

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Together, Apart?**

**Situating social relations and housing provision in the everyday life  
of new-build mixed-tenure housing developments**

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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

Since 2000, mixed-tenure development has been advocated in planning policy guidance to local authorities in England, as a means of providing subsidised housing alongside market rate properties. This research explores residents' experiences of three large, high-density, mixed-tenure housing developments in East London. A combination of in-depth interviews and survey responses provide insights into various aspects of daily life in these schemes, including interpersonal contacts and social relations between residents, attitudes towards tenure-based differences, and perceptions of the local neighbourhood. These insights are, in turn, situated within the context of an analysis of the provision process for mixed-tenure housing, based on interviews with key informants from housing associations, developers, architects and regeneration agencies. Policies for tenure-mixing ostensibly constitute a novel means of providing subsidised housing within a more social inclusive residential form. However, this research reveals a distinctly ordinary quality to everyday life in mixed-tenure schemes, within which the majority of interactions between residents were casual and infrequent, with relatively few close or sustained relationships, especially with between those from different social, economic or cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, these 'mixed communities' were by no means immune to tensions, divisions or prejudice. In both these respects, residents' actions, attitudes and experiences did not correspond to ambitious propositions for tenure mixing to create an inherently more 'inclusive' social milieu with instrumental benefits for lower-income residents. This combination of banal and occasionally divisive social relations therefore appears to challenge the rationale for policy programmes to 'engineer' positive social relations through market-led interventions in housing provision. Rather, if this model of mixed-tenure housing provision does have a role in structuring the lives of residents', it is arguably through design strategies that in fact function to keep inhabitants of different tenure groups apart.

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## Chapter One: Introduction to the Thesis

This thesis is about everyday life in mixed-tenure housing. Beginning in 2000, policy guidance advised local planning authorities in England to “ensure that new housing developments help to secure a better social mix” by incorporating “different types and sizes of housing across all tenures” (DETR 2000:8-9). The stated aim of this policy being “the development of mixed and balanced communities” (DETR 2000:8). As a result, housing schemes built between 2000 and 2010 were typically required to incorporate “a mix of housing types, including affordable housing”, which usually meant providing social rented and ‘intermediate’ tenure properties together with homes destined for market sale or rent (DETR 2000:37). While various forms of ‘mixed-tenure’ scheme were built on sites and in locations around the country, this thesis is concerned with a particular form of high-density mixed-tenure development – generally comprising flats in medium to high rise blocks built on ‘in-fill’ or ‘brownfield sites – which typify those found in inner-city areas. Three such schemes form the empirical focus of this research, which were built between 2005 and 2009 in the inner-London borough of Tower Hamlets, and each of which comprises a mix of social rented, intermediate, and market rate housing. Based on a data from a combination of survey and interview responses from residents, and interviews with those involved in the development of the case study schemes, this research provides insights into experiences of life in these new developments alongside an analysis of the ‘provision processes’ through which they were designed and built. By grounding these accounts of residents’ social contacts, neighbourhood-based routines, and attitudes and perceptions towards tenure-‘mixing’ – within the context of the place(s) and process(es) in and through which the case study schemes were developed – this research contributes critical insights into efforts to create new ‘mixed communities’ in inner-city neighbourhoods.

Mixed-tenure housing development has garnered widespread academic attention, both in the UK (for a recent review, see Sautkina et al. 2012) and further afield (Galster 2007, Joseph et al. 2007). Much of this interest has reflected – albeit often in critical terms – on what are posited to be novel, exceptional or even paradigmatic socio-spatial characteristics of mixed-tenure schemes. In normative terms, tenure mixing may be seen to offer a more equitable alternative to the spatial concentration of lower-income households. Moreover, by emphasising the ‘sustainable’ and ‘inclusive’ qualities of a ‘mixed’ or ‘balanced community’ (ODPM 2003), it is strongly implied that socioeconomic benefits may arise from a mix of

housing tenures. In practical terms, the development of mixed-tenure housing involved a sizeable mobilisation of the activities and resources of non-state housing providers (Crook and Monk 2011). At the same time, policy guidance made it harder for developers to build large housing schemes destined solely for market sale or rent. As such, mixed-tenure development could be seen to counter logics of commodification and privatisation that have undermined the social rented sector over the past three decades (Fenton et al. 2012). The supply of new social rented housing units in purpose built mixed-tenure schemes could also be seen to constitute a means of replacing deteriorating housing stock. In turn, by providing 'affordable' housing in new – often private sector led – developments, lower-income households were afforded opportunities to access areas where demand and prices were particularly high. Mixed-tenure housing schemes could therefore be seen as a novel spatial form, part-funded by revenues from private sector house building, that offer an alternative to the social, economic and spatial marginalisation of lower-income households, by providing new 'affordable' homes within a more 'balanced' and 'inclusive' social milieu.

On the other hand, it is equally possible to respond to the above points outlined above by instead emphasising the 'unexceptional' characteristics of mixed-tenure housing. Indeed, the fundamental aim of social mix or 'balance' has been long-established in British housing and planning policy (Sarkissian 1976), as epitomised by Nye Bevan's proclamation that council housing should be "the living tapestry of a mixed community" (Cole and Goodchild 2001:353). Academic discourses on 'neighbourhood effects' have since provided a renewed epistemological rationality for the de-concentration of poverty in urban neighbourhoods (for a recent and critical review, see Slater 2013). Whilst in practical terms, British cities have a spatial history of neighbourhood mix, which by and large contrasts with other national contexts characterised by acute territorial segregation (Wacquant 1993). More specifically, social rented housing has undergone a long-drawn-out process of tenure diversification, as properties purchased by tenants through the 'Right to Buy' – also under the rhetorical banner of "building stable communities" (Dowding et al. 1999:530) – have subsequently entered the private sale and rental markets. Similarly, in terms of the practicalities of new house building, it can be argued that there has long been a role for private sector interest in the provision of social housing in the UK (Dunleavy 1981). Meanwhile, measures for 'de-municipalisation' have greatly expanded the remit of third sector 'housing associations' as providers of subsidised housing at arm's length from the state (Malpass 2001). Finally, in sociological terms – and despite the fact that 'place' undoubtedly remains as the venue for

most everyday encounters – we are used to now familiar theoretical arguments about individualisation (Beck 1992), a declining role for public or communal social engagement (Sennett 1977), and the loss of locally-based ‘community’ in the face of virtual forms of social organisation (Wellman 1999). Moreover, evidence from existing ‘mixed’ housing contexts also suggests limited potential for tenure mixing to ‘engineer’ propitious social relations between residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Kleit 2005, Musterd and Andersson 2005, Arthurson 2010, Davidson 2010, Graves 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011).

The intention of outlining these contradictory readings of tenure mixing has been to illustrate that – while New Labour’s policy guidance formulated “new roles for capital and community”, in pursuit of ostensibly novel and propitious social, economic, and spatial forms of housing development – there remains cause for caution when considering the processes and outcomes of mixed-tenure housing provision from a perspective of a seemingly paradigmatic shift in policy making (Lupton and Fuller 2009:1025). This project therefore seeks to move beyond the terms of engagement set by the propositions and hypotheses surrounding policy discourses on tenure mixing. In turn, mixed-tenure housing does nevertheless constitute a material setting for the lives of residents who now occupy the thousands of schemes completed between 2000 and 2010 (Crook and Monk 2011). By ‘situating’ residents’ experiences of life in three mixed-tenure developments, within their local ‘neighbourhood context’, and alongside an examination of the process through which these schemes were designed and built, this research therefore offers a grounded account of the everyday ‘realities’ of tenure mixing. Using a mixed method data collection approach that combines survey, interview and documentary sources, this analysis provides insights into residents’ experiences, perceptions and attitudes of life in a particular form of mixed-tenure housing – consisting of large, high-density developments the likes of which have proliferated in inner-city areas – about which relatively little is known. By looking beyond the discursive presentation of tenure mix as a proxy for instrumental forms of propitious ‘social mixing’ – and considering, instead, the ‘realities’ of mixed-tenure housing – this thesis reveals something of the conflicting rationalities and contested outcomes of the previous government’s ‘mixed communities’ policy. Before turning, in the next chapter, towards a more detailed discussion of tenure mixing in policy and practice – this chapter offers some brief reflections on the ‘state of play’ of tenure mixing under the current government’s planning policy, followed by a brief outline of the structure of the thesis as a whole.

## I. Whither Mixed-Tenure?

This research was conceived at the time when the creation of ‘mixed communities’ was a cornerstone of the New Labour’s urban and planning policies. ‘Flagship’ examples of large, high-density, developments comprising a mix of social, intermediate and market rate housing – such as ‘Greenwich Millenium Village’ and Manchester’s ‘New Islington’ – had been completed in the early 2000s and were lauded as exemplars of ‘best-practice’ (for critical responses to both schemes see Silverman et al. 2005, and Mace et al. 2007 respectively). By the mid-2000s, a ‘first wave’ of new housing developments in this mould had been completed across London and other British cities – including the three case studies considered here. Later revisions of the previous Government’s policy guidance would re-assert the aims of creating “sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities”, the ‘key characteristics’ of which being “a variety of housing, particularly in terms of tenure” (CLG 2006c:9). At this time, research into mixed-tenure housing contexts was also proliferating, with a high-profile series of Rowntree Foundation reports garnering widespread attention (Martin and Watkinson 2003, Allen et al. 2005, Berube 2005, Bailey et al. 2006, Rowlands et al. 2006), whilst outputs on tenure mixing in the UK were a regular feature in academic journals on housing and urban studies (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, 2001, Cole and Goodchild 2001, Tunstall 2003, Tiesdell 2004, Galster 2007, Kearns and Mason 2007, Roberts 2007, Davidson 2008, Lees 2008, Camina and Wood 2009, Lupton and Fuller 2009, McKee and McIntyre 2009, Manzi 2010). Mixed-tenure housing development appeared entrenched – both as ‘best practice orthodoxy’ in policy discourse and in the design and development activities of housing providers, and as an object of critical scholarly engagement.

There is no doubt that the political and economic climate has changed profoundly since the inception of this research, bringing with it changes to the planning system and, more specifically, for the prospects of a continued provision of affordable housing within new mixed-tenure schemes. On the one hand, the effect of the financial crisis and subsequent recession have reduced demand in the owner-occupied sector – with a marked fall in housing transactions, fluctuations in prices, and a scarcity of mortgage lending after 2008 (Whitehead and Williams 2011). An accompanying fall in new housing completions – which have averaged around thirty per cent lower in the past five years, since their peak in 2007 (DCLG 2013) – are predicted to have a significant effect on the overall supply affordable homes funded through ‘cross subsidy’ models, such as mixed-tenure development (Crook and Monk 2011). Meanwhile, changes to the ways in which local authorities set targets and

secure funding for affordable housing supply appear to prioritise ‘supply’ over ‘affordability’ (ibid.:1014). The apparently weakening position upon which local authorities can negotiate for affordable housing provision in proposed new developments, especially for new social rented properties, have led some to conclude that “ideas like mixed tenure development and balanced communities will go by the board” (OU 2012). Ultimately, time will tell of any such step-change in the means of providing affordable housing. However, there is still some cause for caution over assertions of the death of mixed-tenure development (not least as because output from the housing association sector has continued to grow since 2007 [DCLG 2013]). Regardless of changes to the political economy of housing provision, it is argued here that tenure mixing retains substantive significance in a number of respects: Firstly, current policy guidance is reflective of a tangible ‘legacy’ for the objective of creating ‘mixed communities’. Secondly, and regardless of shifts in current policy, critically engaging with the outcomes of the apparently paradigmatic ‘renaissance’ in modes of thinking about urban policy remains an important task. Thirdly, the fact that large-scale, high-density, mixed-tenure housing developments now constitute a social and spatial feature of British cities provides arguably the most pressing rationale for continuing to seek formative insights from those who inhabit such schemes. Each of these assertions are elaborated in turn below.

In response to the predicted death of mixed-tenure housing provision, it is argued that the Government’s current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is in fact reflective of a legacy for ‘mixed communities’. Indeed, the NPPF still ostensibly supports the “objective of creating mixed and balanced communities” (CLG 2012:13). Amongst the ‘material considerations’ which inform planning decisions, local authorities are required to “plan for a mix of housing” (including tenures) to reflect “local demand” (ibid.). Moreover, where local authorities identify a need for affordable housing, as would presumably be the case for most inner-city areas, they are required to “set policies for meeting this need on site” – in other words, in the form of mixed-tenure development – unless an off-site provision can be “robustly justified” (ibid.). Whilst the fact that planning decisions are encouraged to be “sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time” is arguably likely to foster a similar approach to that taken in the large-scale mixed-tenure schemes considered in this research, whereby decisions over the proportion and distribution of affordable housing will continue to be shaped by concerns over economic viability (ibid.). Therefore, despite recent proclamations that local authorities are building their own social housing “for the first time in a generation” (Melley 2013) – albeit on a very limited scale –

the overwhelmingly likelihood is that ‘partnerships’ between private and third sector housing providers will continue as a significant source of new affordable housing. The promise of continued mixed-tenure development, even at a greatly reduced scale and scope, suggests that the schemes considered here are not merely an artefact of past policy.

Secondly, the sorts of the large, high-density, mixed-tenure housing schemes that feature in this research are themselves arguably reflective of a broader ‘paradigm shift’ in modes of thinking about – and shaping – the socio-spatial characteristics of urban neighbourhoods. In a number of respects, the schemes considered may thus provide substantive insights into the realities of Britain’s ‘urban renaissance’. Firstly, the case study schemes were built to very high densities. ‘Densification’, Lees (2003:75) argues, was fundamental premise for ‘sustainable’ urbanism as “a magic cure-all for a variety of environmental and social ills”. Secondly, a ‘sustainable’ urban renaissance advocated the re-development of ‘brownfield’ sites in urban locations. In addition to being environmentally sustainable, brownfield development created opportunities for the re-population of inner-city neighbourhoods and the re-valorisation of land in these areas. Thirdly, the overall effect of increasing densities and attracting the ‘middle class’ back to inner-city areas was held to foster propinquity, diversity and positive ‘social mixing’ – especially within mixed-tenure contexts – with a host of additional and propitious socioeconomic outcomes. Together, ‘urban renaissance’ therefore constitutes a broader set of discursive and material ‘orthodoxies’, which are reflected in the schemes featured in this thesis, and which arguably continue to apply more broadly to space-shaping urban policies and practices.

Lastly, and more broadly still, there remains a pressing need to better understanding the social and spatial characteristics of the various forms of mixed-tenure housing development that proliferated across British towns and cities in response to the policy guidance of the past decade. Regardless of the changing political or economic climate, it remains the case that a sizeable number of households reside in large, high-density, predominantly flatted schemes, incorporating a mix of housing tenures. It is difficult to estimate exactly how many, but given that a quarter-of-a-million new homes were completed by housing associations between 2000 and 2010 (CLG 2010a) – when ‘mono-tenure’ developments of affordable housing were almost *faux pas* – it is reasonable to deduce that a sizeable number of these new homes were in some form of mixed-tenure scheme. With private developers also required to contribute a proportion of affordable housing on most large schemes, data from

the mid-2000s suggests that eighty per cent of *all* schemes comprising a hundred units or more included some proportion of affordable housing, suggesting that a sizeable number of large mixed-tenure schemes were built throughout this period (Crook and Monk 2011). It is therefore argued that the sorts of housing development examined here should continue to garner scholarly attention simply because they constitute the residential setting for the lives of hundreds of thousands of their inhabitants. This alone arguably constitutes the most important rationale for better understanding how residents experience everyday life – whether individually, inter-personally, and collectively – in these schemes.

## **II. Outline of the Thesis**

Whilst there is a sizeable body of literature on tenure mixing more broadly, there has been comparatively little empirical engagement with the sorts of large, high-density scheme that have been planned and built in inner-city locations in the past decade. By focusing on three case study schemes – referred to here as Limehouse Wharf, Island Heights, and Shadwell Plaza – this research offers an in-depth engagement with residents' experiences, attitudes and perceptions of life in this forms of mixed-tenure housing. Through 'grounding' insights into everyday life through an analysis of the housing provision process for these schemes, alongside an exploration of their local neighbourhood context, this thesis also seeks to broaden our understanding of the 'realities' of mixed-tenure development by moving beyond narrow yet ambitious policy assertions regarding the exceptional qualities of so-called 'mixed communities'. To this ends, the structure of the thesis proceeds as follows:

*Chapter Two* offers a full account of the origins, operation and outcomes of the mixed-tenure planning policies in the UK. The first part of this chapter critically examines the emergence of tenure mixing as a cornerstone of New Labour's urban policy, within the context of a restructuring of the state's role in providing social housing and a realignment of concerns over housing tenure and social exclusion. This section then outlines the practical operation of policy guidance for new mixed-tenure housing development and the role of planning authorities and housing providers tasked with delivering these schemes. Part Two of this chapter turns toward a review of existing insights into life in mixed-tenure housing, focusing on residents' individual, inter-personal and collective actions and experiences. This chapter thereby arrives at a number of critical conclusions in response to the policy rationale for tenure mixing as a means of fostering 'inclusion' and 'sustainable communities'.

*Chapter Three* outlines the development and deployment of a research methodology for this thesis. Part One of this chapter begins by discussing the rationale for a tripartite empirical focus – examining residents’ experiences of ‘dwelling’, the process of housing ‘provision’, and the characteristics of local neighbourhood ‘contexts’. This first section ends with a set of research questions, centred on the core question of how residents experience life in new - build, high-density, mixed-tenure housing schemes, and from which a series of substantive and empirically-operationalisable research questions were developed. Part Two of the chapter then turns to outline a mixed method research design for the collection of data from three case study housing developments. Finally, Part Three of this chapter provides an account of the data collection process, including the administration of the postal survey, the conduct of interviews with residents and ‘expert’ informants, and the assembly of secondary data on the local planning and neighbourhood contexts for the case study schemes.

*Chapter Four* outlines the ‘neighbourhood context’ for the three case study schemes, each of which is located in areas of both contrasting and similar characteristics within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The aim of this chapter is to provide broad based insights into these neighbourhoods, which ‘ground’ the case study schemes in their social and spatial contexts so as to inform the empirical analyses of ‘provision’ and ‘dwelling’ which follows. Part One of this chapter provides a spatial overview of the neighbourhoods immediately surrounding the case study schemes. Part Two then presents an analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics of these surrounding areas, in the context of the social geography of Tower Hamlets as a whole. The purpose of this chapter is not, therefore, to provide an in-depth study of these neighbourhoods – but rather, it presents a necessarily abstract analysis, based on the mapping and comparison of aggregate census data, alongside simplified plans and selected images of the local built environment and land uses.

*Chapter Five* provides a detailed account of the ‘provision process’ involved in the three case study developments. Based on interviews with expert informants who were involved in the design and development of these schemes – together with documentary sources from planning submissions and reports – this chapter explores how key decisions were made during the initiation, design, and development of these schemes. Part One outlines the background, initiation and key features of these schemes. Part Two examines how decisions were arrived at regarding their overall mix of tenures. Part Three then considers the key



question of how tenures were to be accommodated – or ‘distributed’ – within the designs for the case study developments. Part Four examines how decisions were made regarding the exterior design of the three schemes, focused around questions of ‘tenure blind’ architectural treatment. Finally, Part Five considers the design decisions pertaining to the ‘public realm’, including the provision of public and communal spaces and amenities. This chapter therefore examines how providers of mixed-tenure housing respond to policy guidance – whilst imbuing such schemes with their own design aspirations – and do so within the wider economic and commercial constraints in which they operate.

*Chapter Six* examines the inter-relationships between the case study mixed-tenure developments and their socio-spatial ‘contexts’, by exploring residents’ accounts of their engagements with the surrounding neighbourhood. Part One considers respondents’ first impressions of their neighbourhoods, in the context of their own residential histories and motivations. Part Two then considers residents’ day-to-day engagements with the local areas – focusing on attitudes towards and patronage of local shops, services and amenities. Part Three turns towards residents’ broader perceptions of the local area, by exploring attitudes towards diversity and difference in the case study neighbourhoods and, by implication, responding to assertions of ‘community cohesion’ as a product of housing mix. Part Four then considers residents’ perceptions towards crime and disorder – and in doing so provides critical insights regarding the implication that ‘mixed communities’ possess greater efficacy in responding to these and other locally-faced problems.

*Chapter Seven* explores the nature of interpersonal interactions and relationships between residents of the case study schemes. Part One examines the extent of acquaintanceship ‘networks’, considering the role of propinquity as a factor in contacts between residents and the possibilities for more diffuse or extensive ‘networks’ to form within the developments as a whole. Part Two then explores the nature of interpersonal interactions between residents, based on a typology of ‘casual’, ‘conversational’, ‘friendship’ and ‘instrumental’ interactions. Drawing on a combination of insights into social contacts reported by survey respondents’ and interview discussions concerning residents’ experiences and perceptions of social relations in their developments, this chapter responds to the fundamental question of ‘social mixing’ and the instrumental importance attached to social contacts within policy discourse (as outlined in Chapter Two). In doing so, it adds not only to existing empirical evidence on the role of housing tenure and design as a factor in social relations, but also to the broader

significance of ‘neighbouring’ as an otherwise ordinary feature of residents’ daily lives.

*Chapter Eight* considers what could be described as ‘subjective’ aspects of everyday life, by exploring residents’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the mix of tenures (and peoples) in their developments. Part One considers residents’ perceptions of ‘social mix’ in the three case study schemes – firstly exploring how far residents day-to-day experiences were characteristic of perceived ‘diversity’, before turning to explore attitudes towards the mix and distribution of tenure groups in the case study schemes. Part Two then addresses the question of residents’ attitudes towards difference – considering areas of perceived cohesion, contention and conflict identified by respondents, and in some cases, expressions of deeper seated prejudice or stigma attached to housing tenure. Taking its cue from residents’ own reflections and criticisms, this chapter thereby responds both to assumptions regarding the ‘inclusive’ nature of social relations in ‘mixed communities’ – as well on the broader substantive issue of perceived ‘difference’ or ‘diversity’ within residential contexts.

*Chapter Nine* offers a number of concluding remarks concerning the relationships between policy, housing provision, and everyday life in mixed-tenure housing – drawing on the insights developed throughout the thesis, as well as on respondents’ own direct reflections on the nature and operation of mixed-tenure housing policies. The first set of conclusions concern mixed-tenure development as a means of providing affordable housing, before turning to critically consider and respond to the main ‘social’ rationales for tenure mixing. The first of these conclusions addresses the assertion that tenure mixing might foster the ‘active inclusion’ of lower-income residents in opportunity-enhancing ‘social networks’. The second considers the parallel assertion for ‘passive’ forms of inclusion, social cohesion and the alleviation of tenure-based stigma or prejudice. The third of these conclusions then examines the assertion that mixed-tenure developments may help to foster ‘sustainable communities’ through their inter-relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood. Each of these assertions are re-visited, based on the critical insights gained from the participants in this research, with the aim of developing our broader understanding of the nature of life in mixed-tenure housing, rather than ‘evaluating’ the efficacy of the related policy guidance. The thesis draws to an end with two final and broader comments, reflecting firstly on the ‘promise’ and potential for creating ‘mixed communities’ in practice, and secondly on the question of ‘where next’ for affordable housing provision in British towns and cities.

## Chapter Two: Tenure Mixing in Policy, Practice and Everyday Life

Since the late 1990s, planned and purpose-built large mixed-tenure housing developments have come to form an increasingly prevalent element of the built environment, housing stock and residential life of British towns and cities. Mixed-tenure schemes now form a domestic setting for the everyday lives of hundreds-of-thousands of households. Moreover, the extent of academic interest in tenure mixing over the past decade or so<sup>1</sup> is testament to the view that planned mixed-tenure housing is considered to have a degree of substantive specificity, both as a form of housing provision and as a socio-spatial form of residential organisation. By way of an introduction to the thematic focus of this thesis, this chapter examines these two inter-related aspects of mixed-tenure housing development: Firstly, by outlining the conditions under which tenure mixing came to constitute both a policy aim and a 'best practice orthodoxy' for the provision of new 'affordable' housing – and secondly, by exploring the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of residents whose everyday lives are played out within mixed-tenure housing schemes. Part One of this chapter thereby introduces the policy rationale for tenure mixing, in the context of longer running process of restructuring of the state's role in the provision of subsidised housing, a realignment of political concerns housing tenure and social exclusion, the formulation of new policy programmes for mixed-tenure housing provision, and the practices of planning authorities and housing providers tasked with delivering these programmes. Part Two of this chapter then turns to examine existing empirical insights into residents' experiences of everyday life in mixed-tenure housing schemes – focusing on the social relations and interactions, actions and behaviours, attitudes and perceptions, and broader experiences, which together are often held to reflect what are said to be the unique and propitious qualities of 'mixed communities'. This chapter therefore frames the substantive focus and empirical aims of this thesis – which seeks further critical insights both into life in mixed-tenure housing and into the conditions from and within which mixed-tenure schemes are planned, designed and developed. This is not to assume a deterministic relationship between the 'realities' of life in these schemes and the policy programme for mixed-tenure housing provision. But rather, to suggest that a broader understanding of the very 'everydayness' of life within these schemes may be achieved by grounding residents' perceptions and experiences in the context of the broader politics, policies and practices of mixed-tenure housing provision.

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<sup>1</sup> A recent review identified twenty-seven studies concerned with tenure mix in the UK alone (Sautkina et al. 2012)

## I. Tenure Mixing in Policy and Practice

This section provides a critical introduction to the emergence and formulation of tenure mixing as a planning policy programme. It explores how both the policy rationales and institutional frameworks for tenure mix are rooted in wider processes of political, economic and social restructuring, which have together transformed the policy landscape for subsidised housing provision in Britain over the past three decades. Following Lupton and Fuller (2009), it is argued that the policy approach towards social housing exhibits a familiar neo-liberal rationality, reflected in its deference to the logics of the market, the withdrawal of a direct role for that state, and the individualisation of responsibility for social problems. References to 'neoliberalisation', in this respect, do not merely offer a way of characterising the ideological character of the changing political-economy of 'affordable' housing provision. Rather, it is argued that the policy programme for tenure mixing is embedded within what Brenner and Theodore (2002) describe as 'actually existing' trajectories of political and economic restructuring – through which policy discourse, regulatory and institutional frameworks, and prescriptions for new spatial and social forms can be seen to have emerged. Two 'trajectories' are identified here as having the most bearing on the formulation of tenure mixing as a political programme, each of which in turn are discussed in more detail below. The first involved the formulation of new logics for 'affordable' housing provision, in response to the privatisation and de-regulation of the local authority housing sector. This trajectory, it is argued, set the precedent for the institutional and regulatory frameworks of mixed-tenure housing provision. The second trajectory involved the 'problematisation' of social rented housing within political discourses of 'social exclusion' in which individual disadvantage was causally associated with spatial concentrations of lower-income households. This problematisation of social housing as a source of 'additional disadvantage' arising from the 'monolithic' socio-spatial characteristics traditionally associated with its tenure structure provided a compelling rationale for 'mixing' as a propitious alternative. This rationale was clearly reflected in New Labour's policy discourse on tenure mix, which is discussed in the third part of this section. The final part of this section then turns to outline the means by which mixed-tenure housing was provided in practice – through ad hoc alliances between local planning authorities (LPAs), registered social landlords (RSLs), and/or private sector developers. As such, this section critically examines how the trajectories of 'actually existing' neoliberal restructuring have become aligned with discourses on social exclusion, within both the rationales and mechanisms for providing new mixed-tenure housing schemes.

### **Restructuring, de-regulation and the ‘neo-liberalisation’ of social housing**

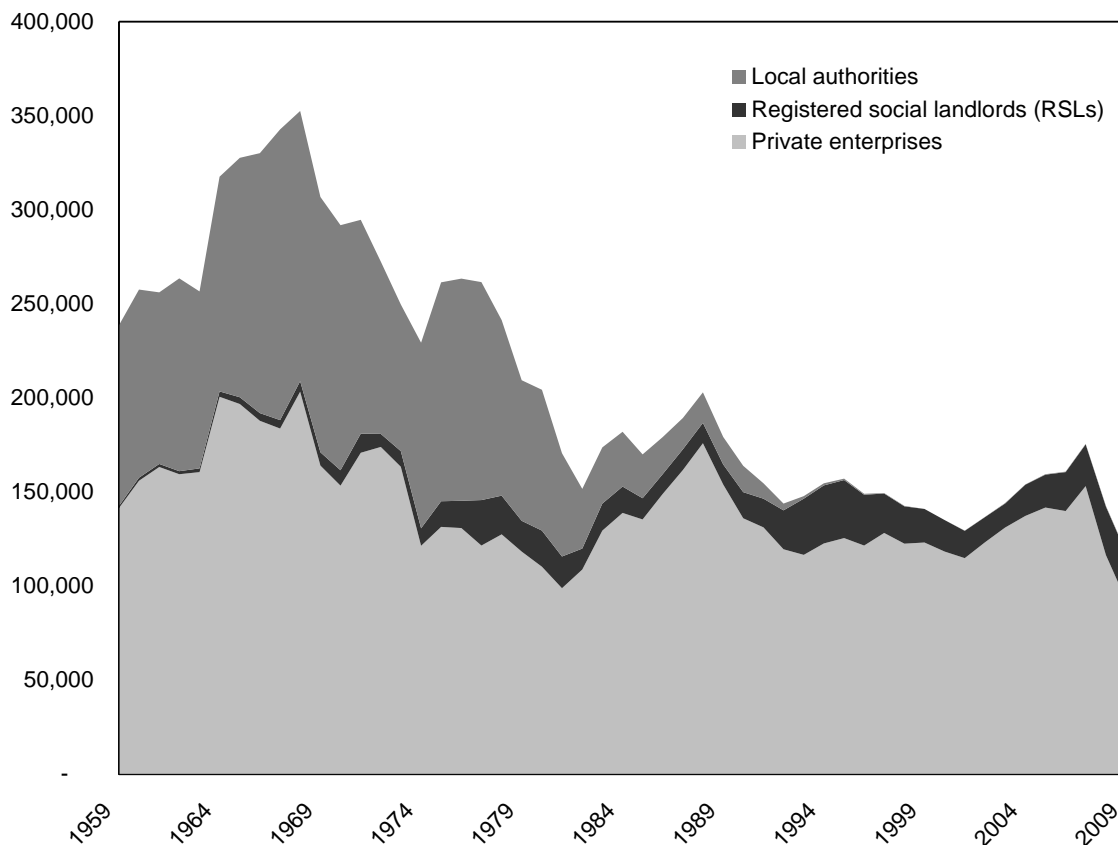
The period from around 1980 to the present has been characterised by the ‘deregulation and dismantlement’ of various institutions of the Fordist-Keynesian welfare state (Peck and Tickell 2002:384). This included the ‘rolling back’ of the state’s role as a provider of social housing. Within a year of taking office, the Thatcher Government had effectively initiated the privatisation of the country’s social housing stock (Forrest and Murie 1988). Under the scheme commonly termed the ‘Right to Buy’, social housing tenants were given the option to purchase their properties at a discount from their local authority. The first four years of the scheme generated around £8.4 billion in cash receipts (as a share of the GDP in today’s terms, Forrest and Murie 1986:46). However, this revenue – which was not recycled into further subsidised housing supply – came in exchange for the loss both of capacity and of assets (often in the form of housing stock that had the highest potential market value, and in some cases against which the local authority still had outstanding debts). By 2004, over two million properties had been sold under the scheme (Mullins and Murie 2006:100). This ‘privatisation’ of social housing also signalled the beginning of a broader and more radical break with – or ‘rolling back’ of – the state’s previous role as the main provider, owner, and ‘landlord’ of subsidised housing. Moreover, various aspects of the privatisation of social housing through the Right to Buy are also reflected in the programme for mixed-tenure housing provision, which began to be ‘formalised’ in the mid-1990s (Tunstall 2003). Firstly, the Right to Buy created a precedent for retailing ‘affordable’ properties at less-than-market rate, the revenue from which could theoretically ‘cross subsidise’ the provision and upkeep of social rented housing. ‘Cross subsidy’ would later constitute a fundamental economic rationale for mixed-tenure housing development. Secondly, Right to Buy initiated a trend towards the diversification of tenure-structures in many social housing estates, which can arguably be seen to have ‘normalised’ the idea that social rented properties could be integrating with other housing tenures within the same schemes. And thirdly, the experience of tenure diversification through Right to Buy sales would later be used as ‘evidence’ that tenure mix could hold social or economic advantages for residents. Moreover, the Right to Buy also had deeply-felt ideological impacts. It undermined and marginalised the local authority housing sector, which Thatcher derided as “a means through which socialism was still built into the mentality of Britain” (Tunstall 2003:156). It also furthered the construction of home ownership as a mainstream aspiration and widened the normative social, economic and cultural gulf between owner-occupation and the ‘last resort’ option of social renting (Gurney 1999b, Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2007).

A second aspect of the 'roll back' of the state's role as a provider of subsidised housing came with the de-regulation of the social rented sector. The 1988 Housing Act made it possible for private corporations and private finance to be involved in the provision of social housing. Most importantly, the Act also created a greatly expanded role for organisations in the 'independent rented sector' – a previously disparate group of non-profit organisations involved in providing less-than-market rate housing (Mullins and Murie 2006). What became commonly known as 'housing associations' – or formally referred to as registered social landlords (RSLs) – would play a central role in the rolling back of state-provided subsidised housing in two ways: Firstly, the removal of funding restrictions allowed housing associations to seek private capital, or enter into 'partnerships' with private developers, thus allowing them the financial flexibility to replace local authorities as the main producers of social housing. Secondly, the 1988 Act laid the groundwork for a process of 'demunicipalisation' whereby housing associations were given the opportunity to acquire social housing stock from local authorities and take over responsibility for its management or re-development (Malpass and Mullins 2002). These changes paved the way for housing associations to become the predominant interest in the provision and management of social and affordable housing. In doing so, it also created the (de)-regulatory framework for the provision of new purpose-built mixed-tenure housing by a new breed of conglomerated RSLs working in 'partnership' with private sector developers.

As a result of these restructuring processes, the 1980s and 90s saw local authority house building decline markedly as a share of new housing completions (see Figure 2.1). Whilst the building activities of housing associations increased, this only amounted to a small proportion of the supply previously delivered by local authorities. The effect of the changing structures of housing provision, combined with Right to Buy sales, meant that the net supply of social rented housing was negative for most years from 1990 to 2006 – with the sector contracting at a peak of over 70,000 dwellings per year (Hills 2007:44). At the same time, the proportion of homes under owner-occupation increased to more than two-thirds of all properties by 2004, having only accounted for around half of all properties in England two decades earlier (ibid. 2007:43). However, this period of tenure restructuring was accompanied by a paradoxical increase in media, public and political attention regarding the un-affordability of housing in many areas of Britain (Bramley 1994). Moreover, as the government-commissioned *Barker Review of Housing Supply* argued, when house prices constrain peoples' choices about where to live, especially lower-paid 'key workers', this can

have additional adverse impacts both on individual wellbeing and on the local economy (Barker 2004:14). A lack of ‘affordability’ was seen as being a particularly deleterious for areas of high demand, especially in London, where the Greater London Authority cited the ‘strategic importance’ of redressing “the affordability issue that underlines the trend towards social polarisation in terms of housing choices and opportunities” (GLA 2004:74).

**Figure 2.1: New housing completions in England since 1959 (source: CLG 2010a)**



In response to this apparent ‘crisis’ of affordability, a third key moment in the restructuring of the political economy of subsidised housing provision thus involved a renewed policy focus on the supply of properties for ‘affordable’ purchase or rent. The Government’s reply was to develop existing low-cost homeownership schemes such as ‘shared ownership’<sup>2</sup> and ‘Homebuy’<sup>3</sup>, as well to introduce new options for low-cost home ownership (Mullins and Murie 2006:105). Areas of high demand were specifically targeted by a new ‘Key Worker’ scheme, which offered a range of affordable housing options to specific groups of public

<sup>2</sup> The ability to purchase an equity share, most often from a housing association, and then ‘rent’ the remainder of the equity-value at less-than-market rate.

<sup>3</sup> An initiative introduced in 1999 whereby housing associations provide interest-free loans to cover part of the equity of a purchaser’s property, the value of which is recouped upon resale.

sector occupations (ibid. 2006:106). For housing providers, especially RSLs, ‘intermediate’ tenures constituted a marketable and potentially revenue-making housing product, which – in financial terms – was easier to integrate into mixed-tenure schemes than more traditional forms of rented affordable housing (Crook et al. 2006). The growth in the supply of ‘intermediate tenure’ housing units is therefore reflected in the tenure structure of most mixed housing developments – including the case studies featured here – in which the majority of ‘affordable’ units tend to be those of an ‘intermediate’ tenure, rather than those destined for social rent (ibid. 2006).

As a political programme, tenure mix can therefore be understood to have emerged from the restructuring of social housing provision which began in the 1980s. Privatisation and deregulation shrank the local authority housing sector, yet the demand for social rented housing placed persisted: From 1997 to 2007 the number of households on local authorities’ housing waiting list in England increased from 1.02 to 1.76 million (CLG 2008b). Meanwhile, the options available to those households who weren’t seeking to access social renting were seen to be constrained by the lack of ‘affordable’ housing. Having ‘rolled back’ its activities as a housing provider, by the mid-1990s the state faced new pressures to intervene in the supply of new housing to address these areas of seemingly acute demand. At the same time, the ‘roll back’ and restructuring of the 1980s had created a new landscape for housing provision, with an increased role for the third and private sector and new paradigms for financing, regulation, and management. It is in the context of these changes that tenure mixing emerged as a ‘technological and ideological shortcut’ in the eyes of policy makers (Murie and Rowlands 2008:656). By mobilising housing associations and private developers to provide new units for social rent alongside market rate properties, tenure mix offered a means by which governmental authorities could respond to demand within the de-regulatory framework left by the restructuring of the 1980s. At the same time, the model for mixed-tenure housing provision also promised to satisfy the neoliberal requisite for competitiveness, flexibility, and de-municipalisation.

### **Social exclusion and the problematisation of social housing**

During the 1990s, neoliberalisation arguably entered a second and seemingly paradoxical phase of increasing (rather than decreasing) state intervention – characterised by the ‘roll out’ of policy programmes oriented towards the “re-regulation, disciplining, and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed by the neoliberalisation of the 1980s”



(Peck and Tickell 2002:389-90). In establishing these new objects and terrains for governmental intervention, New Labour's 'Third Way' evoked "certain ways of visualising political problems, a rationality for rendering them thinkable and manageable, and a set of moral principles by which solutions may be generated and legitimised" (Rose 2000:1395). In this respect, New Labour's social policy discourse was particularly focused on the problematisation of the social housing as an object of policy intervention. Firstly – and despite constituting a form of 'welfare' – social renting thereby came to be presented as form of disadvantage, characterised by the 'social exclusion' of its inhabitants. Secondly, the concentration of social housing within particular geographical areas – namely, large local authority-built 'estates' – was itself constructed as a causal factor in the 'exclusion' of those living in these areas. This process of 'problematisation' legitimated new policy interventions that involved the spatial de-concentration of social housing as means of ameliorating the 'social exclusion' suffered by its inhabitants (Darcy 2010).

The re-formulation of housing tenure as a political problem required the forging of novel discursive links between individual, social, and spatial phenomena. Tony Blair delivered his first major speech as Prime Minister from the balcony of a large social housing estate in South London (see Figure 2.2). From the sort of setting which had increasingly come to represent the socio-spatial archetype for poverty and 'exclusion' in the national psyche, the Prime Minister spoke of his desire to tackle the disadvantage faced by those who had "been left behind by the Conservative years" (Blair cited in Marsh and Mullins 1998:753). This symbolic act provided an indication of the centrality that the New Labour Government would give to a 'spatialised' social policy discourse, in which the seemingly novel phenomenon of 'social exclusion' was seen not just as a problem of 'poor people' but also as one of 'poor places'. The spatialised discourse of social exclusion was epitomised by Tony Blair's foreword to the third report of Labour's 'Social Exclusion Unit':

We all know the problems of our poorest neighbourhoods - decaying housing, unemployment, street crime and drugs. People who can, move out. Nightmare neighbours move in. Shops, banks and other vital services close. Over the last two decades the gap between these 'worst estates' and the rest of the country has grown. It has left us with a situation that no civilised society should tolerate. [...] It shames us as a nation, it wastes lives and we all have to pay the costs of dependency and social division. (SEU 2003[1998]:140)

Figure 2.2: Tony Blair at the Aylesbury Estate in Elephant and Castle, June 1997 (Evening Standard 2010)



Despite having originally emerged as a concept to describe the labour market exclusion which resulted from the globally reaching economic restructuring of the 1970s and 80s (Silver 1994), ‘social exclusion’ was increasingly presented as a localised phenomenon. As Rogers (1996:53) argues, the political potential of ‘exclusion discourse’ was realised through “rendering major social problems innocuous by breaking them down”. By spatialising its policy discourse of social exclusion, the Government could therefore ‘ground’ a set of far reaching processes in the context of the ‘poorest neighbourhoods’. This reconstruction of ‘social exclusion’ as a problem of particular neighbourhoods arguably belied a fundamental discord between the localised nature of ‘symptoms’ – such as joblessness, crime, and social polarisation – and the macro-spatial rootedness of their causes. Moreover, the discursive effect of this account not only worked to suggest that we encounter these problems *in* particular places – which is undoubtedly the case – but rather, it is to suggest that these problems are in fact a *product* of these places themselves. By re-framing social exclusion in terms of processes operating within ‘the poorest neighbourhoods’ – such as abandonment or physical decay – New Labour were able to discursively ‘ground’ far reaching dynamics of marginalisation to render them “thinkable in such a way that their ills appear susceptible to diagnosis, prescription and cure” (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]:281).

The social rented sector was heavily implicated in the plight of the ‘poorest neighbourhoods’. As Darcy (2010) argues, this reflected a widespread adoption of ‘tenure disadvantage’ as an epistemic category in policy making (despite being seemingly incongruous with the intended role of subsidised housing as form of social welfare). New Labour’s discourse of the ‘worst estates’ presented social exclusion as a product of “large areas of housing of similar characteristics” (DETR 2000:8) – which were seen to constitute “pockets of intense deprivation” characterised by unemployment, crime, family breakdown and dependency (SEU 2003[1998]:140-1). The implication that the ‘monolithic’ tenure structure of purpose-built social housing estates was to blame – at least in part – for ‘social exclusion’ arguably reflected a distinct ‘political rationality’. ‘Rationalities’ constitute ways of representing the problems faced by government that adopt a particular epistemological character (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]). In order for the relationship between concentrations of social rented housing and the disadvantages faced by “the poorest neighbourhoods” to be understood as causal, rather than merely symptomatic, this political rationality adopted an alternative ‘epistemology’ which focused on the internal characteristics of poor neighbourhoods themselves. Specifically, the sociological concept of ‘neighbourhood effects’ provided just such an explanation, by posing that “a higher and more complex order of social problems” arises when poor households are concentrated in a geographical area – such as a social housing estate (cf. Darcy 2010:3). ‘Neighbourhood effects’ therefore suggest that the social environment in poor neighbourhoods will have a deleterious effect on individual’s socioeconomic wellbeing. This ‘effect’ is generative and perpetuative and, most importantly, is said to operate independently to the disadvantages posed by material poverty alone. The very fact of residing in a deprived area was thereby held to “adversely affects individuals’ life chances over and above what would be predicted by their personal circumstances and characteristics” (ODPM 2005a:6-7).

Academic accounts offer a complex set of theoretical explanations for a ‘neighbourhood effect’ on poverty which do not deny the role of ‘macro-structural’ processes (Wilson 1987). However, the central argument remains that a concentration of poor households creates a localised social and cultural ‘milieux’ in which ‘poverty related’ social problems, in particular joblessness, become reinforced. For example, as Wilson argues (1997:75-6);

The problems associated with the absence of work are most severe for a jobless family in a low-employment neighbourhood because they are more likely to be shared and therefore reinforced by other families in the neighbourhood through

the process of accidental or nonconscious cultural transmission.

A state of existence outside of the obligations and expectations of advanced capitalist society arguably becomes normalised through ‘cultural transmission’. Those who still aspire to rejoin the ‘mainstream’ no longer can because the ‘social disorganisation’ of their neighbourhood restricts their access to opportunities. ‘Poverty related behaviours’, such as crime or dependency, thus become the norm (Wilson 1997:52). This appears as the crux of an epistemological rationality for the ‘de-concentrating’ poverty within subsidised housing, in which housing tenure is unproblematically mobilised as a proxy for socioeconomic status, class, and deleterious behaviour. If the problems facing the poorest neighbourhoods can be attributed, even in part, to the ‘poverty characteristics’ of these neighbourhoods and their inhabitants, it therefore follows – both by implication and through the explicit claims of policy makers – that a mix of tenures may alleviate these ‘neighbourhood effects’ and instead offer a more propitious social milieu for lower-income residents.

### **Tenure-mixing as a policy programme**

It is therefore possible to identify a two-fold rationale for tenure mixing within the context of the changing politico-economic and discursive landscape for subsidised housing provision in the UK. Firstly, the ‘rolling back’ of the state’s role as a provider of social housing – accompanied by an on-going and often acute demand for affordable housing – constituted a rationale for new mechanisms to ensure the supply of low-cost housing at ‘arm’s length’ from the state. Secondly, the ‘rolling out’ of social exclusion discourse – specifically focused around the problematisation of spatially-concentrated disadvantage within social housing – constituted a rationale for measures to ensure a more ‘balanced’ social mix in those areas where subsidised housing was provided. On the one hand, tenure mixing was constructed as a means by which to ameliorate the social problems faced by those living in unmixed or ‘monolithic’ neighbourhoods of social housing (cf. Power 2007). On the other hand, mixed-tenure housing development mobilised third sector and private sector housing providers to supply social rented and ‘affordable’ (intermediate tenure) housing alongside market rate properties. Whilst the ‘ameliorative’ social policy rationale forms much of the explicit ‘programmatic’ discourse for tenure mixing – the involvement of non-state actors in providing subsidised housing can also be understood as an implicit and underlying ‘rationality’ for mixed-tenure housing development (cf. Rose and Miller 2010[1992])

From the outset, the Government’s case for intervention in the tenure structure of new and

existing neighbourhoods of social housing was based on the virtues of ‘mixed’ and ‘balanced’ communities (Cole and Goodchild 2001):

The Government believes that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. It does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours. Local planning authorities should encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities: they should ensure that new housing developments help to secure a better social mix by avoiding the creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics. (DETR 2000:8)

The policy rationale for tenure mix rests upon a number of additional and underlying theoretical assumptions. The first of which, as we have already discussed, posits social mix is seen as a means of addressing the problems posed by areas of concentrated poverty “by avoiding the creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics” (DETR 2000). This is what Lupton and Fuller (2009) describe as a ‘dispersal consensus’, which holds that tenure mixing may address ‘neighbourhood effects’ on social exclusion. A steadfast belief in the ameliorative potential of housing mix is exemplified by the Government’s statement that:

Mixed communities can help tackle deprivation by reducing the additional disadvantages that affect poorer people when they are concentrated in poor neighbourhoods. (ODPM 2005c:52)

By ‘de-concentrating disadvantage’, tenure mixing thus promises to address the social exclusion ostensibly caused – or at least worsened – by neighbourhood effects (Darcy 2010).

Secondly, allusions have been made to the potential for tenure mix to generate additional positive outcomes, on the basis that “communities function best when they contain a broad social mix” (SEU cited in Cole and Goodchild 2001:355). This instrumental rationale for tenure mixing links physical virtues of a “variety of housing types, particularly in terms of tenure” to the social virtues of ‘balanced’ and ‘inclusive’ communities (CLG 2010b:9). A ‘win-win’ case for tenure mixing was thus constructed on the basis that ‘mixed communities’ ameliorate the deleterious ‘neighbourhood effects’ whilst also offering a more virtuous socio-cultural ‘milieu’ from which lower-income residents might derive additional tangible benefits. As Lupton and Fuller (2009:1017) argue, mixed communities “is clearly different from the previous [...] initiatives in its adoption of the thesis that ‘concentrated poverty’ is the problem and ‘de-concentration’ the solution”. Underlying the explicitly made case for tenure mixing, it is further possible to identify a number of implicit assumptions regarding

the potential for social mix to; firstly, induce more positive forms of social interaction; secondly, normalise and regulate the conduct of social renters; and thirdly, improve the political and economic standing of the local area (Joseph et al. 2007). A number of additional assumptions thus support the contention that ‘mixed communities’ offer a more propitious social milieu from lower-income residents may benefit from the presence of higher-income neighbours. Allusions towards influential academic concepts such as social networks (Granovetter 1973), social capital (Putnam 2000), collective efficacy (Sampson et al. 1997), and the political economy of place (Logan and Molotch 1987), are thus implicitly mobilised to legitimate tenure mixing. These various assertions regarding the positive social dynamics of mixed-tenure residential contexts are discussed in more detail in Section Two of this chapter.

### **The provision of mixed-tenure housing**

As Rose and Miller argue, modern forms of neo-liberal government require political forces to “operationalise their programmes of government by influencing, allying with, or co-opting resources that they do not directly control” (2010[1992]:287). This is especially true with regards to the conduct of urban policy, which has seen “the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred” (Stoker 1998:17). As the earlier discussion of restructuring and de-regulation illustrated, an analytic focus on the operation of housing policy must therefore move from ‘government’ and towards ‘multiple and delicate networks’ and ‘shifting alliances’ – to use Rose and Miller’s terms – that comprise the operation of ‘governance’. Indeed, the provision of social housing was reliant on private finance, the construction industry, and various other private sector interests, long before ‘public-private’ partnership was rolled out across other domains of the welfare state (cf. Dunleavy 1981). As Ball argued – over twenty five years ago – in order to understand housing-related issues, it is thus essential to examine the structures and relationships between various actors involved in the delivery and reproduction of housing as a physical entity (1986:147). These ‘structures of provision’ provide an insight into how forms of mixed-tenure housing development operate in practice.

As a policy programme, tenure mixing involves guidance passed down from central government to local planning authorities (LPAs). In order to achieve Government’s ‘strategic housing policy objective’ for the creation of ‘mixed communities’, this guidance stated that LPAs should work to deliver “a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in

terms of tenure” in all areas (CLG 2010b:6). More specifically, guidance required LPAs to pursue the following steps: Firstly, they should set out a strategic plan for “achieving a good mix of housing” in the local area, based on current and projected figures for the “overall proportion of households that require market or affordable housing” (2010b:9). Housing developers should then propose schemes that “sustain mixed communities” by reflecting the local authorities’ assessment of market rate and affordable demand (2010b:10). In order to gain planning permission, proposals for ‘large strategic sites’ were thus required to comprise “a mix of households as well as a mix of tenure and price” (2010b:10). In addition, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has responsibility for overseeing land use planning within the thirty-three London boroughs. The GLA’s ‘spatial development strategy’ – known as ‘The London Plan’ – provides an additional layer of policy guidance, which from the outset echoed central government’s call for “new housing development [...]to promote mixed and balanced communities by [...] offering a range of housing types and sizes” (GLA 2004:72). To this end, the GLA adopted a London-wide ‘strategic target’ that half of the properties in all developments comprising more than ten units should be of an ‘affordable’ tenure.

“As part of their strategic leadership and place shaping activities”, LPAs were therefore encouraged to ensure the private or third sector housing developments “address the housing needs of all residents across all housing tenures” (CLG 2008b:4). In this respect, an increasingly ‘entrepreneurial’ role requires local governments to mobilise ‘public-private partnerships’ in pursuit of particular goals (Harvey 1989). As the London Plan made explicit;

The Mayor strongly supports *a partnership approach* to the provision of affordable housing. He looks to [...] house builders, boroughs and registered social landlords to take a more pro-active approach in pre-application discussions, public consultation and negotiations over planning agreements. (GLA 2004:79 emphasis added)

The ‘partnership approach’ required local planning departments to engage in a complex process of negotiations with various ‘stakeholders’ in order to determine the ‘affordable’ housing component of proposed developments (Tiesdell 2004). Even at the planning stage, most mixed-tenure schemes will thus involve a range of actors – a private sector developer, a registered social landlord (RSL), a body supplying an affordable housing grant (normally the Homes and Communities Agency), and a host of other firms providing architectural, engineering, construction, and financial services. The exact roles played by each of these actors – and the relations between them – might vary considerably (see Tiesdell 2004). For

instance, RSLs may 'partner' with a developer from the outset of a scheme, or alternatively they may simply acquire units within a completed development. The cost of these units may be met by a funding grant or the RSL may be required to pay from their own funds (usually at a reduced price – although Tiesdell (2004) suggests that in some instances RSLs may be required to pay market rate). The form taken by these arrangements depends on complex negotiations between LPAs, developers, RSLs and various other actors (Monk et al. 2006).

Negotiations over the provision of mixed-tenure housing therefore involve a number of different actors, each of whom may have contrasting objectives. The main objective of the local planning authority is to ensure that developers provide a sufficient quantity of 'affordable' housing, of the appropriate size and tenure-type to meet local demand. RSLs are also primarily concerned with acquiring a sufficient quantity of new housing units of the right size, type, and in the right locations to meet demand, within the cost constraints determined by their funding arrangements. RSLs may also have design, quality and space standards which differ from those adopted by providers of market rate properties (cf. Housing Corporation 2007). For their part, the primary objective for any developer is to build units that can be sold at a price that covers the cost of production and which generates the required return on investment (Tiesdell 2004). Existing research has shown that "developers wishing to work in urban areas recognise that engaging in mixed tenure development is unavoidable if they are to secure development rights to a site" (Rowlands et al. 2006:18). However, if LPAs push too hard on developers in their negotiations over affordable housing supply, proposed schemes risks becoming commercially unviable leaving the developer would have no incentive to proceed (Roberts 2007). On the other hand, if developers are too resistant to the requirements for affordable units, they are unlikely to gain planning permission. The London Plan therefore advises that;

Boroughs should seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing when negotiating on individual private residential schemes, having regard to their affordable housing targets, the need to encourage rather than restrain residential development and the individual circumstances of the site. Targets should be applied flexibly, taking account of individual site costs, the availability of public subsidy and other scheme requirements. (GLA 2004:77)

As Burgess et al. observed in their survey of Section 106 negotiations, this requirement for 'flexibility' means that "the majority of councils do not stipulate the mix of tenure required", with 'site by site' negotiation instead determining the mix of tenures to be delivered



(2007:35). Based on the terms agreed in these negotiations, the various actors involved are eventually required to enter into a legally binding contract with the LPA under 'Section 106' of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. Negotiations over so-called 'Section 106 Agreements' are also long-drawn-out and legally complex affairs. As a result, there is considerable variation in terms of the proportion, tenure-type and size of the affordable housing agreed upon for proposed developments (Groves et al. 2003).

Empirical analyses of the design and development process for mixed-tenure schemes suggest significant variation in the extent to which the Government's (ODPM 2005b) stated aim of a 'well-integrated' mix of tenures was realised in practice (Tiesdell 2004, Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005, Rowlands et al. 2006, Roberts 2007). Whilst some schemes may opt for a dispersed – or 'pepper potted' – tenure mix, others adopt a contrasting approach whereby tenures are grouped in separate blocks, often with their own access, public spaces and amenities – sometimes even on a physically separate site. A third approach involves grouping properties of the same tenure together in 'clusters'. Calls for a 'well integrated mix' of tenures would seem to suggest that a dispersed tenure mix corresponds most closely to the government's aspirations (CLG 2006a). However, evidence from completed mixed-tenure schemes suggests 'clustered' or 'separated' approach to be the most commonly used (Murie and Rowlands 2008). Various rationales have been cited to explain this trend. Firstly, it has been argued that developers will seek to design and build affordable housing "in such a way as to minimise its effects on the value of the market rate housing" (Tiesdell 2004:201). In this regards, developers may be discouraged from fully integrating market rate and affordable tenures, on the basis that it could make private sale units less marketable. Secondly, it has been argued that RSLs tend to favour some separation of tenures in order to facilitate day-to-day management and maintenance (Roberts 2007). Thirdly, private developers may seek to provide higher 'levels of service' for market rate properties, in which case a separating tenure groups means that the cost of facilities such lifts or a concierge do not have to be shared between 'affordable' and market rate occupants (Rowlands et al. 2006:22).

The built-form of completed mixed-tenure developments – including the mix and distribution of tenures – therefore reflects both the requirements of individual actors and the dynamics of negotiations between them, together with a host of other contingencies, such as the physical characteristics of the site, the availability of finance, and anticipated sale

prices for market rate units. However, the privileging of ‘flexibility’ in this process would suggest that variations in the degree to which schemes deliver an ‘integrated tenure mix’ do not necessarily reflect either a policy subversion or ‘failure’ of the Government’s aims. Rather, the activities of housing providers appear to reflect an attempt to mediate between the requirements of planning policy, and the various demands and sometimes conflicting demands for manageability, marketability, affordability, and profitability. Indeed, as Roberts (2007:189) concludes “if the nostrum of an “integrated” layout were to be insisted on in each new mixed income community, some developments might never move on from the design phase”. Ultimately, the prevailing approach towards mixed-tenure housing provision delivered ten billion pounds worth of new units between 2004 and 2008 alone (Crook and Monk 2011:1007). However, the question remains as to what extent this approach may “structure the lives of those caught up in particular architectural regimes” associated with mixed-tenure housing provision (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]:281-2).

## **II. Life in Mixed-Tenure Housing**

This section turns to explore the various insights gained from existing empirical analyses of everyday life in mixed-tenure housing, with particular focus on those aspects of residents’ individual, inter-personal and collective conduct and experiences which form the basis for claims made by policy discourse on ‘mixed communities’. Existing research has engaged with residents living in a variety of planned mixed-tenure contexts. In the UK, research has focused on mixed-tenure schemes planned prior to 1997 (Jupp 1999, Allen et al. 2005, Camina and Wood 2009), areas in which ‘tenure diversification’ has been undertaken in existing areas of social rented housing (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, McKee and McIntyre 2009), and also new-build developments completed under ‘New Labour’ (Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005, Silverman et al. 2005, Roberts 2007, Davidson 2008, 2010). A number of publications have also focused on the broader issues pertaining to mixed-tenure housing provision based on engagements with housing professionals (Rowlands et al. 2006, Manzi 2010, McKee 2011). In turn, the UK evidence base is supplemented by insights from other national contexts. Research from US cities – where planned tenure mixing forms a key aspect of the federal ‘HOPE VI’ urban regeneration programme – has focused both on new-build developments (Rosenbaum et al. 1998, Kleit 2005), as well as on schemes which have involved the ‘mixed-income’ re-development of existing public housing (Graves 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011, 2012). Critical research into social relations in mixed-tenure

neighbourhoods has also been undertaken in Australia (Arthurson 2002, 2010), the Netherlands (Uitermark 2003, Uitermark et al. 2007) and Sweden (Andersson and Musterd 2005, Musterd and Andersson 2005). Drawing on these sources, this section offers a cross-national review of existing empirical insights into the nature of everyday life and social relations in mixed-tenure contexts. Specifically, this review focuses on three of the most prominent themes in UK policy discourse on ‘mixed communities’. Firstly, the assertion that tenure mixing may connect lower-income residents to better employment or economic opportunities – which is termed here as ‘active inclusion’. Secondly, the assertion that mix of tenures will offer a more cohesive and inclusive social environment, in which problems of tenure-based stigma and prejudice are less prevalent – which is termed here as ‘passive inclusion’. And thirdly, the assertion that mixed-tenure development creates more ‘sustainable’ neighbourhoods, that are better placed to respond to locally-experienced problems or better able to attract high quality goods and services – which is termed here as ‘positive gentrification’. Each of these themes is thus explored in turn, based on a critical review of the relevant evidence base from the UK and beyond.

### **Active Inclusion: Social Networks and Interpersonal Interactions**

Assumptions regarding local ‘social networks’ are central arguments that neighbourhoods with a more ‘balanced’ social mix may reverse the ‘additional disadvantages’ imposed by ‘monolithic’ concentrations of lower-income, social renting households. A social networks thesis suggests that localised acquaintanceships or relationships constitute a key source of ‘informal’ information about jobs, opportunities or resources, especially for those on lower-incomes (Joseph et al. 2007:379). Residing in neighbourhoods with a concentration of lower-income households is – by definition – said to limit access to opportunity-enhancing social contacts, because local social ‘networks’ will mainly comprise those who themselves have limited opportunities. For instance, the Government argued that “living in deprived areas can help perpetuate worklessness as there are fewer employed contacts through which individuals can find work” (ODPM 2005a:35). In contrast, neighbourhoods with a more ‘balanced’ social mix are held to offer lower-income residents the opportunity to foster ‘weak ties’ – characterised by acquaintanceships that ‘bridge’ between socioeconomic groups, as opposed to friendship or kinship ties between people of a similar background (Granovetter 1973). Socially mixed neighbourhoods are implicitly assumed to foster the creation of ‘weak ties’, the beneficial nature of which supposedly derives from the fact that “those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own

and will thus have access to information different from that which we receive” (Granovetter 1973:1371). Reflecting this influential argument, the Government suggested that “finding work through personal contacts is the most common route into employment for the unemployed” (ODPM 2005a:35). The ‘social networks’ proposition for tenure mixing thereby asserts that ‘weak ties’ may form between residents of different income levels and backgrounds within the context of ‘mixed income’ housing and that these contacts may afford social renters access to employment networks and other resources (Joseph et al. 2007:381). Mixed-tenure contexts therefore promise to ‘actively include’ their lower-income residents in opportunity-enhancing social networks.

