Crime, the Housing Market and Reputation

A Study of some Local Authority Estates in Sheffield

Submitted

by

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VOL I

For the Degree of Ph.D.

University of Sheffield

March 1981

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

It would be impossible to list individually all the people who have helped me with this research. Firstly, of course, my thanks must go to all residents of the Sheffield estates who, in one way or another, participated in this research, and to the personnel of the taxi firms for their various contributions.

Secondly, I would like to thank the staff of the Sheffield City Housing Department for their co-operation with this research and for the kindness and friendliness they showed towards me. When literally all the staff were so helpful it is difficult to single out one for special thanks, but I would like to mention Mr. Tim Jackson for all the help he gave me.

Thirdly, turning to the Criminology Centre, my thanks go to Professor A.E. Bottoms, for giving me the opportunity to carry out this research and supervising my work throughout. Also to Monica A. Walker for her guidance with Chapter Nine, and for, in fact, allowing me the time to complete this thesis. Both Professor Bottoms and Mrs. Walker have also given me such encouragement and support that without them this research would not have been completed.

Finally, my thanks are due to Mrs. V. Marsh for transforming a disorganised and illegible manuscript into the thesis which is presented here.

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER ONE

1. 'The Urban Criminal' as background to the Research

1.1. General objectives and strategy of the Sheffield Urban Study

The stated objectives of the Sheffield Study on Urban Social Structure and Crime is to advance the study of urban criminality by focusing on the often neglected areal dimension of urban crime. As Baldwin and Bottoms (1976) say in their introductory paragraph,

> "Crime is largely an urban phenomenon but the specifically urban and areal dimensions of the social processes that are connected with crime have been seriously understated in much recent criminological work."

The Urban Criminal represents the first stage of the research which was concerned with tracing possible links between urban sociology and criminology and examining works in urban sociology which are considered to be of significance for an area study of urban crime. The authors give a detailed statistical analysis of recorded crime and census data in Sheffield, with the objective of highlighting relationships warranting more detailed examination. The second and third stages of the project are concerned with this more detailed examination of relationships shown up by the areal epidemiology. Nine small areas of the city were selected by housing type and offender rate for further study - more details of this are given by Bottoms (1976). The small area research proposed for the second and third stages of the study is concerned with intra-urban differences in offender residence levels, revealed by the statistical analysis of crime data in Part One, which are not immediately explicable in terms of other social variables. This research, which includes that presented in this thesis, has the objective of obtaining more qualitative data on the residents and their lives in these housing areas, and of developing explanations for certain housing type and offender rate relationships shown up by the statistical analysis. Other work on the selected areas of the city include a study of the sources and

validity of police statistics for those areas (Mawby 1979). The qualitative work by individual researchers is supplemented by a social survey designed by Professor A.E. Bottoms, in collaboration with R. Mawby and M. Walker, and administered under his direction by an independent market research organisation.

The Urban Criminal is referred to by its authors as ground clearing, exploratory in intent, aimed at revealing certain relationships between rates of offender residence and areas of particular housing tenure types within the city which demand explanation. The small area research to be carried out by individual research workers was conceived as fundamentally etiological and explanatory in intent, in accordance with the stated objective of the originators of the project to attempt to generate middle range theories or 'empirical generalisations'. The explanatory strategy of this Sheffield Study was designed as a modified version of grounded theory methodology (see Glaser and Strauss 1968), although later, with the development of the research, it was recognised that there was more stress on the social action approach than there was in the original modified version of the Glaser and Strauss formulation (Report to the SSRC 1978).

1.2. Theoretical orientation of the Sheffield Study (and later developments in relevant theory)

The Sheffield Study is seen as broadly following a Weberian methodological framework stressing the need for explanation to be adequate, both at the level of social structure and meaning of action. Within this framework the authors of The Urban Criminal considered relevant theoretical work from urban sociology and criminology. From the literature survey, undertaken by the authors, three recent theoretical traditions in urban sociology were seen as potentially useful to a greater understanding of urban crime. These being the concept of housing classes (Rex and Moore 1967) and the idea of a socio-ecological system

as developed by Pahl (1970), and more generally, the concept of social space and the concept of social network. From criminology the authors of The Urban Criminal show that the work of ~~traditionali-~~ transactionalists ~~ists~~ such as Cicourel (1968) and Matza (1969) are of great importance in the study of urban crime.

One important finding of the first stage of the Sheffield Study was that the official offender rate was found to be statistically related to social variables in different ways in areas with different tenure type - supporting the importance of the housing class concept and that of a socio-ecological system. Four types of housing area are distinguished by Baldwin and Bottoms (1976) following the operationalisation of Rex and Moore's housing class concept, these being council, privately rented, owner-occupied and mixed. The tenure types were found to be distinct in several respects both as regards urban data and crime data, and the correlational patterns were also different. The possibility that different etiological and explanatory accounts of crime in differing housing tenure areas might be necessary is mentioned, and also the necessity for taking a closer overall view of the housing market. Certainly the work of Rex and Moore has such implications for the urban criminologist for they suggest that being a member of a particular housing class is of first importance in determining a man's associations, his interests, his life style and his position in the urban social structure. At a theoretical level, at least, it would seem, however, that neither the existence of a causal process, nor its direction can be stated so definitely. A person's associations, interests, life style and position in the urban social structure may be merely a reflection of his housing situation or such factors as these may determine his housing class. Again alternatively it may be argued that his position in the housing market, his interests, life style and position in the

urban social structure are determined by his economic position and his social class. A similar idea to that expounded by Rex and Moore is, however, the underlying assumption of those who argue for the extension of owner-occupation in preference to other types of tenure. That is, there is a belief that home ownership acts as a social anchor, it binds the owner to the social order. A necessary requisite of adherence to a 'property owning democracy' is the ownership of property by the individuals who make up that society.

Pahl (1970) took up and extended the idea of Rex and Moore and it was his contention that it is the locality - the physical situation of housing and the corresponding socio-ecological system - which is important in explaining differences in ways of life, a point that is often overlooked in the emphasis on the role of social class and life cycle characteristics in this connection. There are, therefore, disparities within a social class - people with similar social class and life characteristics do not necessarily have similar life chances in different localities.

Pahl predicts that,

> "As people become more aware of these objective differences between places ... so the backing of objective reality with subjective awareness will lead to common residence becoming increasingly associated with common interest." (p.112)

Since Pahl wrote this he has modified and developed some of his ideas (Pahl 1975), although while moving towards a view of the city which emphasises the role of the political economy in urbanism he still maintains that spatial structure has a degree of autonomy over and above the political economy of a society. "Urban processes are not all created by economic processes." (1975:10).

Unlike the Marxist inspired theorists such as David Harvey (1973), Pickvance (1976), Castells (1977), Lambert et al (1978), Pahl argues that economics is not the only source of inequality in our society.

Inequalities are generated by spatial logics and by allocative structures also. The conflict is not simply one between capital and labour but in the urban areas use of income and means of access to resources and facilities creates conflict. The urban system creates constraints on use of means and the access to the rights and benefits that may make the conventional notion of class structure and divisions in Britain in need of revision.

Pahl accepts some of the criticisms of the housing class concept as postulated by Rex and Moore, in particular that of Haddon (1970) who argues Rex and Moore have confused disposal with use.

"The use of housing is an index of achieved life chances not a cause. The ability to dispose of property or skill in the market depends on the existence and strength of a market" (Pahl 1975:246-247). While not supporting the concept of housing class as postulated by Rex and Moore, Pahl nevertheless accepts the idea of a number of market situations in capitalist society. He suggests that the concept of 'market ~~worker~~' is more important for the understanding of housing than 'class'. He also points out that rather than shared interests uniting a housing class the competition for housing within a class is more likely to generate conflict. Conflict, for example, is more likely to exist between people on a waiting list for local authority housing and those expecting council housing under slum clearance schemes than it is between waiting list applicants and those 'queueing' for a mortgage. Conflicts are more likely to centre on access to housing rather than on differences in current tenure type. Similarly, a person's access to housing is a more precise measure of his housing situation than his present use of housing.

David Harvey (1973), it has already been mentioned, is one of the recent theorists who have made a marxist analysis of the city. It is interesting to note here that despite his very different epistemological

and methodological positions to that of Pahl he, too, comes to see the social and spatial organisation of the city as actually fostering territorial differentiation and cultural heterogeneity. The relationship between social structure and spatial structure he sees as dialectical and is controlled and constrained by the economic forces of the wider industrial society. The work of these urban sociologists from diverse theoretical backgrounds suggests, at least implicitly, that for the purpose of understanding the social life and behaviour of the urban dweller the city should not be viewed as a homogeneous whole, the nucleus of 'mass society' inhabited by 'one-dimensional man',[1] but as being made up of parts - 'housing tenure areas', 'localities', or 'territories' which display culturally heterogeneous ways of life which are not explicable in terms of social class difference alone. The basic agreement over the spatial and social structure of the city and the diversity of life styles of the city dweller is not invalidated by the epistemological and methodological differences of most writers. The existence of spatially segregated people having similar types of housing and often similar opportunities within the housing market helps to maintain the class system as well as reflecting that system. Social distance and spatial distance are not a simple case of cause and effect within the dynamics of urban areas, they are mutually interactive .

Another study of housing areas in an English city which examines and criticises the housing class concept as formulated by Rex and Moore has been published since the authors of The Urban Criminal suggested the importance of this concept for a study of urban crime. Lambert et al (1978) criticise the housing class concept on both theoretical and empirical grounds. The authors consider the concept of housing classes based on the idea of an independent and autonomous housing market and reject this in favour of the Marxist analysis which maintains that a person's position in the housing market is primarily determined by his

social class position in the labour market.

> "the focus on housing as a separate and distinct set of interests with a market or markets of their own, as is implicit in the idea of housing class, is misleading." (p.149)

Their empirical work led them to the discovery that within a housing area (geographically and bureaucratically defined) such as in a slum clearance area there could reside a mixture of housing tenure types or a number of housing classes in the terms of Rex and Moore. In such an area the authors argue all the residents are working class - those on low wages or fixed incomes - whose class position in society is fixed by the economics of the labour market.

> "There seemed nothing 'independent' or 'autonomous' about their housing situation. It seemed a direct reflection of their position in the class structure of contemporary capitalist society." (p.149)

Lambert et al through their empirical research show that although different housing classes can and do reside in the same housing area they can all be in a similar situation in terms of access to housing - their housing position is economically determined and bureaucratically defined.

> "It seems a confusion to argue that the different housing positions of a labourer who rents his house from the council and that of a postman who owns his house in the same street is great enough for us to say that those two occupy different class positions." (p.149)

Similarly people in the same housing class - defined by their tenure type - can have very different access to housing determined by the local authority housing policies relating to their housing area.

In their rejection of the housing class concept the authors centre their 'research action' on four geographically and bureaucratically defined areas which are viewed as distinct working class localities where the way people live and their ideas and aspirations are to some extent shaped by local authority housing policies. The residents of

these areas are not merely spatially segregated from other housing areas of the city, they are segregated in terms of their means of access to future housing both by their position in the labour market and by their incomes, and by their position in relation to the city's allocative structure which is ultimately shaped by the society's political economy. The writers who have joined the debate on 'housing classes' do not dispute the spatial dimension of class division within the city, nor are they disputing the existence of locality based 'ways of life'. Rather it is the basis of the class structure, the market situation which generates class divisions, which is the source of disagreement among these urban sociologists.

The authors of The Urban Criminal also point to criminological work (Reiss and Rhodes (1961), Clark and Wenninger (1962), Lynn McDonald (1969)) which support the importance of neighbourhood in criminological explanation. The findings of these studies do suggest that although social class is an important determinant of criminal behaviour, more important still is the social status of the area or neighbourhood in which the individual lives. The Urban Criminal showed that patterns of offender residence in Sheffield, although having some correlation with the predominant social class of the area and a greater correlation with the housing tenure type of the area are not entirely explicable in terms of social class or housing class differentials, for there are wider variations within particular housing sectors and amongst people of the same social class.

Baldwin and Bottoms sought, by the Sheffield Study, to point to the importance of the areal dimension in the explanation of urban crime. This focus on the areal dimension formed the backcloth to the small area neighbourhood studies of the second stage. Woven into this cloth were a variety of theoretical strands drawn from urban sociology and criminology that, after examination, were seen as potentially useful to such a study.

Of these theories (outlined on page 3 of this thesis) I have devoted space to that of housing classes and later developments and criticisms of the concept, because the second and third stage of this study - of which the present research is a part - were hinged on the relationship between housing type and official offender rate as shown by the first stage. In particular, the research on which this thesis is based is focused on the differences in offender rate within a single housing class - the council house renters.

1.3. The Council House Sector in the Sheffield Study

Downes (1966) remarks on the atypicality of most locales chosen for criminological study.

> "Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, Brighton, metropolitan and suburban London have been strangely untouched by social enquiry into delinquency." (pp.114-115)

The Sheffield study perhaps goes a little way to meet this deficiency - the almost total neglect of large urban areas of Britain by criminological researchers. But it is not only large urban areas that have been neglected by criminology, specific housing areas within the urban centres have also tended to be overlooked. The high percentage of council-owned housing in English cities, usually between a third and a quarter of the city's housing stock, although now somewhat higher in Sheffield at approximately 40%, has made it an essential part of any areal analysis of urban crime. The originators of the Sheffield Study saw the importance of council housing for an areal analysis of urban crime.

> "If the privately rented area is in decline, council housing is on the increase. In the city of Sheffield the proportion of households rented from the council rose from a quarter in 1961 to over a third in 1971. The proportion of all offenders living in such estates rose over the same period from 39% to 52%." (pp.192-193)

The decreasing privately rented sector has been noted by many researchers[2] and is the focus of concern for housing organisations such

as 'Shelter'. In a city such as Sheffield the slum clearance programmes have further diminished the supply of privately let housing and the older type terraced housing that remains is increasingly being sold to sitting tenants or to first time buyers for owner occupation. This trend has accelerated with the Rent Act of 1974 which, by giving tenants of furnished accommodation some security of tenure, has acted as a disincentive to letting property for many landlords.

The authors of The Urban Criminal note that,

> "As rehousing and slum clearance by local authorities have become more pervasive urban characteristics, so the problems of crime and delinquency (as officially recorded at least) have become increasingly related to the shape of public provision of housing. In Sheffield in 1966, for instance, five of the ten enumeration districts that showed the highest rates of offenders were council areas." (p.161)

But just as criminal offenders are not evenly distributed throughout the housing areas of a city, so there are wide variations in the distributions of known offenders between council estates within the same city.

The first stage of the Sheffield Study showed that the rate of all offenders for all large council estates within Sheffield in 1966 varied between 0.0 to 23.6 per 1,000 dwellings for a four month period. Moreover, taking two further samples of offenders, a six month sample in 1961 and a three month sample in 1971, a high degree of stability was evident in the offender rates of the twentyfourestates - only four showed a fluctuating rate. On the basis of the statistical differences in offender rates revealed by the first stage of the Sheffield Study, between different council estates within the city it was decided to extend the work already done on council housing in Sheffield[3] in an attempt to develop an explanation for these differentials.

> "The question that arises rather insistently is why estates which appear to be essentially similar as regards social class composition and age of the estate have such different rates of criminality." (p.169)

From the preliminary work on council estates undertaken at stage one of the Sheffield Study no support was found for some traditional criminological explanations linking offence rates with social disorganisation and residential mobility, or with a lack of social facilities on housing estates. Data was found, however, that was consistent with the Bristol Social Project team's stress on the reputation of estates (Wilson, 1963). There was some evidence that older estates had polarised more fully into 'good' and 'bad' estates than the new ones and there was a correlation between the official offender rate of an estate and the length of time before the corporation was able to relet houses on that estate. Baldwin and Bottoms also suggest that ideas contained in the transactionalist perspective may be very useful in the small area stage of the study and contribute to an understanding of official offender rate differences between estates, although they mention findings from a preliminary piece of second stage research on two estates cast some doubt on the applicability of the police labelling and 'methodic suspicion' ideas contained within this perspective. Moreover, stage one found a fair degree of divergence between areal offence and offender rate in the official statistics mostly accounted for by the high offence rates of city centre, commercial and industrial areas. This was taken to suggest that police concentrate on high offence areas which are often non-residential rather than follow a strategy of systematically over-policing the city's high offender residence rate areas.

Following upon the size and extent of council housing in Sheffield and the criminological interest this sector generates by virtue of its very varied and sometimes very high official offender rates the second and third stages of the Sheffield Study planned a more detailed examination of some Sheffield council estates.

2. The aim and development of the present research

2.1. The general aim and contribution of the present research

The Urban Criminal is referred to by its authors as ground clearing research, the revealing of certain relationships between rates of offender residence and areas of particular housing tenure types within the city which demanded explanation. My research fits in with the later small area stage of the Sheffield Study, one objective of which is to obtain more qualitative data on the residents and their lives in these selected housing areas, and to develop explanations for certain housing types and offender rate relationships shown up by the statistical analysis.

My research is fundamentally etiological and explanatory in intent in accordance with the stated objective of the originators of the project to attempt to generate middle range theories or 'empirical generalisations'. At the same time I hope that what follows in the succeeding chapters of this thesis which are concerned with the empirical research constitutes an 'appreciative' account (Matza, 1969) of the lives of groups of people living together on various council estates in one English industrial city. My study at one level attempts to describe the social context of the criminal behaviour within the selected housing areas and thus to help to explain the differential rates of criminality, and on another level to describe and understand the meanings of this context for residents of these areas and the motives for action of the actors involved.

When I embarked upon the research I was guided by the theoretical framework outlined by Baldwin and Bottoms, but as the research progressed I found myself able to differentiate between those theories and concepts pertinent and useful to the current research and those which were of little relevance for the research situation, or for which the empirical findings offered no support. At the same time the empirical research

~~supported~~ suggested new hypotheses and also the applicability of other theories and concepts drawn from sociology and criminology which had not been considered at stage one. In short, my research has been both theory directed and theory seeking, which is in accordance with the Glaser and Strauss (1968) formulation quoted in The Urban Criminal (1976:35).

> "The trick is to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field. Such existing sources of insights are to be cultivated, though not at the expense of insights generated by the qualitative research, which are still closer to the data. A combination of both is definitely desirable."
> (Glaser and Strauss, 1968:253)

The methodological framework is broadly Weberian, in keeping both with the overall methodological strategy of the Sheffield Study and my own predilections. The same is also true of the principal research method that I have used, that of participant observation, which was selected for me as the most appropriate method for the research problem as it was formulated by the originators of the Sheffield Study. In fact, given an appropriate sociological problem - and I return to this in Chapter Four - I have always favoured participant observation as the quintessential method of empirical inquiry in sociological research, and it was the opportunity to use this method which first attracted me to the Sheffield Study.

The research problem, as it was originally set for me, was to undertake a comparative and explanatory study of a 'matched pair' of council estates in Sheffield. These estates were matched in terms of being comparable in age, locality, size, housing type and rent and having similar social and population characteristics such as social class and age structure. At the same time these two estates had very different official rates of offender residence, that termed CHH having one of the highest offender rates of any council estate in the city.

Rates of offenders per 1,000 dwellings per annum on the pre-war estates of this study[4]

	1961	1966	1971
CHL	15.1	14.9	24.9
CHM	19.6	54.6	45.1
CHH	37.7	58.4	105.5

It will be noticed that in fact the rates for three estates have been given here. The inclusion of the third estate (CHM) in parts of this research is largely due to an 'accident' in the second part of the Sheffield Study when at one point it was mistaken as part of the low offender rate estate (CHL). Later during my research I turned my attention to this estate as it was becoming of particular interest, offering itself as an example of 'an estate in decline'.

This contrast in offender rates remains firm on other 'unofficial' crime indices devised by the Sheffield Study. These include a self report study among school children (see Mawby, 1979) and a victim study and adult self report study carried out as part of the social survey undertaken by the market research organisation on behalf of the Sheffield Study. Mawby (1979:62) offers the following offender data for the two estates.

Offender Data	CHH	CHM	CHL
1. Indictable (1971)	96.7%	46.6%	32.4%
2. Non-indictable (1973)			
Soliciting	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Order (other)	33.2	8.2	5.0
Other police data	49.1	12.3	10.0
TV licence evasion (1971-73) (Prosecution file)	62.0	19.2	10.0
3. Incident form data (1974)			
Disputes (domestic and neighbour)	79.7	32.9	25.4
4. Drugs data (1974-76)	4.3	0.0	0.0

(Offender rates as a percentage per 1,000 dwellings.)

It will be seen that on every available index of crime, 'official' and 'unofficial', CHH has a considerably greater offender rate than CHL, with CHM occupying an intermediate position.

The interim survey carried out on CHH and CHL has given certain social and population characteristics for comparison of the two estates. These are listed by Mawby (1979:36). 92.6% of residents on CHH and 89.3% on CHL had left school by the age of 15 years. 54.6% of residents on CHH and 50.0% on CHL were in social groups D/E. (The definitions for these social groups are slightly wider than for social classes IV and V, and include all those whose standard of living is low). 87.0% of residents on CHH and 81.8% on CHL had been born in Sheffield. Approximately two thirds of the respondents on each estate were married and household sizes were similar - very few having more than one household per dwelling. The percentage on each estate born in the West Indies, Africa and Asia was very low. This survey sample found only two differences between the estates. On CHL 65.6% of respondents were aged 45 or over compared with 52.8% on CHH. Periods of residence on the estates were very similar, with the exception of those who had lived on their estate for less than a year - 13.9% on CHH and 4.9% on CHL.

Mawby also shows that the 1971 census approximations support this picture of similarity of populations on the two estates.

> "The percentages of males in the areas were similar at between 48-50%, the average household size was similar at between 2.79-3.10, the percentage of males over 19 married was similar at 71.6-76.1%."

The two estates CHH and CHL are adjacent to one another, separated in parts by only a main road. CHM is adjacent to CHL, again separated only by a road. All these estates were built pre-war and comprise of a very similar 'cottage type' housing predominantly semi-detached, but some built in terraces of between four and eight houses. I return to a more detailed description of CHH and CHL in Chapters Five and Six. Here I present only an outline of the number, age and type of housing on the two estates and the range of rent charged, for the purposes of comparison.

CHH

1890 Act

612 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	3 bed	=	349
Parlour type	3 bed	=	4
No parlour	2 bed	=	247
2 bed flats		=	6
1 bed flats		=	6

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £1.88 to £3.44 weekly.

1919 Act

(1919-1920) 206 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	3 bed	=	150
Parlour type	3 bed	=	26
No parlour	2 bed	=	30

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £3.06 to £4.01 weekly.

1923-24 Acts

(1926-1931) 52 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	3 bed	=	35
No parlour	2 bed	=	17

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £3.06 to £3.61 weekly.

1946 Act

(1960-1971) 81 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	3 bed	=	9
No parlour	2 bed	=	18
2 bed flats		=	15
1 bed flats		=	39

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £2.99 to £4.88 weekly.

Total number of dwellings on CHH = 951

Rents in 1973 ranged overall between £1.88 and £4.88 weekly.

Source: Annual Report of the Housing Department (1972-1973).

CHL

1919 Act

(1920-1922) 775 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	3 bed	=	564
Parlour type	3 bed	=	106
No parlour	2 bed	=	105

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £3.06 to £4.01 weekly.

1946 Act

(1954)(1963) 28 dwellings built, of which,

No parlour	2 bed	=	16
1 bed flats		=	12

Rents for these dwellings in 1973 varied from £2.99 to £4.19 weekly.

Total number of dwellings on CHL = 803

Rents in 1973 ranged overall between £2.99 to £4.19 weekly.

NB. The difference in the lowest rents between the two estates is attributable to the number of small houses built on CHH under the 1890 Housing Act.

Source: Annual Report of the Housing Department (1972-1973).

2.2. Expansion of the task - the post-war estates and the role of the Housing Department

After the first year of study of the pre-war estates it was suggested to me by Professor Bottoms that I might extend the originally intended research period of two years to a third year, to include a similar comparative study of two further council estates in Sheffield, one with a high official offender rate, the other with a low, as a means to explanation, again using the method of participant observation. I accepted this task.

These two estates CFL (council-flat-low) and CFH (council-flat-high) offered a very different type of housing to that of the pre-war estates. CFL and CFH were again a 'matched pair' but differing from CHL amd CHM in being central, post-war built flats. Again they were matched in terms of age, locality and size of estate, type of dwelling and rent levels.

The information on the number, size and rent levels of dwelling on CFL and CFH is given below. Thebuilding dates of the dwellings on these two estates are not given in the 'Annual Report' but from another data source it is known that CFL was completed in 1959-1961, that the first part of CFH, later referred to as CFH maisonettes, was completed in 1961-1962, and the later part of CFH, referred to as CFH high rise, was completed in 1963-1965.

CFH

Total number of dwellings = 1,317, of which,

4 bed flat	=	6
3 bed flat	=	354
2 bed flat	=	561
1 bed flat	=	323
Combined bed/sit	=	73

Rents for these dwellings in 1970 varied from £2.12.4 to £5.11.11 weekly.

CFL

Total number of dwellings = 992, of which,

4 bed flat	=	4
3 bed flat	=	256
2 bed flat	=	435
1 bed flat	=	139
Combined bed/sit	=	158

Rents for these dwellings in 1970 varied from £3.8.11 to £4.11.8 weekly.

Source: Annual Report of the Housing Department (1969-1970).

Mawby (1979) offers the following information on the offender rates of these two estates:

> "According to the 1971 standard list offence files, the offender rates on CFH was some four times that on CFL. However, although the rate for CFL was similar to CHL, the rate for CFH was rather less than for CHH." (p.37)

The offender data given by Mawby (p.62) is set out below :

Offender data	CFH	CFL
1. Indictable (1971)	76.7	22.2
2. Non-indictable (1973)		
Soliciting	0.0	0.0
Public Order (other)	14.4	7.1
Other police data	19.0	10.1
TV licence evasion (1971-1973) (Prosecution file)	44.0	19.2
3. Incident form data (1974)		
Disputes (domestic & neighbour)	53.7	19.3
4. Drugs data (1974-77)	1.5	1.0

These two estates also showed similar social and population characteristics although the divergences on some of these were greater than on the pre-war estates. The interview survey showed the similarities to be

> "87.5% of CFH residents had left school by 15, compared with 88.9% of CFL; 65.4% of CFH respondents were in social groups D/E compared with 59.9% of CFL; 78.8% of CFH respondents were born in Sheffield compared with 84.1% in CFL; practically all addresses in each estate contained only one household, and about two thirds of respondents were married."

The differences showed up by the interdoo survey were firstly in household sizes; 43.2% of respondents on CFH lived in households with four or more members compared with 25.1% on CFL. Secondly, a higher proportion of residents on CFH had lived there a shorter time - 17.3% had lived there under one year, compared with 5.6% on CFL, and 26.9% had lived there between one and five years, compared with 18.7% on CFL. Thirdly, and most importantly perhaps, for the consideration of offender rates, there was discovered to be a significant difference in age structure between the populations of these two estates. Survey data shows 17% of the CFH sample compared with 35% of the CFL sample to be over 55 years of age. Also the CFH sample had twice as many respondents under 35 years as the CFL sample. In fact CFH has had a markedly higher percentage of children under 10 years than CFL, but this difference did not persist with older children. It may be seen, however, from the information on number and size of dwellings that the difference in age structure shown up by the survey, is not attributable to the differential provisions of small dwellings on the two estates. CFH, in fact, has a higher proportion of flats for allocation to applicants from the old persons waiting list than CFL. 30.1% of the dwellings on CFH being available for allocation to old people compared with 29.9% on CFL.

The important differences in population characteristics are obviously influential in explaining differential offender rates. Later in this thesis, however, I seek to show that my research suggests that the difference in age structure on the two estates is part of a causal chain rather than a root cause of the differential offender rates, or the result of a deliberate housing allocation policy.

As the research progressed on the two pre-war estates it became increasingly apparent that access to Housing Department records was necessary, so as to test certain hypotheses generated by the qualitative study, and this could also give a statistical basis to the research findings. At the same time, if, in fact, the Department's data refuted the hypotheses it would at least indicate other possible explanations for the estates' differentials. The relationship between these two research methods, participant observation and the collection of recorded information, and their complementary nature and use in the present research is discussed in Chapter Four. By the time I went on to study the post-war flats, I had accepted the necessity and the value of using the recorded information available. In fact, as I later explain, the information collected from the Housing Department on CFL and CFH may be judged as more detailed and valuable in the formulation of the explanation for the differential offender rates than the information I collected on these estates as a participant observer.

My research in the Housing Department also enabled me to discuss, with staff at all levels, housing problems, policies and administration in general, and the formation of 'select' and 'problem' housing estates in particular. This research, therefore, gives both tenants' accounts of their housing situation and their analysis of the decline in or maintenance of a good reputation for their estate, and also accounts of housing staff on the reputations of various city estates, and their analysis of the processes involved. Both accounts may be read against the quantitative data collected at the Housing Department. Some of the Housing Department data was not, in itself, quantifiable, but was of interest to the overall research problem. Although the original research problem was formulated in terms of an explanatory account of the differential offender rates of the two selected estates, with the addition later of the two post-war estates, I was made by my early research findings to consider not

only the situation on these estates but also the overall situation of council housing in the city, in particular the status distinctions between estates. I did not, therefore, limit myself to information on the four selected estates, but where relevant I have considered information about other estates and on the hierarchical nature of the local authority owned housing in my attempt to understand and explain patterns of offender residence within this housing sector.

2.3. The final formulation

The purpose of my research has been two-fold. Firstly to explain why council estates which are apparently similar as regards social and population variables and age structure and type of housing, should have great variations in the rate of known criminal offenders amongst their residents. In connection with this aim I have attempted to give a descriptive and explanatory account of the social milieux of the council estates selected for study and have supported this with a study of recorded data drawn from the city's Housing Department. Secondly, it is hoped that the account arising out of the participant observation part of my research may be of use for the purposes of comparison with research that is being carried out in areas of different tenure type, also under the second and third stages of the Sheffield Study.

I have already stated that the research problem as originally set for me was to present an etiological and explanatory account of the differential offender rates of the two pre-war estates. This was later, as I have shown, extended to include two post-war flat estates. I undertook a comparative study of each of the matched pairs, and in the case of the pre-war estates, included at times a third estate, CHM, in the comparison. At the same time I consider my research to be appreciative both on the estates and within the Housing Department. Much of my research time was taken up listening to peoples' ideas and beliefs

on a wide range of issues relating to the research problem. I have tried accurately and faithfully to record these confidences as they were given to me without alteration or comment which would question the validity of these peoples' accounts. If accounts at times conflict with my own perceptions, with recorded data or with the perceptions of other actors this conflict may be pointed out, but this is not taken to negate the validity of the account for the actor himself. My study at one level attempts to describe the social context of the criminal and non-criminal behaviour within the selected housing areas and thus to help to explain the differential rates of criminality, and on another level to describe and understand the meanings of these contexts for residents of the areas, and the motives for action of the actors involved.

In this introductory chapter I have sketched the background to this research - its links with the Sheffield Study and the theoretical and methodological inheritance from stage one. I have also sought to explain the general aim and contribution of the present research and show how the research problem itself developed while under way. In doing this I have given a brief introduction to the estates which form the subject matter of this study.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this thesis are concerned with a critical review of available theoretical insights and empirical findings from the existing literature, criminological and sociological, on council housing and crime on council estates. I have split these studies chronologically, so those carried out in the 1950's and early 1960's are considered in Chapter Two and the more recent studies are reviewed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four contains a discussion of the research methods used, principally participant observation. I trace briefly its links with sociological theory and consider the advantages and disadvantages of this

method that have been discussed by writers on participant observation, and relate these to my own research experiences. Finally, in this chapter I explain the decision to collect some recorded information from the Housing Department files and describe my research strategy within this Department.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six are concerned with the field research on CHH, CHL and CHM (the pre-war estates), and on CFH and CFL (the post-war estates) respectively. In both these chapters I give a detailed description of the estates and consider the main themes arising from this research, both in terms of residents' accounts and my own perceptions. In Chapter Seven I pull together some of these themes to develop a tentative explanation for the differential offender rates of the two "pairs" of estates. In this chapter I consider such issues as the effect of reputations on estates and their social character, the problems of poverty and cycles of disadvantage and the existence of subcultures and neighbourhood networks.

In Chapter Eight I take an overall look at Sheffield's council housing stock and at the eligibility rules, the allocation system and the creation of estate differentials. The data presented in this chapter is all drawn from the Housing Department research and I relate the accounts of housing officials and their explanations for estate differentials. I then consider the local authority in its role as landlord, its housing policies, and discuss the 'market situation' within this bureaucratically administered sector of housing. The quantifiable data collected at the Housing Department is presented separately in Chapter Nine.

From the work done on council housing estates in the Sheffield Study before my research began, the authors of <u>The Urban Criminal</u> came to the conclusion that the political context of control of the housing stock of the city may have important repercussions on criminality in the

areas concerned. In the final chapter of this thesis I consider the wider questions of the bureaucratic landlord, the urban managers, the socio-economic context of their existence and the effects of these on the nature of the council housing stock of a city, the conditions of tenure and the rationale of the policies adopted in the allocation of this stock. This has been made possible by the willingness and co-operation of the housing staff in Sheffield to discuss such issues as the constraints under which they work and their areas of initiative and discretion which can ultimately affect the offender rates of those areas of the city's housing stock over which they have control.

In this final chapter I also consider working class housing in Sheffield generally, and the council housing situation in particular. In considering life-styles, housing aspirations and opportunities, I return to the concept of housing classes and consider its usefulness ih the light of my own research.

NOTES:

1. Two conflicting interpretations of urban life in western industrialised societies may be extracted from sociology. The first is the criticism of mass society. (e.g. Kornhauser, Marcuse, C. Wright Mills). Western urban industrial societies are characterised as 'anomic', 'alienated', 'atomistic', producing uniformity in people without community. The roots of this position go deep in sociological theory to Tonnie's contrast of germeinschaft-gesellschaft societies and Durkheim's theory of the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity.

   Martin Pawley (1973) presents this extreme view of urban societies in the western world.

   > "The community unit is not the city, the suburb, the the neighbourhood, the block or the drive .... The disappearance of the traditional concept of community is evidenced by its failure to re-emerge under conditions of stress." (p.23-24)

   The second is the criticism of the concept of western industrial societies as 'mass societies'. Proponents of this position argue, as Harvey does, that even in the urban centres of industrial societies there are still territorially based subcultures. Daniel Bell (1960), for example, argues that "Even in the urban neighbourhoods where anonymity is presumed to flourish, the extent of local ties is astounding."

2. Colin Wardin Tenants Take Over (1974) gives the following table (p.21).

Date	Owner-Occupied	Public Authority Rented	Privately Rented
1914	9%	1%	90%
1947	26%	13%	61%
1964	46%	26%	28%
1974	53%	33%	14%

   He notes:

   "My table is not toally accurate because, amongst other things, it ignores the distinction between 'dwellings' and 'households' and it ignores too the 1½ per cent owned by housing associations and housing societies, but it does indicate accurately the dramatic changes in the typical modes of tenure."

3. The Urban Criminal, chapters 6 and 7. Also Baldwin, J. (1974) Problem Housing Estates - Perceptions of Tenants, City Officials and Criminologists. Social and Economic Administration, 8. 116-35. This contained a study of 'Blackacre and Whiteacre', the first tentative attempt of the Sheffield Study to offer some explanation for the differences in levels of criminality between two of the city's local authority housing estates.

4. The code names for these estates have been adopted from their use in the interview survey (see page 2) 'C' representing the tenure type - council, 'H' representing the dwelling type - 'house' rather than 'flat' and the third letter representing the rate of offender residence - high, medium and low.

CHAPTER TWO

Studies of Council Housing and of Crime on Council Estates in the 1950's and early 1960's

1. Criminological Studies

1.1. The criminological interest in the 'problem' estates

In the 1950's a new criminological interest emerged in Britain, that of crime and delinquency on local authority housing estates.[1] This interest can be seen as an outcome of the rapid expansion of the council sector of housing following the slum clearance schemes of the 1930's and 1950's. There was a growing realization that many of these estates had as high indices of 'social' problems, including crime and delinquency as the old inner city slum areas they were intended to replace. Some of the studies of this period, such as that by Morris (1958) may be seen as a contribution to the ecological tradition in criminology whereas others such as that by Ferguson in Glasgow (1952) did not start with an ecological intent but found in their analysis of delinquency and its co-incidence with other variables, housing areas to be an important variable in the morphology of urban crime. Most of the studies are openly correctionalist in interest and therefore empirical research is seen as directed towards the formulation of social policy. Explanation of the existence of 'problem' estates vary, but a common theme to much of the research in this period is that crime and delinquency in particular is attributable to either individual pathology, a position accepted by Spencer et al (1964) or social pathology, a concept which is closely related to the idea of 'slum behaviour', the clearest elucidation of which may be found in Morris' (1958) discussion of the culture of the unskilled and semi-skilled working class. Morris argues :

> "It is not a middle class value judgement but a fact, that the culture of the unskilled worker is negatavistic in that it works against the formation of wholesome personalities and a satisfying way of life."
> (1958:196)

He suggests that this culture flourishes in certain housing areas of a city.