The ‘active inclusion’ rationale for tenure mixing – as it is termed here – is thus premised on instrumental assumptions regarding the social relationships between residents. Specifically, “the assumption here is that integration will lead to interaction and interaction to concrete social and economic benefits” (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:210). In the first instance, ‘active inclusion’ presupposes that residents engage in social contacts with one another. So-called ‘propinquity effects’ are held to suggest that interactions will occur due to physical proximity (Graves 2010:112). Whilst this may seem unproblematic, it must be considered within the context of contrary assertions regarding declining social engagement within the public sphere (Sennett 1977), accompanied by an increasing importance of virtual or lifestyle-based ‘communities’ as a sphere for social life (Wellman 1999). Secondly, it is assumed that interactions propagated by propinquity will constitute ‘bridging’ relationships comprising ‘weak ties’ between those from different socioeconomic groups (Gittell and Vidal 1998). In short, the ‘active inclusion’ proposition requires acquaintanceships to bridge the ‘tenure divide’ – despite the fact that many people arguably prefer to form ‘homophilic’ relationships with those who they perceive to be from similar backgrounds. Thirdly, it is assumed that these contacts will have what Cole and Goodchild (2001:355) term as ‘transactional qualities’. In other words, they may be characterised by instrumental exchanges of help or information leading to ‘[job] mobility opportunities’ (Granovetter 1973). Relatively sustained and extensive social contacts between lower- and higher- income residents therefore constitute an “essential preliminary” to ‘inclusion’ (Camina and Wood 2009:470). As Graves (2010:112) argues, “a basic premise of income mixing within a housing development is that neighbours will engage in social interaction and, further, that this interaction will help to reduce social and economic isolation”.

Various studies have examined the nature and extent of inter-personal interactions between residents of mixed-tenure housing schemes, either in the context of the UK (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Silverman et al. 2005, Roberts 2007, Camina and Wood 2009), USA (Rosenbaum et al. 1998, Kleit 2005, Graves 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011), or elsewhere (Musterd 2008, Arthursen 2010). Almost exclusively, the most commonplace form of social contact between residents has been found to be 'casual', fleeting, and relatively 'superficial' in nature. For instance, the majority of social interactions reported by residents of Chaskin and Joseph's (2011:220) Chicago case study were 'limited' and 'extremely casual' – mainly involving exchanged greetings or brief conversations in passing, that were engaged in 'as a matter of course'. Similarly, Camina and Wood's (2009) British study of mixed-tenure estates completed within the 1970s found 'polite' and 'convivial' interactions to constitute the 'norm' for nearly all residents. Arthursen's (2010:56) South Australian case study concludes that most interactions between residents are 'perfunctory' in nature, "such as waving or saying hello in the street", with 'numerous respondents' expressing the view that their lives allowed little room even for fleeting interactions. Similarly, structured interviews with nearly a thousand residents of mixed-tenure estates in England, led Jupp (1999:40) to conclude that "levels of interaction were almost non-existent". Whist Brophy and Smith (1997) find little evidence of any forms of interaction, even within the same building. The picture is thus generally one in which brief and casual exchanges constitute the extent of most inter-personal interactions between residents of mixed-tenure schemes, with even these sorts of contacts being limited in some contexts.

Research into social relations in various mixed-tenure tenure housing contexts also raises questions of the extent to which interpersonal interactions will occur between tenure groups and thus 'bridge' the social worlds of owners and social renters. For instance, Jupp (Jupp 1999:42) found that "only a minority of residents have got to know people of other tenures in the typical developments which are currently described as 'mixed tenure'". Specifically, "although the majority of respondents had got to know the names of more than five other residents, many did not know the name of even one other resident with a different tenure" (ibid. 1999:38;40). Similarly, Kleit's (2005:1438) study of a Seattle new-build mixed-tenure scheme found that "homeowners and public housing renters have few overlapping relationships, and homeowners were more likely to know other homeowners". While from their research into mixed-tenure neighbourhoods in Scottish cities, Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:101) conclude that "it was evident that owners did not mix much with renters"

and that residents' social networks "did not intersect those of people from other tenures". Furthermore, in contexts those where more 'casual' interactions were found to take place with relative frequency between income groups, "they do not generally seem to have led to more substantive or instrumental relations" (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:221). Camina and Wood (2009:473) similarly found that contacts between tenure groups were typically 'polite' rather than 'friendly', whilst most 'close friendships' were reported between residents from the same tenure group. In other words, the proposition that residents from different tenure groups will engage in relatively frequent and sustained interpersonal contact appears unsupported by existing insights into life in mixed-tenure schemes. Moreover, if cross-tenure interactions do occur, these are likely to be even more 'superficial' in nature – and would therefore 'lack substantial significance' by way of their inability to 'tie' individuals into instrumental social networks according to Granovetter's (1973:1361) original typology.

Explanations for a lack of interactions that 'bridge' the tenure divide have – on the one hand – argued that the contrasting lifestyles and routines of owners and renters limit opportunities for interaction between the two tenure groups. Arthuson (2010:58), for instance, concludes that homeowners "generally lead busy lives that are not wholly tied to the local neighbourhood, which means that there is often little time or inclination for mixing with other residents". Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:98), in turn, describe 'stark' differences in the lifestyles of owners and social renters, with the daily lives of renters focused around the immediate neighbourhood, whereas owners' routines focus around work and consumption beyond the confines of the local area. Owners thus described not feeling part of the 'community' and its neighbourhood-based social networks "because so much of their life lay outside the estate" (ibid. 2000:101). Similarly, Davidson (2010:533) argues that 'middle class' residents occupy different 'lifeworlds' to their 'working class' neighbours. For higher-income respondents, a lack of neighbourhood-based social mixing was thus explained in self-reflexive terms "through a lack of engagement, attachment, and/or investment in the local area" (ibid. 2010:533). Jupp (1999:41) also found that "owners mainly led their social and working lives outside the area" and, as a result, many social renters "stated that they never saw any of the [...] owner-occupiers" (ibid. 1999:41). Only Camina and Wood (2009:464) found that the geographical nature of daily activities was broadly similar for both owners and social renters, although factors such as being out-of-work did still tend to concentrate residents' activities more within the immediate area. Most empirical evidence thus suggests that limited interaction between tenure groups may simply result from the fact that owners

and social renters typically have differing and diverging routines and lifestyles. While renters' lives are more centred on the immediate neighbourhood, thus affording greater opportunities for social contacts with other residents – owners' arguably spend more time away from the neighbourhood, whether for work, shopping or leisure activities.

On the other hand, some authors have argued that limited cross-tenure interaction is more reflective of a preference amongst residents to engage with others they perceive to be of a similar background or status. In this regard, a number of observers identify evidence of what Graves (2010:113) terms as a preference for 'homophily' (Jupp 1999:42, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000:101, Camina and Wood 2009:473, Arthurson 2010:50, Graves 2010:113, Chaskin and Joseph 2011:232). In essence, this argument suggests that relations between residents "are more likely to form in situations where they perceive themselves to be social equals" (Graves 2010:113). For instance, Chaskin and Joseph (2011:217) describe how social interactions in their Chicago case study were 'largely contingent' on residents' perceptions of "social (class) proximity". In many ways, these observations are unsurprising – for, as Kleit (2005:1415) reminds us, peoples' broader social networks often tend to be characterised by "real or perceived homogeneity". Specifically, Kleit's (2005) respondents expressed a preference towards interacting with members of the same ethnic or linguistic groups. In some cases, 'homophilic' preferences may also be exacerbated by perceived tension or animosity between tenure groups. Chaskin and Joseph (2011:226) describe a 'fear factor' as inhibiting relationships with public housing tenants on the part of a minority of other residents. Jupp (1999:72) found that similar forms of stigma directed at social housing tenants – who were often blamed for problems of crime or disorder – created feelings of resentment which, in the words of one social renting respondent, meant that "mixing is not on". Graves (2010:128) even found that management practices in her US case study furthered the impression of 'hostility' between tenure groups, discouraging interaction and leading some public housing tenants to isolate themselves from owners to reduce the perceived risk of complaints or sanctions. Perceived differences – whether based around class, race, or conduct – may thereby 'structure' social contacts in favour of homophily, contributing "to the delineation and maintenance of within-group interactions at the expense of between-group relations" (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:230).

In addition to lifestyle factors and personal volition, physical proximity is also said to play an important role in facilitating or constraining neighbourhood-based relations. 'Propinquity'

would suggest that interactions are more likely to occur between near neighbours. Kleit (2005:1434), for instance, found that the majority of social interactions either occurred between next-door neighbours, or those on the same street. Indeed, the case for tenure mixing as a means of fostering greater 'inclusion' are strongly premised on assumptions regarding the potential for 'propinquitous' social contacts. In turn, it follows that mixing between tenure groups is more likely to occur "where owner and rental housing is spatially integrated" (Arthurson 2010:50). Design factors – in particular, the layout and distribution of different tenures within schemes – have thus been identified as having a potentially significant influence on interactions between tenure groups. In schemes where tenures were relatively 'integrated', casual interactions between owners and renters appear relatively commonplace (Camina and Wood 2009). Whereas in situations where there is a degree of physical separation between tenure groups, even 'superficial' interactions are constrained. As one of Jupp's (1999:45) housing manager respondents observed, "the physical separation of the tenures means there is not much interaction", whereas "in a 'pepper potted' arrangement of private and social housing, most residents know people of another tenure". It has also been argued that propinquity can also be fostered through community facilities or events (such as a public library, community gardening, and 'pot luck' meals, in the case of Kleit 2005). Yet there remain serious questions as to whether collective amenities or residents' organisations are sufficiently widely used to constitute a meaningful domain for interaction. For instance, Jupp (1999:49) found that four-fifths of respondents had never used the purpose-built community centres provided in his case study schemes. In contrast, Kleit (2005:1432) did find that many residents did make use of local community facilities – however, her analysis concluded that this did necessarily foster interactions between different tenure groups. Whilst physical separation between households of different tenures invariably works to inhibit interaction – even where tenures are spatially integrated, or where community facilities provide an alternative locale for interaction, there is little guarantee that 'ties' will form between those of different tenures. A causal role for propinquity in fostering interactions between tenure groups thus appears largely unrealistic (Arthurson 2010:62).

The 'reality' of everyday social interactions in mixed-tenure housing schemes therefore appears at odds with the promise that tenure mixing may 'actively include' lower-income residents in instrumental 'social networks'. The potential for ties to form between people from different tenure groups is arguably constrained by lifestyle factors, individual volition,



and a lack of physical proximity. Whilst in situations where conversational contacts were found to take place between residents from different tenure groups, there is no evidence that owners have linked social renters to labour market opportunities (Camina and Wood 2009:473). Indeed, Van Ham and Manley (2010:279) analysed data from a panel of Scottish households to examine whether changes in employment status over time were associated with neighbourhood tenure mix, only to conclude that there was “no evidence that it is beneficial for individual labour market outcomes to mix home owners and social renters within neighbourhoods”. Cheshire’s (2008) review of the transnational evidence base also concluded that – in the vast majority of cases – neighbourhood mix was found to have no discernible long-term impact on job prospects, income, educational achievement, health, and welfare. This is not necessarily to say that ‘mixed’ neighbourhoods do not offer other advantages over areas of concentrated disadvantage. However, it can be argued that ambitious claims regarding the potential for ‘active inclusion’ within mixed neighbourhoods should be re-assessed, in light of the apparently overwhelming evidence that ‘mixed communities’ are characterised by far more casual or ‘banal’ forms of interpersonal interaction between residents. Many of the mixed-tenure schemes studied to-date appear to offer a convivial residential environment within which friendly exchanges are commonplace. However, there remains little evidence to suggest that a mix of housing tenures will, in turn, address broader macro-structural dynamics of poverty and ‘exclusion’.

### **Passive Inclusion: De-Stigmatisation and Community Cohesion**

In response to the widely-voiced criticisms of ‘social networks’ arguments that posit tenure mixing as an antidote for urban poverty (cf. Joseph 2006) – Berube (2006) argues that mixed-tenure developments can nevertheless be rationalised on the basis that they may offer less-tangible prospects for improvements in ‘quality of life’ to low-income residents. Looking beyond ‘active’ forms of inclusion may therefore lead us to consider whether ‘mixed communities’ foster other – more ‘passive’ – forms of inclusion, for instance by reducing the ingrained stigma and prejudice has been found to have a harmful and wide-ranging impact on residents of large-scale social housing estates (Dean and Hastings 2000). In stating that “integrating different housing types and needs can greatly enrich the quality of community life by engendering both a sense of belonging and a sense of respect for all” (DTLR 2001:35), the Government strongly implied that ‘mixed communities’ may also foster a greater degree of tacit acceptance, tolerance and inclusion amongst resident from different backgrounds. just as the city, more broadly, became a political space within which normative discourses of

social justice were articulated under New Labour (Tonkiss 2000), housing mix was endowed with the promise of fostering extra-economic inclusion or ‘cohesion’ within ‘communities’ (cf. Robinson 2005:1421). Mixed-tenure housing development is therefore also held to have a *passive* role in the social inclusion of lower-income residents, on the basis that a more ‘mixed’ social milieu might reduce tenure-based distinctions or divisions along the lines of socioeconomic status, class, or even race.

Given that tenure-based stigma has been found to affect the lives of inhabitants of large social housing ‘estates’ in a myriad of ways – ranging from ‘postcode discrimination’ when seeking employment or accessing services, to stereotyping that taints personal relationships (Dean and Hastings 2000) – the promise that mixed-tenure development may offer a residential setting that is comparatively free from such stigma has understandable allure. The longer-running experience of tenure mixing in US cities has, however, raised questions over whether such initiatives contribute towards the ‘mainstreaming’ of social housing, or whether tenure-based stigma might in fact be reproduced or propagated within newly mixed residential contexts. To date, there is only limited empirical evidence regarding the potential of tenure mixing to alleviate stigma and create a more ‘inclusive’ social milieu in this regard. As discussed in the preceding section, the fact that interpersonal interactions between tenure groups appear to be somewhat limited – not least, as a result of the ‘homophilic’ preferences of some residents – is perhaps suggestive of a degree of tenure-based stigma in itself. For instance, Davidson (2010:533) suggests that ‘naturalised’ differences between the lifestyles of ‘middle class’ owners and ‘working class’ social renters were used by both groups of respondents to explain their lack of engagement with residents from other tenures. Davidson (2010:537) thus concludes that neighbourhoods that have become ‘mixed’ through new-build housing development embody “a social reality that maintains class distinctions”, and within which “spatial cohabitation does not lead to shared social identification”. Arthuson (2010:61) was more explicit still in her conclusions, arguing that the attitudes of homeowners and private renters are reflective of “specific perspectives of social housing tenants which discourages cross-tenure mixing”.

Other UK-based studies have reflected more directly on the question of stigma within mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. On the one hand, Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:106) concluded that the diversification of tenures in existing social housing ‘estates’ had led to a reduction in stigma. Similarly, Camina and Wood (2009:473) found that respondents regarded their

mixed-tenure estates as “inhabited by people much like themselves”, leading to the conclusion that there is the potential of residents “becoming more tolerant of other lifestyles”. In contrast, however, Jupp (1999:69-72) found that – whilst the majority of residents were ‘agnostic’ towards the presence of other tenure groups – some owners expressed views that were characterised by resentment and prejudice towards their social renting neighbours. Social housing tenants were stereotyped on the basis of their conduct and, specifically, their lack of ‘responsibility’ or ‘respect’ towards the neighbourhood (ibid. 1999). Social renters, in turn, felt unfairly villainised. Ultimately, this created tensions which occasionally manifested in conflict. Further evidence of tenure-based tensions and divisions can be found in a number of US-based studies. A perceived divide between public housing tenants and owners – “informed by subtle cues and quiet assumptions about race and class” – constituted a significant source of tension in Chaskin and Joseph’s (2011:221) Chicago case study. Particular activities – such as ‘hanging out’, allowing children to play unattended, or even barbecuing in public spaces – were found to constitute “a marker of difference” that “determined social boundaries and shaped attitudes about neighbours” (ibid. 2011:221). As already mentioned, insights into US schemes also suggest that rules and regulations imposed by management may function as an additional source of stigma, especially where their enforcement places subsidised housing tenants under unequal threat of sanctions or eviction (Graves 2010, Bartz et al. 2011, Chaskin and Joseph 2011, 2012). In some instances, marketing materials even omitted references to the ‘mixed’ nature of new developments, or presented images that signalled towards a homogeneous ‘middle class’ demographic (Graves 2010). In addition to the perceived attitudes of other residents, management practices therefore “left subsidised residents feeling marginalised and alienated from their market rate neighbours” (Graves 2010:128).

The discourse around ‘social mix’ and ‘community balance’ implies that proximity between households from different backgrounds will overcome divisions associated with housing tenure and social class, despite “extremely shaky empirical evidence” to support this proposition (Cole and Goodchild 2001:357). Indeed, whilst some studies have found little or no evidence of tensions or prejudice associated with housing tenure, the majority have found that such tensions persist, or in some cases, may even be exaggerated within mixed-tenure contexts. Where present, these differences were constructed along lines of class and socioeconomic status. However, research into mixed-tenure schemes in US cities has found evidence that the “spectre of racial prejudice” may also haunt tenure-based divisions

(Chaskin and Joseph 2012:15). These insights appear to support Amin's (2002:968) stark conclusion that housing mix offers no guarantee of greater inter-ethnic tolerance and that mixed-tenure schemes may in fact be "riddled with racism, interethnic tension, and cultural isolation". Evidence from US cities – in which racial segregation within public housing is admittedly a more entrenched issue (cf. Wacquant 1996) – therefore raises profound questions regarding the potential for 'mixed communities' to constitute "spaces to encourage racial, ethnic or religious cohesion" and "prevent increasing segregation" (DCLG 2010:8). From a purely normative-theoretical social justice perspective, the implication that tenure mixing has the potential to help overcome wider societal divisions retains an obvious allure. Empirically, however, a 'passive inclusion' rationale for tenure mixing appears to be undermined by experiences that suggests 'mixing' alone offers no guarantee of overcoming ingrained forms of stigma or prejudice associated with housing tenure.

### **'Positive Gentrification': Social Control and the Political Economy of Place**

The discourse around 'social exclusion' not only asserts that residents of lower-income neighbourhoods are disproportionately excluded from labour market opportunities, or suffer the adverse effects of territorial or tenure-based stigma – they also imply that poorer neighbourhoods are additionally disadvantaged because they do not function in line with the norms of 'balanced' or 'sustainable' communities (Cole and Goodchild 2001, McKee and McIntyre 2009, Darcy 2010, Manzi 2010). Areas in which social housing is the predominant tenure are viewed as 'unsustainable'. Whereas by advocating a "more *sustainable* mix of housing types and tenures" (ODPM 2005c:53 emphasis added), the Government implied that socially mixed neighbourhoods are more *self*-sustaining and require less public intervention (Cole and Goodchild 2001:355-6). Chaskin and Joseph (2012) refer to this as a 'positive gentrification' rationale for tenure mixing. In direct contrast to the pathologising conception of neighbourhoods in which subsidised housing 'concentrates' disadvantage – 'positive gentrification' suggests that the presence of homeowners and private renters may render the presence of social housing (and its inhabitants) less problematic by fostering greater 'collective efficacy' in response to problems that manifest themselves locally (cf. Rosenbaum et al. 2002). Through arguing that 'mixed neighbourhoods' are endowed with a greater capacity for "community self-help" and the potential to "assist community surveillance" in response to problems of crime or anti-social behaviour (DTLR 2001:1), it is implied that presence of 'middle class' residents might influence the conduct of their lower-income neighbours and encourage more "more socially acceptable and constructive

behaviour” (Joseph 2006:214), whether through ‘role modelling’, exerting ‘normative pressure’, or directly intervening in consort with police or other agencies (Chaskin and Joseph 2012:3-4). Through arguing that ‘mixed neighbourhoods’ “provide a number of important community benefits”, including “a better balance of demand for community services and facilities” (DTLR 2001:1), it is implied that ‘middle class’ residents will also bolster the local ‘political economy’ by attracting better commercial and public goods or services (2006:215). The result of ‘positive gentrification’ is thereby said to render ‘mixed communities’ more ‘sustainable’ because they require intervention from state authorities, service providers, and housing managers.

It has long been argued that ‘informal’ social control is more effectively exercised within socially mixed neighbourhoods, as a result of homeowners acting as ‘eyes on the street’ and taking steps to intervene over or discourage unacceptable behaviour (Jacobs 1972). Similarly, it has been argued that law-abiding adults who are in regular work may act as positive role models for lower-income households – and especially for young people – which may, in turn, discourage criminal or deviant ‘poverty-related behaviours’ (Wilson 1987). One early study into purpose-built mixed-tenure housing in the US did indeed conclude that higher-income residents were active – and largely effective – in upholding the rules and behavioural norms (Rosenbaum et al. 1998). However, subsequent research has found the picture to be more complex. Chaskin and Joseph (2011:224) found that some respondents did express a willingness to directly intervene, but only in response to very minor instances of disruptive or ‘anti-social’ behaviour (such as children misbehaving). Overall, however, they found that the ‘social dynamic’ of their Chicago case study – which occasionally involved aggressive exchanges between (adult) owners and renters – “has led to a tendency for some residents to withdraw, and to rely more on formal channels to maintain social control” (ibid. 2011:227). The obvious risks associated with more serious or violent crimes understandably discourage informal interventions. Moreover, where residents perceive these risks to be present, they may interpret even more minor forms of nuisance as representative of an associated and incipient danger (Chaskin and Joseph 2012:12). Studies of mixed-tenure estates in the UK have similarly found little evidence for the exercise of greater ‘informal’ social control. For instance, a housing manager interviewed by Manzi (2010:12) suggested that a reluctance to intervene was simply reflective of ambivalence on the part of many residents, who felt that “if people are not kicking their door, assaulting them or harassing them, then as far as they are concerned it is not happening”. Other

observers have suggested that shared behavioural norms may in fact be harder to enforce in areas that are socially mixed, due to the co-existence of people who may have contrasting lifestyles or fewer shared norms (Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005). Lastly, these problems may be exacerbated by aspects in the design of mixed-tenure schemes – such as high densities, the proximity of single-person and family dwellings, or the lack of provision of gardens and play areas (Roberts 2007, Mace 2013 [forthcoming]). In these circumstances, which characterise many newer mixed-tenure developments in the UK, “maintaining personal privacy and quiet enjoyment within the home is likely to be difficult” (Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005:30).

Based on interviews with housing professionals involved in a variety of case study mixed-tenure schemes, Manzi (2010) therefore identifies a continued reliance on ‘intensive’ practices of housing management as a means of addressing problems of crime and disorder. Such practices include ‘probationary’ tenancy agreements, carefully vetted allocations, and the use of neighbourhood ‘wardens’ (Haworth and Manzi 1999, Cole and Goodchild 2001, Flint 2004). In many ways, the advocacy of individual responsibility and ‘informal’ self-regulation on the one hand, accompanied by increasingly punitive forms of ‘formal’ intervention on the other, reflect the paradoxical nature of ‘neoliberal’ policy interventions (Peck and Tickell 2002). As has already been suggested here, however, evidence also suggests that management interventions may have a tangible impact on everyday life and social relations in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. Chaskin and Joseph’s (2012:19) in-depth exploration of the impact of intensive management practices in their Chicago case studies – which included an extensive set of rules, covenants and sanctions – tainted social-relations with feelings of “discomfort and distance”, and manifested in “troubling signs of increased tension and alienation”. A particularly concerning observation from the US case studies has been an apparent tendency for rules to be differentially-enforced according to tenure (Graves 2010, Bartz et al. 2011, Chaskin and Joseph 2011, 2012). For instance, Graves’ (2010:124) public-housing respondents reported that building management were “more tolerant of behaviour from market rate tenants”, describing how market rate residents ‘get away with’ incidents that would leave subsidised tenants facing eviction. Similarly, within the UK context, Manzi (2010:16) argues that:

...the disproportionate attention on tackling behaviour exacerbates resident (and developer) concerns about crime and low-level anti-social behaviour amongst a small minority of social housing residents; it has thereby contributed to the

marginalisation and demonisation of social housing tenants and thus increased, rather than minimised, tenure prejudice.

Self-regulation and 'informal' social control is therefore accompanied, in practice, by more direct and punitive means of 'formal' social control, in pursuit of the 'positive gentrification' of mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. However, intensive management interventions – whether operating through covenants, surveillance or 'community policing' – may logically risk exacerbating tensions based around housing tenure, as occupants of social housing (whose tenancies are less secure and whose conduct more open to scrutiny) may be perceived, and perceive themselves, to be the 'target' of such measures.

A second assumption within the policy discourse on 'sustainable communities' holds that mixed-tenure housing schemes may help to attract and retain higher quality public or commercial services within the immediate area. As another facet of 'positive gentrification', the presence of higher-income residents is believed to generate market demand for better provisions of commercial goods and services, as well as political pressure for better quality public services (2006:215). To date, there is scant availability of evidence upon which to assess this claim. Case studies of 'successful' new mixed-tenure developments – such as 'New Holly' in Seattle (Kleit 2005), or 'Poundbury' near Dorchester (Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005) – offer the general conclusion that mixed-tenure developments can attract public and private services of a 'high standard'. For instance, a public library branch within Kleit's (2005:1431) Seattle case study was reportedly utilised by four-fifths of respondents. In contrast, however, commercial and public facilities within Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000:102) Scottish case studies were "criticised by owners and tenants alike as being of low quality" (limiting the potential that these may constitute sites for social 'mixing'). The same authors also found that owner-occupiers, who are often posited as stalwarts of local public services, made barely any use of local amenities and were often unaware that facilities such as community centres even existed. Studies into the broader dynamics of gentrification offer a source of more critical insights into the relationship between changing housing mix and changes to local services. Freeman's (2007) controversial study in Harlem suggests that gentrification can bring marked improvements in the quality of local shops and services that are welcomed by longer-term residents. However, this contrasts with Davidson's (2008) account of gentrification in West London, where existing residents held concerns regarding changes to the profile of local shops. As one respondent remarked; "Have you seen the prices? I nearly died, I can't believe anyone would shop there" (ibid. 2008:2400). Davidson

(2008) concludes that the upgrading of local shops and services in response to rising middle class demand constitutes a form of 'resource displacement', whereby cheaper shops or 'specialised' services upon which lower-income residents rely are squeezed out of the immediate area. Similarly, Cheshire (2008) argues that low-income neighbourhoods function as specialist 'agglomeration economies' that constitute a 'welfare amenity' for the less well-off. 'Positive' gentrification achieved through planning policies for tenure mixing therefore arguably risks creating similar displacement pressures to 'traditional' gentrification, as local commercial and public services change to cater for the demands of more affluent consumers or 'cosmopolitan' consumers, to the detriment of lower-income residents (Lees 2008).

There is, therefore, little tangible evidence to support the premise that mixed-tenure housing developments constitute an inherently more 'sustainable' form of residential organisation. Whether due to ambivalence, a desire to avoid confrontation with neighbours, or genuine fear – it does not appear that most residents will intervene to exercise 'informal' social control in response to instances of disorder. Instead, mixed-tenure schemes appear – at least from the viewpoint of their residents – to be no more immune to problems of disorderly conduct than other 'mixed' inner-urban areas (Jupp 1999). Moreover, evidence from established mixed-tenure schemes suggests that intensive management practices and their discourses of social control may – in fact – work to further stigmatise and marginalise social housing tenants who constitute the most obvious 'targets' of efforts to regulate conduct and behaviour (Manzi 2010:14). As Lees (2008) starkly concludes, the most convincing case for 'positive gentrification' as a mechanism for social control arguably lies in its promise to replace 'anti-community elements' with responsible, self-reliant and active 'citizens' (in the form of middle class homeowners). The assertion that mixed-tenure housing schemes will support a more 'sustainable' mix of local shops and services also appears both poorly evidenced, and incongruous to the dynamics of 'indirect' displacement that might otherwise be associated with middle class 'gentrification'. If higher-income residents do create market-demand for shops and services, it is hard to envisage how this will benefit less-well-off residents. 'Positive' gentrification therefore appears little more than a euphemism for 'classic' gentrification, with its well-documented impacts upon lower-income residents (Smith 1996, Davidson and Lees 2005, Slater 2006, Davidson 2008, Lees 2008, Wacquant 2008, Davidson 2010).



### III. Conclusion

From this review of the political context, policy aims and empirical outcomes of tenure mixing, it is possible to identify a number of overarching conclusions, each of which has implications for the analysis of housing provision and residents' experiences of everyday life in newly completed mixed-tenure schemes that is presented in this thesis.

Firstly, the provision of new social rented housing in mixed-tenure schemes must be understood in the context of a broader restructuring of the political economy of subsidised housing in the UK. Following Lupton and Fuller (2009), it is argued that the policy programme for tenure mixing is closely aligned with a 'neoliberal turn'. The reliance on market logics and non-state actors to provide social housing – in place of the state – is itself reflective of the move towards de-centred and 'entrepreneurial' urban policy (Harvey 1989, Mayer 1994). But, moreover, it is argued that tenure mixing can be seen to have emerged from 'actually existing' trajectories of neoliberalisation (Brenner and Theodore 2002). Specifically, the privatisation of social housing stock under Right to Buy and the deregulation of the social rented sector together constituted 'demunicipalisation' of subsidised housing provision, which in turn created both the precedent and institutional framework for the provision of mixed-tenure housing through 'partnerships' between local planning authorities, third sector housing associations, and private house builders. In short, the state's role in providing social housing was re-defined through "the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred" (Stoker 1998:17). In this regard, neoliberalisation constitutes both an ideological *rationale* for tenure mixing, as well as an epistemological *rationality* – to use Rose and Miller's (2010[1992]:273) term – for a new means by which to provide 'affordable' housing in mixed-tenure schemes. By mobilising housing associations, private developers, and would-be owner-occupiers, mixed-tenure housing development offered a 'technological and ideological shortcut' through which the government could respond to on-going demand for 'affordable' housing (Murie and Rowlands 2008) – in line with the rationalities of marketisation, deregulation and privatisation which characterise 'actually existing' trajectories of neoliberalisation.

Secondly, the policy programme for providing of social rented housing in 'mixed communities' was strongly endowed with an ameliorative logic, in response to the problematisation of 'concentrated disadvantage' within large single-tenure estates of social

housing. A persuasive discourse of spatialised 'social exclusion' presented the problems experienced by the 'worst estates' as a result – at least in part – of the socio-spatial characteristics of these places themselves. The very fact of residing in the sorts of 'monolithic' social housing estates that had been created by previous generations of housing policy was thus held to "adversely affect individuals' life chances" (ODPM 2005a:6-7). In turn, the problematising 'monotenure' forms of social housing provision as an independent source of 'additional disadvantage' worked to render multifarious dynamics of social exclusion 'thinkable' and 'manageable' in such a way that these problems appeared amenable to particular solutions (Rose 2000:1395). The ameliorative and normative legitimacy of tenure mixing therefore became premised upon the assertion that a 'balanced' mix of housing tenures avoids the additional and deleterious effects of concentrated poverty. Moreover, it is possible to identify a number of specific and interrelated assertions regarding the positive socio-spatial dynamics that are ostensibly inherent to 'mixed communities'. Firstly, it was claimed that tenure mixing has the potential to 'actively include' lower-income social renters in social networks comprising higher-income neighbours, through which they might gain access to information regarding labour-market opportunities or resources that might enhance their social mobility. Secondly, it was argued that tenure mixing offers the promise of greater 'passive' social inclusion for inhabitants of social housing who might otherwise suffer from marginalisation or stigmatisation on the basis of their housing tenure. Thirdly, it has been argued that 'mixed communities' have greater collective efficacy in response to localised problems and a greater level of socioeconomic 'sustainability' as a result of the 'positive gentrification' fostered by the presence of higher-income homeowners.

However, Part Two of this chapter has shown there to be only very limited empirical evidence to support these various assertions regarding the efficacious nature of social relations within mixed-tenure housing. Firstly, studies of a wide variety of mixed-tenure contexts have found little evidence to support the claims regarding the potential for tenure mixing to foster 'active inclusion' (which is premised on the assumption that social ties will form between lower- and higher- income residents). Insights into everyday life within mixed-tenure housing developments suggest that interpersonal interactions are limited in their frequency and nature – and even fewer of these interactions occur 'across the tenure divide'. Whether as a result of busy lifestyles that are largely played out beyond the confines of the neighbourhood, a preference for privacy or for social contacts with those who are

perceived to be similar to oneself, or the physical separation of tenure groups and a lack of spatial opportunities for ‘mixing’ – the ‘reality’ of everyday life in mixed-tenure housing schemes arguably appears at odds with the claims of ‘active inclusion’ through greater interaction between lower- and higher- income groups. Secondly, there is equally limited evidence that tenure mixing also promises ‘passive inclusion’ for social groups that might otherwise experience marginalisation or stigmatisation. Whilst some studies have found little or no evidence of tensions or prejudice associated with housing tenure, the majority have found that such tensions persist or, in some cases, may even be exaggerated within mixed-tenure contexts. Proximity between households therefore offers no guarantee of overcoming social divisions – whether along the lines of status, class, or even ethnicity – that might otherwise be associated with housing tenure. Thirdly, there is also limited and sometimes contradictory evidence to support the assertion that ‘positive gentrification’ in mixed-tenure housing schemes will enhance ‘informal’ social control in response to problems of crime and disorder, or improve the local provision of public and commercial goods or services. Evidence suggests that residents are understandably unwilling to intervene in response to problems of crime – instead, tensions or feelings of difference may be exacerbated as social renters feel disproportionately targeted by practices and rhetoric of social control. Critical analyses of mixed-tenure housing development point to a risk that ‘positive gentrification’ may, in fact, create ‘classic’ gentrification pressures as the local economy changes in line with higher-income demand. Overall, therefore, there is little evidence to support assertions that efficacious social outcomes will naturally result from providing a mixture of housing tenures in new-build schemes.

More broadly, the analysis presented in this chapter raises fundamental questions regarding the supposedly ‘exceptional’ nature of everyday life within mixed-tenure housing schemes. Whilst tenure mixing may constitute a novel form of housing provision – there remains little to suggest that new and efficacious social relations are naturally fostered within mixed-tenure contexts. In fact, it is possible to argue that empirical insights into residents’ experiences and perceptions are actually reflective of a distinctly banal – or ‘ordinary’ – character to everyday life in these schemes (Allen et al. 2005). When interpersonal interactions occur with any frequency, these are generally convivial but casual, typified by fleeting but friendly exchanges that are made ‘in passing’. There is no evidence that people access job opportunities as a result of their relationships with neighbours, but there is evidence that residents can generally rely on their near-neighbours for the occasional

favour. Closer friendships between neighbours do form, but these are the exception rather than the rule. And residents' own accounts of the 'social life' of mixed-tenure schemes are also couched in disclamatory references to busy lifestyles, concerns about privacy, and general ambivalence towards the neighbourhood as an outlet for socialising. Social relations in mixed-tenure housing can therefore be best described as 'banal' – in that they are largely experienced as routine and largely perceived as being unexceptional (compared to what we might expect of any other urban neighbourhood). However, arguing for the 'banality of neighbouring' in mixed-tenure contexts does not imply that social relations are necessarily unproblematic, or free from conflicts or tensions, or unfettered by deeper divisions of class, status, or even race. Just as 'banal' manifestations of national identity have been argued to occasionally elicit 'hot' sentiments of nationalist conflict or violence (Jones 2009) – life in mixed-tenure housing may occasionally provoke expressions of prejudice and difference. It must be emphasised that this interpretation therefore departs somewhat from the reading of social relations in mixed-tenure schemes as 'ordinary' (Allen et al. 2005). Further questions also arise regarding the extent to which residents' experiences, perceptions and attitudes of 'neighbouring' in mixed-tenure housing might also be reflective, at least in part, of other contingent factors. Indeed, evidence from the UK suggests that the design of mixed-tenure schemes often works to separate tenure groups, thus potentially limiting opportunities for social contact. The social and spatial characteristics of the neighbourhoods in which new developments are located also introduce contingent factors that are often underexplored. This research therefore seeks further insights into the everyday life of new-build mixed-tenure developments – without assuming that these schemes will necessarily foster particular and 'exceptional' relations or practices of neighbouring – but instead, by grounding residents' experience and perceptions of everyday life within context of the planning, design and development process for these developments, and within the wider context of the neighbourhoods within which they are located.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the development and deployment of a mixed methods research design, tailored towards exploring residents' experiences of life in three case study mixed-tenure housing schemes. The case study developments – referred to throughout by the pseudonyms 'Island Heights', 'Limehouse Wharf' and 'Shadwell Plaza' – are each located in the London borough of Tower Hamlets and were purpose-built to incorporate a mix of market rate, intermediate tenure and social rented properties, within high density designs predominantly comprising flats. The first section of this chapter presents the rationale for a tripartite empirical engagement with the case study developments – combining a focus on aspects of 'dwelling', the 'provision process', and the characteristics of local neighbourhood for each scheme. This first section ultimately arrives at a set of research questions – presented in Figure 3.1 (at the end of this section) – the operationalization of which is discussed in the remainder of the chapter. Section Two outlines the key features of the mixed method research design that was developed in response to these research questions. This research design included the development of a large-scale postal survey of residents, the recruitment of residents and housing professionals to take part in in-depth interviews, and the selection of appropriate case studies. Section Three of this chapter then turns to discuss the practical conduct of the research, which yielded quantitative data from over one-hundred-and-fifty survey responses, qualitative data from twenty-five resident interviews and a further nine unstructured interviews with professional informants, and the use of additional sources for documentary and spatial analyses. In response to Allen's (2009:54) call for housing researchers should to become more critical and reflexive about their practices of knowledge production, throughout this chapter the discussion of the design and conduct of the research aims to reveal something of the reasoning or motivation guiding the data gathering exercise, so that readers may draw their own conclusions as to the bearing these decisions may have on the ways in which phenomena are represented later in the thesis.

### **I. Rationale and Research Questions**

This research seeks to provide insights into residents' experiences of everyday life in recently-completed housing developments which comprise a mixture of market rate, intermediate tenure and social rented properties. Ultimately, this aim is premised simply on the basis that this particular form of housing provision – consisting of high-density schemes

that incorporate a large number of mainly flatted properties – has proliferated across inner-city locations in the UK in the past decade, and yet has garnered relatively little empirical attention from housing researchers. That said, in seeking to elaborate upon residents’ experiences of living in this particular form of housing, this research deploys a broader empirical focus than this relatively straightforward aim might otherwise suggest. From its inception, this project has also sought to provide broader insights into the relationship between the ‘political economy’ of affordable housing *provision* and the material and non-material outcomes of *dwelling* in mixed-tenure development. In doing so, this research seeks to provide an ‘embedded’ account of everyday life in mixed-tenure housing, which also pays critical attention to the role of political, ideological and economic factors in the provision of these schemes. Yet housing research has traditionally tended to treat dwelling and housing provision as separate objects of study (Kemeny 1988). King (2009:48) goes as far as to argue that we should “strip housing of all that is external to it”, in order to approach the experiential aspects of ‘dwelling’ from a position of “phenomenological reduction”. In contrast, Ball (1986:156) reminds us that housing remains “a physical entity” with “a myriad of social effects”. On this basis, there is arguably more to be said for studying housing issues “in the context of the social relations associated with the delivery and reproduction of housing as a useful physical entity” (Ball 1986:147). This research thereby adopts an approach which aims to embed residents’ accounts of ‘dwelling’ in mixed-tenure housing within the broader process of housing ‘provision’. This section offers some further elaboration of the rationale for adopting a tripartite object of study in order to achieve this aim – which seeks to align ‘dwelling’, ‘provision’ and ‘neighbourhood’ as empirical components of this research.

The first object of study concerns experiences of ‘dwelling’ in mixed-tenure housing. Dwelling incorporates everyday activities, interpersonal-relations, subjectivities and experiences. As such, dwelling is both embodied at the level of the individual and enacted within the spaces of the household or the neighbourhood. As King (2008) argues, dwelling is an intrinsic aspect of human existence, which invokes often contradictory or seemingly paradoxical conditions: Dwelling can be something experienced both privately and communally, dwelling can represent a state of settlement and one of mobility, dwelling is as much about ‘making places’ as it is about ‘using space’ (King 2008:viii). In turn, the sphere of dwelling has the potential to provide broader insights into individual and collective life. However, as King argues, dwelling has tended to occupy only a marginal position as an

object of housing studies – with the result that “the staple focus of most housing research... presents only a partial picture of housing phenomena” (King 2009:42). On the one hand, this project therefore responds to King’s call to re-focus on dwelling as a principal substantive focus, through an in-depth empirical engagement with residents’ experiences of life in mixed-tenure housing. On the other hand, however, this research holds that housing experiences should not – or, in some instances, cannot – be seen in isolation from the aspirations of governmental authorities or the material concerns of housing providers, which contribute towards shaping the physical context for residents’ experiences of dwelling. In this regard, this research accepts Ronald’s (2011:419) argument for “the value of embedded, qualitative research that connects abstract economic and market phenomena with lived meanings, uses and experiences of the home”. Dwelling is therefore approached as something ‘embedded’ within a set of wider social relations, structural factors and material considerations. At the same time, however, housing situations remain inherently complex, dynamic and highly contingent on unique characteristics of their design, their geographic situation, and not least, their occupants. The aim here is therefore not to adopt a crude position of determinism based on policy, design or locality – but rather to elaborate upon these as contingencies that might help to contextualise experiences of dwelling in mixed-tenure housing.

The second object of study in this tripartite research design therefore focuses on the ‘provision process’ for mixed-tenure housing. Following Ball (1986:160), it is argued here that we cannot claim to have reached a full account of housing phenomena without having examined the social and material factors involved in their ‘provision’, which is broadly defined as the “physical process of creating and transferring a dwelling to its occupiers”. This process extends from the initiation of a housing scheme by its developer(s); the securing of finance and acquisition of land; the design, planning and construction; the market and non-market allocation of completed units; and the on-going process of management, maintenance and re-allocation (Ambrose 1991). Moreover, the ‘provision’ of most housing schemes in the UK must correspond to the policy guidance that is prescribed by central government and applied by local and regional planning authorities. The ‘provision process’ thereby encompasses the range of decisions made within the initiation, design and development of a housing scheme – as well as the constraints within which these decisions are made. Whilst many of the inputs, activities and products of housing development are material or physical in their nature, Ball (1986) nonetheless sees provision as a social

process. Just like any other process of production, housing provision ultimately involving social relations between actors, including governmental authorities, developers, financiers, registered social landlords, and designers/architects – as well as ‘consumers’ of housing. Despite the complex economic and political factors involved, Ball’s conceptualisation of housing provision allows it to be seen as an object of sociological analysis, through a focus on the “social agents essential to that process and the relations between them” (1986:157-8). These ‘agents’ and the relations between them are of substantive interest to this project, given that their activities ‘shape’ the physical context for residents’ everyday lives, and also do so in ways that purport to be concerned with the ‘positive’ social outcomes as the previous chapter outlined. In this regard, an understanding of decision making in the provision process – based on first-hand account from these actors themselves – seeks to reveal the constraints, power dynamics, conflicts involved in the construction of ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ in the design and development of mixed-tenure housing (cf. Jacobs and Manzi 2000:40). Given that housing phenomenon essentially combine material, interpersonal and individual elements (Ronald 2011:419), an insight into the provision process provides context in which to understand the link between ‘macro’-scale ideological or economic concerns, and residents’ everyday experiences of life in particular forms of housing.

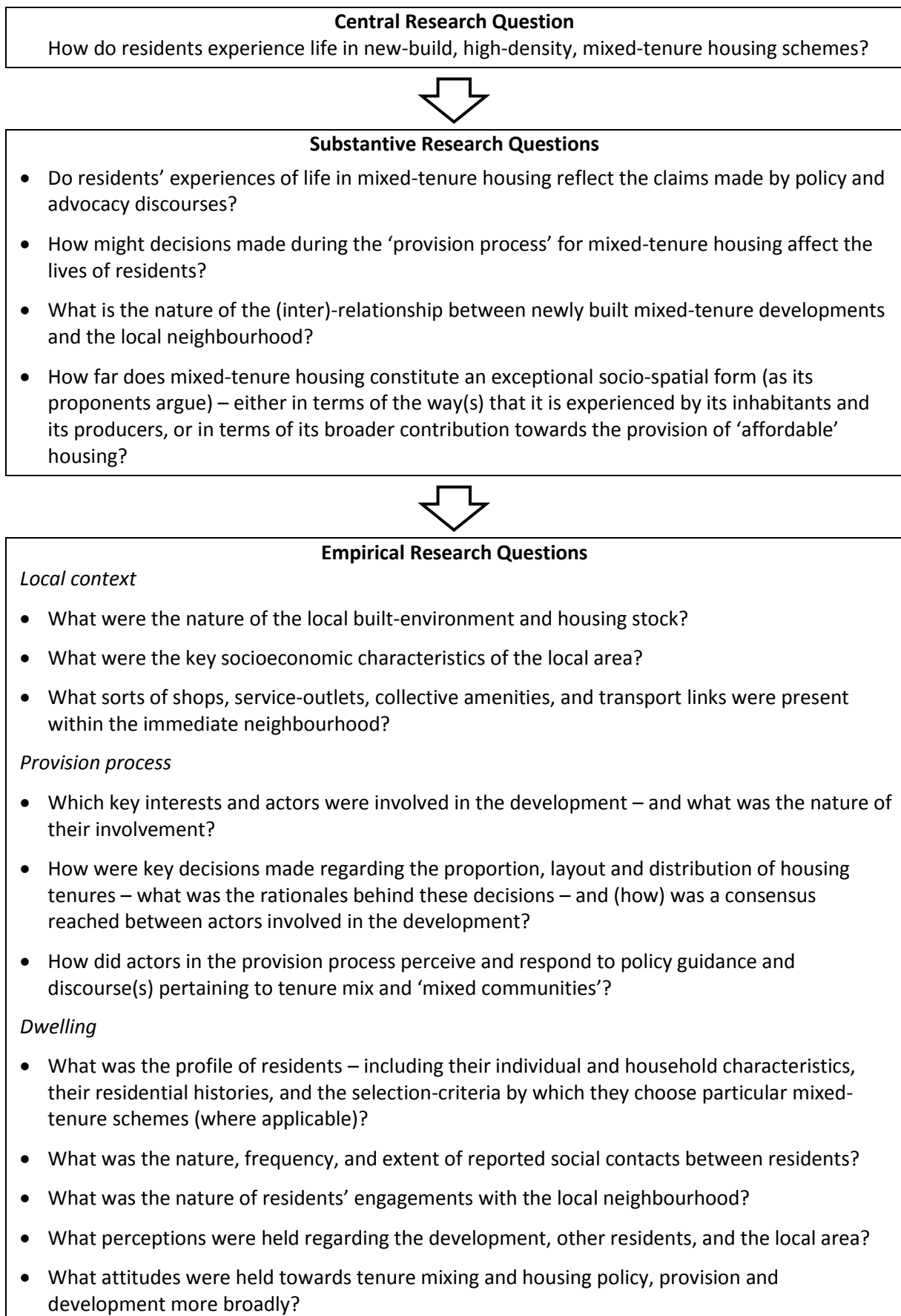
The final element of the tripartite focus for this research is the local context within which newly-built mixed-tenure housing schemes are situated. Of course, the neighbourhood itself constitutes the social and spatial setting both for the ‘provision’ of new developments and for the act of ‘dwelling’ in new housing. For this reason alone, some insight into the nature of the surrounding neighbourhood would appear to be essential for a fuller understanding of any given housing situation. Those who advocate a constructivist approach towards housing research have long argued in favour of what Kemeny (1991:13) calls ‘contextualised reflexivity’, which ultimately situates housing – as an object of study – within the broader social processes and structures of which it is a part (Jacobs and Manzi 2000, Kemeny 2004, Ronald 2011). It is argued that this logic – upon which this research is itself premised – can equally be applied to the importance of placing accounts ‘in situ’ of housing within their local context (cf. Kemeny 2004:64). This research therefore seeks to situate insights into mixed-tenure housing within the context of the local physical and social characteristics of the surrounding neighbourhood. Such an approach presents three particular advantages. Firstly, it will afford additional insights into how the design and development of mixed-tenure



housing might relate or respond to the characteristics of its immediate locale. Secondly, and similarly, the neighbourhood constitutes the spatial and social setting for the domestic life of new housing developments. Thirdly, and moreover, residents' everyday lives likely involve interactions with or within the surrounding neighbourhood itself. Indeed, as the previous chapter outlines, advocates of tenure mixing have advanced ambitious claims regarding the positive outcomes of high-income residents' engagements with the local neighbourhood. These reasons justify an empirical engagement with the social and spatial characteristics of the surrounding neighbourhood(s), in order to provide a fuller picture of 'provision' and 'dwelling' with respect to mixed-tenure housing.

Through adopting a tripartite focus on dwelling, provision and local context in the empirical examination of three case study housing developments, this research seeks to arrive at the fullest possible account of life in the sorts of mixed-tenure housing schemes that have proliferated in many inner-city areas over the past decade (large, purpose-built, high-density housing developments – comprising a mix of market rate, intermediate tenure and social rented housing – and largely consisting of flats in medium-to-high-rise blocks). With this aim in mind, Figure 3.1 outlines the development of a set of research questions for this project. Firstly, and as stated in the opening chapter of this thesis, the central research question – around which this research is based – simply seeks to develop a broader understanding of residents' experiences of daily-life in these sorts of mixed-tenure housing schemes. This central research aim in turn invites a series of 'substantive' research questions, which link the tripartite empirical foci of the research in order to provide the embedded account of everyday life in mixed-tenure housing, as outlined in the previous paragraphs. Finally, Figure 3.1 illustrates how these substantive questions were 'unpacked' into a number of operationalisable empirical research questions, pertaining to the three objects of study – the local neighbourhood context, the provision process, and experiences of dwelling in new mixed-tenure schemes. Through the deployment of these empirical research questions, this project thereby seeks to provide insights into multifarious aspects of the 'sociology' of this form of housing provision – through the lens of its inhabitants – and, in turn, to embed these insights within a broader analysis of the conditions through and within which these housing schemes are developed.

Figure 3.1: The development of research questions



This research is thus premised on the basis that housing phenomena are best understood ‘in context’. The context through which most forms of new housing arise as a material entity – at least in the typical scenario found in most advanced capitalist economies – comprises a combination of political, economic and technical conditions, that providers of housing must respond to in the planning, design and development of their schemes. Following Ball (1986), it is held that insights into these various conditions and constraints – which together constitute the ‘structure of provision’ – can be arrived at by examining the social relations involved in the production of new housing as a physical entity. A ‘social’ analysis of the decision making process for new mixed-tenure developments may, in turn, provide insights into the links between specific outcomes of the provision process and the broader ideological/political, economic, and social ‘structures’ of housing provision. Secondly, both the material and non-material aspects of new housing bear some relation to the social and spatial context of their surroundings. The local neighbourhood therefore presents a set of conditions that housing providers must respond to, as well as constituting the setting in which the ‘social life’ of a housing scheme will be played out. By embedding residents’ accounts of life in mixed-tenure housing within the context both of the provision process and of their local situation, this research does not seek to arrive at deterministic analysis of the relationship(s) between these aspects of the object of study. In this respect, such an approach adopts King’s (2009:44) call that dwelling be treated as the ‘principal activity’ of housing and so should not be treated as secondary to – or, indeed, as conditioned by – activities associated with the provision of housing. On the other hand, however, by offering an embedded account of dwelling, this research does not follow King’s (2009:48) call that researchers should “strip housing of all that is external to it”. Rather, by contextualising dwelling within other factors that contribute toward the material and non-material characteristics of mixed-tenure housing, this research seeks to offer insights that might afford us a better understanding of the broader problems and possibilities of tenure mixing.

## **II. Design**

This section outlines the key components of the research design that was developed in response to the rationale discussed in the previous section. The first part of this section discusses the adoption of a ‘mixed methods’ data collection strategy, which was used to collect qualitative (interview) data from residents and housing professionals, quantitative (survey) data from residents, and additional data from documentary sources, the 2001

census, and spatial analyses of the case study neighbourhoods. Secondly, this section explains the rationale for selecting the three case study housing developments that would constitute the empirical foci of the research. Lastly, this section discusses the steps taken to address ethical issues that arose during the course of the research.

### **Mixed methods**

Reflecting on the task of researching ever-complex spatial phenomena, Pratt (1995:68) concludes that “the great challenge [...] is how to weave together intensive and extensive methods”. This section outlines how this challenge was addressed through a ‘mixed method’ strategy for data collection. The term ‘mixed methods’ simply refers to the integration of quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques (Bryman 2008:603) – in this case, drawing on a range of both primary and secondary data sources. From the project’s inception, it was acknowledged that a variety of methodological techniques would be required in order to garner substantive insights – often by way of different ‘types’ of data – into the various objects of interest for each of the case study developments. In practical terms, a variety of data gathering tools – some of which were aimed at the same object of study – simply emerged as the most appropriate means by which to overcome practical and logistical constraints in the data gathering process. Whereas, in substantive terms, using a variety of techniques for the collection and analysis of different types of data arguably promises advantages in terms of expanding the breadth of information available and providing opportunities for ‘triangulation’ within and between sources.

First and foremost, a mixed methods approach suggested itself at the earliest stages of the research design due to the multifarious nature of the objects of study. The fact that the research primarily aims to provide an analysis of residents’ experiences of life in mixed-tenure housing – and, in doing so, to embed residents’ accounts within the context of the factors in the provision process, as well as the local neighbourhood – inherently presents a diversity of potential sources of ‘data’ on each of these various elements. Therefore, it was soon established that a range of techniques would be required in order to gather various types of data from a number of different sources. As outlined in Figure 3.2 (below), a genuinely ‘mixed’ method approach was developed, which deployed particular data gathering instruments depending on particular requirements of the object(s) of study. Both in practical and substantive terms, the research is centred around an empirical engagement with residents of the chosen case study mixed-tenure schemes. As shown in Figure 3.2, this

engagement took the form of two data gathering techniques – in-depth interviews with residents and a large-scale postal questionnaire. As this chapter illustrates, these two seemingly contrasting sources of data were, in fact, put to work in complementary ways, both in terms of the practical conduct of the research and the proceeding analysis. For instance, the requirement to engage with residents’ experiences, attitudes and perceptions suggested the need for a ‘hermeneutic’ analysis (in this case, drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews). At the same time, there was also a need to garner a broader picture of everyday life in the case study schemes – for instance, concerning the frequency and extent of social contacts between residents. For this purpose, it was felt that the quantitative data that was drawn from survey responses would provide useful and complementary insights into the social life of these schemes. Whilst for other tasks, such as establishing information on the demographic, socioeconomic and material attributes of households in the developments, the postal surveys constituted the sole source of data. For these practical reasons, above all else, the requirement emerged for a research design that could generate qualitative and quantitative data on various – sometimes complementary and sometimes contesting – aspects of life in the case study developments.

**Figure 3.2: Sources of data for the tripartite object(s) of study**

<b>Object of study</b>	<b>Sources of data</b>
Residents’ everyday experiences of case study housing schemes	Semi-structured in-depth interviews Postal questionnaire survey
The provision process for the case study developments	Non-structured in-depth interviews with key informants Planning application submissions and reports Developers’ marketing materials Other documentary sources (such as architecture/design award, case-study write-ups, articles in professional/industry publications)
The neighbourhood context for the case study schemes	Aggregate data from the 2001 Census Authors’ own survey of building types/uses Photographic images from various sources (including authors’ own)

The need for various methods of empirical engagement depending on the phenomenon of interest was equally apparent when considering the other aspects of the tripartite object of study. For instance, the provision process naturally involves a range of actors, representing

various organisations, each with a professional interest in the case study developments. It was clear that unstructured interviews would be the best-suited means of garnering insights into the provision process from the comparatively small number of ‘informants’ who are best placed to elaborate on the decision making involved in the process. However, given the intricacies and complexities of the planning and development process – coupled with the fact that respondents would be interviewed at least five years after most of the key decisions were made – it was equally apparent that other sources could be valuable in providing detailed information into the practicalities of the provision process. For instance, as outlined in Figure 3.2, documents pertaining to the planning process were envisaged as a key source of practical information, as well as potential object for substantive analysis later in the project. The need for different sources of data in response to the inherent complexity of the object of study was perhaps most apparent when considering the local neighbourhood. As discussed previously in this chapter, the area surrounding the case study developments was deemed as a source of substantively-important contextual information. However, it was clearly beyond the scope of this research to gather ‘primary’ data from a potentially inexhaustible number of local residents, business-owners, workers, and interested parties. For that reason alone, it was clear that insights into the local neighbourhoods would be reliant on secondary sources of data (as outlined in Figure 3.2). Specifically, data from the 2001 Census – combined with boundary ‘shapefiles’ – was used to map socioeconomic characteristics of the areas surrounding the case study schemes. Similarly, a survey of building-types was used as the basis for mapping and analysis of the form, age and uses of surrounding buildings. As such, a range of techniques would be deployed to gather various types of data from a number of different sources, with the substantive aim of allowing for a detailed and embedded account of everyday life in the chosen case study developments.

On a more practical level, a range of data gathering instruments also offered the potential to address certain constraints inherent to the conduct of the research. The most notable such limitation concerned physically gaining access to the developments, in order to recruit residents as respondents. Jacobs et al. (2007) use the term ‘black box’ to refer to the seemingly mystical and un-problematisable nature of the technological aspects of 1960s high-rise mass housing designs. Here, it is argued that large contemporary high density housing schemes – even those that are not necessarily ‘high rise’ – can, in turn, be seen to constitute a methodological ‘black box’, for the practical reason that they impose substantial

restrictions on access for researchers (or indeed any non-residents). For instance, the security measures found on almost all recently-built flatted schemes, such as entry phone systems, negate the possibility of simply knocking doors to recruit respondents as others had done to good effect in the past (cf. Miller 2008). The securitised nature of most housing schemes would even render informal non-participant observation as practically impossible, at least without difficult-to-obtain access rights. A postal survey thus emerged as a practical means by which to bypass these access restrictions and make direct contact with potential respondents. Moreover, the postal survey was not just envisaged as a data-gathering instrument, but was use intended as a means through which to communicate the purpose of the research to residents and then – importantly – to recruit additional respondents for qualitative interviews. A ‘sequential’ quantitative-to-qualitative mixed methods design thus emerged as a pragmatic response to access constraints that would otherwise hinder attempts to directly recruit interview respondents. Similarly, the provision process also imposed inherent restrictions on access to organisations and individuals – coupled with the practical difficulties in recruiting busy professionals for social research in which they may have only a limited interest (and little to gain from participating). In this respect, the use of non-structured interviews with those ‘key informants’ who were willing to participate allowed the maximum breadth and depth of insight to be gained from these conversations – in the hope that information gleaned from the willing respondents might go some way towards filling the gaps left by key actors or organisations that declined to be interviewed. Whilst documentary sources, such as planning case files or developer’s marketing material, were also seen as a complementary means of bolstering the projects’ insights into the provision process for the case study schemes.

A final rationale for the adoption of a mixed method approach pertained to its practical advantages in relation to the task of generating substantive insights. It is argued that the use of various measures to examine the same object of analysis can add weight to observations that survive examination from a range of angles – a process referred to as ‘triangulation’ (Webb 1966). The result, it is argued, is to ‘maximise the validity of field efforts’ and therefore allowing us more confidence in presenting accounts from the data (Denzin 1978:304). This research was designed with the theoretical advantages afforded by ‘triangulation’ in mind. In reality, however, the opportunity to overcome the weaknesses of individual methods in providing useful insights mainly constituted a further practical rationale for approaching the same object of study with a range of data-gathering

instruments. For instance, the interviews providing an opportunity to take a second ‘empirical pass’ over any unexpected gaps in information yielded from the survey responses. The potential for triangulation afforded by a mixed methods approach thus allows us to see phenomena from different empirical perspectives, creating a fuller picture and providing the basis for substantive analyses of convergent, divergent or complementary trends in the data.

### **Sampling and the selection of case studies**

The research was designed such that data gathering would be conducted sequentially for three case study mixed-tenure housing developments, applying the same mixed methods approach to each in turn. The use of case studies as the basis for empirical research is very much the convention for ‘in situ’ studies of housing issues. The choice to use case studies in this research was very much a pragmatic one – rather than, say, being motivated by a substantive interest in undertaking a strictly-defined comparative analysis between the chosen cases. In this respect, the use of case studies simply provide the physical setting for the research, a distinct ‘population’ of potential respondents, and a relatively delineated focus for the purposes of substantive analysis at later stages of the research. In most respects, the use of case studies was an obvious choice for this project. This section therefore elaborates upon the process of selection for the three case study developments that feature in this thesis.

Three case study schemes were selected for inclusion in this research, all of which were located in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets, and which together presented both similar and contrasting characteristics. In practice, the selection of cases proceeded sequentially. A single case was first selected to for data collection in the first instance. While this case was not a ‘pilot’ as such – at least in the sense that the intention was always to fully include this first case study in the final analysis – although insights and experiences garnered from the first case proved highly formative in the selection of subsequent case study developments. The basis for case selection evolved and emerged through the course of the research and owed much to decisions made ‘on the street corner’, based more on intuition than on predetermined set of criteria. Even the decision to pursue three case studies was only finalised after the collection of data for the first case revealed the need for two additional cases to arrive at a satisfactory number of interview and survey responses. This being said, it is nonetheless possible to identify a number of underlying logics that guided the case selection process for this research. Firstly, a number of practical considerations had



to be taken into account in relation to the feasibility of conducting research in each case, and these are outlined in Figure 3.3 (below).

**Figure 3.3: Key considerations and criteria in the selection of case studies**

<b>1) Size</b>	Each case had to have a large enough 'population' to generate a usable sample size for the residents' survey. Given that a reasonable anticipated response rate might be around 20% - and thus in order to achieve a sample size that would, at very least, allow for basic descriptive statistical analysis - <b>it was therefore decided that each case ought to have an optimum number of at least 200 dwelling units.</b>
<b>2) Completion date</b>	Another obvious but important consideration was the age of the case study developments. If insufficient time had elapsed since the completion of a scheme, this could reasonably be seen to limit the usefulness of insights into the experiences of its residents. <b>It was therefore decided that the development ought to have been occupied for at least 2 years.</b>
<b>3) Access</b>	Access was a key concern that could not be anticipated at design phase for the research. However, key interests in the development chosen case studies were 'sounded out' prior to committing a scheme to the research. If key actors in the provision process were adverse to a schemes' inclusion in this research – as was the case with at least two potential case studies – then an alternative would need to be selected. <b>The amenability of key informants was therefore an additional factor in selection.</b>
<b>4) Respondent fatigue</b>	A further and unanticipated issue arose during the selection process for a second case study, when it became apparent that residents had recently been involved in another (non-academic) research project initiated by the developers. As topic interest and 'novelty' were envisaged as key motivations for recruiting respondents, <b>the risk of respondent 'fatigue' resulted in this particular case being rejected.</b>

Secondly, cases were considered for selection on the basis of certain characteristics that were of substantive interest to the project. First and foremost, each case study had to fit the criteria of interest for this project. This meant that only those developments that had been recently-completed (after 2003), comprised a mix of intermediate, market rate and social housing tenures, and were built to the sort of size and density and density 'typical' of inner-city new-build housing, were considered for inclusion in the research. Secondly, the strategy

for case selection aimed to minimise certain differences between the schemes, with regards to those factors that were either not of substantive interest to the project, and might therefore risk obfuscating the task of drawing meaningful observations from the chosen cases. The key ‘similarities’ that were sought between case studies are outlined in Figure 3.4 (below). In practical terms, seeking cases with certain features in common was simply a means of avoiding ‘deviant’ or incomparable examples. For instance, selecting schemes in the same borough was seen as means of minimising differences attributable to the local planning system. Thirdly, and in turn, it was felt that the chosen case studies ought to present variations of differences in certain characteristics of interest. The presence of substantively-relevant differences between cases would allow for an examination of whether and how these differences might have any bearing on residents’ experiences.

**Figure 3.4: Substantive contrasts and similarities in the selection of case studies**

Contrasts	Similarities
Mix/proportion of tenures	Comprising intermediate, market rate and social housing tenures
Distribution of tenures	Being a high density (>750 habitable rooms per hectare)
Lead developer (housing association or private sector)	Predominantly comprising flats
Key organisations involved (developer, architectural practice, housing association)	Size (number of properties)
Built form (height and layout)	Date of completion
Provision of collective amenities/public spaces	Being located in Tower Hamlets
Locality within Tower Hamlets	

Loosely following the ‘theoretical sampling’ approach proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), certain properties or ‘categories’ of interest emerged during the early stages of the research, and from the data collection for the first case study (as outlined in Figure 3.4). For instance, the first case study was developed by a non-profit housing association, it was thus decided that at least one other case study would be a private developer-led scheme. The first case study also had a high proportion of intermediate tenure properties – and again, it was felt that additional case studies should have a different overall mix of tenures. Lastly, at the outset of the research, it was intended that a scheme with a fully-integrated or ‘pepper potted’ distribution of tenures would be included as a case study, however interviews with key informants from the first case study revealed that such schemes were atypical, at least in the context of Tower Hamlets (for reasons discussed in Chapter Five). Cases were thus

selected on the basis that they presented different properties in terms of certain categories of interest, but which were broadly similar in terms of other characteristics. Of course, due to the idiosyncrasies of most large housing developments, this was an inherently crude and largely intuitive effort, intended to maximise both the complementarity and comparability between the cases on certain substantively-relevant criteria, rather than a perfect means by which to 'control for' an exhaustive range of possible differences. Details of the characteristics of the chosen case studies, together with a full analysis of the provision process for these schemes, is presented in Chapter Four.

In practice, the selection of cases for the research was the only 'sampling' that was required for this research. The chosen case study developments constituted a ready-made 'population' – first, in terms of all those individuals residing in each development at the time of the study, and secondly in terms of all the key informants on the provision process that could be identified before and during the conduct of the interviews. There was no practical need to 'sample' from within these populations. Every household in each case study was contacted with the aim of soliciting the involvement of all adult residents. Identifying key informants on the provision process would require a more haphazard and opportunistic approach, as an entirely exhaustive and final list of potential informants could not be compiled at the outset. In practice, the process of recruiting expert respondents deploying what could be loosely described as 'snowballing' sampling techniques, whereby interview respondents suggested other informants whom I was initially unaware of.

### **Ethics**

A final consideration of the research design was that of ethics. Ethical issues invariably arise from any social research and it remains the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that their conduct does not violate the rights of research participants (BSA 2002). Three ethical issues had to be addressed in the research design— informed consent, privacy and risk of harm.

Informed consent requires that respondents be given "as much information as possible about the research so that they can make an informed decision on their possible involvement" (ESRC 2010:24). This was achieved in various ways. 'Expert' interviewees were asked to give verbal consent, following an explanation of the research aims and how the data was to be used. This approach towards was deemed appropriate for these respondents, all of whom had prior experience of speaking on behalf of their organisations in a similar

capacity. Consent for the residents' survey involved providing a full-but-concise description of the research aims, together with a statement on privacy, on the front page of the questionnaire form (see Appendix I). Those taking part in residents' interviews signed a written consent form, after I had explained the aims and privacy issues pertaining to the research, a copy of which was also given to respondents (see Appendix II).

The second ethical requirement states that data must remain confidential and its sources be anonymous (ESRC 2010:25). Care was therefore taken to ensure that respondents' identities were not revealed in the write-up, either directly or by the inclusion of information that could be used to deduce someone's identity. For the residents' interview respondents, this simply involved 'standard' procedures such as not using names and avoiding references to any identifying information in the writing up of these data. However, there was a greater issue relating to the anonymity of expert interviewees, due to them having specific and sometimes high-profile roles in the development process. For instance, this meant that, if the identity of the case study was known, it would be relatively easy to ascertain the identity of the project architect. This issue was addressed in two ways. Firstly, the usual steps were still taken to disguise these respondents' identity (such as not revealing their names, full job titles, or the names of their organisation). Secondly, efforts were also taken to disguise the case study developments themselves, by the use of pseudonyms, limited use of photography, and use of 'imprecise' mapping techniques. This is clearly an imperfect strategy – and was intended more to avoid 'advertising' the identity of case studies, rather than conceal them in line with standards of full anonymity. This inherently 'weak' form of anonymity was therefore fully explained to and discussed with the informants before they took part in an interview. A final privacy issue involves the handling of data, and the decision was taken from the outset that all 'raw' data should remain confidential and not be disseminated or shared with other organisations. This proved to be an important consideration for some respondents, who sought assurances that interview transcripts or survey data would not be shared with organisations such as the housing association.

A final – and overarching – ethical principle demands that research pose minimal harm or risk to those taking part, such that their "interests or well-being should not be damaged as a result of their participation in the research" (ESRC 2010:25). On the one hand, the nature of the research topic was deemed to have comparatively little risk of directly causing anxiety, distress or physical harm for participants. The steps outlined above further worked to ensure that harm could not occur indirectly as a result of their participation.

### III. Conduct

This final section of this chapter provides an account of the data collection process for the three case study schemes, discussing the administration of the postal survey, the conduct of interviews with residents and key informants on the provision process, and the assembly of secondary data on the local neighbourhood context(s).

#### Residents' survey

The first phase of empirical engagement with residents involved the designing and distributing a postal questionnaire survey to every household in the case study schemes. The survey – a copy of which is included as Appendix I – was designed to elicit information on respondents' individual and household characteristics; their perceptions of the development and the surrounding area; and the nature, frequency and extent of their interpersonal contacts with other residents. In response to the empirical research questions, these areas of 'measurement' emerged from the existing literature (as summarised in Chapter Two) and from general intuition – rather than, say, from any strong theoretical or conceptual belief that these would necessarily capture or reflect the 'reality' of life in mixed-tenure housing. The design and preparation of the questionnaire involved a number of stages: Firstly, a pool of survey instruments was assembled from previous studies that used a survey methodology to examine relevant or pertinent issues. Figure 3.5 (below) lists the measures that adopted from other studies. Adapting existing established survey instruments helped to avoid the added complexity of designing and testing new measures (cf. Oppenheim 1992). Further survey questions and instruments were then developed specifically for the purpose of this research, ranging from straight-forward questions individual or household characteristics, to measures of residents' satisfaction with the development.

The second stage of the design involved the formatting of survey items into a four page printed questionnaire form. From the outset, it was felt that the visual presentation of this survey form would be an important factor in maximising the response rate. Specialist desktop publishing and graphics software was therefore used to allow for more precision, flexibility and creativity in the design and layout. Key elements in the design include the use of institutional logos on the front page to create a sense of formality and legitimacy, as well as the use of a signature to add 'personalisation'. A carefully-planned layout was used throughout, with obvious section headings and question numbers, standard sized tick-boxes, and plenty of clear spaces (including blank margins for coding). The design included a

**Figure 3.5: Survey questions and items developed from other sources**

Question(s)*	Description of the measure	Source
Section C: Questions 8 - 12	'Social cohesion and trust' (also used elsewhere as a measure of neighbourhood-level social capital), as five item Likert scale.	(Sampson et al. 1997)
Section C: Question 1 - 3	Number of neighbours one can identify by first name or would recognise in passing	(Lochnera et al. 1999)
Section C: Questions 4 - 8	Frequency and intensity of neighbours visiting, or respondents visiting neighbours	(Lochnera et al. 1999)
Section C: Questions 10-14	Neighbouring behaviour	(Perkins et al. 1990)
Section A: Questions 4 - 9	Residential occupancy/tenure categories	General Household Survey 2006 (ONS 2006)
Section B: Question 3	Neighbourhood social problems	Citizenship survey 2007/8 (ONS 2007)
Section D: Question 1	Ethnicity categories	UK Census 2001 (ONS 2001)

\* See Appendix I for corresponding questions

statement on the front cover, introducing the research, explaining how the form was to be completed and returned, and outlining the measures taken to ensure privacy. On the back page of the form was an 'advert', reminding respondents that they also had the opportunity to participate in an interview. The questionnaire forms were produced by a professional printer, as high-resolution, stapled and folded A4 booklets.

The third and final stage was then to administer the finished questionnaire. Having obtained the addresses from the publically-accessible Royal Mail database, a survey pack was posted to each household in the case study development, which included two copies of the questionnaire, a cover letter, a post-card on which respondents could sign up for a prize draw and/or volunteer for an interview, and a freepost return envelope. The intention was that every adult resident would fill out a form, as opposed to completing one-per-household. It was only feasible to post two forms to each household, so those requiring additional forms were asked to contact me. Several measures were adopted to maximise response rates during the administration of the survey. Firstly, a signed cover letter was used to introduce myself, explain the intention of the research, and introduce the opportunity to take part in a further interview (see Appendix I). Secondly, a £100 prize-draw incentive was offered in the form of retail gift vouchers. In order to reassure respondents of

the anonymity of their completed questionnaire booklets, they could enter the prize draw by providing their name and phone number on a separate post-card (included as Appendix III). On the reverse of the post-card was an opportunity for residents to sign-up for interviews. Thirdly, specially designed and professionally printed posters ‘advertising’ the research were put up in the entrance lobbies and public spaces of the case study developments. It was hoped that steps taken in the design and presentation of the questionnaire booklet – together with the £100 prize-draw incentive – would help maximise the often disappointing response rates associated with postal surveys (see Edwards et al. 2002).

In all, the administration of the survey imposed significant costs (around £2 per household) and took several months from design and delivery, but can arguably be judged as successful for the fact that it yielded one-hundred and fifty-two usable responses (from a total of six-hundred and sixty-eight households). This amounted to an overall response-rate of over twenty per cent. A breakdown of survey responses – including the gender, ethnicity, age, length of residence, and housing tenure of respondents – is shown below in Table 3.1 (below). On the whole, the survey yielded a relatively representative cross-section of the main tenure groups - with half of all respondents from intermediate tenure properties and remainder split evenly between social renters and market rate occupants. The particularly low response from market rate occupants of Island Heights was due to the fact that the development only comprises a small number of private units, which are used for short-term

**Table 3.1: Survey responses and the characteristics of respondents**

			<b>Limehouse Wharf</b>	<b>Shadwell Plaza</b>	<b>Island Heights</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	count		49	73	30	152
	response rate		25%	27%	15%	23%
<b>Gender</b>	male:female ratio		50:50	40:60	38:62	43:57
<b>Ethnicity</b>	% BME		27%	42%	57%	40%
<b>Age</b>	mean (years)		38	33	35	35
<b>Length of residence</b>	mean (years)		3	3	1.5	2.5
<b>Respondents’ housing tenure</b>	Market rate	% (within development)	46%	19%	3%	25%
	Intermediate rent/buy	% (within development)	33%	60%	57%	50%
	Social rent	% (within development)	21%	21%	40%	25%

serviced apartment rental (see Chapter Five). The survey also yielded a relatively high proportion of respondents from Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds – in line with the character of the areas in which each of the schemes are located (see Chapter Four). On the other hand, a lower-than-average overall response rate was received from Island Heights. The reasons for this are unclear, but could be due to the fact that – as discussed in Chapter Five – the scheme was the newest of the three case studies, or perhaps that a portion of the properties were allocated for short-term serviced apartment rentals at the time of the research. Clearly, the survey was therefore not without its practical limitations. However, the intention of the survey data was to provide a broad overall picture of life across all three case study schemes, meaning that variations in responses were less important. Ultimately, the data coded and analysed in SPSS, where it was also weighted based on housing tenure (to bring responses in line with the tenure breakdown for each scheme). Given the non-probability nature of the sampling, only non-parametric tests were used (for instance, for the comparisons of associations presented in Chapter Seven).

### **Resident interviews**

The second phase of empirical engagement with residents of the case study schemes involved conducting semi-structured interviews with respondents who had volunteered and were recruited as a result of the postal survey. Every resident was given the opportunity to take part in an interview and around sixty people returned the ‘post-card’ that accompanied the questionnaire survey – as shown in Appendix III – indicating their interest in participating. Potential respondents were then contacted via telephone in order to schedule interviews to take place in their properties during weekday evenings. A financial incentive was offered to encourage participation, in the form of a £10 gift voucher from a major department store / supermarket chain. Due to time and financial limitations, it would not have been possible to interview all of those who expressed an interest in taking part. However, there was no need for systematic mode of ‘sampling’ from the volunteer interview respondents. In practice, an attempt was made to contact all volunteers by phone – some were un-contactable, whilst a small number were no longer available or willing to take part – and, in the end, all those who were willing and able to participate were interviewed.

A total of twenty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents of the three case study schemes. Most took place across a number of evenings in residents’ homes – with one taking place over the telephone and another being conducted at the LSE, both at the



request of the respondents. All interviews were recorded with respondents' permission and all but two of the twenty-five interviews were fully-transcribed (some of the spoken-English in the two un-transcribed interviews was deemed too difficult to transcribe – and these recordings were therefore used directly). A number of interviews were conducted with couples and/or families – two in Limehouse Wharf, two in Shadwell Plaza and three in Island Heights – whilst the rest were conducted with individual respondents. In total, thirty residents were therefore interviewed in the course of the research. Residents were not asked to provide any specific biographical information as part of the interviews – however, it was possible to deduce general information about respondents' backgrounds in the course of our discussions. Table 3.2 (below) provides a breakdown of interview respondents, showing the total number of interviews and interviewees for each case study, the gender and ethnicity of interviewees, and the household structure and tenure group for each interview.

The largest number of interviewees were from the Shadwell Plaza case study – followed by Limehouse Wharf and then Island Heights. The larger-than-average size of the Shadwell

**Table 3.2: Interview responses and the characteristics of respondents**

		<b>Limehouse Wharf</b>	<b>Shadwell Plaza</b>	<b>Island Heights</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Interviews conducted</b>	<i>(number of respondents)</i>	<b>8 (10)</b>	<b>12 (14)</b>	<b>5 (7)</b>	<b>25 (31)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	male:female	5:5	8:6	3:4	16:15
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>White British</b>	7	7	1	15
	<b>White (Other)</b>	2	1	1	4
	<b>Black (African)</b>	-	2	-	2
	<b>British Asian</b>	1	4	4	9
<b>Household structure</b>	<b>Living alone</b>	4	5	2	11
	<b>Living as a couple</b>	2	3	1	6
	<b>Living with children</b>	2	4	2	8
<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Market rate</b>	1	2	-	3
	<b>Intermediate rent/buy</b>	6	6	2	14
	<b>Social rent</b>	1	4	3	8

Plaza development and the lower-than-average response rate from Island Heights most likely explains the differences in recruitment rates. Otherwise, the interviews were successful in eliciting participation from a range of respondents, including a broadly equal number of men and women, those from different ethnic backgrounds, and a range of tenure groups. However, and in line with the postal survey responses, it should be noted that intermediate tenure group were somewhat overrepresented, whilst – in this case – market rate residents were under-recruited.

The residents' interviews generally lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour, following a loose topic guide comprising five main themes (see Appendix IV). Firstly, each interview began with a general question about residential history, specifically focused on how, when and why respondents came to live in the development. This generally worked well to 'break the ice' and also to segue into the second topic for discussion, which revolved around respondents' general feelings towards life in the development and the immediate neighbourhood. The interview 'conversations' usually developed naturally from this point, with other topic areas often arising more organically from the discussion. However, an effort was nonetheless made to ensure that each interview covered key substantive themes, especially concerning interpersonal contacts with other residents, use of public/communal spaces and amenities, and attitudes or perceptions towards social relations between residents. Finally, I ensured that every interviewee was asked for their general thoughts on tenure mixing as an aim of planning policy and new house building. This question was deemed as a particularly important, on the basis that occupants of housing are themselves rarely asked to directly reflect upon broader questions of policy or housing provision, which are generally deemed to be the domain of 'expert' knowledge or insights (Kemeny 1988). Otherwise, and much like the residents' survey, the interview topics were not governed by strong set of preconceived assumptions or hypotheses. As shown in Appendix IV, one or two pre-worded questions and probes were devised for each of the general topic areas, which in practice were referred to only on occasions when the conversation dried up, or when I needed a prompt to re-focus the discussion back on my chosen topics.

The conduct of the interviews proved to be both a formative and enjoyable experience. Spending an hour or so of an evening in respondents' homes provided a unique insight into residents' domestic lives and afforded me a few rare moments of 'participant observation' within the private confines of the development. Being shown around respondents' newly-

acquired homes, admiring views over Canary Wharf or the Limehouse Canal, or meeting children, partners, and the occasional pet, all proved a good way to build initial rapport. Then, once the formalities of the voice recorder and consent forms were dealt with, the conversation by and large flowed in a natural and friendly manner. Most respondents soon developed a pretty good idea of what I was interested in, and many volunteered their own reflections on specific issues of policy, design or management practice that I would not have otherwise considered. By and large, our discussions therefore felt ‘conversational’ and the direction or tone of the interviews were ‘negotiated’ rather than being entirely dictated by me (Fontana and Frey 2000). Ultimately, the residents’ interviews succeeded in generating ninety-three thousand words of typed transcripts, rich in terms of depth, detail and diversity. These interview data form the basis for the analysis in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight – and, overall, proved extremely formative and insightful both in guiding the analysis for this thesis, and in terms of my own understanding of mixed-tenure housing.

### **‘Expert’ interviews**

Interviews were conducted with nine key informants during the course of the data collection. These ‘expert’ interview respondents comprised housing, design and planning professionals that were involved in various aspects of the case study developments. As shown in Figure 3.6 (below), it was not possible to interview representatives of every organisational actor that was involved in the each of the case study schemes. The main issue was non-response or lack of availability due to idiosyncratic factors (ranging from people having retired or emigrated, to inability to provide time in busy schedules). The only overarching area in which respondents could not be recruited was ‘front line’ management. In this case, a more systemic issue arose, broadly regarding respondents’ concerns that they might violate organisational policies and/or residents’ confidentiality by taking part in an interview (whether on or off ‘record’). The recruitment of expert interview respondents did, however, succeed in providing overall coverage of the provision process across all three schemes. Whilst specific insights into aspects of the case study schemes were gleaned from these interviews, these data were also deployed to provide a general picture of the provision process – with a particular focus on the rationales and motivations underlying key decisions pertaining to the ‘mixing’ of tenures – in order to ‘fill in the gaps’ where it was not possible to recruit informants.

Figure 3.6: Areas of coverage in the expert interviews

	Limehouse Wharf	Shadwell Plaza	Island Heights
<b>Private sector developer</b>	x	x	✓
<b>Housing association</b>	✓	✓	x
<b>Architect</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Local planning authority</b>	✓	x	x
<b>Regeneration agency</b>	✓	x	x

The practical conduct of these interviews involved a number of stages. Firstly, potential respondents were identified based on information gleaned from planning files, internet sources, and – once initial interviews had been conducted – on the advice of other interviewees. Secondly, respondents were contacted by various means in an effort to solicit their participation in the research. In the first instance, a letter was sent to individual informants, outlining the nature of the research and stating that I would be interested in speaking with them in the near future (an example of which is included as Appendix V). This letter was then followed-up, either over the telephone or via email, with a request to make an appointment for the interview. Overall, around half of those contacted agreed to be interviewed. As Figure 3.6 shows, architects ultimately proved the most amenable to taking part in the research, with interviews conducted with senior project architects for all three case studies. Representatives of the housing associations involved in Limehouse Wharf and Shadwell Plaza – in both instances, senior managers involved in new development – were also interviewed in the course of the research. And whilst it proved impossible to elicit the involvement of the private developers involved in Limehouse Wharf and Shadwell Plaza, two separate interviews were conducted with senior staff from the multi-national property developers who were responsible for the Island Heights case study. It did prove more difficult to recruit respondents from the local planning authority, although this was reflective more of practical constraints rather than of an unwillingness to participate. A fuller explanation of the nature and capacity of those organisations involved in the three developments is provided in Chapter Five.

Interviews were arranged at respondents' place of work and the context in which these meetings took place proved formative in and of itself, as was also the case with conducting interviews in residents' homes. Visiting offices of busy architectural practices, large housing

associations, and a major property developer each provided a source of observational insights – albeit fleeting – into the nature of these organisations. In this regard, Kemeny (2004) advocates the conduct of research into professional contexts ‘in situ’, so as to provide valuable insights into working practices, cultures and routines. For these interviews, a topic guide was not prepared, as it appeared more appropriate to allow the interviews to proceed by and large as unstructured conversations regarding each informant’s involvement in the case study developments. That said, broad questions or discussion topics were posed to all interviewees concerning how and why particular decisions were arrived at with respect to accommodating a mix of different tenures. This information shed light on the rationales and motivations behind determining the proportion of different housing tenures and adopting particular strategies for the distribution of tenures within these schemes, an aspect of mixed-tenure housing provision about which relatively little is known and which constitutes the focus of the fifth chapter of this thesis. As Jacobs and Manzi (2000:40) suggest, these discussions with informants thereby proved invaluable in making sense of otherwise complex decision making processes, involving a range of actors each with different orientations and motivations. Expert informants were also asked for their general thoughts and feelings towards tenure mixing as a policy programme, which again provided rare and invaluable insights into the ‘professional subjectivities’ of those charged with the task of providing new mixed-tenure housing. Respondents spoke candidly both about the challenges and the possibilities of tenure mixing, and these responses directly inform the discussion in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Although it was not possible to achieve complete coverage in terms of the recruitment of key informants, the flexible interview approach proved effective for providing insights both into idiosyncratic aspects of the development process for the case study schemes, and into the broader decision making process associated with mixed-tenure housing provision. Importantly, a non-structured interview approach, coupled with a ‘balanced rapport’, helped to encourage a candid and free-flowing discussion, in the course of which these housing professionals also shared their own attitudes and opinions towards tenure mixing as a policy aim (see Fontana and Frey 2000). In all, nine interviews were recorded and transcribed, providing forty-thousand words of additional qualitative data pertaining to the conduct of mixed-tenure housing development, about which comparatively little empirically-based knowledge currently exists.

### **Analysis of Supporting Data and Sources**

A final empirical component of the research involved the use of documentary sources, 'secondary' data, and mapping of the built and neighbourhood characteristics. In one respect, these data play a 'supporting role' to the primary data – especially that derived from resident and expert interviews – upon which the substantive chapters of this thesis are based. On the other hand, information gleaned from documentary sources plays an important role in the 'triangulation' of insights into the provision process, whilst the spatial analyses based on census data and on original mapping provides the main empirical engagement with the local neighbourhood context for the case study developments. For this reason, the use of 'other' sources of data warrants elaboration.

A number of documentary sources are utilised throughout the thesis, with documents pertaining to the planning applications for the three case study schemes constituting the most widely used of these sources. The application files from the Tower Hamlets 'planning records service' provided an unparalleled source of practical information on the case study schemes – in the form of plans and drawings, specifications, or written submissions – which is used to inform various aspects of the analysis pertaining to the design of these schemes. This information also provides the basis for the illustrations and tables that are provided in Chapter Five. The planning application files – and, specifically, the reports written by the local authority and the Greater London Authority – also constituted a source of textual data that is subjected to ad-hoc discourse analysis in Chapter Five and elsewhere in the thesis. In order to avoid referring to the identity of the case study schemes, these sources are not cited in the same way as other texts, but instead are used and quoted from 'anonymously'. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the role that these secondary sources play in informing various aspects of the research.

A further – albeit comparatively minor – aspect in the fieldwork component of this research involved the mapping of the built environment surrounding the three case study schemes. This exercise forms the basis for the 'figure-ground' maps that are presented in the first section of Chapter Four. Figure-ground mapping is an abstract approach for providing scale illustrations of building types, layouts and densities – whereby buildings are simply shown as solid blocks, in this case coloured according to their type/use, which are separated by empty space denoting streets and open areas (Farrelly 2011:84). These are intended to provide a comparable picture of the built environment surrounding the case study sites, coded

according to categories of the predominant building types and uses that were observed in these areas. Observations conducted ‘in the field’ and supplemented by the use of Google’s handy ‘street view’ images, were used to ascertain whether buildings were used for industrial, commercial/office, or retail functions, or whether they comprised residential properties. A crude effort was then made to categorise residential properties according to the time period of their construction, and depending on whether or not they were flats or houses. The choice of categorisation according to the ‘era’ of building was necessarily arbitrary, but was hoped to help provide a general picture of the housing types surrounding the case study schemes (coupled with illustrative photographs). The figure-ground maps that are presented in Chapter Four were then drawn using a ‘vector’ illustration software suite.

In lieu of first-hand data, the acquisition of which would have been far beyond the means and the scope of this research, the analysis of the local neighbourhood context(s) presented in Chapter Four also makes sustained use ‘secondary’ data from the 2001 Census and 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Aggregate data for measures of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics were obtained for the smallest spatial unit available – mostly, that of the one-hundred and twenty-five household ‘output area’ – and used as the basis of thematic maps which appear in the second part of Chapter Four. These maps were produced using a basic GIS software package, with the aim of providing a general picture of the characteristics of the case study neighbourhoods, within the context of Tower Hamlets borough. Of course, inherent limitations of this approach must be acknowledged. Firstly, the data pre-dates the completion case study schemes, which are themselves indicative of broader changes to the built and social character of these areas of East London. The data does not therefore provide an up-to-date picture of the characteristics of these neighbourhoods – it is, however, the only such source of information that is currently available and is arguably still sufficient for the purposes of general comparison and ‘scene setting’. Secondly, the use of aggregated data inherently paints a crude general picture of these neighbourhood characteristics – especially when compared to the richness and depth that was sought through empirical engagements with the case studies themselves. This limitation must be acknowledged as reflective of the practical constraints involved in expanding the scope of the research beyond the confines of the case studies – but is arguably preferable to simply ignoring the local context for these developments and approaching them, instead, as if existing in a ‘vacuum’.

#### IV. Conclusion

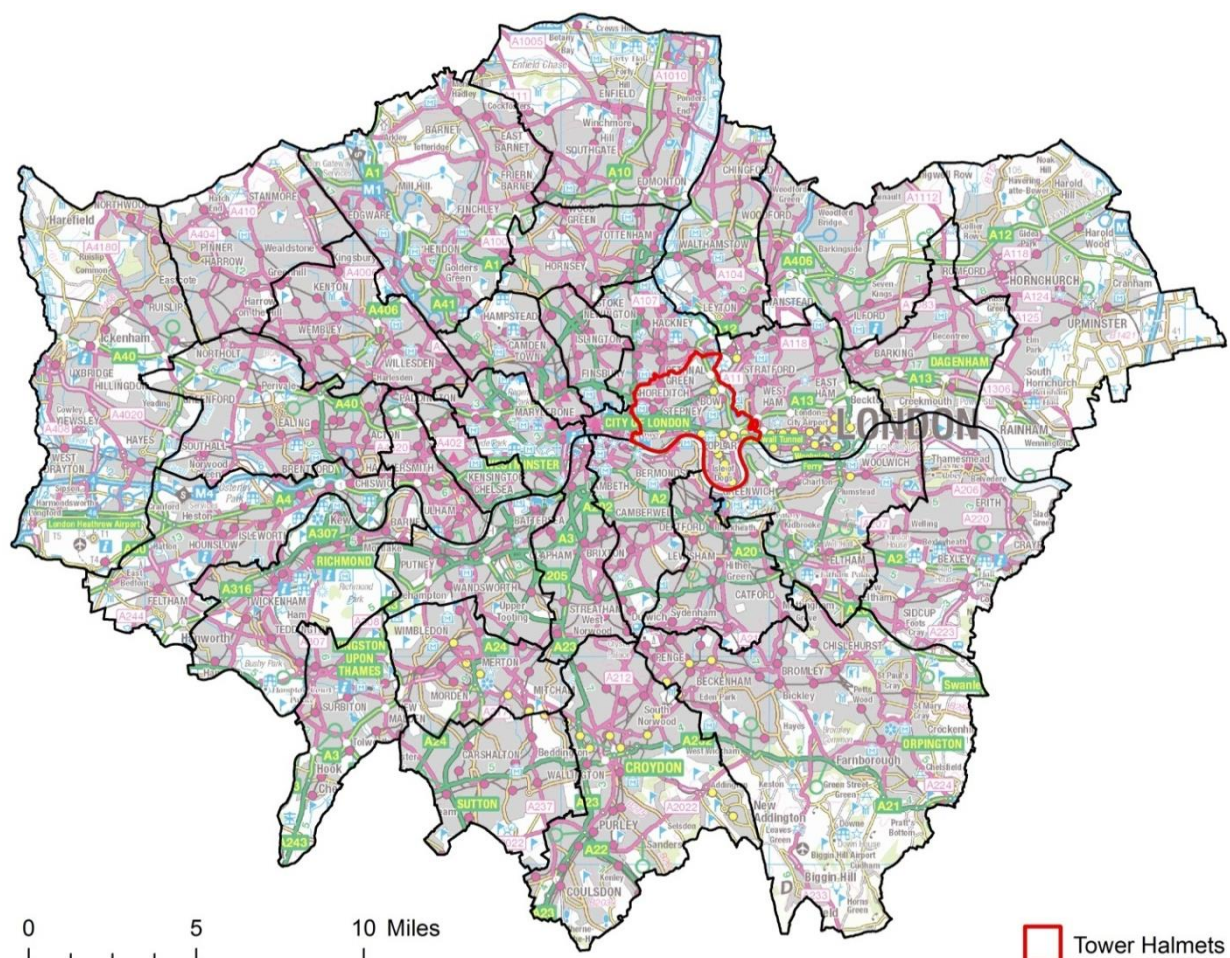
Ultimately, this project emerged in response to an ‘empirical’ aim – that is, to gain insights into everyday life in London’s new-built mixed-tenure housing schemes, and to explore what bearing decision making factors in the provision process had on the built, social and ‘lived’ form of these developments. In the early stages of the research, it also became apparent that an understanding of the local neighbourhood context would add further weight to this case study based analysis. A tripartite empirical focus for the research thus emerged from the overarching aim of better understanding what life was like in these schemes, following a guiding rationale that ‘housing phenomena’ cannot be fully understood in isolation either from their geographical context or situation (Kemeny 2004), or from the ‘structures of provision’ through which they are created (Ball 1986). A genuinely mixed method approach then emerged as the most suitable means by which to operationalise this aim. Unfettered by strong epistemological or theoretical commitments to a particular type of data, or means for acquiring it, the research was able to employ a range of data-gathering instruments, each of which was tailored towards a particular object of study. Ultimately, this approach succeeded in its most important task – to illuminate the empirical ‘black box’ within which the private and communal domestic lives of the case study mixed-tenure schemes are played out. The insights gained from the one-hundred-and-fifty responses to the residents’ survey and from conversations with thirty-one interviewees shed light on the ‘social life’ of mixed-tenure housing – ranging from practical and routine aspects of daily life, to perceptions of differences between residents, and even subjectivities towards housing policy, planning and development. At the same time, nine unstructured and in-depth interviews with professional informants afforded deeper insights into the provision process for these sorts of mixed-tenure schemes – allowing not only for an account of how particular decisions were made with respect to the case study developments, but also for a general understanding of the rationales and motivations guiding the decision making process for mixed-tenure development more broadly. Lastly, these ‘primary’ sources of data were supplemented by material from documentary sources and from spatial analyses of the built and social environment in and around the case study neighbourhoods. This is, therefore, an empirically grounded thesis, which pays heed not to any strong theoretical or epistemological orientation, but rather to the task of elucidating upon everyday life in mixed-tenure housing through the insights garnered from the projects’ respondents – to whom most, if not all, of what is said and discussed in the following chapters must be credited.



## Chapter Four: Neighbourhood Context

This chapter offers a broad based introduction to the social and spatial characteristics of the local areas in which the three case study mixed-tenure housing developments are located. As discussed in the previous chapter, three recently-completed schemes – each of a similar size, but with otherwise differing characteristics and in different spatial settings – were selected as the case studies upon which the empirical research for this thesis would be based. Each of these developments are situated within the London borough of Tower Hamlets, the location of which is highlighted in Figure 4.1 (below). Bordered by the City of London to the west, the River Thames to the south, and the Boroughs of Hackney and Newham to the north and east respectively – Tower Hamlets encompasses much of London’s traditional inner ‘East End’. Today the geography of Tower Hamlets is complicated, on the one hand, by the re-development of the Docklands as a second hub for financial service activities and highly gentrified consumption in the south of the Borough. On the other hand, Tower Hamlets remains home to a diverse population that includes a sizeable number of people on lower-incomes, as well as large ethnic minority communities reflecting

**Figure 4.1: Location of Tower Hamlets within Greater London (Source: EDINA Digimap / UKBorders)**



both recent and past migrations into the area. Similarly, as one would expect, the Borough's spatial and built form reflects a marked diversity – from gleaming office towers and new centres for leisure and consumption, to industrial sites and small-scale shopping centres. Equally, the Borough's housing stock ranges from new-build gated developments, to sprawling 'estates' of local authority housing, and from rows of increasingly sought after Victorian terraces, to an increasing number of recently completed flatted schemes comprising a mix of housing types (and tenures). Whilst unique in many respects, the areas surrounding the three case study schemes all share in common a 'mixed' character which epitomises much of Tower Hamlets and, indeed, London as a whole.

The location of the three case study developments is shown in Figure 4.2 (below). 'Shadwell Plaza' is the westernmost of the case study sites, located around a mile east of the City of London and less than half a mile from the 'gentrified' riverside of Wapping. The development is just a few hundred feet from transport links to the City – which is less than five minutes away – and to destinations further to the east, via the Docklands Light Railway

**Figure 4.2: Location of the case study developments within Tower Hamlets (source: EDINA Digimap)**



(DLR). Equally close by, the London Overground Line provides additional links to North and South London. Main roads a few hundred metres to the north and south of Shadwell Plaza provide access to numerous bus routes and to arterial routes out of London. Further to the east of is 'Limehouse Wharf', the northernmost of the case study developments, located around two-and-a-half miles from the City. Limehouse Wharf is within walking distance from both Canary Wharf and the Mile End Road, each around a mile to the south and north respectively, and both offering a range of transport connections. The nearest rail link – via the DLR – is about half-a-mile away, in contrast to Shadwell Plaza's adjacent stations. Limehouse Wharf is also located directly on the banks of the Limehouse Cut canal – first opened in 1770 – which provides both an attractive and popular amenity space, as well as its towpath pedestrian link to the Limehouse Basin and the River Thames to the south and the River Lee to the east. Once again, there are main arterial roads within close proximity to the Limehouse Wharf site, providing similar bus links further afield. Lastly, Islands Heights is the southernmost case study site – in the heart of the Isle of Dogs and just a couple of hundred metres from Canary Wharf's iconic office towers. The development is close to various DLR and Underground links and access to the well-connected road network that was constructed as part of the Docklands 'regeneration'. Each of the chosen case study mixed-tenure developments therefore occupies locations that offer differing levels of access to transport links and what, according to the accounts of residents discussed in Chapter Six, were 'popular' local destinations (such as Canary Wharf, Wapping and Limehouse Basin).

The first section of this chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the 'neighbourhoods' immediately surrounding the case study schemes – including brief accounts of the history of land uses on and around the case study sites, together with up-to-date 'figure ground' mapping and photographic illustrations of the present-day building types and uses in these areas. This descriptive analyses of the local areas surrounding the case study schemes adopts an necessarily cursory definition of the 'neighbourhood', for the sake of intelligible, consistent and comparable mapping, but acknowledging the underlying complexities and subjectivities involved in defining the extent and boundaries of any given 'neighbourhood' (cf. Jenks and Dempsey 2007). The second section of this chapter then offers an analysis of the case studies' situation within the social geography and history of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This section includes accounts of the borough's ethnic diversity, its provision of social housing, and its contemporary socioeconomic geography, illustrated throughout by thematic mapping of these characteristics at the smallest available scale. Again, the mapping

presented in this second section also suffers from limitations, primarily based on its reliance on data from the 2001 Census (the most up-to-date source available at the time of writing). However, while the limitations of these decade-old numbers must be acknowledged, they nevertheless remain ‘fit for purpose’ in providing a broad illustration of demographic patterns within the Borough and, in particular, how the case study schemes are situated within this geography.

For each of the case study mixed-tenure schemes, the particular characteristics of their physical and social ‘situation’ provide a crucial grounding for the analyses presented in the following chapters. Firstly, key decisions in the housing provision process for the case study developments – as discussed in the Chapter Five – were highly contingent upon the specific constraints or opportunities associated with each schemes’ site and situation. Housing providers discussed the need to consider factors such as previous land uses on the development sites, the nature of the surrounding built-environment, and the demographic of the local area. These factors, in turn, influenced design decisions and outcomes relating to the physical form and layout, the provision of commercial and retail premises, and – importantly – the mixture of housing types and tenures. Secondly, characteristics of the case study neighbourhoods are reflected upon in the discourses of residents which are discussed later in the thesis. Chapter Six focuses on residents’ perceptions of the local area – ranging from the provision of shops and amenities, to the perceptions of crime and personal safety, and attitudes towards the areas’ ethnic and social mix. In this regard, the socio-spatial context in which the case study schemes are situated constituted an important aspect of residents’ accounts of daily life in and around their developments. Characteristics of the local area also provide context for the insights into interpersonal contacts between residents of the case study mixed-tenure schemes – for instance, in exploring whether residents ‘mixed’ while using local services or amenities – as discussed in Chapter Seven. Similarly, the nature of the case study neighbourhoods – and, in particular, their socioeconomic composition – helps ground the responses presented in Chapter Eight, which explores residents’ attitudes and perceptions towards tenure mix more broadly. The analysis of the socio-spatial characteristics of the case study neighbourhoods thus provides a necessary context and grounding, both for the design and development processes, and for residents’ perceptions of everyday life in these mixed-tenure schemes.

## I. Land Uses and the Built Environment

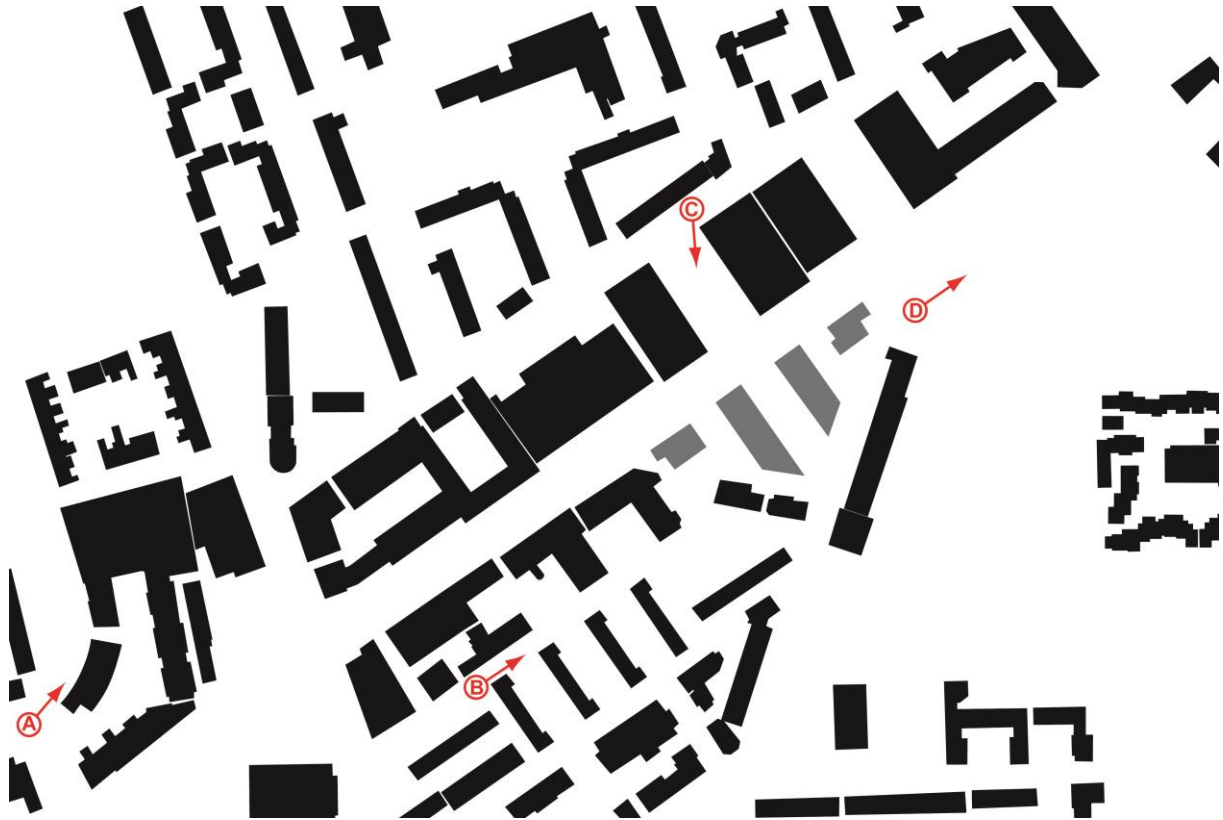
### Limehouse Wharf

The area around Limehouse has seen once dominant land uses associated with nineteenth-century industry progressively make way for a diverse mix of residential and commercial functions, leaving a few remaining Victorian buildings interspersed amongst mid-twentieth century local authority housing and more recent residential developments. An archaeological survey commissioned by Limehouse Wharf's developers provides a unique source of insight into the history of the site itself (Perry 2003). The construction of the 'Limehouse Cut' canal in 1770 – on which the Limehouse Wharf development stands – initiated the industrial-led urbanisation of this area (which had previously been occupied by open fields). Maps from 1829 show the site of Limehouse Wharf as being home to one of the only pieces of development along the canal – a tavern by the name of 'Mount Pleasant Eel Pie House'. Maps from later in the nineteenth-century show a proliferation of various industrial buildings on the site, including a 'saltpetre works' and the 'oil wharfs'. By the turn of the century, the area around the site had become more heavily built-up, predominantly with terraced houses as well as a series of wharfs and larger industrial sites on the opposite side of the canal (Perry 2003).

Dramatic changes to the surrounding area took place throughout the 1950s, with the clearance of terraced housing to make way for a park (which still occupies the area to the east of the case study site). A four storey deck access block was constructed immediately adjacent to the Limehouse Wharf site – as shown in Figure 4.3D – which, whilst standing vacant at the time of the case study's completion, was subsequently demolished. To the south and southwest of the site, a series of deck access blocks were constructed in the 1950s (shown in Figure 4.3B) – again in place of terraced housing – which still remain today. Further to the south of the site, a later development of local authority-built housing was completed by 1975. Abutting the case study site to the south is a smaller five-storey development of flats, completed around the same time as Limehouse Wharf itself. Immediately adjacent to the site, to the east, are two additional blocks of four and five – storey flats, constructed in the early and mid-2000s (on a site which had been occupied by car parking garages). Finally, to the western edge of the site is a 1990s era three-storey residential block (utilised as a care home). However, Perry's (2003) report concludes that there was little change to the built form of the industrial units that had occupied the case



Figure 4.3: The built environment in the area around Limehouse Wharf  
(Images: Google Street View, © 2008 Google)



study site itself throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The site's last occupant prior to its acquisition for re-development was a company manufacturing packaging, which at its height in the early-1990s was employing 70 people. However, following the firm's take-over by a multinational packaging company, operations on the site were wound down. By 2002, only 6 people were employed on the site and soon after the Victorian industrial buildings were vacated and subsequently demolished, ending a century-and-a-half of industry on the site.

The full figure-ground map (Figure 4.4) shows the mixed character of land uses in the wider area surrounding the Limehouse Wharf, with sizeable areas occupied by light industrial and commercial functions, in amongst which is a mix of housing types from various eras. Further to the southwest of the site, the map in Figure 4.4 shows blocks of 1950s-era local authority-built flats (eight in total) and the southern edge of the map can be seen the 1960s/70s built local authority estate. The north and north-western half of the map in Figure 4.4 also shows the area of 1950s local authority flatted housing, situated alongside areas of the terraced housing (mostly from the 1970s, but with some remaining from the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Sizeable areas of non-residential land use are also depicted in Figure 4.4. Indeed, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) most recent 'Employment Land Study' describes the Limehouse Cut as "a traditional small-scale industrial area, which is evolving into a commercial office area with some residential development" (URS 2009:v). A late 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial estate still occupies the area immediately north of the Limehouse Wharf site (on the opposite bank of the canal, as illustrated in Figure 4.3C). The businesses operating here are characterised by labour extensive functions including light manufacturing, warehousing and logistics depots. Further to the west of the site are a number of commercial (office) buildings – some that are purpose-built and date from the 1980s and 90s, others which occupy converted industrial buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Employment Land Study concludes that the area around Limehouse Wharf is "one of the least suitable sites for industrial use in the Borough, given it is surrounded by residential development and premises and can be accessed only via residential streets which are unsuitable for accommodating HGVs" (URS 2009:xxviii). The Borough's forecast for the area is therefore one of continued industrial decline in favour of new residential redevelopment – the likes of which can be seen in Figure 4.3A. The density of buildings shown in Figure 4.4 is visibly lower than for the other case study sites, in part due to areas of parkland both immediately to the east and further to the north-west of Limehouse Wharf.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT

Basemap Source: Ordnance Survey/EDINA 2011  
Scale: 1:2000

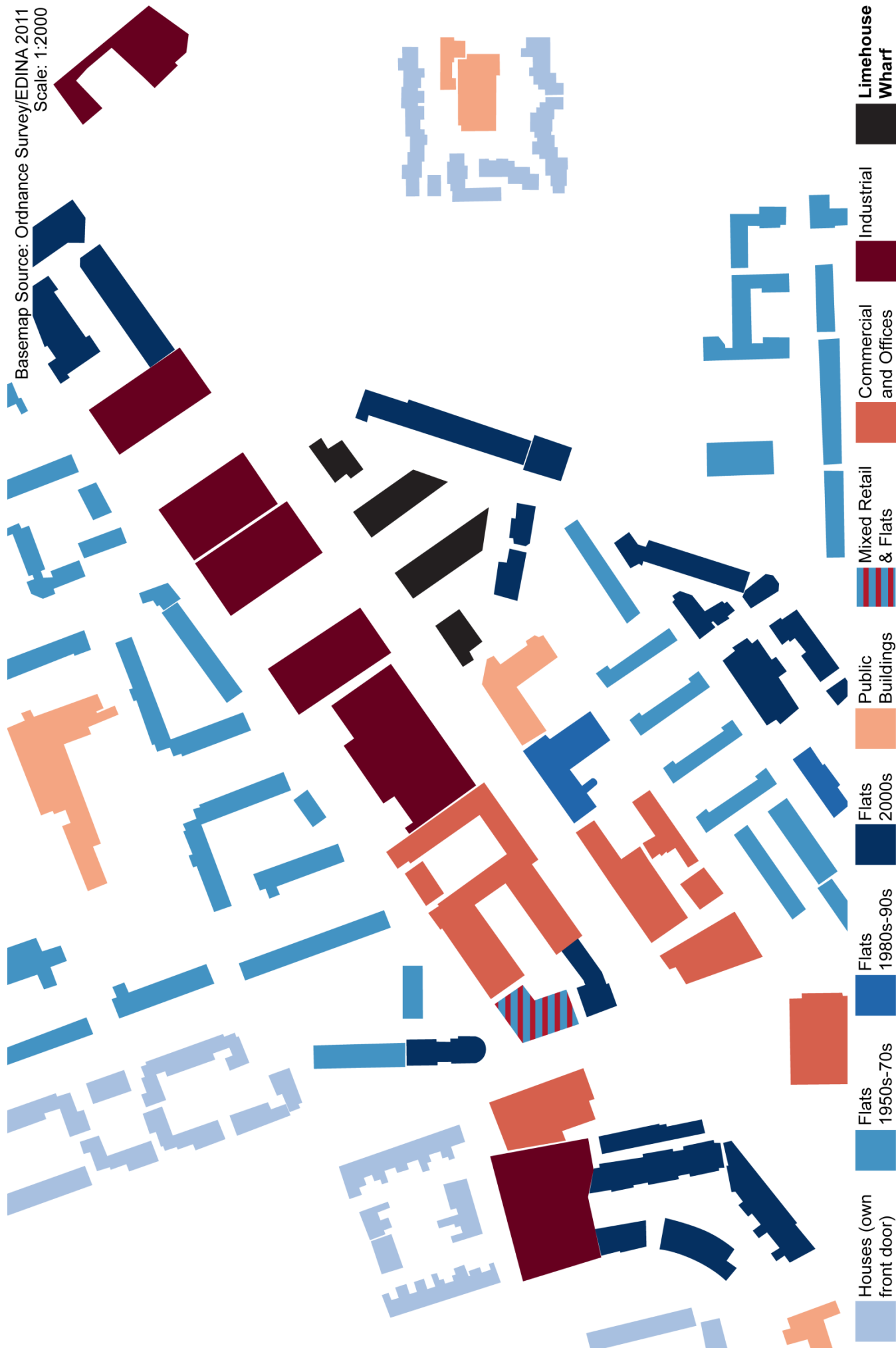


Figure 4.4: Land uses in the area around Limehouse Wharf

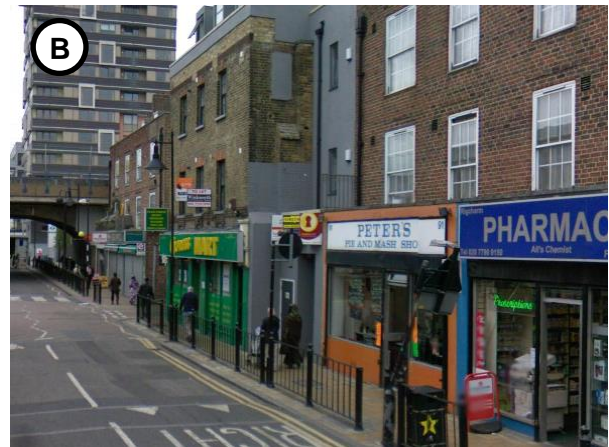
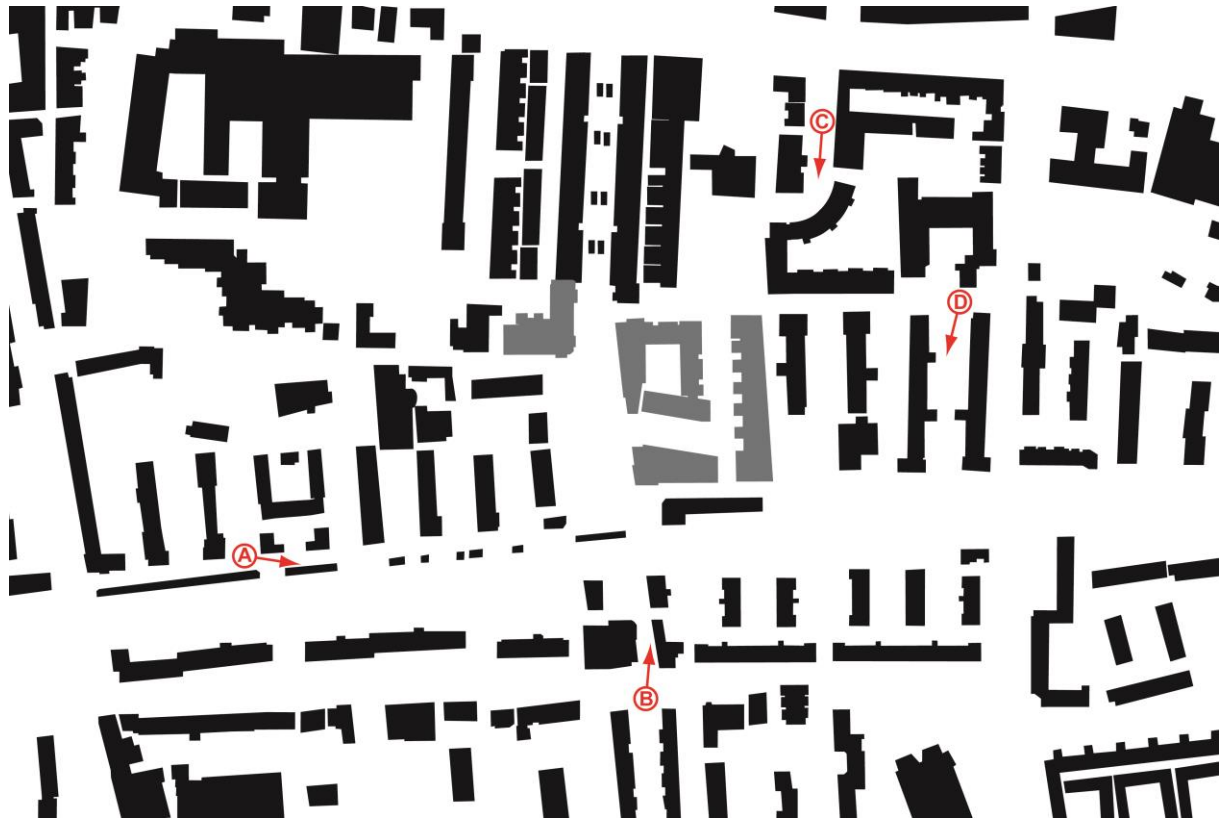


### Shadwell Plaza

In contrast to the mixed industrial and commercial character of the area around Limehouse Wharf – the area around Shadwell Plaza has been historically comprised a mix of high-density housing, with only a spattering of smaller industrial land uses. The earliest detailed maps, from 1875, show the case study site itself – and most of the surrounding area – as occupied almost entirely by ‘back-to-back’ rows of terraced housing. However, the inter-war period saw a dramatic transformation on the site, with the demolition of four streets of back-to-back terraces (comprising around 130 houses), to make way for two local authority built five-storey blocks of flats (dating from the mid-1930s). These blocks would remain on the site until the early 2000s, when they were demolished to make way for the case study development. Further clearances of terraced housing immediately east of the case study site took place in the 1940s, to make way for four additional five-storey blocks (which remain today, as shown in Figure 4.5D). A decade later, the clearance of Victorian terraces had spread to the north of the case study site (where an early 1970s mixed-use retail, housing and market development now stands). Less than a decade later, the last remaining areas of Victorian housing had been cleared – this time to the west of the site – to make way for 1960s local authority-built flats and a large secondary school (which remain today). Lastly, a sheltered housing scheme was completed to the northeast of the site in the 1970s, which was subsequently demolished and redeveloped in the early 2000s to include a new mix of private and sheltered housing. The area has therefore remained predominantly residential, with low-rise local authority built flats constitute the prevailing housing type, together with a small handful of Victorian terraced houses and in-fill developments of more recently completed flats and houses (such as that illustrated in Figure 4.5C). Another aspect of the area’s character is the prevalence of a diverse range of small shops, often occupying the ground floor of residential buildings, and many of which offer specialist goods and services catering to the area’s South Asian community (as illustrated in Figure 4.5A).

While the area immediately to the east of the Shadwell Plaza development is still occupied by the sorts of deck access flats shown in Figure 4.5D, further to the east is a cul-de-sac development of recently-built houses. Another recent market rate development (visible in Figure 4.5C) sits just to the northeast of the case study site (on the area previously occupied by the 1970s sheltered housing scheme). Adjacent to this is one of the few rows of Victorian terraced housing not to have been either demolished or converted to shop units (also shown in Figure 4.6). To the southeast of Shadwell Plaza – and across the railway

Figure 4.5: The built environment in the area around Shadwell Plaza  
(Images: Google Street View, © 2008 Google)

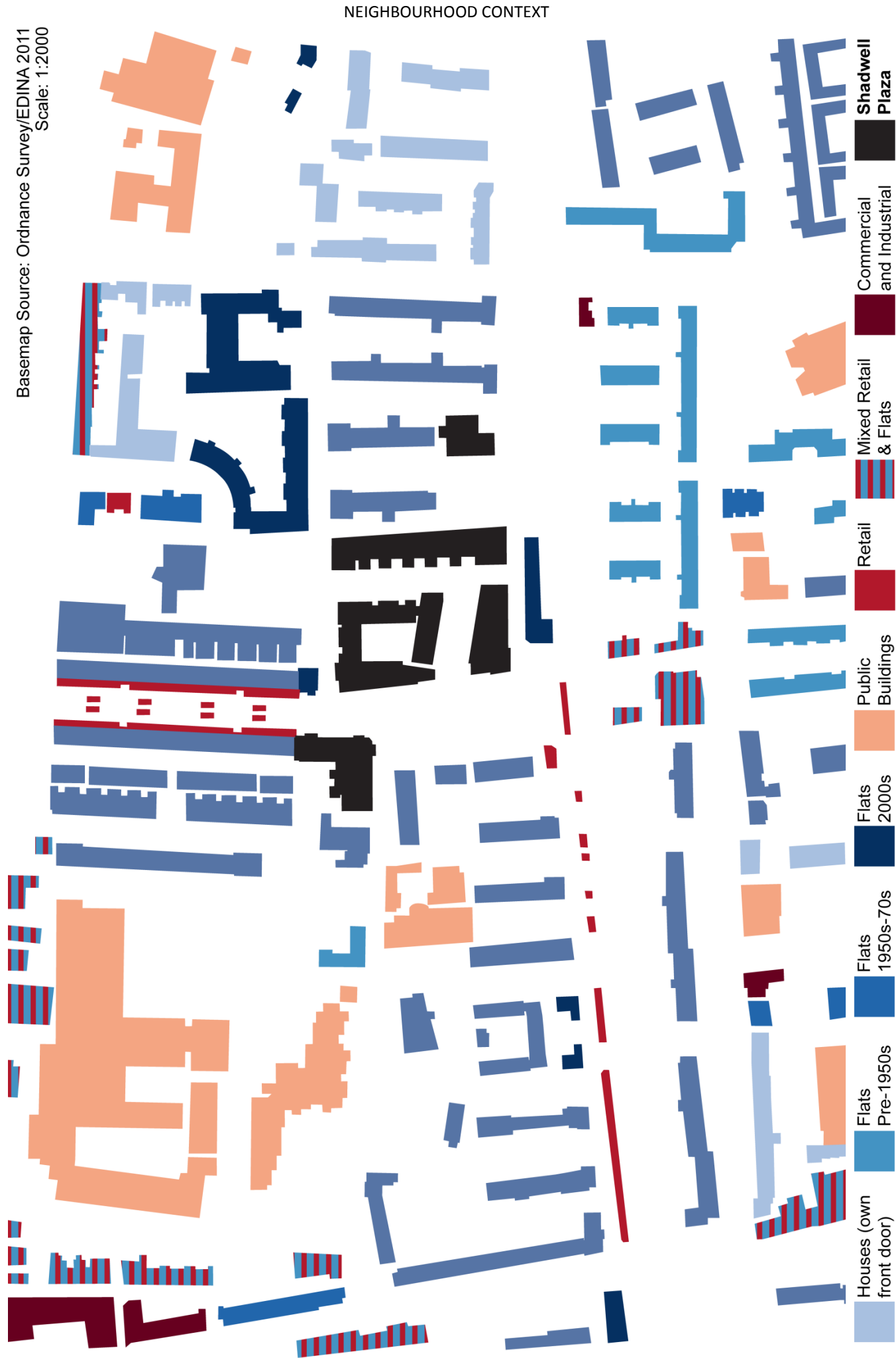


embankment which bisects the area from east-to-west – is a large estate of pre-war local authority built flats (similar in type to the two blocks that previously occupied the site of the case study development). With the exception of one 22-storey block, low-rise social housing from the 1960s-built also prevails in the area to the west of the case study site, alongside a considerable area of land given over to two separate post-war era schools. The outward appearances of the area's remaining 1950s and 60s social housing – some of which has been re-clad and all of which feature new-style security gates – suggests that it has been renovated in the past twenty years.