> "Now while it is true that instances of 'psychiatric' delinquency may crop up anywhere in the city, 'social' delinquency tends to be much more highly localised. The Croydon evidence confirms that whilst the former is more evenly distributed over the middle and working class areas of the town, 'social' delinquency predominates in old working class areas and on the inter-war housing estates."
> (Morris, 1958:182)

Morris maintains that this older type of council housing tended to reproduce a pattern of living not substantially different from that experienced by families before they became tenants of the local authority, in particular he cites overcrowding both in the slum areas and on the old council estates as not conducive to family life. And for Morris

> "the first line of defence against the development of anti-social behaviour is within the family, and the second within the local community."
> (p.196)

Much of the research of this period, such as that of Ferguson (1952), Mannheim (1948), Jones (1958), and Morris (1958) represents attempts to examine the coincidence of delinquency with other psychological and sociological factors mainly connected with family background. These studies make use of the idea of both individual and social pathology in their explanations of delinquency. To quote Morris (1958) again :

> "As a consequence the street play groups in such areas are likely to contain an unduly high proportion of children who by virtue of their cultural inheritance are prone to social delinquency. The conditions of family life are also such that their proneness to 'psychiatric' delinquency is not inconsiderable."
> (p.188)

Coupled with a correctionalist interest these studies typically rely on the official statistics of crime and delinquency in formulating their research problems and subsequent analysis and explanation. There is an almost total neglect of the possibility of the social construction of official crime and delinquency rates. Similarly, although a number of the studies use case history methods, none of them, with perhaps the exception of the study by Spencer et al (1964), which is discussed more fully later, allow any place to the actors' accounts of their social situation and behaviour. In Weberian terms there is a complete neglect of explanations being adequate at the level of meaning. This in turn, I would argue, detracts from the validity of the conclusions. The criticism of Wiles (1976) of the 'old criminology' applies to such studies as these. The old criminology was correctionalist,

> "not only in the sense that it accepted pathological notions of deviance and hence endorsed the validity of treatment models, but also in the sense that its own causal explanations denied any authenticity to the deviants' own account, whether within the explanatory framework itself or by extension within the criminologically informed context of legal and penal processes." (p.20)

1.2. The slum clearance estate, slum behaviour and delinquency

Ferguson's study of delinquent boys in Glasgow well illustrates these criticisms. He set out to examine certain variables, commonly considered to be related to juvenile delinquency, by the use of statistical techniques and the use of case histories. He relies totally on the official police statistics on convictions. He proceeds to find certain statistical correlations between certain associated variables and delinquency rates, one of which is the finding of high delinquency rates on particular local authority estates. These estates were those used to house slum clearance applicants and ~~these~~ Thus Ferguson is able to differentiate between council estates within the same city according to the type of

applicant they are used to house. Thus in Glasgow there are three types of council estates, those built to relieve overcrowding, those used to rehouse slum dwellers and those built as a contribution to the general housing stock of the city. It is on the second of these types of estates - the slum clearance estate - that Ferguson finds the highest rates of juvenile delinquency. Ferguson, is however, content to offer an explanation for his finding solely on the basis of this statistical correlation. If he had accorded some place to the accounts of life on such an estate to the boys or to their families he may well have been less ready to attribute the delinquency to contamination from a slum environment and instead found there are many possible causal processes involved in the slum clearance estate becoming a 'problem' area. He does not consider the type of estate that was built at this time for slum clearance purposes nor the possible effects of a stigma attaching to slum clearance people transferring to the estates and thus affecting, through reputation, the future living pattern of the estate. Instead, he contents himself with his finding that the slum clearance estates of his study had a much higher incidence of crime than the others.

> "Indeed the delinquency rate among the rehoused boys is for all practical purposes as high as that prevailing among the boys who live in slums."
> (p.18)

Just as Ferguson uses the correlation between low scholastic achievement and delinquency as evidence of the former as a factor in the causation of delinquency, rather than considering the other possible causal direction, that is involvement in delinquency leads to low scholastic achievement

> "All the evidence points to the importance of low scholastic ability as a factor in the causation of delinquency".
> (p.51)

So Ferguson uses the correlation between slum clearance estates and high indices of juvenile delinquency to imply a causal relation between the two. He suggests that immersion in a slum way of life is a causal factor

in delinquency.

> "It is much easier to alter a causal environment than to change a way of living, much easier to improve physical attributes than those that are less material." (p.145)

He argues that the slum way of living continues on rehousing, even after ten years or more of living on a council estate. Ferguson does not consider that in the correlations between slum clearance estates and delinquency other factors may be involved over and above a way of living that is a legacy from the days of slum housing. He does not, for example, consider the effect of living on such estates on the young residents. The idea of a slum culture is implicit in Ferguson's study but the relation between the material conditions of a housing area and the prevalent way of life are not the concern of Ferguson. This means it is not possible from his study to see if the material conditions of life in the slum continued on rehousing. Other researchers such as Hodges and Smith (1954) in Sheffield, and Jennings (1962) in Bristol, found poverty to be exacerbated on rehousing with removal expenses, higher rents, increased travelling costs and so on. In such circumstances a way of life closely associated with poverty is more than likely to persist on rehousing.

From his statistical correlations Ferguson argues that social and physical conditions, such as that of living or having lived in a slum, or in a severely overcrowded house, are more important in an explanation of delinquency than individual family situations.

> "It seems reasonable to deduce that the quality of district in which the boy lives is of much greater importance in relation to juvenile delinquency than the circumstances of whether or not he comes from a broken home." (p.44)

It may be said that Ferguson made two contributions of value to the understanding of criminality on council estates. Firstly, his differentiation between council estates according to the purposes for which they

are built, and therefore his implicit recognition of the possible role of local authority housing allocation policy in the creation of high and low offender rate estates. Secondly, he demonstrates that moving to new estates, that is providing people with better physical housing conditions, does not in itself reduce delinquency. This was the assumption of many in the 'social reconstruction' period after the war. New housing was seen as the panacea for all kinds of 'social malaise'.

1.3. Mobility rates, social disorganisation and delinquency

Howard Jones (1958) in Leicester found one high delinquency rate estate was being used to rehouse slum clearance families, but at the same time he found other estates in the same city that had been used for this type of allocation had declining delinquency rates. Nor was this high delinquency rate estate a new one, it was in fact one of Leicester's earliest estates built before the war. Jones relates high levels of delinquency to high mobility rates both in inner city privately rented areas and on local authority estates. These areas, he argues, are similar in one respect, both are areas of transition and thus are likely to suffer from social disorganisation to a similar extent and have consequently high delinquency rates. At the same time, they are different in that whereas the inner city is decaying, the housing estate has the potential for developing. High delinquency rates for Jones, therefore, are causally related to high mobility rates and the attendant social disorganisations and lack of community. As the authors of 'The Urban Criminal' point out, the significance which Jones attaches to population mobility is comparable to the Chicagoan concern with social disorganisation.

> "The constantly changing population meant not only that community controls remained weak and inoperative but that the population was being renewed all the time by a continuous flow of low calibre from the slums." (Jones, 1958:282)

Jones characterises his slum clearance areas ashighly mobile. This is obviously true with clearance in progress. These areas, however, .have for much longer been associated with high rates of crime and delinquency. Before clearance programmes many of these areas depicted by researchers such as Mogey (1956) and Jennings (1962) are characterised by low mobility rates and an exceptionally settled population. Every city has its areas of multiple occupation housing with the associated high mobility rates, but these are often the last to be cleared. Areas of small back to back terraced houses, the majority of which are privately let to working class families and historically have very settled populations are often the first to be cleared. Jones give no information on the type of clearance area his housing estates residents came from.

Jones also suggests a slum behaviour that is not necessarily shared by all slum dwellers, he refers to "the more sluttish and less well-behaved residents of the slum clearance areas." (p.281).

His characterisation of a high delinquency rate estate, like that of Ferguson is presumably what Maule and Martin (1956) had in mind when they wrote :

> "There is a certain stereotype of municipal housing which dates from the period when Local Authority rehousing was taken to be more or less synonymous with slum clearance, a stereotype whose principal components are poverty and disorganisation."
> (p.45)

Similarly, V. Hole (1959) argues that a prevalent idea to be found in rehousing literature is that deteriorated dwellings must necessarily contain occupants who are also physically and morally substandard. Such an idea he argues belongs to the whole ideology of rehousing.[2] Studies such as those by Ferguson and Jones which support a slum pattern of behaviour do not attempt to analyse further the apparently causal relationship they ascribe to 'slum' housing and 'tainted' or 'low calibre' behaviour. Jones

attributes high delinquency rates to high mobility rates because the effect of the latter is that an estate never has the chance to develop as a community which would enforce its own social control on deviant behaviour. His emphasis on the needs for a community to enforce normative standards of behaviour that would have among other things the effect of reducing the delinquency rate suggests that Jones does not believe in a shared slum culture which could be transferred intact to a local authority estate. Rather the ascription 'low calibre' is for a minority of pathological families who can be assimilated to a stable community without upsetting the normative conforming standards of behaviour of the majority of the residents. This is a somewhat different idea of the behaviour attributed to slum dwellers than that posited by others such as Mays (1963) and Morris (1958) who argue that deviant behaviour in 'problem areas' is the result of a non-conformist subculture adhered to by the majority of residents in the area concerned. Mays (1963) argues that high delinquency rate council estates have people from the former blighted neighbourhoods which also had high delinquency rates.

> "Here very clearly we are dealing with the same people transferred to a different geographical setting, a fact which gives substantial support to the criminal area theory."
> (p.220)

Although Mays does consider the possibility of differential policing producing different offender rates for the various areas of a city he does not consider this an important part of an explanation for high offender rate areas.

> "While there may be some discriminatory practice in police methods between neighbourhoods, it is hard to believe that this can account for more than a small proportion of the difference in prosecutions between varying status areas."
> (p.220)

In this article Mays is arguing against psychological explanations of delinquency and those studies which see delinquency areas not as a

result of a prevalent widely adhered to subculture but as the result of the personal inadequacies of members of individual households.

> "One is driven back to the earlier explanation that a delinquent and crime tolerant social atmosphere prevails in such localities, that there is, as it were, not so much a community of individual people as an abiding community of ideas, values and attitudes which is developed as a social tradition and handed on more or less intact to the rising or incoming generation."
> (p.221)

Morris also explicitly argues against the idea of a high delinquency area being necessarily disorganised.

> "The normative structure of conduct may appear to be an inversion of the world at large but it is by no means disorganised."
> (p.178)

Delinquent behaviour within a 'problem' housing area is, in Morris' terms, 'integrated within a normative cultural pattern', the predominant subcultural way of life adhered to by the majority of residents is at least ambivalent to many criminal or delinquent activities if not actually conducive to them. If Morris is correct and certainly a number of studies support his conclusions,[3] then it is difficult to see how Jones' view that the growth of a community would necessarily reduce crime and delinquency rates is correct. In the association suggested between slum clearance, entrants to council estates and 'low standards of behaviour', whether as a result of a prevailing subculture of the slums or due to individual inadequacies, no attempt is made by Ferguson or Jones to relate the attributed behaviour to the material conditions of slum life; there is no attempt to explain or understand the content of such behaviour except to name juvenile delinquency as a defining characteristic.

Jones' high delinquency rate estate also had high rates of residential mobility[4] and he infers a causal connection between the two. Other studies have shown, however, that in both the privately rented and the council sector low mobility rate areas may be high rates of crime and

delinquency.[5] Though it is possible that the high rate of residential mobility on the Leicester estate was in this specific case causally related to the delinquency rates it seems more likely that in fact the high mobility and delinquency rates were both effects of some other causal process which made this estate a problem area. This is a similar criticism to that made of Ferguson earlier - his implied causal connection between slum clearance estates and high delinquency rates, The fact that some slum clearance estates have low delinquency rates suggests the causal process is not so simple and direct as Ferguson believes.[6]

Jones does not offer a quantitative study of moving rates, nor does he attempt to examine the putative mobility rates by including a qualitative study of residents' perceptions of the estate, and the reasons for the moving of previous residents. This would have told us more about the estate and thus given a greater understanding of the complexity of problems associated with such estates of which delinquency is just one. He does suggest that the mobility rates on the estate are associated with the preponderance of small houses, the lure of newer estates with better amenities and the process by which the 'respectables' move away to be replaced by the less choosey slum dwellers. No details, however, are given of the local authority's allocation rules and procedures - how, for example, allocations are made to this estate, the rules governing transfers and exchanges. An estate can only decline through tenant self-selection, as suggested by Jones, and more explicitly by many other council housing researchers whom I discuss later in this chapter, if the local authority operates a permissive policy on transfers and exchanges between council tenants. Information of such housing policies is not offered by Jones, and therefore his contention that the less choosey slum dwellers accept tenancies on this estate and those aspiring to better housing move away, must remain a hypothesis unsupported by empirical data.

1.4. The age of the estate and the delinquency rate

Several researchers in this period mention the age of an estate as of significance in the explanation of its high delinquency rate. Unfortunately there is no empirical agreement over the typical age of a high delinquency rate estate. Jones' high delinquency rate estate actually showed a rise in delinquency over the years. It was one of Leicester's oldest council estates, and Jones does suggest that the new estates with the more modern housing being built in the city were attracting the more aspiring tenants from the old high delinquency rate estate. He suggests that it is the less choosey slum dweller who accepts a tenancy on this old estate. Morris suggests that high delinquency rates are associated with the older council estates and in particular with small and highly localised areas within such estates.

> "Post-war housing .... is of a radically different standard, and the observer cannot fail to be impressed by overt social differences between life on the old and on the new estates."
> (p.185)

Firstly, he argues that the actual housing standards on the old estates are not conducive to family life and thus delinquency among the children is more likely to go unchecked. Secondly, he argues that delinquent areas are formed by the social interaction of families adhering to certain values living in close proximity, and in particular, through the children's social mixing, so that an estate, or part of an estate, can develop a prevalent way of life that will encourage families with higher standards and aspirations to move away.

Not all studies, however, found high delinquency rates to be associated with old estates. Ferguson did not consider the age of the estate to be an impprtant variable. We may assume, from his note that even on a slum clearance estate where families had lived ten years there were high delinquency rates, that the estates on which he found the

highest rates of delinquency were, in fact, quite new. Bagot (1941) in Liverpool compared three housing estates and found that the newest estate had the highest rate of delinquency, and the oldest had the lowest. Comparison of estates on age and delinquency rates is unsatisfactory, as shown by Baldwin and Bottoms, simply because it does not take other estate variables into account, such as, for example, the type of applicant the estate was built to house and the local authority's allocation policies. Maule and Martin (1956) studied a new estate in Hertfordshire and found that rehousing was accompanied by an increase in delinquency but this fell subsequently to a rate that 'reasonably might be considered normal for that population'. (p.451)

Mannheim (1948) based his study of delinquents in Cambridge on a sample of convicted offenders, and like Ferguson, Jones and Morris, he relies on the information of official control agencies, in this case, the probation service. His study, therefore, like the others discussed already, is open to criticisms of a biased sample which tells us nothing of juvenile delinquency per se, nor necessarily about apprehended juveniles, but something about apprehended juveniles who are on probation. The information on the latter is necessarily also biased in the sense that it relies solely on information and assessments from the social control agents. Mannheim is mainly concerned with the correlation between his convicted offender sample and pathological variables connected with family background. In so far as he is concerned with the ecological distribution of delinquency in Cambridge, the finding that three new council estates had high rates of convicted juvenile offenders is explained in terms of the lack of adequate social services on the estates. As Mannheim does not include any low juvenile offender rate estates for comparison such a hypothesis appears pure conjecture, informed only by popular opinion of the time - Mannheim cites Bagot's study in Liverpool

and that of Ruth Durant (1939) in Watling in support of his thesis.

The first stage of the Sheffield study has shown that the newness of the estate is not related to its official rate of crime and delinquency. Of the seven highest offender rate estates in Sheffield, five were built in the pre-war period. At the same time, however, other pre-war estates were among those with the lowest offender rates.

1.5. Social and recreational amenities and the high delinquency rate estate

Jones recommends that measures designed to foster and stabilise community life on housing estates are essential to reduce social problems such as delinquency. This concern over the lack of provision of social amenities that would help to foster a community life is a major concern of criminologists' writing in this period, as it is with their sociological counterparts. In particular, recreational facilities for youths are considered essential in any attempt to reduce delinquency rates. Bagley (1965) is particularly concerned with the relation between delinquency rates and the provision of youth services in his examination of rates of juvenile delinquency in twenty-two towns in England and Wales. He shows that towns of relatively low social class tend to have the highest rates of delinquency, when relatively little is spent on youth services. In towns of similar social class composition, but with higher expenditure on youth services the rates of delinquency were lower. Baldwin and Bottoms, however, point to some anomalies in Bagley's use of census and delinquency data and that relating to expenditure on youth services. They also found that the posited correlation between provision of youth services and delinquency rates is not upheld by the Sheffield analysis.[7] Bagley made a more intensive study of delinquency on one town, Exeter. His sample is, however, based on juvenile offenders appearing in court over a seven month period - again his conclusions are based on a study of apprehended juvenile delinquents. He finds high delinquency rates on

old and new estates and, therefore, does not relate these delinquency rates to the age of the estates. Unlike Jones in Leicester and Morris in Croydon, who found localised pockets of delinquency within one estate, Bagley found his delinquents to be fairly evenly scattered about the estate. He does not relate the high delinquency rates to mobility rates for each estate, nor does he examine the type of applicant for which the estate was built to house. He does, however, note that the local authority disclaims any selective allocation process. Bagley concludes from his research that :

> "Delinquency in Exeter seems to be associated with low social class (and its associated variables), with low expenditure on youth services and with a well established delinquent subculture."
> (p.44).

Although Bagley did not undertake any qualitative research himself amongst the delinquents, so we have no idea whether the young themselves feel a need for youth services, he does admit the desirability of qualitative research, particularly with respect to delinquent subculture.

> "It would be most interesting, both for this and other subcultures described, to gain an intimate description of community dynamics such as that given by Whyte's 'Street Corner Society'.
> (p.44)

Apart from the deficiency of the delinquents' own accounts of their housing areas, their felt deprivations if any, and explanations of their own behaviour, Bagley's study is open to other criticism. Baldwin and Bottoms point out Bagley's explanation of high delinquency rate estates in terms of the three variables, social class, expenditure on youth services and delinquent subculture, is very difficult to test empirically. It is extremely difficult to devise measures of 'good' youth services for purposes of comparison.

Bagley lists the three variables causally. He argues that in areas of low social class, where there is a lack of youth services to compensate

for the lack of opportunities experienced by adolescent boys, the frustrated youth turn to delinquent subcultures. From a correlation between two variables, delinquency and the amount of expenditure on youth services, he argues a cause and effect relationship. Taking the Exeter study, he, like other researchers already discussed, has not proved the causal direction which he assumes. Thus one could equally well hypothesise that the local authority was reluctant to spend money on youth services in known delinquency areas or on problem estates, or that the willingness of agencies to initiate youth services in such areas is hampered by the residents lack of support for such services. Certainly, one of the defining characteristics of a 'problem' estate to come out of council estate studies is the lack of support for such community based ventures. Related to the oft quoted lack of local support on 'problem' estates for 'organised' activities and associations is the objection to the social policy implications of the suggestions of those such as Mannheim and Bagley. The provision of good youth facilities on a housing estate may still not attract the delinquent or potentially delinquent and even if they do there is no reason to suppose that this will automatically deflect them into more conforming behaviour. This criticism may be made of all the policy recommendations which assume an injection of 'community' and an investment in amenities will reduce crime and delinquency rates in such housing areas.

Bagley's analysis of high delinquency rate housing estates is very much in line with Cohen's (1955) explanation of juvenile delinquency. At the same time he acknowledges his debt to Cloward and Ohlin. Bagley sees the emergence of delinquent youth cultures as the result of the blocked opportunities to achieve educationally and in employment, experienced by working class boys living in this case on local authority estates.

"In the blocking of the aspirations of school leavers and young workers, through the lack of opportunity for occupational mobility, frustration may arise having its outlet in various forms, one of which may be delinquency."
(p.45)

Bagley includes a footnote on this statement,

"The hypothesis presented here is that the psychological effect from the resulting frustration is the opposite to that of anomie - out-turned anger, and in some cases aggression against what seem to be agents of frustration."
(p.48)

In this respect he argues that youth services such as youth clubs would relieve the frustrations resulting from the lack of opportunities in other spheres, and so reduce the delinquent response and help to develop areas of legitimate activity (p.45). This is a very similar analysis to that offered by the Bristol Social Project Team of 'problem' estates in Bristol, Spencer et al (1964), which is discussed in the next section. Such an explanation of delinquency as that offered by Bagley must be assessed against the empirical research evidence offered by Morris (1958) and Downes (1966). Morris argues that in areas of high 'social' delinquency children are socialised into a culture :

"which tends to perpetuate what are essentially a-social tendencies to individuals."
(p.196)

In such areas the young are not likely to be attracted to conventional youth organisations, rather Morris sees the only chance of involving these young people in non-delinquent activities and interests is through "spontaneous youth groups" (p.198). Downes also argues that the working class young are socialised into a culture which does not adhere to the same values as middle class society. Just as working class adolescents passively dissociate from school and work, rather than, as Cohen suggests, suffer frustration from blocked aspirations, they also dissociate from conventional youth organisations. Downes in his empirical research in East London shows that such organisations and clubs fail to attract the

very boys that are thought to be most at 'risk', that is, those most likely to commit delinquent actions. Bagley does admit different class patterns of socialisation, but assumes that for the working class boy this just further handicaps him in his attempts to achieve in middle class society. He does not question the assumption that working class boys internalise middle class aspirations - thus the youth club for Bagley is seen as a welcome opportunity for working class boys to compensate in their leisure time for their otherwise blocked opportunities.

1.6. Individual and social pathology

There were a number of studies in this period, both criminological and sociological, which sought the cause of social problems on council estates, in the lack of community and the disorganisation which is particularly associated with the new estate.

Maule and Martin (1956) were concerned with the peculiar features of a new council housing estate. From their original focus on aspects of community health in a medical sense they became :

> "interested both in problems of adjustment of individuals and families, consequent upon rehousing and in the structure and development of the community as a whole." (p.449)
>
> The motivating question for this part of their research was:
>
> "To what extent does this sort of rehousing tear up family roots and cause a weakening in all the supports that a family derives from its relations, friends and neighbours?" (p.445)

Probably the research that was committed most strongly to this perception of the new estate is the Bristol Social Project (1964). This was an action research project carried out on two Bristol council estates and an inner city area of privately rented housing. The validity of their findings is rather questionable in that having accepted the conclusion of Mack[8] that the main problem revealed by delinquency is family disorganisation, they enter the field to find such families. Although some place

is allowed to the subjects' own accounts of the 'stresses and strains' arising out of their housing situation, at the end of the day it is the researchers who hold the monopoly on the correct analysis of the problems experienced by these people. This attitude of the researchers is underlined by their use of the medical analogy - they cast themselves as the doctors whose job it is to diagnose the disease and prescribe the cure. The irony of the situation is that many of the people who lived on the council estate with which they were most concerned, not only did not want a doctor or a cure but, in fact, even questioned the diagnosis. The researchers, aware of this reaction, adopt the position that the people are mistaken and that their task is to reveal this to the residents and bring them to a realisation of the malady for themselves. The idea of social pathology attached to slum housing areas implied by other researchers such as Ferguson has already been discussed. The idea of social pathology is a key component of the Chicagoan concept of social disorganisation. The Bristol team are concerned to see high delinquency rates as a result of individual pathology, rather than social pathology, thus moving even further away from the possibility of a radical critique of a society that produces high rates of delinquency concentrated in certain housing areas of urban centres. The onus of responsibility is firmly put on the individual, and the wider social structure is removed from criticism. The very use of a medical analogy which labels the delinquent or delinquent-producing family 'sick' has a social control function, in that it invalidates the responses of that person and their action cannot be viewed as a rational or viable alternative mode of conduct. Thus research such as that done by the Bristol team successfully reverses the plea of C. Wright Mills,[9] and makes public issues into personal problems. Delinquency, along with other social 'problems' such as crime, child neglect, and a whole constellation of other behaviour patterns taken as typifying the 'problem'

family are for the Bristol team the result of inadequate or 'disintegrative' families who, in the case of the new housing estate, are unable to stand up to the stresses and strains of living in an area without community norms or kinship ties and where social isolation is rampant.

In explaining the existence of the 'problem' estate the researchers reject the idea of a deviant subculture such as that described by Mays, Morris, and Jephcott and Carter (1954).

> "But the stereotyped idea of a 'problem subculture' (Morris, 1958, p.177) in which the whole area subscribes to a set of values different from those held in the wider society certainly does not apply to Upfield, nor, we consider to estates of a similar social structure elsewhere ... what is characteristic of the so-called 'black' streets in which so many of the stresses were concentrated is not that anti-social behaviour is approved of, but that it is not condemned so openly and so often as in other areas."
> (p.287)

Neither is the 'problem' estate seen as the result of a selective allocation policy operated by the local authority, whereby the unsatisfactory tenants and applicants are 'dumped' on to one or two estates which are kept for this purpose. Rather, the 'problem' estate arises from a process of self-selection, whereby incompatibility between neighbours leads to the movement away by 'respectables' from areas with a number of 'problem' families. It is to such areas that families "characterised" by the stress and strain of a predominantly anti-social pattern tend to gravitate. The authors do not explain the deciding factors that make an estate go rough or respectable - that is why on some estates, according to the process they suggest, the 'roughs' stay and the 'respectables' move away, and on others the opposite occurs. Nor do they examine any local authority data which might substantiate their claim, except for a small study on movement away from the two council estates, and Bristol's particular housing policies and procedures are not discussed. Without a detailed examination of the local authorities'

allocation policy and regulations governing exchanges and transfers the claim of a ~~national~~ natural cultural process of selection must rest on 'hearsay' and conjecture.

The Bristol study adopts a consensus model of society.[10] 'Problem' estates result from a collection of 'problem' families who colonise an area. These problem families - and there is never a very clear distinction made in any of the literature of this period between problem families and the ordinary rough working class - are a pathological minority who are socially substandard or inadequate. The remedy for problem estates is the rehabilitation of this minority through welfare and social work agencies, with the assistance of psychiatriccare for the disturbed personality. The 'problem' estate attracts rather than produces the criminal or delinquent because even on such estates the authors deny the existence of a subculture which fosters such deviant behaviour.

The conclusions of Terence Morris, based on his study in Croydon, on the genesis of the problem estates and his consequent social policy recommendations are very similar to those of the Bristol team. Morris, however, adopts a pluralist model of society, with the 'problem' estate both attracting the criminal and delinquent through a process of self-selection, and also producing him in the sense of the young in such areas being socialised into a non-conforming subculture which fosters such deviant behaviour. Despite linking social delinquency to the sub-culture of a housing area, Morris argues that such a subculture gives rise to pathological personalities, as well as a pathological way of life.

> "The opportunism, the egocentricity and rejection of authority which this cultural system perpetuates, give those families socio-pathic if not psycho-pathic characteristics. Poor control over the bladder, inability to budget expenditure, and spontaneous pilfering from the employer are all facets of the same culture." (p.194)

Although he views the root of the pathology as primarily social rather than individual, his recommendations are not in conflict with those of the Bristol team.

> "The problem is how to bring about changes in a culture which tends to perpetuate what are essentially a-social tendencies in individuals."
> (p.196)

Morris, as it has already been said, equates delinquency and crime with pathology and he too uses a medical analogy. He refers to delinquency 'by contagion'. Nevertheless, he is emphatic that his high delinquency areas are not disorganised but are the territorial base of the unskilled working class subculture, which at times fosters and at other times is not antithetical to types of delinquent and criminal activity. He gives cursory attention to the social construction of official criminal statistics, and with equal brevity dismisses the idea that the 'class ~~base~~ bias' in crime and delinquency rates could be to any extent unreal - that is, the result of differential arrest or charge rates based against the working class offender. The official statistics, in Morris' opinion, reflect a real class differential in crime and delinquency rates, and an explanation for this rests on the cultural difference between social classes. Morris is not describing an exclusively slum culture, but the ordinary culture of the unskilled working class that can be found both in the old inner city slum areas and on 'problem' housing estates: in fact, wherever this social class may live. Support for Morris' idea of a delinquency area where the majority of residents subscribe to a distinctive subcultural way of life which may be deviant by middle class normative standards comes from other studies of high crime and delinquency rate areas which are not necessarily council estates. David Downes (1966) in East London and Jephcott and Carter (1954) in Radby, for example, offer evidence of a deviant working class culture which they relate to the material conditions of the people involved.

The use of informal observation (Downes) and participant observation (Jephcott and Carter) as methods of research enables these researchers to give descriptions of working class life in high crime and delinquency rateareas which give some place to the actors' own accounts of life in such areas. Both offer subcultural explanations of behaviour patterns in these areas, and although they differ on the roots of a deviant working class subculture, they concur on the existence of a 'delinquency area' where the young are drawn into the subcultural way of life through family and neighbourhood contacts, thus explaining the persistance of a delinquency area over time.

Madeline Kerr (1958) also describes a working class way of life in a slum area of Liverpool. The content of her description suggests a subculture which is similar to that described by Downes and Morris, and whilst not specifically concerned with criminal or delinquent behaviour she does note that certain types of offence, such as 'stealing from out-groups', is a fairly 'normal' and unsanctioned pattern of behaviour amongst the local people. 'Ship Street' as she calls the area of her study, is undergoing slum clearance schemes, which means the rehousing of many of the inhabitants into corporation flats. Kerr notes the persistence of the subculture after rehousing :

> "This alteration in their manner of living has not led to a related change in their ways of life. The ritual and traditions of the past, carried out in the old houses and streets, are now preserved in the present in the corridors and yards of tenement flats."
> (1958, p.3)

Kerr's interest in this working class subculture is in relating environmental stresses to personality development, utilising concepts and tools from clinical and social psychology. This does not, however, detract from the descriptive data of the subjects in their daily lives, and her finding of the persistence of such a subculture could be taken as

further evidence for a subcultural explanation of high crime and delinquency rates on a slum clearance estate.

1.5. Council allocation policies and the natural cultural process of selection

Originally Morris saw 'problem' estates as the result of a policy of selective allocation by the local housing authority, but he later changed his mind and saw a natural cultural process of selection as the more important cause of the 'problem' estate.

> "Families with higher standards and aspirations who found themselves in 'rough' areas either moved out of their own accord or applied for a transfer. Similarly families who found themselves with 'stuck-up' or 'toffee-nosed' neighbours applied to be transferred to streets where they would be at home."
> (p.186)

Like the Bristol study, Morris offers no detailed analysis of the way a natural cultural process of selection would be possible under a local authority's housing policy regulations. While noting the difficulty of gaining information on housing allocation policies some twenty five-years before his study when the estates were first let, he makes a somewhat general statement about the then current housing policies :

> "It would be unfair, however, to suggest that Housing Authorities, in general, or indeed the Housing Authority in Croydon, deliberately seeks to perpetuate the delinquency area; on the contrary they try to satisfy the wishes of the majority of tenants .... "
> (p.188)

In discussing the origins of the pre-war estates with which he is concerned, Morris says it seems almost certain that some imposed separation took place on economic and domestic criteria, but that subsequently tenants themselves have shown a preference for social segregation through a self-selection process.

> "The Housing Department has attempted as far as possible to accord with what is clearly a desire for segregation on the part of both 'rough' and 'respectable'."
> (p.187)

A process of segregation which may be started by the deliberate policy of the local authority gains momentum when tenants themselves become aware of the 'tone' or the 'status' of an area and choose their housing area accordingly. The local authority, by allowing the tenants to segregate themselves in this way, permits the development of a 'problem' estate or smaller 'problem areas' within an estate. The segregation and social isolation of families in a 'problem' area encourages the growth of a deviant subculture and the final result, says Morris, is a 'problem' area of unkempt houses and bad repute to which only the 'roughs' will go.

> "The "delinquency area" which is an ecological feature of the urban scene when development follows the trend of the market is thus perpetuated by an aspect of administrative policy."
> (p.188)

Morris considers the dilemma of the local authority, vis-a-vis social mixing or segregation, to be an unenviable one. He argues

> "for while segregation undoubtedly perpetuates a subculture which has little to recommend it from either the aesthetic or practical point of view, the alternative is likely to be unpopular with all concerned."
> (pp.188-189)

It is Wilson (1963) who makes the most explicit statement on the natural cultural process of selection in the creation of 'good' and 'bad' council housing estates. This statement is based on the findings of the Bristol study, reported by Spencer et al (1964). He argues that there are always likely to exist,

> "some areas of planned municipal housing that are held in low public esteem because they exhibit a relatively high proportion of anti-social behaviour, which is self-perpetuating rather than self-extinguishing and which is a painful affront to the good intentions of the elected authority that provided the housing."
> (p.41)

Wilson recognises that it is the variety of housing stock owned by the local authority and let at differential rents, together with the policy

of allowing applicants a choice of houses that makes 'problem' housing estates inevitable :

> "Difficult housing estates must be accepted as a potentially permanent feature of the social landscape .... "
> (page 41)

He argues that in a free economy with privately owned housing,

> "those families who are at the foot of the ladder as desirable tenants gravitate to the poorest housing."
> (p.14)

With local authority housing, Wilson argues, the process is more complex but not essentially different. Firstly, there must be some distribution in terms of ability to pay - a local authority 'cannot reasonably offer a family which it thinks may be a poor tenant a house with a relatively high rent'. (p.14). Secondly, the tenant will choose the housing he thinks will suit him best - this choice, says Wilson, will be partly economic and partly social in terms of what he thinks of the neighbourhoods and their reputation :

> "and not everybody wants to be posh."
> (p.14)

Thirdly, established estates develop a reputation, and transfers and changes in tenancies will accelerate the process of self-selection.

> "Tenants who want to move away from 'Botany Bay' can only be replaced by tenants wishing or willing to move into 'Botany Bay' knowing its reputation. A point is reached in some roads where the only tenants willing to accept a vacant house are those whom the housing authority know will offer problems to the department, the neighbourhood, or both."
> (p.14)

Wilson does not describe a housing allocation system in detail that would allow this natural cultural process of selection to take place, so we have no evidence on how far a local authority - in this case Bristol - makes this process possible, or even encourages it. Wilson only states that one policy regulation ensures that the poorest applicants are not

offered the more expensive accommodation. Nor does Wilson consider just how housing estates acquire and maintain reputations, or how these reputations are transmitted. Nevertheless, some support for his thesis was gained by the first part of the Sheffield study. In particular, informal talks with Sheffield City housing officials suggested that the department was pursuing no crude segregationalist policies, but 'problem' tenants and applicants would not be offered houses with high rents or in 'high class areas'.[11] Furthermore, the official offender rates for the older Sheffield council estates suggested that polarization into 'good' and 'bad' estates had taken place.

The authors of '<u>The Urban Criminal</u>' summarise their testing of the 'Wilson Hypothesis' :

> "Clearly none of these data is sufficiently detailed to provide a thorough test of Wilson's thesis. All that can be claimed is that the findings discussed here are in general consistent with his explanation in a number of ways and offer a good deal of support for predictions which one might draw from his assertions."
> (p.181)

Wilson, therefore, like Jones, Spencer and Morris, and a number of other more sociologically orientated commentators of this period, who are discussed later in this chapter, see the differential status of council house estates and their related differential rates of criminality as an inevitable result of the natural cultural process of selection. Social classes tend to be residentially segregated through the operations of the housing market, and through individual choices made with reference to class-determined systems of values. In this way, the 'problem' or the 'difficult' families tend to become concentrated in certain housing areas distinct and separate from other social classes and family types in our society. Where the local authority role in this process is recognised it is accorded a smaller, less significant part than later writers attribute to it. Housing policy, at this stage of council house research, is seen as a re-inforcer rather than creator of social segregation. These

researches bow to the inevitability of a process which they view as initiated in the main by the tenants themselves.

1.8. Some conclusions

I have referred to the studies discussed in this section as a group, but this is only true in a chronological sense. The explanations offered of 'problem' housing estates as high crime and delinquency rate areas vary greatly and are often in conflict. There are, however, some common theories to be drawn out of the studies discussed.

Firstly, the ubiquitous stigma attaching to the slum clearance tenant,[12] and the consequent explanation of crime and delinquency on an estate in terms of its former slum dwellers. Against this must be balanced Jones' finding that in Leicester not all slum clearance estates had high delinquency rates. Most of these studies attribute deviant behaviour to slum clearance entrants to the council sector - some see this as a subcultural way of life, others as the 'mark' of slum life and inadequate people who cannot adapt to better housing conditions. Whether proponents of individual or social pathology, these researchers put the onus of responsibility for the 'problem' estate on the anti-social behaviour of the majority or the minority who live there.

Secondly, a number of these researchers explained the high delinquency rate estates in terms of negative subcultures, to which the majority living in the delinquent area adhered. Morris and May, in particular, may be noted for this type of explanation. Against these, and often in direct conflict with such subcultural explanations, a number of studies share a common explanatory theme of a lack of community on high delinquency rate estates. This may be attributed to social disorganisation (Jones), or to the newness of an estate and its lack of communal facilities (Spencer et al). On such estates 'minorities' are seen as bringing the estate into disrepute and giving it high levels of

crime and delinquency amongst the residents. 'Problem' estates are explained in terms of the lack of community to enforce normative standards of behaviour which are in accordance with the law.

Thirdly, there is a shared belief among those researchers who apply themselves to the problem of the concentration of offenders on certain council estates that whatever are the 'causes' of criminal, delinquent and anti-social behaviour at the individual level, the 'cause' of the 'problem' estate is a process of tenant self-selection. Housing departments may contribute to the polarisation of estates into 'select' and 'difficult' by policies relating to rents, and by allowing tenants choice in their housing, but they do not pursue a deliberate policy of segregation.

2. The Sociological Studies

2.1. Social reconstruction and the quest for community

While their criminological counterparts were specifically concerned with the etiological studies of problem housing estates with high indices of crime and delinquency, the sociologists of this period were almost exclusively concerned with the effects on families of being rehoused on new council estates. The favoured research method used in these studies is that of interviewing a sample of residents who have been rehoused on a new estate. Sometimes the study is longitudinal, so that the same respondents are interviewed before and after rehousing. Some of the estates which are studied may be considered 'problem' estates, in that they have all the high indices of social problems - including crime and delinquency - which are the defining characteristics of such estates for the criminologist. The sociologists, like the criminologists of this period, were influenced by the structural functionalist tradition in sociology, and so their research took on the form of a desperate search for 'community' and integrating factors in the social context of the new

council estate, which is itself often depicted as inducive to social isolation and even anomic. Similarly, their empirical research, based on a consensual model of society, is directed towards the formulation of social policy that would encourage the integration of families into a neighbourhood-based community and the integration of a 'problem' area into the wider society.

The old established 'problem' estate was not the focus of concern but the vast new council areas usually situated on the periphery of the city and often used to rehouse families from clearance areas. At this stage of housing estate research, the 'problem' estate was seen almost exclusively in terms of the families who lived in the area and no recognition was given to the estate which, by its geographical location, design or previous housing of its original tenants, had a built-in stigma which might consequently become as much the 'cause' of its 'problems' as the behaviour of the residents. Where the physical attributes of an estate were recognised as contributing to its 'problems', these were characterised as factors physically constraining a growth of community, such as a lack of social facilities, or inconvenience factors such as poor public transport services, or inadequate lifts. The emphasis of much of this research was that of the need to help families adapt to a new and alien environment. Deviants or 'problem' families were those who failed to adjust to the new situation or to benefit from better housing conditions. Many of the slum areas from which these people came were characterised by high rates of crime and delinquency, and those individual families who continued in such 'anti-social' patterns of behaviour were those who failed to respond to the 'opportunities' of the new estate.

These sociologists, then, working in the functionalist tradition, made their primary concern the effects on working class families of being rehoused in a social melieux which is often characterised as anomic.