The 1970s 'Shadwell Market' development and its surrounding buildings dominate the area to the north of Shadwell Plaza. The market consists of around two-dozen stalls, flanked by medium sized retail units, sitting below a three storey blocks of Greater London Council-built flats. These retail units are predominantly occupied by 'high street' retailers and services – including outlets of big-name supermarket, clothing and banking chains – as well as a number of independent retailers, a small library (recently re-branded as an 'Idea Store') and a pub (located immediately opposite Shadwell Plaza). Beyond the market, the majority of shops are independently owned, many of which cater to the South Asian (predominantly Bengali) population of the area. Figure 4.5A shows Asian food retail and wholesale shops that occupy the railway arches to the west of Shadwell Plaza. These shops include 'specialist' South Asian food retailers (including several halal meat shops, a fishmonger, several grocers, and a sweet shop). A second parade of largely independent shops is located to the south of the case study development (shown in Figure 4.5B), which includes a newsagent, a post office, several convenience/grocery shops, a pharmacy and a pie and mash shop (one of the few visible traces of the 'traditional' East End). Additional areas of mixed retail units are also located along the main road further to the north of the site. Together, the presence of a wide range of independent retailers and services, a number of high-street businesses, a library, and three schools – all within a relatively small area – creates a general impression of a well-served inner-urban residential area, which could be described as 'bustling', 'vibrant', 'thriving' and other similar superlatives. Importantly, the area also boasts stations on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and newly renovated East London Line – both of which are within a few hundred feet of the case study development – as well as a host of bus links on the main road to the north.

Figure 4.6: Land uses in the area around Shadwell Plaza

Basemap Source: Ordnance Survey/EDINA 2011  
Scale: 1:2000



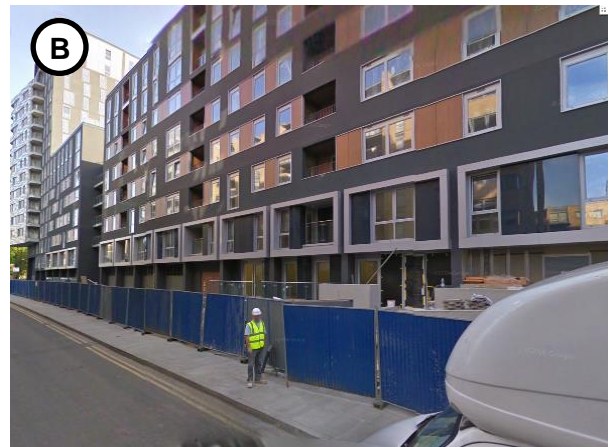
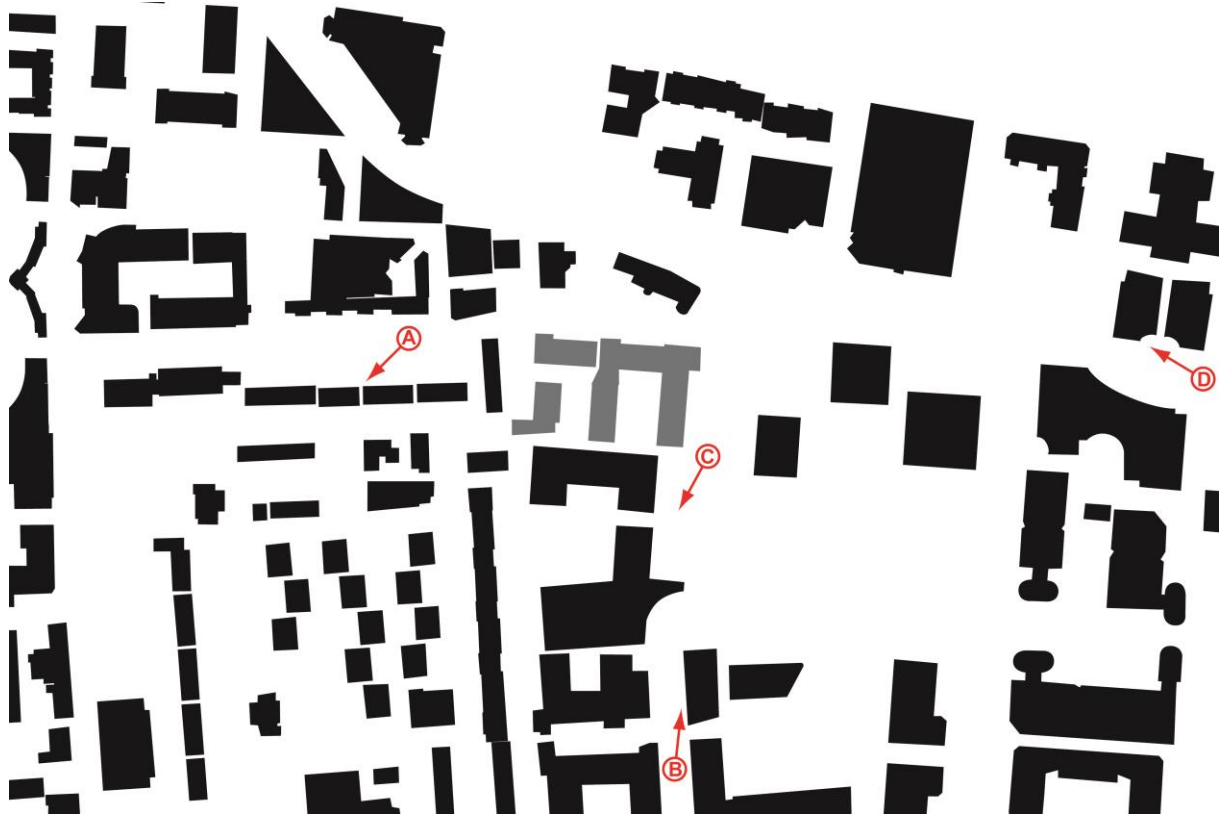
## Island Heights

Given its location, barely five-hundred metres south of One Canada Square and the Canary Wharf business district – formerly the heart of London’s working docks – the built environment around Island Heights presents the widest contrasts of all three case study developments. Large-scale office, retail and residential developments from the 1990s; light industrial and business units from the 1980s; social housing from the 1960s; and recently built mixed-tenure and high end market rate housing – all sit within a couple of hundred metres of the Island Wharf site. Historically, the site itself had been at the heart of the area’s dock related activities, having comprised part of the Millwall Dock’s estate of wharfs and warehouses since the mid-nineteenth century. Later maps show that, by the 1890s, the Island Heights site itself formed part of a sizeable grain depot (a five-and-a-half acre ‘shed’ containing 78 railway sidings). Meanwhile, late-Victorian developments of terraced housing had crept eastwards to the very edge of the case study site. The next major transformation in the built environment around the site was not until the 1960s, when more than 160 Victorian terraced houses were compulsorily purchased and cleared to make way for the construction of a large local authority housing estate (Hobhouse 1994). The estate – shown in Figure 4.7A – comprises nearly seven hundred homes in a mixture of four 21-storey high rise towers and more than a dozen of two to four storey blocks and remains today as the predominant land use in the area immediately west and southwest of the case study site (Hobhouse 1994:447).

Throughout the 1970s, the industrial land uses that occupied the development site remained largely untouched – despite the decline and closure of the docks – until the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) was formed in 1981 (Foster 1999). The area of the case study scheme, which by the 1980s had been left abandoned as a result of the closure of the docks, was designated as part of a 482 acre ‘Enterprise Zone’ (known as the ‘Millharbour Sites’). As part of the infrastructure development within the Enterprise Zone, brand new roads were laid through the formerly enclosed areas of the docks, including new arterial roads running east-west and north-south (both within a hundred metres of the Island Heights site). The development now sits on the corner of two smaller ‘new’ roads, which transect the old dock. On the site itself, a large, low-rise commercial building was constructed in the late 1980s, which was occupied by the dealership and service centre for a high-end car manufacturer until its purchase and demolition to make way for Island Heights’ development in the mid-2000s. Given the massive scope of the 1980s redevelopment, vast



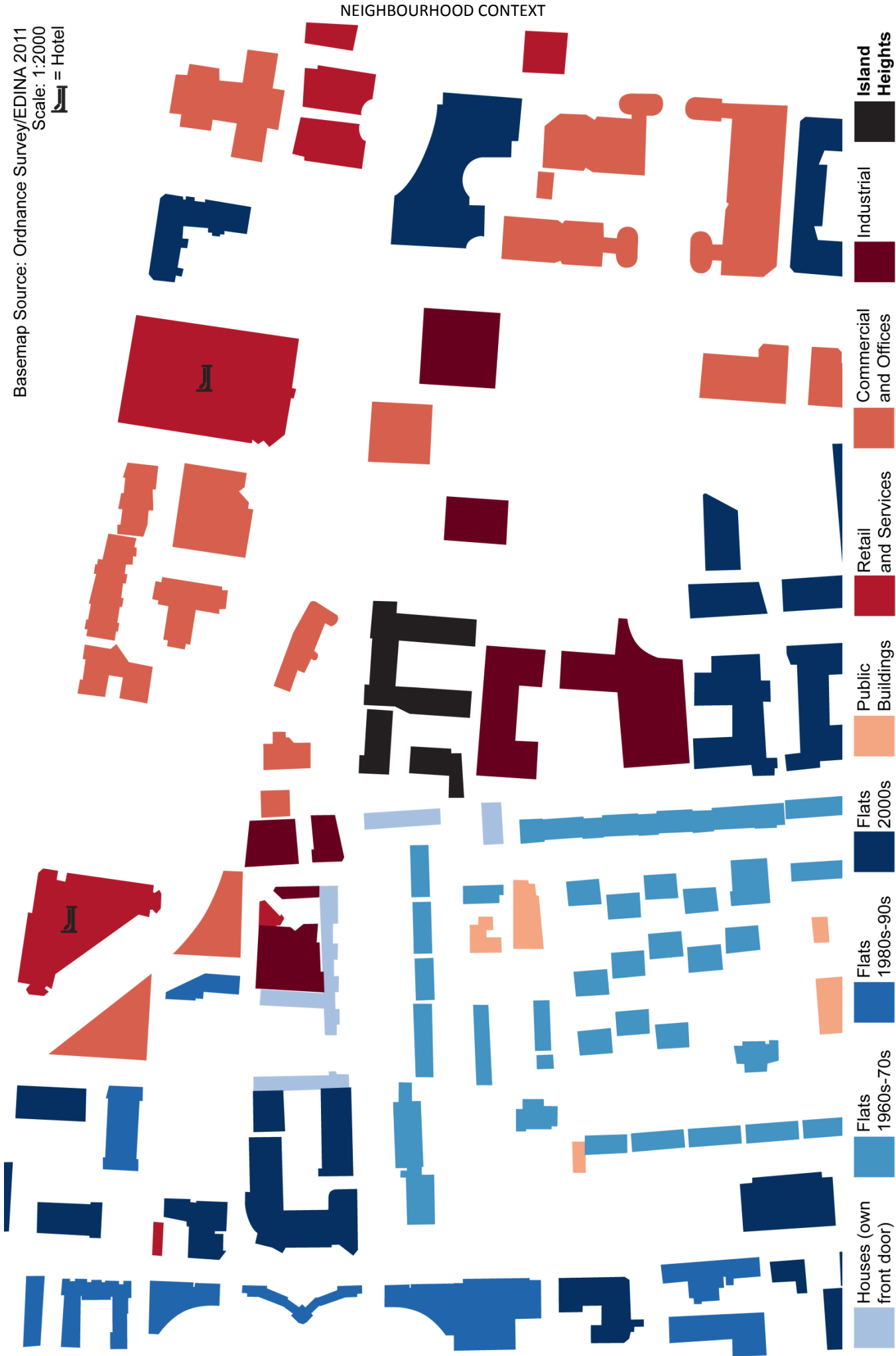
Figure 4.7: The built environment in the area around Island Heights  
(Images: Google Street View, © 2008 Google)



swathes of land in the areas surrounding the case study site are now occupied by buildings constructed as part of the first phase of Enterprise Zone development. Immediately to both the north and south of Island Heights, for instance, is a small Enterprise Zone-era industrial estate (illustrated in Figure 4.7C) that accommodates various wholesale outlets, warehousing, a distribution depot and a print works. Directly to the east of the site is another area of low-rise business units – some of which have been converted to sales and service premises for another high-end car dealership, while others are home to an outlet and production facility for a multinational design and print-production firm. In essence, these parts of Island Heights' surroundings therefore continue to represent the initial image for this area of the 'Docklands' – as envisaged by the LDDC in the early 1980s – as a mixed industrial and business centre. However, the Borough has more recently referred to this era of re-development as 'unattractive' and lacking 'character' (LBTH 2000:4), whilst in practical terms it has argued that the 1980s buildings accommodate 'inappropriate' and 'obsolete' land uses given their proximity to the commercial centre of Canary Wharf and the new residential development as illustrated in Figure 4.7B (LBTH 2006:93).

Dramatic changes to the wider area were also brought by the LDDC-led re-development of the land adjacent to the Millwall and West India Docks (most notably, the construction of Canary Wharf, the DLR and new road infrastructure). With the exception of a handful of smaller buildings and the 1960s local authority housing developments to the West, which remain today, the radical transformation in the built environment seen since the 1980s – and which is still on-going today – has largely shaped the physical characteristics of the area around Island Heights. Further to the south of the case study site, are two sizeable recently-completed mixed-tenure housing developments – comprising around 540 and 360 units, and rising in height to 11 and 19 stories respectively (as illustrated in Figure 4.7B). Housing also constitutes the predominantly land use to the southwest and west of the site – with the large post-war local authority built housing estate mentioned above (as illustrated in Figure 4.7A), which in turn is bounded by more recent new-build residential development of varying sizes and types. Finally, to the North of the case study site is a string of mixed-commercial development – including 1990s office developments, two large hotels and an indoor shopping precinct (illustrated in Figure 4.7D) – which line the main road and sit in close proximity to the DLR station.

Figure 4.8: Land uses in the area around Island Heights





## Summary

The neighbourhoods surrounding all three case study sites have seen radical transformations in their built form since their initial eighteenth and nineteenth-century urbanisation. Today, only a scattering of Victorian buildings remain and these areas are instead characterised by evidence of successive generations of urban re-development. In common with many other areas of British inner-cities – which have long undergone and remain in transition – the built environment around each of the three case study sites demonstrates ‘palimpsest’-like qualities, albeit with somewhat different spatial characteristics: Limehouse continues to see industry make way for new housing development in some areas, while manufacturing and commerce remain as sizeable land uses in others. Buildings heights are generally low – with the Limehouse Wharf development standing as the tallest of only three nearby buildings above ten stories. The area around the development is also unique amongst the case study schemes, as it includes two large areas of green space together with the eighteenth-century canal and its towpaths. In contrast, Shadwell Plaza sits amidst an area that has long been, and remains predominantly residential. Building uses in this area nonetheless comprise a wide range of housing types, alongside retail, commercial services and public facilities. There is little in the way of industrial or office-based land use in the area and Shadwell Plaza is one of only two recently-built large-scale residential developments. Again, building heights are generally low – with the case study scheme including one of only three taller residential towers in the immediate area – and, whilst a busy arterial road bisects the area to the north, the streets around the Shadwell Plaza remain relatively narrow, with the density of housing, shops and services creating observably higher amounts of pedestrian traffic than in either of the other two case studies. Island Heights is located in an area which has seen probably the most radical and wide-ranging ‘rupture’ in its built environment – especially in the past three decades – and the area’s redevelopment and reconfiguration remains very much on-going. Little remains from before the LDDC-led re-development of the 1980. Yet despite the massive scale of new building in the 1980s and 90s, the area around Island Heights is experiencing yet another wave of ‘master planned’ re-development, mostly comprising large-scale residential and mixed-use schemes (with building heights pushing forty stories). These recent developments have already brought thousands of additional – and predominantly market rate – housing units into this relatively small area. Large swathes of land around Island Heights remain earmarked for further re-development, signalling toward the continuation of the three-decade long transformation of the area’s built environment.

## **II. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets was formed from the amalgamation of the East End boroughs of Bethnal Green, Bow and Poplar in the mid-1960s. The characteristics of the borough comprise a somewhat unique setting for the case study schemes considered here, which is reflective of the area's social and political history. Today, Tower Hamlets is one of most populous, ethnically diverse and materially deprived boroughs, both within London and within the country as a whole. Projections place the 2011 population of the Borough at 255,000 (GLA 2010) – a twenty-seven per cent increase from the 2001 census. With a projected population-density of one-hundred-and-thirty persons per hectare – compared to seventy-five per hectare for neighbouring Newham – Tower Hamlets is also one of the most densely inhabited urban areas in England (third only to Islington and Kensington and Chelsea). The Borough also had the third-highest proportion of black and ethnic minority residents in England at the 2001 census. Specifically, the Borough is home to the largest Bangladeshi community in Europe. The first part of this section explores this ethnic diversity in more depth. The second part specifically addresses the allocation of housing within the borough. This section turns to examine the broader socioeconomic conditions within the Borough, which the Local Authority describes as “one of the most deprived areas in the country” (LBTH 2011a). Scores on the Indices of Deprivation – upon which the Borough's overall score ranks as the 7<sup>th</sup> out of three-hundred and twenty-six local authorities in England – are used alongside data on unemployment and social housing occupancy, to illustrate the socioeconomic ‘landscape’ in which the case study schemes are situated. Part Two of this chapter thereby provides a picture of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Tower Hamlets borough, drawing on thematic mapping and aggregate statistics to situate the case study schemes and their surrounding areas in the context of these characteristics.

### **Ethnic Diversity**

Tower Hamlets Council describes the Borough as “one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country” based on the fact that around half of the borough's population are from black or minority-ethnic backgrounds (LBTH 2009a:21). Yet despite the fact that, in common with much of the rest of London, the borough's residents undoubtedly represent an incredible diversity of ethnic origins and backgrounds, it has nonetheless been argued that the overall picture is best described as ‘biracial’ (Burns et al. 1994:55). This is due to the fact that

residents from a Bangladeshi background represent at least a third of the borough's population (see Table 4.1). This area of East London has long been home migrant communities, including a notable settlement of Jewish migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Kershen 2005). Bengali settlement in the area dates back to the end of the eighteenth century, when sailors from the Indian Subcontinent took advantage of lodging houses specially set up for sailors of the East India Company (Dench et al. 2006:36). A small number of Bengali *lascars* – predominantly from the Sylhet region of what is now Bangladesh – are believed to have remained in the area having failed to secure passage on ships making the return voyage. However, India's partition in 1947 cut off Sylhet (in new 'East Pakistan') from the employment opportunities in major ports such as Calcutta. This forced the hands of Bengali merchant seamen, with seafarers' unions even rumoured to have circulated advice to their members to remain in London to avoid the risks of unemployment and conflict resulting from partition (Dench et al. 2006:39). By the time Commonwealth immigration came under tighter control in the 1970s, it was estimated that seventy thousand (predominantly male) migrants from the now independent Bangladesh had settled in the UK, with the vast majority in Tower Hamlets (ibid.:41). The borough is therefore unique in terms of its sizeable and long-established Bangladeshi origin population. But although a 'biracial' character remains a useful 'headline' classification, this risks obscuring the increasing 'diversification' of Tower Hamlet's ethnic demographic, with growing Somali, Polish and other East European populations expected to constitute the largest 'new' communities in the 2011 census (Mayhew and Harper 2010).

**Table 4.1: Ethnic diversity in Tower Hamlets**

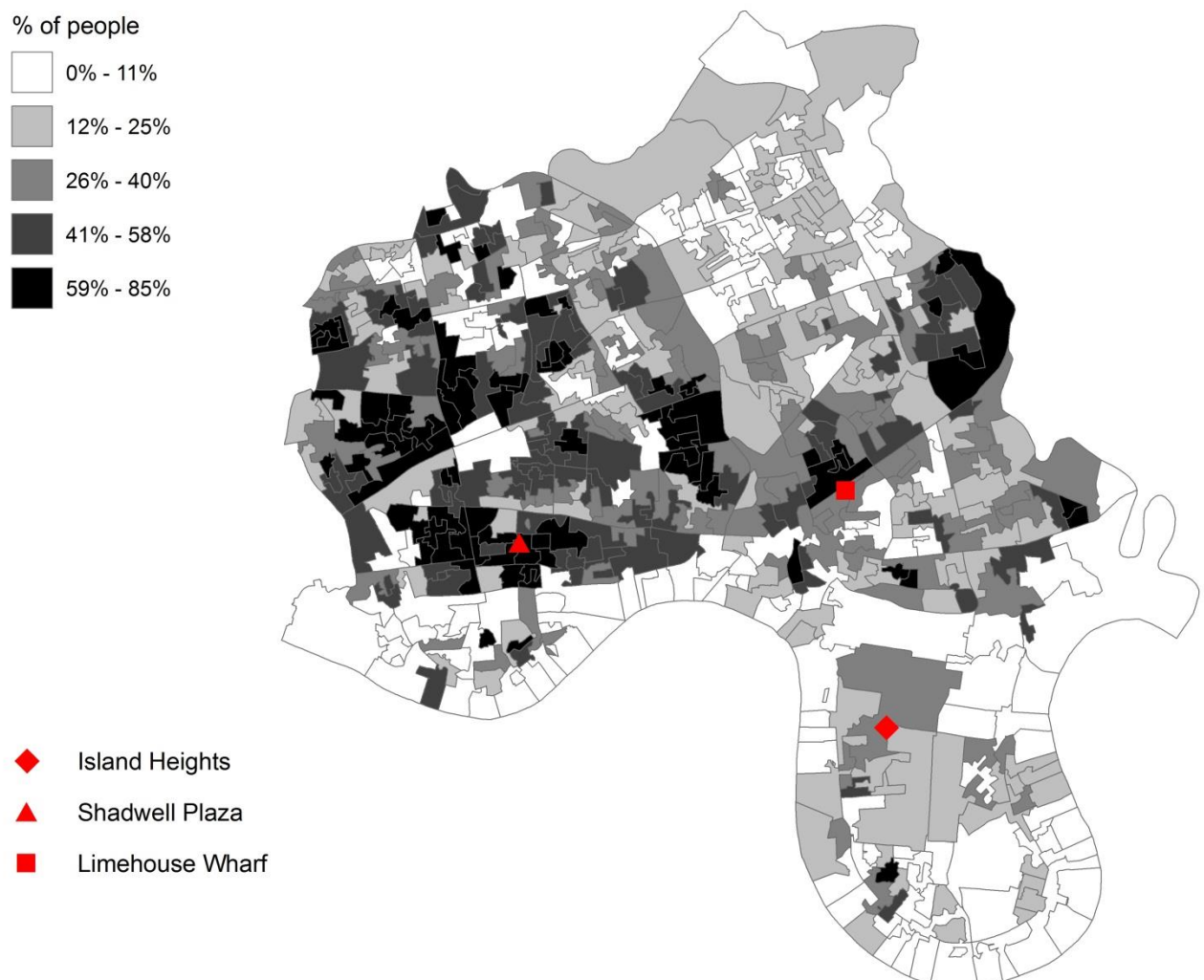
	<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	Greater London	England
White (All)	<b>51.4%</b>	71.2%	90.9%
Asian or Asian British (All)	<b>36.6%</b>	12.1%	4.6%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	<b>33.4%</b>	2.2%	0.6%
Black or Black British (All)	<b>6.5%</b>	10.9%	2.3%
Chinese or other ethnic group (All)	<b>3.0%</b>	2.7%	0.9%

Source: Office of National Statistics, 2001 Census Data

Dench et al. (2006:56) describe Tower Hamlets as divided into "culturally distinct territories" with "Bangladeshis to the west, white 'East Enders' to the east, the new, rich City workers to

the south”. The map in Figure 4.9 shows the contemporary (2001) geography of the British-Bangladeshi population as largely reflecting this pattern. In areas to the west and east of the Borough more than forty per cent of residents are of Bangladeshi origin – including around the Limehouse Wharf and Shadwell Plaza case studies. The large Bangladeshi population around Shadwell Plaza in particular is attributable to this area’s particular history of Bengali migration and settlement (symbolised by nearby Brick Lane). In contrast, the areas bordering the Thames, much of the Isle of Dogs, and the north east of the Borough still have comparatively lower proportions of Bangladeshi and ethnic minority residents. The area around Island Heights, however, does have a moderately high proportion of Bangladeshis, explained in part by the social housing in this area (see Figure 4.11). Those from Bangladeshi backgrounds do, on average, constitute a relatively socioeconomically deprived group within the Borough, with seventy-three per cent of households claiming benefits compared to thirty-six per cent of those from other Asian backgrounds (Mayhew and Harper 2010:42).

**Figure 4.9: Proportion of people of Bangladeshi origin (Data: ONS 2001 Census Data / EDINA UKBorders)**



Mayhew and Harper's (2010:44) recent analysis of Tower Hamlet's population also suggests that both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf are situated in areas with the highest proportions of Somali residents in the Borough. The presence of a sizeable ethnic-minority population – especially around Shadwell Plaza – forms an important context to the interview narratives discussed later in the thesis, which include reflections on perceived inter-ethnic tensions (as discussed in Chapter Six). More broadly, within this context of the case study neighbourhoods' unique ethnic composition, the critical discussion of 'mixed communities' policy discourse in Chapter Nine also reflects upon implicit assertions regarding the potential of mixed-tenure housing development to foster ethnic, racial and religious 'cohesion' (Amin 2002, Robinson 2005). This is particularly pertinent given Tower Hamlet's unique history of racial conflict and discrimination, particularly surrounding the allocation of housing within the borough, which is elaborated in the following section.

### **Housing**

The area of Tower Hamlets has long been characterised by the provision of low cost and subsidised housing. From the late eighteenth century onwards, landlords provided crowded and often low-quality dwellings for comparatively cheap rent in terraced houses and tenement blocks. In turn, philanthropic societies funded lodging houses and offered properties for subsidised rents to the 'deserving poor' (Tarn 1973). The Boundary Estate – one of the first examples of local authority-build social housing – was also completed in 1900 within what is now Tower Hamlets. Given the predominance of earlier generations of often overcrowded and lower quality housing in the East End of London, the borough saw more than its fair share of pre- and post- war slum clearances, with large estates of social housing built from the 1930s onwards. However, the history of low cost housing provision within the borough was often a focus for conflicts, tension and controversies. From the late-Victorian era onwards, there was increasing opposition to the building of new estates that would predominantly house the area's new migrants, "made more violent because the slum housing which had been replaced had been occupied [...] by the poorest elements of the indigenous [white] working class" (Dench et al. 2006:17).

Bangladeshi migrants, in particular, were caught up in this unsavoury tradition of conflict over housing fuelled by racism, xenophobia and right wing politics. The first generation of Bangladeshis lacked the status required to access subsidised housing, so tended either to rent cramped multi-occupancy accommodation from private landlords, or squat in disused

buildings. By the 1970s, as family reunion quickened the demand for more suitable affordable housing, the community began to organise around the issue of housing needs. However, as Glynn (2010:999) describes:

When attempts were made to address Bengali needs—by rehousing squatters, by giving priority to homeless families or those suffering severe overcrowding, or by building larger housing units—this was seen as queue-jumping and discrimination against established residents.

These issues were met by sometimes-violent protests around Brick Lane and Bethnal Green and by ‘mismanagement’ from the local authority who saw the solution as relocating Bangladeshi families into more hostile areas to the east of the borough (Dench et al. 2006:49). The situation reached a head, however, with a shift in the balance of power within the Borough council from Labour to the Liberal<sup>1</sup> party in 1986. The previous Labour regime had already been investigated for discrimination in its allocation of housing by the Commission for Racial Equality (Dench et al. 2006:137). More broadly, the Labour council had been characterised as ‘rotten’ due to its perceived acquiescence with right wing politics and policies and its under-spending on and mismanagement of its housing stock (Socialist Review 1993).

The new Liberal-led council implemented a radical regime of decentralisation, whereby seven almost entirely independent ‘neighbourhood committees’ took over responsibility for housing and other services. This restructuring represented an ‘extreme’ form of community politics, imbued with a ‘strong sense of populism’, which promised to “rescue the old neighbourhoods, neighbourhood loyalties and ethnic identities from obscurity” through local political autonomy (Burns et al. 1994:69). From the outset, the new neighbourhood committees had the effect of divided the borough’s Bangladeshi and other ethnic minority communities, diluting their representation in local politics (Dench et al. 2006:166). More worryingly, both the rhetoric and policies of the new regime also pandered to racist and right wing elements in borough, which were epitomised by the 1987 election of councillor from the far-right British National Party to the Millwall ward in which the Island Heights case study now stands. The increased involvement of local people in decision making over housing allocations caused what one Labour at the time described as “parochialism which took the form of a negative attitude towards minorities” (cited in Dowding et al. 1999:533). In response, a new allocation policy was formalised whereby ‘sons and daughters’ of local

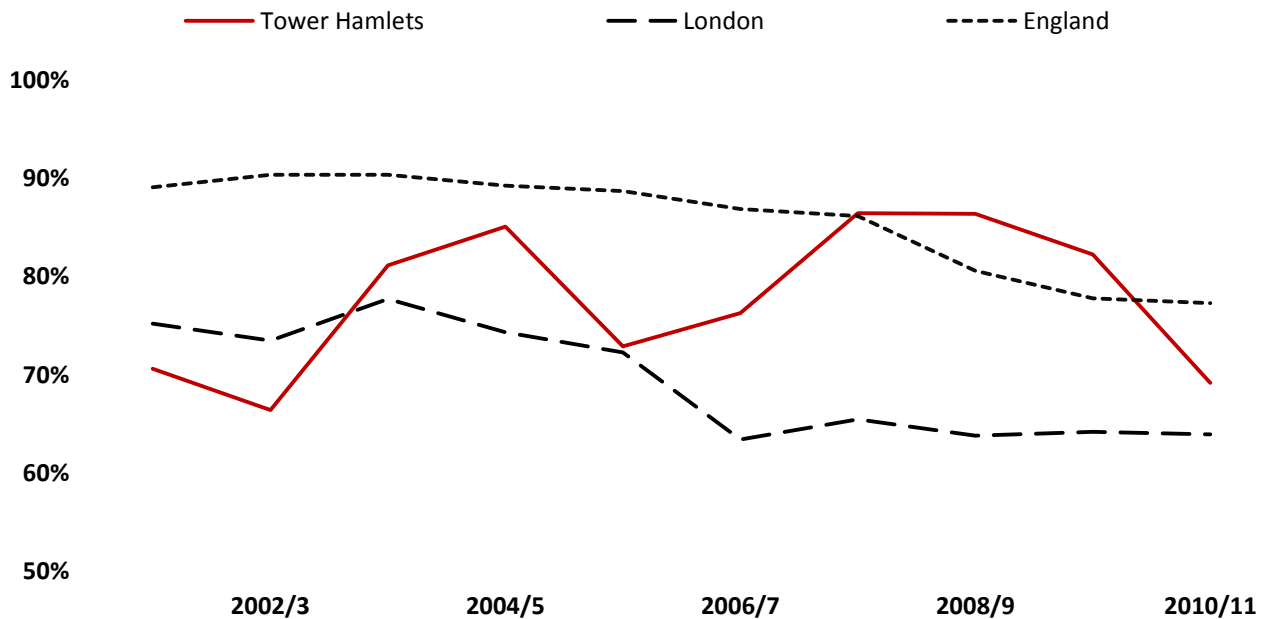
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<sup>1</sup> Today’s Liberal Democrats

(predominantly white) residents could claim priority over available social housing. As Glynn (2010:1000) argues, while the number of households allocated through the scheme only amounted to a few hundred, “the policy allowed the Liberals to present themselves as champions of the local (White) community and to paint the Bangladeshis, and their Labour defenders, as usurpers of local homes”. Perhaps more practically-damaging was the Borough’s subversion of central government policies towards the homeless. Recognising that the majority of homeless households were Bangladeshi, the Liberal neighbourhood committees refused to comply with Government quotas in a move eventually ruled as illegal (Burns et al. 1994). In part due to these controversies, the Liberal’s radical experiment in decentralisation ‘failed’ (Dowding et al. 1999). Labour were re-elected in 1994, bringing the borough into line with the broader shift towards New Labour and their housing and urban policies (the practical implications of which are explored in the following chapter).

Today, a comparatively high proportion of households in Tower Hamlets still live in social rented properties, with the latest estimates suggest that forty-two per cent of housing stock is in the social rented sector (DCA 2009:92), compared to twenty-four per cent in London and eighteen per cent nation-wide (CLG 2011a). However, this figure reflects a ten per cent decline in the size of the Borough’s social rented housing stock since the 2001 Census, while the proportion of owner-occupied, private-rented, and intermediate/shared ownership housing have all increased (DCA 2009). Right-to-buy undoubtedly had a marked effect in reducing the proportion of social renting within Tower Hamlets – 4,600 right-to-buy sales were approved in the Borough between 2001 and 2011, the second-highest number in Inner London (CLG 2011b). Similarly, as Figure 4.10 illustrates, Tower Hamlets has consistently seen an above-average proportion of its new housing completions destined for market rate sale/rent (when compared to the rest of London). In fact, towards the mid-to-late 2000s – when the case study schemes were completed – the percentage of new properties built by private enterprise was around twenty per cent higher in Tower Hamlets than across London as a whole. Transformation in the Borough’s housing stock, in favour of market rate properties, has likely been intensified by the area’s proximity to the City of London and the impacts of large-scale regeneration in the Docklands and elsewhere.

Figure 4.10: New housing completions for private sale/rent, between 2001 and 2011 (Source: Live Tables of Dwelling Stock, CLG 2011)

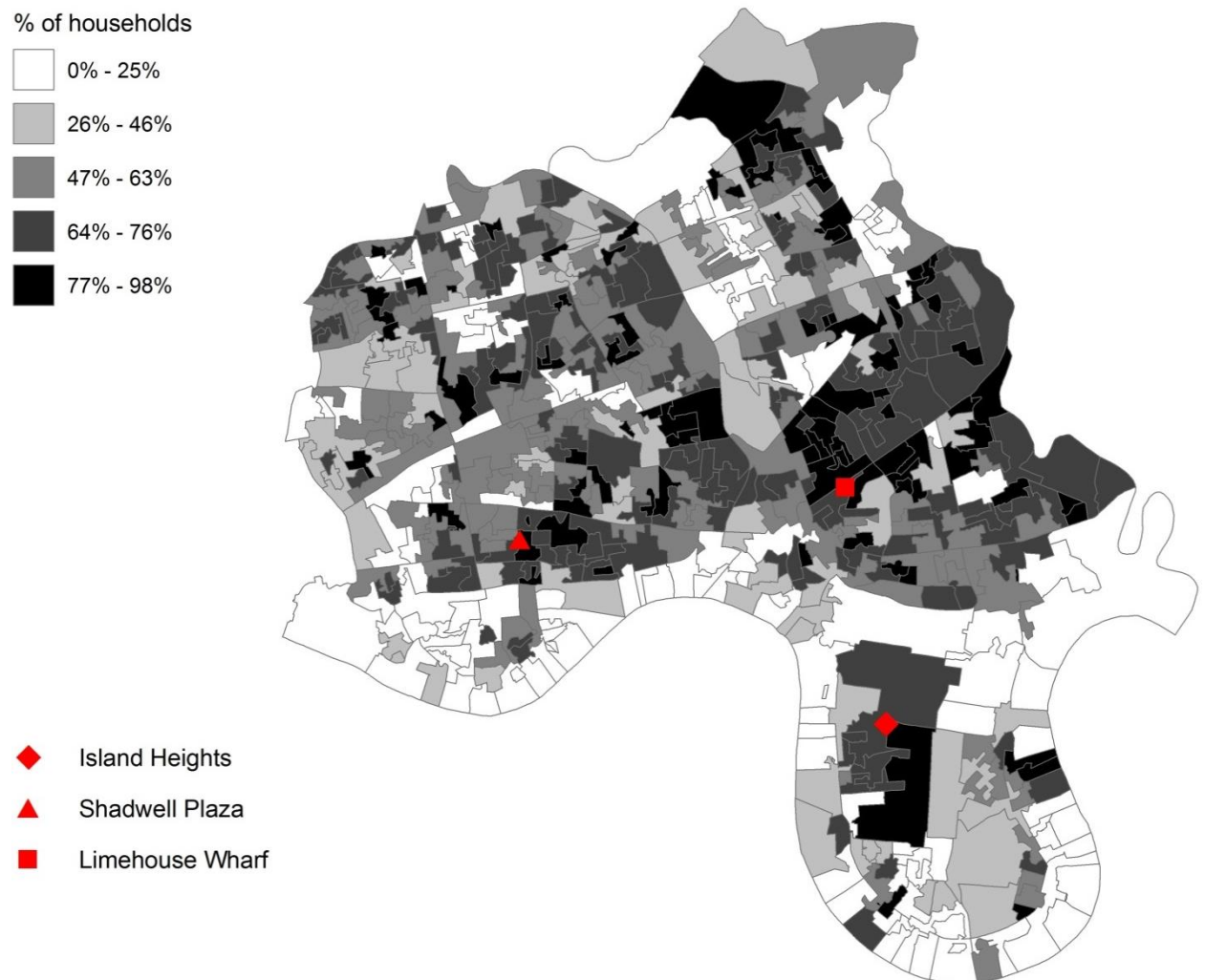


The map in Figure 4.11 (below) shows the relatively high proportions of social housing in the areas around the case study developments, in which two-thirds or more of the housing stock is rented from a housing association or local authority. Adjacent to areas each of the case study schemes are areas where the proportion of social rented housing rises to above seventy-five per cent – as seen in the areas north of Limehouse Wharf (where the map in Figure 4.4 above shows a large area of 1960s local authority build housing), as well as the areas to the east and south of Shadwell Plaza (as seen in Figure 4.6 above) and Island Heights (Figure 4.8 above) respectively. The neighbourhoods along the River have the lowest concentrations of social rented housing, as does much of the Isle of Dogs – representing the extensive (market rate) residential-led re-development in and around these areas. Island Heights is in fact located in an area of the Docklands with an unusually high proportion of social housing, due to the large 1960s social housing estates in the area (with one such estate to the east of the case study development comprising at least seven-hundred dwellings). The provision of ‘affordable’ and social housing in the case study schemes, as explored fully in the next chapter, must therefore be viewed in light of the fact that at least two-thirds or more of the housing stock surrounding the case study developments is in the social rented sector (as Figure 4.11 shows). The housing stock within Tower Hamlets also comprises an extremely high proportion of flats, with around eighty per cent of housing in flats/maisonettes (compared to forty-eight per cent in London and nineteen per cent in



England, based on the 2001 Census data). The Borough's recent Housing Market Assessment found that the proportion of properties in flats had changed little over the past decade (DCA 2009). The Council's 'Local Development Framework' describes the Borough's social housing as quality as "low but improving" (LBTH 2009a:20). Tower Hamlets has far smaller-than-average property sizes, with sixty-eight per cent of properties comprising two bedrooms or fewer – and, in turn, twenty-nine per cent of homes in the Borough were also categorised as 'overcrowded' based on 2001 Census data. More broadly, as Glynn (2010:1009) concludes, "the juxtaposition of new up-market developments and older housing estates presents a landscape of stark contrasts".

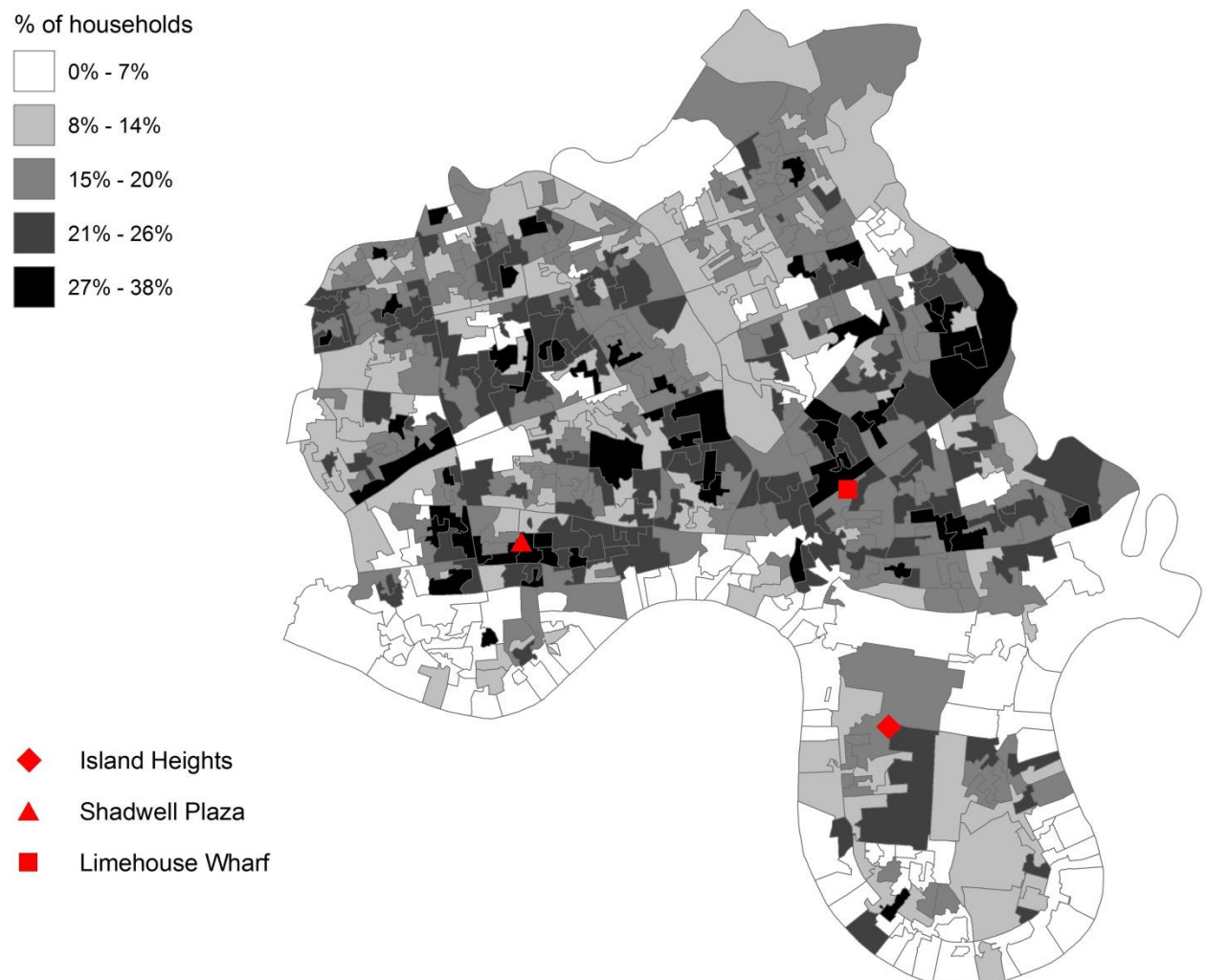
**Figure 4.11: Households renting their property from the local authority or a housing association (Data: ONS 2001 Census Data / EDINA UKBorders)**



### Material Deprivation

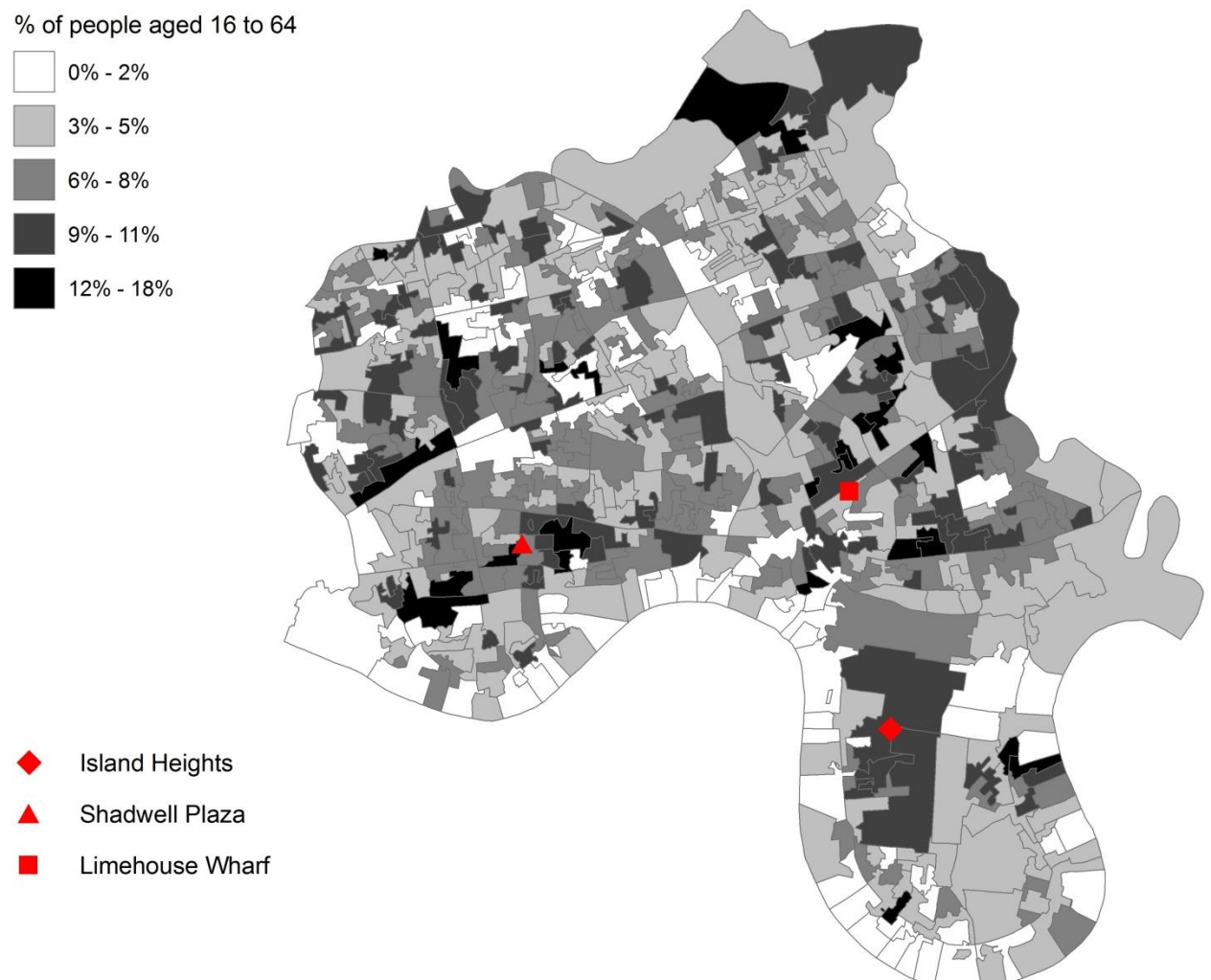
Based on its average score on the 2010 English Indices of Deprivation, Tower Hamlets ranks as the seventh most deprived local authority in the country. This constitutes a slight improvement on 2007's Indices, which placed the Borough third (and second only to Hackney within London). Evidence of material deprivation is widespread within the Borough – seventy-two per cent of local neighbourhoods rank amongst the top twenty per cent in the country (LBTH 2011a). Figure 4.12 maps levels of deprivation within the borough, based on the proportion of households with three or more indicators of deprivation (which may include having no qualifications, being unemployed, and/or living in overcrowded housing). Both Limehouse Wharf and Shadwell Plaza are situated adjacent to areas with the highest average proportions of households facing multiple deprivation. Comparatively fewer households around Island Heights demonstrate multiple indicators of deprivation, likely reflecting its situation amidst the more affluent and gentrified Docklands.

**Figure 4.12: Households with three or more indicators of multiple deprivation (Data: ONS 2001 Census Data / EDINA UKBorders)**



According to a recent Local Authority report, “the borough fares worst on measures that relate to housing and income deprivation, especially income deprivation affecting children and older people” (LBTH 2011a:1). With just under ten per cent of the population on some form of income support, Tower Hamlets has the fourteenth highest benefit claimant rate in the country – the sixth highest in London (GLA 2009:119). Within London, the Borough also has the lowest rate of economic activity amongst its working-age population, with fifty-seven per cent taking part in some form of employment in 2007 (GLA 2009:42). The unemployment rate within the Borough has consistently been over ten per cent for the past decade and currently stands at around thirteen per cent – compared to an average of eight per cent across London (LBTH 2011b:6). Unemployment within the Borough is acknowledged to disproportionately affect ethnic minorities (especially first generation and recent migrants), young people, and women (LBTH 2011b). According to the latest available figures at the time of writing, Tower Hamlets has the highest proportion of under-24s claiming Job

**Figure 4.13: Unemployment rates (Source: ONS 2001 Census Data / EDINA UKBorders)**

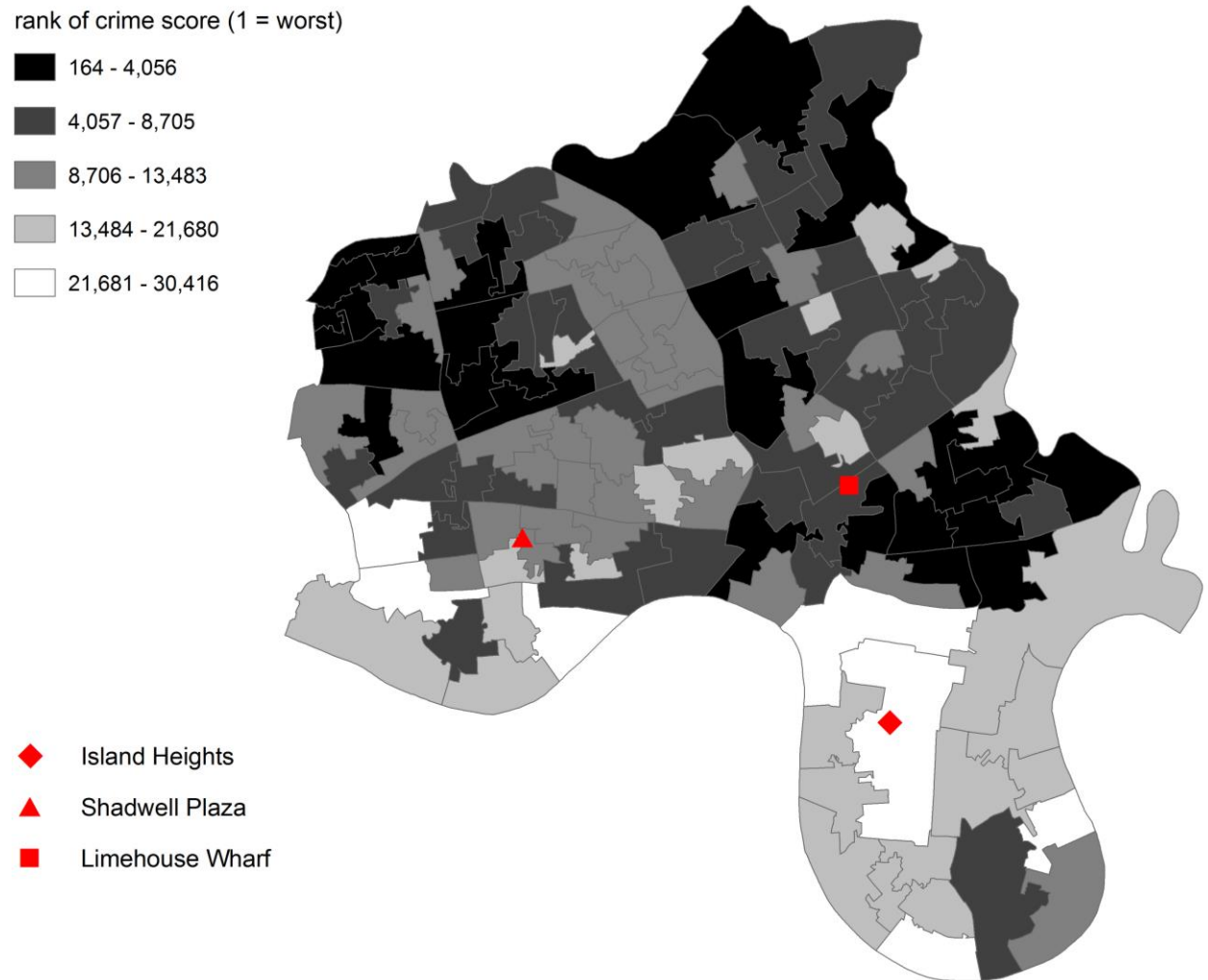


seeker's Allowance in London – at twenty per cent, compared to an average of twelve per cent across the Capital (GLA 2012). Even more striking – nearly half (forty-six per cent) of children in Tower Hamlets are dependent on income support, the highest proportion in the country (GLA 2009:120). Figure 4.13 shows unemployment rates within the Borough – which, whilst based on 2001 census figures, nevertheless provides a useful geographical representation of those areas in which unemployment and income deprivation. Areas of comparatively high unemployment can be seen around all three case study areas. The extent of unemployment and income-related deprivation within the borough is placed into especially stark contrast when one considers that an estimated two-hundred thousand workers commute into Canary Wharf alone from outside the Borough (LBTH 2009a:20).

### **Crime**

Tower Hamlets has a 'moderate' crime rate compared to the rest of London (MPS 2009b). Out of the thirty-three boroughs, in 2008-9 Tower Hamlets ranked twelfth-highest for violent crime, thirteenth for property crimes, seventh for drug-related crimes and twelfth highest for its overall rate of reported crime (MPS 2009a). Whilst not insubstantial, crime rates in the Borough are arguably modest when compared with the size, density and relative deprivation of the population in this area of London. According to neighbourhood profiles compiled by the Metropolitan Police, each of the three case study areas presents particular challenges in terms of crime. Island Harbour is proximate to Canary Wharf, which the Police describe as a "significant terrorist target", as well as a focal point for crime aimed at incoming commuters and affluent residents (MPS 2009b:6-7). Limehouse Wharf and Shadwell Plaza both face challenges associated with their proximity to "crowded low-income estates" (MPS 2009b:4). Furthermore, Shadwell Station and the Limehouse Canal both constitute 'high risk' areas for personal crime. The map in Figure 4.14, however, shows that the three case study areas are located outside of the highest crime areas of the Borough. Of the three developments, Limehouse Wharf is situated in the lowest-ranked (highest crime) area, in relatively close proximity to areas ranked in the highest crime category towards the east. Shadwell Plaza is located in a middle-ranked area. Island Heights is located in the heart of one of the highest-ranked (lowest crime) areas within the Borough, perhaps due to its proximity to Canary Wharf with its enhanced security and policing arrangements.

**Figure 4.14: Crime rates from the 2010 English Indices of Deprivation (Source: CLG 2010 / EDINA UKBorders)**



The analysis in this section has illustrated the key characteristics of Tower Hamlet's large and diverse population, and demonstrated some of the many challenges the Borough faces in terms of material deprivation, underemployment, and the demand for social housing. In demographic terms, a main feature of the Borough is its sizeable Bangladeshi population. In many ways, Tower Hamlets is in fact less 'diverse' than many other London boroughs, due to the fact that those from Bangladeshi backgrounds comprise the vast majority of 'BME' residents. The geography of Tower Hamlet's Bangladeshi population is characterised by sizeable communities to the north west and north east of the Borough – around the Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf case study sites respectively – as well as smaller populations in the area of the Isle of Dogs in which Island Heights is located. In geographic terms, the analysis in this section has also illustrated the marked unevenness and spatial variations in the various socioeconomic characteristics of Tower Hamlet's population. In contrast to the more affluent areas running adjacent to the River Thames, the north west

and north east of the Borough – around both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf – are characterised by comparatively high deprivation, high unemployment and large proportions of social housing. Despite its proximity to the highly ‘gentrified’ neighbourhoods around Canary Wharf, Island Heights is also situated in what appears to be amongst the least materially well-off areas of the Isle of Dogs’ least affluent areas. On a number of measures, Tower Hamlets is amongst the most materially-deprived local authorities – both in London and in England as a whole. However, aggregate measures of unemployment, social housing occupancy or multiple deprivation at Borough-wide level conceal a more complex and uneven neighbourhood level geography within Tower Hamlets. This geography, in turn, constitutes an important contextual factor when considering the socioeconomic milieu within which this project’s case study housing developments are located.

### **III. Conclusion**

Despite their relative proximity to one another, all three case study schemes are situated within contrasting social and spatial contexts – with many of these characteristics constituting important factors when considering residents’ accounts of life in and around their developments. Shadwell Plaza is located closest to the City of London, in an area popular with communities because of its transport links to Central, East, South East and North London. The area remains predominantly residential – with mid-twentieth century local authority housing as the prevailing building type – alongside a mix of smaller businesses and local public/commercial services that largely cater towards the needs of the local population. This is significant in two respects. Firstly, the area already has a naturally-‘mixed’ housing stock, with social rented housing alongside market rate units in ‘tenure diversified’ local authority-build blocks, as well as spattering of other housing types which are not indicative of any ‘monolithic’ tenure structure. Secondly, the area is also notable in terms of the quantity and variety of local shops and services, which are suggestive of a relatively active local service economy. This may be significant, especially in terms of the idea that everyday sites of consumption may constitute spaces for ‘prosaic’ mixing or interaction between residents of different backgrounds (cf. Watson 2009). Even compared to the rest of Tower Hamlets, Shadwell also has a particularly high proportion of residents from Bangladeshi backgrounds, many of whom have long-established roots in the local area (Ahmed 2005). Again, this has substantive significance, especially in terms of arguments concerning the potential of housing mix to foster ‘cohesion’ between ethnic, racial or

religious groups (Amin 2002, Robinson 2005). This combination of an already-mixed and dense residential form, a range of locally-oriented businesses, and good public transport links – coupled with the area’s ethnic and social ‘mix’ – give Shadwell a ‘vibrant’ character, which was often reflected upon (both in positive and negative terms) in the accounts of its residents’ discussed in the following chapter.

Located further east and to the north – and with its history of heavy industry – the area around Limehouse Wharf remains characterised by a greater mixture of commercial and residential land uses. In contrast to Shadwell, Limehouse Wharf is a fifteen-minute walk from rail links and is not situated in proximity to any established shopping areas. The significance of this difference ought not be underestimated – as, compared to Shadwell Plaza, Limehouse Wharf is ‘off the beaten track’, feels quieter and more isolated, but also boasts the benefit of more open spaces (including the canal and a large park). Local authority housing still constitutes the predominant residential building type in this area, although at lower densities compared to Shadwell. Importantly, there is also a greater proliferation of new-build housing in close proximity to Limehouse Wharf, including two large mixed-tenure schemes that were completed around the same time. These new residential developments – coupled with the recent demolition of some existing local authority housing – featured in some respondents’ reflections on the changes taking place in the area. However, immediately to the north of Limehouse Wharf remains one of the largest areas of predominantly social rented housing in Tower Hamlets – stretching towards Mile End and Bow. The area thus has a broad overall housing of housing types, with a distinct geography (as new-build development proliferates along the canal, while the adjacent areas still predominantly comprise social rented housing). In common with the other case study sites, the area also has a large proportion of Bangladeshi households and comparatively high levels of material deprivation. However, perhaps due to the less ‘fine grained’ nature of the area’s housing and social ‘mix’, this was something that fewer residents reflected upon.

Finally, Island Heights sits immediately adjacent to the highly-developed and highly-gentrified ‘bubble’ of Canary Wharf. Moreover, this ‘bubble’ appears to be spreading to the South – incorporating and including Island Heights and nearby recently-completed developments which form part of the area’s ‘masterplan’ (LBTH 2000). Most residents understandably reflected on the ongoing re-development in the immediate area. Overall, however, the unprecedented scale of LDDC-led redevelopment means that Island Heights

sits amidst a wide range of building types and functions. Headquarters of multi-national corporations, chain hotels and luxury serviced apartments occupy a range of 1980s, 90s and 00s buildings – including a number of ‘skyscrapers’ – dominate views from Island Heights. Look the other way and 1980s-era ‘industrial estate’ and ‘business park’ type developments are interspersed with a number of newly-completed housing schemes reflect different phases of the Docklands’ ‘regeneration’. Yet to the west of Island Heights there remains a large 1960s ‘estate’ of local authority housing. As a result, the area’s population has not been entirely ‘gentrified’ and in some respects it remains an ‘island’ of relative socioeconomic diversity (and – in some cases – deprivation). In this and other respects, similarities can therefore be seen in terms of the broader socioeconomic characteristics of the neighbourhoods surrounding the three case study sites, despite some marked contrasts in terms of their built and spatial characteristics.



## Chapter Five: The Provision of Mixed-Tenure Housing

This chapter provides a detailed account of the ‘provision’ of three case study mixed-tenure housing developments in Tower Hamlets, East London. Following Ball (1986:160), ‘provision’ is used here to refer to the “physical process of creating and transferring a dwelling to its occupiers” – which, in turn, invites a focus “on the social agents essential to that process and the relations between them” (1986:158). As Ball (*ibid.*) concludes, any analysis of new housing provision “cannot ignore the social agencies involved in that provision”. The analysis presented in this chapter therefore draws on interviews with key informants who were directly involved in the planning, design and development stages of the case study schemes. These interviews provide insights into the provision process, from its inception, to the key decisions that were subsequently made regarding the overall ‘mix’ of tenures, the distribution and integration of different tenures, external treatment and design, and the provision of public and communal spaces. Moreover, insights into the provision process for case study schemes shed light on how a range of actors – including design professionals, private and third sector development managers, and planning professionals – responded to the broader context of ‘mixed communities’ planning policy. In order to explore the intersection between planning policy and housing provision, interview data are supplemented with information from planning reports; local, regional and national planning policies; and other documentary sources. As such, this chapter offers an exploratory engagement with mixed-tenure housing provision, through which it “seeks to understand housing policy and the problems that it encounters” (Atkinson and Jacobs 2009:240).

As was discussed in Chapter Two, the Government’s policy programme for the provision of mixed-tenure housing seeks to align the activities of various non-state actors with the aims of creating ‘mixed and balanced communities’. Tenure mixing thus operates ‘at a distance’ from central government, by aiming instead to “shape the conduct” of non-state actors “in the hope of producing certain desired effects” (Rose 1999:52). Through planning policy ‘guidance’ passed down to local planning authorities (LPAs), the Government sought to secure a supply of new housing that met local demands (including for ‘affordable’ housing). Where it was deemed that affordable housing was required, local authorities should ensure that “an element of affordable housing is provided [...] as part of proposed developments” (DETR 2000:10). As a ‘material condition’ under which planning decisions are made, new schemes should only be granted permission if these requirements for affordable housing are

met. On the other hand, planning policy guidance extends beyond the supply of new affordable housing, in stating that “local planning authorities should encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities” by ensuring that “new housing developments help to secure a better social mix” (DETR 2000:8). The Government therefore sought to ‘shape the conduct’ of housing providers in the hope of producing a second ‘desired effect’, that being the creation of “mixed and inclusive communities” (DETR 2000:8). Specifically, policy discourse referred to the need for new housing schemes to offer “a well-integrated mix of decent housing of different types and tenures” (ODPM 2005b:9). This forged a discursive link between the ‘integration’ of different housing tenures in the designs for new developments, and the creation of socially balanced and mixed ‘communities’ that “promote social inclusion” (ODPM 2005c:53). Those involved in mixed-tenure housing provision were thereby co-opted into helping achieve what the social policy aims of ‘inclusion’ and ‘sustainability’ discussed in Chapter Two.

Modes of governing ‘at a distance’ must operationalise policy aims “by influencing, allying with, or co-opting resources” which government do not directly control (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]:287). Indeed, the need for ‘flexibility’ from all parties – including LPAs – in implementing guidance for tenure mixing was acknowledged in stating that “decisions about the amount and types of affordable housing to be provided in individual proposals should be a matter for agreement between the parties” (DETR 2000:10). Policy aspirations must therefore translate into the actions of housing providers through “multiple and delicate networks” which afford a considerable degree of ‘agency’ (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]:273-4). This chapter explores the decision making processes within these ‘multiple and delicate networks’. The first section outlines the initiation of the case study schemes – including the acquisition of land and the formation of ‘partnerships’ between key actors. The second section examines how decisions were reached regarding the overall mix of tenures. The third section turns to consider the physical integration of different housing tenures within the case study developments and the logics behind various design strategies concerning the distribution of tenures. The fourth section examines the decisions regarding the exterior design ‘treatment’ of buildings in the case study developments. The fifth and final section then turns to consider the design of outdoor communal and the provision of a ‘public realm’. The focus throughout the chapter therefore remains on the various factors and decisions which might provide the necessary context for critically understanding the relationship between housing provision and the day-to-day experience of life in mixed-tenure schemes.

## I. Background and Initiation

All three case study schemes can be described as ‘infill’ developments, occupying compact sites of less than a hectare, in areas comprising a relatively high-density mix of existing buildings with a variety of forms, functions and ages (as detailed in the previous chapter). Limehouse Wharf is the only of the schemes to have been built on a previously unoccupied ‘brownfield’ site (although the land only stood vacant for around a year before it was acquired for re-development). In contrast, the other two development sites had both been acquired whilst occupied. In the case of Shadwell Plaza, by two inter-war, deck-access blocks of local authority-owned social housing, and in the case of Island Heights, by a service centre for a high-end German car dealership, occupying a large and utilitarian shed-type structure dating from the first phase of LDDC development.

The acquisition and initiation phase of the case study developments also reflects certain substantive differences. Having been offered for sale on the open market as commercial premises, the site for Limehouse Wharf was acquired by a large housing association who intended to develop it as a mixed-tenure residential scheme. In order to secure additional financing, the fifty per cent share of the newly-acquired land was sold to a private sector housing developer who would share the costs of building the scheme, in return for which they received half of the completed properties to be sold on the open market. A senior manager from the housing association outlined the process as follows:

“The site was acquired on the open market as a commercial property, so we bought it at quite a low cost. We immediately sold a share to a developer we’d been working with at the time, on the basis that they would work with us through the planning process and would ultimately develop the private housing.”

Limehouse Wharf’s project architect described the scheme as a “genuine joint venture”, in which private sector and housing association ‘partners’ shared the financial responsibility, risk and rewards. The fact that the site was acquired as a commercial property, with no guarantee of planning permission for residential re-use, created a greater-than-usual degree of risk for both parties. However, as the representative of the housing association described, the reportedly lower-than-average cost of the site meant that the economics of the scheme “stacked up a lot better than we’d originally anticipated”, whilst also yielding “a real success in their off plan sales” for the private developer. At least at ‘face value’, Limehouse Wharf thereby reflected the sorts of mutually beneficial ‘partnership’ between private and nonprofit interests that was espoused by Government policy discourse (ODPM 2005c:26)

## THE PROVISION OF MIXED-TENURE HOUSING

**Table 5.1: Key features of the case study developments**

	<b>Island Heights</b>	<b>Limehouse Wharf</b>	<b>Shadwell Plaza</b>
<b>Site area</b>	0.6 hectares	0.6 hectares	0.7 hectares
<b>Prior land use</b>	Car dealership and service facility	Warehousing (vacant prior to development)	Two blocks of inter-war social housing (comprising 88 units)
<b>Site acquisition</b>	Acquired on the open market	Acquired on the open market	Acquired from Local Authority through a competition to re-develop the site
<b>Site (freehold) ownership</b>	Private (developer)	Equal split between private (developer) and housing association	Housing association
<b>Lead developer</b>	Large multi-national private sector property developer	Joint venture between a large housing association working predominantly in East London, and a medium-sized UK-based private sector housing developer	A long-established medium-sized housing association working in London and the South East
<b>Architect</b>	Small London –based practice	London–based multi-national practice	Collaboration between a large London-based practice and a Western European based practice
<b>Date of planning application</b>	2005 (Q4)	2003 (Q1)	2004 (Q2)
<b>Date of planning permission</b>	2007 (Q4)	2004 (Q2)	2005 (Q4)
<b>Date of completion</b>	2009 (Q4)	2005 (Phased)	2007 (Phased)
<b>Density (per hectare)</b>	1020 habitable rooms	770 habitable rooms	790 habitable rooms
<b>Number of units (total)</b>	199	197	272
<b>Section 106 conditions (affordable housing)</b>	- 142 units (98 for social rent)	- 96 units (26 for social rent)	- 166 units (75 for social rent)
<b>Other negotiated conditions</b>	- On-site community centre - Pedestrian linkage between adjacent streets - £1m towards medical and educational provision	- On-site commercial premises (700m <sup>2</sup> ) - Public access to canal and maintenance of towpath	- On-site commercial premises (700m <sup>2</sup> ) - £1m towards off-site community centre - Publically accessible open space (1200m <sup>2</sup> )
<b>On-Site Management</b>	Original developer	Outsourced to management agent	Large housing association (of which the original developer is now a subsidiary)

The site for Island Heights was also acquired on the open market, albeit under a contrasting set of circumstances whereby a major multi-national private sector developer was seeking land on which to accommodate the 'off-site' provision for affordable housing from a nearby high-end residential development (referred to here as 'Meridian Towers'). The site for Island Heights was acquired – reportedly for significantly more than its nominal market value – while 'Meridian Towers' was already under construction. A senior manager from the housing developer described how the proposal for Island Heights followed-on from the development of the 'principal' Meridian Towers scheme:

“We got planning permission for Meridian and as part of that negotiation we agreed to take the affordable housing off-site. We then managed to secure the Island Heights site, which is obviously only a stone's throw away from the principal [Meridian Towers] site anyway.”

The developer also reflected upon the fact that the so-called 'off site' provision of social housing was a 'contentious' issue in the eyes of the local authority and that, as a result, there was an additional desire for them to 'sell' the scheme as an 'exemplar':

“At the time it was quite contentious, because [...] as a matter of principle Tower Hamlets were very uncomfortable about moving affordable housing away from the principal sites. So as part of that negotiation, there was a motivation for us to make Island Heights into an exemplar scheme, selling the idea that it was effectively off-site in planning terms.”

In contrast to both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf, a housing association was not involved in the project until it was already under construction. As one architect respondent explained, without the involvement of a housing association at the design stage, “you won't have sat down with them and discussed much about [the design]”, meaning that “it's very unlikely that they have a formative influence on how things have gone together”. In the context of this research, Island Heights can therefore be seen as an example of a private developer-led scheme, the genesis of which was inextricably linked to their development activities elsewhere on the Isle of Dogs.

The origins of the Shadwell Plaza development are perhaps the most unusual of the three case study schemes – the land having been acquired directly from the local authority on the basis of a competition to secure the rights to redevelop the two inter-war social housing blocks that had previously occupied the site. Although a number of nearby local authority-built blocks have recently undergone renovation as a result of similar competitions – which

saw the ownership and management of the housing stock transferred to housing associations who then undertook improvement works – it is understood that the intention from the outset was to demolish and replace the blocks on the Shadwell Plaza site. The competition to redevelop the site was ultimately won by a medium-sized housing association, a process which their then development manager described as follows:

“There was a competition by the local authority for two deck access inter-wall blocks, with a view to disposal. The properties were derelict for ages and in a really shocking state. They were used by drug takers and were a magnet for some quite serious anti-social stuff in that area. The idea was that they would be vacated and transferred to whoever won the competition.”

Because Shadwell Plaza replaced existing blocks of social housing, the scheme is widely referred to as ‘estate regeneration’. However, this label was consciously avoided by those involved in the scheme, for whom Shadwell Plaza instead amounted to “starting afresh” on the site, not least because the ‘vacation’ of the existing blocks was not conditional on their inhabitants having the option to return to the newly-built social housing.

All three case study schemes enjoyed a relatively smooth passage through planning. Final planning reports document the feedback received both from Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and the Greater London Assembly (GLA), the most seemingly positive of which was given to Shadwell Plaza, which was described as an “excellent example of social housing estate regeneration” (despite the fact that, in reality, the scheme amounted to housing estate ‘replacement’). The planning reports for Shadwell Plaza also went on to commend “the variety in dwelling type, size and tenure” and the inclusion of commercial space as “crucial to achieving a mixed neighbourhood that is hallmark to a sustainable community”. The planning report for Limehouse Wharf cited “many positive strategic aspects” to the scheme, including its proposed “regeneration of a brownfield site with an attractive waterside development” and its potential to “contribute to London’s housing needs” through a “significant element of affordable housing” that is “consistent with the need to promote mixed and balanced communities”. The planners were more reserved in their feedback for the Island Heights scheme, which they described as “generally welcomed”, citing “clear design benefits” for the off-site provision of affordable housing, including “a higher proportion of family housing” and “the provision of generous amenity space”. The more reserved tone of the comments perhaps attest to the Local Authority’s reported reservations towards off-site affordable housing provision, which it noted they “had little option but to accept”.

## II. Mix of Tenures

In line with most large-scale new housing developments completed in England in the past decade (Crook and Monk 2011), all three case study schemes provide a mixture of market rate and ‘affordable’ housing. Indeed, in their study of developers’ attitudes towards mixed-tenure housing provision, Rowlands et al. (2006:18) conclude that most “recognise that engaging in mixed tenure development is unavoidable”. Respondents from all three case study schemes also reiterated this perceived normalisation of tenure mixing in large-scale, proposed housing schemes. As Island Heights’ project architect explained:

“It’s pretty much standard. Every scheme you do will have to have a proportion of affordable housing and inevitably that will be a mixture of shared ownership and social renting. That’s common to every scheme we do.”

The key question – at least at the time that these developments were planned and built – was therefore not whether a mix of tenures was to be provided, but rather what that mix would comprise and how that decision was reached.

Table 5.2 shows the breakdown between market rate, intermediate and social rented units for each of the developments. Market rate properties are those which are made available for sale on the open market and will, ultimately, involve some form of privately financed occupation (either owner-occupation or private rent<sup>1</sup>). ‘Intermediate’ tenure properties are those which have been made available by housing associations at a less-than-market rate, usually either for those who have purchased an equity share in the property (in which case a lower-than-market rate is paid on the remaining share of the equity) or for those who are renting outright. Intermediate housing falls under the Government’s definition of ‘affordable housing’ and is bound by eligibility restrictions that generally limit access to those in ‘front-line’ public services, first-time buyers, and/or existing local residents those who would otherwise require social housing (CLG 2006b:14). The exact nature of intermediate tenure housing products varies between developments, but in these cases the majority were made available for ‘shared ownership’. Finally, social housing – often referred to as ‘council housing’ – are those properties that, in this case, are owned and managed by the housing association and allocated to eligible households via the local authority, based on their own criteria – together with nationally-set guidelines – for eligibility and rents.

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst it is possible that some of the ‘market rate’ properties may have been occupied by those claiming housing benefit – the comparatively high rents commanded by properties in the case study schemes coupled with the potential reluctance of private landlords to rent to benefit claimants, render it unlikely that any were occupied by those in receipt of housing benefit.

**Table 5.2: The mix and proportions of tenures in the three case study schemes**

	Island Heights		Limehouse Wharf		Shadwell Plaza	
	Count	% (% of 'affordable')	Count	% (% of 'affordable')	Count	% (% of 'affordable')
<b>Market rate</b>	57	29%	101	51%	35	13%
<b>Intermediate</b>	44	22% (31%)	70	36% (73%)	143	53% (60%)
<b>Social rented</b>	98	40% (69%)	26	13% (27%)	94	35% (40%)
<b>Total</b>	199		197		272	

At the time that the case study schemes were proposed, planning policy guidance required that the “need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing” should be taken into account by LPAs when considering planning applications (DETR 2000:9). Two additional sets of local planning policy also had a direct bearing on case study developments. Firstly, the original London Plan specified a ‘strategic target’ that fifty per cent of new homes should be ‘affordable’, seventy per cent of which should comprise social housing (GLA 2004:63). However, these proportions constituted ‘targets’ rather than legal requirements, leaving individual LPAs to negotiate the exact mix of tenures for proposed schemes. In these negotiations, LPAs are advised to seek “the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing”, whilst taking into account individual circumstances and “economic viability” of each scheme and “the need to encourage rather than restrain residential development” (GLA 2004:65). For larger schemes, such as those considered here, the GLA must also have a direct say over planning proposals, with the power to instruct the LPA to refuse permission if it considers that the scheme fails to meet the requirements of the London Plan. In turn, Tower Hamlets (LBTH) has its own planning policies, which require a mixture of market and affordable housing to be provided on all schemes of ten or more properties, with a minimum of thirty five per cent affordable units (LBTH 2007[1998]:91). LBTH also seeks its own target that the affordable housing mix comprises eighty per cent social rented units. These targets are not a legal requirement and – as observed in a survey of LPA’s policies on affordable housing, “the majority of councils do not stipulate the mix of tenures required”, relying instead on “site by site negotiation” (2007:35). However, the terms agreed during the negotiations are codified into a legally binding contract (under ‘Section 106’ of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act). So-called ‘Section 106 agreements’ ultimately constitute the legal mechanism through which LPAs specify the proportion of affordable housing units in new developments (Burgess et al. 2007). However, negotiations over these agreements can be long drawn-out and legally complex affairs and research has shown there to be considerable variation in the outcomes achieved (Groves et al. 2003).



The case study developments vary considerably in the tenure mix provided (as per Table 5.2). This variation demonstrates the ‘negotiable’ nature of national, regional (GLA) and local (LBTH) planning policy, coupled with scheme-specific factors and contingencies. It arguably also reflects the overarching concern with ‘encouraging development’ and ensuring ‘economic viability’ during the negotiations process. A senior manager for the Government’s national housing and regeneration agency explained how the question of viability ultimately boil down to how much less-than-market-rate housing developers can afford to provide:

“The mix of affordable housing that is determined should be the maximum that is viable. That viability is economic, and Local Authorities have a variety of mechanisms for asking developers to model what is ‘viable’. But clearly the key question is ‘how much can you afford?’”

The importance of ‘economic viability’ was reiterated by a respondent from the housing association responsible for developing Shadwell Plaza (which ultimately had the highest overall proportion of affordable housing of all three schemes):

“One big driver is how it works in terms of economics. The other is the view of the local authority. Tower Hamlets have got a very strong policy on affordable housing and normally insists on at least thirty-five per cent being affordable. So how you arrive at a mix of tenures is about juggling all of those factors and making a judgement which is acceptable to the local authority, but it also has to be something that you can stack the scheme up on in terms of numbers.”

Put simply, any new housing developer (whether private sector or non-profit) must ‘juggle’ the demands of the local authority, who will be seeking “the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing”, against the economics of the proposed scheme, which must still raise enough revenue to cover the costs of production and generate the required return on their investment (LBTH 2007[1998]:65). For their part, local authorities must also balance the need to achieve their affordable housing targets against the “the need to encourage rather than restrain residential development” (ibid.:65). Push too hard on housing providers to allocate more units for affordable housing and proposed schemes risk becoming unviable (and thus yielding no new housing). Fail to push hard enough, and a desire for returns and revenue – even for housing associations – will inevitably take precedence.

As suggested, the decisions regarding the exact mix of tenures on these developments reflect a raft of factors – including complex economic rationales and scheme-specific contingencies – which together inform the negotiations between the developer(s), the LPA

and the GLA. In economic terms, the housing association developer of Shadwell Plaza described a situation whereby “the profits generated from private sales were ploughed back in to build what are incredibly expensive social rented units”:

“It was partly driven by economics. The fact that we did a twenty storey tower with some private sale meant that we were also able to do a terrace of six bedroom [social rented] houses. So by doing the market rate housing, we were able to address the local authority’s and the neighbourhood’s need for housing.”

In this case, the provision of a certain number of market rate properties ‘cross-subsidised’ the building of larger-than-average social rented properties, in turn helping to meet what the Borough describes as “a significant need to increase the provision of family housing” in the social rented sector (LBTH 2007[1998]:214). Without the demands of shareholders, housing associations are arguably better positioned to re-invest revenues into cross-subsidising social housing. Whether or not a housing association is acting as the lead developer may therefore have a bearing on the tenure mix. In the case of both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf, the fact that a housing association had initially acquired the site allowed them to secure a greater proportion of ‘affordable’ housing, as Limehouse Wharf’s developer explained:

“Because we’d bought the site and we were in control, we were able to select a [private] developer on our terms and we were able to achieve things with the mixture of tenures that perhaps we wouldn’t have been able to achieve if it were a developer-led project.”

Respondents from both housing associations are thus clear in their motivation to maximise the proportion (and size) of affordable housing units in their schemes, through various forms of cross-subsidy based upon the sale of market rate properties.

Whilst all three of the case study schemes meet or exceeded the target for fifty per cent of all units to be for affordable housing, none met the GLA’s target for seventy per cent of those units to be social housing (let alone LBTH’s target of eighty per cent). Paradoxically, however, the two housing association-led developments delivered a lower proportion of social rented housing (thirteen per cent for Limehouse Wharf and thirty five per cent for Shadwell Plaza) compared to Island Heights’ privately-led development (with an overall proportion of forty per cent social housing). Once again, the interviews reveal this to be a reflection of a range of planning considerations, scheme-specific factors and economic rationales. Speaking in general terms, a senior manager at the housing association

responsible for developing Limehouse Wharf provided some insight into their motivation for maximising the proportion of intermediate housing:

“We can portray intermediate housing to a local authority as, you know, ‘it is pretty low cost’, so it can be quite attractive for them because it’s housing for local people who can’t generally access the social housing if they’re in work, so it gives people within local authority areas the opportunity to stay there. At the same time, developers don’t get so worried about mixing intermediate housing with their private market housing, because it’s generally people in employment and on reasonable income.”

This comment appears to reflect Rowland et al.’s (2006:18) conclusion that developers view shared ownership “as the more palatable ‘affordable’ option” when compared to social housing”. Indeed, as Crook and Monk’s (2011) detailed survey of new ‘affordable’ housing completions confirms, there is an upward trend in the supply of intermediate tenure properties when compared to social housing. As the authors therefore conclude, “developers think [intermediate] purchasers are good neighbours for those buying their market housing; housing associations favour it because it enables cross-subsidy; government favours it because it requires less public subsidy” (Crook and Monk 2011:1009).

Intermediate-tenure properties therefore appear as a preferable means of providing ‘affordable housing’. However, intermediate housing was also discussed by Shadwell Plaza’s housing association developer as a means of ‘diversifying’ the social structure of an area comprising predominantly social housing:

“Because it’s an area that’s got a lot of existing social housing, our view at the time was that we needed to diversify tenures and bring in some other kinds of people, you know, people who were more economically active, into the area. So that was one of the things that we consciously wanted to do.”

In the case of both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf, the typical characteristics of shared ownership households thus appeared to render them more attractive to their housing association developers. However, in the case of Island Heights the onus appeared more on maximising the amount of social housing, in particular for families – whilst including a proportion of private and intermediate housing primarily to maintain a ‘balanced’ mix:

“The principles that we agreed with [the LPA] were, firstly, that although it was going to be predominately social, it should have some private housing in it. And secondly, that we would maximise the amount of family housing.”

In this instance, inversely, the LPA expressed concern that the proportion of social housing proposed by Island Heights' private sector developer might 'ghettoise' the scheme, were it not for the incorporation of some private and intermediate properties on the same site.

In all cases, therefore, a combination of scheme-specific factors and the concerns of particular actors in the development process were balanced against the requirements of the LPA. On the one hand, the variation in tenure mix between the three case study schemes appears to reflecting the GLA's advice that "boroughs should take a reasonable and flexible approach on a site-by-site basis" (2004:65). On the other hand, however, the fact that all three schemes fell short of targets for the proportion of social housing raises questions regarding the ability of governmental authorities to compel developers to provide subsidised housing – especially given the pressure on local authorities to take into account the economic viability of proposed schemes and act in a way which does not constrain new housing development. While the Government were clear in calling for local authorities to take into account the local need for 'affordable housing' (DETR 2000:9), and LBTH in turn makes explicit the Borough's acute need for social housing alongside its desire that social housing should be "the predominant form of affordable housing being provided on site", the developers of all three schemes were nonetheless able to make a case for a lower provision of social housing that was deemed acceptable by planning authorities. From the point of view of housing providers, the economic 'realities' of new development appear to render the ambitions of maximising social housing supply through new mixed-tenure schemes unrealistic. As one respondent remarked, "I don't think the government really gets the economics of housing, particularly affordable or social housing".

### **III. Distribution of Tenures**

While the proportion or overall 'mix' of tenures remains an important factor, both in terms of affordable housing supply and in terms of the 'balance' of households within the development, the physical distribution of housing tenures within a scheme is arguably of greater concern to developers (Tiesdell 2004, Rowlands et al. 2006, Roberts 2007). As Roberts (2007:187-8) concludes, the question of how to physically integrate properties of different tenures is widely held as being of "crucial importance". On the one hand, the proposition that mixed-tenure housing may promote social 'inclusion' rests, at least in part, on an assumption of physical proximity between social rented and market rate households

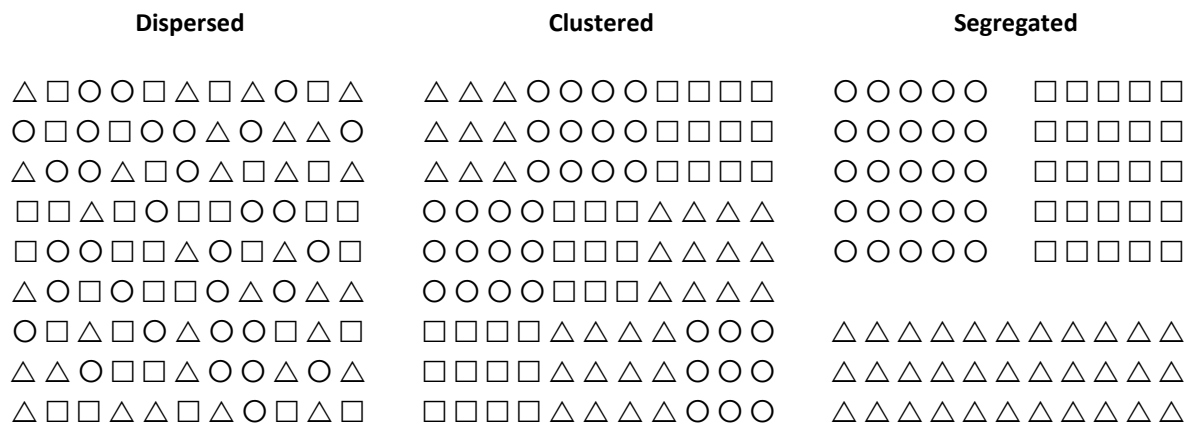
(Kleit 2005:1413). On the other hand, as Tiesdell (2004:173) argues, developers may anticipate that the positioning of different housing tenures in close proximity may produce 'negative spillover effects' on the market rate units (resulting, for instance, in reduced property values). Therefore, whilst decisions over the proportion of 'affordable' tenures appear to be guided in a large part by broader economic rationales – decisions over how to distribute social rented, intermediate and market rate tenures within developments appear to be guided by a more 'calculating' set of logics concerning the optimum degree of separation between lower- and higher- income households.

Roberts (2007) argues that the physical dispersal – or 'pepper potting' – of affordable housing units amongst market rate units is seen to constitute "good practice orthodoxy", especially in relation to the 'social' ambitions of mixed-tenure housing development. Planning policy guidance also made explicit reference towards the importance of dispersing housing tenures in "the development of mixed and balanced communities", stating that "[the Government] does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours" (DETR 2000:8), and that local authorities should therefore encourage a "*well-integrated mix* of different housing types and tenures" (ODPM 2005b:9, emphasis added). Similarly, the first London Plan explicitly advocates dispersal, stating that "affordable housing should be integrated with the rest of the development" (GLA 2004:65) – while Tower Hamlet's (LBTH) own planning policy also states that "affordable housing should be provided alongside market housing" and "it should be integrated", in order to "ensure social cohesion and inclusion" (LBTH 2007[1998]:87). Applicable central, regional and local government policy guidance – together with the attitudes of many housing professionals, according to Roberts' (2007) review – therefore appears aligned around the view that different housing tenures should be dispersed or integrated within new developments, rather than being kept separate, in order to achieve the 'social' aims of 'mixed communities'.

However, as Tiesdell (2004:197) observes, in practice many recently-completed mixed-tenure schemes are characterised by "some degree of spatial zoning" for properties of different tenures. In short, developers may avoid the integration or dispersal of tenure groups and opt to separate them instead. In this respect, Tiesdell's (2004:203) proposes a broad taxonomy of possible design approaches ranging from 'full-integration' and 'segregation' (as shown in Figure 5.1 below). Under a fully-integrated or 'pepper potted' design, tenures are dispersed together throughout a scheme. With a 'clustered' design, like-

tenures are grouped together – either vertically, so that properties of the same tenure are ‘stacked’ on top of each other across a number of floors within a block; and/or horizontally, on the same floors(s). A ‘true’ clustered design approach avoids large groups of properties from a single tenure and does not seek to physically separate these ‘clusters’ between different buildings or access points (Tiesdell 2004:205). A ‘segregated’ design approach does, however, ensure a degree of physical separation between properties of different tenures. This may be achieved, for instance, by providing separate single-tenure blocks within the same scheme. ‘Segregated’ schemes may even require occupants of particular housing tenures to access the site itself via different routes or entrance points, or even utilise separate areas for rubbish disposal, cycle or car parking, or other amenities. In larger (especially lower-rise) flatted schemes, tenures may also be separated according to ‘access cores’ within the same building. Access ‘cores’ comprise a main entrance, lobby area, lift and/or staircase, and the corridors or landings from which individual property’s front doors are accessed. With separate ‘cores’, properties in the same building can therefore be accessed through a different route depending on their tenure.

**Figure 5.1: Typologies of tenure distribution (adapted from Tiesdell 2004:205), whereby each symbol would represents a different hypothetical housing tenure within a scheme and/or building**

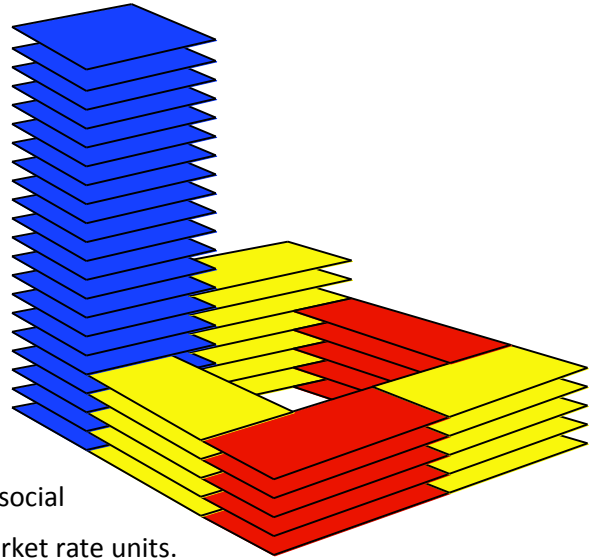


Whilst the ‘best practice orthodoxy’ would therefore suggest that schemes should adopt a design approach towards the fully-integrated end of the spectrum – Tiesdell’s (2004:203) research suggests that, in practice, many housing developers reportedly prefer to pursue design approaches that involve some degree of ‘segregation’ between tenures, in an effort to “isolate the externality caused by the affordable housing”. Indeed, none of the three case study schemes adopted a dispersed distribution of tenures. Instead – as outlined in Figure 5.2 below – various design approaches were adopted to maintain a separation between

Figure 5.2: The spatial distribution of tenures within the three case study schemes

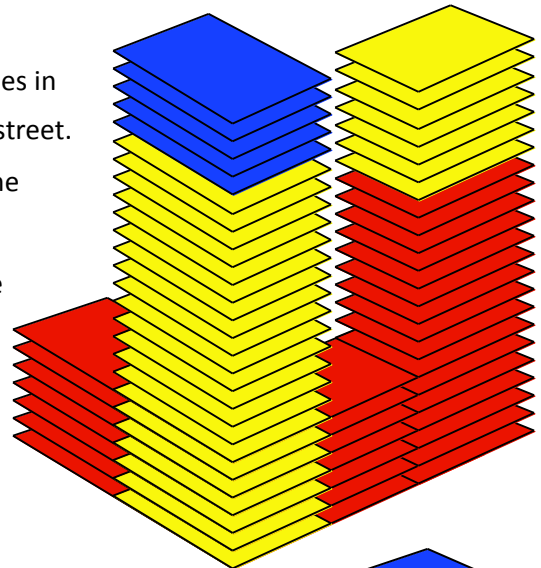
### Shadwell Plaza

- Three building-blocks, physically separated by public streets (one of which is pedestrian only).
- The first block comprises just social rented properties (some flats, others houses with their own front door).
- The second comprises a 'clustered' mix of social rent on the lower two floors and intermediate tenure properties on the upper floors (with shared access).
- The third block – *illustrated here* – comprises separate access cores of varying heights and appearances. Some serving only intermediate tenure properties, others only social renter properties, and one – a taller tower – with just market rate units.



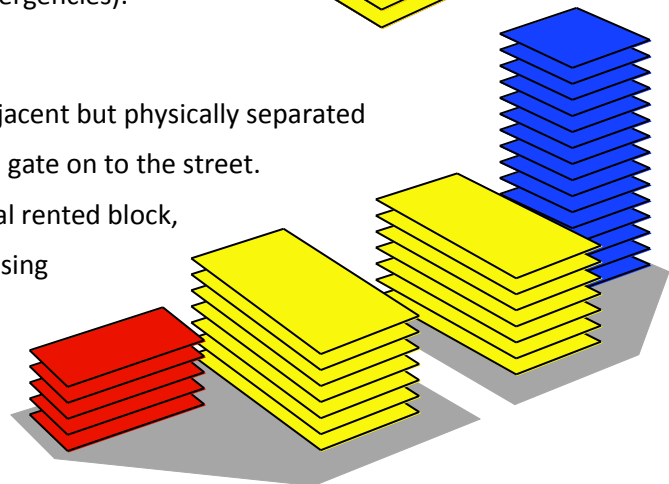
### Island Heights

- Podium-level block exclusively houses social rented properties in two separated 'cores', each with separate entrances to the street.
- The first tower accommodates intermediate properties at the lower levels and market rate properties on the upper floors.
- The second tower accommodates social rented units on the lower floors with intermediate units above, accessed via separate entrances on opposite sides of the block.
- Programmable lifts ensures access only to tenure-specific floors depending on the entrance used, whilst security gates to prevent access between floors (except in emergencies).



### Limehouse Wharf

- Four individual blocks, located between two adjacent but physically separated outdoor courtyards, each with their own access gate on to the street.
- One side of the site contains a separate all-social rented block, adjacent to a second larger and taller block housing intermediate tenure properties.
- The second side of the development site comprises a high-rise block of market rate units, alongside a lower-rise block of intermediate tenure properties.



Social rent



Intermediate tenures



Market rate



Source: Author's own illustrations, adapted from – but not accurate to – the developments' accommodation schedules. Not to scale.

tenures across floors, access ‘cores’, or individual buildings, with a small amount of ‘clustering’ between floors in some instances. Figure 5.2 provides graphical illustrations of the various forms of tenure-separation designed into the three case study schemes. The first illustration shows how tenures can be separated ‘vertically’ between access cores within the same building-structure. This illustration represents the design approach used in Shadwell Plaza – but which was replicated, at least in part, across all three case study schemes – whereby occupants of a particular tenure access their parts of the building via a separate ‘core’ with its own entrance, lift/stairwell, and landings on each floor. The second illustration shows how an additional level of horizontal separation can be introduced, to ensure that different tenures can be isolated between particular floors within the same block. This represents the design approach used in one of Island Heights’ high-rise towers, in which social renters and shared owners enter through separate entrances, utilise lifts that are programmed to ensure they can access the appropriate floors, and are prevented from moving between floors by security gates. The third illustration shows tenures separated between individual buildings – as in the case of Limehouse Wharf. This illustration also shows the access points into the development’s two semi-private courtyard areas (shaded in grey), which constitutes an additional level of separation between market rate and social rented properties within Limehouse Wharf.

Together, there are tangible implications of these various techniques to ‘engineer’ a degree of separation between tenure groups. For instance, none of Island Heights’ social renters share a street-level access door, entrance lobby, lift or staircase with the development’s intermediate tenure or market rate residents. In the case of Limehouse Wharf, the division of the site into two separate halves – each with security gated courtyards from which the blocks themselves are accessed – again means that the scheme’s social renters access their properties through a different route to the market rate households. And whilst a small proportion of social renters in one of Shadwell Plaza’s three blocks share a main entrance with intermediate tenure properties, the majority of the social housing is still located in single-tenure blocks or access-cores. In fact, of the two hundred and twenty social rented homes featured in this research, only thirty share an entrance with properties from another tenure. Inversely, none of the hundred and ninety-odd market rate units featured in the research shares an entrance door, lobby, lift or staircase with any social renters. And across all three case study developments, there are no individual floors which have any mix of tenures, meaning that no households have an immediate neighbour from a different tenure



group. Crucial questions are therefore raised as to why there appears to be a lack of correspondence between the level of policy discourse and ‘good practice orthodoxy’ – which prescribes a ‘well-integrated’ or dispersed distribution of tenures – and the practical design approach pursued by developers of these and other schemes, which ensures a degree of ‘segregation’ between tenure groups (Tiesdell 2004, Rowlands et al. 2006, Roberts 2007). Two explanations for the apparent preference towards ‘segregation’ emerged in the course of the interviews with those involved in the case study schemes, which are examined in turn below: The first, which is widely discussed in the existing literature, explains the decision to separate tenures as motivated by a desire to avoid any impact on property values caused by the proximity of social rented housing. The second explanation, which is less widely acknowledged, is that housing associations find it easier to manage and maintain social rented properties that are grouped together separately.

### **Property Values**

Concerns that affordable – and especially social rented housing – might have a negative impact on the value of adjacent market rate properties is one possible explanation for the pursuit of a ‘segregated’ design approach over an ‘dispersed’ distribution of tenures. In arguing that social housing can create a ‘spillover effect’, acting as a ‘negative externality’ on the prices of market rate properties, Tiesdell (2004:197) concludes that:

“Where market rate and affordable housing have to be provided on a single development site, the design challenge (at least from the developer's perspective) is to include affordable housing with minimal effect on the end value of the market rate housing”.

In creating a ‘commodity’ for sale in a competitive property market, developers must cater to the perceived preferences of potential purchasers. The assumption that house buyers will prefer not live in close proximity to social renting households may therefore lead developers to separate social housing from other (equity-based) properties. As many intermediate tenure properties also involve the purchase of an equity share, providers of ‘affordable’ housing may equally seek to insulate shared ownership properties from social housing. This impulse to ‘protect’ property values therefore offers one compelling explanation for the deployment of a ‘segregated’ tenure distribution. In choosing a ‘segregated’ layout over a ‘well-integrated’ tenure distribution, developers can thus be seen as acting ‘rationally’, in order to maximise their returns on investment and mitigate against the financial risks inherent to new house-building (Rowlands et al. 2006:25).

There was universal agreement amongst those involved in the design and development process that the impact on property values was a major rationale for the decision to separate social housing from other tenures-types in the case study schemes. As the project architect from Island Heights explained;

“A developer is concerned that if they’ve got private tenures on a floor with social tenants, the value of that flat would drop... That they’re not going to be able to sell it for as much money essentially”.

The architect responsible for Limehouse Wharf also offered a similar explanation for the decision to separate tenures in that (housing association-led) development, stating that;

“...it affects the marketability, there’s no denying it. The values of the private sale [properties] are going to be dragged down by the notion that there is affordable renting there. So these [blocks] aren’t pepper potted.”

Those involved in the case study developments were candid regarding the perceived need to mitigate against possible impacts on the values of private sale properties separating them from the social housing provided in the same schemes. Similarly, the decision to separate (the majority of) intermediate tenure properties from social rented units was also explained as a response to concerns over impacts on values. The private sector developer of Island Heights – in which various design technologies are deployed to ensure a complete separation between social rented and intermediate tenure properties sited in the same building – described how housing associations;

“...look at it the same way we do – which is, if you shared access-cores between socially rent and intermediate tenure, that’s going to drive down the value of those intermediate units”.

The decision to separate tenures between floors, access core or buildings was therefore rationalised – in a large part – by concerns over the “effect on values”, as one respondent put it, resulting from the proximity of social rented properties.

As Tiesdell (2004:201) therefore argues, “in order to make a marketable commodity, private developers have to be aware of – and act in response to – the perceived attitudes, preferences, and prejudices of house purchasers”. Those involved in the provision of the case study mixed-tenure housing developments certainly appeared to hold the view that potential purchasers would be sensitive to the degree to which social housing is dispersed amongst market rate and intermediate tenure properties. Indeed, a senior manager from the private sector developer of Island Heights described how their sales department;

“...typically don’t like the idea of pepper potting or shared cores and access [...] for the reason that, if people are buying a private unit, they don’t want to feel like they’re with social rented [properties]”.

A senior manager involved in the housing association-led development of Shadwell Plaza offered a similarly-stark reflection on purchasers’ perceived desire for separation from social rented properties (and their inhabitants):

“To put it very crudely, if you have people who are paying large sums of money for their flats, they don’t want to be sharing communal space with people who are on benefits. You can argue about whether that should or shouldn’t happen, but that is the commercial reality that we have to deal with.”

The same respondent explained how this ‘commercial reality’ went on to influence the decision to separate tenures in the design for Shadwell Plaza:

“We had lots of debates about whether to pepper pot or not. But we had tested that on a scheme elsewhere where we did find there was an effect on values. So at Shadwell Plaza, we kept tenures quite separate. Separate cores just work better economically.”

Developers – including housing associations – were thus anticipating and responding to the preferences of would-be purchasers in their decisions to separate tenures.

Those involved in the design and development of the case study schemes appeared to share the view that purchaser preferences – and, therefore, property prices – were ‘sensitive’ to the proximity of social housing. However, in their examination of five recently-completed mixed-tenure schemes, Andrews and Reardon-Smith (2005:53) found that it had “not been necessary to reduce prices of homes situated next door to the affordable housing” (despite developers having anticipated the need to discount market sale units by up to ten per cent). Similarly, Rowlands et al.’s (2006:69) survey of house price data led them to conclude that “this analysis does not support the view that tenure mix reduces property values”. Despite this apparent evidence to the contrary, the developers involved of all three case study schemes nonetheless appear committed to the belief that social housing will negatively impact on the marketability of other properties. As Island Height’s developer concluded:

“I think this idea of sort of pepper potting units around in blocks is just unrealistic. Put yourself in [purchasers’] shoes and say, well, “would you buy in a block of flats if you knew the next door neighbour was a social tenant?”. Rightly or wrongly, most people probably wouldn’t. That’s the market reality.”

The use of sometimes elaborate strategies to separate social rented properties from other equity-based housing products was thereby rationalised in response to the demands of purchasers and, in turn, the need to ensure the economic viability of proposed schemes. This seemingly-obvious 'subversion' of the espoused aims of a 'well-integrated' tenure mix therefore appears as inherent to the 'market reality' of mixed-tenure development.

## **Management**

Ease of on-going management – especially from the point of view of housing associations – constituted a second widely cited rationale for ensuring a separation between tenures within the case study schemes. Whilst Tiesdell's (2004) analysis concludes that perceived consumer preferences were the prime concern when deciding on the distribution of tenures – Rowlands et al. (2006:19) found the most commonly offered explanation was "to enable housing associations to manage their stock most efficiently". Housing associations, or 'registered social landlords' (RSLs), are generally responsible for the day-to-day management of 'affordable' properties. In this regard, an RSL's management remit may range – on the one hand – from routine cleaning, maintenance and upkeep, to larger-scale repairs or capital investment projects. On the other hand, RSLs may also be responsible for dealing with minor incidences of anti-social behaviour and enforcing the conditions of tenancy agreements. Maximising the ease and efficiency by which these various management responsibilities can be delivered must therefore be a major consideration for RSLs – which may, in turn, influence their preferences for how properties are distributed within new mixed-tenure housing schemes. One respondent – a planning and development manager with extensive experience of working with various RSLs – explained that the preference of housing associations will usually be "to ring-fence their maintenance and management regimes" and that "by sharing [access] cores, it's quite difficult for them to do that". In other words, a dispersed tenure mix may make it more difficult for RSLs to effectively 'contain' their management responsibilities, as opposed to a scheme where RSL-managed properties are located together in separate areas. Two particular issues were identified by respondents in this regard – the first being the conduct of management and maintenance tasks and the administration of service charges by which these are funded – the second being the 'management' of tenants themselves, in the context of perceived problems associated with conduct and behaviour. These issues created what one RSL's senior manager described as "lots of resistance from internal colleagues in housing management" to the idea of a dispersed distribution of tenures.

RSLs are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the properties which they manage, including the associated communal and public areas. In order to cover these costs – like any other freeholder – RSLs impose service charges on households (whether or not they are social rented<sup>2</sup> or shared ownership). However, mixed-tenure housing schemes present two potential challenges in this regards (Roberts 2007:188). Firstly, where ‘affordable’ properties are dispersed throughout the development, RSLs may struggle to achieve ‘economies of scale’ when undertaking maintenance or upkeep tasks. Secondly, if the ‘service expectations’ of market rate purchasers demand more costly provisions – such as concierge staff, higher-maintenance furnishings in public areas, or lifts – this creates potential problems for the apportioning of service charges. Providing uniform levels of service across a scheme would either require RSL-managed properties – including social housing – to share the cost of these more expensive facilities, or require developers to sacrifice these ‘marketable’ provisions for their private-sale properties. As one senior housing association manager – who was involved in the decision to separate tenures within Limehouse Wharf – explained:

“There are problems that go with fully-integrated schemes where you’ve got differences in service expectations. With lifts, carpets, things like that, communal areas can be quite expensive to maintain...”

Another respondent, who worked for the government agency responsible for overseeing affordable housing delivery, described service charges as “a massive issue in mixed tenure [development]” and one of the main factors driving the desire to have “social rent operating off separate cores”. Equally, the architects involved in the case study schemes were acutely aware of these management concerns – as Limehouse Wharf’s project architect described:

“Every affordable housing manager will tell you that there are lots of reasons why it’s cleaner to be able to combine the tenures in a sensible way. It’s easier for management. It’s easier for apportioning of service charges. And I actually think that’s the most critical thing.”

Housing designs that allow for the separation and grouping of like-tenures – preferably, it seems, around their own access-cores – thus appears to be favoured by RSLs seeking to “ring-fence” the upkeep costs and service charges for affordable properties. This, in turn, allows private sector developers to offer higher levels of service for market rate properties in the same scheme, without imposing an additional cost-burden on affordable properties. Ultimately, these concerns appear to be widely acknowledged by RSLs, private developers, architects and even policy professionals.

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<sup>2</sup> Housing Benefit will cover the costs of charges relating to the upkeep of communal areas and facilities, providing that “the council accepts that the service charges are not excessive” (DWP 2012)

Concerns regarding behaviour and conduct constituted a second management-related rationale for ensuring a separation between tenures in the case study schemes. Whilst some respondents were quick to refute the suggestion that the conduct of social housing tenants was a concern at the design-stage of their schemes – others candidly cited the management of ('anti-social') behaviour as a motivation behind the physical separation of social rented properties. Specifically, the decision to use separate entrances, access-controlled lifts, and metal security gates between floors in the design of Island Heights' was rationalised as a response to these concerns. Interestingly, however, Island Heights' private sector developer described these measures as "a request of the client, of the social housing association". The scheme's architect reiterated that "we wanted everyone use the same lift and same stairs, but both the developer and the RSL just wouldn't go there". These accounts therefore suggest that the RSL were instrumental – at least in part – in the use of seemingly elaborate technologies to ensure a complete separation between the social rented and intermediate tenures within one of the scheme's high-rise towers (as illustrated in Figure 5.2). The potential for conflicts between social renting and shared-owning residents was one reason purportedly given by the RSL for their concerns, as the developer described:

"I remember the discussions. For example, we were told that the rented tenants' kids would play ball in the corridors. And that shared owners, they're a different type of client, they have different ways of living, different patterns..."

The project architect also explained that, despite their reluctance to 'design-in' measures to separate tenures within the same building, concerns regarding behaviour took precedence:

"We were very uncomfortable having two doors at the base of the building that said, you know, 'if you're shared ownership you go in there and if you're social rented you go in here' – but housing [association] managers give you endless stories about problems with looking after lifts and things happening in them, kids running down corridors, drug dealing in landings..."

While Andrews and Reardon Smith's (2005:67) conclusion that there is no direct evidence that the dispersal of tenures requires more 'intensive management', insights from those involved in the design and development of Island Heights' certainly suggest that concerns over the management of social renters' conduct motivated the RSLs desire to separate tenure groups. Ultimately, the fact that RSLs are 'responsible' for the conduct of tenants in their subsidised housing units arguably explains this preference for seemingly arcane techniques to ensure 'social control' that are by no means without precedent (Haworth and Manzi 1999, Flint 2002, 2004, Manzi 2010).

#### IV. External Treatment

In addition that “affordable housing should be integrated with the rest of the development”, the London Plan (2004:65) also states that affordable units should “have the same external appearance as the rest of the housing”. Similarly, Tower Hamlets’ planning policy states that:

On sites providing both market and affordable housing, the Council will require all housing to be integrated to ensure there is no visible difference between the different housing tenures provided. (LBTH 2007[1998]:92)

Planning guidance thus advocates that mixed-tenure housing schemes be designed such that there is no discernible distinction between the appearance of market rate and affordable housing units. This reflects Roberts’ (2007:187) observation that a so-called ‘tenure blind’ design approach constitutes another widely acknowledged element of ‘good practice orthodoxy’ for mixed-tenure development, which holds that “housing from different tenures should be indistinguishable from each other with regard to their external architectural treatment”. Both Roberts (2007:202) and Tiesdell (2004:201) identify the main rationale behind a ‘tenure-blind’ design being to avoid attaching any stigma to affordable (and especially social rented) housing units. For instance, Tiesdell (2004:196) describes how “express attempt to avoid physical cues” of tenure-based difference mean that prejudices associated with social rented housing are not “reinforced , amplified, or signalled through the physical design [...] of the housing”, to the obvious detriment of its inhabitants (Dean and Hastings 2000).

Two of the three case study schemes – Island Heights and Limehouse Wharf – deployed an ‘orthodox’ tenure-blind design approach, whereby there is no discernible difference in the external treatment of the social rented units. Limehouse Wharf’s project architect described how a ‘uniform’ design approach was decided upon from the outset of the scheme:

“At the outset the brief was that the scheme would be tenure blind. In terms of the treatment of all the external facades, the treatment of balconies, the treatment of the common spaces in the building and between the buildings – they would all be treated uniformly.”

Similar, Island Heights’ developer described how there was never any debate over the adoption of a tenure-blind approach, with the result that “there’s no obvious social block”. In the case of Shadwell Plaza, an entirely uniform design was pursued, and instead the development’s four separate blocks each have a different external appearance. The scheme’s RSL developer explained that – while tenure-blind design is “something we believe

in doing” – in their view this does not necessarily require that building designs be “visually homogeneous”. The developer rationalised the decision to utilise a different external design for the various social rented, intermediate tenure and market rate blocks as a question of design ‘quality’ rather than strict uniformity:

“We don’t believe in stigmatising the rental sector from the private sale sector. But equally, that’s not to say that the buildings always have to be exactly the same. I think they all need to have the same quality. So they could be treated as individual buildings with a different approach, but the idea would be that, even if they were treated like that, it would no way be obvious which is for affordable rent and which is for private sale. So the materials can be different, the treatment can be different, but the overall impressions should be of equal quality.”

Indeed, it is worth noting that Shadwell Plaza (with its variegated design) and Limehouse Wharf (with its conventional tenure-blind treatment) both received accolades from industry bodies for their “seamless” visual integration of housing tenures.

Tiesdell (2004:203) suggest that the main rationale behind tenure-blind design is the desire to “avoid physical stigmatisation of the affordable housing element through physical design strategies clearly identifying it as either different or as lower quality”. A similar explanation was offered by those respondents involved in the three case study schemes, all of whom mentioned the desire to avoid attaching stigma to the social rented housing. For instance, Limehouse Wharf’s project architect described the motivation to pursue a tenure-blind design approach as being to avoid visual cues as to each blocks’ tenure:

“... the intention was that there should be no sense that, if you were living in the affordable-rented block, that your building was obviously treated differently, or was shabbier, or poorer, or whatever.”

Insights from these case studies thus appear to confirm the conclusions reached by Roberts (2007) and Tiesdell (2004), that the primary reason for a tenure-blind approach having become a ‘good practice orthodoxy’ is a genuine desire amongst housing developers to avoid the potential stigmatisation of social rented housing within their mixed-tenure schemes. However, one respondent suggested that a uniform design approach might also be motivated by a degree of “financial self-interest” amongst developers:

“There is an argument that when you’ve got developments when there is clearly a mixture of two different tenures, if the affordable isn’t treated as well as the private sale, it can actually act as a drag on the private sale. Because, if you’re



selling a development, why would you have one block which is obviously more shabby compared to another one? It's only going to impact on values."

It therefore appears that – in contrast to the question of how to distribute different tenures – aesthetic integration makes sense both when "thinking about the market", as one respondent put it, and when seeking to avoid the stigmatisation of social rented households. However, the decision to design 'tenure blind', while also separating tenure groups, appears somewhat incongruous with the desire to reduce 'cues' of difference, given that techniques for separation are often clearly legible within schemes' designs (as Chapter Eight reveals).

## **V. Public Realm**

The last aspect of the design of the three case study schemes considered here is the provision of public and communal spaces, shared facilities and amenities, and commercial premises. Together, these various spaces and facilities can be seen to constitute a 'public realm' within and around the developments. The term 'public realm', in its loosest sociological sense, as being "simply defined as a place where strangers meet" (Sennett 2002:261). Roberts (2007:187) identifies "the quality of their public realm and shared facilities" as being of crucial importance in the design of mixed-tenure schemes, arguing that "a clearly differentiated and high quality public realm is required where residents from different income or tenure groups can encounter each other" (2007:201). Planning policy guidance also reflects on the importance of the 'public realm'. The London Plan requires that new developments "create or enhance the public realm", by ensuring that "spaces between, around and within buildings" are "accessible, usable and permeable" (GLA 2004:173-4). Similarly, LBTH (2007[1998]:53) planning guidance states that "new development should assist in creating a well-connected public realm". Promoting an enhanced 'public realm' reflects the widespread adoption of 'new urbanist' planning principles (Hall 2000). According to 'new urbanist' rationales, "the public realm, in the form of parks, plazas, streets, and other elements, may act in particular as both mitigator and generator of diversity" (Talen 2006:243). As Talen (1999:1363) argues, public space is thus seen as critical for attempts to "build a sense of community" through physical interventions in the built environment. Similarly, the presence of 'non-residential' uses within new developments – such as community facilities, local shops, or cafes – is equally seen to play a role in "supporting diversity" (Talen 2006:243). A high quality 'public realm', of public and communal spaces with a mixture of uses, is therefore held to encourage interpersonal interactions and build a 'sense of community'.

Various planning policy guidance therefore calls on new developments – including those with a mix of housing-tenures – to create a ‘well-connected’ public realm, comprising outside spaces that are ‘accessible, usable and permeable’. Indeed, all three case study schemes involved the creation of new outside spaces. Most notably, the development of Shadwell Plaza involved the creation of two entirely new public streets that bisect the site and provide pedestrian and vehicular access the scheme’s various buildings. These new streets include car parking spaces and other elements of landscaping such as planters and seating. Vehicular access is controlled, turning the streets into dead-ends to reduce traffic. The architect described these streets as functioning as ‘tributaries’, affording local residents easier access to the nearby main roads, stations and Shadwell Market. In addition to the new streets, Shadwell Plaza’s developers also provided a public square (shown in Figure 5.3) and additional areas for seating (shown in Figure 5.4 below) as part of ‘enhancements to the public realm’ which were proposed from the outset of the scheme.

Advocates of the sociological importance of the urban ‘public realm’ would argue that streets and public spaces such as the ones created as part of Shadwell Plaza’s development provide opportunities for “social encounter” – between residents and non-residents alike – which, in turn, “serves to strengthen community bonds” (Talen 1999:1364). Similarly, the scheme’s developer recalled how “we put a lot of effort into designing the external amenity at Shadwell Plaza”, describing it as “really critical” to the overall design. Both Limehouse

**Figure 5.3: Public space adjacent to Shadwell Plaza (source: Google Maps 2012)**



Figure 5.4: Seating area outside Shadwell Plaza (source: Google Maps 2012)



Wharf and Island Heights also included new publically-accessible spaces in their designs. Limehouse Wharf's canal-side site required that the development offer enhanced access to the canal footpath – which was achieved by splitting the site in two around a publically-accessible canal basin that provided access to the towpath (as indicated in Figure 5.2 above). This was described by Limehouse Wharf's developer “adding real interest” and providing a “sense of place” for the scheme. Lastly, the design for Island Heights also incorporated a public footpath linking the two streets running parallel to the site (shown in Figure 5.5 below), at one end of which is a children's playground and in the middle of which is a public courtyard area. All three schemes therefore incorporate spaces that provide public access through the development sites and, in physical terms at least, fit the model of improvements to the ‘public realm’ that may provide opportunities for social interactions or ‘encounters’.

In their advice on how building designs should respond to central government planning guidance, the Department then responsible for planning stated that:

With imaginative design, the provision of community facilities can not only support community development and meet needs, but also help create a focus and sense of identity for a neighbourhood. (DTLR 2001:4)

Tower Hamlets, in turn, require new developments to seek “innovative opportunities” for improving providing “outdoor space for residents, including requiring amenity space within new housing” (LBTH 2007[1998]:98). This implicitly reflects ‘new urbanist’ design doctrines

Figure 5.5: New pedestrian link and children's play area at Island Heights (source: Google Maps 2012)



which purport that communal spaces and facilities “sustain diversity by offering shared space” in which social contacts may take place, while at the same time ‘mitigating’ against potential problems by “providing a better chance for informal, collective control” and fostering “a sense of shared responsibility” (Talen 2006:243). Both Limehouse Wharf and Island Heights incorporate various semi-private outdoor spaces and facilities within the developments. Limehouse Wharf’s blocks are accessed via two separate outdoor courtyards, to which only residents have access (see Figure 5.6 below). These courtyards are ‘hard landscaped’ and function primarily as an access route. In this regard, the scheme’s developer commented that “I think it could do with being a bit greener, I would like to have seen less hard standing and less paving”. In the absence of seating, for instance, there is arguably little in Limehouse Wharf’s courtyard “amenity spaces” that would encourage people to linger and potentially initiate the sorts of ‘chance encounters’ that proponents of a socially ‘interactive’ public realm might envisage. Despite being on an equally compact site, a wider range of semi-private amenity spaces are provided within Island Heights, including a communal garden and rooftop sports pitch. The scheme’s developer described seeking “maximise the sorts of amenities that that community would require”. The architect also described how “because the site is very dense, we wanted to make use of every little scrap of space [...] for roof terraces, play space or amenity spaces”. Indeed, the planning report for Island Height’s cited “the provision of generous private gardens, roof gardens and public amenity space including two areas of children’s playspace” as amongst the “clear design

benefits” of the scheme. In the case of Shadwell Plaza, no communal “housing amenity spaces” are provided, but instead seating and landscaping are provided in the fully public spaces within and adjacent to the development (as shown in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.6: Hard landscaping in one of Limehouse Wharf’s semi-private courtyards**



Inversely, communal amenity spaces with “diverse uses” – such as areas where children might play or adults may congregate – “in turn require design control to ensure compatibility and acceptance” (Talen 2006:243). In other words, attention must be paid at the design stage, so as to mitigate conflicts arising from noise, nuisance, or lack of privacy associated with communal spaces. The decision to hard-landscape the courtyard spaces in Limehouse Wharf appears to have been motivated by similar concerns regarding potential disturbance from people gathering in the relatively compact spaces between residential blocks. The architects for Island Heights also described how consideration was paid to how amenity spaces might be used. For instance, the scheme’s communal garden – shown in Figure 5.7 below – was designed in order to ‘manage’ the issue of children playing in the space:

“We didn’t want one large green space that could be dominated by some older kids playing football for instance. So it was broken down by landscaped elements, with hedges and planters, so it was useable for lots of people simultaneously.”

In this instance, ‘design control’ thus aimed to ensure that Island Heights’ communal spaces could be used without creating excess disturbance for adjacent properties. Additionally, Island Heights included a community centre that is open to the public, with indoor spaces for

organised activities, in addition to an allotment garden and a rooftop sports pitch. Again, the housing association-managed community centre contributed an element of ‘design control’, as the architect explained:

“Having the rooftop sports area and the community space together avoided the problem where there was just open gates that anyone could go in at any time.”

And secondly, the provision of a purpose-built sports pitch means that “if older kids wanted to go and kick a ball around, they had a place they could go and do that”. Ultimately, the design of amenity spaces provided within the development itself therefore requires careful consideration of what Talen (2006) terms ‘design control’, in order to minimise the opportunities for issues to arise over potentially conflicting activities or uses. As Island Heights’ architect concluded, “there are lots of different things that need to coexist” within high-density mixed-tenure schemes such as these.

**Figure 5.7: Island Heights’ semi-private communal garden (Source: © Dennis Gilbert)**



A final element in the case study developments’ ‘public realm’ was the provision of commercial premises, which were incorporated at the ground-floor level of both Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf. So-called ‘mixed-use’ development has been lauded within ‘urban renaissance’ and ‘sustainable communities’ planning discourses (Lees 2003). Talen’s (1999:1364) analysis identifies the theoretical importance of ‘mixed uses’, which hold that;

“The mixture of residential and commercial land uses creates a multipurpose space in which lingering is encouraged, creating a setting for repetitive chance

encounters which, in turn, builds and strengthens community bonds”

The London Plan also makes a number of reference to mixed-use development, stating that new developments include “a balance of housing, employment, commercial and other community facilities” (GLA 2004:174). Indeed, in the case of Limehouse Wharf the provision of ground-floor commercial units was a requirement specified by GLA planning officers, who requested seven-hundred square metres of “replacement employment floorspace” in order to offset the loss of jobs on the previously commercial site. However, at the time of interviewing (in 2010) the six large ground-floor units remained unoccupied, as a senior housing association manager explained:

“The shop units on the ground floor, I don’t they’ve ever been let. It was the insistence of the planners to have this commercial activity and ground floor level, when really you’ve just got these empty, boarded-up places. It’s not surprising, it’s slightly remote and here’s not really a catchment for passing trade.”

Two of the six units were subsequently occupied – one by a convenience store, the other by an estate agent – but, having remained vacant for more than five years, a successful planning application was ultimately lodged to convert the four remaining commercial units back into flats. In the planning application, the architect stated that:

“The commercial uses have failed to attract and maintain any long-term significant commercial tenants... resulting in an unsafe, neglected and negative aspect to the existing development.”