Frankenburg's (1966) summary of urban housing estates well illustrates this interest :

> "This state of uncertain or merely passively sanctioned norms seems to me to make possible the emergence on housing estates of a society alienated from norms - the classically anomic society. Empirical studies from Watling (1939) to the Bristol Social Project, still in process, suggest that housing estates are for this reason difficult places for youth to grow up in. Educational and recreational facilities for adolescents are almost non-existent on many estates." (p.200)

The intellectual roots of these studies lie with Tonnie's distinction between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft societies and subsequent theories of rural and urban contrast. The new urban housing estate is seen as typifying the gesellschaft relationships associated with urban society. Armed with the Durkheimian notion of anomie - although at times this appears to be a misappropriation of the concept - these researches were concerned with a search for integrating factors which would stabilise the new estate and help the residents adjust to the 'new society', albeit on the localised level of the local authority estate.

The localities covered by these council estate studies are quite well dispersed throughout the country, thus we get fairly similar descriptions of life on a new council estate from Durant in Watling (1939), Hodges and Smith in Sheffield (1954), Mogey in Oxford (1954), Willmott in Dagenham (1963), Kuper in Coventry (1953), Jennings in Bristol (1962) and Hole in the Clyde Valley (1959). Certain themes are recurrent, the social isolation and normlessness of the new estate, the attenuation of neighbourhood relationships on rehousing, the transition from neighbourhood to family centred living, the opening up of material aspirations with new housing and the replacement of neighbourhood cooperation with materialistic rivalry between neighbours. There are, of course, variations

and exceptions amongst the studies mentioned. Thus Willmott does not describe the Dagenham estate as characterised by social isolation and a competitive concern over conspicuous consumption. On the contrary, he argues that the increased concern with material possessions is not evidence of neighbours acting as adversaries, but rather as 'allies in a general advance'. In contrast, both Hodges and Smith in Sheffield and Jennings in Bristol, are concerned to show that far from rehousing being accompanied by increased consumption of material goods, it was often accompanied by severe financial hardship. Jennings found that when families did try to buy the material possessions thought to be a necessary part of a new home, this often led to heavy hire purchase commitments and severe financial strain. The result of this was very often rent arrears and other types of debt, leading to petty crime as a solution. Jennings mentions 'the temptation to stave off a summons by robbing the gas-meter or borrowing from the moneylender'. (p.125). Durant in Watling and Hodges and Smith in Sheffield - both of which are amongst the earliest of these studies - suggest that an informal community arose on their estates out of adversity and outside hostility. On the Sheffield estates there was a complete lack of any organised community life, but at the same time, the authors argue :

> "To some extent, therefore, the community suffers from deprivation, like other deprived communities it possesses a certain measure of internal cohesion which is imposed on it by the negative attitude of those in more favoured circumstances. This cohesion has been strengthened by the more positive forces which arose out of shared experience of the depression and the war." (p.87)

It is the later studies in this group - those made in the first years of post-war prosperity that tend to emphasise the attenuation of neighbourhood ties as the principal characteristic of the new estate. Thus Mogey's depiction of a new estate in Oxford is very similar to that

of Spencer in Bristol, emphasising the lack of community ties which places strain on some families :

> "Barton is not without its stresses which press heavily on particular families. The absence of any commonly accepted sets of standards of belief and action also distinguishes Barton from the community of St. Ebbes. It is in fact not a localised society nor do its inhabitants feel loyal to an isolating set of social customs."
> (p.156)

Hole and Kuper both recognised that the way of life they find on their estates is consciously chosen by the residents, and thus there will be no return to the close-knit community life style previously associated with the slums. Kuper refers to his 'respectables', who typically espouse a privatised family life, as the 'evolving urban type'. Hole concludes that it is the freely chosen values of 'withdrawal' and 'individualism' that makes community life untenable. The conflict found between residents on the Coventry and Clyde Valley estates is attributed to the difference of normative standards and life style between residents, which has been made possible by the rehousing situation.

2.2. The Local Authority allocation system and natural cultural process of selection

With one exception, these studies place more importance on the natural cultural process of selection in the 'character formation' of an estate than local authority allocation policies.[13] The exception is V. Hole's study of an estate in the Clyde Valley. The local authority operated a very rigid allocation system, whereby both estates and tenants were graded, prize estates only being used to house 'category A' tenants, and so on, down the scale. Hole does not in fact argue that 'category C' tenants would only want 'C' grade estates, which would be the case if the Wilson hypothesis in its full form is correct. On the choice of estates by the applicant, Hole, in fact, states that tenants in category 'A' were most likely to be given the

house type and estate of their choice when rehoused. She does, however, acknowledge a self-selection process amongst the tenants themselves.

> "In the Scottish burgh in which this inquiry took place, the explicit and implicit criteria for the selection of tenants when combined with the unorganised process of self-selection from amongst those who are eligible for local authority housing, operates to produce a far more homogenous population in the housing estate than is found in the old established areas from which the tenants were drawn."
> (p.170)

Hole argues that the lack of community on the new estates is not just due to the break up of kinships, neighbour and friendship ties on rehousing. She describes life in the old housing areas as characterised by friendships and unity of purpose, a solidarity 'which can form such an attractive feature of slum life'. (p.172). With rehousing, these old values of cooperation are lost and replaced by values of withdrawal and individualism which are antithetical to the growth of community.

The genesis of the problem estate is not a question with which Hole is concerned, nonetheless, the description of the local authority grading system contained in this study suggests that for the Clyde Valley at least, the onus of responsibility would rest with that local authority's housing department.

In contrast Kuper argues from his study of a Coventry estate that it is not the allocation policy of the local authority which sets the tone of an area, but the later self-selection of tenants that ultimately decides the social status and associated characteristic life-style of an estate.

> "The housing shortage has not put an end to the self-sorting of residents, to their finding their own compatible levels: it has merely slowed down the process or altered its course. Self-sorting takes place to a lesser extent in the initial stages of finding a home, and to a greater extent once the families have roofs over their heads."
> (p.144)

Unfortunately Kuper offers no recorded information from housing department files that would support this statement.

The residential mobility pattern that Kuper notes on his estate he explains as 'two-way'. That is, on the Coventry estate, with no yet established 'tone' or 'reputation', 'roughs' move away, finding life intolerable nextto 'respectable' neighbours, and vice versa. Kuper, however, does not consider how this mobility within the council sector is possible, as he does not examine the local authority's housing policies that regulate the movement of tenants by transfer and exchange. It is interesting to note that, although Kuper uses the 'rough'-'respectable' division, which is a necessary part of an explanation of tenant self-selection, his definition of each is slightly different to that of other researchers. The 'respectables' represent an evolving urban type, with values centred on a privatised family life. The 'roughs' are those who seek to recreate the neighbourhood-centred type of living, characteristic of their previous housing. Kuper's interest in social segregation on council estates stems from the formulation of his research problem, which is not the 'problem' estate as such, but the study of social relationships within a planned neighbourhood. It is not, therefore, within his frame of reference to consider if his 'rough' category espouse values and life styles which make them more likely to commit criminal offences. 'Rough' for Kuper means 'sociable', those families seeking a return to the neighbourhood-centred living characteristics of the old slum areas. On Kuper's estate in Coventry, high mobility rates are not associated with high rates of criminality,[14] but with an ongoing process of tenant self-selection, whereby neither type has as yet colonised the estate.

Willmott's study of a huge council estate at Dagenham also traces a self-selection process amongst tenants within the estate, as well as

between other estates. He finds some evidence that thosevaluing 'reserve' - Kuper's 'respectables' - will move away from cul-de-sacs because the physical structure of such streets promotes neighbour contact. Thus Willmott argues that the idea of social mixing and social balance in areas of residence, which was a major objective of post-war reconstruction in town planning, is 'utopian and naive'. (p.114).

> "A whole series of studies have, in fact, shown how widespread is people's desire to live amongst others like themselves."
> (p.113)

Jennings (1962) also traces the natural cultural process of selection on some Bristol housing estates, and states that local authority policy in Bristol was to disperse rather than congregate the unsatisfactory tenant. It was on the post-war estates that Jennings detected problems arising from social mixing. 'Problem' families - in Jennings' terms the 'anti-social' and the 'socially inadequate' - were housed next door to 'respectable' families, those who aspired to a better way of life. Jennings states that on the evidence of social workers, these 'problem' families had problems before rehousing.

> "It was obvious that the new housing estate did not cause though it might aggravate their difficulties."
> (p.126)

These 'problem' families, typically, had different standards of behaviour than other working class families, and Jennings argues housing them in close proximity to other families brought considerable 'problems' to an estate, and such a minority of families could bring a whole estate into disrepute.

> "Even a comparatively small number of difficult families could disrupt the life of the street and induce an attitude of withdrawal in their neighbours. In the shortest streets and in the closes their influence on the pattern of relationships was increased by greater physical proximity. In certain streets one matrimonial or police court case followed another and the streets attained a bad reputation on the estate. It was obvious also that some respectable families were reluctant to move into them. Movement away also followed as a result of neighbour troubles."
> (p.127)

The residents of the estate were already beginning to feel the effects of the estate being so labelled. Jennings records the experience of some residents who were adversely affected by this stigma.

Jennings considers mobility patterns, both from the old clearance district to the various corporation estates, and reasons for moving after rehousing, in more detail than most studies of this period. She considers both the reluctance to accept tenancies on the less popular estates, and the reasons for movement away from such estates. She recognises the differential demand for council estates, and found the lowest demand was for old estates with 'bad' reputations, and new post-war estates situated on the periphery of the city. She records that the clearance families typically expressed two wishes, first that they should be rehoused near their old area of residence, and secondly, that they should be rehoused in close proximity to relatives and old neighbours. Jennings explains the extent to which the local authority was not able to meet the first mentioned demand, as it was itself dependent on the houses becoming vacant for letting. Relets on estates in the area were rare, but there was a massive amount of new housing on the city's periphery to be let. The expressed desire of so many clearance families to be housed with friends, relatives and neighbours from the 'old' area was also not satisfied; the local authority had planned the clearance in sections to facilitate redevelopment. In fact, there were such delays in redevelopment that this refusal to meet the demands of the clearance families was in the end unjustified.

The peripheral post-war estates, then, were in the lowest demand among Barton Hill residents, and it was these estates which showed the highest mobility rates in their early years. Part of this was attributable to the inconvenience of their semi-rural location and their initial lack of transport and amenities. But Jennings found that among

her sample of Barton Hill residents the highest number of transfer requests from three post-war peripheral estates were in terms of 'separation from relatives'. Second to this came 'finance', followed by 'access to employment'. 'Dislike of the area and/or neighbours' was only mentioned by fourteen of the seventy seven families applying for a transfer, and was, in fact, only the fourth most frequently given reason for a transfer request. Jennings does say elsewhere that the arrival of the Barton Hill families prompted a reaction against these 'slum clearance' tenants on the part of the other residents of the estate. It is possible that an analysis of their transfer requests might have shown ~~none~~ more giving the reason for the request in terms 'of their new neighbours'.

For the Barton Hill clearance families, however, of those interviewed far fewer gave the reason of wanting to move to a neighbourhood where they perceived the residents would be more like themselves, than those who wanted to move for one of the reasons of 'convenience'. In fact, during the time of Jennings' research, the housing department in Bristol introduced a ~~shock~~ strict policy to limit transfers to only those with 'a very sound reason', so that the process of tenant self-selection was effectively prohibited.

Residents of the new estates explained the high delinquency rates in terms of the newness of the estate, the lack of community controls and inadequate recreational provision for the young. Jennings, therefore, while admitting that 'respectable' families did try to move from areas which housed a number of 'rough' families, put the natural cultural process of selection in perspective. Reasons of convenience were more commonly given for leaving an estate than neighbour troubles, and residents themselves attributed the 'problems' of an estate to its 'newness' and lack of facilities, as well as to troublesome neighbours.

Respectable families were reluctant to move to estates or 'parts' of estates that had gained a 'bad' reputation, but their movement away from such areas was hampered by the local authority's policy on transfers.

Morris and Mogey (1965) also did not see the formation of territorially based residential groups , which they found on the Oxford estate, as the result of a deliberate local authority housing policy. They do, however, advocate a local authority housing policy which would facilitate the natural cultural process of selection through exchanges and transfer. They recognise that this would mean that 'problem' families would be increasingly isolated from other council tenants, but view this as the price that has to be paid for allowing tenants a degree of freeom of choice within the council sector.

Hodges and Smith (1954) made a study of a Sheffield slum clearance estate which had an established reputation for being a rough area. They found, however, that the families who might be considered to have earned the estate its reputation were a minority who coloured the reputation of the estate out of all proportion to their number.

> "There are upon the estate a considerable number of tenants who would fit without friction into any of the post-war housing estates to which no stigma of slum clearance attached." (p 88) 15

In fact, a high percentage of those interviewed (30%) expressed a desire to leave the estate.[16] The authors comment that the actual low removal rates (1949-50, 7% and 1951-2, 5%) should not be seen as contrary evidence, but as a reflection of the reputations of the estate that so few succeed. The authors also analysed transfer requests to be housed on the estate.

> "Although occasionally an application to move may be motivated by a wish to be closer to relatives, the majority are due to the desire to secure a cheaper house." (p 90)

Hodges and Smith found both 'rough' and 'respectable' families living on the estate - in fact, they made a four-fold classification of family types. Although, therefore, the estate had the reputation of being a 'problem' area, it had not, in fact, been 'colonised' by 'roughs'. Nor had the local authority selected the estate for a particular grade of applicant. They had, in fact, used it for rehousing from a slum clearance area, and had moved the families in, street by street. The high percentage of the respondents wanting to leave the estate may be the result of 'respectables' wanting to leave a stigmatised area, but as the authors suggest, leaving a 'problem' estate may not be so easy. Studies of council estates undertaken by sociologists in this period, like those of the criminologists, rarely considered housing allocation policies responsible for the creation of 'problem' council estates. Where housing policies are discussed, they are generally portrayed as permissive in allowing the tenants themselves to segregate and congregate themselves on estates, or parts of estates, according to the perceived character of the area and the family types living there. In this way, the reputation of an estate affected mobility patterns in both directions - to and away from the estate. Official housing policies for the sociologists and criminologists discussed in this chapter, with the exception of Hole, are, at the most, secondary to this natural cultural process of selection in the creation of 'problem' and 'select' council housing areas.

2.3. The stigma of slum clearance

Hole notes the stigma attached to the slum clearance tenant.

> "Those rehoused for overcrowding sometimes complained when families from condemned property were put beside them on the estate, saying that such tenants would lower the 'respectable' tone of the neighbourhood and would probably not pay their rent."
> (pp.163-164)

Hole, in fact, examined council records pertaining to rent arrears, and found 'no special tendency' among slum clearance tenants to be in arrears with rent.

Kuper in Coventry also notes the ubiquitous stigma of slum clearance families - the area of the estate housing former slum dwellers was generally considered to be the 'rough' area. Kuper does not say how a group of slum clearance families came to be housed together in the same part of the estate.

Jennings' Bristol study is of the rehousing of families from a slum clearance area on to various Bristol housing estates. Only four families included in the study went to pre-war estates which had a 'bad' reputation. The vast majority went to post-war estates, where some of them, at least, found themselves stigmatised as 'slum clearance' people - a stigma they very much resented. Many denied that their old housing area was a slum. Jennings shows the wide variety of life style espoused by the slum clearance families, and argues that the unfortunate stigma that attached to them was the result of a minority of anti-social families who bring the others into disrepute. The slum clearance area that Jennings is concerned with, Barton Hill, was, in fact, before redevelopment, in an area where

> "Crimes against property or person were rare, the juvenile delinquency rate was very low in comparison with that in many other parts of the city."
> (p.211)

She does say, however, that in the years of redevelopment, when Barton Hill was 'blighted' and awaiting clearance, the desolation of the streets 'has to be seen to be believed'.

> "In such streets children play under conditions which to say the least cannot be expected to conduce respect for public and private property or a sense of responsibility for neighbourhood amenities. This state of affairs may last not for weeks or months only but for years."
> (p.234)

There is, perhaps, in this comment of Jennings on the devastation of the slum clearance area, and the quality of life for those waiting to be rehoused, some substance for an explanation of high delinquency rates on slum clearance estates.

Although Barton Hill was a low crime and delinquency rate area before redevelopment plans started to take effect, Jennings does recognise that there are a variety of 'slum' areas in any city. This is a fact which is not recognised in many of the studies discussed so far.[17] On the post-war estates with which Jennings is concerned, there are a minority of 'anti-social' or !substandard' families, as she terms them, that might well owe their patterns of behaviour to the local subculture of their previous 'slum' housing area.

> "How far the early histories of these and other families with long term difficulties were the result of prevailing standards in the areas where husbands and wives had been brought up or had spent the first years of married life, it is impossible to judge."
> (p.126)

The slum clearance estate studied by Hodges and Smith in Sheffield had suffered from the stigma attached to its original tenants. In this case the local authority might be indirectly responsible for the reputation of this estate, not by selecting a grade of tenant for it, but by using it solely for allocation to one application type. Thus this designation of an estate for slum clearance families appears from the literature to be a common practice of local authorities, at least in the pre-war and immediate post-war periods.[18] In the criminological literature the 'problems' of a council estate tended to be explained in terms of the behaviour of such tenants, and the idea of a continuing 'slum culture' was prevalent. The sociological literature of the same period shows the researchers to be more aware of other possible processes that can make a slum clearance estate a 'problem' estate in terms of its crime and

delinquency rates. Hole, Jennings and Hodges and Smith all show that the stigma attaching to the slum clearance family may well not be merited, but it has real consequences for the reputation of an estate and for consequent mobility patterns.

2.4. Intra estate divisions

Many of the studies discussed in the criminological section of this chapter found small areas within a 'problem' estate which had an inordinately high proportion of known criminal offenders living there, the one researcher who found contradictory evidence being Bagley. Some of the studies of council estates which have been discussed in this chapter found physical divisions within estates (often the unintended consequences of planning) had assumed social status characteristics. Mogey found, for example, that social status differentiations on the Oxford estate followed 'natural' physical boundaries. In connection with this, however, he found the same 'ecological equilibrium' remarked on later by Baldwin (1974) and Damer (1974).[19] Residents of one area typically referred to other parts of the estate as the 'bad' area.

The finding that the structure of physical space creates social areas of interaction is shown by Durant, Willmott, Kuper, Hole, Hodges and Smith, and Morris and Mogey. The latter make a very clear statement of this in discussing networks of relationships on housing estates.

> "Such a network runs parallel to the road until a social isolate, a geographical barrier or a change in house type occurs, whereupon it stops. The networks thus tend to have clear geographical boundaries."
> (p.108)

As Morris and Mogey point out, the usefulness of such a concept of geographically circumscribed social networks depends on its correspondenc to observable and consistent differences in behaviour, opinions and attitudes between residential units. Their evidence suggests that such

social behavioural differences between them do exist. They argue that if the trend they have detected continues they see it as leading to even more marked differentials between residential groups, so that each group will acquire a reputation, status and 'character' of its own.

In the formation of these groups the authors see the local authority as having no part :

> "The differences were not due to physical variations, the houses were nearly all identical. Nor were they due to systematic allocation by the local authority." (p.116)

Morris and Mogey, therefore, attribute this finding to differential residential groupings within one estate to a process of tenant self-selection. This finding of social divisions along geographical 'boundaries' within an estate, which is common to most of their studies, may be seen as consistent with the Wilson hypothesis. Moreover, a number of the studies, including those of Jennings, Kuper, Willmott and Hodges and Smith, found that cul-de-sacs and inner estate streets with little through traffic, resulted in greater neighbour contact, and so the 'local way of life' exerted a stronger normative pressure on those who lived there. Consequently, it is on such streets that these studies found the greatest evidence of 'respectables' moving away if the streets housed a few 'rougher' families. From these findings one might predict that where high offender rate areas exist within an estate these are more likely to be focused on the inner estate roads and cul-de-sacs.

2.5. Some conclusions

These studies offer a more qualitative analysis of life on various council housing estates than the criminological studies of the same period. Although much of these studies is taken up with the search for integrating factors on new estates, and subsequent detailed accounts of the triumphs and tribulations of organised community centres, there

are a number of recurrent themes which may be relevant to an understanding of the 'problem' estate, and an explanation of a high crime and delinquency rate council area.

The attenuation of community controls on rehousing is seen as not only producing a new urban way of life, but also as imposing a strain on some 'inadequate' families which may result in their involvement in criminal or delinquent behaviour. Some of these families adhered to a deviant life style before rehousing, but the effects of rehousing on new estates, where there is a conspicuous lack of local community control is thought to exacerbate their involvement in deviant behaviours. Allied to this there is the suggestion, expressed most explicitly by Jennings, that rehousing on a new estate could put intolerable financial burdens on the new residents, both in terms of high rent, transport costs and expenses, and in the felt need to satisfy material aspirations and 'keep-up' with the neighbours. This plain fact of financial hardship could prompt the 'inadequate' family to commit petty crimes to obtain temporary alleviation from chronic debt. Jennings also suggests that the way of life for the young in a redevelopment area may foster patterns of play which, on a new estate, lead them into delinquency. It is interesting that Jennings anticipatess the attack on council housing from both the 'conservative' and 'radical' critics that became a fashionable topic in the 1970's. She characterises the old slum neighbourhood as one of diffuse property tenure - where owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants all lived in close proximity, and where there was not only a flourishing local community and a fairly homogeneous set of conduct norms, but where there was also a certain local pride in the neighbourhood and an interest in safeguarding its rep utation. Residents of the slum area had control over their housing situation before the interventio n of the local authority ; even the privately renting tenants had an element

of control denied them on rehousing, when they were forced to accept a bureaucracy for a landlord. In the slum area familial based networks were possible, local landlords could be approached for housing for successive generations of a family when they came to the time of needing their own home. The council estate, however, has no landlords or owner-occupier residents. Therefore, no one has a financial interest in the neighbourhood. The tenants have lost control of their housing situation, they are often split up from family and former friends and neighbours, and do not therefore have a 'stake' in the neighbourhood, nor a particular interest in its continuing 'good' reputation. Jennings argues that the common concern and interest in the old neighbourhood was responsible for its low rates of crime and delinquency. This concern and interest is lost on a new council estate, and so council tenancy per se may be seen as fostering a propensity to certain types of criminal and delinquent behaviour. Jennings argues that :

> "the development of a property-owning population with a substantial stake in its own neighbourhood obviously affected the general attitude towards property and personal rights and obligations and to the neighbourhood itself."
> (p.211)

The extension of this argument to different types of tenure areas have implications for urban residential offender rates, which is outside the scope of Jennings' study.

The diversity of local authority allocation policies throughout the country and their consequent differential responsibility in the creation of the 'problem' estates becomes apparent in their literature.[20] In the Clyde Valley, for example, we are offered evidence of a rigid allocation policy, which involved the segregation of tenants on to 'graded' estates. In Oxford, Morris and Mogey argue that the local authority were not responsible for the fact that some estates, or parts of estates,

established a disreputable tone and character. In Bristol, Jennings attributes the 'problems' of the post-war estates largely to the local authority's avowed policy of dispersal rather than congregation of its unsatisfactory applicants and tenants. Most of these studies, however, acknowledge the fact that a local authority can - albeit inadvertently - create a 'problem' estate by designating it to house slum clearance applicants only. The 'problems' of such an estate are variously explained, either directly by the attributed behaviour of such tenants, or indirectly, through the stigma attached to slum clearance families colouring the reputation of the estate and making it in years to come 'low demand' council housing. A number of these studies consider the reputation of a 'council' estate and the effects of this reputation on subsequent mobility patterns. This is linked to a belief in the existence of a natural cultural process of selection, said to take place on all the council estates studied where local authority policy was permissive. Council tenants are seen as having a 'natural' propensity to live with people who they perceive in terms of social status and behaviour as being like themselves. Often the resulting residential groupings follow ~~rational~~ natural physical boundaries within an estate, so that a main road, a different house type, or some other perceived physical demarcation line, contains and separates neighbourhood networks within an estate. Each area establishes its own reputation and character, and so tenants are said to increasingly select themselves accordingly, and reinforce the process by which physical space is used to reflect social distance. One of the main problems with this finding of tenant self-selection is the lack of consensus or clear definition of types of families found on council estates. Each study seems to be using the labels 'rough' and 'respectable' to apply to different family types, and many use further classificatory groups in addition to these two. Morris and Mogey decided to abandon such an attempt at classification because of the difficulties

involved. Hodges and Smith recognise that the label 'rough' or 'respectable' changes its meaning and applicability according to who is applying the label. Nevertheless, the acceptance of some sort of rough-respectable division, either as empirically verifiable classes, or as the methodological tool of the ideal type, is essential for the discussion of either the hypothesis of natural cultural selection or council allocation policy, in terms of segregation and concentration or dispersal.

The 'problem' family appears, however, in both the sociological and criminological literature, as an identifiable and consistent type, whether the term 'pathological minority', 'anti-social', 'socially substandard' or 'socially inadequate' is used. These are the families with whom no one wants to live, and who, it is postulated, will through the process of tenant self-selection become increasingly isolated in physical, as well as social, terms. The new housing estate may be seen as exacerbating the behaviour of these families, but the 'causes' of their life styles and behaviour are most usually explained in terms of a previous immersion in a slum culture which, combined with inadequate personal or family characteristics, make such families unable 'to change their ways' with rehousing. Nevertheless, it may be noted that some of the sociologists, unlike their criminological counterparts in this period, do consider that an estate used solely for slum clearance allocation by a local authority can create a highly stigmatised housing area, which has little to do with the behaviour of the tenants themselves.

3. The Influence of Structural Functionalism

The correctionalist interest that characterised the criminological studies of this period is reflected in the sociological work on council estates which sought stabilising and integrating factors at a time and in places of rapid social change. The influence of structural function-

ism on the sociologists has been noted, and this influence may also be traced in the criminological concern with crime and delinquency in council housing areas. One of the strengths of structural functionalism is its concern with the problem of order in society, and its concern to explain how social order is maintained. The attendant weakness is its neglect of conflict. In postulating a consensual model of society, conflict is deemed pathological and ascribed to deviants. Thus at the level of these small empirical studies conflict on housing estates is attributable to the pathological and deviant minority, whose ways of living must be changed.

Structural functionalism enables sociological study at micro levels and another of its strengths is that it allows society to be broken down into parts for the purposes of analysis, and thus the parts may be examined in relation to the whole. The structural functionalist tradition is, however, basically conservative, and does not challenge the status quo. It is an underlying assumption of this school of thought that everything has a function within the social order. In this way the state and political, ~~and~~ economic and ~~local~~ social order are not subjected to critical analysis. It may be noted that the social policy recommendations in the council estate studies of this period are in no way radical. They are geared to increasing conformity, stability and integration, thus strengthening the social order. Critics of structural functionalism also argue that it is incapable of explaining social change. On a micro level, the sociological studies discussed in this chapter are very concerned with situations brought about by social change, but again the interest is not in explaining change itself, but in seeking ways of directing social change, so that it is functional and unchallenging to social stability. From these studies there is no threat to the social order, no criticism of the society in which 'delinquency areas' and

'problem' estates are a persistent feature of the urban scene, no considerations of deviant life styles as alternative modes of living, and no attempt is made to analyse and relate these urban areas to the political and economic forces that shape them at either a local or at a national level.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. The phrase "crime and delinquency" is used generally as an umbrella term in this chapter to refer to the various aspects of criminality considered by these studies.

2. Hole's work on housing estates is discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

3. See Downes, D.M. (1966) 'The Delinquent Solution.'
Jephcott, P. and Carter, M.P. (1954) 'The Social Background of Delinquency'.
Kerr, M. (1958) 'The People of Ship Street'.
May, J.B. (1954) 'Growing up in the City'.

4. Although Jones (1958) had no data on this; the high residential mobility was merely based on the impressions of housing officials.

5. See Baldwin, J. and Bottoms, A.E. (1976) 'The Urban Criminal', pp.171-175 for details of the testing of Jones' hypothesis against the Sheffield data. In fact, mobility rates appeared more related to age of estate and rents than to high offender rates.

6. Unfortunately, Ferguson does not differentiate between slum clearance estates in his study, so it is not possible to compare them. Other studies do show slum clearance estates with low or declining offender rates. Jones, for example, found such estates in Leicester.

7. Details of the testing of this hypothesis on the Sheffield data is given in 'The Urban Criminal', pp.171-175.

8. Private report to the Carnegie Trust, written by John Mack, referred to by Spencer et al on p.4 of their study. 'Stress and Release in an Urban Estate', (1964).

9. See C. Wright Mills (1959) 'The Sociological Imagination'.

10. See Taylor, I.R., Walton, P. and Young, J. (1973), 'The New Criminology'.

11. See Baldwin and Bottoms op.cit. 'The Urban Criminal', p.177.

12. See Peter Collison (1963) 'The Cutteslowe Walls'. This study shows the extreme reaction of a group of owner-occupiers against the proximity of some council housing. The justification for this reaction given to the author was that this was a slum clearance council estate.

13. This is perhaps not surprising, in view of the fact that in 1955 the sixth report of the Housing Management sub-committee, Unsatisfactory Tenants, was published, which recommended the use of older housing estates for the unsatisfactory tenant, to 'make treatment easier' and to act 'as an incentive'. The studies of this period were mainly concerned with new estates. There is, however, no mention in any of these studies that the local authority might have 'weeded out' the unsatisfactory applicant from new estate allocations and placed them in pre-war property. If this had happened it would mean that new estates housed a fairly high grade of tenant. On Jennings' new estate in Bristol allocations were made to 'problem families'. See page 60 of this chapter.

14. See discussion of Jones (1958) in section 1.3 of this chapter.

15. Baldwin (1974) found some twenty years later on the same estate that only 10.2% of his sample could be graded as having 'rather' or 'very' low domestic standards. Three-quarters of households scored 'high' or 'very high' on their domestic standards, according to his assessment.

16. This is a considerably higher percentage than Baldwin found wanting to leave the estate (see Chapter Three of this thesis).

17. See page 32 of this chapter.

18. With the exception of Bristol, where, according to Jennings, all application types were housed on the new estates.

19. The studies of Baldwin (1974) and Damer (1974) are discussed in Chapter Three.

20. As so few of the studies offer detailed accounts of local authority housing policies and process, this apparent diversity would be impossible to confirm. It would be possible to argue that the differences in local authorities' allocation policies described by these studies are more apparent than real. It may be the differences described say more about the lack of standardisation of small scale empirical research enterprises and differences in the abilities and interests of the researchers than about real differences in local authority housing policies.

CHAPTER 3

Studies of Council Housing and Crime on Council Estates in the late 1960's and 1970's

1.1. Some shared characteristics of the criminological studies

The first interest in criminality on council estates has somewhat subsided in recent years, and subsequently only a few studies specifically concerned with criminality and the 'problems' of the 'difficult' estate have been made. These, however, have a new focus and in some part make up for the serious deficiencies in the earlier work. Armstrong and Wilson in Glasgow; Baldwin in Sheffield; Damer, also in Glasgow and Owen Gill in Liverpool have all tried to understand and describe what life is like for the residents of a 'problem' estate and how the fact of living on such an estate might shape their attitudes and influence their social behaviour. They attempt by a variety of qualitative research methods - participant observation, Damer (1974) and Gill (1977); informal observation and interview, Armstrong and Wilson (1973); questionnaire-based interviews, Baldwin (1972) - to let the residents give their own accounts of the situation. All four studies are, therefore, sensitive to the need for any explanation of social behaviour to be adequate at the level of meaning. They also take into account and utilise various ideas from transactionalist criminology in their analysis of the 'problem' estate. Where the official crime statistics are used to delineate a 'delinquency' or 'high offender rate' area their social construction is acknowledged. The amplificatory role of social control agents and the possibility of secondary deviance is considered. The reputation of the housing area is recognised and the relevance of labelling theory is considered, for an understanding of the effects of a reputation on an estate and on its residents and for an analysis of the way such a reputation is established, maintained and transmitted.

These studies also give a greater consideration to the role of local authority housing departments in the creation of 'problem' estates than did the earlier criminological studies. None of these studies are written with a correctional interest, in the sense of treatment for the individual offenders living on an estate. All, however, make suggestions for improving the 'problem' estate either explicitly or implicitly, by the analysis of the causes of an estate's 'problems'.

1.2. Easterhouse

Armstrong and Wilson discuss the popular explanation for violence on Glasgow's large post-war housing estates, which at the time of their study was in terms of a 'lack of community' and a paucity of social and recreational facilities, but as the authors argue, many middle class housing areas do not have a flourishing community or good social facilities but they do not have juvenile delinquent gangs as a feature of the neighbourhood. Armstrong and Wilson suggest that the local authority can directly create 'problem' estates by operating a selective allocation policy. Following the adverse publicity that Easterhouse suffered :

> "the housing scheme was officially downgraded by the local authority during 1969 to 1970, often a prelude to the utilisation of a housing area as a 'dumping' ground for 'undesirables'". (1973 : 63).

The authors show the importance of the built environment and local demography in structuring the pattern of youth relationships - the specific features of Easterhouse bing the physical division of the estate into four neighbourhoods between which there was little social mixing, and the high proportion of young people in the population. But they argue that the content of the youth behaviour cannot be adequately explained without referring to the subjective definitions

of the situation held by the actors themselves. Using research methods of informal observation and interview, Armstrong and Wilson gave some of the residents of Easterhouse - both gang members and those uninvolved with gang activity - a chance to give their accounts of the effect on them of living on an estate with an infamous reputation. Interviews and conversations with gang members show how the events surrounding the emergence of the reputation of Easterhouse brought about real changes in the conditions of life for these boys. The circumstances surrounding the notoriety of Easterhouse are exceptional[1], but Armstrong and Wilson do suggest one way in which a bad reputation, however acquired, can lead to a further deterioration of a council estate.

They also consider the role of the police in the process by which Easterhouse rose to notoriety, from a fairly typical 'problem' estate to a special case. The over-reaction of the police, as with other agencies of social control, led to a situation of deviancy amplification. However, as Baldwin and Bottoms (1976) argue, the Easterhouse study offers no official statistics of delinquency which could be used to compare Easterhouse with other housing areas, or to assess whether Easterhouse had any rise in officially recorded delinquency over the period involved. They quote Armstrong and Wilson's statement that :

> "official sources have stated that there was no increase in gang activity in the scheme at this time, nor did police officials consider the area one of the worst." (1972 : 75).

Baldwin and Bottoms suggest, on the basis of this, that the social control agents concerned may have been very ineffective labellers, for despite the increased surveillance of the area by the police, and the subsequent antagonism between police and youth, the rate of violence and vandalism may have remained unaffected.

Armstrong and Wilson offer valuable insights into some ways in which a council estate may gain a 'bad' reputation, how this reputation is transmitted and its effects on the lives of the residents. The special circumstances of publicity surrounding Easterhouse do, however, make this a rather exceptional 'problem' estate, and we have no information on what happened to this estate after the publicity died down.

1.3. Wine Alley

Damer's 'dreadful enclosure' in Glasgow might be taken as a more typical Scottish council housing estate, in that it was not subjected to exceptional publicity which had the effect, on Easterhouse, of, among other things, making the estate a focus for political concern. The dreadful enclosure that Damer studied is a small corporation slum clearance housing estate in the Govan area of Glasgow.[2] Wine Alley is a pre-war estate built to house slum clearance families, and Damer says it has the physical appearance of a deteriorating area with damaged and unkept houses and gardens. Damer is aware of the in-built stigma attached to many slum clearance estates, arising not only from the reputation that attaches to the families but also from the physical construction and design of the estate. These slum clearance estates in Scotland, Damer says, were built to provide the rehoused tenants with a bare minimum and the rents were lower than for other estates.

> "Being at the bottom of the league table of public housing had a potential stigmatising effect on these rehousing estates." (Damer, 1974 : 224).

The standard of the estate is a reflection of the reputation which attaches to slum clearance tenants and at the same time the stigma attached to slum clearamce families is transferred to the estate on which they are housed. Damer's study is among the first to recognise

that a disreputable estate may be one from its inception - not through the behaviour of its residents, nor through a lack of community or normative standards, but because the estate itself was built to house a low status section of the city's residents. Not only were the houses built to provide a bare minimum but the new tenants were processed through what Goffman has called a 'mortification ritual' and Garfunkel a 'degredation ceremony'. Damer gives examples of this processing, night raids to find out how many people were living in a dwelling, fumigation of people and belongings and so on.

> "If the tenants had not begun to feel there was something odd about themselves during the move from the slums, they must have become very suspicious in their new houses." (p.226).

The residents of Wine Alley - like all people living in disreputable neighbourhoods, whether in the private or the council sector, suffer not only the structural constraints of a capitalist housing market, they can also suffer from their very reputation in the outside world. Damer is interested in the effects of this reputation on the residents themselves.

Damer traces the history of the estate and its 'awful' reputation to the peculiar local circumstances which surrounded the allocation of the houses to the original tenants. Apart from the fact of the original tenants coming from slum clearance schemes they were from outside the local area and this was bitterly resented by local residents, many of whom were themselves in great need of better housing. A local press campaign whipped up a moral panic about the estate which became a scapegoat for locals in the depression years - within a year Wine Alley had a 'dreadful' reputation. This has persisted because the estate "is and always was a highly circumscribed community in ecological terms." (p.234). There had been little contact between the tenants and

other local residents and relations had been characterised by hostility and antagonism. Despite this, in the early years of the estate the residents were quite satisfied with their new housing. Residents themselves date the decline of the estate to the post-war years, when 'anti-social' families are said to have first started being allocated tenancies on the estate. Damer found that although perjorative comments on Wine Alley were plentiful all were rather vague generalised expressions of disapproval. He found, as did Baldwin (1974) and Hole (1959) that an ecological equilibrium existed on the negatively labelled estate with regard to where the 'riff-raff' lived, that is, everyone thought they lived elsewhere on the estate, and not where they themselves happened to live. The residents of Wine Alley, as individuals, resisted the negative label for themselves but as an aggregate the population of the estate was in collusion with its label, believing that the label applied to others on the estate and retreating from identifying themselves with other residents. Thus residents accepted the negative reputation for the estate on which they lived, but at the same time, managed to evade the label as applying to themselves. This suggests that when the relation between the reputation of an estate and the behaviour of its residents is examined, because the label applies to a collectivity rather than an individual, one of the ideas, at least, embodied in labelling theory is of no use: that is the idea that a negative label is so powerful in its implications for the individual self that the individual comes increasingly to view himself in terms of that label and to be committed to the life style and activities that that label implies. Damer shows that residents of an estate can evade being labelled by the reputation of the area they live in. His initial research was to find out whether the high rates of criminal offenders and juvenile delinquents living on the estate were at least partly the result of a reaction to living on an estate with a 'dreadful' reputation. He concludes, however, that the high indices

of social problems found in Wine Alley, including crime and delinquency, are not the result of secondary deviance.[3]

> "But people can resist labels and do battle with powerful others who try to construct their social reality for them, and gradually most of Glasgow's slum clearance estates settled into being the milieux for the culture of the unskilled or semi-skilled worker and his family ..... Nowadays (the estate) contains more than its fair share of poverty, deserted wives and mothers, juvenile delinquents, unemployment, illness and all the other popular social indicators of 'problem' areas. But these characteristics, ironically enough, still only constitute primary deviance in Glasgow, they are commonplace. (p.226).

Damer does not discuss explicitly the causes of this primary deviance but his description of life in Wine Alley suggests a culture of poverty resulting from the material deprivation of the lives of the residents. The deviant behaviour which is part of this response to deprivation is 'commonplace' in the poorer districts of Glasgow.

> "The behaviour castigated by so many reformers of the period can, I submit, be more usefully seen as the slum-dwellers way of 'making out' under the constraints of an oppressive and intolerable society." (p.242).

Although Damer argues that the residents of Wine Alley have not been propelled by its reputation into secondary deviance, the action of the Corporation as landlord has had the effect on the behaviour of some residents of making them act out a self-fulfilling prophecy.

> "What has happened is a glorious self-fulfilling prophecy. The Corporation had ihitially defined the slum-dwellers as social pariahs, sociopaths, incompetents or the disreputable poor. This was a false definition based ona stereotype of the complex social situation of the slum, but action was taken on this definition and so, as Merton says it ..... evoked a new behaviour which made the originally false conception come true'." (p.230).

Damer is concerned with the effect of an estate being negatively labelled on the subsequent social behaviour of its residents. He does not consider the effect of the reputation of the estate in terms of supply and demand for the houses on the estate within the housing market. The original tenants, he says, were ordinary slum dwellers not especially

selected 'problem' families from this category of council applicant. They had the usual material 'difficulties' associated with unskilled or semi-skilled working class families in Glasgow at this time. The implication from this is that Wine Alley at least started life no differently from other slum clearance pre-war housing estates in Glasgow. Damer does not tell us whether the other estates in this category suffered a similarly 'dreadful' reputation. In the case of Wine Alley, with the persistent high indices of 'social problems' and undesirable reputation, Damer does not consider the idea of a natural cultural process of selection contained in other housing estate studies. He does say, however, that while living on the estate he met many residents who expressed a wish to move elsewhere if the opportunity arose. He does not attempt to define those residents who want to move as different from those who express no such decision, nor does he offer any evidence of residents who especially wanted to live in Wine Alley. The residents themselves apparently blame post-war corporation allocation policies, coupled with general neglect of upkeep and repairs, for the demise of the estate, although from Damer's description the estate appears to have always been one of Glasgow's worst.[4] Although residents believe the Corporation had used Wine Alley in post war years to dump anti-social families, Damer, himself, believes that the Corporation has not in later years operated a selective placement policy for Wine Alley whereby the houses there would be used for 'low grade' applicants and unsatisfactory tenants .

> "Knowing the system in Glasgow Corporation for the allocation of houses I am, in fact, in no doubt that a dumping policy did not occur." (p.236)

Unfortunately, due to the inadequate records kept by the Corporation, Damer could not substantiate this nor find out why people left the estate nor how they were allocated tenancies on it.

Although Damer states that in relation to Wine Alley he did not believe the Corporation was operating a 'dumping' policy in his article, Damer and Madigan (1974), The Housing Investigator he accuses the Corporation of doing just this. He says that the Corporation divided its council housing into eight 'amenity groups' ranked roughly in order of physical attractiveness, desirability to the public and rent. Within this grouping Wine Alley was placed in the least desirable category :

> "many of the poorer corporation estates have become stigmatised, the outcome of a self-fulfilling prophecy set in motion by the Corporation when it created a special category of low amenity housing estates for slum clearance before the war. There is now a tendency for housing visitors, and other officials to scan for 'problem' or 'inadequate' families for these estates. This confirms the expectations of anti-social behaviour in these estates and exacerbates the Corporation's difficulties in keeping them full."
> (p.227).

In this article with Madigan he recommends the minimising of differences between estates and the abolition of grading. Even so he acknowledges that disparity between estates will persist, but at a less extreme level.

> "In an allocation system responsive to individual needs, social differentiation will take place anyway through some form of self-selection, but this would hardly be as rigid as under the present corporation system."
> (p.227).

Damer does not consider the effect of the reputation of Wine Alley on the principal agents of social control - namely the police. He gives no details of police activity on the estate, and does not discuss the possibility that the high rate of crime and delinquency might, in part, be a reflection of particularly vigilant policing as a result of the reputation of the area. In his description of the early years of the estate he describes the continuous presence of a 'formidable array of agents of social control' (p.225) which includes 'the ubiquitous police' (p.226); the self-fulfilling prophecy which he describes, was helped along by, among other things, the constant policing! Damer, is, therefore, concerned primarily with the possible effect that the reputation of the estate may have on the behaviour of its residents. He is not concerned with the effect of the reputation on the housing market within the council sector, and offers no data on this. Nor does he give any official statistics of crime and delinquency pertaining to this estate, so that Wine Alley might be compared in this respect with other council estates in the city. 'Wine Alley' is an appreciative study of one small corporation housing estate in Glasgow, and Damer's final verdict on life on this estate is that

> "Wine Alley gives all the appearance of a fairly ordinary Glasgow manual working class community - a somewhat battered but cheery place to live." (p.237)

1.4. Blackacre

Baldwin also attempts to 'appreciate' life on a 'problem' estate, 'Blackacre', and includes a study of a 'select' estate, 'Whiteacre' for purposes of comparison. His research is a contribution to the Sheffield study on urban social structure and crime. Baldwin's methodology, that of administering a questionnaire to a sample of residents,

on the two estates is perhaps less suited to appreciating what life is like on a 'problem' estate than Armstrong and Wilson's methods of informal observation and interview, and Damer's use of participant observation, but Baldwin does state that his research is only to be considered as 'exploratory'.

The two Sheffield council estates, called by Baldwin Blackacre and Whiteacre, were both built pre-war and are very similar in terms of rent levels and house sizes, but greatly differ in terms of the officially recorded rate of offender residence. Baldwin notes first the stark contrast in the physical appearance and upkeep of the two estates, and the fact that officials such as the police and social workers are well aware of the contrast between the two estates, both in terms of physical appearance and indices of 'social problems'. Although Baldwin found a higher incidence of children on the high offender rate estate (Blackacre) he points out that if adult offenders only are considered, the rate on Blackacre is over forty times higher for the three years in question than on the low offender rate estate (Whiteacre). Baldwin found, unlike other council estate researchers, with the exception of Bagley, offenders were not confined to small localised areas within the estate, but were fairly well scattered throughout it.[5]

He suggests that this finding is consistent with the 'Wilson hypothesis' in that the tone of this pre-war 'problem' estate is firmly established.

Baldwin found no evidence to support Jones' hypothesis that high delinquency estates were areas of high residential mobility, characterised by social disorganisation, where local community control was lacking. Blackacre had as stable a population as Whiteacre. Although he found no significant difference in mobility rates between

the two estates, that is, in the supply of houses falling vacant for re-letting, he is not able to give details of the demand for the two estates and, therefore, we do not know who accepts a tenancy on Blackacre and their reasons for doing so.

A somewhat surprising finding of Baldwin's is, perhaps, that 71.4% of respondents in the Blackacre sample said they liked living on the estate. This is difficult to compare with the findings of Armstrong and Wilson, Damer and Gill because of the differences in methodology, but certainly the impression gained from the study of these three 'problem' estates is that a majority of the residents are unhappy with their estate and would like to leave if they could.[6] Only 37.5% of the Blackacre respondents said they had at some time wanted to leave the estate, but of these 52,(40%) had taken no positive action to leave. Baldwin found only 17% to be seriously unhappy about having to live on the estate. When asked about the problems associated with living on Blackacre, 45.5% of the sample could name no particular problem and 63.3% saw the estate as being no better or worse than other Sheffield estates. Although residents generally appeared aware of the 'bad' reputation of Blackacre the majority dismissed this as unjustified. The responses on the question of whether the number of people living on the estate 'getting into trouble with the law' had increased, decreased or stayed about the same in the last few years, showed many respondents on Blackacre gave replies in conflict with "reality", as measured by the official statistics. Only 17% thought the number had increased. Baldwin found, as Damer had, that an ecological equilibrium existed on the estate, and although people varied in their acceptance of the validity of the reputation of their estate, those who accepted the reputation was in some way justified believed it

could only be justly applied to others living elsewhere on the estate. Baldwin offers a tentative explanation for this, suggesting that most residents could not fail to be aware of the negative reputation of the estate but their responses were attempts to shield themselves from this. Additionally, people they knew on the estate or members of their family who have criminal convictions are in some way seen as not really criminals. Baldwin quotes Morris in The Social Tolerance of Crime, - "crime is in the last analysis what the other person does" (T.P. Morris (1966) p.33).

Baldwin also asked questions concerning residents' perceptions of police activity and interest in the estate. The responses are generally at variance with certain central tenets of the 'transactionalist' criminologists who see police law enforcement procedures as of crucial importance in an explanation of official offender rates of an area. Similarly, only 6.3% of the respondents on Blackacre thought the people on the estate 'got on badly' or 'not very well' with the police.[7] The residents' attitudes to the Corporation as landlord were very different, over two-thirds of the Blackacre sample raised complaints of varying degrees of seriousness, compared to only 28% on Whiteacre. Related to this, many Blackacre tenants expressed a dissatisfaction with recreational facilities provided on the estate.

The conclusion of Baldwin is that :

> "very few respondents perceived the problem of criminality among Blackacre residents as being at all relevant to their own situation. Nor could the estate, which is an area of very high delinquency, be seen as constituting an area of social disorganisation in the Chicagoan sense. The concept of a deviant or delinquent subculture as well as the accounts of arbitrary law enforcement practices by the police, both currently fashionable among certain groups of sociologists, were also found to be inapplicable

> to the situation which obtained on Blackacre. Contrary to such theories, it emerged very clearly from the interviews, that the great majority of Blackacre residents were on the whole satisfied with life on the estate, though they had many complaints particularly about the attention they received from public authorities." (p.345).

Although Baldwin's study of Blackacre led the authors of 'The Urban Criminal' to argue that the local authority could not be charged with the deliberate segregation and 'dumping' of 'problem' tenants on this estate, or rather the authority was limited in the extent to which it could enforce such a policy, Baldwin believes that by allowing the physical decay of an estate such as Blackacre they are colluding in a process whereby tenants could increasingly select themselves for this estate as the "Wilson hypothesis" suggests. This in turn leads to an 'isolated and decaying' subculture (p.346) and so the demise of an estate takes on the processes of a 'vicious circle'. The existence of a delinquent subculture is denied by Baldwin but the possibility of an areal subculture emerging out of isolation and deprivation is considered by him. Blackacre, then, is a 'problem' estate in criminological terms, having a high offender rate, although relations with the police, from Baldwin's survey, do not seem strained as they have been found to be on other 'problem' estates, such as Luke Street, which is discussed below. On Easterhouse the strained relations between police and residents appeared to be confined to the special force which was brought into the estate from outside the area. Poor police public relations in the existing council estate literature would generally appear not to be a problem of council housing areas however disreputable.[8]

In sociological terms, however, Blackacre does not appear to be a 'problem' estate with the exception of the physically decaying environment.

> "It would seem that the aspects of life on Blackacre viewed as problematic by the residents are not much different from what one would expect from the residents of most other estates."
> (p.345).

It is interesting to compare the high degree of satisfaction with the estate expressed by residents to Baldwin with the findings on other 'problem' estates discussed in the next section. Baldwin does not consider the origins of Blackacre nor attempt to trace its reputation historically. We do know, however, from an earlier study of the same estate, made by Hodges and Smith (1954) that Blackacre was originally a slum clearance council estate, and from the first suffered from the stigma attached to this type of council tenant. It is not within the scope of Baldwin's study to consider the relationship between the estate's reputation and subsequent letting patterns, but he does argue that his findings are consistent with the idea of a natural cultural process of selection and that unless the local authority intervenes and improves the physical condition of Blackacre it will fall further into disrepute and tenancies will increasingly only be accepted on this estate by the 'less respectable' family who can identify with the estate and its residents.

Baldwin states that his study of Blackacre is intended as an appreciative account of what it is like to live in a delinquency area or on a 'problem' housing estate. The methodology employed by Baldwin is perhaps restrictive, in that interactions with subjects are somewhat formalised and cursory in the questionnaire situation. The methodology also limits the scope of such a study to explain why this housing area should have such high levels of officially recorded crime and delinquency. Nonetheless, the Blackacre study does throw up some interesting ideas, in particular the high percentage of respondents who liked living on the estate warns us against assuming too readily

that a 'problem' estate is necessarily problematic to its residents. The study also shows that the term 'problem' means different things to different people. Blackacre may thus be a problem to the Housing Department in terms of arrears levels, and to the police in terms of delinquency and crime levels, but for the residents themselves the 'problem' of Blackacre is overwhelmingly the Corporation's neglect of the upkeep of the estate and repairs to the houses.

1.5. Luke Street

Owen Gill assumed the role of a participant observer to give a qualitative account of life in one council-owned highly delinquent area, Luke Street. He supplements this account with a fairly detailed historical analysis of local authority housing policy in relation to the area. Gill also uses the Council's housing files and the official offender statistics for the area, which may be read in conjunction with his own account of the local boys' involvement in delinquent activities. Although his study is only of one small council estate his methodology for this study really meets all the criticisms made of earlier criminological work into council-owned delinquency areas. Thus the recorded information of official agencies is balanced against an attempt to appreciate the lives of the subjects themselves, and to consider the policing of the area.

Luke Street is a pre-war estate which started life as a fairly respectable housing area, and which declined both in reputation and reality in the 1950's and 1960's. Gill dates its period of decline to the post-war years, when a higher proportion of the houses was falling vacant due to the age structure of the original population, and the fact that the second generation of these families were lured away from the area by the higher standard post-war council housing. The vacancies were filled in the 1950's and 1960's by the Corporation operating a 'dumping' policy - allocating the houses on the estate to

to the lowest grade of applicant. For this purpose Luke Street was perhaps particularly suitable as it has a disproportionate percentage of large houses and the majority of 'low grade' applicants have large familes and low incomes.[9]

As Gill points out :

> "The family that can't afford to maintain standards is regarded as the family that doesn't care about standards." (p.8)

Luke Street is also a geographically isolated area, cut off from other housing by roads, docks and a railway line. As Gill shows, such geographical isolation encourages the formation of areal reputations.

> "The more powerful the barriers are between the neighbourhood and the wider community the stronger the externally imposed identity or reputation of that neighbourhood is likely to be. The barriers can be either physical or social in nature." (p.57).

Luke Street had natural physical barriers, but Gill argues, as a result of local authority housing allocation policies the barriers also become social and the two were naturally re-inforcing.

> "The hierarchy of desirability in terms of types of residential location is the product of both the physical conditions of the housing in different areas and the social characteristics that these areas are perceived as having." (p.6).

Local authority housing policy in the context of the wider housing market re-inforces existing inequalities in society by allocating the least desirable of the council housing stock to the poorest tenants. As seen by Wilson more than a decade earlier, Gill recognises that it is the wide variety of housing stock owned by a local authority and let at differential rents, coupled with the subsequent reputations of these estates that determines demand. In the competitive struggle for housing which Gill argues is as unfettered in the public sector as it is in the private, the losers - those

according to Gill, who are graded low by the authority on financial or domestic criteria - are awarded the houses in least demand. Thus it is the local authority which must bear the responsibility for the differential social status of its estates, both through its type and maintenance of housing stock and through its allocation policies.

> "'Good' property is offered to 'good' families and the 'bad' property to 'bad' families. Just as accommodation is categorised into a hierarchy of desirability so also are applicants categorised into a hierarchy of respectability." (p.7).

Gill suggests that this housing policy is not confined to the local authority responsible for Luke Street. He says there is,

> "some empirical evidence and a great deal of anecdotal evidence " (p.5)

to suggest this selective allocation process, grading estates and tenants and matching accordingly, is more widespread than is often suggested.

Gill does insist that he is not arguing that the families on Luke Street were wrongly graded by the housing department, many of the families who were housed on the estate in the 1950's and 1960's, he says were from slum clearance areas and often had difficulties related to large families and low incomes. He accepts that amongst council tenants there are some who can be called 'problem' families and that these families can be found concentrated in such areas as Luke Street. He argues, however, that these are families which have problems and should be seen in this way, rather than families who are problems to other people. He relates the difficulties experienced by the 'problem' family to their socio-economic conditions such as large families, low incomes, irregular employment, bad health and so on. Residence in Luke Street simply exacerbated their problems and for the young exacerbated their involvement in delinquency.

He produces some interesting data on dates of first residence

in Luke Street compared with dates of first known offence. Of the twenty-six Luke Street people with criminal convictions who were born before 1945 only ten had been convicted of an offence prior to their arrival, and yet the majority of these people were adults when they arrvied in Luke Street.

The actions of social control agents are given a secondary role in the genesis of this 'problem' estate.

> "The definitions and actions of the 'trouble workers' may if not actually initiate delinquent behaviour then certainly exacerbate it - in doing so they play a key role in creating the delinquent area." (p.13).

Gill's analysis would seem to support the idea of secondary deviance as defined by Lemert. The young of Luke Street to some extent internalised the stereotype of them held by outsiders and so there grew up a tradition of 'adolescent wildness'. (p.20).

> "The extreme stereotype was not only the result of 'official' delinquent activity in the neighbourhood but also played a part in the production of such behaviour." (p.62).

He argues that besides the general economic, educational, recreational and employment deprivations suffered by this social class throughout society, these families suffered the specific local circumstances of the reputation of the neighbourhood and externally imposed stereotypes, and a tradition within the area of 'adolescent wildness'.
In relation to delinquency he also considers the necessarily public nature of the lives of the adolescents living in this area, which makes them more 'visible' to outside society and thus more vulnerable to police surveillance.

In this context, Gill argues, current social work practice is doomed to failure and he is very critical of the tendency to individualise what are essentially social problems and make policy recommendations accordingly.[10] Social workers and their ilk tend to

explain delinquency areas in terms of a 'lack of community' and a 'lack of a decent family environment', rather than the 'whole complex of disadvantages' (p.72) suffered by such a group of people as the residents of Luke Street.

> "The difficulties which were intimately linked with the processes affecting the residential group as a whole, were individualised and thus discounted. ... It is necessary to change our emphasis from the individual and to counteract the processes that are involved in the creation of the delinquent area." (p.187).

Gill's social policy recommendations are directed at local authority housing policy :-

> "The first implication of the present study is, therefore, to stress the dangers of a high level of child density." (p.187)

Secondly, Gill argues against a housing policy that is in the interests of the most advantaged tenantsand relegates the disadvantaged to the 'bad' property, thus forcing specific areas into a 'dramatic decline' (p.188). Although he recognises that allowing a freedom of choice in housing areas encourages the natural cultural process of selection by allowing the most powerfully placed in the council house market the best houses and thus creating the problem of the low demand estate, he argues that housing departments are in a position to :

> "regulate the rigid and extreme dichotomy between housing areas and thus avoid for individual neighbourhoods the headlong spiral into decline." (p.189).

Although Gill is concerned with social policy recommendations at their local level he is not unaware of the wider political-economic context of housing.

> "Sensitive allocation policies have their uses, but in the end they are partially neutralised by the more basic arrangements of power in society. Techniques of intervention are not enough to counteract the delinquent area." (p.189).

Like the other studies considered in this section, Gill also makes social policy recommendations to prevent the growth of delinquency areas. He justifies this interest by taking the human misery of living in such an area as non-problematic. In fact, Luke Street does not come over as well as Wine Alley - 'a somewhat battered but cheery place to live in', nor does he record any degree of the satisfaction that Baldwin found among Blackacre residents. Luke Street is a place of the last resort, and the impression gained from Gill's data, gathered as a participant observer is that, if given the choice, no one would want to live there. Similarly, his account of police activity on the estate is at variance with the responses Baldwin elicited from residents of Blackacre. The role of the police in amplifying delinquency in Luke Street may not be generalisable to other 'problem' estates but be part of the peculiar local situation of this small estate.[11]

Luke Street, it has already been said, is depicted by Gill as a 'dumping' ground for the council's most unsatisfactory applicants and tenants and a place of the last resort for those in great housing need. In the composition of Luke Street, Gill places more emphasis on families who have accepted tenancies there through compulsion by the local authority than those who have accepted through the compulsion of their great need for housing. In effect, Gill would appear to equate 'low grade' families according to the local authority classficatory system with those in the greatest need of housing. Undoubtedly the two often coincide but it is possible to imagine families in great housing need who would not be given the lowest allocation grade and would not, therefore, be restricted by the authority to Luke Street accommodation. Similarly, one can imagine some families who could wait some time for an acceptable offer of housing, but who would only be offered a

Luke Street dwelling as a result of a low classificatory grade from the housing visitor.

To give his hypothesis a sounder base Gill might well have explained in more detail the mechanisms by which the local authority 'forces' the low grade family to accept an offer on Luke Street. Are they, for example, only made one offer without reference to their choice of area, or can they elect to wait for the area of their choice? Similarly, we are not told of the specific policy held on different types of applicant, that is, if the same allocation rules apply to slum clearance and waiting list applicants. Gill says the majority of incoming tenants to Luke Street were from slum clearance areas and so we have to assume either that such families are in the greatest housing need, or that they have lower living standards than waiting list applicants, or perhaps that they have less bargaining power in the council housing market.

Gill's account of housing allocation policy, vis-a-vis Luke Street, is certainly more detailed and informative than any to be found elsewhere in the criminological literature on council house estates, but it does leave the reader wondering what the general allocation policy of the local authority is, and how other delinquency areas fit into this scheme of things. Gill does not examine the allocation policy for any other council owned delinquency areas in other parts of the same city that might be considered more typical insofar as they are larger, house more people, and contribute a larger proportion of the known offenders to the city's crime statistics.

1.6. In conclusion

All four estates discussed in this section were either built originally to house slum clearance tenants or have been used in later

years for slum clearance entrants to the council sector of housing. The ubiquitous stigma attaching to this type of applicant and estate built to house them is again apparent, but although the stigma appears real we are no nearer knowing if slum clearance families typically display behaviour patterns which create such a stigma or whether they contribute a disproportionate number of offenders to the criminality of an area. Nor have the processes by which the stigma of a slum clearance estate influences the fate of that estate through subsequent demand and letting patterns been examined.

These studies are divided in the importance they attach to local authority allocation policy in the creation of a 'problem' estate. Armstrong and Wilson and Gill argue that local authorities do operate selective allocation policies which seal the fate of an estate's future. Baldwin believes they are severely limited in the extent to which they can do this and Damer argues that in the case of Wine Alley the housing department did not operate such a policy, although elsewhere he argues that Glasgow Corporation does operate a highly selective allocation policy. These differences may be due to the studies being made of estates under the control of different local authorities - but Gill argues the process he has uncovered is fairly uniform throughout the country. Armstrong and Wilson and Damer do not consider the 'Wilson hypothesis'. Baldwin argues that his findings are consistent with the hypothesis and Gill's evidence suggests that at least part of this hypothesis is wrong - respectables may move away from a 'problem' estate but no one goes to live there by choice.

> "Thus the 'respectable' families may certainly wish to group themselves together but I do not accept that those classified as being of 'low' standard constantly seek out others who are facing similar difficulties. The suggestion comes dangerously close to a belief that 'they choose to be like that' and that their problems are of their own choosing."
> (1977 : 188).

Damer and Baldwin can offer no evidence for the agents of social control having an amplificatory effect on crime and delinquency in a problem area. Amrstrong and Wilson present extremely impressive evidence for this, but at the same time the events that took place on Easterhouse at the time of their study were quite exceptional. Only Gill argues that on his 'problem' estate social control agents, in particular, the police, had an important if secondary role in the genesis of the 'problem' estate.

In the introduction to this section I indicated that these studies could be considered as more than a chronological group, that they shared some methodological interests, in as much as they all pay some tribute to the phenomenological contributions to sociology and criminology;[12] that they take account of transactionalist ideas in their analysis of 'problem' estates and that their correctional interest lies in the improvement of estates, not people's behaviour patterns. Although the empirical details of the estates do vary, there is a general recognition that it is the disparate nature of a local authority's housing stock which is let at differential rents that makes a natural cultural process of selection possible, or a selective allocation policy operable, and, at the same time, the disparity in stock may be used as a rationale for such a policy.

Local authorities, whether by direct allocation policies, or by neglecting pre-war estates and building 'undesirable' modern ones, have, for the first time in criminological literature, been given at least part of the responsibility for the creation of a 'delinquent' or 'criminal' area.

2.1. The critics of council housing

Every city has its 'gold coast' and its 'slums', but until recent years British sociologists have identified the slums as those inner city areas of privately rented housing known as 'twilight' zones or 'defeated neighbourhoods', where the 'lumpen-proletariat' or 'disreputable poor' reside. The studies considered in this section are innovatory, in that for the first time certain types of local authority housing estates are seen as the new slums of the English city. Thus we have a literature replete with such terms as 'council ghetto', 'council dump' and 'sink estate'. Such labels are not confined to the old housing of p re-war estates that Kirkby (1971) saw as taking on "the appearance of a twilight zone", (p.251), rather the large post-war complexes are just as commonly associated with slum housing. The popular press and the other media have continually picked up the theme of the high rise block as the 'problem' estate, and highlighted the faulty construction and physical deterioration of these as well as the social problems associated with residence on such estates. The studies discussed in this section see the squalid corners of council housing as the creation of the local authority housing department, reinforced by some variants of the natural cultural process of selection.

The studies of council housing considered in this section are, in chronological terms, a group, but they also share a different commitment and concern that sets them apart from previous sociological studies of council housing. No longer are local authority 'problem' estates seen as solely attributable to the behaviour of slum clearance tenants, or to a minority of pathological familes. Nor are they seen

as a result of a deviant subculture, or alternatively attributed to a loss of community and consequent normative standards. The emphasis changed from seeing such estates as the end product of a process of selection and segregation initiated by the tenants themselves to the deliberate creations of local authority housing departments, both in terms of the initial building of a disparate stock and the perpetuating of disparity by selective neglect of certain estates, and also through allocation policies which favoured the segregation of the unsatisfactory tenants into substandard and unpopular housing.[13] The importance of the reputation of a housing area and subsequent demand and letting patterns also become a focus of concern.

The wider political issues of council housing also come within the scope of some of these studies. The idea of council housing as an indisputable victory for the working classes in twentieth century Britain is increasingly called into question. Council tenants are seen as victims rather than victors in the 'new' welfare society. Questions concerning the purposes and priorities of council housing are raised, along with related issues of management policy. Methods of research are typically interviewing, combined with the community involvement of housing organisations, such as Shelter and research agencies such as the Community Development Project.

The focus of concern is principally in terms of finding out how 'problem' estates develop, who gets housed on these least favoured of a city's estates, and how such housing affects the lives of the residents.

2.2. James Tucker and the role of the Local Authority in the creation of 'problem' estates

James Tucker (1966) may be seen as the forerunner of this era of council estate research. Collecting his evidence from a number of

large British cities he argues that the local authority housing department, working within the wider socio-economic system of our society, not only permits social segregation initiated by the tenants themselves, but, in fact, plays the principal role in starting this process moving. He argues that there is a high degree of uniformity amongst the local authorities in their allocation policies.

> "Most big councils have apparatus to prevent what they regard as undue social mixing on their estates. Segregation is a science. The object, by and large, is to make sure that like lives next door to like; or, at least, not violently unlike." (p.50).

He supports this statement by quotations from a number of housing officials throughout the country, including Plymouth, Birmingham, Wigan, Newcastle, Bristol and Exeter. Although Tucker does not comment on these studies, it is interesting that in the case of the latter two, Bristol and Exeter, Jennings (1962) and Bagley (1963), report housing department policy as being dispersal rather than congregation of social types. Tucker also shows that the housing departments operate their selective segregationalist policy at the level of transfers.

Tucker does not, however, seek to deny that a natural cultural process of selection also contributes to the disparity between council estates. He offers evidence of 'respectable' families refusing offers of housing on 'problem' estates, and moving away from estates with a declining social status. He describes a bitter social division between council tenants:

> "on the council side the tenants carry on their own interminable class enmities." (p.55).

The residents of a 'problem' estate, he argues, suffer not only the acrimony of other housing classes, but they are also the target of similar sentiments expressed by the housing department itself and by other council tenants who have the credentials for a decent council house and who feel that the tenants of a 'problem' estate cast a stigma on all council tenants.

Tucker argues that disreputable estates are largely the result of local authorities pursuing segregationalist housing allocation policies, whereby 'low graded' and 'high graded' applicants and tenants are housed on separate estates.

> "I have an idea that it is because so many councils avoid mixing that some estates have acquired apparently unchangeably dim reputations." (p.55).

He acknowledges the role of rents in the formation of 'select' and 'problem' estates :

> "As they are at present managed, rents make mixing difficult." (p.55). 14

He quotes the Sheffield Housing Manager :

> "By and large people go to the estates they can afford. Some people opt for high rented property, but we talk to them and advise them to go into pre-war houses." (p.55).

Tucker argues that such a differential rent scheme means :

> "Badly off families may find themselves grouped in disgraceful municipal slum houses, with no prospect of getting out." (p.55).

Tucker's concentration on the role of housing department allocation policy in the creation of 'problem' and 'select'estates is only tenable if local authorities grade estates as well as tenants and allocate accordingly. Otherwise his analysis leaves unexplained the differentials between low rent estates and the existence of the 'problem' high rent estate. Similarly, within the explanatory framework of

allocation policy, Tucker is unable to explain the divisions that occur within an estate, divisions which, in Tucker's experience, the local authorities deny knowledge of.

> "there has mysteriously developed between the two parts this confrontation of snootiness and underdog resentment." (p.62).

On both the estates that Tucker makes a special study of he found people attempting to dissociate themselves from their neighbours for reasons which are 'slim, historical or non-existent'. (p.63).

Finally he is forced to accept the opinion of a probation officer, "Like seeks out like". (p.71). Tucker, therefore, accepts the hypothesis of a natural cultural process of selection as a secondary process in the genesis of 'select' and 'problem' housing estates: in fact in the case of the 'mysteriously' split estate which was comprised of entirely post-war housing, Tucker accepts this process as primary, as he could trace no allocation policy 'acknowledged or sly' (p.71) housing according to social grading. He is pessimistic for the future of old estates with deeply entrenched reputations, where self-selection of tenants has already taken place:

> "On old estates where dark reputations created years ago still shadow the streets, and where whole areas may be explicitly lower esteemed by officials the divisions are possibly too deep to do much about." (p.73).

2.3. James Tucker and the problem family and the non-conforming subculture

Tucker argues for the housing together of families of a variety of different domestic standards, and he includes problem families in this suggested scheme of allocation. There should be a dispersal of like and a congregation of unlike.

Tucker makes a distinction between the 'problem' family and the ordinary 'rough' working class. It is the congregation of problem

families on an estate or part of an estate which, he argues, indelibly imprints the character and reputation of that estate. Local authority housing departments allow 'problem' families to congregate out of expediency,

> "If a problem family is put into an ordinary street on an estate there is a good possibility that the people next door will try to move away. The council will then have difficulty in reletting except to other problem families."
> (p.122).

Tucker argues for the dispersal of 'problem' families throughout the council housing stock of a city. He particularly advocates housing them on new estates, even if these families have low incomes and the rents are high. He argues the better standard of housing would increase their morale and 'respectable' neighbours would find them less threatening, as the physical condition of the estate would give them a security of status not possible on an old rundown estate. The congregation of 'problem' families on 'rundown' estates, he argues, not only exacerbates their problems but perpetuates these and the consequent style of life with the next generation.

> "failure becomes the norm; and this is the environment in which children in large numbers are brought up and educated."
> (p.128).

Tucker suggests, then, that a deviant subculture may take root in an area of deprived and disadvantaged families.

2.4. James Tucker and slum clearance estates

In his consideration of the original factors which stigmatise an estate and set it on the path of decline, Tucker notes that one such factor can be the designation of an estate for slum clearance tenants. He quotes Jevans and Madge (1946) on an estate built in the 1930's to house 'families from the oldest and worst slum areas'.

> "The sense of loneliness and neglect was reflected during this period in acts of adolescent hooliganism and crime which won for the district the bad name from which it still suffers. The stigma of this reputation has left a lasting impression on the tenants, and has undoubtedly prejudiced people's willingness to move there." (Quoted by Tucker 1966, p.74).

The Bristol Housing Manager concerned with this particular estate states the department's policy is to encourage transfers to this estate but applicants and tenants were reluctant to accept houses there. Tucker argues that in such circumstances the department needs to introduce an element of compulsion to enforce social mixing, that is the housing together of families irrespective of their income, domestic standards, way of life or of their application type, whether they are slum clearance entrants or have to be housed from the waiting list.

He describes the "inveterate class contempt for slum clearance families" which is "virtually inevitable among other local authority tenants". He reports that "time on the waiting list is frequently spoken of as a pedigree." (p.77). Thus, for Tucker, whatever the reality of the behaviour and life styles of the slum clearance tenant their stigma is such that class divisions between estates are often based on the reputation of the type of applicant for which the estate was built. Patterns of demand are influenced by an estate's original status,and subsequent local authority allocation policies, re-inforced by the tenants self-selection processes, can make the reputed social character of an estate a reality.

2.5. James Tuckers social policy recommendations

Tucker recommends that local authorities should adopt a policy of social mixing.

> "There should be all sorts next door to all sorts, not like next door to like. People would have a range of neighbours - instead of a grade of neighbour ... Mixing should be as much a skill as segregation is at present."
> (p.55).

In the balance between freedom and equality within the council sector Tucker comes down firmly on the side of equality - equalising the estates and equalising people's housing chances within the council sector. The price to be paid is the freedom of choice at present allowed to the majority of applicants and tenants, but Tucker does not acknowledge this. Nor does he discuss the mechanisms of compulsion necessary to enforce the ideal of social mixing. While acknowledging the difficulties inherent in pursuing such a policy he offers no solutions.

> "To work deliberately for a mixing of social levels on an estate might lead to unpopularity since there could be objections from 'high' and 'low' grade families if they were offered houses away from what they deem their peers. That ought to be faced."
> (p.73).

Tucker's solution to the problem of disparity within the council housing sector is for local authorities to enforce a social mixing policy. Tenants over the full range of domestic standards and income levels should be housed next door to each other on estates. This would necessitate retaining a 'grading' scheme for applicants and tenants, but using it for an entirely different end - dispersal rather than congregation of family types and income groups. This solution cannot be, however, a final one, for all the evidence, as Tucker admits, suggests that such an allocation policy would be very unpopular with the majority of tenants. Tucker says this ought to be faced, but he offers no suggestions as to how opposition to an autocratic allocation system from the tenants themselves could be overcome.

The value of Tucker's contribution to council estate research is firstly through his very thorough appraisal of the multiplicity of factors which lead to the creation of 'problem' estates. He considers the role of the local authority, in pursuing segregationalist housing allocation policies, and by allowing a natural cultural process of selection, to be the principal factor in the creation of estate differentials. He is aware also of the physical disparity between estates built to different standards, of differing design, in a variety of urban locations and the accompanying differences in rents. Tucker considers the origins of stigmatised estates and the effect reputations have on the future social composition of an estate. He suggests that children born and brought up on an estate which house disproportionately large numbers of problem families may be unable to break out of the cycle of deprivation. He recognises that stigmatic reputation, once established, may well persist after the original causes have disappeared.

A second strength of Tucker's work should also be mentioned. His study is not restricted to one or two estates, or even to one local authority. His analysis of the problems of council housing sweeps the country, and his evidence being collected from a number of different towns and cities must give strength to his analysis and explanation of council estate differences. He offers the widest possible accounts of council housing from tenants all over the country, from owner-occupiers 'affected' by council building in their locality, from housing officials, councillors, politicians and social workers. Additionally, he draws on many documentary sources. Unfortunately, he offers no details of his methodology that enabled him to carry out such widespread interviews of council tenants, and no information on how he was able to ascertain the housing policies of so many local authority housing departments.

3.1. The problem estate as a slum

Following Tucker, there have been a number of studies published in recent years that re-inforce Tucker's finding that good housing management policy for a local authority is considered to be the housing of 'good' families in good property and 'bad' families in the worst stock. Local authorities are charged with allowing the natural cultural process of selection to take place out of expediency. They are also alleged to reserve 'bad' housing for the unsatisfactory tenant, and to justify such a policy in terms of administrative convenience or an 'incentive to higher standards'. The studies discussed in the remainder of this chapter, principally the work of Kirkby (1971), Ward (1974), the Shelter organisation and CDP, all argue against such rationalisations of a 'dumping' policy. In practice, they demonstrate that mobility from a 'problem' estate is so restricted through transfer policies and through the lack of demand for such estates among other tenants making exchanges unlikely, that housing in such areas becomes permanent for such tenants. It cannot, therefore, act as an incentive for better standards if the competitors know the prize is illusory. The result is a depressed and often physically decaying area housing disadvantaged families - the council slum, where the deprivations such families and their children suffer as a result of their socio-economic position in the wider society, are compounded at a local level.

Problem estates are seen by these writers to be characterised by high levels of tenant dissatisfaction, high indices of social problems such as crime, delinquency and child neglect, and so typically house a high proportion of residents in receipt of some social welfare service. These are the depressed, unpopular council housing areas, some of these are badly run-down old pre-war estates, others are

post-war flat complexes which have been unpopular since first lettings. Lambert, for example, discusses such post-war estates which he argues are 'destined to become the albatross of housing managers in years to come'. (p.219). Meanwhile, as he points out, 'they must be let to those who must rent' (p.219). Similarly, Noble Street and Norwich Place, the subject of a CDP report, discussed below, were described by a writer in 'Labour Weekly' as 'a slum before the first tenants moved in. Slums start on the drawing board' (Labour Weekly, 19.1.1973, quoted in Noble Street and Norwich Place, p.8).

3.2. The disparate housing stock

Not all pre-war estates constitute slums, a fact recognised by Kirkby in his description of pre-war estates.