The lack of interest in these units was explained due to the development’s location away from main roads or existing shopping areas, coupled with a lack of parking, meaning that “there is no reason to attract commercial users and customers into the site”. In the case of Limehouse Wharf, therefore, the GLA’s (2004:182) insistence that new development “contain a mix of uses with public access, such as ground floor retail or cafes” appeared to have failed in terms of creating a ‘sustainable’ mixed-use development.

Shadwell Plaza incorporated a similar amount of commercial space to Limehouse Wharf. However, as the analysis presented in the previous chapter showed – and in contrast to Limehouse Wharf – these premises now accommodate a range of established local shops and services. As the scheme’s developer describes, the decision to incorporate commercial units was made in response to the already ‘active’ nature of the area’s local economy:

“We built a lot of commercial space, which was really important as part of creating an active place. Lots of local people are also traders or businessmen, so

it was about creating spaces where they could expand and do more business.” Perhaps as a result of the its proximity to an existing, long-established shopping area, coupled with the nearby transport links, all but one of the scheme’s ten commercial units were occupied at the time of writing. Occupants included a convenience store, a small supermarket, a homewares shop, a beauty parlour, a café, a technology shop, and businesses including an estate agency and a shipping company. Shadwell Plaza has thus secured a mix of shops and services within its commercial premises which corresponds more to the definition of a ‘mixed-use’ development – with the potential to attract people from outside the development, as well as to serve the needs to residents, and therefore creating the “greater use of buildings and areas throughout the day” which planning policy advocates (GLA 2004:67). Moreover, as critically examined in the following chapter, this mix of local shops and services could be seen to offer opportunities for interaction between residents.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Policy discourses that accompany political programmes naturally purvey the impression of close correspondence between their stated aims and material outcomes. In reality, however, the objects of government are often not so readily ‘programmable’ (Rose et al. 2009:5). Whilst ‘mixed communities’ ultimately aspires towards positive social outcomes, in reality policy guidance extends only as far as those involved in the provision of mixed-tenure developments. This chapter has therefore focused on how this policy guidance was translated into material decisions in the design and development of the three case study schemes. Insights from those directly involved in these developments have revealed four key areas for which the decision making and negotiation process appears to have a particularly substantive bearing: The proportion and distribution of tenures, the external architectural treatment of the buildings, and contributions towards the ‘public realm’ each constitute areas where planning policy espouses particular ‘social’ outcomes associated with ‘mixing’. However, as this analysis has shown, housing providers may pursue alternative outcomes in order to better suit their own requirements. By way of a conclusion, this section will return to these four key design and development decisions and critically examine, in turn, how housing providers have responded to the aims of planning policy.



Firstly, respondents provided insights into how the overall mix of housing tenures was decided at the planning stages of the case study schemes. All three developments varied in their mix of tenures (each meeting or exceeding the London Plan's target for fifty per cent 'affordable' housing). However, whilst Government policy guidance states that "a community's need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, should be taken into account [...] in deciding planning applications" (DETR 2000:9) – and despite Tower Hamlets' stated desire to prioritise the supply of social rented housing – none of the three developments met the local authority's target that eighty per cent of 'affordable' units be destined for social rent. This arguably reflects a degree of conditionality within relevant national, regional and local authority planning policies, which emphasise the importance of 'encouraging development' and ensuring 'flexibility'. As Burgess et al. (2007:35) conclude, the majority of local authorities therefore rely on 'site by site negotiation' rather than strict targets when determining the mix of tenures in new schemes. Respondents agreed that providing some proportion of 'affordable' housing was seen as inevitable, but that 'economic viability' was the main concern when determining the specific mix of tenures. This arguably helps explain the comparatively-low proportion of social housing provided in all three schemes. As a number of respondents suggested, intermediate tenure properties were favoured because they have the potential to generate revenue through the sale of equity shares. It was also suggested that the socioeconomic status of the likely occupants of shared ownership properties made them a more attractive option. Maximising the proportion of equity-based housing units also creates a source of revenue through which to 'cross-subsidise' social rented properties. Together, this suggests that a delivering a higher proportion of social rented properties may simply be unrealistic in financial terms – especially where land values are high. On the one hand, therefore, insights from the case study schemes suggest an area of de-correspondence – to borrow Gordon's (1980) term – with Government's stated aim of meeting local housing demand for affordable (especially social rented) housing. On the other hand, however, policy guidance explicitly acknowledges the need to be 'flexible', taking into account both site-specific 'suitability' and 'economic viability' when determining a mix of tenures. A combination of scheme-specific contingencies and overarching concerns with economic viability may therefore help explain the considerable variation in the outcomes of negotiations over the supply of affordable housing in mixed-tenure schemes that has been identified by existing research (Groves et al. 2003, Monk et al. 2006, Burgess et al. 2007).

Secondly, all three case studies also highlighted the importance of decisions regarding the distribution of tenures within new mixed-tenure developments. Policy advocates a 'well-integrated' mix (ODPM 2005b:9), on the basis that "the Government does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours" (DETR 2000:36). According to Roberts (2007) – and in response to assertions regarding the 'inclusive' nature of social mix – 'good practice orthodoxy' therefore suggests that different housing tenures should be dispersed or 'pepper potted' throughout new developments. However, in apparent contrast to this 'orthodoxy', all three case study schemes adopted various strategies to separate the social housing from market rate properties. Two factors were identified by respondents as motivating this decision: Firstly, as Tiesdell (2004) also finds, there was a widely held perception that the proximity of 'affordable' housing units – and in particular social housing – would reduce the potential value of market rate properties. This is clearly a major concern for private sector developers seeking to maximise their profits from private-sale units. However, insights from interview respondents also suggested that housing associations were equally concerned that they would receive lower returns on shared ownership properties. Social housing was therefore seen to constitute a 'negative externality' if not adequately isolated from equity-based housing products (Tiesdell 2004). A second rationale for this separation of tenures was related to management problems apparently associated with a more dispersed tenure mix. On the one hand, anticipated issues of anti-social behaviour or 'lifestyle' conflicts between owners and social renters were cited as a reason to keep these groups separate. On the other hand, housing associations were also reported to favour a separation in order to rationalise their management and maintenance activities. It appears that concerns regarding day-to-day management constitute a second – and, to-date, less widely acknowledged – rationale for ensuring a separation between tenures. More broadly, the separation of tenures in the case study schemes appears incongruous with the 'social' aspirations of tenure mixing – which LBTH (2007[1998]:87) acknowledge by stating that affordable tenures should be 'integrated' alongside market rate housing "to ensure social cohesion and inclusion". In particular, the potential to encourage propinquitous interactions between residents from different tenures would appear to be significantly constrained by design strategies that keep inhabitants of social housing apart from other residents. In reality, however, insights from respondents mirror Roberts' (2007:189) conclusion that "if the nostrum of an "integrated" layout were to be insisted on in each new mixed income community, some developments might never move on from the design phase".

Thirdly, interviews shed further light on other ‘architectural’ or design-related decisions that also had a potential bearing in terms of responding to the broader question planning policy aims of ‘mixed communities’. Both Limehouse Wharf and Island Heights adopted a ‘tenure blind’ approach to the external design treatment of the buildings. Reflecting another aspect of ‘good practice orthodoxy’ for mixed-tenure housing design (Roberts 2007), the London Plan (2004:65) states that affordable units should “have the same external appearance as the rest of the housing”, whilst Tower Hamlet’s planning policy reiterates that there should be “no visible difference between the different housing tenures provided” (LBTH 2007[1998]:92). Respondents explained the rationale behind their adoption of a ‘tenure blind’ design approach in terms of a desire to avoid attaching stigma to social rented properties (which might also, in turn, impact upon the values of nearby market rate properties). In the case of Shadwell Plaza, however, the scheme’s developer was keen to highlight that, in their view, ‘tenure blindness’ did necessarily equate to architectural uniformity and that their aim was instead to ensure an equally high quality of design across the scheme. As Tiesdell (2004) concludes, developers are not ultimately inclined to adopt design approaches that highlight the presence of affordable housing – for instance through the use of ‘cheaper’ or ‘shabbier’ finishes – at the risk of lowering the ‘kerb appeal’ of private sale properties. In terms of external design treatment, therefore, it appears that the socially ‘inclusive’ aspirations of ‘mixed communities’ policy corresponds more closely with the economic realities of mixed-tenure housing development.

Finally, each of the case study schemes involved various contributions towards the ‘public realm’. Planning policy advocates a mix of uses and the incorporation of design features that create public or communal spaces that are “accessible, usable and permeable” (GLA 2004:173-4). All three schemes include some form of outdoor space – some of which were fully ‘public’ (as in the case of Shadwell Plaza), whilst others were accessible only to residents. Once again, interviews provided an insight into the guiding ‘rationalities’ behind the provision of these public spaces. In the case of Shadwell Plaza, publically-accessible streets, seating areas, and a landscaped plaza were described as an effort to create a ‘sense of place’ in and around the scheme. Limehouse Wharf and Island Heights focused instead on ‘housing amenity spaces’ that were accessible only to residents. These spaces revealed an important consideration regarding what Talen (2006:243) terms as ‘design control’ – whereby efforts were taken to reduce the potential for disturbance arising from the day-to-day use of these spaces. In the case of Limehouse Wharf, this meant that communal spaces

were ‘hard landscaped’, without seating or other provision for non-transient uses. Island Heights provided ‘amenity spaces’ that were landscaped and designed such as to reduce their potential for ‘inappropriate’ uses – such as ball games – which were provided for instead with a purpose-designed playground and sports pitch. Lastly, two of the schemes – Shadwell Plaza and Limehouse Wharf – provided ground-floor commercial space within the developments. These proved more successful in Shadwell Plaza, where a broad mix of uses currently occupy the various premises – than in Limehouse Wharf, where four of the scheme’s six commercial units were never let. Together, therefore, all three schemes provide a ‘public realm’ – albeit each with different uses, levels of access and overall character. ‘Urban renaissance’ or ‘new urbanist’ design discourses would suggest that these sorts of ‘shared’ and ‘multipurpose’ spaces might “create a setting for repetitive chance encounters” – between residents and non-residents alike – and which, in turn, might “build and strengthen community bonds” (Talen 1999:1364).

This chapter has therefore explored a number of key factors and decisions in the provision process for mixed-tenure housing. In response to the policy programme for ‘mixed communities’ – passed down through central, regional and local planning policy guidance – housing providers translated various governmental aspirations into practically workable housing schemes. In order to ‘encourage development’, housing providers are afforded a degree of ‘flexibility’ in how they respond to policy guidance on affordable housing supply, design and layout. This flexibility is intended to ensure that proposed developments remain ‘viable’ – and this chapter has illustrated the particular significance of economic viability as a guiding rationale behind decisions concerning the design and layout of mixed-tenure schemes. However, by accommodating the requirements of non-state ‘partners’, the end products of political programmes delivered ‘at a distance’ – in this case, housing schemes that are provided by non-state developers and third sector housing associations – may not always constitute a perfect reflection of governmental will, either by failing to achieve some or all of the originally-stated aims, or even by producing contrary outcomes (Rose 1999:52). Therefore, as Gordon (1980:247) concludes, analyses of political programmes serve not to identify “the perfect correspondence between the orders of discourse, practice and effects”, but rather “the manner in which they fail to correspond and the positive significance that can attach to such discrepancies”. In the context of this research, the ‘positive significance’ derived from these insights into the reality of the provision process for mixed-tenure housing lies in their potential to pose critical questions regarding residents’ experience of

everyday life in these schemes: Does the separation of tenures also keep these groups apart, or heighten perceived differences between tenures? Does a tenure-blind design approach alleviate stigma? Do public spaces constitute a site for interpersonal interaction or engagement between groups? And – more broadly – how might the physical and spatial context, as examined in this section of the thesis, help us to better understand day-to-day life in mixed-tenure housing?

## Chapter Six: Perceptions of the Local Neighbourhood

This chapter explores residents' perceptions of the local areas surrounding the three case study mixed-tenure schemes (the socio-spatial characteristics of which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four). There are large areas of social housing within the immediate vicinity of all three case study schemes, alongside a mix of non-residential land uses (including shops, services and commercial premises). Each of the neighbourhoods comprises a mix of ethnic groups and backgrounds, a comparatively high proportion of those being from British-Bangladeshi backgrounds. These neighbourhoods also score relatively poorly on various indices of deprivation and have relatively high levels of unemployment. In these respects, the case study neighbourhoods therefore exhibit several characteristics of the sorts of inner-urban areas in which Government policy discourse advocates interventions in order to create more 'sustainable communities' (ODPM 2003, 2005c). In normative terms, Government policy argued that a "more sustainable mix of housing types and tenures" may help "address deep-seated problems" within deprived neighbourhoods – including problems of crime, inadequate provision of goods and services, and even a lack of 'cohesion' between ethnic, racial or religious groups (ODPM 2005c:53). This chapter offers a critical engagement with normative claims regarding the potential for a more 'balanced' housing mix to foster the characteristics of a 'sustainable community' – which, it has ultimately been argued, may "greatly enrich the quality of community life" and engender "a sense of belonging and a sense of respect for all" within the wider neighbourhood (DTLR 2001:2). Drawing on in-depth interviews with twenty-five residents of the case study mixed-tenure schemes developments – as well as the socio-spatial analysis of the local neighbourhoods presented in Chapter Four and the insights into the provision process for the case study schemes presented in Chapter Five – this chapter explores four key themes which emerged directly from discussions with residents, beginning with their 'first impressions' of the local area, before turning to consider their day-to-day patronage of local shops, services and amenities, their attitudes towards ethnic diversity, and their perceptions of crime, disorder and personal safety. These insights from residents' interviews together raise critical questions pertaining to potential for area-based interventions, such as mixed-tenure housing development, to engender the vaguely defined and empirically allusive outcomes associated with 'sustainable communities'. This chapter also provides important grounding for considering the possibility that 'the neighbourhood' may constitute a potential site for interaction and mixing between residents from various backgrounds, as discussed in the following chapters.

## I. 'First Impressions' of the Neighbourhood

All respondents interviewed had lived in London before moving in to one of the case studies, and the majority had previously resided elsewhere in East London. The quantitative survey data also suggests that many residents of the case study schemes were already local to the area, with around half of respondents from Island Heights and Shadwell Plaza and a third of those from Limehouse Wharf having previously lived within ten minutes' walk of the developments. Overall, therefore, many of those interviewed had longer-term connections to East London – some to the already-gentrified heartlands of the Docklands or Wapping, others to more 'cosmopolitan' or 'up and coming' areas such as Whitechapel or Stratford. When discussing their motivations for moving into the case study schemes, a number of respondents reflected upon these residential histories. In some cases – such as for this late-middle-aged shared owner from Limehouse Wharf – long-held ties to the area motivated their choice of these particular developments:

“I did want to stay in East London because that's where I've been born and bred. I've lived there all my life and I've got family in East London so I really didn't want to move out.”

Other residents hailed from further afield, but expressed a strong affinity to East London as being part of their motivation to move in to the case study schemes. One respondent described how “I know east London because I went to university here, I feel comfortable here.” A number of respondents, therefore, held positive feelings towards living in an East London neighbourhood – whether these feelings stemmed from a long-held sense of attachment, or from more recent experience of living in the area, as exemplified by this Limehouse Wharf shared owner (who previously lived in neighbouring Poplar):

“I love the area. Since I came to East London, I love the feel to it, I just like the fact that it's got such a lot of history, but it's constantly changing and it's constantly evolving. It's just got everything that I really, really like about London.”

Only a handful of respondents – all of whom were social renters – expressed any desire to move out of the area, often citing a retreat to the suburban fringes of East London or Essex as their preferred alternative.

A second, more pragmatic, aspect to many respondents' decision to move into the case study schemes concerned their favourable transport links and proximity both to the City and the Docklands (see Figure 6.1). All three case studies are within easy walking distance of DLR stations which, coupled with other nearby tube/train stations and a plethora of bus routes,

provide good connectivity to elsewhere in London. For instance, one Limehouse Wharf resident described how “you can just get anywhere, the transport in this area is very, very good and that’s been one of the great things about living here”. The convenient location of the case study schemes was clearly a major draw, with their proximity either to the City or to Canary Wharf being widely cited by some respondents:

“We’re very close to the train station. Very close to the City. I don’t have a car, so to be able to walk is fantastic. And that’s probably one of the reasons why I wouldn’t live in many other places in London.”

Indeed, the developer’s marketing material made reference to Limehouse Wharf’s “impressive views” of One Canada Square (as shown in Figure 6.1). In practical terms, this proximity was an important factor for some respondents’ work;

“[Limehouse Wharf] is very close to the [Canary] Wharf. About a ten minute walk to work and there’s where my clients are.”

For residents of Shadwell Plaza, the very close proximity to the City of London was a more commonly-cited locational amenity factor. One shared owner described she would explain to friends that she lived “literally on the edge of the City”. Interestingly, many respondents thereby tended to selectively ‘position’ their developments only in terms of their proximity to more ‘prestigious’ destinations for work, consumption and entertainment – such as the City, Canary Wharf or Wapping – in contrast to less salubrious but equally proximate areas such as Poplar, Stepney or Bow. However, this proximity to transport links and local

**Figure 6.1: View of Canary Wharf from a top floor balcony of Limehouse Wharf (Source: CABE/Josh Onikul)**





shops/services meant that, for most residents, there was no need for a car – in contrast to the comparative isolation suffered by those residents of peripherally located social housing estates without access to a car (Hanley 2007).

Residents' initial impressions of their neighbourhoods were mixed. A number of respondents described initially being taken by the 'buzz' or cosmopolitanism of the areas around their development, with one shared owner describing how "there is a kind of vibrancy to Shadwell that you might not get in, say, other kinds of deprived neighbourhood". Another respondent – a long-term resident of East London – described Island Heights' surroundings as directly contrasting to other areas within Tower Hamlets:

"It's got a really different vibe to it. A lot of the north east of the borough, around there I think it just feels dead".

Other respondents, however, admitted having more negative impressions of the physical and social character of their neighbourhoods. One Limehouse Wharf resident described how, on first impressions, the area "was all kind of the council blocks and they just looked really dilapidated". Similarly, one resident recalls her impression of the area around Shadwell Plaza before its re-development:

"I remember it was really grim. It was pretty much still a bomb site to be honest. It was the only bit of London I knew that was still like that."

Other respondents acknowledged the lower socioeconomic status of the neighbourhood, in this case positioning it within the context of Tower Hamlets as a whole:

"You know, I think that the area itself is – is not a very elevated socioeconomic status, by most measures. You know? Tower Hamlets has kind of low, lower levels of income... I know it is not the nicest place in London!"

Overall, however, residents were keen to stress the improvements and changes which they perceived to be taking place within their neighbourhoods. As one Limehouse Wharf owner-occupier concluded, "we see a lot of prospects for the area, it's improving".

## **II. Local Amenities and Day-to-Day Life**

It has long been argued that lower-income neighbourhoods predominantly comprising social housing suffer a 'double disadvantage' as reasonably-priced, decent quality shops and services avoid locating to these areas (Dean and Hastings 2000). 'Sustainable communities' – with a greater mix of housing types and tenures – are said to avoid these issues (ODPM

2005c:52), by creating “a better balance of demand for community services and facilities” (DTLR 2001:1). ‘Urban Renaissance’ design principles also advance the notion of ‘mixed-use’ development – incorporating retail, employment, leisure amenities, and other services – so as to encourage residents to make use of the local area in their day-to-day lives (UTF 2005). Tenure mixing has thus been associated with changes to the local economy, as the presence of higher-income residents attracts and sustains a better range and quality of local shops and services (Joseph et al. 2007:394). On the other hand, however, it has also been argued that an influx of more affluent residents brought by mixed-tenure housing development risks distorting the market for goods and services provided in the local area in favour of more affluent tastes or demands (Davidson 2008). Therefore, lower-income residents who may otherwise derive a ‘welfare benefit’ from cheaper shops or specialised services could in fact be disadvantaged by living in a ‘mixed community’ (Cheshire 2008:23). Existing research into newly-‘mixed’ residential neighbourhoods in London has therefore focused on the question of whether and how higher-income residents make use of – and potentially alter the nature of – local shops and services (Davidson and Lees 2005, Davidson 2010). Inversely, Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:105) argue that, if residents of mixed-tenure housing are to become active and fully-engaged members of locally-based ‘mixed communities’, their needs and aspirations must be met locally (including the needs of more affluent residents). The promise that shops or markets might offer spaces for ‘inclusive sociability’ (Watson 2009:1583) – or that local amenities might encourage interaction between diverse groups (Kleit 2005:1416) – is therefore contingent, at the very least, on the utilisation of these services by a broad range of local residents. In the context of these seemingly contradictory claims regarding the various advantages or disadvantages of the patronage of local shops, services and amenities by higher-income residents, this section explores respondents’ accounts of their routines, habits and preferences with regards to the consumption of goods and services in the local area.

Firstly, it is important to reiterate that the three case study neighbourhoods varied notably in their range of shops and services. As the analysis in Chapter Four illustrated, Shadwell Plaza is the only of the three case studies with a relatively wide range of businesses in the immediate area – including a pub, market stalls, and numerous independent and ‘high-street’ shops and service-outlets. A number of shops and businesses are also located on the ground floor level of the development itself. Both Limehouse Wharf and Island Heights were located reasonably near to ‘express’ outlets for major supermarket chains, but neither had a

comparable range of nearby shops and amenities to Shadwell Plaza. All three case studies are also within easy reach of large shopping centres at Canary Wharf, Stratford and in the City of London. For many of Shadwell Plaza's residents, therefore, the range of local shops and services was often discussed as a major amenity, as one social renter described:

"I love the area, I love the shopping. I use a lot of different ones. I use the meat shops, I love halal meat, and I use the market for veg and stuff. I use Iceland, I use the library for photocopying, to get the East End Life<sup>1</sup> and to get [my son] library books and stuff like that. I use the Abbey National..."

Another resident – this time a shared owner, working full-time in a 'professional' occupation – described the local shops as "one of the things that makes this flat work, because here you've got everything within walking distance". A third respondents described how "there is something about Shadwell that is always a bit buzzy, with the markets and the other stuff going on round here". A number of residents therefore described making use of the local shops, with the market stalls and diversity of goods on offer in various 'specialist' shops appearing to lend the area a distinct and 'vibrant' character. For Bengali respondents, these shops offered an impressive selection compared to other areas of London (especially for Halal meat). Some respondents – including owners/shared owners – even described no longer using larger non-local supermarkets. However, making frequent use of local shops and amenities was not a universal feature of all residents' routines. For instance, as one respondent 'young professional' shared owner described – somewhat guiltily:

"I either get things delivered or I go to Canary Wharf. It's terrible, I don't really support local businesses and I should, but I think I'm just so exhausted after work I just wanna get home."

Other respondents described liking the "novelty" or the "exotic" or "interesting" produce available in some of the shops, although they were more likely to "just go in and pick something random now and then" rather than make regular use of these outlets.

Aside from the market stalls and various shops, another amenity in close proximity to Shadwell Plaza was the "Prince of Wales" pub. Local pubs have long been seen to constitute an important local venue for leisure and socialising. Thrift (1983:41) describes how pubs constituted "the only important extradomestic leisure institution" in industrial British inner-cities. Whilst Willmott and Young's (1957:23) seminal study of East End life described how, for many residents, "the bar in the pub was as much a part of their living space as the room

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<sup>1</sup>'East End Life' is a free weekly newspaper published by Tower Hamlets Council, which includes articles in Bengali and Somali in the main edition.

in their home". Perceptions of the "Prince of Wales" were, however, almost universally negative amongst respondents from Shadwell Plaza<sup>2</sup>. One social renter was particularly outspoken regarding the pub;

"It is just filthy dirty, needs a good overhaul. And the things that – that are going on in there need to stop. Underage drinking, drug dealing, drug taking openly."

Many residents mentioned having been into the Prince of Wales just once or twice – however, as one respondent put it, "it was always a bit ropey and it's got even worse, so we don't go in there anymore". The only 'local' pub in close proximity to any of the case study schemes was thus not seen to constitute an 'amenity' for local residents. Instead, it was even described by one respondent as "kind of a nuisance" that "causes quite a lot of grief". Some residents did lament the Prince of Wales' failings as a potential local 'amenity':

"I think it's a shame that that the [Prince of Wales] is not a particular nice pub. I think trying to get people to use their local amenities is important really."

Another respondent described how, "in terms of having a sense of community", the pub was "too run down and not really conducive to hanging out in". There did, therefore, appear to be some suggestion that a local pub could – and perhaps should – constitute a more usable amenity for the development's residents. Similarly, some respondents described how other local facilities – which included several cafes, one of which was located on the ground-floor of the development itself – were not places they would opt to frequent in reality:

"As far as the kind of facilities I would use, you know, I'd like a nice café that you could sit outside. There's a few here. But, hmmm, yeah, they're not for me!"

The 'mixed use' character of the area around Shadwell Plaza, therefore, did not universally appeal to the tastes and aspirations of a cross section of residents – an observation reflective of findings from other mixed-tenure contexts (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Davidson 2010).

Residents of all three case study developments tended, by and large, to venture beyond the local area for socialising and leisure activities. For a young single social renter of Island Heights, this meant frequent visits to nearby Canary Wharf:

"Oh, I go there a lot of the time yeah. You've got AllBarOne, Slug and Lettuce, all the City-type bars, and Nandos! It's good. It's nice to invite people around here, because you can take people out. Nearby we have loads of places to go to."

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<sup>2</sup> Comments on popular online review sites also provide further insights into attitudes/perceptions towards the Prince of Wales, which is variously described as "horrific", "bleak", "grim" and "with all the atmosphere of a supermarket".

For this respondent, important 'local' amenities thus took the form of nearby 'big name' outlets mainly tailored towards office workers and visitors to the area. Canary Wharf also featured as a popular destination for Limehouse Wharf residents, which is around a 15 minute walk away. One shared-owning couple described visiting 'The Wharf' at least two or three times a week for the cinema, bars or restaurants. Overall, the impression from Island Heights and Limehouse Wharf respondents – around half of whom worked on the Isle of Dogs – was that leisure and consumption activities often focused around Canary Wharf. This appears to reflect Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000:100) observation that the area around people's work – rather than their residential neighbourhood – often constitutes the focus for social and leisure activities. Moreover, despite the fact that Shadwell Plaza confirmed closest to the definition of a 'mixed use' urban neighbourhood, with a local concentration of shops and services, many shared-owning residents still expressed a preference to leave the local area for leisure activities. In some cases, this again meant visits to Canary Wharf, although nearby Wapping was a commonly-cited destination for socialising:

"St Catherine's dock is ten minutes' walk away, with lovely cafes to sit by the Thames. So there's competing interests in other neighbourhoods, you know?"

Or as another younger Shadwell Plaza owner-occupier described:

"If I'm going to go to the pub, I'll probably go to some down in Wapping, which are a lot more comfortable and cosy. Because that's more what I look for when I wanna just hang out and have a drink."

'Competing interests' in more gentrified, 'trendy' or well-served locales therefore attracted many of the residents of the case study 'mixed communities' to consume and enjoy leisure time in destinations away from their own neighbourhoods. Once again suggesting that the consumption aspirations of many residents – especially, but not exclusively, owners/shared owners – were largely not met within the environs of the case study schemes.

Lastly, two of the case study schemes featured purpose-built community centres – either adjacent to the development, in the case of Shadwell Plaza, or within the development itself, in the case of Island Heights. Both facilities were funded by the developers of the case study schemes, with the housing associations being responsible for the running of both centres. A range of organisations made use of the facilities, with a particular focus on clubs and services for local people. All respondents were asked whether they made use of these facilities. Only three of the twelve Shadwell Plaza interviewees were even aware of the presence of the community centre (less than a hundred metres from the development). One

social renter, with an eight year-old son, explained how she had enquired about the facilities offered by the community centre, but found that there was nothing suitable for her child:

“They do have a youth club maybe twice a week, but you can't go there until you're over 12. It has a football club once a week, but that's the same.”

Another resident voiced his frustration over the apparent lack of activity within the newly-opened community centre:

“We've got a community centre, a brand new community centre on, it's unmanned. They can't afford to put anyone in – it's got so much facilities. All this equipment in there but it doesn't have hardly any activities going on.”

The community centre at Island Heights was reportedly better used. One respondent described seeing people regularly playing football, and another described how it was always busy on half-terms and school holidays. However, despite the fact that the community centre was located within the development itself, residents of Island Heights still appeared to have little knowledge of what services or activities it offered. As one social renter who had lived in the development for two years described:

“I've seen people in the [community] centre downstairs. You've got, I don't know, community workers there or something. I suppose that I would use it, but I don't know what I'd go down there for. It's just there...!”

Other residents also either replied by suggesting that they did not know anything about the activities or facilities offered in the community centre. Only one Island Heights resident – a teenage girl living with her family in a social rented flat – discussed making use of the youth club within the community centre. She described how “I normally just go in just to chill, like just talking and playing games”. She also observed that the young people who used the youth club were mainly from outside the development, because “that's the only youth club they have around this area”. Therefore – as Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:100) also observed – “few residents are involved in local [...] community activities”. This lack of involvement is particularly pertinent in the context of suggestions that community facilities or activities have a role to play in facilitating relationship-building between residents of mixed-tenure schemes (Kleit 2005:1416), as semi-public venues for informal interaction (Amin 2002).

Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:104) conclude that owners in their Scottish case studies “are away from the estates, at work and leisure, more often than renters, and use the local facilities far less”. This was not universally true for residents of the three case study schemes. Most residents – both renters and owners – did make some use of local amenities,

in particular the shops around Shadwell Plaza. What was clear, however, was the extent to which most residents were more inclined to spend their time outside of the local area when socialising or pursuing leisure activities. The relative lack of amenities such as bars, cafes and pubs could certainly be a contributing factor. However, even with a busy ‘mixed use’ neighbourhood on their doorstep, Shadwell Plaza’s residents still favoured other nearby areas for consumption and leisure activities, such as Wapping with its more ‘gentrified’ environment and wider range of bars, cafes and restaurants. Even local community facilities – which are widely considered to be an important social outlet for those on lower-incomes – were rarely frequented and largely an unknown entity amongst social renters and owners alike. The ‘neighbourhood’ thus appears to have an amenity function only in terms of the most ‘everyday’ activities such as convenience shopping, for other – less ‘everyday’ – activities, such as socialising, the case study ‘mixed communities’ were often overlooked in favour of other areas that better catered towards the apparent desires of residents.

### **III. Ethnic Diversity**

Whilst UK policy discourse on tenure mixing did not make explicit reference to ethnic mix (Colomb 2011), a recent government commissioned ‘evidence review’ went as far as to describe “‘mixed communities’ as spaces to encourage racial, ethnic or religious cohesion, or which prevent increasing segregation” (DCLG 2010:8). As a number of authors have observed, a normative association between community cohesion and ‘mixed communities’ stems from a tendency to conflate housing mix with ethnic mix (Amin 2002, Colomb 2011:230). Indeed, the final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion stated that “cohesive and integrated communities are more easily achieved where there is a mix of housing types and tenures” (2007:123). However, as Amin (2002:968) argues, “engineering ethnic mixture through housing is problematic” and mixed-tenure communities offer no guarantee of inter-ethnic tolerance, let alone mixing, in reality. In practical terms, language barriers can inhibit social contacts between residents from different backgrounds (as discussed in the following chapter), whilst feelings of racism can manifest in more actively exclusionary expressions of “neighbourhood nationalism” (Amin 2002:968). This section explores residents’ attitudes and perceptions towards ethnic mix in the three case study neighbourhoods.

As Livingston *et al.* (2010:421) found from their interviews with residents of socially-mixed

inner-city neighbourhoods, ethnic mix was “likely to be recognised spontaneously” by residents. Indeed, many respondents from the case study developments proffered reflections on the racial and ethnic diversity of their neighbourhoods. This issue constituted a particularly prevalent aspect of the interview discussions with residents of Shadwell Plaza – the area having the largest ‘BME’ populations and the highest proportion of Bengalis in comparison to the other case study schemes. As one resident described, “you definitely see that it’s socially mixed, just by the broad diversity of residents you cross on the street”. More specifically, another Shadwell Plaza resident reflected upon the ethnic composition of the area’s population, including the presence of newer migrant groups:

“You’ve got obviously a massive British Bangladeshi and Bengali community, but equally Polish and Somali, which is more of a recent thing...”

Another Island Heights resident offered a considered reflection on the presence of new migrant populations from Eastern Europe – as identified by Mayhew and Harper (2010) – within the broader context of the East End’s history of migration:

“The East End has always been a first stopping off point for people, you know, successive waves of migrants, people from South Asia. I think that the East End has always been like this actually. And that the people who have now come in from Eastern Europe and so on, they just reflect that kind of history.”

On the whole, therefore, residents described the ethnic mix in their area in a way that closely reflects historic and contemporary geographies of migration and ethnic diversity in Tower Hamlets.

The majority of residents expressed positive sentiments towards the ‘multicultural’ character of their neighbourhoods. For instance, one Shadwell Plaza respondent – from a White British background – reflected on the benefits of the area’s diversity;

“...part of it being multicultural, you know, the shops and you know, it’s nice seeing different people getting on.”

Respondents therefore readily used the language of ‘multiculturalism’ – a central ‘ideological’ concept for the previous Government’s cohesion agenda (Robinson 2005) – when describing their neighbourhood. Another Shadwell Plaza respondent – again from a White British background – drew links between ethnic mix and a ‘sense of community’ in the area:

“It does feel like a community, even though the people are very, very different. I think the differences actually strengthen it rather than anything else. There’s a lot



of acceptance. And I don't think it would occur to anyone to be any other way.” This quote certainly appears to correspond closely to the normative construction of ‘cohesion’ as incorporating collective solidarity, minimal conflict and the valuing of ‘difference’, all within the spatial and social lexicon of ‘community’ (Forrest and Kearns 2001).

The same respondent quoted above went on to state in unequivocal terms that she had never encountered racism in the area around Shadwell Plaza and was confident that this was not an issue. However – whilst the majority of respondents expressed similarly positive sentiments towards the prospects for ‘multiculturalism’ in their neighbourhoods – attitudes towards ethnic mix were discussed in more negative terms by a relatively sizeable minority of respondents. The Bangladeshi population in the area around Shadwell Plaza constituted the main focus for negative – and in some cases racist – comments from respondents. One particular issue concerned the visibility and perceived dominance of the Muslim faith in the area. As one White British social renter and a long-term resident of Tower Hamlets complained, “it's wrong, the amount of space that's being taken up by other people's religious views here”. Another White British respondent took issue with hearing the call to prayer, as discussed in an exchange with her partner (in italics):

*“The other thing that has bothered us negatively while we've lived here is hearing Friday prayers. Yeah. It's loud. I mean I can hear it loud in our flat. And when Friday prayers being broadcast, it doesn't feel right.”*

A third respondent from Shadwell Plaza – a White British social renter – reflected upon an experience she encountered when visiting the newly-opened nearby community centre;

“When you walk in there, you feel like, why am I walking in here? There's all Asian guys outside. And I did actually go there to try and find out some information. And this guy turned round and said to me, “What are you doing here, you can't come in here, we don't want no white people here because this is ours.” And I said, “Excuse me, this is England, this community centre is for everybody”. It was so rude.”

The perception that the Bengali community was, in the words of one resident, “making a statement” through its presence and practices within the neighbourhood around Shadwell Plaza – whilst by no means typical of a majority of respondents – were suggestive of a degree of tension focused around race, ethnicity or religion.

Moreover, the idea that the neighbourhood around Shadwell Plaza could even be seen to constitute an ethnically 'integrated' or 'mixed' community was contested by a number of respondents. As one British-born Bengali respondent, who had grown up in the area around Shadwell Plaza, explained how:

"It's not mixed ethnic minorities you have here, basically you have a concentrated, big population at least fifty per cent Asians. This [area] is Bangladeshi, you know, not 'BME' or whatever else."

The same respondent was clear in his view that the area does not constitute a 'mixed' community;

"It's still segregated in the way we've grown up with in the Asian community. There was never much interracial mixing in that sense."

In turn, however, the size and spatially-concentrated nature of the area's Bangladeshi-Muslim population was seen to offer certain advantages, as another Bengali respondent described:

"That in itself provides you stability, security, safety, and it helps you to grow within a community. If you was to be in a mixed, sort of interracial community, it would probably work the other way round."

As Marcuse (2005:4) argues, voluntary congregation within ethnic 'enclaves' offers minority groups a means of "protecting and enhancing their economic, social, political and/or cultural development" – and the same argument has been made with respect to Tower Hamlets' Bengali community specifically (Ahmed 2005). From the perspective of those outside the Bengali community, however, this 'enclave' character was largely viewed simply as a form of self-segregation. One White British shared owner explained how "a block of this community don't integrate really and that can be quite challenging". This seems to corroborate Power's (2007) pessimistic observation that large minority populations pose "a serious risk" of "ethnic polarisation" in the context of otherwise mixed residential settings.

Amin (2002:968) rightly observes that neighbourhoods comprising a mix of housing types and tenures are by no means immune to more acute forms of racism. Interview data from Shadwell Plaza does seem to support this argument, with a number of respondents suggested that overt racism was present within the neighbourhood. One female resident described occasional incidents of what she felt to be racially-motivated abuse from young Bengali males from the neighbourhood, which she felt to be specifically targeted at White women:

“I’ve been harassed many times on the street. And it was obviously they were particularly targeting women coming into the building, because they tend to see Western women as whores, you know, ‘fair game’. And that’s truly unpleasant, just living in this neighbourhood, being a woman is just really unpleasant.”

This respondent’s account mirrors Macey’s (1999) contentious<sup>3</sup> claims regarding young Muslim men’s violence towards women in the public sphere, or similarly the former Home Secretary Jack Straw’s controversial comments regarding Muslim British Asian men viewing White women as “easy meat” (The Guardian 2011b). It is worth noting, however, that this was the only such incident described by female respondents from Shadwell Plaza. Needless to say, British Asian residents were not the sole protagonists in the incidences of racism or conflict described by respondents. Another Shadwell Plaza resident described a ‘gang’ fight apparently instigated by White patrons of the Prince of Wales pub. The pub, which another respondent alluded to be frequented by a ‘closed community’ of White working class patrons<sup>4</sup>, was cited by a second respondent as a focus for aggression towards the Bengali community, this time in the context of a situation where Asian councillors were canvassing outside the pub:

“There is still a bigish white community here. And I think the – actually sometimes you see, particularly in the summer, people politically campaign here a lot, so I sort of sit and watch the campaigners go and talk to the people outside that pub. And they’re like, oh, why would I have anything to do with you? You can hear it really clearly, why would I have anything to do with you guys? And it gets quite kind of aggressive. So the idea there’s no issues here is nonsense – people seem to rub up against each other quite a bit.”

As Amin (2002) concludes ethnic diversity within a residential context is thus no guarantee of ‘cohesion’ or greater tolerance – with resentment and conflict just as likely to arise.

Perceptions of the Bengali community around Shadwell Plaza therefore appear somewhat incongruous with the discursive characteristics associated with a “mixed community”. Reference to a ‘balance’ and ‘inclusive’ housing mix arguably imply a more propitious inter-ethnic relations, especially in the context of discussions on ‘community cohesion’. As Robinson (2005:1421) argues;

“The community cohesion agenda assumes that housing interventions can

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<sup>3</sup> Authors writing in the post-colonial vein have criticised the impulse to construct Muslim men as sexually aggressive and/or dangerous in popular and political discourse (see Bhattacharyya 2008)

<sup>4</sup> One online review even went as far as to describe the Prince of Wales as a ‘BNP pub’

promote residential integration and increasing ethnic mix, from which interethnic interaction will inevitably flow.”

The insights gained from interviews with residents of Shadwell Plaza in particular appear to suggest that such a link between housing mix and ethnic ‘cohesion’ is tenuous at best. The influx of new residents into the area around Shadwell Plaza has undoubtedly created a more ‘mixed’ demographic. However, as Robinson (2005) argues, housing interventions can only have limited impact on longer-term racialised divisions within urban space(s). Whilst the majority of interview respondents expressed either neutral or positive views towards ethnic diversity in the case study neighbourhoods, evidence of racial segregation and racial tensions were nonetheless apparent from the interviews. As Amin starkly observes, “many mixed estates are riddled with racism, interethnic tension, and cultural isolation” (2002:968). Elements of this are clearly present within Shadwell Plaza, although it is by no means clear that such problems were universally experienced. The interview data do, however, further challenge the assumption that changes to an area’s housing mix can necessarily engender inter-ethnic mixing or greater tolerance towards racial or religious difference.

#### **IV. Crime and Disorder**

Rose (2000:1408) argues that ‘Third Way’ political programmes such as ‘mixed communities’ invoke new strategies to regulate individual conduct and behaviour “through activating the responsibilities of communities for their own well-being”. Such political ‘strategies’ to “sustain civility through community” advocate individualised notions of self-control alongside ‘affect-laden’ relationships between members of territorially-based communities (Rose 2000:1410). ‘Community’ has thus come to be endowed with ‘collective efficacy’ in shaping desirable conduct and behaviour (Sampson et al. 1997). As an object of policy intervention, lower-income neighbourhoods – and in particular those comprising high proportions of social housing – have become a major concern within this new ‘politics of behaviour’. Through what Haworth and Manzi (1999:161) characterise as a ‘moral panic’ regarding ‘anti-social behaviour’, neighbourhoods with high proportions of social housing were framed as “concentrated areas of lawlessness”. Of course, this is not to suggest that problems of crime and disorder within social housing estates are merely a fiction of political imagination. Indeed, interviews with inhabitants of ‘deprived’ inner-city neighbourhoods suggest that “nearly all respondents thought that their area was deteriorating in relation to crime and especially anti-social behaviour” (Livingston et al. 2010:418). High profile

responses to these problems – both real and perceived – included new tactics in ‘community’ policing, reinforced by punitive instruments such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. But as Haworth and Manzi (1999:162) argue, tenure mixing also played its part through reinforcing “a moral framework within which behaviour can more easily be controlled if there is ‘diversity’ within a balanced community”. On the one hand, it is implied that social housing tenants might “regulate their own behaviour in accordance with the norms and values of these [mixed] communities” (Flint 2004:899). On the other hand, the framing of disorder and anti-social behaviour as collective (rather than individual) problems also exhorts members of the ‘community’ to encourage the desirable conduct of others (Flint 2004:901). This section therefore explores residents’ perceptions of crime, disorder and ‘anti-social’ behaviour in the three case study ‘mixed communities’. Firstly, by considering the nature and extent of various problems in these neighbourhoods. Secondly, by examining residents’ first-hand experiences of crime or disorder. And thirdly, by exploring respondents’ perceptions of ‘collective efficacy’ in addressing these problems.

Data from the residents’ survey provide a general picture of the perceived prevalence of various issues within the case study schemes, ranging in severity from minor forms of ‘disorder’ (such as noise from neighbours, or teenagers hanging around), through ‘anti-social behaviour’ (such as littering or vandalism), to more serious criminal conducts (such as harassment or theft). Figure 6.2 shows the reported severity of these problems. Littering and teenagers ‘hanging around’ were the most widely reported, followed by vandalism and graffiti. Comparatively, more serious forms of personal/property crime were less prevalent across the three case study schemes – with more than half of respondents citing thefts or break-ins as not being a problem in their neighbourhood, and two-thirds having never experienced forms of abuse or harassment. Interview responses also suggested that a majority of residents generally felt safe and that, on the whole, the three case study neighbourhoods did not suffer from frequent or widespread occurrences of serious forms of crime or disorder. Typical response from Limehouse Wharf’s residents suggested that:

“You don't get a bad feeling being round here. You know, when you kind of walk down the street, I feel quite safe actually”.

[and]

“Generally it’s really, really quiet living here and you do feel safe”.

A similar sentiment was expressed by a number of Shadwell Plaza residents, who described “feeling safe in the neighbourhood” and having “never had any problems with ‘anti-social

behaviour' or anything like that". One respondent from Island Heights even saw the area, and its inhabitants, as less prone towards trouble than elsewhere in Tower Hamlets:

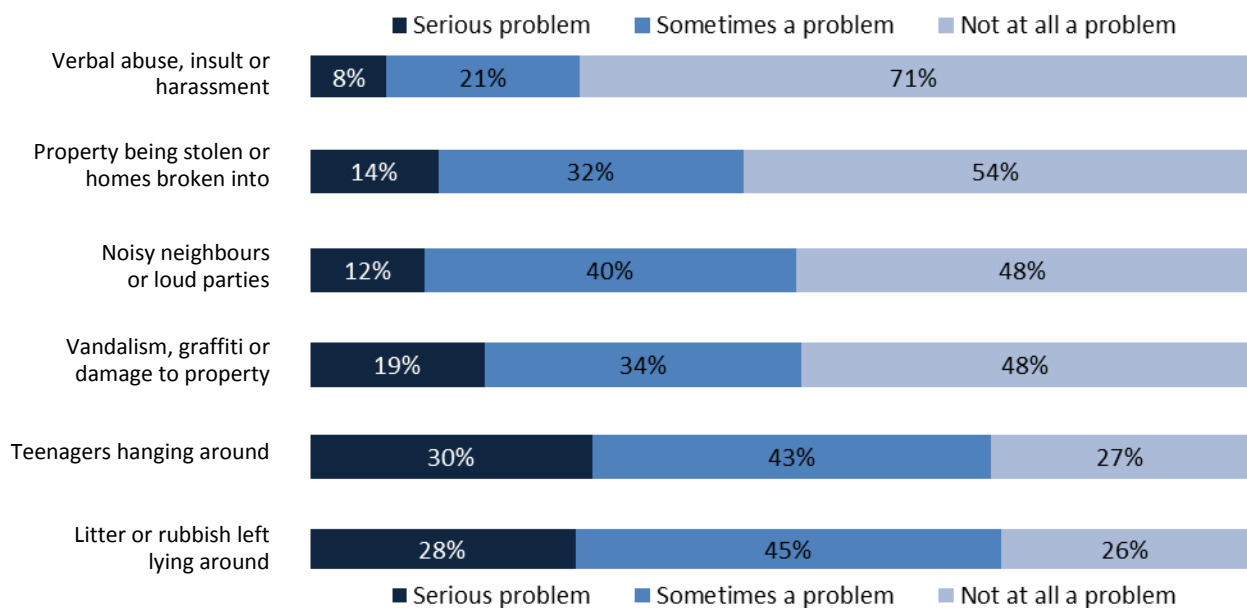
"People round here just aren't like that. Honestly, like, I've actually not seen any physical fights round here. Not like, for example, if you go to Stepney, Mile End, Whitechapel – there's always something going on there."

Another resident of Island Heights was conscious that the development's proximity to Canary Wharf likely enhanced the area's safety:

"It's near Canary Wharf, so it's safer because there's so many security guards"

The majority of responses therefore contrast directly with the image of lower-income inner city areas, especially those comprising high densities of social housing, as characterised by lawlessness and disorder.

**Figure 6.2: Perceptions of neighbourhood problems**



Needless to say, however, perceptions of safety and security were not universally positive. For some respondents, there was a 'matter-of-fact' awareness that security was not guaranteed outside the confines of the developments themselves:

"There's no doubt that, you know, outside of the Limehouse Wharf community, it's not the kind of tamest places and, you know, your car could nicked or broken into right, or you could get hassled on the street."

Responses were often framed through various contrasts between safety 'inside' and disorder 'outside'. One Shadwell Plaza shared owner described how "these flats feel safely

tucked away” whereas “sometimes it can be a bit chaotic outside”. Again, this was rationalised through the view that ‘problems’ – or even a degree of ‘chaos’ – were par-for-the-course for a ‘mixed’ inner-city neighbourhood:

“If you live this close into an inner city pretty deprived area, there are obviously quite a lot of people round here who have their fair share of problems.”

For a number of other respondents, therefore, perceived problems or risks ‘outside’ their housing development were rationalised either as being typical of any big-city context, or as one respondent put, as “true of anywhere in Tower Hamlets”.

However, for some residents negative perceptions of their local area went beyond detached or ‘pragmatic’ interpretations of potential risks, and instead were expressed in language that was more suggestive of a degree of fear. For instance, despite feeling ‘relative safe’, a young female resident of Limehouse Wharf clearly perceived there to be some potential danger associated with her walk home to the development:

“I feel relatively safe here because it's a short walk from the DLR and the chances of something happening to me in the five minutes that it takes me to walk from the DLR are slim. But I'm always looking over my shoulder and checking that no-one's following me.”

Another respondent, this time from Shadwell Plaza, explained the concern she had relating to her teenage son and the fear that he could get engaged in an altercation with local youths (which she later described as ‘gangs’):

“There's always this fear that they will try to challenge him and get him to fight or something. Because I have seen that outside, there was an ambulance once when some kid had gotten really beaten up.”

For some residents, therefore, perceptions of the areas ‘outside’ the case studies extended to more ‘active’ concern over potential danger.

In the course of a number of the interviews, residents also reflected upon first-hand experiences of crime or disorder. There was a wide range in the types and severity of the incidents described. For instance, vandalism or damage to property was generally discussed in matter-of-fact terms. One Shadwell Plaza shared owner described how;

“...there was a little bit of vandalism. It was just kids kind of hanging out in the stairwells, you know, a bit of graffiti and stuff.”

Residents of all three case study schemes mentioned similar (relatively) minor incidents

within or around the developments. Other residents mentioned incidents outside of the developments, involving noise, disorder, or occasionally violence. Again, some residents described such incidents as “just anti-social behaviour”, generally associated with local ‘kids hanging around’ the neighbourhood. However, for others these issues were viewed as more serious or threatening problems. For instance, a social renter from Shadwell Plaza – and long-term resident of the area – described witnessing a number of more serious crimes:

“I’ve witnessed a lot: Stabbings, people getting beaten-up, sex acts, prostitution, drug deals on a regular basis going on out there behind the garages. It’s not safe. What goes on at the back of these flats here, you would be appalled!”

Whilst such incidents were not commonly cited, there were a number of other references to violent crimes (including stabbings, muggings, and in one case a dog fight). Drugs, in particular, were discussed as a problem by a number of respondents. Once again, for some residents drug taking was viewed as relatively harmless, whereas for others it was clearly a greater source of concern, as the same respondent explained;

“It’s not very nice for my son to be walking along smelling weed. He knows what it is and he’s only four and a half.”

Another Shadwell Plaza resident – this time a shared owner – discussed problems of drug dealing in the street immediately outside the southernmost block of Shadwell Plaza, which she described as being “like out of [the US television drama] *The Wire*, something in Baltimore!”:

“I think there’s a dealing problem all around here. You see people who clearly don’t live here. You know? Kids leaning into cars on the corners as if people are asking for directions. And obviously it’s unpleasant if you live here, to think about the fact that people are selling heroin just in front of your house.”

Residents from Shadwell Plaza, in particular, had witnessed more serious forms of crime and disorder in the immediate vicinity of their developments.

Moreover, some respondents from Shadwell Plaza discussed these perceived problems of crime and disorder in implicit or explicitly racialised terms. A minority of these respondents discussed problems as being predominantly associated with ‘gangs’, comprising “large groups of Asian youths”. One respondent described how;

“you can’t walk [...] late at night, for fear of getting mugged or even attacked. You don’t know what they’re going to do when they’re drunk. And they all drink, all the Muslim kids drink and smoke [weed] around here.”



This respondent thus explicitly attributed anxieties regarding her safety to the conduct of the area's Muslim youth. Others drew more explicit links between disorderly behaviour and the conduct and characteristics of Bengali youths. As discussed in the previous section, one shared owner felt that residents of Shadwell Plaza – and women in particular – were a target for groups of younger Bengali boys:

“Their parents don't care where they are. They don't teach them any respect towards especially western women. So, you know, I've been harassed many times on the street.”

As the survey results (shown in Figure 6.2) suggest, abuse or harassment was by no means commonplace. Likewise, the perception that Bengali youth were a source for crime and disorder in the area was also by no means universally felt. In fact, some respondents held directly contrasting opinions. One respondent – also a young white British woman – offered the following reflection, speaking in the context of the recent London ‘riots’<sup>5</sup>:

“There's not going to be any trouble in Shadwell, there absolutely isn't. And I'll tell you why, because people respect their elders around here, and there's always a presence of some of the kind of older guys in the Bengali community who go and sit on the benches downstairs. I came home the second day of the riots and it was so placid here, it was ridiculous!”

Similarly, a Bengali respondent from Shadwell Plaza – a life-long resident of the area and a father of two young children – offered a contrasting reflection on the issue of discipline amongst local Bengali youths:

“Round here you're safer, with the background that I'm from, Bangladeshi, in the Muslim community, there's just more discipline with the kids.”

In this regard, there were, therefore, contrasting and conflicting opinions regarding the innate or naturalised characteristics of the area's young Bengalis.

Residents offered various other rationalisations for their experiences or perceptions of crime and disorder around the case study developments. However, one noteworthy inference was that new developments such as these may constitute a ‘target’ for acts of anti-social or criminal behaviour. One Island Heights respondent described how she perceived “quite a lot of sort of aggression by young people around here towards people [in the development]”. One Shadwell Plaza shared owner also explained problems faced in her development;

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<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Shadwell Plaza residents took place during November 2011, around three months after the protests, unrest and disturbances that had taken place in various areas of London in early August. According to The Guardian (2011a), no incidents took place in or around any of the three case study schemes, the nearest reported unrest being at least a mile further north in Bethnal Green.

“In our first year [2008], this particular development was targeted by gangs of youths. Vast numbers of them would just camp outside, harass residents if they were coming in, break into the building and vandalise it frequently, vandalise anything they could get their hands on. They’d steal our bikes regularly.”

The impression was thus that the developments and their inhabitants had been ‘targeted’ and – again in the case of Shadwell Plaza – that the physical space immediately outside the development was being occupied by disorderly youths. The same resident posited her own explanation as to why this was the case:

“My theory is that it was just new and shiny and flash. They seemed to particularly like to harass residents and vandalise this building. I guess they liked the novelty.”

This theory appears to be supported by some respondents’ perception that the situation had improved markedly in the three years since the development’s completion, because “over time it became less of a novelty so many of them have moved on”. It could be inferred, therefore, that sizeable and high-profile new housing developments, which contrasts physically and symbolically with the area’s existing built environment, and whose inhabitants constitute a different demographic to the areas predominant social mix, might attract certain forms of undesirable behaviour – whether out of ‘novelty’, or perhaps because of the potential opportunities for acquisitive crime. However, other residents posed a more practical explanation for peoples’ propensity to congregate around newly-built seating outside the development, due to the fact that it offered what one respondent jokingly described as “just a comfy place to loiter!”.

Lastly, a number of respondents reflected on measures which they had taken in an attempt to address the issues of disorder described above. Advocates of tenure mixing have implied that a ‘balanced’ social mix can engender ‘social control’ in response to problems of crime or disorder (Joseph et al. 2007). Sampson et al. (1997) have controversially argued that, when controlling for other neighbourhood-level characteristics, areas with a greater concentration of homeowners and residents from higher socioeconomic strata have greater levels of ‘collective efficacy’<sup>6</sup> when dealing with crime. Sampson’s argument – which has been widely (and critically) discussed within literature on ‘mixed communities’ (Cole and Goodchild 2001, Uitermark 2003, Joseph 2006, Joseph et al. 2007) – therefore proffers that more affluent

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<sup>6</sup> Collective efficacy is defined here as the “the capacity of residents to control group-level processes and visible signs of social disorder” (Sampson et al. 1997:918), primarily through “the willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good” (1997:919).

residents will be pro-active (and effective) in addressing locally experienced problems. The interview responses presented above already appear to imply that these residents did not hold especially strong sentiments towards their own 'collective efficacy'. Some respondents did, however, discuss measures they had taken in attempt to address problems of crime or disorder. One Shadwell Plaza shared owner discussed her experience of calling the Police after witnessing a mugging from her window. The Police attended the incident, but the aftermath of this had implications for the respondent, when the perpetrators began to 'harass' her, mainly by throwing stones at her window;

"They knew I had called the police on them so they were just trying to hound me out of the flat. It was just at the time they started really harassing us".

The same respondent also described her experience of attempting to elicit a response to this problem from the local police:

"They were positively uninterested in coming. I think their position was, you know, we're some rich people in their ivory tower complaining about innocent kids frolicking outside. But they weren't just innocent kids outside. They were attacking us! But we didn't get taken seriously at all."

This respondents' account appears to directly contract the main assumptions behind the 'collective efficacy' rationale for mixed communities, in which it is implied that homeowners tend to be more adept at eliciting help from Police and other authorities. In this instance, the respondent felt that her perceived situation in the "ivory tower" of one of Shadwell Plaza's all-private blocks meant she was taken *less* seriously as a complainant.

In summary, therefore, residents gave mixed and oftentimes conflicting accounts of crime, disorder and safety within the three case study neighbourhoods. Most felt safe and, if they did experience problems, these were either considered to be minor or not out-of-the-ordinary for an inner-city neighbourhood. For a number of residents, however, the neighbourhood was perceived to be problematic in terms of crime or disorder and for some this was a source of fear. These responses pose a number of critical questions in terms of the normative and instrumental conceptions of 'mixed communities' as implicitly associated with fewer problems of crime (ODPM 2005d:39). Firstly, crime or disorder were almost universally discussed as problems 'outside' the developments, and were sometimes associated with 'othered' groups within the neighbourhood (young people, Muslims, Bengalis, gangs, drug users, or some conflation of all these). Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:105) discuss how higher-income residents of mixed-tenure housing are expected to become

‘neighbourhood stalwarts’. However, one could certainly infer that some residents’ dismissal of the ‘outside’ neighbourhood(s) as inherently unsafe – and sometimes even hostile towards the developments themselves – did not appear suggestive of such an ‘active’ role in this regard. Indeed, in arguing for the inhibiting effects of these problems, Power (2007:193) goes as far as to state that “disorder creates an almost insuperable barrier to mixed communities”. Of course, negative perceptions of crime and disorder were by no means held by all residents of the case study schemes. Moreover, and as Flint (2004:906) reminds us, wider Government policy discourses themselves have a role to play in their “symbolic attribution of distinct moral and ethical values” (such as a tendency towards ‘anti-social behaviour’) to particular sections of society (such as inhabitants of social housing). Whatever the implications of residents’ perceptions of their own ‘mixed communities’ as places of occasional disorder, there is little evidence here to suggest that tenure mixing in these contexts has led to collective efforts to exercise social control. In reality, residents appear instead to be resigned to the fact that inner-city neighbourhoods involve an element of risk – with some respondents even suggesting that their mixed-tenure developments constituted targets, or at least foci, for certain incidents of criminal or disorderly behaviour.

## V. Conclusions

This exploratory analysis of residents’ engagements with and perceptions towards the neighbourhoods surrounding the case study mixed-tenure schemes raises a number of questions – whether regarding propositions that tenure mixing might create more ‘sustainable communities’, or regarding the broader relationships between new housing development and surrounding areas. Firstly, whilst respondents generally expressed positive sentiments toward their local area, in terms of shopping, leisure or other routine activities, the amenity value of the case study neighbourhoods was often discussed in terms of their proximity to *other* areas (such as Canary Wharf, the City or Wapping). It is understandable that residents would value easy access or proximity to their places of work or preferred venues for leisure and consumption. But the fact that many respondents – mostly, but not exclusively, owners or shared owners – talked about their neighbourhood in terms of its geographical relationships to other (more affluent or gentrified) areas does raise questions regarding the potential for ‘mixed communities’ to engender a deeper sense of belonging or attachment to the immediate local area. The fact that the daily lives of most respondents were centred outside the immediate vicinity of the case study developments mirrors more critical findings from previous research in this regard (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000).

Secondly, and in relation to the first set of findings, it appears that locally-oriented amenities and facilities do not play a major part in the social life of these neighbourhoods, at least from the perspective of a majority of respondents. Not all of the case study areas did comprise a range of local shops and services, and in the case of both Limehouse Wharf and Island Heights owners and social renters appeared equally likely to use better served nearby areas (especially Canary Wharf) for shopping or leisure, turning to local convenience shops or 'metro' supermarkets only out of occasional necessity. In contrast, the area immediately around Shadwell Plaza offers a plethora of convenience stores, specialist food shops and supermarkets, alongside various public and commercial service outlets, and a number of larger high street retailers. Residents generally made use of these local shops and services, and most valued them as a local amenity, although a number of residents admitted that their 'main' shopping was still done elsewhere. However, local venues for leisure or socialising – such as the pub or cafes – were barely used by any of the respondents. In this case, Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000) observation that socially-mixed neighbourhoods will not satisfy the aspirations of higher-income residents appears to hold. Moreover, the nearby community centres adjacent to Shadwell Plaza and Island Heights – both of which were built as part of the mixed-tenure housing developments – were barely used by respondents (including social renters, which Atkinson and Kintrea suggest are more likely to make use of these facilities). Whilst these community centres do provide a resource for some young people, they do not constitute a venue in which adults from different backgrounds or tenures were likely to mix, for the simple fact that few people appeared to frequent them. This finding therefore raises questions surrounding the normative claims that 'mixed communities' will either lead to a better demand for local services and facilities, or that these amenities will constitute a venue for social mixing or a focus for community activities (DTLR 2001). In turn, however, the changing housing mix in the case study areas did not appear to constitute a significant pressure for the 'gentrification' of shops or services (Davidson 2008), as 'middle class' demand was oriented more towards areas further afield.