> "Inter-war council housing some 30-50 years later can be seen to vary between those housing estates which constitute a pleasant residential environment as can be found in the private sector to council housing which has taken on the appearance of a twilight zone." (p.251).

The Shelter Report (1975) relates the present day conditions of the pre-war estates to the purposes for which they were originally built - the application types they were designed to house - which determined their original design and the quality of the materials used. The original status of a council estate and its standards of construction and design set the patterns of popularity and demand for houses on the estate and so determine housing department allocation policies for the estate.

> "Some estates built in the early 1920's benefitted from generous subsidies and were let at high rents to the skilled artisan class. Tenancies on these estates are still sought after." (p.11)

Similarly, the Report recognises that some estates built for slum clearance tenants in the 1930's were of a lower standard of

construction and design and this coupled with the iniquitous stigma of slum clearance families has set a pattern of low demand and use by the local authority for housing 'problem' families.

3.3. Other factors contributing to the decline of an estate

The original building, design and letting of a council estate, can then, stigmatise it from its early years. Shelter particularly comments on the stigma of slum clearance estates in this respect. But an estate can start its life 'respectably' and decline in later years. This may be due to the council's neglect of repairs and the consequent lure of more modern post-war housing creating excessive vacancies. Also, Shelter suggests that other factors encouraging excessive vacancies, such as the age structure of the population of an estate, may start it on the downward path.

> "Feelings that an estate is deteriorating are often bound up with the arrival of a number of new families with children .... and the arrival of a younger generation of families is seen as a problem." (p.29).

The possible causes of decline, then, are various, but once an estate loses its popularity and demand the local authority often accelerate the process of decline by allowing estates to become over-populated by young families.

3.4. Allocation policies, physical neglect and tenants' self-selection in the creation of the council slum

The Shelter Report argues that 'problem' estates are largely a result of low demand for substandard housing areas of undesirable repute, coupled with the use of this stock by the local authority for the 'dumping' of unsatisfactory tenants and 'low grade' applicants.

> "It is completely unacceptable that people should be forced to live in local authority housing no one else would accept, as a punishment for past misdemeanors in other council housing (such as non-payment of rent) or being judged a likely 'problem' tenant."
> (p.13).

The Report also suggests, as Damer and Baldwin do, that,

> "Inadequate maintenance of houses and upkeep of the environment can be a major factor in leading to the decline in an area."
> (p.14).

Local authorities are seen as responsible for the creation of 'problem' estates through allocation policy and also through building unattractive estates and allowing attractive ones to decline.

> "The physical causes of deterioration are re-inforced by the way Local Authorities allocate their stock. It is considered bad management practice to house 'good tenants' in old stock and more particularly to give a family likely to be unsatisfactory tenants a house in a good modern estate."
> (p.16).

Kirkby (1971) too, makes this point :

> "The lower standard inter-war dwelling can be used, and frequently are being used, to house problem families and those unable or unwilling to pay the higher rents of a more modern house, or to keep a new one in good condition .... Residential decay is clearly linked with the esteem in which the property is held by both the tenant and the landlord, and it would seem that in part this is related, directly or indirectly, to the standard of accommodation which the dwelling affords." (p 264)

Petra Griffiths, the author of the Shelter Report, argues that in this way local authorities create ghettos of 'bad tenants', in the worst accommodation. She believes that the 'segregating' and 'dumping' of 'problem' families is a policy common to most local authorities. She quotes Owen Gill with approval;

> "Allocation policies have played a direct and crucial part in bringing about what was perceived locally as the decline of the neighbourhood ... There is no need to go through the files of every housing department to know that the same process is at work all over the country."
> (p.28).

Similarly Colin Ward (1974) quotes Tom Woolley from Scotland :

"Every town has similar council housing estates where the poorer people are dumped. I mean that many local authorities have deliberately let estates run down, and then turned them into 'problem' areas. As their stigma grows, only the weakest and most desperate people are prepared to go to such estates." (p.17).

The Shelter Report too, sees the process of natural cultural process of selection as only secondary.

> "North Farringdon estate was used for slum clearance tenants before and immediately after the war and then the housing department started sending families with low housekeeping standards there. Families with high standards began moving to new post-war estates, so that once started by housing department policy, the process became inevitable." (p.17).

It is apparent that in these later studies of housing estates the natural cultural process of selection is seen as a one-way process. Tucker may have accepted the idea that 'like seeks out like' as applying to 'respectables' and 'roughs', but the Shelter Report and Ward argue that 'problem' estates are not sought by anyone, rather they are accepted out of housing need, or allocated to those denied choice by the local authority.

3.5. The subculture of poverty

> "Dump estates have above average numbers of people unemployed and forced to live long term on social security benefits." (Shelter Report, p.29).

The estates which are the subject of the Shelter Report also show all the hall-marks of material deprivation with physically neglected and damaged houses in a deteriorating environment. Crime on such estates is explicitly related, by the author of the Shelter Report to poverty. She comments on the Bradford estate :

> "The connection between the large amount of theft and the very small means many families have to live on becomes very clear in the period leading up to Christmas." (p.34).

Break-ins to houses and meters are common, so also is the vandalism of empty property, which Griffiths relates to the high truancy rate associated with the estate. The families who live on such estates typically live in the perpetual poverty of rent arrears, constant cut-offs of gas and electricity and problems of meters being broken into. Their homes are spartan and ill-equipped.

> "In many houses there are .... no ornaments, few toys and often a grave lack of items that are usually considered normal, such as enough sheets and blankets. Families arrive with nothing and never get beyond the essentials." (p.35).

An education welfare officer is quoted as saying that non-attendance at school can often be caused by the family lacking the money to buy the uniform or afford the bus fares. He comments on the problems such families have to face :

> "I don't know how some of them survive." (p.35).

Forty per cent of the estate's social service referrals are a result of material or financial problems compared with 22% for the city as a whole.

A social worker is quoted as characterising this typical situation on another 'dump' estate.

> "Cases are very much concentrated in certain roads, and on many roadsthey have no cases. Family relationships on the estate are very unstable. Referrals are mainly over child care and mental health. Juvenile delinquency and vandalism are common on Fairfields, as oh other similar estates. Petty crime is another feature, in the form of housebreaking, quarrels between neighbours are also common. Both the discontent at the state of the estate and the poverty of many tenants lead to high levels of debt." (pp.29-30).

Such housing areas, the Shelter Report argues, where a group of materially deprived families are housed together in substandard conditions with little hope of either financial relief or better housing, are fertile ground for a non-conforming subculture. This subculture

may be perpetuated by successive generations of children being brought up in this material and cultural environment.

> "The combined effects of grading tenants and the other constraints at work, is the creation of areas of housing that no-one with any choice will live in, a stigmatized community that is all too aware of its undesirable reputation, and which is likely to develop a non-conforming subculture." (pp.26-27).

3.6. Social policy recommendations

The social policy recommendations of these studies are concerned with tackling the problem estate, rather than the problem family. The solution within the council sector is seen to be the eradication of disparity between estates. The Shelter Report diagnose the situation in this way :

> "The chief constraint on the Lettings Officer is the stock which he has to allocate .... In each town there are some estates that are popular with applicants and others that are only accepted as a last resort .... It is inevitable that while there is a stock of differing standards and a shortage of housing, the situation will persist where the families in most urgent need of rehousing will be allocated tenancies in the most unpopular places .... To achieve a better mix of families, therefore, it is essential that the differences of standards between estates should be eliminated as far as possible .... " (p.25).

These studies also recommend, as Tucker does, that a 'social mixing' policy should be enforced and that this should be extended to eliminate the natural cultural process of selection. The Shelter Report, however, recognises that there are limitations on a local authority's possibilities of equalising housing stock in a society which is founded on socio-economic inequalities.

> "The development of dump estates is primarily the result of inequalities in the distribution of resources and of the continuing existence of multiple deprivation; changes in housing department policies, procedures and attitudes will not alter these factors." (p.65).

The other solution offered by Shelter is in accord with that of Colin Ward - the handing over of the control and management of local authority housing to its tenants. Both studies quote the success of various housing associations and co-operatives, to back such a recommendation. The C.D.P. research team, discussed below, throw grave doubts on such a solution. Suffice to note here is that if any validity is accorded to the idea of a natural cultural process of selection - and most studies have pointed to some such process being characteristic of mobility within the council sector - it would be reasonable to suggest that tenant control of housing management and allocation procedures would result in greater disparities between estates and social segregation of tenants. That is, one might predict that those with power over access to housing on the most desirable estates by virtue of being residents of the estate themselves, would be reluctant to allocate neighbouring houses to families perceived as potentially problematic as neighbours, who could bring the estate into disrepute. Those with power over access to the least desirable of the housing stock would, perhaps, welcome those perceived as potentially 'good' neighbours, but these estates would remain in low demand and so only attract the most desperate for housing, and those perhaps who are unworried about living in a highly stigmatised area.

The success of housing co-operatives in England have been stressed by proponents of 'tenant control', but it remains a fact that these are small, isolated experiments. To hand over control and management functions to tenants of all local authority housing stock within an authority would be a very different enterprise, and would need to be regulated according to the problems that this type of tenure arrangement would produce. In Sweden for example, co-operatives are forced

to accept by law a quota of the more 'difficult' families. Another problem associated with tenant management is that in any community some people want and are capable of participation in community leadership, whereas others may not want this involvement or may be unable to give such a commitment. Something would have to replace the housing department in the protection of the rights of the more passive tenants. To resolve such issues as the possible exclusion of 'difficult' applicants from the best housing and the protection of the 'silent' tenants from the decisions of the active leaders of an estate, I would argue, some authority over and above the tenant group themselves is inevitable.

4.1. The Community Development Project literature : the council housing market

The CDP research teams have produced various studies of council housing and of specific estates in recent years. Although evidence is given in these reports of local authorities operating grading systems to match applicants and tenants with estates, there is a shift away from explanations of 'problem' estates in terms of crude allocation policies using rigid grading systems. In its place is the idea of local authorities allowing the development of 'problem' estates through default - that is, in permitting market forces free play.

> "It is important to emphasise the extent to which public sector housing - supposedly distributed administratively according to need - has in practice taken on the wide area differentiation characteristic of allocation by the market in the private sector."
> ('Whatever happened to Council housing').

In a sense this is a return to the hypothesis of a natural cultural process of selection which was given primary importance in the genesis of estate differentials, in the earlier literature. The

emphasis, however, is on the applicants' housing situation before being housed by the council and the degree of power this gives him in rejecting the worst estates. Thus it is the most disadvantaged in the housing market before accepting a council tenancy, who are forced by their need for housing into accepting council property for which there is least demand. The 'select' estates are populated by families who were relatively better off in their housing situation before becoming council tenants and who, therefore, could play the waiting game with the local authority before accepting an offer.

The 'select' estate may also be populated by families who are advantaged in their application type according to their particular local authority's allocation rules. Thus, for example, in some authorities the advantage may be with slum clearance tenants, and in others with the longest registration on a housing waiting list. Application type, local authority housing policies and housing need become the key to understanding the mechanisms of the council housing market. Material conditions and administrative policies rather than 'life styles' and 'aspirations' become more important in the acceptance of an offer of housing on a 'problem' estate.

With this recognition of disparity in housing situations amongst applicants for council housing is a new interest in the waiting list applicant. Although the Shelter Report had noted that slum clearance applicants had more leverage than waiting list applicants in the competition for housing, most of the previous literature had stressed the stigma of the slum clearnace estates and the behaviour of slum clearance tenants in explaining the 'problem' estate. While not denying the stigma attaching to many slum clearance estates, and the subsequent effect of such a stigma on letting patterns, the CDP studies recognise that the 'problem' estate may well be populated by a majority

of residents who have been housed from the waiting list.

Thus the CDP study of Fergustie Park in Paisley reports :

"Not many people choose Fergustie Park without official suggestion. The estate involves the shortest possible waiting time for council housing sometimes less than a month, more usually no longer than three months ... Because of the unpopularity of the scheme and the difficulty of letting houses there the Housing Department places few restrictions on whom it will accept." (p.32)

Similarly, the CDP team in Southwark report (1975),

"In particular, estates will tend to deteriorate to the point where no tenant who has any choice will accept a nomination. This means that people decanted from development areas will be unlikely to move to older un-modernised estates so that homeless families and those groups from the waiting list who, as we have said above, are unlikely to be representative of the whole population in terms of household size and structure will move in."

Again, in Newcaslte (1974), the CDP team report the same letting pattern on possibly Newcastle's worst estate, which was originally built to house slum clearance tenants, a modern housing complex which 'looks exactly what it is - a slum'. (p.8).

"Families have always moved into Noble Street and Norwich Place through necessity rather than choice but this has intensified since the change in housing allocation policy in 1970. Priority in rehousing for families affected by clearance programmes has meant that other families in urgent need of housing can only be offered undesirable areas - such as Noble Street and Norwich Place." (p.5).

Noble Street and Norwich Place have increasingly :

"assumed a major role as emergency accommodation taken by families and individuals whose desperation for a home exceeds their distaste for the flat offered. The shift to greater unemployment and shorter previous tenancies are an illustration of this." (p.33). 15

The findings of this CDP report in Newcastle are substantiated by Jon Gower Davis' study (1972), of a twilight zone of predominantly privately rented housing in the same city. People being rehoused from this area were waiting list applicants, rather than slum clearance. Newcastle was operating a rigid grading system at the time. Of the

67 households rehoused over a seven month period from this area of the city, 45% went to 'patched' houses,[16] 24% went to council estates with a 'bad' reputation - including housing dating from before the First World War - and 31% managed to get into new or reputable council housing. Davis does not say whether the 69% who went to 'patched' housing or 'bad' estates asked for the better type of council housing and were refused. He does say that people were more ready to accept 'patched' houses which were 'short life' than 'bad' estates, such as Noble Street, which they could not realistically think of as short term expedients. Davis also shows that the possibility of procuring exchanges or transfers after acceptance of a council tenancy were an important part of tenants' calculations about houses. He suggests that people accept or reject a 'bad' offer according to their housing need.

> "The council was not overjoyed at the thought of taking on Rye Hill's impecunious population unless it could prevail upon them to accept the oldest (and worst) council tenancies - an offer often rejected with derision or accepted in despair." (p 53)

4.2. Local Authority grading systems

The Newcastle CDP report also discusses the rigid grading system operated by the local authority, which is mentioned by Davis. The authors do not, however, discuss the relation of this grading system to their finding that it is housing need which ultimately determines who accepts what. It might be, and this they do not consider, that the market situation of supply and demand and people's differential position within that market makes the grading system irrelevant in the formation of 'select' and 'problem' estates. That is, many of the applicants who are likely to receive a low grade on account of their financial status, domestic standards, arrears records or on other more

personal criteria may well bé desperate enough for housing to accept low demand accommodation, ~~that~~ that would normally be used for 'low grade' applicants anyway. People in urgent need of housing are very often in financial difficulties or have been evicted from previous accommodation, or have large families living in overcrowded circumstances which might well make their domestic standards low, all of which would exclude them from allocation to a select estate, according to local authority criteria.

They refer to allocation policies generally, and not specifically to the grading system in their concluding remarks. It is, they consider, the appalling design and structural defects of certain estates, such as Noble Street and Norwich Place, coupled with allocation policies, which have determined that those in greatest housing need should live in these conditions, that are responsible for the 'problem' estate. Similarly, in North Shields, the CDP found the local authority operated a 'rigid and rigorous grading system' with grades from 'A' to 'E', which also affected a tenant's subsequent chances of transfer. Rent differentials re-inforced this grading process. But, say the authors, the importance of this grading system should not be overstated. They found a tendency on the 'worst' estates for houses to be accepted by people who could find nowhere else to live, irrespective of their grading by the local authority.

> "In 1973 no less than 59% of the households on South Meadowell, which is the unimproved and supposedly worst part of the estate was classified at B+ or above .... In addition to this it was the larger families - presumably allocated this estate because of the availability of larger houses - which tended to have the lower grades." (p.75)

Since local government re-organisation, this allocation system has seen several changes, but the CDP team do not consider this will in any way affect the social differentiation between estates, the root

cause of which is the market situation of supply and demand where the commodity is not standardised.

> "The new authority does not have a deliberate allocation policy as such, but the major differences in its stock predicate the same result. The only solution is the massive improvement of this stock." (p 75-76)

The Southwark Report maintains that the local authority operates a policy of dispersal of 'problem' families and uses 'rehabilitated' sundry housing for this end. Moreover, the 'best' property goes to slum clearance applicants rather than applicants of all categories with the 'best grades'.

4.3. The disparity in housing stock

The physical condition of the housing, its initial design and subsequent upkeep are a preoccupation of the CDP reports. They identify the 'problems' of a 'problem' estate as emanating from a situation of a housing stock of widely differing standards, creating unequal supply and demand patterns. The Southwark report recognises two physical types of 'problem' estate. First, the new estate, often of a poor design in an unpopular location which starts as a 'low demand' estate. Housing on such an estate is allocated on need, leading to an unbalanced population, large families usually being in greatest need, with excessive numbers of children. Secondly, the old pre-war estate often built in the 1930's for slum clearance tenants, which has a physically deteriorating environment, a substandard stock of houses and an undesirable reputation. Such estates are described as places of the last resort, and again they are characterically let to those in greatest housing need, typically giving the estate's population a disproportionate number of children. The Report gives a comprehensive history of the Housing Acts of the twentieth century, and

the type of council housing that was built under each Act. Like the Shelter Report, the CDP Report in Southwark argues that the quality of council housing is tied to its function, that is, who it is intended to house. Quality and function are tied to reputation, and in subsequent years these factors determine demand and allocation policies and thus the social character of the estate.

4.4. Children

Both types of 'problem' estate described by the Southwark team are characterised by excessively higher proportions of children in the estates' populations as a result of letting patterns. Excessive numbers of children are seen as crucial in bringing about the decline of an estate, through such associated problems as delinquency and vandalism which bring an estate further into disrepute. On an estate with a balanced population for which there is a reasonable demand and low mobility rates, a good proportion of the families will stay in their housing for a normal life cycle, and so there are periods on an estate where the population has lower than average numbers of children.

In contrast, on a low demand, high mobility estate, there are such a number of vacancies occurring which are filled by desperate young families in urgent need of housing, that the estate has a continually high proportion of young children. In addition to this, many of the 'new problem' estates are of a design which is now considered entirely unsuited to children.

A Home Office Research Unit Study, Tackling Vandalism is particularly pertinent in showing the relationship between high child densities and vandalism on council estates. The author of this research, Sheena Wilson (1978), originally intended her study of a large sample of inner London estates to be an examination of the relationship between

vandalism amd estate layout and design. A principal influence on the study being the work of Oscar Newman (1972) in the United States, which is considered later in this chapter. From the beginning, however, she found that :

> "There was a widely held belief among housing managers and others consulted about the design of the research that it was children living on the estates who were responsible for most of the damage." (p.49).

Wilson only included one social variable in her study, but this was a measure of child density calculated on a rate of children per dwelling.[17]

Wilson states that :

> "The study found that the principal factor related to levels of vandalism in the sample of estates studied was child density." (p.60).

Only in blocks with low child densities did it appear that rates of vandalism were related to design factors.

Wilson considers the possibility of dispersal of children by allocation policy to reduce damage to highly vandalised estates. Although she makes the point that dispersing the children may merely disperse the problem, so that other estates previously not so vandalised may develop problems of this kind, she also considers the practical difficulties facing a local authority housing department that set about a policy of reducing child densities on certain estates and preventing high child densities occurring on others. These difficulties include the grouping of larger dwellings together in a local authority's housing stock, so that pursuing a policy of child dispersal may lead to under-occupation of some of the larger dwellings. Another difficulty to be faced would be the revision of the 'transfer' system, whereby the movement of families with a number of children away from estates with

already high child densities could be expedited.

Wilson also adds the caveat that from her findings:

> "the rate of recorded vandalism per child was lower with both increasing child density and number of children per block."
> (p.62)

Moreover, other social variables likely to be important in the variance of vandalism rates were either not measured in this study or immeasurable.

Two studies published by the Department of the Environment suggest that child densities have an effect on the popularity of an estate, and thus on its demand and on the general 'quality of life' that an estate offers its residents. One of these studies was of eighteen council estates in Lambeth, and this showed that child densities, the social composition of an estate, the level of maintenance and caretaking, as well as design features, were all important variables in setting the character and quality of an estate. The other publication, The Social Effects of Living Off the Ground, notes the relation between high child densities and high rates of vandalism and, not surprisingly, dissatisfaction with an estate.

4.5. Social policy recommendations of the Community Development Project

The CDP recommendations for council housing start with the estates rather than the tenants. 'Problem' estates and those in decline should be acted upon immediately by bringing the houses, flats and estate environment up to the standards of the better council housing, and letting policy should be used to improve the estate's reputation. In many cases this would mean reducing the child density of an estate and 'balancing' the population in demographic terms. Rehabilitation of an estate must have the ultimate objective of increasing its demand to prevent a relapse into decline. The work of the CDP is in essence

a defence of council housing against a two-pronged attack. Firstly, the Conservative attack which espouses,

> "the ill-expressed but quite prevalent belief that certain social problems such as vandalism, social isolation and a perceived lack of sturdy individualism and independence are caused by council tenure <u>per se.</u>"

Secondly, the radical critique which contains the idea that the 'problem' estate is at least partly the effect of the aberation of tenants, that is, their lack of control over their own housing situation. Although the conservative and radical views of council housing start from very different commitments their diagnosis and prognosis to some extent coincide. Thus the CDP writers criticise the Labour Party for accepting the Tory ideology of a property owning democracy, supporting owner-occupation and a consensus view of housing. An offshoot of this is the current fashion for promoting housing associations, tenant co-ops and the like, as alternatives to council tenure. In contrast, the CDP position is that council stock should be improved and standardised, and council tenure should be managed and presented as both acceptable and respectable, so that council housing may become a popular alternative to other types of tenure.

The CDP teams are critical of any analysis of council housing which does not take into account the political processes and socio-economic structures of society. They criticise the various 'fashionable' theories of 'problem' estates which do not set council housing in its wider political and economic context. It is, they state, the overall shortage of housing for low income groups which is the root cause of many of the problems of council housing.

> "There sometimes appear to be vast numbers of new theories designed to solve, by the use of one comprehensive formula, the problems that beset the existing estates. At present such a formula would require low rise development with a dash of 'defensible' space and a sprinkling of community

> spirit administered by retaining the characteristics of the old traditional neighbourhood whatever they might be."

Moreover, focusing on any one characteristic of any estate as the cause of its 'problems' does not enable an explanation to be made of why estates of essentially similar design characteristics can be entirely different in terms of social character, reputation and demand.

> "Concentration on the unsatisfactory design of many council estates may allow an analysis of the way in which a particular estate declined. It is difficult to believe, however, that this approach can ever provide an adequate explanation of why some estates do sink faster than others."

The CDP approach to the understanding of the 'problem' estate is that the idea of a single factor being responsible for an estate's 'problems' needs to be replaced by the idea of a process in which interacting factors combine to produce a situation.

5.1. Department of the Environment research

Research into 'difficult' council estates has also been carried out by the Social Research Division of the Department of the Environment's Housing Development Directorate (see Wilson and Burbidge, 1978).

Wilson and Burbidge are concerned with 'difficult to let' council housing, although, as they explain, the term 'difficult to let' only has a literal meaning in areas of housing surplus. Usually it is a surrogate term for a situation on an estate where vacancies are increasingly filled by households with problems of one sort or another.

> "'Unpopular' is perhaps the most accurate description for such schemes, although this insufficiently conveys the various combinations to be found on estates so labelled of unsuitable design, unsuitable location, lack of amenities, poor management and maintenance, poverty and 'stigma'".
> (p.100).

The objective of the research is firstly to explain why some local authority estates are unpopular, remain in low demand and house only those who are in desperate need of a home. Secondly, arising out of this explanation the authors are concerned to make some housing policy recommendations that might alleviate the situation on such estates and prevent others from sliding into unpopularity. The emphasis of this Report is that dwellings on unpopular estates are let to the most disadvantaged applicants in the council housing market, who accept such dwellings through need rather than choice.

> "Allocation policies which use certain estates as repositories for the most difficult families may contribute to a polarisation between the best and worst estates, but the process of self-selection amongst housing applications must also be recognised. The simple truth is that no one will accept a letting unless it represents an improvement on his or her previous housing." (p.100).

The research revealed that there was always a combination of factors involved in an estate's unpopularity rather than a simple cause.

> "Typically these factors would feed upon each other in such a way that the estate would become caught in a downward spiral and develop a poor reputation. Having gained such a reputation all but the most desperate families would be deterred from accepting accommodation there, and management would be faced with resident apathy and low morale, vandalism, a disproportionately high level of rent arrears, and complaints about maintenance backlogs." (p.101).

The authors of this Report recognise that it is the disparity in a local authority's housing stock, in terms of such physical factors as location, design, amenities and types of dwelling, which create a situation of unequal demand. In this situation the more liberal are the authority's housing policies in allowing applicants a wide choice of housing and tenants freedom of movement within the council sector, the greater will the disparity of estates become. What starts as disparity in physical terms becomes disparity also in terms of social character and composition of estates.

A number of housing policy recommendations are made, both in terms of physical improvements to estates and better maintenance, and in terms of changes in allocation policies to increase the popularity of 'difficult to let' estates. It is stated, however, that such improvements would not go far enough in preventing other estates becoming unpopular in the future, or in arresting the polarisation of the council housing stock into 'good' and 'bad' estates.

> "Perhaps the overriding conclusion of the investigation was that the housing service has an important social role which is not fully appreciated." (p.103).

The authors make recommendations for the closer co-operation of local authority departments in dealing with the concentration of problems, not least of which is poverty within a few estates. Unlike the CDP reports, however, no analysis is made of the effects of Central Government policies on the shape and provision of council housing within the local authorities, the effect, for example, of subsidies or the type of council estates to be built.[18]

Apart from the greater representation of local authority housing management in the Department of the Environment the solutions are seen to lie at a local level.

The strength of this Report is in its stress on the need for a multi-causal explanation for the existence of 'difficult' council estates, these cannot be explained simply in terms of the behaviours and life styles of 'difficult tenants'. Wilson and Burbidge, in examining the local authority role in the creation of 'difficult' estates, attempt to explain how 'problem' families come to be concentrated on unpopular estates, and how the inadequacies of housing on such developments may exacerbate their problems and thus makes such tenants more 'difficult' for management. Estates are seen as

having problems unconnected with their residents, problems of an environmental nature which include siting, construction and design which may be exacerbated by poor management and maintenance.

6.1. In conclusion

The studies discussed in sections 3, 4 and 5 are in agreement over the failure of council housing to realise its initial promise of alleviating certain social problems related directly or indirectly to the housing situation of the lower income groups in society. Indeed, far from alleviating these problems of the poor and disadvantaged, council housing has had the effect of containing social problems in certain areas of the city, and thus to some extent has exacerbated the situation of the most deprived tenants. Thus local factors combine with the more general inequalities resulting from their socio-economic position in society to increase their deprivation. These studies adopt a conflict model of society - the housing market is one area in which the conflict takes place . Within the council sector the defeated are those who are processed, labelled and dumped by the local authority on to one of their 'slum' estates, or those who are in the weakest position in the housing market, and who the local authority leave to the mercy of market forces.

Although these studies concur in their contention that it is the inequalities between housing stock within a single local authority area that allows the division between 'haves' and 'have-nots' to occur even within the council sector, they are still somewhat divided in their descriptions of the processes by which this division takes place. These variations might be attributed to real differences in allocation policies between local authorities. But even if the differences in allocation policy attributed to the same local authority by different researchers could be ignored, the fact still remains that

Tucker, Ward and Griffiths claim that the processes of allocation of council housing which they have uncovered are common to most urban areas.

Tucker argues that the local authority is primarily responsible for the 'problem' estate by the use of a selective allocation policy, which is then re-inforced and gathers momentum with a natural cultural process of selection. This tenant self-selection process is carried out by all types of tenant, that is, the 'respectable' seek out those they perceive to be like themselves living in 'respectable' areas. Similarly, the 'roughs' want to live with their own kind on the more disreputable estates. Petra Griffiths, writing for Shelter, and Colin Ward again accept the principal role of the local authority in using certain estates to 'dump' their most unsatisfactory tenants and thus create their own 'problem' estates. Council housing is used in this way, they argue, to mete out rewards and punishments with the objective of imposing a certain 'living standard' on tenants, and thus the housing department is given a certain social control function.

The natural cultural process of selection is accepted as a secondary process in creating the rift between council estates, but this is hypothesised as one way only. The 'respectables' may select a 'respectable' estate and make efforts to move from 'problem' estates, but no one freely chooses to live on a 'problem' estate. The CDP research teams, although giving evidence of certain local authorities operating rigid and rigorous grading systems and allocation schemes, see this as less important than the free play of market forces which produces a situation of those in the greatest need accepting the worst accommodation. They return to an idea of a process of tenant self-selection being the most important single factor in the processes

by which tenancies are accepted on the better council estates, leaving the unpopular estates to be inhabited by those with no choice, either because of their need for housing or because the local authority had not allowed them a choice.

In a situation of inequality in housing and income before entry into the council sector those who can wait and pay extra for a modern well-equipped dwelling on a 'respectable' estate will do so. Those on low income or in great housing need will accept the 'worst' housing available which is in least demand. Despite these differences in analysis of the importance of allocation factors and conditions of acceptance of tenancies on the 'problem' estates, it appears from these studies that whatever the emphasis, even within the bureaucratically administered sector of housing, which is traditionally associated with the alleviation of housing need and thought to operate under different conditions, those in the private sector, 'addresses', in the words of Tucker, are in the peculiar way of the council market, still 'purchasable'. (p.161).

The concern of these studies is to explain why a council estate becomes a 'slum' with all the associated social problems, and who accept tenancies in such areas of disrepute. This is the background to an understanding of why some council estates are high criminal offender rate areas. But for those with a criminological interest in the 'problem' estate it is necessary not only to examine why some council estates fall into disrepute and who accept tenancies on such estates, it is also essential to attempt to study life in these areas, to understand crime and delinquency within the social milieux of the 'problem' estate.

7.1. The N.A.C.R.O. Conference

In 1975 NACRO held a day conference to consider the relationship between housing and crime, or more specifically, to consider the role of housing management in the prevention of crime. The proceedings of this conference are reported in Housing Management and the Prevention of crime. (1975).

Those who attended the conference were not concerned to study the social origins of crime, and Chris Nuttall for the Home Office

> "acknowledged that no direct causal relationship between housing and crime had ever been established and that speculation was, therefore, rather pointless." (pp.3-4).

It was generally accepted that the idea that better housing would lead automatically to 'better' citizens was fallacious. It was said that on new council estates, or on council estates where residents had previously lived in the worst type of housing some of the worst concentrations of anti-social behaviour could be found.

> "Research on the backgrounds of juvenile offenders revealed as many from modern council estates as from the worst privately rented housing. Once again, the only really unlikely background to crime was owner occupation." (p.4).

John Thane, director of the Housing Centre Trust suggested that housing by itself was probably irrelevant.

> "He believed crime was most directly related to economic opportunities. Insofar as poor economic opportunities are reflected in poor housing, or housing with a low social status, whatever its physical quality - then the people who live in this housing will be at risk." (p.3.).

Other speakers at the conference also re-affirmed their belief that poverty and unemployment were more directly related to crime and delinquency than housing.

A social worker pointed out that when a family had problems these could only be exacerbated by homelessness, poor or inadequate housing.

> "The housing they lived in might be only one of several factors predisposing people toward crime, but a stable home was often the essential first step in keeping them out of trouble." (p.6).

'Problem' estates, according to this speaker needed advice and information centres, local centres for support from the housing department and social services, so that individual and family problems might be dealt with before they assumed crisis proportions. Such outside support is seen as encouraging self-help schemes among the residents.

The focus of concern was the general malaise to be found on some council estates, particularly in inner city areas. It was acknowledged by a member of the Greater London Council that the design of some estates contributed to their problems :

> "too large, too dense and entirely flatted, which was a particular problem where children were concerned. Past letting policies had also contributed, by bringing so many families with children to such a difficult environment." (p.4).

This speaker also acknowledged the reputation spiral - once an estate gained a bad reputation it lost popularity with housing applicants. Even in an area such as London, with an immense housing shortage, flats can be offered several times before an acceptance is received.

> "Finally, a family too desperate to care, or unfamiliar with anything better accepts it, and the deprived character of the estate is further enhanced." (p.4).

Other speakers agreed that design could create problems, particularly on flatted estates with high child densities. John Thorne, however, pointed out the dangers of scapegoating the designer whilst paying little attention to the consequences of unwise letting policies. There was, he thought, a suitable tenant for every kind of dwelling.

This consideration of allocation policies in the creation of 'problem' estates led a number of people to discuss how policies could work to bring about social mixing and prevent the growth of 'problem' estates, and some thought was given to ways community spirit might be enhanced on such estates. This led to a discussion of tenant control and the idea of housing co-operatives. Examples of successful ventures were given. Some expressed the doubt that if tenants had power over allocations problem families might be totally excluded. Lord Goodman, the chairman, in his summation, raised the question of personal liberty - had this been forgotten in the excitement of ideas of allocation policies to create social mixing, and in the ideas of tenants' control? He posed the problem of conflict between equality and liberty.

> "How far are we going towards the complete and regulated scheme of living, the regulated housing notion ... ? (p.37).

This conference is interesting in that amongst the attenders were a number of housing managers who were freely admitting that design and allocation policies, including the 'grading' of tenants, could both contribute to the creation of 'problem' estates which suffered from a general social malaise of which crime, delinquency and vandalism are only a part.

> "We have turned some of our estates into ghettos which serve as dumping grounds for problem families. We are now faced with an almost insoluble problem in planning the future of these estates, some have become so notorious that no one wishes to be housed on them. (p.14).

The conference was not concerned with the causes of criminal and delinquent behaviour, but from the discussion there emerged a general concern that grouping together families with 'problems', amongst whom will be those with criminal and anti-social tendencies, by allocation

policy on estates of the least popular design can only exacerbate the 'problems' of these people and further re-inforce an estate's 'bad' reputation and unpopularity with other applicants and tenants. Some of the families who are housed on such estates may have previous criminal histories, the problems of living on such estates may precipitate them into further anti-social behaviour, but it is the children of such families who could be even more at risk, by virtue of being brought up in such a neighbourhood. The conclusion of Jane Morton who wrote the Conference Report was that

> "Crime may or may not, result from upbringing in some of the estates that caused so much distress. No action by management may be able to prevent it, if it does. But allocation of tenancies is, inescapably, a mainlihe management function." (p.7).

It was generally argued that there are no simple housing policies that could reduce urban crime. Housing managers, however, have to decide whether they are going to pursue policies to disperse throughout the urban area those who are likely to be at risk in criminological terms, or whether they are going to congregate them in certain estates. If the latter policy is accepted - and those authorities using a rigid grading system would seem to have opted for this policy - then it may be that the local authorities are at least creating the conditions in which crime flourishes.

8.1. The sociological interest in high flats

Some particular sociological interest has been shown in the multi-storey flat complexes of the council sector in more recent years. Some of the studies already discussed include in their survey of run-down or difficult to let estates, high flat developments. Noble Street and Norwich Place, for example, are flatted developments. It is also perhaps interesting to note the high proportion of flatted

estates that Wilson and Burbidge (1978) included in their 'difficult to let' investigation. Admittedly the survey carried out by the Housing Development Directorate into difficult-to-let stock was restricted to post-war developments, and there have been proportionately more flat developments in this era than pre-war. Nevertheless, of the 87% of local authorities responding to the survey and reporting difficult-to-let housing stock, two-thirds were in the form of flats and maisonettes. Moreover, the survey total was an underestimate of the post-war stock affected, since the questionnaire limited local authorities to just three examples. Other studies of high flats have their parallel in the 'new' estate research discussed in Chapter Two. High flats are seen as imposing stresses and strains on residents that may lead to social problems. Thus Jephcott (1971) concludes from her study of high rise council flats in Glasgow that :

> "There is little evidence, here or elsewhere, that those who have actually experienced life in a high flat are in general opposed to it. Though certain 'types' of household, notably those with young children, and also perhaps some 'types' of personality, have found it unsatisfactory, they are a minority among the occupants." (p.126).

The social problems associated with 'high living' are largely seen in terms of the failure on the part of certain tenants to adjust to the new environment and living conditions.

The 'fact' that high rise living is not suited to families with young children is now part of the popular 'wisdom' of housing. Similarly, 'problem' families are seen as unsuited to such accommodation. Jennings (1962) quotes the Bristol Housing Manager on lettings policy for the department's high flats; he maintained that the department did not allocate such accommodation to 'low grade' applicants because such families could cause more disruption in such housing than they would on a traditional 'low rise' estate. Similarly, Jephcott argues,

"Another group of households which life in a high flat does not really suit are those rather below the social and educational level of the block's households in general. These tenants find it difficult to cope with the methodical habits and self-contained existence of life in a multi-storey block, and are likely to be a more disruptive element than wouldbe the case in low-rise housing. Those who fit easily into life in a high flat are people who are self-sufficient and socially 'above average'." (p.130).

In the case of these Glasgow flats it would seem that the residents were financially, at least, 'above average', the rents were higher than for other types of council housing, and the flats were not built with the largest families in mind. Moreover, Jephcott argues acceptance of a high rise tenancy in Glasgow signifies a degree of material aspiration which might exclude the most deprived families. Jephcott does, in fact, argue that high rise flats only offer suitable accommodation for this 'elite' of the council tenants, and that because of this they should only be built as 'select' estates.

"Local authorities should discontinue this form of housing except for a limited range of carefully selected tenants, or in cases of extreme pressure." (p.131).

The evidence from other research, most notably that of the CDP, suggests that 'high rise' buildings are more often let to the deprived than to the elite. Being the least popular type of council housing, they are in the lowest demand and are, therefore, most readily available for a local authority to use as 'emergency housing' for homeless families and those in great housing need. These families are often those with low incomes and large numbers of children, who have considerable associated 'problems'. In terms of severe housing shortage, or in Jephcott's terms, 'in cases of extreme pressure', the tendency for local authorities to allocate their stock in this way must increase.

Jephcott does concede that high rise flats produce problems which are not immediately associated with the type of tenant housed there.

She mentions social isolation as a characteristic of life in a tower block estate. This has been a recurrent theme in the media's treatment of high rise living. She also mentions the increased tenancy restrictions that tenure of this type of council owned accommodation involves, and the subsequent loss of self-determination in the small matters of every day living. Thirdly, she discusses the possibility of greater juvenile delinquency and vandalism on such estates, because the physical design is such that children have to play where they are away from parental control, and much delinquent behaviour is an extension of juvenile play. Vandalism was also a concern of a Department of the Environment publication, 'The Social Effects of Living off the Ground'.

> "It has often been noted that high rise estates suffer disproportionately from damage to the environment. ... It should not be imagined, however, that vandalism is 'caused' by high rise housing, its causes go much deeper. It seems that in order to reduce vandalism the right approach is not a direct frontal attack, not an increase in measures of control, but rather an attempt to enlist individual and community potentials for reducing vandalism."(p7-8)

The authors of this report were obviously influenced by Newman's 'Defensible Space' hypothesis, which is discussed in the final section of this chapter. They also indicate that some of the problems of high rise estates could be alleviated by the growth of 'community' within the estate, which would result in the estate itself becoming an area of interest and concern. This need for community on flatted estates was a concern of a number of speakers at the NACRO Conference on housing management and crime which was discussed in Section 7.1. The 'community' approach to counter vandalism was also the basis of the Widnes Project (Hedges et al 1980), discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Jephcott's study of high rise flats in Glasgow does not, unfortunately, give any comparative data on the estates in terms of reputation, demand and letting patterns, nor does it give any indication of differences in rates of 'social problems' between the estates. Comparative details of the physical environment surrounding the estates, their location, construction and design are given. These, however, are not linked with data on their 'reputation' or 'character', but with the effects of such features on immediate tenant satisfaction. The application types for the estates are given as an aggregate, and although child density is given for individual estates this is not linked with other data of possible interest, such as rates of juvenile delinquency, vandalism or the reputation and mobility patterns associated with each estate.[19]

Jephcott does, however, consider the popularity of high rise blocks compared with more traditional forms of council housing, and considers the demand for this type of housing in Glasgow. She believes that an influencing factor in the Corporation's predilliction for high flats, apart from the subsidies granted for this type of building in this period, has been its failures in other types of housing.

> "Too many areas of its inter-war housing have degenerated into near slums to judge from their external appearance and shady social reputation ... The huge peripheral estate to which about 10% of the city's population was decanted after the war have also been denigrated." (p.17).

According to Jephcott, applicants for council housing in Glasgow may be considered for all types of dwelling, they may express a preference for an area and type of house, and there is a 'rough and ready' rule in operation that they can turn down 'three or so' offers. Jephcott, therefore, depicts quite a permissive allocation policy on the part of Glasgow Corporation, directed towards initial applications

for council housing. She does, however, recognise the effect of housing shortages and how this can constrain individual choice.

> "No one who definitely dislikes the idea of a high flat is forced to take this kind of home, but the pressures to move from badhousing are so strong that people are reluctant to do anything which they feel might prejudice their chances of a better place." (p.19).

Despite this possible constraint on initial choice, and the fact that in the past the corporation had operated a rather inflexible transfer policy which had the effect of limiting mobility between estates, the high rise estates which Jephcott studied appear to be fairly happy, settled estates, and respondents indicated a high degree of of satisfaction with the flats themselves. This reaction to 'high living' may, however, be peculiar to Glasgow, where housing conditions for the lower income groups are appalling, and the council alternatives of run down pre-war estates or the vast post-war housing complexes on the city's periphery are not so attractive. Additionally, there is a tradition of flat living in Glasgow which may make 'flat' life more acceptable to its population.

8.2. The need for more research

Despite the exposure by the mass media of the 'problems' of high rise living, very little is known about this type of council housing - for example, its popularity in relation to other types of a local authority's housing stock and subsequent population characteristics.[20] Nor do we know anything about such differentials as popularity between tower blocks, whether in the same city or between different local authority areas, nor about differences between types of flatted estates. We are given examples of flatted estates which have become the squalid areas of council housing, but these are not compared with similar estates of the same authority which have escaped this fate. We do not even really know much about the 'quality of life' in such

blocks in the same way as we do from many small studies of traditional council house estates, with residents' accounts of life on the estate, details of neighbour interaction, community organisation and so on, to draw upon. (Jephcott's (1971) study is, in fact, one of the few attempts to meet this deficiency in council estate research.)

Thus we have no knowledge of the effects of different allocation policies for these blocks, whether reputations are more or less easily attached to this type of housing, nor of the effects on residents of living in a tower block with a 'dreadful' reputation.

It has been suggested that 'problem' families will be more disruptive in a high rise flat than on a traditionally built council estate, but we have no details of the effects such families have on their neighbours in a tower block, nor on whether such buildings are more susceptible to 'colonisation' by social types than other forms of council housing.

Methods of policing tower block estates have been even more neglected by criminologists than the policing of traditional types of council housing. A member of the Sheffield research team[21] has looked at policing and crime reporting patterns for two post-war high rise flat complexes in the city. Similarly, the survey which is also part of the Sheffield study on urban social structure and crime is concerned with crime and victim reporting, and attitudes to and perceptions of lawbreaking and policing in these areas. But, as already suggested, there have been no attempts to distinguish between different types of high rise development, that is between tower blocks and the lower flat complexes, such as those included in the Sheffield study, for purposes of comparison.[22] Council flats are not in any sense homogeneous. They have been built both pre-war and post-war in most cities, and flat

estates vary between tower blocks, the lower slab complexes and maisonettes. Some estates include all three types of building, others only one.

With the exception of the Home Office Research Unit and the Department of the Environment publications which have shown an interest in the 'estate outside the dwelling', and the relation of this to vandalism and tenant satisfaction respectively, the possibility that there are other differences resulting directly, or indirectly, from the architectural ones between high rise council flats which are of relevance for both an understanding of the areal dimension of urban crime and the social divisions between council estates has largely been ignored.

9.1. The criminological interest in high flats :

'Defensible space'

Oscar Newman's (1972) work on high rise housing in the U.S.A. is in a very different vein from the ethnographic studies discussed in the first section of this chapter. It has, however, been included in the way of a postscript to this chapter, because of its possible relevance to high rise council housing in Britain and rates of criminality on these estates. Newman's thesis is that architectural design is a variable which directly affects crime rates in residential areas. He is concerned with offence rates and does not offer information on the offender rates of his housing estates.[23] Neither does he make any study of the origins of the tenants of his 'paired' housing estates, nor the conditions under which they were allocated a tenancy. He does, however, remark in passing that one estate at least has seen changes in allocation policy, which would appear to have had the effect of increasing the offence rate on the estate itself.

> "When in 1965 the Federal Government decided to change the rule for admission to public housing many welfare families previously excluded were allowed entry. In the intervening seven years the high rise buildings to which they were admitted have been undergoing systematic decimation. Some have been gutted and others totally abandoned ... Almost every major city has its own example." (p.188)

Thus, while in a major part of his book he sees offences committed in certain residential blocks as the work of outsiders against which the residents could protect themselves if architects allowed them defensible space, he also attributes high crime rates in certain building projects to the influx of welfare families. To admit a possible relationship between resident type and offence rates somewhat diminishes the usefulness of 'defensible space' in crime prevention.

Although Newman does say that middle and lower class high rise blocks may be equally vulnerable to criminal assault by outsiders, he argues that in low class high rise blocks criminal acts are encouraged by the living conditions of poor families. He fails, however, to clarify the question of whether the high crime rate of high rise blocks housing families of a low social class is mainly attributable to the quality of life on the estate for the residents and their more general material deprivation, or whether the construction and design of the buildings is the more important factor in making an estate susceptible to crime commission by residents or outsiders. Newman does not consider the effect of the reputation of a high offence area on patterns of mobility and subsequent tenancy acceptance patterns. His finding, however, that high rise blocks inhabited exclusively by the elderly of any income group suffer a much lower than average offence rate might suggest that the problem of high offence rate housing estates could be more productively considered in terms of the social characteristics of the residents, than in terms of the construction and design of the estate itself. Newman himself admits that 'approximately 50%

of all apprehendees on housing projects live in the project they are victimising'. (p.200). He does not say whether this percentage varies with different estates, nor whether it is linked with differential physical design or social composition. Despite this percentage of 'resident criminals' Newman argues that in most housing projects the 'resident criminals' form a very small percentage of the population, whereas the 'victims' usually include everyone.

Newman argues that to minimise the number of offences committed in an area estates should be built small, with good 'defensible space', so that resident criminals will be reluctant to victimise their own estate, as their chances of identification and apprehension will increase. In addition to this, he argues that 'the location of a housing project within a low crime community will benefit the housing project residents appreciably'. Newman is apparently arguing that this will minimise the number of 'criminals' resident in an area, and thus minimise the number 'preying' on the high rise block. The idea of siting the high rise block in a low crime rate area would have been of more interest if Newman had considered the effect of the geographical location on the reputation, popularity and demand for the estate, and the possible effect on the residents of being able to share common facilities, such as schools and recreational facilities with residents from the immediate area.

Newman's thesis of defensible space in the prevention of deterrence of crime seems to evade the issue of the high offender rate estate. As Bottoms (1976) argues, in his criticism of Newman's method of 'comparison of coupled projects' no data is given on the history of the housing projects, the original tenants, subsequent reputation of the estates and patterns of allocation and acceptance of tenancies, Newman's overall population characteristics are too general for the

research problem to be adequately dealt with, that is, to test, for example, whether for some reason the estates are attracting or being used to house different types of tenant. He is advocating community control 'within the present atmosphere of pervasive crime and ineffectual authority', but the efficacy of this in crime deterrence rests surely on the type of community which is in control.

In addition to Newman's lack of concern over the population characteristics of the paired estates and the related letting patterns, one of Bottoms' major criticismsof Newman's study is his neglect of the work of the 'transactionalists' in criminology, in particular, his uncritical acceptance of official statistics of offence rates means that he does not examine the possibility of differential crime reporting patterns or policing practices between estates.

Bottoms suggests Newman has drawn attention to what may well be an important theme in an understanding of urban crime; the relation between architecture and criminality. Unfortunately his treatment of this theme does not do it justice.

Another member of the Sheffield study, Mawby (1977a), has written an article on Newman's thesis relating it to data collected by him for the Sheffield study. His main criticisms of Newman are that, firstly, the concept of crime used by Newman is too general. There is, for example, no differentiation between offences committed in private and those committed in public. Secondly, the concept of defensible space is unclear. Thus, for example, traditional low rise housing may have private gardens which would constitute good defensible space, but which may be subjected to criminal offences because few survey them.

Newman's original thesis has also been criticsed by architects. Raynen Banham (1973), for example, challenges Newman's emphasis on

design by reference to the low offence record of a Sheffield flatted estate which is very similar to the supposedly indefensible and high offence rate Pruitt-Igoe estate in St. Louis. The latter estate was one of the developments used by Newman to support his thesis.

9.2. Newman's modified theory

In later work Newman modified his theory by giving greater emphasis to factors other than physical design in determining offence levels. In Design Guidelines for Achieving Defensible Space (1976), Newman argues that the more important variable in predicting crime rates than design is the social composition of the residents of an estate. He enumerates the most important variables as being: the percentage of families on welfare, the percentage of families headed by a female receiving welfare; and the per capita disposable income of residents. In this article Newman has come to see different types of housing as suitable for different types of people, with different levels of income. In a paper read at the N.A.C.R.O. Conference, Newman (1975) identifies a need for a 'community of interest' as well as defensible space for a housing area to maintain a low crime record. A community of interest may be fostered by housing together people of similar social characteristics.

Newman admits this proposal for selecting residents for a housing development to maximise the chances of a 'community of interest' developing sounds like a plan for the segregation of communities. He emphasises, however, that he is recommending this only on a 'micro-scale' involving about fifty to a hundred families. Residents at this level would be selected by similarity or such factors as age, income and shared interests. However, at the macro level, of small areas of cities,

> "We are working at measuring how to achieve the stable integration of people by race, income, age and life-style." (p.9).

People grouped by their similar social characteristics should then be housed in the building type most suited to their needs. Thus, Newman argues, high rise blocks are suitable for higher income families who can afford to employ security personnel. They may also be suited to the elderly who would operate a tight surveillance of their block. The housing needs of lower income families with children are not suited to high rise living. Finally, in the attempt to produce a crime an d vandal free environment, as much space within the block and outside in the immediate surrounds should be kept private. Newman has come to see architecture as operating more in the area of influence than control in promoting a crime free environment.

If Newman's modified theory of 'safe' housing and controlling crime rates is applied to the council sector there are obvious weaknesses. The idea of housing together people of similar social characteristics would not solve the problems of the estate where those whose income, age group and life style make them most likely to produce offenders are housed together, and where one could predict a continually high offence rate. Moreover, eradicating or reducing offences from one estate may simply result in their being displaced to another housing area.

In fact, Newman's proposal for 'safe' housing areas sounds suspiciously like an argument for segregated housing schemes where, in Tucker's terminology, like would be housed with like. This is just the situation which, Tucker argues, pertains within the council sector of housing in England, and which must be reversed so that 'there should be all sorts next door to all sorts' (1966:p.55). For Tucker argues that segregationalist housing policies within the council sector in England have led to the formation of disreputable estates, where poor

housing, poverty, despair and associated problems abound.

9.3. Studies in the Defensible Space tradition

Pat Mayhew (1979), in a review of the work done in the defensible space tradition, suggests that despite the developments by Newman of his theory , studies that test Newman's ideas still centre on the Defensible Space thesis. Mayhew distinguishes between those studies which consider housing developments that have incorporated defensible space ideas and those studies looking at existing developments in defensible space terms.

Both types of study are seen as being equally indecisive and discouraging.

Of the former category - studies of developments incorporating defensible space ideas - Mayhew mentions three, one in the United States, one in Canada and one in England. The English study was of four walk-up blocks of flats in Liverpool, to which defensible space improvements had been carried out. The results, as reported by Hunter (1978) are disappointing. No tenant assocation was formed, there were continuing high numbers of transfer requests and continuing vandalism. Of the second category of studies Mayhew again considers studies made in the United States, Canada and England. The English studies include those of Mawby (1977a) in which Mawby argues in his findings that in flatted housing areas a greater number of burglaries and serious vandalism offences were reported to the police than in low rise housing areas; this is consistent with Newman's thesis, in that flats offer better surveillance opportunities than conventional housing. In a study of kiosk vandalism, Mawby (1977b) suggested that usage was the most important variable in kiosk vandalism, but once this was controlled for secluded kiosks were, in fact, the most vandalised. In a Home Office

Research Unit study (1979), however, housing tenure type of the area surrounding the phone kiosk was found to be the strongest factor determining vandalism rates (council areas were the hardest hit, explained by the authors in terms of the high child density of such areas). In another H.O.R.U. study by Wilson (1978), of thirty-eight inner London council estates, already discussed in section 4.4. of this chapter, child density was found to be the most important factor in determining rates of damage. There was no direct relationship between design features and vandalism, although in blocks with low child densities certain aspects of design which impeded defensible space were associated with higher levels of damage. The Department of the Environment (1977) study of eighteen Lambeth council estates showed that as well as child densities and design features, also important in influencing the 'quality' of estates were the social composition of the residents (a variable Wilson was unable to include in her study), and levels of caretaking and maintenance on estates.

Mayhew sums up the defensible space research findings :

> "While present evidence may suggest that defensible space has only a weak relationship with crime, the case cannot be seen as exhaustively examined." (p.155).

As Mayhew points out, most of the studies have been of existing housing developments, not designed with defensible space in mind. New defensible space developments,

> "may have a better chance of moulding residents' behaviour before attitudes have hardened and anti-social norms become established." (p.155).

Also, most of the studies have concentrated on only two of the defensible space components, surveillance and territoriality, neglecting Newman's other two components, the 'image' of the housing development and its locality within the wider urban area.

Mayhew concludes that these studies suggest that design factors have to compete with social factors, such as the type of resident, number of offenders resident and child density on an estate, as well as the quality of outside management and the residents' community of interest or estate involvements, in producing a crime prone or crime free environment.

> "Defensible space has considerable intuitive appeal, but it may have been over sold. Social variables need to be considered alongside design, and the practical problems of implementation should not be ignored." (p.157).

The Widnes study reported by Hedges et al (1980) also began with Newman, but incorporated the idea of 'tenant participation' which eventually became the main theme. Following the 1974 N.A.C.R.O. Conference on the role of architects and town planners in the prevention of crime, NACRO sought the co-operation of a local authority for an experimental project aimed primarily at reducing vandalism. The intention was to test out some of the ideas discussed at the 1974 Conference, in particular those of Oscar Newman, and to try to find ways of reducing vandalism on an estate that could be useful to other local authority housing areas also beset with the problem of vandalism. In the interim report (1976) of this project it is stated :

> "NACRO believes that one way of reducing crime is to improve the environment within which young people are growing up." (p.1).

The estate chosen was one of post war housing in Widnes, which was generally run-down and in poor condition and in which there was much evidence of vandalism. The report states that

> "the residents had the reputation of being either apathetic or hostile, and neither the council nor other local agencies were optimistic about our getting much co-operation from them." (Final Report, p.3).

The estate, although having serious vandalism problems, was not one where the problems were assessed as being so acute that remedial

measures of the kind planned would be totally ineffective.[24]

The main objectives of the project were firstly to find out from the residents themselves what improvements they wanted, secondly, to liaise with the council and other outside agencies in the implementations of these recommendations and thirdly, to assess the effects of the project on the estate, in particular the level of vandalism and other offences over three years. The strategies adopted to implement the first objective included a sample survey, using questionnaire interviews for which there was an 84% response rate, and a series of small group meetings. For the latter, attendance was by invitation to achieve a balanced cross-section of residents, and a small attendance allowance was paid. A residents' association was formed on the estate

> "which arose out of the sense of common purpose engendered by the consultative group meetings." (p.4).

The improvements to the estate included the introduction of a beat policeman, repairs to the houses (which the residents themselves considered of first priority), a general clean up of the environment and the provision of an adventure playground. (This was vandalised and closed down within two months of opening and remained closed for over six months).

Overall, the authors of the final report consider the Widnes Project to have been a success.

> "The consensus of opinion is that crime and vandalism on the estate has abated, although by no means disappeared .... Both the two beat policemen who have served successively on the estate since the inception of the project feel that things are much better and the Chief Inspector reported it "changed out of all recognition"." (p.31)

When the police statistics, however, were examined, there was no significant fall in offences.

> "The project has not had measurable effect on criminal activity." (p.86).

The authors of the Report suggest that it is possible that an effect of the Report may have been an increased level of reporting offences on the estate, and improved detection through the presence of a beat constable. Increased reporting and improved detecting would both have the effect of increasing the offence levels of the estate. Other statistics reflecting vandalism are those kept by the Post Office. These showed there had been an overall drop in kiosk vandalism in four areas considered by the Widnes Project team, but Cunningham Road, the estate on which the Project was based, showed a greater reduction than the other areas.

Another measure of 'deviance' considered by the team is rent arrears. Cunningham Road had a persistently high record of rent arrears, and this did not diminish over the project years. Data from the social services showed a rise in the number of cases on the Cunningham Road estate over the project period, but the rate of new referrals on this estate did fall over this time.

The survey carried out by the Project team showed only a slight reduction in the general desire to leave the estate, but a high proportion of the respondents still preferred to live elsewhere. The housing transfer request lists of the local authority were also examined to compare the number of residents requesting transfers before the Project got under way, with the number requesting a transfer away after the Project period. The authors conclude from this comparison that :

> "The fact that one family in five is still on the transfer list shows that improvements in the estate have not solved all the problems by any means, although the dramatic drop in the rate of growth in the list is encouraging." (p.56).

The Widnes Project attacked the problems of the Cunningham Road estate in their immediate form. That is, the Project was not concerned

with housing allocation policy and tenant self-selection, or how the estate came to get its social character, nor was it concerned with how the estate had become so run down. The approach is essentially pragmatic, that is, to tackle the existing problems rather than to change the social structures of the estate. Similarly, familial and individual problems of poverty and personal stress were not the focus of concern, and no links are drawn between the existence of this 'delinquent area' and the wider socio-economic structure of society. Nevertheless, given the existing status quo of an estate, the attempt to create a greater estate satisfaction among its residents, to generate a community and to encourage self-help and grass roots community control of crime and vandalism is a feasible enterprise. In these, its objectives, the authors of the Project report claim a limited success which they hope will have some permanence.

It is difficult to see how a programme such as this could affect the criminal offenders and 'deviants' who live on such an estate, in the sense of deterring them from committing offences. (They might of course prefer to victimise other housing areas following the physical improvements and the greater social and police control in their own.) But such a programme could have success with the young in deterring them from vandalism and delinquency if enough resources were concentrated on this section of the residents. Overall, I would suggest that the criteria for assessing the success of a Project such as that carried out in Cunningham Road, to reduce the problems of that estate, is to monitor the popularity of the estate in the future with applicants and tenants. If large numbers of residents continue to want to leave the estate and if houses are only relet to those who accept through housing necessity, rather than choice, then the estate will continue to be housing those with very little interest or enthusiasm for their

home environment; and who may well have problems of their own associated with their earlier deprivations.

Chapter 3

NOTES

1. Easterhouse was the subject of massive publicity through the press and television at the time of Armstrong and Wilson's research. Delinquencies were given full coverage and gang warfare was suggested by the media. This publicity was increased by the intervention of Frankie Vaughan offering 'help' to 'reform' the boys living on Easterhouse.

2. Damer notes that uhtil 1971 there were three categories of corporation housing estates in Glasgow, constructed according to the provisions of what can be seen as three sets of Scottish Housing Acts. The other two types of estates built in Glasgow were constructed for the 'aristocracy of the working class' and the 'decent poor' respectively.

3. Damer is using Lemert's definition of secondary deviance.
   "Secondary deviation is deviant behaviour, or social roles based upon it, which become means of defense, attack, or adaptation to the overt or covert problems created by the societal reaction to primary deviation. In effect, the original causes of the deviation recede and give way to the central importance of the disapproving, depredational and isolating reactions of society".
   Lemert, E.M. (1967) Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control (p.17).

4. At the time of Damer's research the corporation had decided to effect an improvement plan on Wine Alley, although housing department officials felt locals would vandalise any improvement.

5. When the estate was divided into five parts for the purpose of analysis, only one area showed a significantly lower offender rate.

6. The later sociological studies of council estates considered in the second section of this chapter, take as a defining characteristic of a 'problem' estate that such an estate is one where the majority of people do not want to live. This suggests that a council estate may have high offender rates and other indices of 'social problems' but not be a problem estate in the sense used by such organisations as Shelter and the CDP research teams, i.e. the 'problem' estate for the criminologist may not always coincide with that of the sociologist.

7. Andrew Sanders (1974) The Politics of Vandalism, unpublished MA. thesis, University of Sheffield. Sanders on another Sheffield estate argues that the commonly held view that police are feared and/or disliked in working class areas is not substantiated by his research. Only 16 respondents (40% of the sample) did not want police or corporation patrols within the estate. Furthermore, the reasons given by these 16 were usually in terms of doubts about police efficiency, and the belief that vandalism was not a serious enough problem on the estate to warrant such measures.

8. Poor relations meaning here hostility between police and residents. There is some evidence from the interview survey of the Sheffield study, carried out in 1975, that council tenants often feel their estate is not policed enough, that is, their estate receives poor policing. A majority of respondents in all the council areas covered by this survey (including two high offender rate estates) thought police did not patrol sufficiently.

9. The evidence of various researchers suggests that the criteria for a 'low grade' being given to an applicant for housing by most local authority housing departments is :
1) low income, and 2) low domestic standards.
Large working class families often have the lowest incomes - particularly in relation to their needs - and financial problems often produce 'low domestic standards'. Moreover, when an applicant is being assessed it is not only pure cleanliness that is used as a criterion for grading, but also standards of furnishings, decorative order of the accommodation, condition of bed linen and so on - all of which are linked to the financial status of a household.

10. This tendency to individualise social problems and make social policy recommendations accordingly is a characteristic of the council estate research in the 1950's and 1960's, which I discussed in Chapter Two. The social work ideology in Liverpool in the 1970's, described by Gill, could for example, equally well describe the approach of the Bristol Social Project team to their estates in Bristol in the 1950's.

11. Similarly, contrasting with Baldwin's Blackacre, Gill found a very high proportion of on-street delinquencies amongst his adolescent sample.

12. I use phenomenological here as an umbrella term to incorporate all the schools of sociological thought which have developed the Weberian idea that sociological explanation should be not only causally adequate, but also adequate at the level of meaning.

13. <u>See The Cullingworth Report (1969)</u>

A questionnaire was sent to 131 local authorities and 121 completed and returned it. From this the Report states there appeared to be a 'wide variety of practice' in systems of grading and allocating.

> "We have found considerable variation not only in the extent to which local authorities 'grade' their tenants, but also in the reasons why grading is thought to be necessary .... It is a far cry from allocating specifically selected houses to unsatisfactory tenants to grading all according to their 'fitness' for particular types of houses." (p.31).

The grading system seemed to vary with type of stock the authority had to allocate, i.e. a small authority with all post-war houses found no need for careful grading, a large authority with a wide variety of stock felt it necessary to operate a rigorous grading system.
The Report concludes that

> "the majority of applicants are suitable for a new house and grading is justified for only a very small

group of 'problem families' who would literally wreck a good house." (p 33)

14. The term 'mixing' as used by Tucker here mean the housing together on estates of low and high income tenants. However, 'mixing' is a term used often in the council estate literature and is taken to mean, more generally, the housing together of 'respectable' and 'rough' tenants. Sometimes there is the implicit assumption that low income is necessarily accompanied by 'low' standards and generally deviant life styles. This is obviously a questionable assumption.

15. Noble Street and Norwich Place shows a table of lettings by lengths of previous tenancies. (p.29).

Analysis of households: length of present tenancy by length of previous tenancy, exclusive of households where previous tenancy was in Noble Street or Norwich Place

Length of present tenancy	Less than 1 yr	Less than 3 yrs	3-9 yrs	10 yrs +	Total
less than 1 yr	45	8	5	1	59
less than 3 yrs	32	10	9	1	52
less than 10 yrs	10	12	16	10	48
10 years or more	4	8	16	21	49
TOTAL :	91	38	46	33	208

16. Patched houses is a term used for houses bought by a local authority awaiting demolition under a clearance scheme, but in the meantime given only essential repairs and let to tenants. These houses being short life and low rent are often used by housing departments as either emergency accommodation, or are let to unsatisfactory tenants and low grade applicants. The fact that they are not on an estate makes such a lettings policy even more attractive to the housing department. If the tenants cause their neighbours problems this does not rebound on the housing department in the same way as it does if the neighbours are also council tenants.

17. Data on the children was obtained from education welfare records, 'as the local authority records proved incomplete and sometimes out of date' (p.49). The children were, therefore, aged six to sixteen and the density of children on a block was calculated by dividing the number of children, in this age group, in each block by the number of dwellings.

18. The authors do consider that in cases where demolition or major surgery were considered for estates 'political factors as well as loan sanctions and subsidy considerations were being taken into account'. (p.102).

19. S. Wilson (1978) in Tackling Vandalism does link child ~~deviations~~ crashes with rates of damage on council estates.

20. Although we know a little of the characteristics that make particular flatted estates unpopular with their tenants. See, for example, Wilson and Burbidge (1978), the CDP (1974) publication Noble Street and Norwich Place and the D.O.E. (1975) publication The Social Effects of Living off the Ground.

21. Mawby, R. (1979) Policing the City.

22. See Sanders, A. Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Sheffield.

23. The Sheffield study, however, has found that high offender rate areas have higher residential victimisation rates than the low offender rate areas. See Mawby, R. (1979) Policing the City.

24. This is stated in a pamphlet issued in connection with this project entitled Vandalism - An Approach Through Consultation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE METHODOLOGY

1.1. Participant observation and the development of sociological theory

Participant observation is a long-established method of sociological enquiry, and its popularity has fluctuated with the changing fashions in sociological theory. At the times in the history of sociological theory when 'naturalism' as opposed to 'positivism' and'ethnography' as opposed to 'scientism' is in vogue, participant observation as a research method becomes highly favoured.[1] Similarly, in criminology when 'appreciation' becomes more academically acceptable than 'correctionalism' participant observation becomes a respected research method. This is not to suggest that individual academics have not adopted participant observation as a research method at times when mainstream sociological theory made it a less acceptable methodology. Nor that at any one time the sociologists predisposed to a social action approach have been entirely exiled by their positivist colleagues.

In fact, participant observation has been used as a research method in various social science disciplines since the last century. Early participant observation studies in sociology are associated with the Chicago school. Nels Anderson's study(1923) of the hobo is often seen as the pioneer work in participant observation, but in fact, Malinowski used this method in his anthropological research, and even before this Le Play in the mid-nineteenth century took on the role of a participant observer to make a study of European workers. The classic study using participant observation as a research method is probably that of W. Foote-Whyte (1943) - an era when American sociology favoured ethnography. The 1950's, however, saw the predominance of the structural

functional school of sociological theorists and even those interested in empirical research favour the more quantitative research methods considered more scientific.

The development of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism in recent years has led to renewed interest in the social action approach, the roots of which lie in the work of Max Weber. This has brought participant observation once more to the fore amongst sociological research methods. Weber's concept of 'verstehen' and the demand for sociological explanation to be relevant at the level of meaning which was taken up and expanded upon by Schutz and later phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists have given ethnographic sociology a new importance and made participant observation an essential method of sociological enquiry. Despite this 'new' concern of sociological theory for validity in empirical research, and the necessity for the investigation of 'meaning' in sociological explanation, there remains at present the challenge to participant observation - at least in its ethnographic, appreciative form - by marxist theorists who deny the need for such empirical research, or who argue for the unification of research and political practice.

British sociology may have made some use of participant observation as a research method in recent years, but British criminology has little to offer in the way of participant observation studies. This dearth of participant observation studies in British criminology may be attributable, in part, to its overriding correctionalist interest, which predominated until recent years , and in part to the nature of the subject matter of criminology, which makes participant observation a fairly difficult technique to use from purely practical considerations. In terms of the former, it has already been said that correctionalism did not support a research method such as participant observation.[2]

Crime was equated with pathology and an academic's immersion in the life style and experiences of this pathological minority would have been unthinkable unless motivated by a reforming or evangelical zeal. The late 1960's and early 1970's, however, saw a growing political awareness and a new radicalism in criminology, the influence of the social action approach in sociology gradually began to take effect and criminologists began to take notice of the structure-action debate which had for some time been a pre-occupation of sociologists.

The necessity for explanations of human behaviour in criminology to be adequate at the level of meaning also fitted well with the political commitment of the radical criminologists. But despite this, closer relationship between the two disciplines and the opening up of research areas within criminology for which participant observation was an eminently suitable research method in empirical as well as theoretical terms, few empirical researchers in criminology have adopted this method of research. This might be taken to suggest that the second possible reason given for the lack of participant observation studies in criminology - the practical difficulties presented by the subject matter- may be the greater obstacle.

Polsky (1967), writing in America, sets out to counter the criticisms of those who are opposed to field studiesof criminals in their natural social world, either on ideological grounds, or because they view such a research enterprise as either impossible or fraught with such difficulty as to render it useless. He expresses concern over the lack of qualitative studies of the criminal in his natural social setting free from the constraints of the social work approach.

> "Lately a number of sociologists themselves have joined forces with social workers to promote extra scientific goals in the name of science and have saddled us with

> new euphemisms for these goals, such as "applied sociology" and "action-oriented research" (p.117).

Criminology stands accused of neglecting the possibility of field research amongst adult criminals. The adult criminals that have been studied have been in "jails or other anti-crime settings such as the courts, and probation and parole systems." (p.119). This raises a number of problems, not least being that of unrepresentative samples of criminals, those that have been apprehended and convicted. But also, as Polsky points out, information offered to the researcher in anti-crime settings must always be suspect. The relationship between researcher and subject will be influenced by the setting, and there is no opportunity to check the information offered by observation of the subject's normal behaviour in his 'natural environment'. Moreover, most of the data arising in this type of research is in the form of recollections long after the event. Polsky emphasises the need for,

> "well rounded contemporary sociological descriptions and analyses of criminal life styles, subcultures and their relation to larger social processes and structures." (p.122).

As it is, some criminolgogists neglect field research techniques entirely, others study criminals in the artificial situation of penal institutions, still others grant the potential value of field research but believe there to be insuperable practical difficulties. Polsky argues for,

> "The study of career criminals 'au naturel', in the field, the study of such criminals as they normally go about their work and play, the study of uncaught criminals and the study of others who in the past have been caught but are not caught at the time you study them." (pp.122-123).

Polsky, as an experienced criminological field researcher, argues that the prąctical difficulties to be faced in making such a study of

the criminal in his natural social setting, can be overcome.

Polsky is writing in America, but in Britainthe study of criminals'in their natural social setting' has been even more neglected, having neither contemporary studies nor 'classical' such as those of the Chicago school to our credit. In Britain the number of participant observation studies of the 'criminal', or more accurately, of people who sometimes commit crimes remains very small, in fact, there are really only studies of 'delinquents' rather than adult criminals. This remains the situation in Britain despite the fact that the new wave of 'social-interactionist' inspired criminology has opened up many areas for empirical research which really demand a qualitative research method.

1.2. The participant observation literature

The literature on participant observation as a method of social research is fairly voluminous. Most of it actually falls into a category that might be entitled the 'conduct of enquiry'. This literature includes both first hand accounts of research experiences by participant observers, detailing problems met in the field, and justifications of techniques adopted to combat such problems, which are very useful to the first time user of this method. It also includes general discussions of research methods open to the social scientist, and comparisons of the advantages and disadvantages accruing to each method. Many of these are concerned to defend participant observation against charges of being 'unscientific', and elaborate strategies which may be adopted and checks that might be built in to the method to make it match up to the demands of scientism. Others argue the case for participant observation as a research method peculiarly suited to social science and contend that the nature of the subject matter is so different from that of the natural sciences that the rigid application

of scientific criteria to sociological research methods is at best, unwarranted, if not absurd. A little has been written on participant observation as a research method which might be said to warrant the title the 'logic of enquiry', the fit of participant observation as a research methodology with sociological and criminological theory.[3] Phenomenology, most notably in the person of Schutz, has attempted to consider participant observation as a technique to discover subjective meaning.[4] Epistemological discussions of participant observation are, however, far outnumbered by the straightforward methodological discussions mentioned above.

I do not intend, here, to enter into a critical appraisal of either of these types of participant observation literature. In the succeeding sections of this chapter, however, I refer at times to the literature dealing with the 'conduct of inquiry', where it is relevant in describing field situations and problems, or in discussions of the particular research strategies which I adopted.

1.3. Participant observation as the method selected for this research

The present research was not originally conceived as an opportunity to put participant observation as a research method into action. Rather, the research problem dictated the choice of research method. This choice was not made by me, but by the originators of the Sheffield study on Urban Social Structure and Crime as the method most suited to the overall research strategy of the Sheffield Study, and also to the research problem as it was formulated - the explanation of offender rate differentials between matched pairs of council house estates.[5] For this reason I have not embarked upon a critical appraisal of the participant observation literature, nor on a discussion or defence of participant observation as a research method. I have, however,

attempted, in what follows, to justify my behaviour and decisions in the field. That is, I have not set out to justify the use of participant observation as a method of social enquiry, but rather to justify the way in which I used it. The success of this method in this particular piece of research, and my own particular interpretation of this method in the field, can only be assessed on 'results'. It is hoped that the findings, as they are presented in this thesis, will justify not only my actions in my role as participant observer, but also the decision to use this research method in the second stage of the Sheffield study.

I would like, before going on to the substantive account of my work in the field, to declare my interests in this research method. I accepted the research task initially because I have always believed in the necessity of empirical research for both producing, as well as testing, hypotheses in sociology and criminology. As I argue in the first chapter of this thesis, participant observation is an essential method of empirical research in those disciplines offering the unique opportunity to the sociologist or criminologist to share the life styles and experiences of a 'social group', so that any explanation offered about their behaviour or social situation is based on an informed and empathetic understanding.[6] It is the best method available to the social researcher, which allows actors to give their own accounts of the meaning of their actions and their situation as they perceive it, and this is an essential part of any sociological explanation. I might, therefore, be described as a 'social action' criminologist, who believes that 'meaning of actions' and 'definitions of situations' are as important as social-structural processes in sociological and criminological analysis, and that for this reason qualitative methods are essential to social research enterprises.

My primary objective in this research is to offer an explanation for the 'problem' as posed by stage one of the Sheffield study. I set out to do this in the spirit of 'appreciation' as described by Matza (1969). At the same time I have employed quantitative methods on a small scale which is consistent with my own belief that although qualitative methods form an essential part of sociological and criminological research they are rarely adequate on their own. I have, therefore, tried to balance the account based on information offered to me in the field by the subjects of the research, with some relevant quantitative data collected from information recorded at the City's Housing Department. Although at most times these are mutually supportive, where they do differ they should not necessarily be taken as contradictory, but understood as part of a total reality. Thus, at times in my research the wisdom of W.I. Thomas was brought home to me - it does not matter if a situation is real or not - if the actors define a situation as real it will be real in its consequences.

1.4. Participant observation on the two pre-war estates

What follows is essentially a description of my work in the field as a participant observer. This account is based on notes that I made during the time I was employing this research method, and on a paper which I wrote after about six months in the field. At times I quote directly from my field notes and recorded conversations to convey the situation as I experienced it then, rather than as I remember and interpret it now. Incidents and conversations of interest I recorded as soon as possible to avoid problems of inaccurate re-call. In some situations, such as in pubs and bingo halls, it was impossible to take immediate notes, but the 'writing up' was never left to the next day. In addition, I wrote brief personal reviews on average every week, not only to systematise field notes, but also to record my own

impressions and ideas about the data collected. My research strategy was much the same as that described by Jon Gower Davis in his account of participant observation in Rye-Hill, Newcastle.

> "I made it my business to be as ubiquitous as possible .... I made notes on numerous conversations and telephone calls, and collected chance remarks and casual writings as avidly as a magpie." (p.233).

I spent about a year working as a participant observer on these two estates, and I subsequently maintained some contacts with residents after I withdrew from the field. In a sense, I have never ceased to be a 'sometime participating' observer of council estates and council tenants in this city generally. Once an interest is stimulated by a research problem it does not cease automatically when one withdraws from the field. Thus, I still have a great interest in meeting council tenants, comparing their impressions of their own estate and other estates in the city, and I am still a keen observer of the estates themselves and any relevant reporting on them in the media. My contacts with council tenants have continued to extend in my personal life since I ceased the participant observation stage of my research, and anything that I have learned from such contacts - particularly in relation to the housing market or crime has been recorded as contributory information.