Thirdly, interview responses suggest that the case study 'mixed communities' are not universally perceived as sites of ethnic 'cohesion'. Whilst the majority of respondents did describe these neighbourhoods as being characterised by acceptance and 'rubbing along' between residents from different backgrounds – there was little evidence of inter-ethnic mixing, especially between British Bangladeshis and those from other backgrounds. As Kleit (2005) observed, linguistic and cultural differences may in fact constitute barriers towards

interaction or engagement within the 'public realm' of socially-mixed housing contexts. This appears equally true of the wider neighbourhoods surrounding the three case study schemes. On the whole, diversity was valued by most respondents – some, however, discussed tensions or even conflicts along lines of racial/ethnic difference, in particular for the area around Shadwell Plaza. Some respondents perceived the area to be 'dominated' by the Bengali community, whilst a minority of responses bordered on overt racism. Following Amin (2002) and Robinson (2005), the insights from residents of the case study 'mixed communities' generally appear to further undermine the claims advanced by 'community cohesion' rhetoric, which suggest that housing mix can engender more harmonious race relations or greater inter-ethnic mixing. As Amin (2002) concludes, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods are neither immune to racism, nor do they guarantee greater engagement or interaction between groups from different backgrounds.

Finally, residents offered mixed opinions on the issue of crime and disorder within the case study neighbourhoods. The general picture suggests that most residents felt safe in these areas and that more serious forms of crime were only experienced by a small minority, whilst more commonplace forms of nuisance or disorder were generally normalised as an unavoidable aspect of inner-city living. On the other hand, for some residents crime and 'anti-social behaviour' was a more serious source of concern, frustration, or in some cases fear. These respondents had generally witnessed or experienced more serious incidents including harassment, drug use/dealing, theft, or assault. For these respondents, the area 'outside' their developments was seen – to a varying degree – as disorderly, chaotic, and risky. The source of this disorder was often attributed to particular groups (in the case of Shadwell Plaza, 'gangs' of Asian youths). Such negative perceptions were by no means representative of all residents – nor did the reported incidents of disorder necessarily constitute the "insuperable barrier to mixed communities" that Power (2007:193) describes. These insights do, however, raise major questions regarding the potential for 'mixed communities' to "assist community surveillance", as the Government claimed (DTLR 2001). Rather than engendering greater 'collective efficacy' in response to problems of crime and disorder, some residents in the case study schemes felt that they were taken *less* seriously by police as residents of new-build developments. Rather than constituting a beachhead from which middle class homeowners could stage effective efforts to prevent crime or disorder in their local areas, some residents even felt that their developments constituted a 'target' for anti-social behaviour.

## Chapter Seven: Interpersonal Interactions and Social Relations

This chapter examines social relations within recently built, high-density, inner-city mixed-tenure housing schemes, based on insights into the interpersonal interactions and relationships between residents of the three case study developments. The rationale for such an engagement in this chapter – and indeed within the thesis as a whole – is threefold: Firstly, policy discourse on tenure mixing “implicitly suggests a degree of positive social interaction” (2001:352). In fact, the notion of ‘inclusion’ within mixed-tenure is largely premised on the assumption that relationships will connect lower-income social renters with higher-income homeowners (Camina and Wood 2009:470), whilst the ‘active inclusion’ proposition holds that these ‘social networks’ may afford access to opportunity enhancing information, resources or support (Joseph et al. 2007:379). Secondly, and despite these ambitious claims for positive interaction, there remains a lack of empirical insights into social relations in newly purpose-built mixed-tenure housing. Existing research has examined relationships between inhabitants of new-build developments and residents of surrounding neighbourhoods (Davidson 2010) – whilst others have looked at interpersonal interactions in the context of ‘mature’ schemes (Camina and Wood 2009), former local authority estates (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000), or peri-urban developments (Jupp 1999). However, there is a paucity of research into social relations within recently purpose-built, inner-city, mixed-tenure housing schemes, such as those examined here. Thirdly, relations between neighbours arguably remain a potentially important facet of peoples’ daily lives (Crow et al. 2002), despite of claims for the decreasing significance of neighbourhood-based social contacts (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999, Wellman 1999). A broad-based definition of ‘neighbouring’ – incorporating ‘friendly distance’, face-to-face interaction, personal ties, and mutual support – arguably still applies to many peoples’ experiences and expectations of urban life. This chapter therefore seeks to respond to these three concerns, by offering a critical examination of the assertion that ‘positive’ interaction can be engendered through tenure mixing, based on an exploratory illumination of the empirical ‘black box’ of social relations in these particular form of mixed-tenure development, and with a view towards exploring the broader substantive importance of ‘neighbouring’ in contemporary urban contexts.

The analysis in this chapter is based on a synchronous deployment of data from the residents’ survey and interviews, so as to provide both a general picture of interactions and

acquaintanceships between residents and a closer engagement with residents' experience of and attitudes towards social relations in the case study schemes. Survey respondents were asked to report the frequency with which they engaged in interactions ranging from casual greetings and conversations struck-up in passing, to social visits to other residents' properties and exchanges of favours or support. Based on a similarly broad conception of 'acquaintanceship', survey respondents were also asked whether they knew the first names of other residents, or recognised them well enough to greet in passing. Interview discussion then picked up upon a broad range of experiences and subjectivities concerning respondents' neighbourhood-based interactions and relationships. In the course of these discussions, respondents' not only elaborated upon the nature of their social contacts and relations, but also proffered a range of explanations for the frequency and extent of interactions which they had experienced or observed in the day-to-day life of their development. Based on these insights, this chapter is focused on presenting a general (albeit by no means generalisable) picture of social relations *across* the three case study schemes. As such, substantive differences between the three developments are rarely discussed – in part because few idiosyncratic variations were apparent, but also so as not to risk obfuscating a broader-based account of the 'social life' of these forms of housing scheme.

The structure of the chapter proceeds as follows. Section one examines residents' 'networks' of acquaintanceships. A focus on 'acquaintance'-based networks is adopted here, so as to avoid imbuing social relations with the normative or instrumental qualities associated with 'social networks'. This section firstly explores the 'propinquitous' acquaintanceships between near neighbours, before turning to examine the broader social and physical 'extent' of residents' acquaintanceship networks within the schemes as a whole. Section two then offers a more detailed analysis of the nature of interpersonal interactions between residents of the case study schemes. This section explores respondents' experiences of interactions ranging from casual greetings and conversations struck-up in passing, to closer contacts based on friendships or instrumental exchanges of help or support. Throughout the chapter, particular attention is paid to those factors identified by respondents as potentially enabling or constraining contacts or relationships between residents – including individual and lifestyle characteristics, personal volition, physical proximity, and design factors. This chapter thereby presents a broad-based picture of social relations in these forms of mixed-tenure development mixed-tenure housing, based on the experiences and perceptions of residents from the three case study schemes.



## I. Acquaintance Networks

This section presents an overall picture of acquaintanceships between residents of the three case study schemes. The rationale for ‘active inclusion’ through tenure mixing posits that access to extensive and diverse ‘social networks’ may provide lower-income residents of mixed-tenure housing with additional opportunities and resources. The relational qualities of life in ‘mixed communities’ have therefore become a key concern for observers, as is critically discussed in Chapter Two. More broadly, urban sociologists have long been concerned with the apparent tendency of city-dwellers to be acquainted with a small and declining proportion of their neighbours (for instance, Simmel 1901[1997], Wirth 1938, Sennett 1977). Based on survey responses relating to residents’ familiarity with their immediate next-door neighbours and, more broadly, with other residents within the developments as a whole – coupled with insights from interview responses – this section explores the nature of ‘acquaintance networks’ within the case study schemes. The more neutral term ‘acquaintance network’ is used here in place of ‘social network’ – as an admittedly crude reference to the other residents known to respondents (Freudenburg 1986:30) – rather than to imply any conceptual or normative association with the use of the term ‘network’ in discussions of social capital. This section firstly explores the role of physical proximity or ‘propinquity’ in fostering acquaintanceships between near-neighbours, before turning to consider the whether more physically diffuse or ‘extensive’ acquaintance networks can be observed across the case study developments.

### Propinquitous Acquaintanceships

Propinquity is a key factor when considering social relations in residential contexts. Nearness is intrinsic to the etymology of the term ‘neighbour’ and the fact of dwelling in close physical proximity is perhaps the only universally agreed-upon feature of ‘neighbouring’. As Abram’s seminal account of neighbouring relationships concludes, “neighbours are quite simply people who live near one another” (Abrams, 1989 - cited in Painter 2012:523). It is this state of propinquity which arguably enables the formation of social relationships – whether ‘good’ or ‘bad’ – between neighbours. In very general terms, it is possible to identify two competing propositions regarding the substantive nature and importance of social relations between near-neighbours. On the one hand, it has been argued that social relationships have been ‘liberated’ from their ties to particular localities – such as urban neighbourhoods – and that peoples’ social lives are no longer dependent on densely concentrated networks of propinquitous social contacts (Wellman 1979:1207). Such a position can either invoke

lamentations for the ‘loss’ of the sort of close-knit neighbourhoods celebrated by classic ‘community studies’ (cf. Willmott and Young 1957), or celebrations for the emancipatory potential of de-territorialised ‘communities of interest’ (Wellman 1999). Yet, on the other hand, it has been argued that locally-based communities remain of central importance to society – as typified by neo-communitarian logics underlying New Labour politics (Rose 2000), or equally, the current Government’s advocacy of ‘Big Society’ (Pattie and Johnston 2011). Indeed, support of the latter proposition is heavily implicit within policy discourse on social mix and ‘mixed communities’. A key question is therefore whether the ‘social life’ of mixed-tenure housing, especially that built to high densities in inner-city locales, is characterised by atomisation and anomie, or whether propinquitous relations do indeed form between near neighbours.

Painter’s (2012:524) recent review of the ‘politics of neighbouring’ concludes that “in highly urbanized societies the neighbour as near-dweller is typically neither a friend, nor a stranger, nor an enemy, *but an unknown*” (emphasis added). As a cursory measure of the propinquitous acquaintances held by residents of the case study mixed-tenure schemes, respondents were asked whether they knew the first names of one or more of their next-door neighbours. Forty-three per cent answered that they did not know any of their immediate neighbours by name (see Table 7.1). The interviews suggested that feelings towards this apparent state of anonymity were generally agnostic. One Limehouse Wharf private renter, who had lived alone in the development for two years, matter-of-factly stated that “I’ve got no idea who my neighbours are, I’ve just never met them”. Whilst another resident simply stated that “I don’t know any of the others, to be honest I don’t know anyone’s first name”. However, one should perhaps be cautious in drawing conclusions regarding the ‘atomistic’ nature of the case study schemes, despite the impression of relative anonymity even amongst adjacent neighbours. Interview responses suggested that physical proximity did foster a degree of familiarity between many residents. For instance, as one Shadwell Plaza shared owner replied, “I know most of the people on my floor by sight, just don’t necessarily know their names”. Similarly – recalling the survey question – a number of other interview respondents explained how they knew their neighbours by sight rather than name. Propinquity did not therefore constitute a guarantee of acquaintanceship (although, as the discussion later in this chapter outlines, most ‘close’ social relationships did form between near neighbours). On the other hand, most residents did not describe a situation akin to social ‘atomisation’ in the case study schemes.

**Table 7.1: Propinquitous acquaintanceships (between tenures-groups)**

		<b>Do you know the first name(s) of one or more of your next-door neighbours?</b>	
		No	Yes
<b>Tenure</b>	Market rate	47% (20)	53% (23)
	Intermediate rent/buy	31% (18)	69% (40)
	Social rent	54% (26)	46% (22)
<b>Total</b>		43% (64)	57% (85)

Arriving at a fuller picture of the role of propinquity in fostering acquaintances between residents therefore poses some considerable challenges. Kleit's (2005:1435) study of social relations in a purpose built mixed-tenure scheme in Seattle asserts the importance of proximity, with around one-third of the social ties reported to be between immediate neighbours. However, whilst residents were most likely to mix with those who lived nearby, other factors also came into play – not least of which was housing tenure, upon which the propinquity of social ties was found to be strongly dependent (Kleit 2005:1436). Specifically, owner-occupiers were found to have the highest proportion of proximate acquaintanceships, followed closely by social renters. Occupants of intermediate tenure properties – namely, in this case, those subsidised by tax credits – had more geographically dispersed acquaintance networks. Similarly, across the three London case study schemes, housing tenure<sup>1</sup> was amongst the only variables found to have a significant association with knowing with one's immediate neighbours (see Table 7.1 above). However, the relationship was somewhat different to that observed by Kleit (2005:1434), with those from intermediate tenures having the highest level of reported familiarity with their neighbours (more than two-thirds), followed by more than half market rate tenures and slightly less than half of social renters (see Table 7.1). Acquaintance with one's immediate neighbours was not found to vary according to individual characteristics such as age<sup>2</sup>, gender<sup>3</sup> and employment status<sup>4</sup>. Similarly – and in contrast to evidence that children play a role in fostering relations between immediate neighbours in mixed-tenure contexts (see, for instance Arthurson

<sup>1</sup>  $p = 0.05$  (Chi-square = 6.05, 2 d.f.)

<sup>2</sup>  $p = 0.20$  (Mann-Whitney = 2285,  $Z = 1.28$ )

<sup>3</sup>  $p = 0.95$  (Chi-square = 0.01, 1 d.f.)

<sup>4</sup>  $p = 0.91$  (Chi-square = 0.01, 1 d.f.)

2010:57) – neither was having children<sup>5</sup>, nor living alone<sup>6</sup>, significantly associated with whether or not respondents were acquainted with their immediate neighbours.

As one might expect with the formation of any social relationship, it is therefore as difficult as it is problematic to arrive at any concrete determinants of the extent of respondents' acquaintances with their near neighbours. Variations according to tenure are suggestive of a higher degree of atomisation amongst social renters, although any such trends need fuller examination – as is offered in the final section of this chapter – before conclusions can safely be drawn. Instead, it is argued here that the role of individual volition – coupled with the opportunities afforded by physical proximity – best explains whether or not one will become acquainted with their neighbours in high-density flatted schemes such as these. In this regard, the conduct of residents was the most widely discussed factor in the formation of relationships between near neighbours. A number of interview respondents reflected on efforts they made to initiate social contact with their immediate neighbours after moving into their homes. For instance, one Shadwell Plaza owner-occupier described how;

“I was the one to go out and introduce myself when I moved in, at least to my immediate neighbours on this floor. I went out of my way to invite them to my flat warming party”.

Similarly, an Island Heights shared owner described how he and his partner made an effort to initiate contact with other residents on their floor – “we literally just wrote a piece of paper and then put it under everybody's doors, because we wanted to meet up socially”. Whilst another Shadwell Plaza shared owner described “knocking round doors on this floor, seeing if anyone wanted to go for a drink”. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the initial act of ‘reaching out’ to ones’ immediate neighbours was thus the most commonly discussed factor in the formation of propinquitous acquaintanceships between residents.

Whether or not one is acquainted with their immediate neighbours appears largely as a matter of individual volition – in terms make the decision and necessary steps towards initiating contact – which were described nicely, in the words of one respondent, as a matter of ‘vivaciousness’. What is less clear, however, is whether tenure or other ‘structural’ factors might also play a role in the formation of propinquitous acquaintanceships. On the one hand, the survey data suggests that social renters are least likely to know the names of their immediate neighbours. Yet this finding is the inverse of what Kleit (2005:1434) observed,

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<sup>5</sup>  $p = 0.58$  (Chi-square = 0.31, 1 d.f.)

<sup>6</sup>  $p = 0.29$  (Chi-square = 1.10, 1 d.f.)

whereby occupants of intermediate tenure properties had the fewest physically proximate acquaintances (as opposed to the most, as was observed in our data). On the other hand, the anecdotal insights from interview respondents suggest that the practice of initiating social contact with neighbours was largely the domain of owners or shared owners. Of the eight social renting households interviewed, none mentioned taking similar steps to make contact with their neighbours. Yet, in contrast Davidson's (2010:536) critical account of social mixing in gentrifying London neighbourhoods suggests that 'middle class' sentiments towards neighbouring are characterised by "liberal detachment/obliviousness". Ultimately, therefore, attributing a propensity towards acquaintance-forming to any particular tenure group appears both difficult and arguably futile in the face of confused and conflicting evidence. What is clearer, however, is the potentially important role played by physical proximity in enabling initial social contacts between neighbours. Indeed, other studies of UK mixed-tenure developments have found that living next-door is by far the most commonly reported factor in getting to know other residents (Jupp 1999:45). The importance of this observation should not be overlooked, especially considering that all of the three case study schemes examined here were designed to ensure that social rented properties were never situated next door to other housing tenures. Amongst those respondents who did report to be on first-name terms with their immediate neighbours, we can thereby deduce that none of these acquaintanceships crosses the 'tenure divide' engineered into these schemes. If tenure does therefore have a role to play as an intervening factor in the formation of propinquitous relationships – it is most likely complicated by the fact that, as Chapter Five argues, schemes such as these appear to be designed to ensure that physical proximity also equates to a degree of social proximity.

### **The Extent of Acquaintanceships**

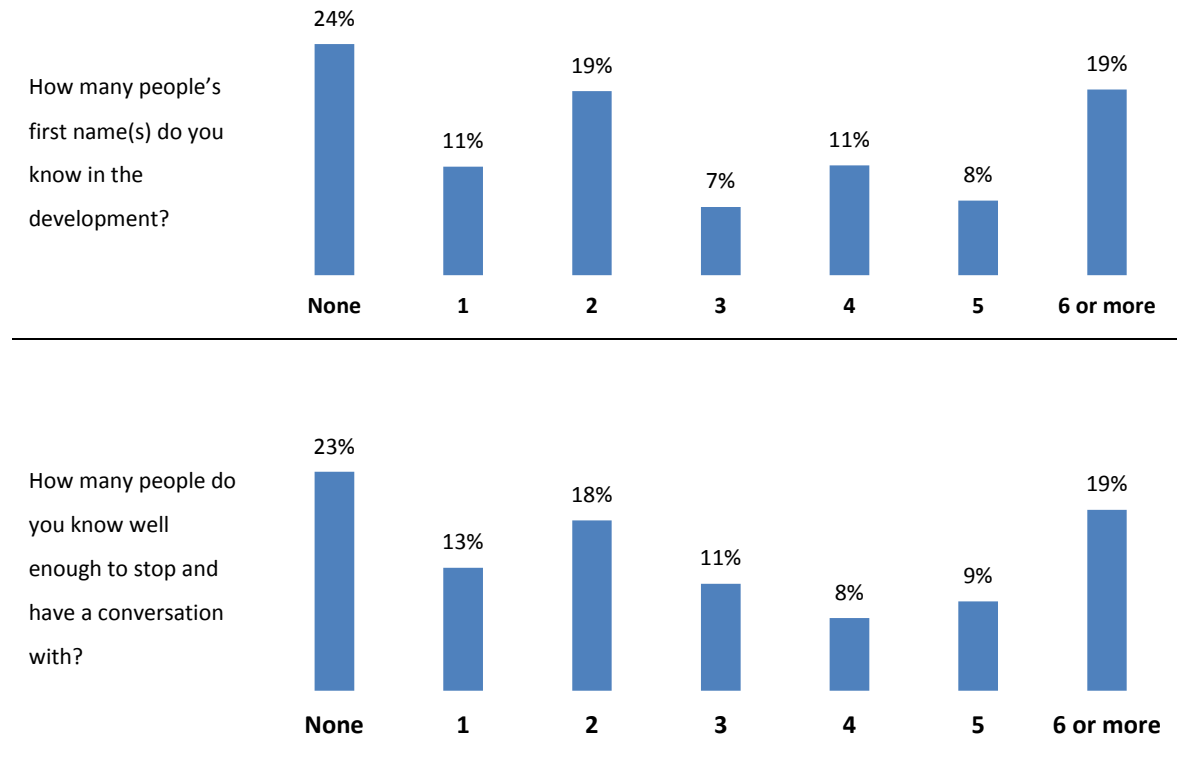
This section now turns to consider the extent of residents' acquaintanceship networks in the three case study schemes. A more 'extensive' network of social contacts – both in terms of the number of acquaintances and of the relative diffusion of these contacts in terms of social or physical distance – can arguably be seen as a necessary pre-requisite to the promise of 'active inclusion' envisaged by advocates of 'mixed communities' (Camina and Wood 2009:470). As outlined in Chapter Two, the 'active inclusion' proposition for tenure mixing holds that residents will benefit from their participation in extensive 'social networks', comprising 'bridging' ties between acquaintances from different socioeconomic backgrounds. These inclusionary 'networks' of social contacts must arguably satisfy at least

three basic requirements in order to maximise their members' exposure to new and varied opportunities and influences. Firstly, they must be reasonably extensive in numbers. Secondly, they must also be relatively socially diverse in terms of their membership. Thirdly – and considering the design strategies adopted for these sorts of mixed-tenure developments – residents' networks of acquaintanceships must also be relatively spatially diffuse, in order to satisfy the characteristics of social diversity within schemes where different tenure groups are kept physically separate. The previous section, however, appears to support others' findings regarding the importance of physical proximity in the formation of acquaintances between residents (Jupp 1999:43, Kleit 2005:1435, Chaskin and Joseph 2011:221). This section therefore considers whether the overall picture of residents' acquaintanceship networks suggests that these might extend beyond ties with immediate neighbours. The next section of this chapter then turns to consider the nature of interpersonal contacts between residents in more detail, and the mechanisms through which acquaintanceships or relationships might form.

Firstly, survey respondents were asked to estimate the total number of other residents they were on first-name terms with. Secondly, respondents were asked to estimate the number of other residents they knew well enough to stop and engage in conversation. Together, responses to these questions offer an (admittedly crude) measure of the extent of respondents' networks of acquaintanceships – based on the assumption that a degree of familiarity can be construed from knowing somebody's first name and/or knowing a fellow resident well enough to engage in conversation. As illustrated in Figure 7.1 (below), the highest single proportion of respondents reported not to know anyone else's first name (24%), nor to know any other residents well enough to in engaging in passing conversation with (23%). A sizeable proportion of respondents therefore had no acquaintance network to speak of within the development itself. As a comparator, a somewhat-striking ninety four per cent of respondents from Jupp's (1999:38) ten UK case studies knew at least one other resident's first name, with around forty per cent knowing the names of more than five other residents (compared to twenty eight per cent of respondents from our case study schemes). A similarly low eight per cent of residents from Chaskin and Joseph's (2011:218) Chicago case study reportedly did not know any other residents well enough to converse with – whilst sixty per cent reported to have more than five discussants (compared to twenty eight per cent of respondents from our case study schemes). Once again, however, residents of the case study schemes were generally matter-of-fact about their lack of extensive social

contacts. As one Shadwell Plaza shared owner explained, “sure, there's a couple of people I know by sight, some people I see and nod to – I just don't know them by name”.

**Figure 7.1: The extent of acquaintanceship networks**



Variations in both the total number of named contacts<sup>7</sup> and the number of discussants identified<sup>8</sup> were associated with housing tenure. As Table 7.2 illustrates, a higher proportion of intermediate tenure (55%) and social renting respondents (52%) could identify at least three people within their development who they knew well enough to stop and have a conversation with, compared to less than one-third of market rate respondents (30%). Market rate owner-occupiers and renters thus have a significantly lower number of discussants than those living in ‘affordable’ tenure properties. The market rate tenure group also had the lowest proportion of respondents who knew the first names of at least three other residents (35%), compared to social renters (41%) and shared owners/renters (56%). Again, whilst this offers only a crude picture of residents’ acquaintanceship networks, it does suggest that variations are likely to be seen between tenures.

<sup>7</sup>  $p = 0.08$  (Chi-square = 4.98, 2 d.f.)

<sup>8</sup>  $p = 0.03$  (Chi-square = 6.91, 2 d.f.)

**Table 7.2: The extent of acquaintanceship networks (between tenure groups)**

		How many people do you know well enough to have a conversation with?		How many people's first name(s) do you know?	
		0 to 2	3 or more	0 to 2	3 or more
<b>Tenure</b>	Market rate	70% (30)	30% (13)	65% (28)	35% (15)
	Intermediate rent/buy	45% (26)	55% (32)	44% (25)	56% (32)
	Social rent	48% (23)	52% (25)	59% (29)	41% (20)
<b>Total</b>		53% (79)	47% (70)	55% (82)	45% (67)

Interviewees offered some elaboration on the generally limited extent of many residents' social contacts within their developments. Some respondents cited the pressures of work and an accompanying daily routine that was centred away from the development as a factor in not knowing any other residents – as a Limehouse Wharf private-renter explained with regards to his job in Canary Wharf:

“I’m often away. I go to work early, you know, and come back late and just do my thing here. So I’ve just – I’ve never really met any other people.”

Other respondents described “keeping themselves to themselves”, or a desire for privacy or “down time” when in and around their flat. Such responses – whilst no means universally representative of all working respondents – do appear to echo other researchers’ observation that those in full-time work, especially ‘professional’ home-owners, tend to lead busy lives that are not tied to the neighbourhood and leave few opportunities for mixing with neighbours (Jupp 1999:41, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000:98, Arthurson 2010:58).

However, it must be noted from the survey data that individual characteristics such as education<sup>9</sup> or employment status<sup>10</sup> were not significantly associated with either measure of the extent of acquaintance networks. A few respondents also appeared to lament the apparent absence of extensive social ties within their development. One Limehouse Wharf resident described feeling ‘invisible’, whilst another explained how she knew her immediate next-door neighbours, but “would really like to know the other residents a lot more”. Whilst

<sup>9</sup> **Total number of first-name contacts**  $p = 0.48$  (Chi-square = 0.08, 1 d.f.) / **Total number of discussants**  $p = 0.78$  (Chi-square = 0.49, 1 d.f.)

<sup>10</sup> **Total number of first-name contacts**  $p = 0.32$  (Chi-square = 0.99, 1 d.f.) / **Total number of discussants**  $p = 0.37$  (Chi-square = 0.80, 1 d.f.)



in contrast, other respondents challenged the atomised impression given by the survey data, such as this Shadwell Plaza shared owner:

“There's probably another five or six people that I'd stop to talk to, and would have a bit of a sense of what they do or what's going on in their lives, and then there's maybe another three or four people that I recognise and it's more kind of a bit of a nod and a smile [in passing]”

Once again, the situation does not therefore appear sufficiently clear-cut to simply conclude that the case study schemes are universally characterised by ‘atomistic’ social relations.

As Camina and Wood (2009:470) also observed in their study of ‘mature’ mixed-tenure housing schemes, length of residence appeared as one factor which had a notable bearing over the development of more extensive acquaintanceship networks. Respondents from our case studies who had lived in the development longer did, on average, have a greater extent of discussant contacts<sup>11</sup> and knew a greater number of other residents by name<sup>12</sup>. As a Limehouse Wharf shared owner, who had lived in their flat for three years, commented:

“I know one or two other people but, generally, you don't know everybody in the block. It takes time and we probably need a bit more.”

Other respondents reflected on the fact that their acquaintanceships were generally formed amongst a group of other residents who had moved in immediately after the completion of the development. For instance, as one Shadwell Plaza shared owner described:

“People are generally most friendly amongst the guys who bought in the beginning. Because we all pretty much knew each other from then.”

Moreover, respondents also reflected on the effect that perceived transience might have on the formation of social ties, as implied by this response from a Shadwell Plaza shared owner:

“I always see lots of people that I have never seen before. We've been here three and a half years, so it's been that long and there's still people that I will bump into that I have not seen before.”

Residents therefore appeared to acknowledge the role played by time in establishing and broadening a network of acquaintanceships within their developments. Whilst obvious in some respects, this observation does challenge the assumption that broad ‘social networks’ can necessarily be ‘engineered’ in newly-built mixed-tenure schemes.

A final point must be made to once again assert the importance of individual actions, volition

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<sup>11</sup> Pearson's  $r = 0.25$

<sup>12</sup> Pearson's  $r = 0.20$

and preferences in establishing acquaintanceships within these residential developments. As discussed in the previous section, the decision to 'reach out' and initiate ties with other residents was, needless to say, a key factor in the extent of individual's acquaintanceship networks. As one respondent explained, the only people she knew anyone from her three years in Shadwell Plaza were the result of being invited to a neighbour's 'flat warming' party:

"I know the name of a few other people, but that's only because one guy actually made the effort to invite a few of us – that he'd bumped into on his first week here – to their flat warming party. That was three years ago!"

The potential significance of 'reaching out' is twofold. Firstly, the distribution and separation of tenures again makes it far more feasible for people to initiate contact with those in their particular block – which, in all but a handful of instances, means households of the same tenure. As a Shadwell Plaza resident, whose property was in a block comprising a mix of shared ownership and social rented properties, described:

"The residents I've got to know are mainly on this floor, where the people have generally bought their properties, or they're professionals that are renting"

Secondly, it has been argued that individual volition may make people more inclined to 'reach out' to other residents who they perceived to be of a similar background (2010:113). This is explained, variously, through preferences for 'homophily' (Kleit 2005:1415), or the 'symbolic capital' associated with class (Davidson 2010:537). Without wanting to unfairly attribute a modicum of 'snobbery' to residents of the case study schemes – and given that this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter – it is simply worth noting here that some residents' accounts of their acquaintance networks suggestive of a degree of homogeneity. As one Shadwell Plaza shared owner bluntly stated, "most of the people I know, they work in the City or, you know, they're professionals".

Overall, therefore, there was little evidence from across the three case study schemes to indicate the widespread formation of extensive networks of acquaintanceships. Despite the fact that physical proximity was perceived to be a key factor in the formation of acquaintanceships, nearly half of all respondents were unable to name their immediate next-door neighbour(s). Whilst within the developments as a whole, less than half of all respondents could name at least three other residents and a quarter felt that there was nobody in their development that they recognised well enough to engage in passing conversation. Ultimately, the 'active inclusion' rationale for tenure mixing posits that relatively extensive and socially diverse networks of acquaintanceships will form between residents from different tenure groups. However, from these case study examples of newly

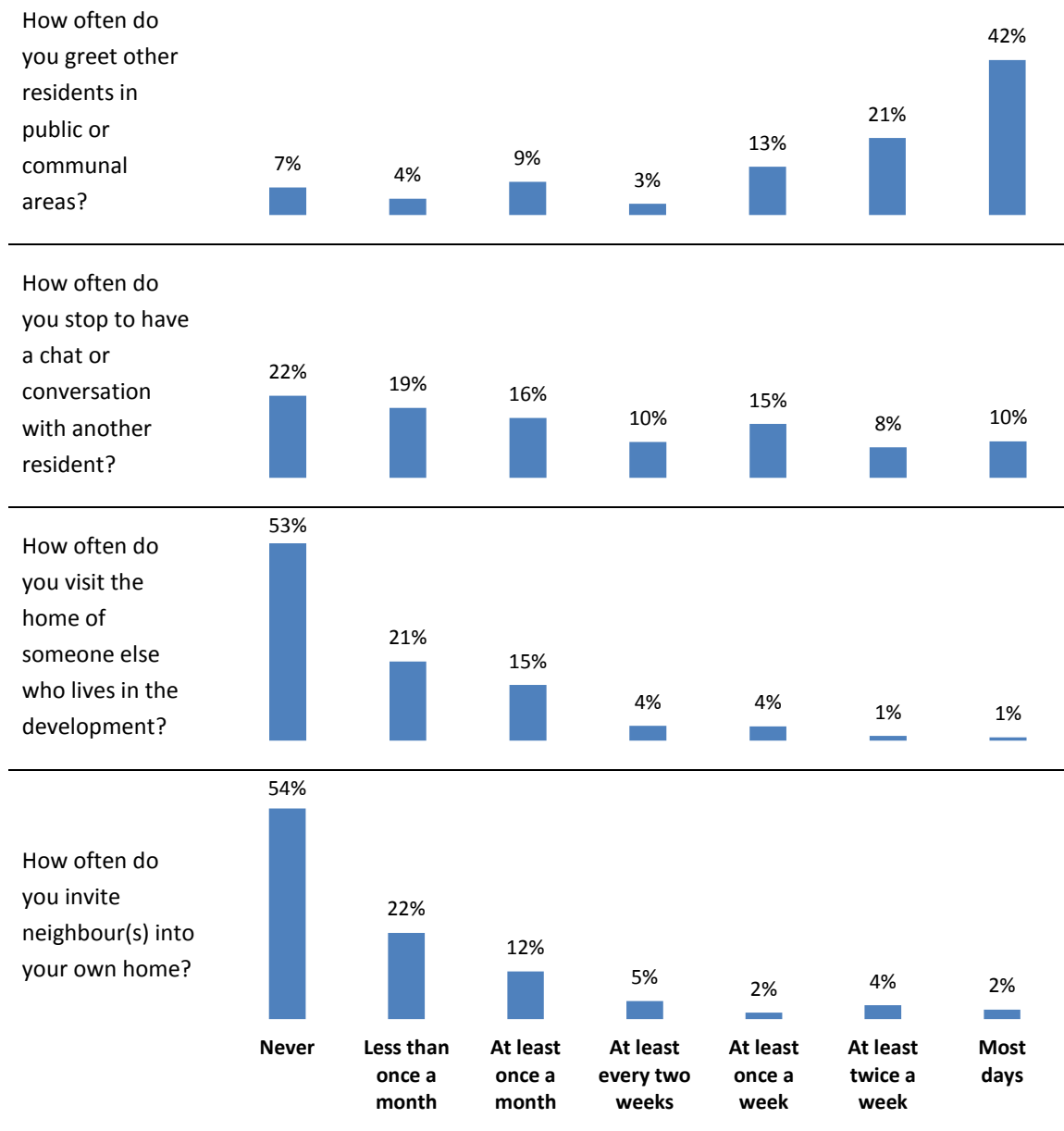
purpose-built mixed-tenure schemes, it appears that ‘networks’ of acquaintances are likely to be neither extensive nor diverse. Instead, the role of propinquity in facilitating acquaintanceships – coupled with fact that properties from different tenure groups were physical separated from one another – appear to conspire to favour acquaintances between those from the same tenure. The overall picture therefore suggest that extensive ‘social networks’, comprising the sorts of ‘weak ties’ that supposedly afford opportunities for ‘active inclusion’, do not characterise the social relations experienced by a vast majority of residents in the sorts of schemes examined here.

## **II. The Nature of Interpersonal Interactions**

Having presented a general picture of acquaintanceships amongst residents of the three case study schemes, this section now turns to explore various forms of interpersonal interaction between residents. In conceptual terms, at least, some level of interaction between residents is an “essential preliminary” for the social inclusion supposedly afforded by tenure mixing (Camina and Wood 2009:470). As such, increasing empirical attention has been paid to the fundamental yet simple question of how residents of mixed-tenure housing schemes might interact with each other (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Kleit 2005, Arthurson 2010, Graves 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011). This research contributes to this evidence base, by presenting insights into to the nature and frequency of interpersonal interactions. As Figure 7.2 illustrates, the overall picture predictably suggests that ‘casual’ interactions were by far the most commonly reported, with more than three-quarters of survey respondents estimating that they would greet other residents in passing at least once a week (76%). In contrast, only one-third of respondents reported that they would also stop and engage in conversation with other residents on a weekly basis (33%). Whereas more than half of all respondents had never visited a neighbour’s home (53%) or invited another resident into their own property (54%). At a general level, this reflects the findings of other research into mixed-tenure contexts, which has tended to find that casual or perfunctory interactions tend to constitute the norm – and, in some cases, the extent – of social contacts between residents (Camina and Wood 2009, Arthurson 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011). This section thus examines various the types of interpersonal interaction reported by respondents – beginning with ‘casual’ greetings, before turning to consider conversational interactions, closer forms of ‘friendship’-based contact, and finally, instrumental interactions involving the exchange of help or support between neighbours. Particular attention is also

paid throughout to those factors which residents saw as potentially enabling or constraining these various forms of interpersonal interactions, that together constitute the sorts of 'social mixing' upon which much of the rationale for tenure mixing is arguably premised.

**Figure 7.2: The frequency of interpersonal interactions between residents of all three schemes**



### Casual Interactions

Greeting other residents in passing was the most commonly reported form of interpersonal interaction. On average, the majority of respondents engaged in a 'greeting contact' on a daily basis (42%), with more than three-quarters of respondents (76%) reporting to engaging in a passing greeting with another resident at least every week. Participating in some sort of

passing greeting can therefore be reasonably described as the 'norm' for residents across the three case study schemes, which is in line with the findings of other studies that have used a similar method to explore the extent of different forms of social contact in mixed tenure schemes. Camina and Wood (2009:472) describe greetings based on 'mutual recognition' as the "first rung of the ladder" for neighbourhood-based social relations, whilst others have concluded that this form of interaction can be considered as something that occurs "as a matter of course" (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:217).

Interview responses also gave the impression that mutual recognition or convivial greetings were a feature of communal life in the case study schemes, many of whom described day-to-day interactions as being "affable", "friendly" and "amicable". Respondents from each of the three case studies described a situation in which "people will be polite if they're passing you on the stairs", "people do hold the lift door open for you, that kind of thing", and "if I do see people and you recognise them, you'd say hello". However, whilst the vast majority reported engaging in relatively frequent greeting contacts with other residents, a number of interview respondents suggested that even casual interactions were absent from their daily experience of life in their development. As one Limehouse Wharf respondents complained:

"Sometimes you're in the lift and people come in and you're expecting a 'good morning', but it's like you are not there! I remember once feeling like, 'oh my God, I'm invisible!'"

This perceived 'invisibility' – whilst not widely reported – does further suggest that some residents experience a degree of 'anomie' within their development, at least when compared to their own expectations of mutual social acknowledgement. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that perceived cultural differences, attributed to race or ethnicity, were another factor in a lack of even passing reciprocal acknowledgement. As one Shadwell Plaza shared owner cautiously suggested;

"A lot of the Asian women who have veils, or – well, sometimes it's more noticeable when they've got a veil – they don't really acknowledge you."

This reflects Kleit's (2005) observation that cultural differences may constitute unforeseen barriers to even casual forms of interpersonal contact. Following the conclusions reached by a number of other studies into mixed-tenure contexts – especially in North America (Graves 2010, Bartz et al. 2011, Chaskin and Joseph 2011) – race begins to emerge as one potential marker of difference in terms of social relations, something that is discussed in more detail in the following chapter of this thesis.

From their study of mixed-tenure housing schemes in Chicago, Chaskin and Joseph (2011:220) comment on the overwhelmingly casual nature of the majority of interactions described by their respondents. Contacts between residents in this context rarely extended beyond “visual recognition and a cordial wave” (ibid.:220). Evidence from the three case study schemes also suggest that such fleeting and casual contacts constituted the extent of interpersonal interactions with other residents for a majority of respondents (as illustrated by Figure 7.2). As one Shadwell Plaza resident put it, “people are friendly, but that’s as far as it goes”, whilst another described the level of sociability as polite but restrained:

“I’d say it’s quite sociable. I mean, I wouldn’t say it’s anything unique to this building, but I think it’s more of a British thing – people are polite and courteous and greet each other. But generally that’s the extent of it.”

Similarly, one Limehouse Wharf shared owner explained how;

“...people generally do not engage with each other and generally do not know each other. We’ll say hello or good morning, good evening and be polite and smile, but we don’t stand and chat really”.

Therefore, not only did casual greetings constitute the prevailing mode of interpersonal interaction, they also appear to constitute the *extent* of most respondents’ contacts with other residents. Interestingly, some respondents were even dismissive of the perceived importance of interactions that extended beyond passing acknowledgement. As one Limehouse Wharf private renter replied, “what does it matter that you don’t talk to them, but just see them around?”.

It would perhaps, however, be unfair to dismissively characterise that nature of social relations in these schemes as perfunctory or ‘superficial’. Firstly, as the discussion below outlines, closer forms of interpersonal contact – whilst not commonplace or widespread – were by no means absent from residents’ accounts of life in all three case studies. Secondly, the sort of conviviality characterised by passing greetings or mutual recognition was almost universally viewed as a positive and valued aspect of communal life in these housing schemes. It is therefore argued that casual interpersonal interactions are reflective of a form of ‘banal neighbouring’ – as suggested in Chapter Two – in so far as they are routine and ‘ordinary’, but not without value or import for residents. On the other hand, however, the apparent banality of residents’ interactions does challenge the possibility that tenure mixing might naturally foster the sorts of sustained and potentially ‘transactional’ forms of interpersonal contact arguably envisaged by policy discourse (Cole and Goodchild 2001).

### Conversational Interactions

Contacts involving conversations between residents constituted the next rung on the 'ladder' of interpersonal interactions reported by respondents. Conversational contacts are arguably of importance because they are arguably the most likely to foster 'inclusion' – whether in terms of reducing isolation or atomism, fostering solidarity or 'community', or helping to initiate the sorts of instrumental exchanges envisaged by theorists of 'social capital'. Ultimately, the notion of 'social mixing' ultimately conjures images of relatively widespread interactions based around conversation. However, only a third of our respondents reported that they would typically engage other residents in conversation more often than once-a-week – with the survey question being worded so as to include conversations struck-up in passing. A fifth of respondents had never had a chat or passing conversation with another resident from their development. Stopping to have a casual chat with a neighbour or fellow resident was therefore far from commonplace. As outlined in Chapter Two, empirical evidence suggests caution in assuming that conversation-based 'mixing' will naturally take place within schemes such as these and, in many respects, the general picture from the residents' survey supports this. However, these findings thus also appear to be in contrast with some previous research conducted in 'mature' mixed-tenure developments, in which it was found that residents averaged at least daily conversational contacts (Camina and Wood 2009:471).

Firstly, it is worth noting that the frequency of conversational contacts was found to vary between tenures<sup>13</sup>. As shown in Table 7.3, market rate respondents reported the lowest proportion of regular (at least monthly) conversational interactions (30%). The proportion was slightly higher for those in intermediate tenures (40%). As was found when considering the overall extent of acquaintanceships (as per Table 7.2, above), social renters again reported the highest proportion of monthly conversational contacts (60%). On the one hand, this finding contrasts somewhat with Camina and Wood's (2009:471) observation that the frequency of conversational contacts varied little between owners and social renters. On the other hand, Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:98) found that social renters' interpersonal interactions more frequently took place within the confines of the residential neighbourhood, when compared to reported by owners. While there is no evidence here to suggest – as Atkinson and Kintrea (2000) do – that the renters are necessarily more reliant on geographically narrow and 'neighbourhood centred' social contacts across their daily-

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<sup>13</sup>  $p = 0.02$  (Chi-square = 8.42, 2 d.f.)

lives. The residents' survey does suggest that, based on these self-reported measures, social renters appear as generally more 'sociable' within the developments – as do intermediate owners – when compared with residents of market rate properties.

**Table 7.3: Frequency of conversational contacts (between tenure groups)**

		<b>How often do you have a chat or conversation with another resident?</b>	
		Less than once a month	At least once a month
<b>Tenure</b>	Market rate	70% (30)	30% (13)
	Intermediate rent/buy	60% (35)	40% (23)
	Social rent	40% (18)	60% (27)
<b>Total</b>		57% (83)	43% (63)

A small number of residents did describe relatively frequent conversational contacts with their neighbours – and for these respondents, this was seen as a normalised aspects of their daily lives. For instance, one Shadwell Plaza respondent described how passing chats with those other residents she recognised were important for “just getting a sense of what they do or what's going on in their lives”. Similarly, a Limehouse Wharf resident described how, having initially engaged in conversation with one or two other residents of her block, they now have a routine of “just saying hello and seeing how's the family's doing, things like that”. Another respondent – a Shadwell Plaza social renter – simply replied how she and her son would routinely engage in conversation with “our neighbours”. Relatively routine conversational contacts were thus not entirely absent from residents' descriptions of life in the case study schemes – although, once again, it appears that individual volition was a key factor in initiating these sorts of contacts. For the most part, however, interview respondents reflected on the *lack* of conversational contacts between neighbours – typified by this reply from an Island Heights' social renter:

“The residents in the block, I'll be honest I hardly ever speak to them. I don't really mix with anyone in the block.”

Another Shadwell Plaza respondent, an owner-occupier, offered an equally dismissive response when asked whether he engaged in conversation with other residents:



“I come home and don't even think about stopping by to talk to someone in the corridor – and I suppose that's the only way I would have any interaction with them.”

Insights from residents of the three case study schemes appear to corroborate others' findings that – with a few exceptions – conversation contacts were not a commonplace feature of most residents' daily lives and for some, these sorts of interactions were entirely absent from their experiences of life in these schemes.

Some respondents offered personal reflections on their own lack of motivation to engage other residents in conversation, citing a preference to “keep to themselves”. As one Shadwell Plaza shared owner described, “I keep myself to myself really, I'd say hello to people in the lift but that's it”. Similarly, a private renter from Limehouse Wharf simply explained how “I'm just looking for a bit of peace and quiet”. Camina and Wood (2009:472) suggest that this reflects some residents' desire to strike a balance between conviviality and privacy. Others, however, have suggested that this is an actively pursued strategy to maintain ‘social distance’ within a mixed-tenure context (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:221). An additional explanation for the paucity of conversational interactions is simply derived from the fact that residents' busy lifestyles and routines. Some respondents – including, in this case, a social renter – discussed how busy work schedules restricted their opportunities for interaction:

“There's not much interaction at all really. It's very difficult to get to know people.

But then again, I don't really have the time. I work two jobs, six days a week.”

Again, this reflects the findings of other research into social relations in mixed-tenure housing. For instance – from her South Australian case study, Arthuson (2010:56) describes how “numerous respondents expressed the viewpoint that people's lives were too busy for much interaction to take place, especially when people were in employment”. The survey data reflects also this finding, with significant variations in the frequency of conversational contacts depending on respondents' employment status<sup>14</sup> and income<sup>15</sup>. A higher proportion of those respondents not in paid employment (62%) reported engaging in conversation with other residents at least once every month, compared to those in regular paid employment (35%). Following Atkinson and Kintrea (2000:98), this suggests – understandably – that the temporal and geographical nature of the daily routines of those who are in work restrict opportunities for neighbourhood-based interactions.

<sup>14</sup>  $p = <0.01$  (Chi-square = 19.36, 1 d.f.)

<sup>15</sup>  $p = 0.03$  (Mann-Whitney U = 1886, Z = -2.24)

Once again, some respondents also reflected upon cultural or linguistic ‘barriers’ which, in their eyes, restricted the potential for engaging in conversation with neighbours from particular backgrounds. Given the particular demographic characteristics of the case study neighbourhoods – as outlined in Chapter Four – it is perhaps unsurprising that those from Bengali backgrounds were cited by respondents as a group which proved hard to engage in conversation. For instance, as this Limehouse Wharf shared owner – himself from a British Asian, but not Bengali, background – described:

“The Bengali people who live in this block, they don’t speak the language. They’re a different culture. [Especially] the women, it’s much harder to approach them. That sort of natural barrier exists, you know.”

Most respondents took a cautiously neutral view towards these perceived language barriers, although some – such as this Shadwell Plaza social renter – held more negative views towards the perceived challenges of engaging non-native English speakers in conversation:

“To be quite honest, most of the older generation of Muslim people here don’t speak English. So – “hello” – yeah, okay. But we can’t stand and have conversations, because the language barrier is so bad, and that really annoys me, it’s one of the biggest issues.”

As Kleit (2005:1427) observes, “connections are obviously easier among those who share a common language”, creating a ‘natural’ separateness between those who do not. Whether real or perceived, linguistic differences may therefore constitute a further barrier to conversational contact between residents, especially in mixed-tenure developments that are sited in otherwise ethnically-diverse neighbourhoods.

Lastly – but importantly – aspects in the design of all three case study schemes were cited by respondents as being uncondusive to ‘mixing’ with other residents. The design of new housing schemes is argued to play an important role in facilitating interactions between their occupants (Talen 1999, 2006). In the case of mixed-tenure housing, there is some evidence that “high quality design” can foster closer or more frequent social contacts (Camina and Wood 2009:472) – although researchers have more commonly identified design factors which limit the possibilities for interaction, whether through the separation of tenures (Jupp 1999:45, Arthurson 2010:59), or through inadequate provision of shared or communal spaces (Roberts 2007, Davidson 2010). Respondents from across the three case study schemes almost unanimously cited the latter as a factor in the perceived lack of conversational interaction in their developments. As one Limehouse Wharf resident put it,

“it’s not that conducive to meeting, it’s just up and down the lift”. Similarly, an Island Heights resident explained how “nobody congregates anywhere, apart from in the lift, that’s the only opportunity to talk to people”. Whilst a Shadwell Plaza resident simply stated that “there is no communal space to bring people together”.

Respondents from each of the case study schemes cited aspects of their developments’ design that they felt to be unconducive to ‘mixing’. Residents described how the hard-landscaped courtyards between Limehouse Wharf’s various blocks did not encourage the sorts of ‘lingering interactions’ sought in the design of public spaces (cf. Talen 1999):

“People don’t generally want to sort of just stand around and chat in the middle of a concrete area – there’s no natural places to sort of sit and hang out.”

As another respondent described, “there’s just nothing there, like a bench or anything, so there’s no reason for people to be congregating out there”. As a result, these spaces functioned as thoroughfares “for people going from A to B”. In the case of Island Heights’, with its single tower block form, respondents explained how “there isn’t a space in the building for people to get together” – despite the presence of a dedicated community centre integrated into the podium-level of the building. As one resident described:

“I think that’s just the way that [the building] is designed. There’s one entrance, you go straight in and then up you go into your flat. There’s no social space for people to kind of get together or really interact.”

This lack of obvious communal space – aside from small and functional entrance lobbies, staircases, and lifts – was also reflected upon by residents of Shadwell Plaza. One owner-occupier respondent suggested that “having a shared space would be more conducive to socialising, just somewhere to hang out outside the flat and just chat with other people” – whilst another respondent specifically cited a communal garden as something that he felt would encourage interaction, adding that “it’s a real shame we don’t have that here”. Another resident explained how the public seating areas that had been provided around the building entrances were not conducive to mixing, for the reasons of perceived crime and disorder discussed in the previous chapter:

“You’d imagine mothers with strollers or old people sitting down there and having a chat, all very cute! But there’s never anyone outside having a conversation. It’s just kids from elsewhere doing drugs!”

As the same respondent bluntly concluded, “I think people would be more likely to use those spaces if they were not completely public”.

Given many respondents seemingly agnostic attitude towards the possibility of interacting with other residents, it was both interesting and somewhat unexpected that a number of respondents lamented the lack of 'sociable' design features in their schemes – and in doing so, implied that communal spaces would be used for this purpose had they been provided. It remains, however, that perceived linguistic and cultural differences, the pressures and constraints of busy work routines and lifestyles, and the preferences of some individuals to 'keep to themselves', all appear to constitute barriers to conversational interactions between residents. Even given an apparent paucity of opportunities for interaction – whether physical or social – it is hard to see whether such perceived barriers could realistically be overcome so as to realise the image of 'social mixing' that is envisaged in advocacy discourses for mixed-tenure development (Cole and Goodchild 2001). Either way, it remains the case that the sort of conversation-based interactions that logically constitute both a precursor to or a feature of informal 'social inclusion' did not appear as a feature of most residents' everyday experiences in any of the three case study mixed-tenure schemes.

### **'Friendship' Contacts**

If casual interactions and conversational contacts between residents constitute a necessary preliminary to 'social inclusion', it would logically follow that closer relationships or friendships might constitute the next rung on the interaction 'ladder' (Camina and Wood 2009:472). However, the prevailing impression from existing research into mixed-tenure contexts is that 'close' social relations are not a commonplace feature of most residents' experiences. Relationships between residents have invariably be characterised as "friendly but not close" (Arthurson 2010:58), "loosely knit" (Jupp 1999:52), or "superficial" (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000:100). Figure 7.2 illustrates how casual interactions were by far the most commonly reported, with fewer conversation-based interactions reported by residents. In turn, closer forms of social contact – characterised either by visiting a neighbour's home or inviting a neighbour into their own home – were the least commonly reported form of interaction. When examined together, more than half of survey respondents (51%) reported that they had never engaged in either of these forms of social contact. This apparent paucity of closer forms of interpersonal contact was also reflected upon by interview respondents, some of whom – like this Island Heights social renter – were quick to dismiss the possibility that "I would be, like, 'oh yeah, come in my house!'". The apparent challenge in fostering closer social relationships was encapsulated by another respondent's reflection that the people she had got to know "aren't like 'real friends', but as neighbours they're good!".

A range of factors have been tabled as possible mediators in the formation of closer relationships between residents of mixed-tenure schemes. Camina and Wood's (2009:470) study of 'mature' schemes, developed in the 1980s, logically concludes that length of residence is a key factor. However, no such association was observed from the survey responses pertaining to closer ('visiting') contacts<sup>16</sup>. A number of studies have suggested that busy lifestyles, whereby day-to-day routines are focused away from people's place of residence, might constrain the formation of closer neighbourhood-based relationships (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Arthurson 2010, Davidson 2010). Whilst the reported frequency of visiting contacts was not found to vary according to whether respondents were in paid employment<sup>17</sup>, interview response suggest that busy lifestyles were seen by some as hindering the potential for closer relationships with their neighbours. For instance, when asked about the possibility of forming friendships with other residents, one Island Heights social renter suggested that this was unlikely because "I'm busy, I'm at work, I'm on holiday, so I'm hardly ever here". Typical responses suggested that many residents were either too busy with work, or that their socialising tended to occur elsewhere. As a Shadwell Plaza intermediate renter explained, "I don't have one friend that lives in the area because I'm always going out in other parts of London". Again, reflecting Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000) suggestion that places of work and leisure often become spatially conflated in people's day-to-day routines, another respondent described how his time was spent "either [socialising] after work, or visiting friends". Interview responses do, therefore, suggest that Wellman's (1979) original assertion of 'community liberated' – whereby social relationships are no longer fundamentally tied to the neighbourhood locale – might be applicable to the context of mixed-tenure housing developments, especially those in inner-city areas (cf. Gwyther 2009). Few respondents reflected negatively on the situation and the vast majority did not give the impression they were looking for more 'intimate' relationships with their neighbours. Once again, individual volition therefore appears to incline respondents towards maintaining a degree of 'distance' from other residents – whether for reasons of ensuring privacy, avoiding 'encumbrance', prioritising existing relationships, or favouring other social outlets (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:220).

Previous research has suggested that having children of a similar age might act as a form of 'common interest' around which closer social ties might form between families in mixed-tenure schemes (Jupp 1999:56, Kleit 2005:1428, Silverman et al. 2005). The survey responses

<sup>16</sup>  $p = 0.83$  (Mann-Whitney  $U = 2607$ ,  $Z = -0.21$ )

<sup>17</sup>  $p = 0.10$  (Chi-square = 2.75, 1 d.f.)

from the three case study schemes, however, suggested that having children was not significantly associated with the frequency of close social contacts<sup>18</sup>. Out of the four families interviewed with school-aged children, all mentioned knowing other children in the development through school. Indeed, it has been suggested elsewhere that the 'school gate' is a more important focus than the neighbourhood itself for the formation of relations between families in mixed-tenure housing schemes (Camina and Wood 2009:470). However, only one family – who were social renting in Island Heights – actually described having frequent social contact with a neighbouring family. In this instance, the oldest of this family's children described how her younger siblings "go around some of the houses where they've got kids as well – and they play out – so that's something good". However, these relationships between parents were not described as a 'close' friendship between the families and social contact did not extend beyond organising the activities for the children. More typically, another family with young children – this time living in a social rented flat in Shadwell Plaza – described how there "isn't any interaction" between the children in the development. Whilst for another family, again from Shadwell Plaza, their focus was on socialising with the children of relatives' families who lived nearby:

"... my mum's house is close and my brother's is quite close too. So therefore we're more family orientated. If we were to have any spare time, I'd maybe go to my mum's where my nieces and nephews, they all congregate. So there's more of that rather than [my children's'] friends here at the moment."

Having young children therefore offers no guarantee that you will develop closer social relationships with those other families living in the development. Moreover – and reflecting the Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000:102) findings – a lack of communal play facilities or other suitable spaces, in all schemes aside from Island Heights, was also cited as factor that limited the opportunities for children and families to interact within the developments themselves.

Whilst closer contacts were not commonplace, the picture was not so clear-cut as to conclude that closer forms of contact were entirely absent from the 'social life' of these schemes. As Figure 7.2 illustrates, a quarter of respondents did report having visited a neighbour's property within the past month. Some interview respondents also discussed socialising with neighbours. For instance, one Shadwell Plaza resident described being "particularly good friends" with their immediate next door neighbours:

"We've been out for dinner with them. We've had each other over for meals. So

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<sup>18</sup>  $p = 0.27$  (Chi-square = 1.40, 1 d.f.)

there's a really good relationship there."

Similarly, another Shadwell Plaza shared owner described the closer relationship with both her neighbours:

"With my two next door neighbours it's a lot more than just amicable, we socialise together maybe every couple of months. I'd always invite them if I was having a get together. I'm having a do in a few weeks, so they're coming to that."

In some cases, these friendship 'networks' extended to an entire floor, as this Limehouse Wharf shared owner suggested:

"Actually I know everyone who lives on this floor and once every couple of months one of us goes, 'shall we all just go for a beer or something'?"

Friendships between neighbours were, therefore, by no means completely absent from residents' accounts of life in the three schemes. Once again, however, individual volition and personal circumstances no doubt plays a significant role in the establishment and maintenance of these relationships. The respondent quoted above actually explained how she was a "naturally gregarious person" who also had "consciously made an effort to make friends" upon moving into the development. Moreover, the fact that each of the friendships described above were between near neighbours also re-asserts the importance of propinquity, especially in the formation of closer relationships between residents. As one Limehouse Wharf resident described, a relationship with his immediate neighbour formed "because of being immediately across the corridor". This reflects Kleit's (2005:1415) conclusion that "proximity matters" for engendering closer relationships between neighbours. Inversely, the formation of 'mini neighbourhoods', based around proximity, suggests that "only short distances are needed to prevent associational ties from developing" (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000:102). Given the apparent design orthodoxy of ensuring a separation of tenures, the implications of this are clear – if people predominantly socialise with their proximate neighbours, this will inherently limit if not hinder the formation of closer social ties between members of different tenure groups.

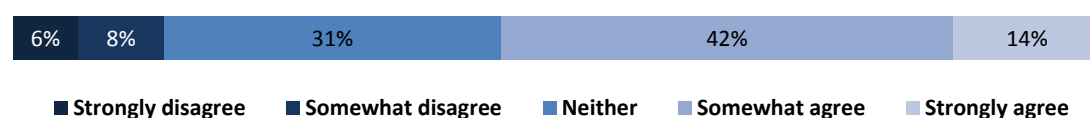
### **Instrumental Interactions**

The final part of this section turns to examine the nature and extent of 'instrumental' interactions between residents of the case study schemes. Instrumental interactions broadly refer to the exchange of favours, support, or other forms of assistance. Instrumental interactions can be seen as of particular importance in a number of respects. Firstly – and at least from a functional point-of-view – the exchanging of favours or assistance can arguably

be seen to constitute the ‘top rung’ of the neighbourly interaction ‘ladder’ (Camina and Wood 2009:472). Secondly, mutual support and ‘looking out’ for one another has been traditionally seen as characteristic both of a ‘good neighbourhood’ (Jacobs 1972), as well as of being a ‘good neighbour’ (Painter 2012). Thirdly, facilitating purposive exchanges of help or information between residents appears as a persuasive rationale for tenure mixing (Joseph et al. 2007). Discourses of ‘social capital’ have been used to endow relationships in mixed-tenure contexts with what Cole and Goodchild (2001:355) term as ‘transactional’ qualities. In this regard, ‘weak ties’ between neighbours – especially those from different socioeconomic backgrounds – supposedly foster the sharing of beneficial information about opportunities or resources (cf. Granovetter 1973). As outlined in Chapter Two, instrumental interactions therefore constitute a key mechanism through which mixed-tenure housing schemes might supposedly offer a greater degree of ‘inclusion’ for their lower-income inhabitants.

In line with the tenor of the findings presented above – Chaskin and Joseph (2011:222) describe the ‘vast majority’ of interactions reported by their respondents as ‘casual’ and reflective of ‘cordial distance’, but “largely not characterised by exchanges of practical information or instrumental favours”. Survey respondents from the three case study schemes were not specifically asked whether they had engaged in instrumental exchanges with other residents. Residents were, however, asked to respond to the attitude statement “people around here are willing to help their neighbours”. As shown in Figure 7.3, more than half agreed with the statement (56%), whilst the majority of the remainder offered a neutral response (31%), with only a small proportion indicating that they did not agree that residents were willing to help one another (14%). It does, therefore, appear that a general impression of mutual support and assistance was relatively widely felt by residents of the three case studies. This reflects others’ findings, which have suggested that a majority of residents in mixed-tenure schemes felt able to rely on others for ‘basic’ assistance or support (Jupp 1999:42, Chaskin and Joseph 2011:223).

**Figure 7.3: Responses to the attitude-statement “People around here are willing to help their neighbours”**





Insights from the interviews also suggest that reciprocal instrumental exchanges were a feature of *some* residents' experience of life in the case study developments. When asked whether there was anyone they could rely on for a favour, a number of responses cited immediate neighbours as a potential source of help or assistance:

"Yeah absolutely, particularly my neighbours right next door, we've you know done bits and pieces for each other in the past."

Whilst another Shadwell Plaza respondent explained how;

"My immediate neighbour on the same floor, we're good friends – and if I needed a favour I could reach out to him and ask for that".