I have divided the account of my participant observation on the first two estates studied (CHH and CHL), into four sections, to correspond with what appear to me to be distinct periods of time, in which I utilised different research strategies during my year of research. Inevitably, perhaps, my observations of CHH and CHL are supplemented by observations of CHM, because its geographical proximity meant that I had frequent interactions with residents of this estate also. Moreover, I

believed that CHM might be a particularly interesting estate for comparison with CHN and CHL, as it was at that time an estate in transition - no longer select and, in fact, apparently well on the way to becoming a 'problem' area.

2. The early days of field research

2.1. Participant Observation literature as a guide to selecting a role

Before starting work as a participant observer on the two Sheffield council estates I attempted to read a cross-section of the existing literature on participant observation, in order to gain some understanding of what the research method involved; its relation as a methodological technique to social and criminological theory and epistemology, and its applicability to different types of research problems. In particular, I was interested in the first hand accounts of the experiences of participant observers in a variety of social situations, and their discussions of the uses and limitations of participant observation as a research method, and the typical opportunities and pitfalls that are met in the field, thus offering me insights and guidelines for my own research.

The standard text book definition of participant observation was perhaps provided by Florence Kluckhohn (1940), when she wrote :

> "Participant observation is conscious and systematic sharing, in so far as circumstances permit, in the life activities and on occasion, in the interests and affects of a group of persons. Its purpose is to obtain data about behaviour through direct contact and in terms of specific situations in which the distortion that results from the investigator's being an outside agent is reduced to a minimum."
> (p.331).

The key phrase in this definition for many 'would-be' participant observers is "in so far as circumstances permit", for many have found in a variety of social fields that circumstances have not

permitted such a 'systematic' sharing. There has, therefore, emerged a broad consensus amongst writers on the subject that in the final analysis it is the research situation that should dictate the type of roles that the prospective participant observer should adopt, rather than adherence to some ideal type of research method. There have been a number of attempts to differentiate and classify the variety of roles a participant observer may adopt, based on the degree of participation involved. Gold (1958), for example, has constructed a typology ranging from the complete participant to the complete observer. Between these two came the participant as observer and the observer as participant. Gold discusses the advantages and disadvantages of these roles. The complete participant and the participant as observer are better at getting valid information than either the observer as participant or the complete observer roles. In the latter two roles, where the emphasis is on observation, the researcher may well miss important information - this danger is of course increased with decreased participation, so that it is an extreme problem for the complete observer. The complete participant is in a position to gain the most valid information from his subjects and to achieve the best understanding of their social world. At the same time, he is most at risk in terms of over-involvement with his subjects and either 'going native' or facing an identity crisis. This danger decreases with less participation, so that it is not a problem at all for the complete observer. Objectively, a selected role is simply an expedient device for securing a given level of information, but Gold points out that the selection of a role must also take into account the researcher as an individual, and he has to select the role he can utilise best in his chosen research field.

A simplification of such typologies, however, is to discuss in broader terms the 'outsider' and the 'insider' roles in participant

observation and to compare and contrast the two in terms of the limitations and advantages that accrue from such roles. An 'insider' role involves the researcher participating fully in the life of his subjects, he may even be or have been a member of the group which he is researching. Advocates of the insider role argue that only as an insider can the researcher really understand the social world he is attempting to study, and gain the full confidence of his subjects. With an 'outsider' role the researcher may still participate in the life of his subjects, but throughout this participation he remains inwardly detached from those he is in interaction with, and acceptance by them will be only in terms of an outsider. Merton (1947) writes of the 'stranger' value of the participant observer adopting an outsider role. He suggests that in everyday life there are social interactions which have 'stranger-value'. Chance meetings such as those between two travellers on a train have 'stranger value' - confidences between the travellers are possible because both know that neither will probably see the other again. The 'outsider' in field research offers such an opportunity for confidences from his subjects.

> "Individuals grasp the rare opportunity to give voice to their sentiments and preoccupations in the presence of a listener who will not pass judgement, with whom they will not have personal relations in the future ... " (p.305).

Other writers stressing the advantages of an 'outsider' role emphasise the inner distance that a researcher can maintain which guards him against over-involvement with his subjects.

2.2. Specific problems of this research

My research situation presented me with two 'problems' which made me decide to adopt an 'outsider' role. Firstly, I was unable to obtain accommodation on the two estates, and so I rented a house some

two miles away which necessitated my commuting to the estates to undertake my research. This introduced a rather artificial element into my research situation. Secondly, it has been demonstrated by other practitioners of this research method that participant observation is most successful in a 'small group' research situation. My research problem, that of explaining a differential criminal offender rate between two fairly large council estates[7] meant that I had to attempt to get to know, as a participant observer, in pure numerical terms a very large number of people who could fairly be taken as a representative cross-section of the estates' population. A survey of the literature shows that most participant observers have lived for the period of their research amongst the people they are studying, or if the subject of their study has been an organisation rather than a 'residential community' they have obtained a definite social position within that organisation. Moreover, few participant observers have 'taken on' such a large population as that which was presented to me.

Damer (1974) and Gill (1977) both operated as participant observers on council estates, but in the case of Damer he managed to obtain accommodation on that estate, and Luke Street, the subject of Gill's study, is a very small council area compared with the two Sheffield estates.[8] Davis lived in his privately-rented area of Newcastle, and Parker (1974) and Patrick (1973) worked with small groups. Downes (1966) and Armstrong and Wilson (1971) adopted roles which enabled them to carry out informal observation, thus becoming non-participating observers, and Carter (1954) took up employment in a local factory in the small town of Radby. British criminology, therefore, offered few precedents or guidelines.

I entered the field, therefore, with a rather ill-defined 'outsider' role which was not in any real sense chosen, but rather

dictated for me by the research situation. These were, in fact, rather aimless days for me personally, and although I established a few acquaintances with people who lived on the estates, I really made little progress in tackling my research problem. I commuted to the estates to do my shopping, my washing at the launderette, to have my lunch in a cafe, to have a drink in the evening at a pub, instead of doing all these things in the area where I actually lived. In fact, I had to discipline myself to go to the estates for everything - including 'adopting' a garage where I always filled my car with petraol, and a park where I regularly walked my dog! I use the phrase 'discipline myself' deliberately, because it is far easier to perform these day-to-day activities in the area where one lives, and it is to denote this situation that in an earlier paragraph I refer to an 'artificial' element in these early days of my field work. And despite all my attempts to systematically share the life activities of the group of persons I was studying I was still missing out in terms of the ordinary everyday contacts that develop between neighbours. In retrospect, I believe that my lack of a specific role to play when interacting with people who lived on the estates had a two-way detrimental effect on the research enterprise. Firstly, I could offer no meaningful identity to the people I met - that is, I had no assured social status in their social world, my role was ill-defined and ambiguous. I had great difficulty in explaining my presence to them in a meaningful way, although I tried to emphasise the sociological nature of my interests, that is, my interest in their opinions of their housing areas, their attitudes towards the Housing Department as landlord, and in housing problems generally, rather than the criminological research problem which was my main concern. In approaching my research problem in this way I was working on the basis of the common-sense assumption that people would talk more readily and

with more confidence on such issues as housing and local facilities than on criminal activities, whether they participated in such or not. I worked with the idea that specific questions about crime should be left until they could be introduced quite naturally into conversations by the researcher, or were mentioned by subjects without any prompting, and neither of these would occur until I managed to build up some rapport with the people I met. The second effect of my having no specific role to play on the estates was on me personally. I lacked the self-confidence and sense of self-identity in my interactions with subjects that would have enabled me to establish a rapport and to behave naturally. Instead, I felt that all my activities on the estates had an element of contrivance about them, that is, I lost that spontaneity of action that comes from acting without continual self-examination and self-awareness. My problem, therefore, was that given that I had to assume an outsider role because of the external circumstances of my research situation, how could I transform that 'outsider' role in the pejorative sense to an 'outsider' role which would enable me to be accepted by my subjects, despite differences? Certainly there were many differences between the residents of these estates and myself. I did not share many social characteristics or life experiences with my subjects. I was not, for example, working class in origin, a native of Sheffield, a council house tenant, a worker or the wife of a worker in the steel or other related industry. Not only did I not share a common history or a present social situation with my subjects, my life expectations were also different. My financial life was not organised around the alternating demands of rent and "Wigfalls", and I did not have to face the prospect of being a council tenant for the rest of my life. I was likely to 'move on' in a few years, while the material facts of their existence such as housing and income were likely to remain the same. The debit side seemed overwhelming and I turned back to the

literature on participant observation.

2.3. The opportunities for adopting an outsider role

On two points most writers on the subject seemd agreed. Firstly, rarely does the academic and the subject of the research coincide in the same person. There are few true 'insider' accounts in sociology and criminology[9] but those that exist have their attendant problems, such as the subjective involvement and consequent bias of the author. Secondly, there can be no hard and fast rules on the role to adopt in participant observation. The role a participant observer chooses to play must be judged in the light of whether it has facilitated or deterred effective, valid and meaningful observation. The research problem and the social situation in which the observer finds himself must dictate the most productive role to take, given a prior understanding of the advantages and limitations of the possible types of roles. Every field research situation must be unique to the researcher and, therefore, every researcher must expect some trial and error attempts at establishing a rapport with his subjects before the best research role is found. Reassured by this I decided to examine the credit side of my situation and to put this to its best possible use in my research. Broadly, there were three possible bases of social interaction and communality likely to lead to my acceptance by subjects and my integration into the 'social life' of the two estates. These I considered to be housing and neighbourhood area, leisure time activities and employment. As regards the first, housing and neighbourhood area, I had already found that living in the area but not on one of the estates was not facilitating participant observation in any way. Being a 'renter' in the housing market as opposed to an 'owner' did not give me any common ground either. I quickly gained the impression from the council tenants I had met that only a minority had once rented privately owned accommodation, and that most had lived in council owned housing "all their lives".[10] There are no

points of similarity between searching for a house or flat to rent in the private sector and putting one's name down on the 'housing list' and waiting at home for the housing visitor to call. Occasionally a young couple would enter the private sector rather than wait in a difficult situation with in-laws, but more often the higher rents of the private sector and the difficulty of finding landlords who accept children deterred such people from trying the private sector for housing.

The second possible basis for shared experiences and social interaction with the residents of the estates which I considered was leisure time activities. In fact, the few council tenants I knew so far I had met in this way. Jennifer[11] for example, a waitress in the local cafe, lived in CHH with her husband and four children. She had plenty to say about her housing difficulties, past and present, and gave me a very colourful account of life on the estate, but I could take our 'relationship' no further than long talks in the cafe's less busy hours.

With Jim and Robert Jackson I had more success. I met them at a motor auction outside the area. I was with a friend at the time, and we found we all had a common 'interest' - secondhand car dealing. We were asked back to their house, which was on a neighbouring estate, and I met Jim's wife Mary and his daughter, Margaret. This family were particularly helpful to me, introducing me to their friends and relations, nearly all of whom were council tenants from a variety of estates in north Sheffield, including CHH and CHL. I already had a number of contacts with the 'back street' motor trade in Leeds and Sheffield, and this made my friendship with this family and their friends more one of mutual gain than the exploitative type that participant observation usually necessitates. I became a useful person to know for parts, repairs, towing, cheap cars and so on. Realising the

potential of this I multiplied my own contacts with the motor trade - small garages, accessory shops and scrap yards.

I soon learnt that a major pre-occupation of the women in the area was playing bingo, and Mary took me to bingo halls and introduced me to the intricacies of the game. This proved very useful, firstly for widening my contacts in the field - Mary introduced me to many other regular bingo players, secondly, it was a useful talking point in conversation and, thirdly, it was a necessary social skill when asked out for the evening. Bingo, although a major pastime for many women who live on the estates is not an exclusively female preserve - although in my experience most women who play do so more frequently than men. The Jackson family, then, were probably my most useful contacts in this period, and although not living on either estate with which I was concerned, they introduced me to a social network of friends and relatives who did. They took me to the working men's club, pubs and local functions, as well as to the bingo halls, and I began to feel a true participant.

Other residents of the estates that I had talked to before meeting the Jacksons were isolated encounters, and although they gave me some knowledge of the estates they did not help me to become involved in everyday social interaction amongst residents. With the Jackson family I was more involved. I quote a passage from my field notes :

> "I went out with Jim and Robert this morning to buy a car from the '£30 and under column' .... [12] Mary asked me to stay to lunch which I accepted, and this afternoon we watched T.V. and discussed at length our chances on 'Mark the ball'.... [13] Tonight Mary is taking me to a different bingo hall in town .... I feel really at ease with them and forget at times my research interest, I genuinely enjoy being with them."

I knew, however, that I had to break out from the Jackson family and friends - although I still see them now - and widen my contacts if my research was to be in any way successful. This returned me to

considering the third possible point of contact, or basis of interaction with my subjects, that of employment.

It was in my employment that I was the complete 'outsider', and I mean this in a pejorative sense of the 'oddball'. However I introduced myself, as a student or as working for the university, the same constraint was noticeable. I tried not to say too much about what I did but sooner or later people start talking about their work. Before I started my research most of my friends would have been classified by a sociologist as 'working class', and probably as 'rough working class' at that, usually having no regular or conventional employment, but rather falling into that elusive catégory of people who earn their living by 'wheeling and dealing', and whose names never appear on any taxation form. But I had made these friends 'naturally', not through the conscious contrivance of a research situation. I knew that this was the type of person I made friends with most easily, and that some such people must live on the two housing estates, but the problem remained: how to meet them? And then there were the 'ordinary' working class families who make up the vast majority of the residents of both estates, employed in manual jobs of varying skills in the local industries. How could I get to meet them in an ordinary way as a social equal? The answer eventually seemed to me to lie in taking a job which would for the time put me in a comparable occupational class as the people I wanted to meet, and at the same time help me meet these people through my work. I had no intention of concealing the fact of my research, but I felt I needed to play it down and take on an occupational role that could be used as a basis for social interaction. Having had previous experience in mini-cab firms in London the obvious choice for me was to join a local mini-cab firm in Sheffield, as a driver. In that way I would be working with other drivers who lived locally and also carrying passengers who lived on the estates.

3. The first taxi office

3.1. 'Joining the Firm'

The 'Better Car' private-hire firm that took me on as a driver was situated some two miles from the estates. It was, however, the only private-hire firm in that area of north Sheffield at the time. The firm was owned by a very equable couple and the husband was himself an ex-resident of CHH. I was the only female driver on the firm, which consisted of Eddie and his wife Susan - who ran an 'off-licence', an d about ten drivers. In fact, although the number of drivers remained fairly constant, with the exception of one or two 'old hands', the personnel was constantly changing. Most of the drivers were natives of Sheffield and a fair proportion had lived or were living on CHH or CHL. In the nine months I worked with the 'Better Cars' there were forty or fifty drivers who drove for the firm - many of whom had done the 'circuit' of private hire firms in Sheffield: some stayed only a few days, others lasted months, but they typically left without warning (often 'under a cloud'), and this was accepted as normal.

I enlisted Eddy and Susan's co-operation in my research from the first days at the firm, and they seemed to appreciate this confidence. Eddy put all the calls off CHH and CHL my way, and spent a lot of time introducing me to friends and relatives from CHH. In fact, he always introduced me with some pride as 'my lady driver'. I soon became one of the family and willingly accepted such extra tasks as manning the radio control at the taxi firm at night, when Eddy considered it unsafe for me to drive, and standing in for Susan at the off-licence when she wanted to go out. For nine months 'Better Cars' became my home, the base from which I spent my working, and most of my sleeping, hours.

It was from the time of joing 'Better Cars' that my research really began to make progress. At the same time, it was not until after

I had joined the firm that I realised that those early days in the field had not been wasted as I had thought. In those first two months or so I had familiarised myself with the two estates, their geographical layout, the pubs, shops, working men's clubs and bingo halls. Less tangibly I had also become familiar with their reputations, the naming of small areas and associated status distinctions. The first had the practical use in facilitating my finding places in my role as taxi driver, which saved me from appearing too inefficient at my work. The second enabled me to understand references in conversation to the estates and the importance of such remarks for me. Thus, for example, I could appreciate the significance and humour of a remark made in my first week or two at the firm, when a somewhat dishevelled and intoxicated middle aged women walked into the 'office' for a taxi.

"A typical - estate resident" followed by guffaws of laughter...

"And she's the only person in our street who's had her gas meter broken into six times this year" - more laughter.

I also found that the few people I had met from the estates gave me an acceptability to others I met at the taxi firm. Thus a girl who came for a few weeks as the radio controller lived on CHH, and became very friendly when she learnt that I knew Jennifer, the waitress in the local cafe who came from the same estate. Such unexpected links as these gave me a firmer footing with the people I was trying to get to know.

3.2. Taxi driver as an interaction facilitating role

I became a taxi driver because I needed to adopt an interaction-facilitating role in my research. I was fortunate - the specific role I adopted was a success, and the pay-off was good. Working as a taxi driver gave me a legitimate access to many families on the estates, it facilitated my acceptability, and proved to be a useful introductory

role in the field for me. A taxi driver is an occupation of the same sort of social status level as the occupations of the majority of the residents of the estates. In fact, on more than one occasion I was told by my passengers from these estates that a relative or friend also 'worked the taxis'. This led into discussions of the various Sheffield 'private-hire' firms and their iniquties, in conversations which used the shared understandings and language that comes from knowledge of and participation in the same activity. The occupation of taxi driver was, in this way, comprehensible, acceptable and commonplace for my subjects, and did not distinguish me sharply from them as the role of university student had done. In this I was guided by Geer (1964) who wrote :

> "If the setting and the group are reasonably familiar to the observer .... his problem in initiating a role is a matter of judicial negatives. He should not have the manner or appearance of any group which his informant group distinguishes sharply from itself." (p.327).

Although I always dismissed the criminological interest of my research in quite vague terms when asked, I made no attempt to conceal the reasons for my interest in any information that was offered to me. I did play down my university background, however, and when asked what I did before I came to university I replied in terms of my period in London working both in taxi firms and in an accommodation agency. The typical response to this emphasis of my time in London was in terms of a curiosity about London itself which also facilitated conversation.

3.3. Taxi driver as an outsider role

Despite the fact that the taxi driver role gave me an entrance to the estates it was still very much an 'outsider' role for a participant observer. Much has been written on the merits and limitations of the outsider role in participant observation, or the role of the social marginal, as it is sometimes referred to. Kluckhohn, who

views role playing as the key to participant observation in a community, which makes insights into that community life possible, favours the more fully participant role where circumstances permit, but she acknowledges that :

> "The investigator is never able to shake off entirely her role of outsider, and I am in accord with those who maintain that it is not advisable for him to do so. Some exceedingly valuable information comes to the outsider simply because he is one." (p.336).

It was, however, Merton's (1947) discussion of the stranger values of the outsider which was most relevant to my research. The role of the taxi-driver for me was a role of a 'near-stranger' for my passengers. Many times, I believe, people have spoken to me, as that near stranger, more expansively and with more confidence than they would speak to their friends and neighbours. There are of course a number of social roles that come into this category; doctors and hairdressers, for example, also can have the opportunity to fulfil this function for their patient, customer or client. Historically, the servant often performed this function. Such roles would make an interesting subject for sociological analysis, and further insights into such a role can be gained from fiction. The example that comes to mind is that of '<u>The Hireling</u>' by L.P. Hartley (1957). As is suggested in this novel, and I have experienced this on many occasions myself, it is not uncommon for people to have a taxi, not only because they want to get from A to B, but also because this gives them the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic stranger. Taxi-driver as unwitting psycho-therapist may sound a little far fetched to anyone who has never done this job, but most taxi-firms would confirm that there are always a percentage of customers - albeit a small minority - who take a taxi because they are lonely. For others, although they would not describe themselves as

lonely, or in need of someone to talk to, taking a taxi breaks up the monotonous routine of daily life and gives them an opportunity to engage in conversation and pass the time with someone other than their family, neighbours or friends. It provides them with that sympathetic (and most taxi-drivers are sympathetic if they feel this is what the passenger wants, if only because they are thinking of payment at the end of the journey) and anonymous figure to whom they can spill their troubles, share their experiences and generally talk about themselves without fear of repercussions from the reaction of the other, to these confidences which might rebound on their everyday life. In this respect, being a taxi-driver does have stranger value in the general sense apart from any consideration of the peculiar relationship between a driver and his passengers. And given that all information received by a researcher from his subjects must be judged for its creditability in the context in which it is offered, information received in my role as a taxi-driver came at a premium. Passengers have little reason to deceive or to impress their drivers. Both the need to deceive and the desire to impress are common complexities of closer relationships.

3.4 The ethics of the research strategy

A note here might be in order on the ethicality of participant observation. The wider issue of the ethics of this research method vis-a-vis other methods of social investigation is not within the scope of this thesis. It might, however, be argued from my description of 'information gathering' as a taxi-driver that such a process had an unethical and exploitative side. All participant observer roles involve a degree of exploitation of the subjects, in the sense that however much an 'insider' that researcher becomes, and however genuinely involved in his subjects' way of life, he always has an ulterior purpose, that is,

research. For my part I have always declared my research interests, although I am bound to say I believe the majority of people did not really understand these. Typically, people were not bothered by the disclosure of my research purposes, in fact, the majority seemed to like the idea of participating in a research project and being asked their aspirations and experiences. Many, in fact, indicated to me that they felt such researchwas a "good thing" and that "it gives the ordinary person a chance to have their say". This must be particularly true for research such as mine, which concerns many materially and socially deprived people who are generally ignored and neglected by the wider society. The pay-off for these people from my research may be nil, indeed they never expected it to be anything else, but at the time they became the focus of interest and had the opportunity to tell somebody - albeit a very ineffectual somebody - about their lives generally.

3.5. Participant Observation and the representativeness of the respondents

One of the problems the participant observer has to face is that of becoming too identified with one particular social group in a community so that his data can be invalidated by reference to the unrepresentativeness of his informants to the larger population. Once the participant observer becomes identified with a particular group within the community he often finds difficulty in being accepted by those outside the group. He may also have personal difficulty in disassociating himself enough from those who have accepted him to make himself acceptable to other members of the community. A related problem is that some groups are more accessible than others to the participant observer. The housing estate literature suggests, for example, that the 'roughs' may well be more accessible than the 'respectables' by virtue of their attitudes, values and life style, as well as by their different

use of public space. The 'respectables' who are thought to be the least accessible, to the participant observer, are characterised by their privatised life style, their emphasis on the value of 'keeping oneself to oneself' and their lesser use of public spaces such as pubs, clubs, bingo halls and the like. The role of taxi-driver helped me avoid both these problems. I did not become identified with any one social group within the estate and all 'types' of resident became accessible to me. It is difficult to think of any common factor about people who take taxis that could make them unrepresentative of the residents of the estate as a whole. Perhaps affluence will be suggested as a common characteristic of those who use a taxi as a means of transport, but in my experience this is not the case. Many of the people I have regularly taken in a taxi I know to be on low fixed incomes, such as supplementary or unemployment benefit. This is, of course, related to the questions of primary and secondary poverty. I have not meant to suggest in the foregoing that it is only or primarily the lonely who take taxis - these form a very small but significant minority. People take taxis for many reasons of necessity or convenience, from visiting sick relations or going on holiday, to doing the rounds of pubs and betting offices. Taxi-driving, thus, enabled me to meet quite a varied cross-section of the people who live on the two estates.

3.6. Participant Observation taxi-driving and criminological inquiry

I found most people would talk unhesitatingly, and indeed, often with enthusiasm about their housing situation, past and present, and their perceptions of the area. Establishing a rapport with people so that one can pursue a more criminological line of inquiry - that is, being able to gain people's confidence, so that they will readily discuss their attitudes to different types of crime, to the police and courts,

and their participation, if any, in illegal behaviour and their experiences with law-enforcement agencies, is often more difficult. My experiences as a taxi-driver led me to place people I met in one of three broad categories - these of course involve gross generalisations - according to the attitudes they held towards crime generally and their readiness to discuss these with an 'outsider'. Firstly, there were those who were quite prepared to discuss the 'decline in the moral standards of the country' generally, and more particularly the evidence of this on their estate. They openly condemn most types of criminal action that can be mentioned, and hold the 'rough element' on their estate culpable for crimes committed in the area, and the children of such families are seen as the juvenile delinquents responsible for any vandalism and violence associated with the estate. By the very nature of their responses, which I am sure they would give as readily and in much the same form to anyone conducting a survey on the estates where the interviwer has little time to establish rapport - it is impossible to find out from them whether their behaviour always reflects those attitudes. Only the 'insider' would be able to compare the consistency between expressed attitudes and actual behaviour. With these people the role of taxi-driver was not especially insightful.

Secondly, there are those people who, provided the participant observer is able to establish sufficient rapport, will discuss their oppositional attitudes to various laws, particularly those based on property norms. They will also talk quite freely of the times when their behaviour has reflected such dissent from the 'popular morality' and the infringement of laws which uphold certain parts of this popular morality. These people often express antagonism towards law enforcement agencies generally, although this is not always the case. These peopb are only likely to give honest accounts of themselves and express

dissenting opinions of the researcher gains their confidence, both in the sense of assuring their anonymity and by showing himself to be in agreement over certain issues, or at least sympathetic and not critical. To achieve this rapport between subject and researcher and gain maximum validity of responses, participant observation is probably the best research method available to the social scientist. After the adoption of this research method, success is largely dependent on the role the participant observer plays in the community and his presentation of self in interaction with his subjects. The role of a taxi-driver lessened the social distance between myself as researcher and the residents on the two estates, and was particularly successful in this respect with the category of people under discussion. Such people were unlikely to feel the need to be guarded in their conversations with a person such as a taxi-driver, and with them this role had particular stranger value.

The third category really includes such a variety of people it constitutes no category at all. What might be said is that on some issues they accept the popular morality as expressed by the law, on others they dissent. Similarly, they differentiate between types of criminals. Sometimes their attitudes to crime and criminals are based on abstract principles and argument, more often it is rooted in their own life experiences. Thus, for example, someone who has always espoused 'respectable' attitudes to crime generally, suddenly find themselves in the situation of having a son in trouble with the police, a wife charged with shoplifting, or a husband convicted for theft. Such a person experiences considerable mental turmoil often accompanied by feelings of guilt, shame or parental failure. Other people's actions are simply inconsistent with their articulated attitudes to certain types of crime. Individual circumstances can make a person's own actions

conflict with their attitudes.Such inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviour are more visible and comprehensible to the participant observer than they would be to a researcher using another methodof social enquiry such as interviewing. As a participant observer I gained such information about subjects, as a taxi-driver I was often offered such information directly. Thus, for example, on one occasion I had a woman in the taxi who, after discussing the decline in the type of person coming to live on her estate, suddenly confided that her son was in trouble with the police. Similarly a woman who decried all the break-ins on the estate and attributed them to 'those slum clearance families' confessed that she herself was on probation for shoplifting - an action which she did not herself approve of but 'we were desperate'. It is often apparent that the passenger has not felt able to talk in this way to friends and neighbours, as they are more intimately involved in their daily life.

3.7. The outsider as ascribed role - and the choice of specific role

Kluckhohn, in the above quoted article, also discusses the determinants of the specific role or roles a participant observer adopts in the field. She writes,

> "One's specific roles are affected by one's choice of general role."
> (p.336).

My general role of an 'outsider' as participant observer influenced my choice of a specific role on the estates, that of a taxi driver. As Kluckhohn shows, one's general role is influenced by certain personal characteristics of the researcher, such as age, sex and social class, which can be constraining factors. The taxi-driver role enabled me to transcend some of the difficulties I might otherwise have met, being a young, female, middle class research student. It brought me into

contact with men and women of all age groups, it somewhat disguised my social class background, and it gave me a role to play vis-a-vis the male population of these estates. This made interaction with them easier and more productive. Conversations were more serious in the asexual role of the taxi-driver, unhampered by the male-female rituals in social exchanges that are common to our culture, with all their attendant complications. Thus I was able to make my specific role work for me in combating some of the limitations that had forced me into the general role of an outsider.

3.8. The outsider role and 'going native'

The outsider role also helps the researcher to maintain an 'inner distance' which lessens the possibility of his becoming so emotionally involved in lives and problems of his subjects that this threatens his objectivity in selecting, interpreting and evaluating information he received during the course of his research. It also guards against the possibility of his abandoning the research altogether and 'going native'.[14] In my outsider role I avoided the total identification and emotional involvement with the subjects of the research that could have jeopardised the research project. At the same time, it would be dishonest to claim that I felt equally sympathetic to all my informants or that I even liked all of them. I tried at all times not to allow these personal preferences and prejudices to interfere with the research. Perhaps the most difficult situations in this respect which a participant observer has to face is when he or she makes friends with a person or family who is suffering severe difficulties - most often in my case there were housing difficulties and other forms of material deprivation - and has not the means to alleviate their situation in any concrete way. In addition to this, any 'how to do it'

handbook of participant observation stresses that the researcher if he or she is to produce 'good sociological accounts' must not allow his or her presence to alter the research situation. Suffice to say, where I could help in any way by giving aid or advice I did so. My resources were such, however, that such help was necessarily negligible and could not seriously be taken to have altered the 'research situation' in any way. I have already said that I tried to maintain an impartiality to the subjects at all times repressing personal likes and dislikes and preventing them from intruding upon the research. In this way I have tried to pursue the ideal of objectivity in social research. However, maintaing an impartiality with the variety of people I met on these estates, after recognising my subjective biases, was an easy task compared with that of exercising restraint in casting the Housing Department as the villain of the piece before I had done any research into their allocation policies. I offer an extract from my field notes :

> "Mrs. Hall was telling me today about the housing visitor who came round before they were rehoused. She gave me a blow by blow account .... no wonder so many of these tenants resent their landlord."

Before I started my research I was not 'uncommitted' on the question of housing and by the time I had finished my field research that commitment had been strengthened. A time in the Housing Department researching records and talking to staff, which I describe later in this thesis, did not change the nature of my views but it did to some extent modify them.

3.9. Some other advantages of the outsider role

Blum (1952) highlights another advantage of the outsider role for the participant observer. Provided that the outsider gains the confidence of his informants, has the ability to understand and speak

their language and is capable of interacting and understanding a social world different from his own, his experience and knowledge of other social worlds may be used as a point of reference and comparability. In this way the researcher may have the ability to see a different social world from an objective standpoint, but still be able to understand and appreciate it. Many writers on participant observation are much concerned with the possible distortions in data that result from the observer-observed relationship. Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) in particular focus on this concern. Vidich (1955) too makes a similar point, whatever the role the participant observer takes will affect his perception of the observed and also the observed's perception of the participant observer, which will have consequences for the research. For this reason, Vidich, too, favours the role of the social marginal. My role of a social marginal, as taxi-driver, minimised these possible distortions arising from the mutual perceptions of observer and observed. It also reduced the amount of time necessary to gain an acceptance and develop a rapport with subjects. These advantages, taken with others such as neutrality in respect to social cliques and objectivity in research already discussed, outweigh, I believe, some of the disadvantages inherent in the outsider role in general, and in the specific role that I adopted.

3.10. Recognition of a major theme and the method of analytic induction

Participant observers sometimes say that the major themes of a study appeared very early on in the field, although they may have been unrecognised. Major themes generally keep recurring through information volunteered or solicited from a high proportion of subjects. A major theme did emerge in the early days of my research, and its continual recurrence led me to formulate a tentative explanation for the estates' differentials while I was still in the field.

This explanation - despite a certain amount of necessary refinement - was confirmed by subsequent data from later periods of the research and from other data sources, and is presented in this thesis in its modified form. Thus, like various other participant observers, I found the most significant components of my explanation were offered to me by informants literally from my first few weeks in the field.

A major theme arising out of participant observation can be further tested by using the method of analytic induction and the search for negating cases. It would be true to say that I conducted an ongoing process of analytic induction throughout my time as a participant observer. While in the field I continued to search for negating cases for the hypothesis I was formulating. These did not, in my opinion, occur in sufficient number to invalidate the hypothesis. I would argue, however, that with such a large population of informants which could only be considred to be a 'social group' in residential terms negating cases are inevitable. But provided these cases remain in a small minority - which they did in my research - they need not destroy a hypothesis although they may require its qualification. In the final analysis in the isolated position of the participant observer, it remains the latter's responsibility to decide if the negating cases can be justifiably ignored or used to qualify the hypothesis, or whether they are relevant and numerically significant enough to demand that a hypothesis should be abandoned or totally revised.

3.11. Some disadvantages of the outsider role

Even supporters of the 'outsider' role would not disclaim that it also has its share of disadvantages. The most pertinent one perhaps is the argument that the participant observer who remains an outsider may simply just miss out on a lot of what is going on, and not only that,

not being fully involved in the daily life of his subjects he may not understand what is going on when he sees it. This is rather a hard argument to counter. In the case of my research the outsider role, as I have tried to show, was a necessary solution to the twin problems of the researcher residence away from the two estates, and the size of the population to be studied. Despite this, I always considered my work as a taxi-driver to be an interaction - facilitating role only. Many of the contacts I made as a taxi-driver were casual 'one-off' affairs, but through my work I did make more intimate and lasting friendships which in many ways compensated for the essentially casual nature of taxi-cab encounters: I therefore got to know a large number of people as acquaintances and a much smaller number as friends through my work as a taxi-driver. It was only with the friends I made, when I was asked into their homes, or out for the evening drinking or visiting clubs, that I was able to study social interaction as such, which is one of the acclaimed advantages of participant observation as a research method. The taxi-cab encounters were necessarily superficial meetings between the observer and the observed, which did not give the researcher the opportunity to observe social interaction between the observed.

Thus, information gained in this way came more in the form of a series of open-ended interview-conversations, some carried out over a period of time with 'regulars', but most being brief encounters. Ironically, the only social situation in which I became more participant than observer and in which I was able to observe social interaction between subjects without restraint was in the social setting of 'Better Cars' [15] - further proof, perhaps, that participant observation works best with small groups. I was, therefore, an 'insider' in the taxi-office to the extent I could never be on the estates.

Trice (1956) considers the 'outsider' role and gives the following advice which I have tried to follow throughout my research :

> "Despite the various pros and cons in the situation, it seems possible to conclude that the use of the outsider role as a means of developing acceptance in the research situation is a technique to be considered by the field researcher. He will probably discover that the role is given him by the data-bearers and that it is more effective to turn this role assignement to his advantage than to try to remove it from his research activities." (p.32).

It is against the background of the problems that the circumstances of the research situation posed for me that the advantages and disadvantages of the specific research role should be judged. I have considered the advantages accruing from the outsider role in general and the taxi-driver role in particular at some length. It now remains for me to mention a somewhat unexpected pay-off.

3.12. The unexpected pay-off

The decision to join 'Better Cars' had been the right one for my research. I had at last met a wide variety of residents of the two estates and had made a number of close contacts. I had at this stage formulated a tentative explanation for my research problem, or at least at this stage I knew the components of such an explanation. My time as a taxi-driver had another unexpected pay-off in research terms. It familiarised me with the operations of the housing market in Sheffield generally and with the council sector in particular. I was able to build up a mental geographic map of the city on which the housing estates stood vividly marked according to their place on a scale of desirability. I met residents of many different estates in Sheffield and was not limited to those who were the subject of my research. It was through my passengers that I became acquainted with the elite council estates, as well as the 'Botany Bays'. Such an acquaintance was essential for an understanding of the council sector of housing generally and for an understanding of any particular housing estate.

Sheffield having a high proportion of council housing, and taxi customers coming mainly from the working class, it was predictable perhaps that the vast majority of my passengers would be council house tenants. What I had not foreseen was how conversations with such a variety of people would familiarise me with the numerous housing estates in Sheffield in terms of their demand and perceived desirability and the reasons for this[16] and also with the complexity of processes by which a family may get a council tenancy on a particular estate. But it was not only the council tenants who contributed to my mental map of Sheffield estates, it was also the potential tenants of the council - those in privately owned or rented accommodation in clearance areas waiting anxiously to see if the council would offer them the estate of their choice, and those private renters who had their name on the housing list and were living in hope.

Similarly, I met sons and daughters of council tenants waiting for an offer of their own home to be made by the council. There were also the ex-tenants of the council - those who had left the council sector through choice, either buying their own home or opting for private renting; and those who had left through force of circumstances, such as those who had been evicted for rent arrears, or who had constantly broken tenancy regulations. Amongst the council tenants themselves I was made aware of why they had left one estate for another. For example, I met ex-tenants of the estates with which my research was concerned and I could ask them why they had left, and by what means. Apart from the current tenants of the two estates, all these useful informants would not have been available to me if I had adopted another role as a participant observer, especially one which was residentially restricted to the two principal estates being studied.

3.13 Taking my leave of 'Better Cars'

After approximately nine months of working as a driver for 'Better Cars' I made the reluctant decision that it was time to leave. This decision was prompted by two considerations. Firstly, I felt I had to move 'closer in' on the estates now that I had 'broken the ice' and had established a range of contacts. In particular, the high offender rate area of S€.CHH needed working on as an understanding of life in this small area of the estate was essential to any explanation of its high offender rate. So far I had only met a few people from these roads and these were only brief encounters. I had tried 'carding out' - advertising the taxi firm - at this end of the estate, but there was no response from this. When I mentioned this fact at 'Better Cars' the reply I receivedwas that such people would not even be able to read the card, let alone use a telephone. Although the person who volunteered this information was himself an ex-resident of this part of CHH I thought this remark probably said more about the reputation these streets had gained than about the type of people who lived there. Secondly, a new taxi-firm had started up in the central shopping area that divided CHH and CHL, and it was being run by the ex-partner of Eddy's brother. This firm then was likely to 'pirate' all the estate work that was previously being dealt with by 'Better Cars'.

I was reluctant to leave 'Better Cars' because, like all participant observers who become successful insiders, I knew I would suffer 'withdrawal pains'. I had become one of Eddy's family and they had been immensely helpful and kind to me. Eddy himself came from the notorious part of CHH, and had spent much time telling me about his childhood on the estate some twenty years ago and had gone out of hi s way to help my research by introducing me to friends and relatives from this estate.

His interest in the research is perhaps best illustrated by the following reply he gave to my assurance that anything he said would be in the strictest confidence.

> "It doesn't matter, you tell them how Eddy Baker came from a problem family on one of the worst estates in Sheffield, and how he became a businessman .... Ah and tell them the name of the firm that will be good publicity like."

Unfortunately the connection Eddy had with this new taxi firm - 'Dial-a-Car' - through his brother's one-time involvement with the firm, meant that he was rather upset at my deserting 'Better Cars' to join 'Dial-a-Car'. I, then, also left the taxi firm somewhat 'under a cloud'.[17]

4. The second taxi firm

In the preceding section I have discussed at some length the role I adopted as a participant observer, the reason for the choice of role and the advantages and limitations resulting from it. I do not, therefore, propose to analyse my role as a taxi-driver at the second taxi firm in any detail, as this would involve repetition. I shall, however, discuss the differences during the time with the second taxi firm that had a methodological relevance, and the particular achievement of this stage of the research.

4.1. The set-up

The time spent at 'Better Cars' enabled me to join 'Dial-a-Car' on a much surer footing, which was perhaps just as well, as I had lost the help of Eddy and Susan, and the new firm was an entirely different set-up. In practical terms, then, I had learnt my way around the city - I knew the 'back doubles' and the fare scales. I knew and was known by drivers of rival taxi firms, I had learnt the twilight world of

private-hire in Sheffield, the tricks of the trade, the dodges and aggravations.

All this was probably just as well, because never was a firm less well-equipped to deal with the work than 'Dial-a-Car', and never was a car less suited to being a taxi.[18] I never found out who actually owned 'Dial-a-Car' and I don't believe John knew himself - another much larger private-hire firm in Sheffield had a somewhat ~~similar~~ sinister interest in it.[19] Nor did I find out who owned the cars. I myself ran an old wreck which belonged to me, but when the firm eventually folded there w ere no vehicles left.[20] The main personnel of the firm were John (who lived sometimes with his parents on the S.E. corner of CHH, and sometimes with his second wife and family on a neighbouring estate); Richard, also from the same area of CHH; two younger boys (Kevin and Mike), both from CHL; and various other drivers and non-drivers who frequented the office and who came and went with bewildering rapidity. In addition to the male personnel there was Jane, a young girl from S.E. CHH, who was a fitting subject for a study all on her own, and who I shall return to later.

Although most of the people working in the taxi office, or who were in some way connected with it were, in fact, residents of CHH, CHL, and CHM, I do not consider them to be in any way representative of the majority of people living in this area. Even in comparison with the majority of offenders living on CHH the personnel of 'Dial-a-Car' were probably more consistently criminal in its activities. Most people I had met who had criminal convictions, or admitted illegal acts, were not committed to crime in any sense. Their offences were typically 'one-off' affairs of a fairly petty nature, or otherwise occasional acts when money was short or the opportunity presented itself. Some of the drivers at the taxi firm were more consistently involved in

criminal acts - their lives were organised around 'making money' and this involved constant violation of the law. This was the 'norm' amongst people with the same shared material aspirations who were unlikely to be able to satisfy these through conformist legal channels. There was also the commonly accepted principle of not involving the police in personal disputes, but "sorting it out yourself", and this often led to criminal offences being committed. Even the girl attached to the office could not be taken as typical of teenage girls on CHH. She was, in fact, already involved in a life style not dreamed of by the majority of young girls on the estate - engaging in a range of activities which could be called 'fringe prostitution'. By this I refer to sexual behaviour which is both more organised, complex and covert than ordinary street soliciting, and certainly more lucrative.[21]

4.2. Participant observation and criminal involvement

Sutherland and Cressey (1960), while accepting the desirability of studying criminals in their natural social setting, argue such an ideal is in practice fraught with difficulties. Few researchers, they argue :

> "could acquire the technique to pass as criminals; it would be necessary to engage in crime with the others if they retained a position once secured." (p.69).

This might be true of the participant observer who does not disclose his identity, but overt particpant observation does not demand that the researcher should attempt to pass himself off as a criminal. Also the overt participant observer can, to some extent, exempt himself from the necessity of participating in criminal acts to retain the acceptance of the group. Nevertheless, even the criminological field researcher who has revealed his identity must be prepared to at least witness some crime commission. John Irwin (1972), in arguing against the position of Sutherland and Cressey (1960) rather understates

the reality of criminal involvement for the field researcher.

> "Researchers face no great dangers in studying criminals .... since one need not become involved in these activities."
> (p.133).

He also argues that :

> "researchers who study criminals need not be special types, have special connections or have special access, anymore than researchers who may study many non-criminal groups."
> (p.135).

I would argue that a conscientious participant observer of a criminal group must at least connive in criminal acts, even if he manages to evade deeper involvement, and that because of this he is likely to be a 'special type', if only in the sense that he can tolerate a wide diversity of ~~heinous~~ human behaviour, and thus happily condone certain criminal actions by his silence. I am, therefore, in agreement with Polsky (1971) who argues:

> "If one is effectively to study adult criminals in their natural settings, he must make the moral decision that in some ways he will break the law himself. He need not be a "participant" observer and commit the criminal acts under study, yet he has to witness such acts or be taken into confidence about them and not blow the whistle."
> (pp.139-140).

Like other criminological participant observers such as Patrick (1973) in Glasgow, and Gill (1977) in Luke Street, I found it not only necessary to witness criminal acts, but also participate in them myself at times. There must be occasions in any criminological field situation when the decision of whether or not to participate in some illegal activity has to be faced. Some actions I participated in were consistent with my own past behaviour before taking on the research, others I accepted as necessary to continuing good relations with my subjects, but there were more 'serious' crime 'opportunities' that I avoided as best I could without upsetting my contacts, having weighed up the research interest against the possible personal cost and decided

that "it wasn't worth it". Such decisions in the field are, of course, ones that the individual researcher has to make on his own. Verbalising this criminal involvement tends to dramatise it - for very little of my time was spent in 'breaking the law'. For most of the time, transmitting a 'live-and-let-live' non-judgemental attitude - which comes naturally to me anyway - was enough to maintain my acceptance within the office. Nor do I wish to give the impression that people I met through working at this taxi firm were constantly engaged in criminal activities. The very label 'criminal' tends to set them apart as different from normal people, but in reality such people are not being criminal all the time. On the contrary, their criminal activities took up only a small part of everyday living. It is, however, because of these activities that I shall not describe in any detail the daily routine of this taxi office.

I was perhaps fortunate in that the type of criminal activity that I witnessed or was involved in raised no moral dilemmas for me personally. I had entered the field with the avowed intention of following Matza's naturalistic method. I had no correctionalist interest whatsoever. In fact, the participant observer always remains a person, he can not shed all his ethical beliefs on assuming the research role, and it is easy to imagine situations where, although methodologically committed to an appreciative stance, the subjects become involved in actions which are morally intolerable to the participant observer as individual. The types of criminal activity I witnessed and was involved in were not morally reprehensible to me, and therefore I was lucky enough not to be put in the dilemma of choosing between being a good researcher or acting according to my own ethical dictates.

4.3. Participant observation, criminal involvement and the romantic encouragement of crime

One of the most often discussed possible pitfalls of participant observation is the effect of the observer on the observed. It is suggested that awareness of an observer's presence may influence the actor or actors to change their pattern of behaviour. For the criminological participant observer this could mean either that the subjects minimise, cease or conceal their criminal activity because they feel insecure in the researcher's presence. Or at the other extreme, there is the possibility suggested by Yablonsky (1965) that the presence of the researcher can encourage the subjects in their involvement in crime or delinquency, by giving it a romantic significance. One disadvantage of participant observation as a research method is that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to check on the validity of the statements of the researcher. For my part, then I can only claim that I did not reduce the criminality associated with the personnel and some 'clients' of this taxi firm. In fact, when I had gained their confidence - and after an initial sounding out, having a couple of good contacts I received almost immediate acceptance - there was no attempt to conceal any of the 'business' matters or behaviours of the individuals concerned. At the same time, I am certain that the criminal involvement was not displayed for my benefit. These people had long histories of criminal involvement - and the younger ones much experience in a short time - and most had past convictions. In addition to this, it must be remembered that the 'set-up' at the taxi firm existed before I joined, and there is no evidence that I know of that it changed character after I joined.

The good participant observer has to be 'many things to many people', that is, he has to be a complete dissembler, and be able to

change roles and images with great rapidity. In fact, I would argue that the participant observer has to be something of an actor. This aspect of participant observation has to some extent been delicately neglected by the literature, as it raises some ethical problems to which participant observation is particularly vulnerable. Some writers on the subject, however, do discuss this requirement of the participant observer - for example, most of the essays in the J. Douglas' study (1972) refer to this skill as 'front management', and considers it in some depth. But it would be a mistake to assume that 'front management' is peculiar to the participant observer. Goffman (1959), in his brilliant analysis of the presentation of self in social interaction, unmasks the conscious impression management that is an essential part of ordinary everyday social life. Participant observation merely sensitises the researcher to these ploys of impression management in the processes of social interaction, and if the researcher can accept this reality of social interaction he can make use of this knowledge to further his research. An example from my field experience may illustrate this.

Jane was the central personality of 'Dial-a-Car', and I realised within the first few days on the firm that if I did not win her approval my time at the firm would be wasted. Violently disliked by most of the drivers, she ran the office partly as a result of John's infatuation for her, and partly because her personality was such that she would 'run' any organisation with which she was involved, if not by charm, then by more violent tactics. Jane is young, very pretty and immensely likeable when she is humoured; she is violent to an extreme when upset. I realised that the last thing I should appear to her was as a competitor in the feminine sense. Consequently, I worked hard at playing a role acceptable to Jane, and at the same time, showed her great deference.

When in her presence I fought back the urge to assert myself in any way, and even when provoked by her I remained diffident to an extreme. Jane adopted me and spent hours talking to me about men, sex, clothes, make-up and so on. She became very protective and allowed no-one to cross me in any way, seeing me, not as a threat - as she might well have done being the only other woman in the office - but as an ally in the male world of the taxi-office. During my time at 'Dial-a-Car' she got rid of passengers and drivers with amazing speed, and skilfully dealt with anyone brave enough to argue. When I witnessed such episodes I remained quietly in the background, to all intents and purposes unaware of or at least not bothered by what was going on . When Jane looked to me for a reaction I always assumed attitudes of agreement, if not admiration for her tactics. At the same time, I had to present myself to the drivers as their equal in every sense - diffidence towards them might well have resulted ih them interpreting such a stance as naivete, and so concealing their more deviant behaviour from me in order not to shock or offend. To the drivers I presented myself as potentially just as aggressive and well aware of how to 'get on'.

This is not the place to describe my relationship with Jane, but I have used her to illustrate the necessity for the participant observer to be prepared to play different roles, that is, to play the part demanded by the other, to build up a rapport and facilitate social interaction. This can, of course, lead to an identity crisis for the researcher if he or she does not retain an 'inner distance'. I kept my inner distance in my role with Jane as I did with the other taxi drivers. To an extent I exploited her as an informant and as a contact but this does not detract from my genuine affection for her as a person.

4.4. 'Dial-a-Car' - results

I believe my time at 'Dial-a-Car' was well spent in research terms. I succeeded in meeting both the more criminal characters of the area and getting to know of certain 'rackets'. I also extended my contacts on the estates. In particular, I came to know, mainly through Jane, a number of people on the south east corner of CHH. I was, then, nearer an explanation for the high offender rate of this area. However, I still considered there were more people who should be reached before I could claim that my research was at least based on a representative sample of the large population residing on the two estates. Happily, my decision to leave 'Dial-a-Car' coincided with its 'liquidation', so I left without the pains involved with 'Better Cars'. I decided to adopt two new roles as a participant observer which I was able to work simultaneously - these two roles were as a football pools collector and as a youth club helper.

5.1. The Pools Collector

The football pools collector is a familiar sight in working class housing areas, and in this CHH, CHL and CHM were no exception. When I saw in the local press that the job of a collector for one of the large national pools companies was being advertised for these specific areas I was quick to apply. I was fortunate enough to get the job, which centred especially on CHL and CHM, and I became the only collector for this particular company on these estates. The collector, being a frequent caller to pools regulars, soon becomes an accepted 'friend' to his or her clients, and in this I was no exception. The vast majority of clients ask the collector into the house and many press tea and refreshments on you while you wait for them to fill in coupons and collect up their money. It is impossible, of course, to stop at every house and many of the

invitations to come inside have to be regretfully resisted. I was, however, able by this method to extend my range of contacts and establish a friendly relationship with many. If the taxi-driver is to many a sympathetic listener the pools collector is the figure with whom dreams are shared. The chance of the win on the pools is the life blood of many people and, being a subscriber to that particular dream myself, I understood. No particular social type within the estates could be said to do the pools to the exclusion of others. My clients included a great many old people, but equally I had on my books a number of young families and a few young men who still lived in their parents' home. The age range and family type, therefore, was wide, so also were the occupations. These ranged from the pensioners, the unemployed and the manual workers, to the police families who lived on CHM. Casual but regular contact with these people helped me to establish a rapport with many of them, which enabled me to converse with them on a variety of subjects of research interest.

To give two examples: it was in a police house that a news feature on the high-rise flats, CFH and CFL, was shown on television while I was sitting waiting for the policeman to complete his coupon. This prompted him to tell me of his experiences of these estates and his opinions on the difficulties of policing flat estates, as opposed to the more traditional type, such as CHM on which he himself lived. Again, on CHL I collected from an old lady who was very nervous living on her own, but once having established my credentials she welcomed me into her house every week. She had applied for a transfer to a nearby estate which was only recently completed and was much in demand. One or two of her friends had already moved there and she was waiting eagerly for an offer. Each week I received a progress report on her application,

her dealings with the housing department and arrivals and departures in her area of CHL.

When, eventually, it was time to move on to the post-war flat estates, CFH and CFL, and I had to give up my job as a pools collector, I found myself hoping that my successor would take an interest in my clients and that I would not be missed.

5.2. The contribution of the 'Pools Collector' role to the research

Having spent some time in the second taxi office associating with the more criminal element living in the general area, and particularly on CHH, I felt the need to both widen my range of informants by concentrating some time on CHL and also to broaden that range in the sense of getting to know some more 'ordinary' residents. The pools collector round met this need, being concentrated especially on CHL, and also giving a wide range of contacts living on this estate. I have already indicated that there is no special shared characteristic of 'pool entrants' that make them an unrepresentative group of people living on a housing estate, on the contrary it appeared that all types of families and individuals "did the pools". This role also gave me the opportunity to gain a fairly representative entry into "private space". That is, observation of and interaction with subjects took place in their own homes.

To gain entrance into the home while working as a taxi-driver took a great deal of effort in working up sufficient rapport and building up relationships so that I might be invited to 'come in' for a drink, or a chat, or whatever. As a pools collector, access to the home was legitimate and easy. That is, people will ask a pools collector into the privacy of their home as a matter of course, whether they knew them personally or not. This is not the case with a taxi-driver.

The role of the pools collector was then, a 'balancer' in the research, a successful attempt to extend contacts, particularly among the ordinary people living on CHL, and to meet families in their home setting.

6. The Youth Club

Towards the end of my field research period on the pre-war estates I decided to offer my help at the youth club on CHH. On this estate there was much evidence of vandalism and juvenile delinquency, and much of the dissatisfaction expressed by residents of this estate was in terms of the behaviour of the children.

I was by this time, on the evidence of my informants, thinking of crime and delinquency on this estate in subcultural terms. In particular, I saw delinquency in children being particularly prevalent among certain families living in close proximity on the south east side of the estate. The explanation I was formulating for the persistently high offender rate on CHH necessitated my getting to know some of the children of the estate.

I already knew children of friends, but I had not established a direct contact with any child or group of children. It was decided that the only way I could do this was by contacting the local detached youth worker who lived on CHH and offering her my services. This was left until the final months in the field, as it necessitated, to an extent, my being identified with the youth worker and the church youth club. This would probably have been incompatible with my role as taxi-driver, especially while working for 'Dial-a-Car'.

The youth club was split into two groups, one session a week was held for the younger children and one for the teenagers. There were the

usual games provided, such as table tennis and quoits, and a variety of table games for the young children, but the most popular activity for the children and teenagers was dancing to records. The club meeting was held in the church hall and was run by Helen, the detached youth worker. The vicar looked in briefly at most sessions and Helen was helped by an ex-social worker and two or three 'mums' from the estate. In addition to the youth club evenings, Helen organised outdoor sports in the local park; rounders and football and a variety of activities and outings, which included visits to the coast as well as to local places of interest.

By the time I became involved in the club Helen had been living and working on CHH for a year, and increasingly she had found the necessity to limit the youth club to the better behaved children and teenagers, and to organise other activities for the wayward. This was for Helen a practical necessity because of her responsibility for the actual building.[22] At one point the behaviour of the more troublesome children had disrupted the club so much it had to be closed for three weeks. Helen took to organising outdoor events for these children, where their activities caused minimal damage. Helen, in fact, concentrated much of her time in getting to know the more delinquent children who had been banned from the club, and organising separate activities for them. These children in the main came from the south east corner of the estate. Helen adopted different tactics for the two groups of children she worked with on CHH. Those who could use the church hall and attend the Youth Club, and those who had to be restricted to outdoor entertainment. Although these groups emerged originally from the different behaviour patterns of the children, in fact, the division also reflected fairly accurately the geographical-social division within the estate.

Despite the fact that the youth club had become the preserve of the more disciplined children of the north and west part of the estate,[23] and the damage to the hall decreased as Helen became more selective, the building was still subjected to some considerable vandalism during the youth club sessions, although some of this was attributable to 'raids' by excluded children. It was not, however, only the problem of vandalism that brought Helen and the other workers to the decision to exclude certain children. The original mixing of the children had brought other difficulties. By the time I became involved with the club some of the most delinquent had been excluded. Even so, on more than one occasion I witnessed violence between children and this was apparent even in the very young. This distressed and frightened the more timid and situations developed whereby certain boys were in control, usually backed with the threats of other male members of their families. The less aggressive children were naturally deterred from attending.[24]

6.1. Role conflict

The behaviour of some of the children and the attitudes of the helpers to these more difficult children was such that I soon began to experience real conflict. As a researcher, I needed to be able to observe the children behaving in a 'natural' way, without interference from me. At the same time, being a volunteer helper, I was expected to correct the children, keep them in order and to show I had the same values and attitudes to the children's behaviour as those of the social workers and 'respectable' mums. The conflict between my roles as a participant observer was never greater. I needed to gain the confidence of the children and allow them to behave as they would if I were not there, and at the same time, I was only there by the consent of those people who had a very different interest. Two examples from my field notes should illustrate my dilemma.

"I was early at youth club tonight, the hall was still locked and none of the helpers had arrived. About half a dozen kids turned up - all boys of the nine to eleven age group. We exchanged greetings, had a little chat about my car, but after a quarter of an hour they were getting restless. They went round the back of the building, I heard a window go and then Kevin and John started tugging some electric cable, running to the outside light, out of the wall in front of me. I tried to distract them without actually correcting them - perhaps they were testing me. At last Mrs. White turned up, she was horrified by the boys - by this time Kevin and John were actually swinging on the loose cable - and told them she was speaking to Helen about their behaviour and that they would not be allowed to come to the club again. Meanwhile, I pretended to investigate what was happening at the back - I don't think Mrs. White realised how long I had been there. I think she just thinks I'm rather wet and hopeless."

On another occasion I was in charge of refreshments and Jennifer and Karen asked me if they could help. I saw no harm in it and let them stand behind the counter with me selling drink and chocolate, trying to check they were giving the right change and so on. Soon three more girls wanted to join us and it became rather like a game of 'playing shops'. Mrs. Jackson spotted me, she was horrified and obviously wanted to tell me off along with the kids. In fact, she confined herself to giving me a lecture on the rashness of such action and of course she understood that I didn't "realise what thieves the children were,[25] but when I had been there longer and if I had lived on the estate all my life as she had done I would know just what 'thieving little devils' the children were."

The next session the children again asked me if they could help me with refreshments - I let them. Mrs. Jackson saw and looked on with

tight lipped disapproval - I think she had a word with Helen.

Such episodes as these were a problem for Helen too, basically she agreed that prohibiting the children from doing anything responsible such as handling money was rather a negative way of 'helping the children' in the area, but without the Mrs. Jacksons she would be unable to run the club. As far as possible I adopted avoidance tactics to extricate myself from such situations. This meant the kids still liked me and the other helpers could believe I was weak and inadequate rather than acquiescent in the childrens' deviancy.

6.2. The contribution of the Youth Club to the research

Helping at the youth club certainly enabled me to get to know the children of CHH in a way that had been impossible as a taxi-driver. Despite the fact that most of my interaction with the children took place in the 'controlled' environment of the club, I observed all kinds of delinquency, as well as ordinary non-delinquent behaviour.

Having been introduced to the children through the club I was also able subsequently to talk to them when I met them on the streets and in the 'playing' areas[26] surrounding the estate. From the children I learnt much about the situations and factors that prompted their delinquencies. They told me their versions of their home life, family and peer relationships, and their parents reactions to some of the activities - delinquent and non-delinquent - that they engaged in. It was also possible to get them to talk about their perceptions of CHH, how they felt about living on the estate and how their attitudes about CHH compared with those of their parents. Information volunteered by the children, however, had to be assessed against their perceptions of me. Undoubtedly I was still some kind of social worker in their eyes, albeit a rather unconventional one. This typecasting by the children, despite

my explanation of being a student friend of Helen's, was inevitable, partly because of my role at the youth club, but also because the only adults the children came into contact with, apart from family and neighbours, were typically in authority roles. The childrens' accounts of their activities and life experiences, however, were not often at variance with my own observations when such comparisons were possible.

Overall, the youth club experience supported the tentative explanation I was forming for the high offender rate on CHH. This explanation predicted what I in fact found while helping at the youth club. There existed a network of children, a number of whom were related in kinship terms, who lived in a small corner of the estate and who constantly played together. These children appeared to be the most delinquent in their behaviour, espoused the most delinquent values, were most openly hostile to authority, and indeed were often very well informed on criminal opportunities and techniques. When these children mixed with other less delinquent children the latter were typically either distressed and intimidated, or drawn into behaviour which was more delinquent and aggressive than was normal for them.

7. Participant observation and the necessity of other research methods in sociological investigation

Few would claim for participant observation that it is a sufficient method of research on its own in the explanation of a sociological problem. Its strength lies in enabling sociological explanation to be adequate at the level of meaning, that is, it allows the subjects of the research to define and explain their own realities, and to give their own motivational accounts for their actions. It gives the researcher first hand experience of the social world he is attempting to explain. Participant observation is, however, limited in its capacity to relate the microcosm to the macrocosm, to put the small social enclave in its

wider social setting. Social structure and process tend to be beyond the vision of the participant observer, as he is immersed in his subjects' world and he can lose sight of the societal context of his social milieu. One of the criticisms made of the small housing estate studies discussed in the previous chapters is the lack of information on the processes that brought about the social realities of the estates described. Gill (1977) was the one participant observer who escaped this criticism by looking at the socio-historical development of Luke Street, and by using recorded information from both police and housing department sources in his explanation of a small delinquent housing area. Gill also used press reports of delinquent behaviour, and interview material from individuals who in various work roles had been involved in the area. He does, however, see these data sources as providing additional information for the research problem. Delinquency which is the focus of his study is itself best researched by the method of participant observation :

> "it is perhaps the most appropriate method of research into delinquency."
> (p.190).

I am in agreement with Gill that participant observation is the most appropriate method to study delinquency, and I would take it further:to study any kind of social behaviour. In this chapter I have tried to highlight some of the advantages of participant observation that no other method of sociological investigation can offer. At the same time, to present an explanation of the differences in official offender rates of the estates I studied, purely in terms of the data I collected as a participant observer would be to give an incomplete and very unsatisfactory account of the differences between the two estates. It became increasingly obvious towards the end of my field research that I needed some more quantitative material on the housing market issues

that had been raised by tenants' accounts. Additionally, I wanted to know something about housing policy in the city, past and present, and the housing allocation process. Many participant observers have made use of the recorded information of official agencies and I decided that I also needed access to such information on council housing in Sheffield.

Before contacting the Sheffield City Housing Department I decided precisely what information I was seeking, that is, what data I needed to test the explanation I had framed for the differential offender rates on CHH and CHL. I was aware that such information could support my tentative explanation, but it could also refute that explanation if I had been misled by, or myself had misintepreted my informants in the field; alternatively, such information might be inconclusive, offering neither support for nor refutation of my explanation. I hoped, however, that data collected from the Housing Department, if it did not support me, would at least give me alternative ideas about the differences between the two estates. The quantitative data, therefore, that I collected was intended as hypothesis testing, and at the same time, if it supported the hypothesis it could be used to supplement the qualitative data collected.

7.1. Sheffield City Housing Department

Professor Bottoms negotiated with the Sheffield City Housing Department for access to the information I had decided that I required. Consent was, in fact, readily granted to all requests for information, and much additional information was produced and sources suggested by staff when they learnt my research interests. I spent nearly a year collecting information from the Housing Department, and in this time I was never refused any information, nor did I meet with any reluctance to discuss housing issues from staff at any level, despite their own

work load. They gave opinions and information and made suggestions both on and off the record.

This co-operation of the Sheffield Housing Department may appear surprising in view of the adverse publicity given to Housing Departments throughout the country in terms of their alleged secrecy, and the inaccessibility of records to outsiders,[27] but I can only repeat that the welcome accorded to this research by the Department was unreserved. I adopted a very similar strategy in the Housing Department as I had used on the two estates, in that I moulded my own behaviour in the belief that a researcher in any situation will get the 'best results' or the most co-operative informants if he or she initially appears polite, diffident and appreciative, without being too retiring or self-effacing, and being above all eager to learn from someone else. It has been my experience that few people object to the person of a researcher intruding in their social or working world if the latter sticks to these basic principles of social interaction.

I had decided in advance on the information I needed to collect from the Housing Department. This was not, as I have already indicated, in any way exploratory research, rather there was certain clearly defined information that I needed to test hypotheses formulated as a result of my participant observation. At the same time, I was always open to new information that was relevant to the research problem, or to the council housing market generally. Although by the time I started research within the Housing Department I had realised how crucial an understanding of the operations of the housing market within the council sector would be to an understanding of the differentials between council estates, I had not appreciated the complexity of the Housing Department's allocation policies within the market situation. In this respect, the data collected as a participant observer highlighted areas of enquiry

which were considerably clarified by research within the Housing Department. In general terms, qualitative information from housing officials on housing stock, policies and administration in a situation of scarcity and demand became a more important source of understanding estate differentials than the more specific quantitative data collected on the individual estates. The information on these estates may be taken as individual illustrations of the results of the council housing market situation in Sheffield.

Informal observation of staff at work within the Housing Department, behind the scenes and in interaction with tenants, and conversations with staff at all levels , then became the most important data sources. This is not to denigrate the recorded information of which I made great use, and which I present in Chapter Nine. Rather I went to the Housing Department originally because of the need for such data and found additionally great opportunities for informal observation within the Department itself.

The sources of recorded information within the Department are complex, and a description of them is inevitably technical, so it has been presented in the introduction to Chapter Nine.

8. Informal observation on the post-war flats

It had been proposed that I should undertake a further period of participant observation on the two post-war flat complexes, CFH and CFL. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to do this, given the difficulty of keeping to a strict time schedule with this research method, and the enormity of the research task.[28] I decided, therefore, to make best use of the time I had left by spending some weeks on these estates, engaging in informal observation, both by 'hanging around' and using some of the estates' facilities, such as pubs, launderettes, shops and open spaces. In this way I was able to engage residents in informal

conversations, usually centring around life on the estates and housing generally. It proved possible to gain a great deal of information using this strategy. In fact, I found people far more prepared to talk to a stranger on these developments than I had while 'hanging around' the pre-war housing estates. This is, I think, attributable to the population differences between the two 'pairs' of estates. On CFH and CFL the resident populations were far more mobile than on the CHH andCHL, where long lengths of tenancy, often spanning generations of one family, were the norm. CFH and CFL were obviously younger estates and therefore comparable lengths of tenancy with many of the long-term residents of CHH and CHL were not possible. But it was not only the comparative youth of these estates that led to short-term tenancies as the norm; people moved more frequently on the post-war flats and many, especially on CFH, saw their present housing as only temporary.[29] The populations of the post-war flats were also more 'cosmopolitan', both in the sense of having more migrants from out of Sheffield, and also from drawing people from all over the city. This contrasted with the pre-war housing estates, where people typically had roots in the area before accepting their present tenancy.[30]

I am suggesting, then, that people living on CFH and CFL were more used to strangers in their midst and did not live in 'closed' communities such as to be found on CHH and to some extent CHL. Such people are more prepared to talk to strangers, and additionally they may welcome the opportunity if they are suffering from 'high rise loneliness'. Despite the apparent success of these casual encounters in gaining information, the qualitative data collected on the post-war flats CFH and CFL by informal observation cannot compare with that collected on the pre-war estates, CHH and CHL, by participant observation, either in terms of the extent of the contacts or the intimacy and depth of the relationships formed.

Before starting on these two estates I had the advantage of knowing them quite well through my work as a taxi-driver, and in fact knowing a few residents on both CFH and CFL through personal contacts I had established since living in Sheffield, as well as when working at the taxi offices. The Housing Department data on these two estates was kept at the local estate office situated on CFL, which also facilitated my informal observation. Tenants called at this office to pay rent, make complaints, report damage or make repair requests, and for general enquiries. The staff of the office were more familiar with the estates and the residents than those at the main Department, who had not the same personal day-to-day contact with any one particular estate.

Various workers from porters and maintenance men to rent collectors and social workers were frequent callers to the office, and I was able to talk to many of these on a variety of subjects connected with the research while I was colllecting the quantitative information from the records in the office. The situation of the office also enabled me to extend the period of informal observation on CFL and CFH, as I was able to use the estates' facilities in the lunch hours. Thus despite being unable to employ the originally intended research method on CFL and CFH, I managed to make some inroads into gaining an understanding of life on the estates from the viewpoint of the residents, and to build up a picture of how the two estates had developed and their present day differences.

8.1. Changes in allocation policies affecting the estates

At the time of my research on CFL and CFH the council were subjecting themselves to some painful self-criticism over the situation pertaining on their largest post-war flat complexes. This was perhaps to some extent prompted by the peculiarly bad experience of CFH which at this time was becoming a 'letting impossibility' in the words of

several of the staff of the Housing Department.Some staff were openly critical of the estate and had been aware of the 'problems' associated with the estate from its "first lettings". The council was eventually forced to reconsider its position on these estates, and subsequently set up a working party on 'High Density Developments', which made several recommendations for changes in lettings policy, in an effort to change the social character of these developments. These changes in lettings policy have taken effect since I finished my field research, but in this thesis I have discussed the situation on CFH and CFL before the council came to the conclusion that 'something was wrong' with a number of its post-war flat developments. Although it is early days yet to assess the effects of the changes in lettings policy on these estates, I have in Chapter Eight briefly described these changes, their rationale and their objectives.

Research projects, being of necessity limited to a fixed time period, the social researcher has to face the problem of a changing field situation, both during the period of his research and after he has withdrawn from the field. It is not possible for me to return to CFL and CFH and see if the changes in allocation policies and Housing Department attitudes have had any effect on the social reality of the estates, but I have attempted to assess the possibility of the changes obtaining their objectives in the light of experiences of other estates. The changes, if any, in the character of these two estates do not, of course, invalidate the findings. The offender rate data for these two estates was collected mainly for 1966 and 1971, and the research problem formulated on these figures. The explanation, then, is in terms of these two estates during the period of field research 1976-1977, and an attempt to reconstruct the history of the two estates through recorded data and information collected from residents of the two estates, housing

department staff and other people who have at some time been concerned with either of the developments.

8.2. The recorded data

The collection of recorded data from the local estates office on CFL was rather more exploratory and less hypothesis-testing than that collected at the main Housing Department building for CHH and CHL. That is, the data itself suggested lines of inquiry that my informal observation had not turned up. This may be attributed to the inadequacies of informal observation compared with participant observation as a research method for tackling a sociological problem - remaining uninvolved as a formal observer there is much the researcher may miss. Another contributory factor in this particular instance was that the explanation for the differential offender rate of CFH and CFL was more discoverable in the recorded data than by pure observation of the two estates, or in residents' own accounts. There were, of course, hypotheses suggested by my own observations and those of residents that were possibly relevant to the situation pertaining on the two estates that could be tested by the recorded data, but conversations with housing staff involved with the two estates, which are related in Chapter Eight, proved more productive in suggesting the main line of enquiry. The 'explanations' of housing officials were also tested against the quantitative data collected for the two estates.

CHAPTER FOUR

Notes:

1. This is historically true for participant observation as a social science research method. It is possible to argue, however, that in epistemological terms participant observation is a research method in the positivist spirit - its underlying assumption being that there are empirically observable facts for an impartial, objective researcher to collect.

2. Correctionalism and appreciation are not logical opposites as Matza supposes. Some researchers in criminology have managed to combine participant observation with a correctional interest. For example, Patrick (1973) A Glasgow Gang Observed, London, Eyre Methuen.

   More usually, however, participant observation is carried out in the spirit of Matza's 'appreciation'.

3. See, for example, Blumer H. (1969), Symbolic Interactionism : perspective and method, Englewood Cliffe, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, for a discussion of the theoretical position underlying most sociological field studies.

4. See Schutz, A. The Stranger - an essay in social psychology AJS (May) 1944, pp.499-507.

   Goffman, too, is concerned with a search for the basic principles of social interaction which are essential for an understanding of the participant observer role. See Goffman, E (1957), The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Garden City, New York, Anchor Books.

5. See Baldwin, J. and Bottoms, A.E. (1976), The Urban Criminal London, Tavistock, for a full account of the emergence of the research problem and the chosen methodology.

6. For a discussion of the distinction between empathetic and sympathetic understanding in participant observation see Douglas, J.D. (1972) Research on Deviance, pp.26-27, New York Random House.

7. Total number of dwellings on each estate are as follows :

CHH	:	951
CHL	:	803
CHM	:	709

8. Damer's estate was smaller than any one of the Sheffield estates included in this study having a total of 516 dwellings.

   The Luke Street neighbourhood studied by Owen Gill has a total of only 69 dwellings.

9. The tradition of field research developed by the Chicago sociologists under the direction of Robert Park is an interesting compromise. Field researchers were often selected to study a group with which they shared some characteristic. Sometimes the researcher had been a member of this group, or a similar one in the past. In two more recent Chicago studies, the field researchers had personal involvement in the past with the type of people they made the subject of their research.

See Becker, H. (1963), Outsiders - studies in the Sociology of Deviance, N.Y. Free Press.

Polsky, N. (1967) Hustlers, Beats and Others, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company.

10. A minority, that is, with the exception of the slum clearance entrants.

The slum clearance families had their own shared experiences from which I was excluded, for example, waiting in a 'blighted' area for rehousing hoping for the estate of one's choice and living in a state of uncertainty, resulting from being ill-informed of the processes involved. Often the demoralisation is as severe as the uncertainty resulting from the devastation and desolation that clearance brings to an area in purely physical terms.

11. All the names of persons and organisations used in the account of my field research have been changed.

12. Column in the 'Sheffield Morning Telegraph' and 'The Star' which advertises items for sale for £30 and under. There are a number of small dealers buying from this column, doing the cars up and selling at a profit. Jim and Robert were both only working intermittently and this was a lucrative sideline for them.

13. 'Mark the Ball' is a competition run by the local newspaper, in which large cash prizes may be won. Like some other working class pastimes, it offers the possibility of winning the 'jackpot'. A discussion of the role of games of chance in working class culture and their social control function is unfortunately beyond the scope of this research.

14. A very amusing fictional account of the particular problems caused by over involvement with subjects on the part of the participant observer is Imaginary Friends, Alison Lurie, (1968), New York, Avon.

15. In fact a participant observation study of the 'mini-cab firms' would be fertile research ground for a criminologist.

16. Baldock makes the point that in a city such as Sheffield with a high proportion of its housing stock owned by the council (around 40%), there will be more status differentiation between council estates than in towns with a larger private sector.

Baldock (1971) Tenants Voice, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield.

Certainly the majority of council tenants I have met are reconciled to this type of tenancy for the rest of their lives, and so within their narrowed choice more who want to move aspire to the elite estates, rather than to owner-occupation. In fact, given the type of housing stock in Sheffield at the lowest priced end of the owner-occupied market, and the cost of such housing in terms of deposit, mortgage repayments, maintenance and repair, many council tenants stated they preferred a council house on a 'good' estate.

17. See page 180.

18. 'Better Cars' has now been taken over by a larger private hire firm. 'Dial-a-Car' is out of business. The twilight world of private hire is to some extent cleared up since plating regulations were introduced by the city council.

19. I don't think I can commit to paper some of the facts of these and other private hire firms in Sheffield at that time. But I might add that there were several respectable firms also operating, who were in no way implicated in the 'shady' dealings that went on inside and between some of the less respectable firms.

20. In fact, the garage which was repairing some of these vehicles a few days before the firm disappeared, suffered a case of arson which might or might not have been coincidence.

21. In fact I discovered no actual soliciting on any of the estates such as is normal for the "red-light" inner city districts. There were one or two 'known' houses, but these were housewives trying to make some extra cash without openly soliciting. Jane had legal employment which brought her into contact with 'blue-movie' makers, escort services and so on. I got to know four other girls during my time as a taxi-driver who were also making large amounts of money from associated but illegal activities connected with this type of employment.

22. Helen had actually experienced great difficulty in obtaining premises. The reputation of the 'children' of the estate was such that there was great reluctance to let them have any premises at all by the owners of suitable buildings in the area. The chapel refused Helen's request to use their hall. Fortunately the Church of England vicar was a very sympathetic person with a great concern for CHH as a defeated neighbourhood! And so he allowed the church hall to be used for the purpose of holding the youth club meetings. There was, however, a limit to the vandalism he could tolerate.

23. The vicar, however, considered that the youth club catered for a middle group; the "goody-goodies" organised their own entertainment, and the villains, who in fact had shown they wanted such a facility, were too destructive to be housed anywhere.

24. I was told that at the beginning of the Club the situation of violence between the children had been so serious that the Club had been in danger of becoming exclusively a facility for the violent.

25. When I checked the money that night it was correct.

26. The most popular area with the children was a large piece of waste ground strewn with all kinds of rubbish to the south east of the estate.

27. See, for example, the comments of Colin Ward (1974) and Owen Gill (1977). Also the recommendations of the Cullingworth Report (1969) on the publication of local authority allocation procedures. The Shelter Report (1975) does recognise that

> "There has been some progress in that many local authorities do at least make public the methods by which they assess people's housing need, but the decision about who get which house and on what criteria is kept completely in the dark." (p.19).

The Sheffield Housing Department also does not release such information to the 'interested public'. It did, however, allow me in the role of university researcher, access to such information.

28. CFH had 1,317 dwellings
CFL had 992 dwellings
Source: Annual Report of the Housing Department (1969-1970).

29. See Chapters Six and Nine of this thesis.

30. See Chapters Five and Nine of this thesis.