A number of other respondents' reflected on specific instances when they participated in 'instrumental' exchanges. Some of these were relatively frequent and routine in nature – such as picking up a neighbour's children from school (as discussed by a social renting family from Island Heights). Other respondents described the lending or borrowing of everyday items (such as tools or extra chairs for a party). In one instance, a Shadwell Plaza resident described having received assistance from a next door neighbour in putting up some furniture (a task which took considerable time, over two weekend days). Another shared-owning Shadwell Plaza resident even recounted how she gave some unwanted items of furniture to a social renting family. The general impression given by many respondents thus suggested that the sorts of "dyadic exchanges of favours" that have also been identified by other research into similar contexts were a relatively commonplace and valued aspect of 'neighbouring' in the case study schemes (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:223). Importantly, however, such exchanges were almost exclusively between near neighbours – suggesting that either close propinquity and/or the presence of some prior relationship was often a precursor to such as exchanges – as one respondent who explained "people who know each other would help each other out".

In a few cases, reciprocal exchanges between neighbours took a more substantial form. For example, a trained nurse from Limehouse Wharf recounted an instance when she offered assistance to another resident whose child was unwell:

"There was a woman, she lives on the next floor up, and I helped her with her son because he had a fever and she was panicking."

In other situations, examples of closer or more sustained assistance extended beyond 'dyadic' exchanges between individual residents, to involve 'broader networks' of support (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:225). For instance, a Shadwell Plaza shared owner described how

four residents on the same floor mobilised in support of a neighbour who had suffered a bereavement:

“Her mum unfortunately died earlier in the year. And basically we all kind of clubbed together to go and make sure that she was okay.”

Similarly, for another Shadwell Plaza shared owner, her neighbours became an important source of support over a six-month period of illness, during which time various neighbours undertook to do shopping and assist with other practicalities. Examples such as these were by no means universally experienced, nor even particularly commonplace. However, they nonetheless show that more substantial or sustained forms of mutual support did form part of some respondents’ experiences of social life in the case study schemes.

Needless to say, not all residents felt either able to rely upon, or willing to participate in, instrumental interactions with their neighbours. Some respondents were dismissive when asked if they would approach another resident for a favour. One Limehouse Wharf private-renter replied that “perhaps I might but I haven’t needed to and I’m not sure what it might be for”. Another Limehouse Wharf resident described how she would prefer to approach the development’s twenty-four hour concierge for day-to-day assistance. Whilst Limehouse Wharf was the only of the three case studies to offer such a service – this understandably suggests that neighbours might be seen by some as a ‘last resort’, in lieu of the possibility of assistance from building management. Similarly, an Island Heights social renter explained how she would only approach a neighbour “in an emergency”, explaining how otherwise “I wouldn’t feel comfortable, because I don’t know them”. Lastly, a Shadwell Plaza shared owner – a single man in his late middle-age, who had grown up in what he described as a ‘working class’ area of East London – explained his reluctance to engage in reciprocal exchanges because of what he perceived as a degree of mutual distrust:

“I suppose in some ways it's regrettable, but people are suspicious these days I find. Personally, I wouldn't knock on anyone's door, it's as simple as that. Not unless I knew the guy.”

Reflecting on a previous occasion when he had been approached by a near neighbour to help fix a water leak, the same respondent appeared puzzled by his neighbour’s readiness to engage the assistance of a ‘stranger’:

“I think they must’ve been brought up different! They were quite middle class, you see, and they seemed to have no qualms about [approaching me for help]. For all they knew I could have been Jack the Ripper, you know?!”

In this case, it was interesting that 'middle class' sensibilities were perceived to be associated with a greater willingness to engage other residents in requesting a favour. Whilst this was not elaborated-upon by other respondents, residents' general reluctance to engage in instrumental exchanges was perhaps unsurprising, given our arguably increasingly insular expectations of inner-city life (Sennett 1977). It has also been suggested that a degree of reticence towards 'neighbourly' reciprocity remains largely a reflection of personal volition, especially with regards to maintaining privacy and avoiding encumbrance (Chaskin and Joseph 2011:220).

There was, therefore, some evidence that neighbourly exchanges of help or support were a feature of life in these mixed-tenure schemes. And whilst these sorts of instrumental interaction were not universally engaged in, the fact that 'neighbouring' of this sort took place at all within recently-built inner-city housing developments might surprise those who lament the supposed loss of 'community' in urban society. However, where instrumental exchanges and mutual support were evident in the case study schemes, extreme caution should be exercised before concluding that this constitutes evidence of 'social capital', at least in terms of the sorts of capacity-building relationships envisaged by discourses on 'social mix'. There was no evidence that any respondents had received information about employment opportunities or access to material resources, which reflects others' findings (Jupp 1999:42, Camina and Wood 2009:473, van Ham and Manley 2010). We therefore once again see little evidence of instrumental 'social networks' assisting residents of mixed-tenure housing in finding employment. Moreover, the examples of instrumental exchange discussed above overwhelmingly appeared to take place between proximate neighbours. Given the physical separation of tenures within these schemes, this observation further challenges the assertion that these exchanges might assist in 'actively including' residents from different tenure groups. Equally, one might question whether neighbourly exchanges of help and support might, in part, have been fostered by the relative socioeconomic homogeneity of the case study schemes at the spatial scale at which such exchanges took place.

### **III. Conclusion**

This analysis of interpersonal interactions and social ties within newly-built, inner-city, mixed-tenure schemes is revealing in a number of respects – yet the insights into social relations gained from the residents' survey and interviews elude definitive characterisation

and deterministic explanation. Acquaintanceships between residents were neither suggestive of widespread insularity, nor of extensive 'social networks'. Social contacts most often consisted of 'casual' interactions, but closer contacts based on conversation, friendship or instrumental exchanges were by no means anomalous. Residents were busy and opportunities for interaction were often limited, but many nevertheless took steps to 'reach out' to initiate contact or get acquainted with their neighbours. The passage of time appeared to broaden networks of acquaintanceship, yet in some cases this was tempered by transience. In sum, as with any form of social (inter)action, individual volition combines with a host of other practical and perceived constraints to render such a list of contractions and complexities potentially never-ending. However, it is nonetheless possible to extrapolate a number of potentially significant conclusions regarding the nature of interpersonal interactions within the case study schemes – and arguably, within other similar forms of purpose-built mixed-tenure development.

Firstly, whilst for many residents interpersonal interactions were predominantly 'casual' and acquaintanceship networks somewhat limited, this should not lead us to conclude that social relations were necessarily 'superficial' or that 'neighbouring' was absent as a feature of life in the case study schemes. On the one hand, there was evidence that closer relationships had formed between some residents and that, on occasion, these contacts took the form of 'neighbourly' assistance or support. On the other hand, residents' reflections on the more commonplace sorts of 'casual' exchanges suggested that these were viewed as characteristic of a friendly and convivial social environment. Where passing greetings typified by mutual recognition or acknowledgement have been dismissed as being of 'negligible' importance by theorists of social capital (Granovetter 1973:1361) – for residents of the case study schemes, such contacts were instead almost universally cited as a valued feature of their everyday lives. For this reason, if one were to offer a synecdoche of social relations in these schemes, it would be inappropriate to term them as 'superficial'. Instead, it is argued that the situation described by respondents would be best described as one of 'banal neighbouring'. In the same way that scholars have theorised on how nationalism – an undeniably significant socio-political phenomenon – is reproduced through 'banal' (everyday, routinised and sometimes unconscious) ways (Billig 2008), the same is argued here of social relations and neighbouring in these mixed-tenure schemes. In this respect, fleeting or casual interactions still worked to bolster a sense of convivial 'neighbourliness', which was neither intimate nor insular, and was experienced by residents as a positive aspect of their residential lives. Moreover, just as

the 'banal' reproduction of national identity does not exclude the possibility that expressions of nationalism may take a more extreme form (Jones 2009), 'banal neighbouring' does not discount the possibility that some casual interactions may propagate closer forms of social relationship. And regardless of whether or not closer relationships do result from everyday interactions, banal forms of neighbouring remains an important and valued quality of neighbourhood life, especially within a frenetic inner-city locale.

Secondly, whilst concrete determinants of interpersonal interactions or acquaintanceships were predictably elusive, it is nevertheless possible to identify a number of factors which appeared to either hinder or facilitate neighbourhood-based social relations. As one would expect, busy lifestyles were often proffered by respondents as an explanation as to why they did not engage in extensive social contacts with their neighbours. However, it is worth noting that interview responses suggested that social renters felt their time to be equally constrained by work and lifestyle commitments. Some respondents also discussed perceived cultural or linguistic differences as practical barriers to interaction (although none suggested that such differences would affect their own inclination towards interaction). Of course, individual volition played a major role in the initiation of social contact. Acquaintanceships often appeared to have formed because someone 'reached out' to other residents, while on the other hand, some respondents expressed a desire to 'keep to themselves'. Individual factors therefore played an important role in constraining or enabling social contacts. However, it is arguably also possible to identify additional factors which may, in some instances, condition or 'structure' social relations between residents. Firstly, propinquity was found to play a major role in facilitating interactions between near neighbours. Living in close proximity – either next door, or on the same floor – understandably made it more likely that people would recognise other residents, engage them in contact, and perhaps form an acquaintanceship or even friendship. Secondly, the physical design of all three case studies was explicitly identified by residents as a factor which constrained opportunities for social interaction. Respondents described how the design of the developments meant that they generally had only passing contact with other residents, whether in the lift, on the stairs, or at the entrance. A perceived lack of suitable 'social spaces' was also cited by a number of respondents. In light of both these factors, interactions between non-proximate neighbours were unlikely and relationships would only form through the comparatively slim possibility of a chance encounter or meeting.

Thirdly, it is argued that interactions between residents from different housing tenures are less likely to occur, in no small part due to a combination of the factors outlined above. On the one hand, it must be stressed that residents' accounts of social contacts did not appear to vary notably between tenure groups. Contrary to the assertion that neighbourhood-based social contacts may be more important for lower-income social renters (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000), the insights gained from resident interviews supports others' conclusion that there were no substantive differences either in the inclination towards or experience of interpersonal interactions for different tenure groups (Camina and Wood 2009). Differences in the reported frequency and extent of social contacts were seen between tenure groups – with both social renters and intermediate tenure respondents reporting a higher frequency of such contacts than occupants of market rate properties – however, it is argued that this is not a particularly noteworthy finding, given that differences in characteristics of 'intermediate' owners and market rate owners/renters are likely to be negligible. On the other hand, there is 'circumstantial' evidence to suggest that widespread interactions between tenure groups were unlikely to occur within the case study schemes. The fact that residents appeared overwhelmingly more likely to be acquainted or interact with their near neighbours – coupled with the fact that tenures were almost exclusively located separately in the designs for all three developments – arguably constitutes a major constraint on the formation of relationships between those from different tenures. In acknowledging that their designs largely removed the possibility of propinquitous relations between tenure groups, the schemes' designers argued that public or communal spaces instead constituted an alternative locale for 'mixing' between all residents. However, respondents were clear in their feelings that this was not the case. Interactions between tenure groups were therefore unlikely to occur – not because of individual volition (although the following chapter does suggest that a degree of prejudice and perceived social distance was felt by some residents) – but simply because residents were unlikely to have anything but the most fleeting of contacts with those from other tenures.

Fourth and finally, the insights gained from residents of the case study mixed-tenure schemes arguably undermine the 'active inclusion' rationale for tenure mixing. This rationale is premised on the assumption that frequent interactions between residents will lead to the formation of extensive acquaintanceship networks comprising those from different tenure groups. These 'weak ties' between residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds will ostensibly lead to the sharing of beneficial information or resources, imbuing social relations

in mixed-tenure schemes with individually beneficial and ‘transactional’ qualities (Cole and Goodchild 2001). Interactions and acquaintanceships between residents therefore constitute an “essential preliminary” to the promise of ‘active inclusion’ through tenure mixing (Camina and Wood 2009:470). Put simply, “individuals must have had enough repeated contact and familiarity to have a substantive enough conversation for information about employment needs and resources to be exchanged” (2007:382). However, residents’ accounts of social relations in the case study schemes provided neither direct nor indirect evidence to support this proposition. Most respondents described a general paucity of frequent or widespread conversation-based contacts. Moreover, the limits on social contact between tenure groups make it all-the-less likely that social renters would become acquainted with a sufficient number of the developments’ higher-income residents. Lastly, whilst some residents did engage in ‘neighbourly’ exchanges of favours or support, respondents simply did not appear to view their interactions or relationships with other residents as a means of exchanging ‘life changing’ information or resources (such as employment opportunities). While common sense makes the ‘active inclusion’ proposition appear far-fetched, and existing research suggests it is poorly evidenced – the insights from this chapter go further still towards undermining the assertion that opportunity-enhancing social interactions might occur between tenure groups, both in light of the design orthodoxy for tenure-separation within these forms of mixed-tenure development, and in light of the ‘reality’ of everyday life as described by the inhabitants of these schemes.

## Chapter Eight: Perceptions and Attitudes towards Tenure Mix

This final chapter considers the premise that mixed-tenure schemes might constitute a more 'inclusive' residential setting, in which less significance is attached to housing tenure as a marker of social difference or division than might otherwise be the case for 'unmixed' forms of subsidised housing. In this regard, Wacquant (1993:368) argues that "the powerful territorial stigma that attaches to residence in an area publicly recognized as a 'dumping ground' for poor people" constitutes a form of 'symbolic dispossession', which turns subsidised housing tenants into 'outcasts'. This particular form of stigma is inherently associated with the fact that public housing has traditionally been developed within "bounded and segregated" spaces, which appear – from the outside at least – as 'monolithic ensembles' of the poor, downwardly-mobile or marginalised (Wacquant 1993:369). Indeed, the discourse of 'sink estates' or 'no go areas' that was mobilised around concerns over social exclusion in the UK echoes (and arguably works to reproduce) the form of territorial stigma which Wacquant describes. Indeed, research has suggested that residents of large-scale social housing estates in the UK face tangible problems as a result of stereotyping and prejudice – ranging from discrimination in the labour market and in the provision of services, to impacts on personal relationships and emotional upset (Dean and Hastings 2000:14-22). Given that these forms of stigma are inherently associated with housing tenure – and, specifically, with residing in 'monolithic' housing schemes – it therefore follows, both by implication and assertion, that the provision of social rented housing in mixed-tenure schemes may avoid these forms of stigma and their potentially-harmful effects.

The discourse around 'social mix' and 'community balance' certainly implies that the physical integration of subsidised and non-subsidised housing has the potential to overcome social divisions associated with housing tenure and class (Cole and Goodchild 2001). The Government's references to housing mix in the context of fostering greater 'inclusion' and 'cohesion' suggest, at the very least, that a mix of tenures may encourage a greater degree of mutual acceptance between those from different backgrounds (DETR 2000, ODPM 2005b, CLG 2008a). Whereas more ambitious statements regarding the potential for the integration of different housing types to "greatly enrich the quality of community life by engendering both a sense of belonging and a sense of respect for all" strongly imply that social cohesion – exemplified by 'mutual respect' – can be realised through tenure mixing (DTLR 2001:35). A twofold logic can be identified to support this rationale for tacit or 'passive' inclusion within



mixed-tenure schemes. Firstly, it is argued that the diversification of housing tenures will avoid the sorts of territorial stigma that might otherwise attach to large developments of social housing (cf. Power 2007). Secondly – and in contrast to the segregation and isolation supposedly characteristic of life in ‘monolithic’ estates of social housing – it is argued that the integration of different housing tenures may foster a greater degree of acceptance between residents from different backgrounds (cf. Berube 2006). In both respects, mixed-tenure housing development has come to be endowed with the promise of fostering extra-economic ‘inclusion’ or ‘cohesion’ (cf. Robinson 2005:1421), despite what is outlined in Chapter Two as “extremely shaky empirical evidence” (Cole and Goodchild 2001:357).

This chapter offers an empirically-grounded engagement with the premise that mixed-tenure housing – at least in the form of the sorts of high-density, inner-city development considered here – might offer a more ‘cohesive’ social milieu, characterised by the ‘passive inclusion’ of households from different tenure groups. This engagement is entirely based on insights into the attitudes and perceptions towards tenure-based differences held by residents of the three case-study schemes. All thirty-one interview respondents were asked – in very general terms – to share their thoughts on living in a mixed-tenure scheme. This elicited a broad range of responses from both social renters and occupants of intermediate and market rate properties. Some discussants framed their answers in terms of the physical distribution or mix of tenures, reflecting in turn upon the extent to which different tenure groups of household-types were socially integrated within the case study schemes. Other responses focused instead on the presence of ‘other’ tenures within their developments – discussed almost overwhelmingly in terms of the perceived conduct of social renters, and sometimes in stronger and more overtly-critical terms. The analysis presented in this chapter is structured around these two themes which emerged from the interviews. The first section explores residents’ attitudes towards the ‘social mix’ and integration of different tenures, in the context of respondents’ experiences and perceptions of life in the case study developments. The second section then turns to examine residents’ attitudes towards the presence of different tenure groups – focusing, in particular, on perceptions regarding the supposedly-problematic conduct of social renters in the case study schemes. With respect to both these dimensions of the social ‘integration’ of different tenure groups, it is argued that forms of tenure-based stigma and division may in fact be reproduced within the context of new-build mixed-tenure schemes.

## I. Perceptions of Social Mix

This section will consider residents' perceptions of the socio-spatial 'mix' of housing tenures within the case study developments, focusing specifically on the perceived nature and extent of 'integration' between social housing with market rate and intermediate tenure properties. The first part of this section explores the extent to which residents actually experienced their developments as 'mixed'. Given the design orthodoxy of separating tenures between blocks or cores within the case study schemes, the vast majority of interview respondents lived in parts of the development occupied by those from the same tenure group. Of the twenty-five households interviewed, only six were from blocks that incorporated a mix of both social renters and other tenures. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the prevailing sentiment amongst most respondents was that the demographic of their building – and thus their experience of the development as a whole – was not indicative of a 'mix' of household types. Rather, the majority of intermediate and market rate respondents experienced their blocks as being relatively socially homogeneous and to predominantly be comprised of 'young professional' households (a category with which many market rate and intermediate tenure respondents self-identified). In the context of the apparent socioeconomic compartmentalisation of the case study schemes, the second part of this section turns to consider residents' attitudes towards the distribution of different tenure groups within their developments. Once again, it is perhaps unsurprising that those from all tenure groups appeared acutely aware of the physical separation of tenure groups within all three schemes. What was interesting, however, was the perception – held by a number of respondents – that the spatial distribution of tenures also resulted in socioeconomic 'segregation' between the inhabitants of different tenure groups. Insights from residents' interview therefore suggest that the grouping of housing tenures is experienced as a form of *social* separation, which ultimately manifests itself in cleavages between residents from different tenure groups.

**“From my interactions with people in this building, I wouldn't say it's very mixed at all”<sup>1</sup>**

Policy discourses on 'mixed communities' are premised, in a large part, upon the assertion that a mixture of housing tenures will create a more diverse or 'balanced' social milieu, within which people from different backgrounds will come into regular contact (Cole and Goodchild 2001). Chapter Seven raised questions over the extent to which inhabitants of mixed-tenure schemes will engage in frequent and sustained interpersonal contacts with

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<sup>1</sup> Shadwell Plaza shared owner

one another. Yet it nonetheless remains that a mix of household types and tenures ought to engender a greater-than-average degree of social diversity within these new housing developments. Ambitious claims about the potential of tenure mixing to foster 'active inclusion' might, in fact, distract from less ambitious but equally desirable outcomes that may arise from residents' day-to-day exposure to a more socioeconomically diverse social milieu within mixed-tenure schemes. Indeed, policy discourse does implicitly reflect what could broadly be termed as a 'passive inclusion' rationale for 'mixed communities'.

References to tenure mix in the context of greater 'inclusion' and 'cohesion' (DETR 2000, ODPM 2005b, CLG 2008a) – coupled with occasionally explicit statements of the potential for a more balanced housing mix to "engender a sense of respect for all" (DTLR 2001:2) – certainly appear to imply that 'mixed communities' also promise to foster tolerance and acceptance towards difference and diversity. This raises questions as to whether mixed-tenure schemes might be seen to constitute a welcome alternative to 'exclusionary' examples of residential organisation – such as 'gated communities' – the 'psychological lure' of which reflect a contrasting desire for a socially homogeneous retreat from the diversity of inner-cities (Low 2001:47). In this regard, Bauman (2003:31-2) uses the term 'mixophobia' to describe city-dwellers' "reaction to the mind-boggling, spine-chilling and nerve-breaking variety of human types and life-styles that rub their shoulders in the streets of contemporary cities", which manifests itself in a desire to secure for oneself "a territory free from that jumble and mess that irredeemably afflicts other city areas".

How far do mixed-tenure housing schemes, as characterised by the three case-study developments, expose their residents to a more heterogeneous social milieu – the likes of which fosters 'mixophilia' and encourages the 'passive inclusion', rather than indulging 'mixophobia', exclusion and withdrawal into 'communities of similarity' (Sennett 1973, Bauman 2003:34)? As Chapter Four illustrates, all three case study schemes are situated within the sorts of high-density and highly-'mixed' urban neighbourhoods – with large ethnic minority populations, comparatively acute levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, and a built environment dominated by public housing – which may characteristically prompt 'segregationist' urges or desires (Bauman 2003:31). Yet, as Chapter Six revealed, the majority of respondents offered positive reflections on the perceived 'vibrancy', 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity' of the case study neighbourhoods, in which – after all – most had actively chosen to live. It is therefore logical to suggest that, on the whole, most respondents had not sought residence in a sheltered 'community of similarity'. However, the

extent to which the case study mixed-tenure developments constituted spaces in which residents might regularly encounter difference and diversity was less clear. Specifically, the design and layout of the case study schemes – as outlined in Chapter Five – is arguably the greatest factor limiting the potential to immerse their inhabitants in a variegated social milieu. Within Limehouse Wharf, for instance, none of the floors comprise a mix of tenures and none of the developments' market rate residents even share a street-level entrance with a social renting household. One of the development's shared owner described how "everyone here is more or less our age, everyone is a professional, you can see that we're all kind of the same". Another respondent reasoned that "most people who would choose to live here would tend to be single or professional". Whilst a third respondent, who lived in Limehouse Wharf's all market rate block, described how;

"I've seen like people pushing pushchairs and prams, and kids and stuff, in the other [social rented] block. But in our block, I don't think that there are many families and I don't think there's any council tenants".

The scheme's design and layout therefore meant that, in practice, the 'communal' spaces within the development were perceived as relatively homogeneous rather than diverse.

As the quote at the start of this section illustrates, Shadwell Plaza's respondents appeared equally cognisant of the impression that the development's single-tenure blocks and building cores were "not very mixed at all". Another respondent – a shared owner living in an single-tenure block – observed that "I don't see this block of flats as mixed", joking that "most of the people I've met look like bankers!". Another shared owner likened her block to a university residence, remarking that "it's just groups of twenty-something singles and couples who live here, kind of 'yuppies' like me!". Within the only one of Shadwell Plaza's blocks that did comprise a mix of both social rent and intermediate tenures, the picture was also one of perceived homogeneity – at least within the 'intermediate' part of the building (the top two floors). As one respondent replied, when asked about the mix of people in his building, "I think that you've got to remember that the majority of the people living on the second floor up are young professionals, it's only social housing on the first and ground floor". Another respondent – a shared owner who had lived in the building since its completion – went further still, describing how "many of them [social renters] don't really fit in", explaining that "they're not like most of the people on this floor, who work in the City or they're professionals" and, instead, "you can just tell they're not working or they're off the Council waiting list". Even when intermediate tenure and social renting residents are

brought together in the same building, cleavages therefore still appear to be perceived along the lines of observable or imagined differences and similarities. Respondents perceived that Island Heights' intermediate and owner-occupier only buildings/access-cores predominantly comprised 'young professionals', as one shared owner described:

"The demographic of this particular building is quite interesting because of the location [near to Canary Wharf]. Everybody – at least most of the people that we have met – work for banks, or consultancies, or law firms. We're all probably twenties to late thirties, we're all young professionals, pretty much on the same socio economic level."

This respondent added to this description of the building's 'young professional' demographic by stating that "we'd probably want to keep it that way too if I'm completely honest" – again deploying collective pronouns in their reflection of the scheme's perceived homogeneity.

Respondents' encounters with the other residents do not therefore appear to reflect the sort of 'mixophilia' – characterised by social and cultural variegation – which Bauman describes (2003:34). In fact, the most common sentiment was that the predominant social archetype within these developments was that of the 'young professional' – a category with which, to some extent, most intermediate tenure respondents self-identified. This contrasts with respondents' perception of the neighbourhoods *outside* the developments – as discussed in Chapter Six – which were discussed in terms of their socially 'mixed' character. Drawing on Sennett (1973), Bauman suggests that constructions of an urban 'collective identity' are inherently subjective. A desire to be part of an identifiable group – even one as slippery and potentially meaningless as 'young professional' – may offer the promise of "making togetherness easier by cutting off the efforts to understand, to negotiate, to compromise that living amidst and with difference requires" (Sennett 1973:32). Similarly, Sibley (1988:409) uses the term 'purification' to describe this subjective "distaste for or hostility towards the mixing of unlike categories". Perceptions of relative socioeconomic homogeneity, at least within the non-social renting parts of the case study developments, may arguably reflect this impulse to construct a homogeneous collective identity (even if one does not necessarily exist).

Aside from the image of predominantly 'young professional' occupants, other social characteristics were less widely discussed in responses to questions regarding the 'social mix' of the case study schemes. For instance, nobody went as far to attribute a typical ethnic

or racial category to the archetypal 'young professional' resident. In fact, several shared owners commented to "eclectic", "harmonious" or "multicultural" mix of backgrounds within their sections of the development. Interestingly, this contrasted somewhat with the accounts of social renters, who tended to describe the mix of households in their blocks or floors less in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics, and more in terms of their ethnic or racial backgrounds. For instance, one respondent described his block – of seventeen flats – as being "predominantly all Asian". Another Shadwell Plaza social renter – himself from a British Bangladeshi background described how:

"No matter how much they wanted to have different ethnicities or people from different backgrounds living together, it's not happened. The majority of families who live here are either Bangladeshi or Somalian."

Despite their mixture of housing types and tenures, and their locations within urban areas that corresponded closely to the definition of a 'mixed community', residents perceptions of the social mix within the case study schemes appear to correspond less to the characteristics of diverse 'micropublics' in which 'prosaic' engagements with difference take place (Amin 2002:969), and more to the characteristics of "islands of similarity and sameness" typically sought by 'mixophobic' city-dwellers (Bauman 2003:31-2). Just as not all urban spaces are "natural servants of multicultural engagement" (Amin 2002:967), it therefore appears that not all mixed-tenure housing schemes will naturally engender a diversity of encounters between different groups.

Most respondents felt there to be a relative degree of homogeneity in their experiences of daily life in the case study schemes and few expressed sentiments that the households within their block exhibited 'diverse' or 'mixed' characteristics. Sibley (1988:414) pessimistically concludes that city life leads individuals to value such homogeneity and to "desire to inhabit a world made up of pure categories". However, it must be stressed that such a desire for similarity was not widely reflected in the discourses of respondents. In contrast, one shared owner lamented that Shadwell Plaza did not correspond to her expectation of a 'mixed community':

"When I bought into this development, they were saying "oh, it's a mixed community". Great! But most of my neighbours are very similar to myself. They're all kind of 'middle class professionals'. It would be great having a family living next door or something like that, but I find this block of flats - and probably others - haven't 'mixed people up' at all."

The fact that respondents perceived their neighbours to be like themselves therefore appears, by and large, as an artefact of the design of the case study developments, each of which reflected a concerted effort to ensure a physical separation between tenures. On the one hand, Bauman (2003:34) therefore argues that “there is a lot that the architects and urban planners could do to assist the growth of mixophilia and minimize the occasions for mixophobic responses to the challenges of city life”. Yet, on the other hand:

“[The] segregation of residential areas and publicly attended spaces, commercially attractive to developers as a fast fix for mixophobia-generated anxieties, is in fact mixophobia’s prime cause.”

Rather than creating the sort of ‘balanced’ and ‘inclusive’ social milieu advocated by policy discourse, developers’ preference for a separation of tenures – as discussed in Chapter Five – could arguably have a similarly-contrary effect, creating a relatively homogeneous social milieu which emphasises differences in class, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity that are indirectly associated with housing tenure.

**“There’s a clear divide between the well off and the not so well off here”<sup>2</sup>**

While most intermediate tenure respondents perceived their block or ‘access core’ as relatively socially-homogeneous, most were nevertheless aware that their developments did comprise a mix of tenures within the scheme as a whole. In many cases, residents reflected on the fact that physical features of their development provided indicators of the distribution of tenures. For some, this was discussed in neutral or even positive terms, as this Limehouse Wharf shared owner described:

“I think it’s nice that you can live in a mixed-tenure development and, obviously you look right across there, we’ve have got some social housing as well. You know, [the development] is very mixed.”

However, other residents were more conscious of a physical separation or ‘divide’ between tenure groups. Another Limehouse Wharf social renter described how “it’s almost split by class levels really”, explaining that “a couple of the blocks are straight-forward all private, but only the two on our side are actually mixed tenure”. A third respondent described a “socioeconomic grouping” of properties in the development, adding “there’s clearly that distinction here”. Whilst another resident commented on how the building-heights of the development’s four blocks (as illustrated in Figure 5.2) were also reflective of a distinction between the tenure groups contained within them:

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<sup>2</sup> Limehouse Wharf social renter

“The blocks are pretty much divided. It’s like that John Cleese clip [see Figure 8.1]! He’s like, “I look up at him, but down at him”. It’s kind of like that here. Because we look up at those guys, because they’ve got their [all private] block, they’re more expensive. Then you’ve got this block, which is mostly teachers, the policemen, key workers. Then that block down there is the social housing.”

Despite the use of a ‘tenure blind’ homogeneous external finish across the scheme, residents of Limehouse Wharf were nevertheless acutely aware of the physical distribution of tenures within the scheme. Signifiers of tenure were encoded in the buildings’ design – namely the grouping of like tenures within physically separate between blocks of differential heights – which anyone with knowledge of the scheme (such as the majority of residents) can read these as indicative of distinctions between the socioeconomic status or even ‘class’ of the development’s inhabitants.

**Figure 8.1: “I look up at him, and down at him” – the famous ‘Class Sketch’ from the 1960s comedy-satire ‘The Frost Report’, featuring John Cleese and the Two Ronnies arranged by height and class position (Source: <http://youtu.be/K2k1iRD2f-c> [BBC 1966])**



In addition to features in the design of buildings, residents’ ‘personalisation’ of their properties was cited as a second visual signifier of tenure differences. One particular example from Limehouse Wharf was the displaying of St. George’s cross flags on balconies (see Figure 8.2), which was particularly prevalent because of the timing of the interviews



coinciding with the football World Cup Finals. As one respondent commented:

“That block over there is the social housing. And you can tell because every one of them has got an England flag outside. And then Christmas comes and they’ve all got those giant Santa Clauses!”

In this case, the flags – which, by and large, were predominantly hung from balconies of the development’s social renting block – therefore became an additional signifier of tenure differences (and, by implication, of class). As Billig (2008:43) reminds us, flags – whilst habitually overlooked – nevertheless work as unconscious reminders of the social phenomena with which they are associated. Similarly, other authors have also identified the ‘personalisation’ of individual properties as a potential signifier of tenure, which in turn subvert efforts to ensure ‘tenure blindness’ in purpose-built mixed-tenure contexts (Andrews and Reardon Smith 2005:38). Whether through the ‘flagging’ resulting from residents personalising their properties, or through visible features in otherwise ostensibly tenure-blind building designs, respondents thus appeared to read cues into the layout and distribution of different housing tenures which, in turn, were deciphered as signifiers of socioeconomic status or ‘class’.

**Figure 8.2: England flags on the balconies of Limehouse Wharf, during the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament**



Housing tenures were also separated both between and within Island Heights’ high-rise towers. Yet unlike Limehouse Wharf, the scheme’s two towers and the all-social renting

podium did form one seemingly coherent building. The fact that social rented properties were not located in a physically separate block would perhaps be expected to reduce discernible tenure differences. However, one shared owner – whose property, on the upper-floors of the part-social rented block, was accessed by a separate front door and separate lift access – described how the building was also ‘differentiated’ according to tenure:

“Obviously, because you have a separate entrance, and in effect we have the use of two lifts for only our floors, it is very differentiated if you will. I even want to use the word ‘segregated’.”

In contrast, a social renter – whose property, a couple of floors below that of the shared owner quoted above, was accessed by a different entrance on the opposite side of the building and was separated by the internal security gate – saw this division between tenures as an acceptable, if not desirable, feature of Island Heights’ design:

“Actually, I like the idea some of it’s actually private. For example, my next door building– that is all private residents. Here it’s some council, I think to the tenth floor. The eleventh floor up, it’s private again, which is fine. Like, imagine if this whole building was all council – I wouldn’t want to be here, know what I mean?”

Once again, therefore, there was a discernible and acknowledged ‘differentiation’ created by the separation and distribution of housing tenures within the development. On the one hand, this was seen as a form of ‘segregation’. Whilst from the point-of-view of the social renter quoted above, this separation was seen as desirable, in that it differentiated the development from a ‘council’ housing scheme.

Shadwell Plaza has a variegated distribution of tenures within its six separately accessed blocks – one of which was the only building in this study to comprise a ‘clustered’ mix of both social rented and intermediate properties, whilst the rest were either single-tenure or a mix of intermediate and market rate properties. Shadwell Plaza’s residents also appeared the critical of the separation of tenures within their development. One shared owner described how the distinction between the development’s ‘young professionals’ and the social renting households in the previous section was reflected in this distribution of tenures;

“...they call it a supposed "mixed development", but it’s still quite separate in a way. Because, you know, the people that live here are all probably different to the families that live there [the social rented blocks]”.

The same sentiment was expressed by a social renter, who lived in an all-social rented block:

“You’ve got all these young professionals in a penthouse block, and you haven’t

mixed tenure – there's no mixture of anyone – it's still going to be segregated and it's going to stay like that...”

One shared owner went further still, describing how:

“You still hear people say “oh, that’s the council block and that’s not safe”. They see this [shared-owning block] as one particular cultural, social, economic group and that [social rented block] is another.”

Despite the fact that Shadwell Plaza arguably demonstrates the greatest degree of tenure-integration amongst the three case studies – residents nevertheless remained acutely conscious of the physical separation between tenure groups and the resultant differentiation between residents’ socioeconomic position. Moreover, this differentiation was conceived either as a form of ‘segregation’ or, at the very least – as one social renter described – as “an obvious difference in people's economic state”.

Across all three schemes, the responses from residents therefore reveal a generally critical take on the extent to which their developments were perceived to correspond to their own definitions of a ‘mixed community’. As one shared owner wryly concluded:

“To me, a mixed community is more a range of different people living side by side. Like physically side by side, not side by side as in ‘they’re over there’!”

Whilst it is unsurprising that residents are aware of the distribution (and in most cases separation) of tenures within their own developments – it is notable that many respondents viewed this as a form of ‘segregation’, often along what they saw as socioeconomic or class lines. Moreover, respondents also reflected upon the broader implications of this perceived socio-spatial division. For instance, when asked whether he considered the social renting occupants of his block to be his neighbours, one Island Heights shared owner replied;

“If I'm brutally honest, no. Even though we're physically in the same structure, I don't have any connection with them, because there are separate entrances.”

Whilst another respondent – this time from a social rented property – commented that;

“...unless you have me living in a block where it's shared ownership or privately owned, you know, you're never going to really have any mixture”.

These insights from residents raise critical questions over the reality – ‘on the ground’ – of what are ostensibly attempts to ensure ‘social mix’ or ‘balance’ in housing development. Respondents rightly query the extent to which these developments can be categorised as ‘mixed communities’, given the pursuit of physical design strategies that function to separate tenure groups. As one respondent concluded, greater integration of tenures would

be required in order to correspond to her definition of a 'mixed community':

"I think you'd almost need to take all of these block of flats and really mix them up, like a kind of puzzle. And that would be more my understanding of a 'mixed community'. I would expect to live alongside people that were unlike myself..."

More broadly, the fact the residents perceived the 'sorting' of household types within the developments not only as physical separating tenure groups – but also as propagating distinctions along the lines of socioeconomic status and class – raises serious questions about the 'inclusive' possibilities of this form of mixed-tenure development.

## II. Attitudes towards Tenure Difference

Having considered residents' perceptions of the socio-spatial 'mix' of tenures within the developments, this section now turns to consider broader attitudes towards tenure-based differences. During the interviews, all respondents were asked about their feelings towards the presence of different tenures within their development. Whilst many respondents felt that tenure groups were largely kept apart – those from all tenure groups still expressed strong and often conflicting feelings towards the presence and perceived conduct of their other-tenure neighbours. This section begins by considering agnostic or positive opinions on the presence of different tenure groups, which have been argued elsewhere to constitute the 'typical' response towards living in a mixed-tenure context (Jupp 1999). This section then turns to consider the various ways in which residents – in particular shared owners – problematised the presence of social renting households within the case study schemes: Firstly, it is possible to identify a line of thought which suggests that social renters had lower levels of 'investment' or commitment in the developments. Secondly, some respondents expressed feelings of resentment or animosity on the basis that social renters were living 'for free' or 'not paying their way'. It is argued that these attitudes are reflective of a degree of prejudice within the discourse of some shared owners – often based on an 'othering' rationality, which works to attribute negative or undesirable conduct to the perceived attitudes, characteristics and pathologies of social renters.

### **"I don't see that there's any problem with mixed tenure"<sup>3</sup>**

It would not be accurate to imply that negative feelings towards the presence of social renters were by any means universally held by residents from other tenure groups, most of

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<sup>3</sup> Shadwell Plaza owner-occupier

whom appeared largely 'agnostic' towards the mix of tenures (Jupp 1999:65). The majority of respondents expressed views that explicitly or implicitly suggested that the mix of different tenure groups was an unproblematic aspect of life in their developments. Several respondents described how initial feelings of uncertainty or scepticism towards living in a mixed-tenure scheme turned out to be unfounded. For instance, an Island Heights shared owner described:

"We had no idea though that it was a mix of ownership and council. I'd thought it was fully private. And so when we found out, we sort of had a suspicion of what exactly it was."

This respondent went on to explain that he'd "not had any real problems with anybody" in the year in which he had lived in Island Heights, and besides, he "couldn't really afford to go for a fully private place anyway". A second respondent – this time from Shadwell Plaza's only internally-mixed block – described similar concerns regarding the mix of tenures:

"When I heard that they will be social renters downstairs, I was afraid that there'd be the really stupid types who are gonna mess up the place and bring the properly value down. But I think most of them are decent families. They're not 'bad', you know...?"

On the one hand, these accounts do reflect an initial degree of scepticism on the part of some residents towards the presence of social renting households within these schemes, that may in themselves be indicative of underlying prejudices. However, 'suspicion' towards the conduct of social renters is arguably propagated through broader popular and political discourses (Flint 2003b, a, Flint and Rowlands 2003, McKee 2011). And, on the other hand, both respondents were clear that their initially sceptical attitudes changed based on their experience of life in their respective schemes.

Other residents also expressed similar sentiments that, in reality, the presence of social renting households was unproblematic. For instance, as a private renter from Limehouse Wharf explained:

"[Housing tenure] doesn't really seem to have any impact here. Like, I don't think that there are any like for instance total scumbags. You know? No people with no respect for their neighbours. Everybody behaves quite decently really."

The assertion that no problems have been encountered is arguably suggestive of 'agnosticism' towards the presence of social renters – rather than outright positivity. Illustrating the degree of 'tacit acceptance' towards the presence of other tenure groups,

one Shadwell Plaza resident simply responded that “I don't think anyone is unhappy with the fact that this is a socioeconomically diverse development”. However, only one respondent – a Shadwell Plaza shared owner – went as far as to express overtly ‘positive’ sentiments in favour of the mix of tenures:

“I mean, I looked at [the tenure mix] before and it's not a problem for me. I was like, “I'm quite happy with that”. In fact, I think it's a great idea.”

Whilst a position of support or advocacy was therefore not commonly adopted, the majority of intermediate owners/renters nonetheless express neutral attitudes towards their social renting neighbours, which were more indicative of a degree of agnosticism or acceptance.

**“Just because you've got a lower income, it shouldn't make you a social parasite”<sup>4</sup>**

A sizeable minority of respondents did, however, express negative views towards the social rented households in their developments. These views were overwhelmingly expressed around the perceived conduct of social renters, whom it was felt were more likely to deviate from the accepted norms and rules within the development. For instance, as one Shadwell Plaza shared owner described:

“They seem to flaunt the rules a bit more as well. You know, it just feels like everything bad that seems to happen seems to happen over there [the social rented blocks]. Which then stirs up this kind of resentment – like they're being disrespectful.”

This apparent tendency to attribute the source of problems – in this case, ‘flaunting’ the development's rules – to occupants of the social renting part of the scheme was echoed by a Limehouse Wharf shared owner:

“I don't have any issue with a mix of people. But they do let loads of rubbish accumulate on their balconies. And people playing music really loud. It tends to be in the blocks that are more social housing. So that's my bother with it.”

In this case, more specific problems were associated with “the blocks that are more social housing” – a sentiment reflected by several Limehouse Wharf shared owners. Both responses reveal a tendency to attribute ‘deviant’ conduct to those *other* parts of the development that are occupied by social renters (‘those blocks...’ or ‘over there’). Secondly, both responses begin to reveal an ‘othering’ tendency – illustrated by the use of collective nouns – whereby all social renters (‘they’) are associated with problematic behaviour. Indeed, such universalising language was mainly used without qualification. Thirdly, both

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<sup>4</sup> Limehouse Wharf shared owner

responses interpret the perceived 'disrespectful' conduct of social renters to be a cause of deeper concerns, which the first the respondent described as a form of 'resentment'.

It is worth noting that both the respondents quoted above lived in single-tenure parts of their developments. However, amongst those whose blocks contained a mix of social rented properties, a number of respondents also levelled similar complaints regarding the conduct of social renters living in their block. In Island Heights, the lifts constituted the only communal space that was used by both social renting and intermediate tenure residents (albeit never simultaneously). And as one shared owner described, the perceived condition of the lift on occasions made this a particular area of contention:

"There's been a lot of complaints about the state of the lifts that are also used by those [social housing] floors. And I have seen it, at times it looks really bad. They litter on the floor. So some people have been quite vocal that there should've been one lift for us exclusively, rather than having to share with the council flats."

This respondent's language again suggests a tendency to apportion blame for collectively-experienced problems – in this case the relatively minor nuisance of littering in the shared lifts – on the conduct of 'council' tenants. And in this case, feelings of frustration or 'resentment' manifested in the call for one of the two lifts to be kept exclusively for the use of the building's shared-owning minority. A similar – albeit more cautiously worded – complaint was offered by a shared owner from Shadwell Plaza's only internally-mixed block:

"You get like crisp packets and stuff left in the lobby, which – I don't know – rightly or wrongly, we'd always assume is the social rented element. We do assume that their attitude to communal space isn't the same. But that's just our assumption, we could be totally wrong."

In reality, the last response is perhaps telling in its disclamatory tone, as it must be noted that the basis on which these complaints are being made remains unclear (and none of the respondents interviewed described witnessing social renters being involved in these sorts of 'anti-social' behaviour). However, it remains apparent that the tendency of some respondents was to discuss the conduct of their social renting neighbours in a way which both collectively *and* exclusively apportions blame for misconduct on this tenure group.

For their part, needless to say, those social renters who were interviewed did not share the view that 'non-owners' were largely to blame for any problems experienced in their developments. On the one hand, very few social renters commented on problems such as

littering or noise within the developments. One Shadwell Plaza social renter even described how “because this block is very mixed, a lot of people respect it”. On the other hand, some social renting respondents were conscious that others in their development took issue with their conduct. For instance, a Limehouse Wharf resident – who lived with her husband and baby in a one-bedroom flat – reflected upon the complaints made regarding ‘clutter’ on the balconies (including laundry, which was ‘banned’ by the building’s covenant):

“I don’t think people should complain about that because it’s practical, it’s fact of life. You’ve got to wash your clothes. You’ve got to dry them. If you’ve got nice weather and if you’ve got a balcony, you’re going to make use of it, you know?”

For this resident, therefore, complaints over laundry on the balconies were unreasonable. However, not all shared owners were of the view that their home-owning neighbours held unreasonable expectations or made unreasonable demands of the building and its inhabitants. Indeed, as one Island Heights social renter commented;

“If people start disrespecting the building, the people that earn a lot of money, they wouldn’t want to live here. And it’d get worst if they’re putting more council in<sup>5</sup>. I think it’d have a really bad effect.”

This respondent – herself a young social renter, who was brought up in a local authority flat near to Island Heights – therefore echoed some non-social renters’ sentiments that ‘disrespect’ towards the building was associated with ‘council’ tenants. In doing so, she appeared to rationalise and justify perceived concerns regarding differential levels of conduct between social renting and intermediate or market rate households.

A sizeable minority of residents from the three case study schemes therefore appeared – rightly or wrongly – to associate deviations from ‘normal’ or acceptable conduct with social renters in their development. This appears to reflect Jupp’s (1999) observation that residents of mixed-tenure schemes attribute ‘minor problems’ to the conduct of social renters. However, where Jupp (1999:70) finds that owners “identify the problems with just a few families rather than tenure groups”, negative sentiments here appear to generalise blame to social renters and/or the part of the development in which their properties were located. This was revealed, in particular, in the ‘universalising’ language of some respondents’ complaints, which were characterised by the use of collective nouns and pronouns when discussing ‘their’ misconduct and ‘our’ concerns. There was also some evidence to suggest that social renters were conscious of these sentiments. Moreover, as

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<sup>5</sup> Whilst there were no proposals to increase the proportion of social renters in Island Heights, a number of additional developments were proposed nearby which would include social rented units.



illustrated by the example of ‘clutter’ on the balconies, these insights appear to reflect Graves’ (2010) suggestion that building rules and regulations can work to reinforce this form of stigmatisation.

**“As owners, we have a vested interest in keeping the place nice and clean and tidy”<sup>6</sup>**

The residents’ interviews also provide insights into how respondents rationalised perceived differences in conduct, based on differences in the attitudes held by social housing tenants. In short, this perceived deviance from the rules and norms of conduct was not seen simply as a reflection of the characteristics of those who rented from a housing association, but was also sometimes seen as an ‘effect’ of housing tenure itself. A sizeable literature has engaged with the collective and individual normalisation of home ownership as a more virtuous tenure category (Kemeny 1981, Gurney 1999b, a, Flint 2003a, Flint and Rowlands 2003, Flint 2004, McKee 2011). As Flint and Rowlands (2003:224) argue, owning one’s home “confers upon individuals the symbolic capital of subscribing to and successfully attaining constructed lifestyles and values”, based on the ‘distinction’ between home-owners and social renters. Specifically, “owner-occupiers are identified as being able to take more responsibility for their homes” (Flint and Rowlands 2003:226). The normalisation of home ownership thus invokes a belief – which is particularly pervasive in the era of ‘active citizenship’ (Rose 2000) – that those with an equity stake are more responsible in their conduct (especially concerning the upkeep of properties) than those renting from a housing association, simply because they are financially ‘invested’ in their properties and in the local neighbourhood (Flint 2004).

Contrary to the shared-owning interview respondents from McKee’s (2011) Glasgow case study, who tended to avoid or contest negative perceptions or stereotypes when discussing their social renting neighbours – a number of shared owners from the three case study developments appeared quick to attribute social renting with lower levels of responsibility, care or individual investment in their properties. As one Limehouse Wharf shared owner matter-of-factly stated, “if people don’t own their home, they don’t tend to look after it as well”. Whilst another shared owner elaborated upon this point in equally direct terms:

“A slight downside is that some people don’t treat it as their own, and I think that might be because they are social tenants. People who own or people who are in shared ownership tend to look after their property better.”

Social renters were therefore seen by some shared-owning respondents as less inclined to

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<sup>6</sup> Island Heights shared owner

attend towards the care and upkeep of their own properties, simply because of the financial characteristics of their tenure. This rationale was most commonly used to explain the perceived propensity of social renters to allow their flats (and in particular their balconies) to become cluttered or messy. However, some respondents also extended the perceived lack of material investment by social renters to explain what they saw as lower levels of care and commitment to the development as a whole. As a Shadwell Plaza shared owner described:

“Those people who I’ve generally met here own. Those are the people who care and are involved. Who take notice of things, not just within their flats, but with issues within the block. Our eyes are open to the whole complex.”

Similarly, according to an Island Heights shared owner, “there is a drastic lack of care and awareness of people who are not long-term invested in this building”. A number of shared-owning respondents thus rationalised and normalised social renters’ perceived divergence from norms of conduct on the basis that were less materially ‘invested’ in where they lived than those whose housing tenure involved a share in the equity of their properties.

The material characteristics of different forms of housing tenure were thus conflated both with levels of individual responsibility and engagement in ‘active citizenship’ – whether in terms of the upkeep of individual properties, or attitudes towards the development as a whole. On the one hand, this viewpoint can arguably be rationalised on the basis that shared owners and owner-occupiers arguably have more to gain, in financial terms, by maintaining their properties and ensuring that standards of upkeep are maintained within the building. Such an explanation was proffered by a Shadwell Plaza resident:

“We have a stake in the upkeep of the building. Basically, if all the corridors are a mess, it affects our investment. Whereas somebody who's paying less, who doesn't have equity, they don't have that same level of investment.”

However, the association between someone’s housing tenure and their motivation towards the upkeep of their home and its environs invariably privileges a property’s ‘exchange value’ over its ‘use value’. In other words, this assumes that financial investment (viz. exchange value) constitutes the sole motivation to maintain the physical condition of one’s property – rather than, say, the desire to ensure that one’s home simply remains nice to live in (viz. use value). On the other hand, therefore, financial ‘investment’ constitutes a problematic explanation for a divergence in the conduct of those from different tenure groups – as even for the most ‘rational’ of economic actors may still be adverse to living in conditions of mess, disorder or disrepair.

Indeed, some respondents offered alternative – and more critical – reflections on some people’s apparent propensity to associate other residents’ conduct with the financial characteristics of their housing tenure. For instance, one Shadwell Plaza shared owner described the attitude of “this is my home, it’s not just some place I rent” as “the worst tendency of the leaseholders” in her building. A second respondent saw this mind-set as instead reflective simply of a sense of ‘entitlement’ or ‘snobbery’, rather than of genuine variations in the level of investment in or commitment towards the building:

“I think people [shared owners] that are living on the upper floors maybe see themselves as perhaps more entitled, because they own part of the property as opposed to just pure tenants. That’s certainly the attitude or the vibe that I get. And there’s likely an element of snobbery there as well.”

Some residents therefore contested the assumptions that social renting might inherently constitute a flawed or problematic category, simply because its occupants are less financially invested ‘consumers’ of housing – reflecting the more progressive attitudes amongst the shared owners and renters which McKee (2011:3408) interviewed for her Glasgow case study. Overall, however, it remains that a number of respondents were quick to associate forms of property ownership – even, ironically, those involving an element of subsidy – as inherently associated with greater levels of responsibility and ‘investment’. By rationalising the perceptions of social renters as less inclined towards the upkeep of their properties in this way – and thus normalising their perceived misconduct – a sizeable group of residents were therefore stigmatised solely on the basis of their housing tenure. In essence, therefore, this attitude goes beyond the already problematic tendency to conflate misconduct with the characteristics of people that occupy subsidised housing (Dean and Hastings 2000), to mobilise the inherent financial characteristics of housing tenures themselves as causal explanations for perceived variations in conduct (Flint and Rowlands 2003).

**“There’s some resentment that we’re paying so much to live here and other people get it for free”<sup>7</sup>**

Finally, some interviews revealed a degree of underlying resentment regarding the fact that subsidised housing tenants were living in the same scheme as those who had bought an equity share in their properties, or those who were paying a higher-level of intermediate or market rate rent. Contrary to the assumption that feelings of resentment in mixed-tenure contexts arise from social renters becoming envious of their more well-off neighbours

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<sup>7</sup> Limehouse Wharf intermediate-renter

(Joseph 2006) – interviews with residents of the three case study schemes suggested that feelings of resentment were largely confined to those from intermediate tenures. In many cases, this took the form of frustration over a perception of paying more for an equivalent (or smaller) property. For instance, this shared owner's response was reflected on the fact that Shadwell Plaza included a number of six-bedroom houses for social rent:

“They're wonderful houses, housing association properties. So those people have the opportunity to live in accommodation which ordinary people, who aren't in receipt of any kind of benefit from the state, wouldn't ever be able to access.”

Whilst a similar comment from a Limehouse Wharf shared owner encapsulate this view:

“It's a bit annoying, if you think about it. They [social renters] get something for free that you had to pay for. And I guess that's more in your face living here.”

For this reason, another Shadwell Plaza shared owner described there being “more resentment than interaction” between tenure groups, because “we bother going to work in the morning, when someone else is getting it all for free”. In essence, a minority of shared-owning residents felt resentful over the fact that, in their view, they had to pay for a property that other residents were getting for free. Once again, perceived differences in the fundamental economic characteristics of particular housing tenures constituted the basis for the stigmatisation of social renters, who were implied to be undeservedly in receipt of subsidised (or ‘free’) housing.

The receipt of housing benefits constitutes a less-widely-discussed aspect of resentment or prejudice within the literature on tenure mixing. However, as Bartz et al. (2011:5) suggest, the increasing profile of public debates over the perceived expense and quality of public/social housing could arguably lead to a heightening of such sentiments of resentment amongst within in mixed-tenure schemes. This view was also highlighted by comments that ‘ordinary’ people could not reasonably afford to access some of the social rented properties in the case study schemes. On the other hand, this viewpoint could arguably be seen to reflect the emphasis that has been placed on shared ownership as primarily constituting a form of financial investment – at least in anecdotal terms – as seen in the marketing of schemes such as these. Once again, this would suggest that a tendency to privilege a property's exchange value might be a source of resentment amongst some shared owners – alongside wider-ranging public debates over the excessive value or quality of some social housing stock. What is interesting on the basis of these case studies, however, is the fact that – firstly – those respondents who expressed sentiments of resentment towards social

renters were all shared owners<sup>8</sup>, itself ostensibly a form of ‘affordable’ housing. Secondly, several such comments were made by ‘key workers’, whose access to the shared ownership schemes was contingent on their work in the public sector. However, one key worker respondent explained how he felt key workers were not a target for resentment “because I think people see that we’re paying our way”. Similarly, another key worker who expressed sentiments of resentment towards the scheme’s social renters explained that, in her view, “people who outrightly own probably don’t feel like that about us”. Shared owners, and key workers in particular, thus positioned themselves either as outside of – or as alongside owner-occupiers – in their distinctions between those who ‘pay their own way’ and those who do not.

The perception that social renters are accessing an equivalent property for free is, needless to say, inherently problematic – not least because tenants of social housing *do* pay rent. These rents, whilst being below market rate, still constitute considerable sums of money (around £600 a month for a 1-bedroom property according to one Island Heights resident). However, one social renter nevertheless described how she ‘respected’ the view those who “work hard for their money” and, as a result, “don’t want no more poor people moving in”. Once again, it must also be stressed that a majority of residents did not share these sentiments of resentment or frustration towards their social renting neighbours. As one Shadwell Plaza resident described:

“I haven’t noticed anyone rubbing up against each other on the basis that “I live in this flat, you live in that flat, and actually I paid for mine or whatever else”. In fact, I don’t even make that distinction.”

Negative attitudes towards the provision of housing at less-than-market rates are perhaps better understood as a reflection of wider public and political discourse, or of people’s backgrounds, political orientations or, as McKee (2011) argues, their residential histories – rather than being necessarily construed as having been formed in response to the lived experience of a mixed-tenure housing context. As one resident of Limehouse Wharf implied, these negative sentiments may also reflect the physical and social ‘distance’ between tenure groups, and might therefore be reduced by a greater degree of interaction or familiarity:

“If everyone made a bit more of an effort and we got to know each other, then I’m sure that resentment would die down... You’d kind of understand where people are coming from.”

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<sup>8</sup> Whilst only a small number of private-renters (2) and owner-occupiers (4) were interviewed – none expressed similar negative sentiments towards social renters in their developments.

Feelings of resentment towards the subsidy received by some households were perhaps indicative of little more than a degree of ignorance towards the realities of social housing amongst some shared owners, resulting from the fact that those from different tenures had not “got to know each other”. On the other hand, however, it could be seen as reflective of deeper-seated political opinions amongst a minority who resent the presence of social renters ‘on principle’. Either way, forms of stigma and prejudice associated with housing tenure constitute potentially divisive aspects on the individual and collective psyche of some – albeit by no means all – higher-income residents of all three case study schemes.

### **III. Conclusions**

Berube (2006) suggests that critics should be more accepting of the potential of mixed-tenure development to improve the quality of life for lower-income social housing tenants, by alleviating the stigma and prejudice otherwise faced by those living in subsidised housing schemes. Indeed, the policy rationale for tenure mixing in the UK context is premised in part on the ability of mixed-tenure development to foster ‘passive inclusion’. Reference to ‘inclusion’, ‘cohesion’ and mutual ‘respect’ strongly imply that the physical integration of housing types and tenures will create a residential milieu that is characterised by tolerance and acceptance towards those from different backgrounds (DTLR 2001:35, ODPM 2005b:5, LBTH 2007[1998]:87). These forms of informal or ‘passive’ inclusion – whilst not imbued with the same tangible or material qualities as ‘active’ inclusion in the labour market – can nevertheless be seen as equally important, especially in the context of myriad ways that the stigma attached to residents of social housing ‘estates’ has been found to affect their lives and life chances (cf. Dean and Hastings 2000). Yet, despite the obvious allure of this ‘passive inclusion’ rationale for tenure mixing, evidence suggests that the stigma, prejudice or social division based on tenure a reality of life in mixed-tenure schemes – both in the UK (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000) and elsewhere (Arthurson 2010, Graves 2010, Bartz et al. 2011). In a number of respects, the insights gained from residents of the three case study mixed-tenure schemes appears to affirm the view that, in practice, perceptions of tenure-based differences are coloured by divisive attitudes. However – while underlying tensions, potential conflicts and a lack of perceived diversity raise fundamental questions regarding the promise of ‘passive inclusion’ in new-build developments – these findings are also reflective of both more and less predictable ways in which stigma and division may manifest themselves in ‘mixed tenure’ urban contexts more broadly.

Firstly, it was clear that most respondents' day-to-day experience of life in the case study developments was characterised by a perception of relative social homogeneity – seemingly in stark contrast to the 'balanced' social milieu that tenure mixing ostensibly aims to achieve (Cole and Goodchild 2001). Respondents from shared ownership and market rate properties perceived the other residents with whom they had the most daily contact – namely, those in the same building block or access core – to have similar characteristics to themselves, typically being those of 'young professional' urban dwellers. This was perhaps reflective, in part, of residents' projection of their own self-identity onto their neighbours. However, it was most likely indicative of the simple fact that developments were all designed in such a way as to ensure a degree of separation between tenure groups, with the inevitable outcome that this separation was experienced by residents as a lack of 'social mix' or diversity. In this respect, rather than offering a space for 'radical encounters' between members of diverse social groups and backgrounds (cf. Watson 2009), experiences of life in the case-study schemes were arguably more suggestive of their reproduction of patterns of residential segregation, albeit on a finer-grained scale. This is an important observation in and of itself – whether in terms of the possibilities for social interaction between residents of different tenure groups, or in terms of the potential for the creation of a more socially diverse and therefore 'inclusive' residential milieu.

Secondly, and in turn, many residents nevertheless remained aware of the fact that their development comprised an overall mix of household types and tenures – and, moreover, were conscious of the fact that tenure groups were physically separated. A number of respondents described this separation in terms of a form of 'segregation' between housing tenures, which was also seen by some to reflect differences in socioeconomic status or class. Again, this observation may simply be seen to reflect the design strategies that were pursued by the developers and designers of these and other schemes, who for various reasons discussed in Chapter Five, seek to limit the proximity between properties of different tenures. In this respect, an impulse towards spatial 'purification' – described by Sibley (1988) as a drive to avoid the mixing of unlike categories – was simply being reflected in the day-to-day experiences of residents. Yet despite this seeming predictability, perceptions of 'segregation' within the case study schemes arguably have broader substantive implications. On the one hand, a number of respondents themselves questioned the extent to which their development actually corresponded to their definition of a 'mixed community' – both given the perceived internal homogeneity of the various different parts

of the case study schemes, and also given the perceived separation between social renters and other tenure groups. On the other hand, as the second section of this chapter illustrated, a number of residents still expressed the sorts of negative sentiments towards their development's social renters that a 'segregated' distribution of housing tenures is ostensibly supposed to avoid. Where tenure mixing could be seen as an antidote to what Bauman (2003) describes as 'mixophobic' responses to the heterogeneity of urban life – this therefore appears to be contradicted by the similarity and homogeneity experienced by residents in their daily lives, together with the perceived division and segregation between tenure groups.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, there was evidence to suggest that residents not only saw their developments as 'divided' along the lines of tenure, but also that a number held negative sentiments towards the social renters living in their scheme. These attitudes or perceptions were arguably indicative of a degree of prejudice, specifically associated with housing tenure. The first indication of this was a tendency, amongst a sizable minority of residents, to attribute undesirable or negative conduct to the schemes' social renters. Social renters were perceived as having a propensity to deviate from the norms or rules of acceptable behaviour, whether through littering or 'disrespect' of communal areas, or failing to maintain their own properties. Moreover, 'deviant' conduct was not attributed to particular incidents, households or individuals – as Jupp (1999) found – but was discursively associated with social renters' as a whole through the use of generalising language. It therefore appears that perceptions of 'other' (subsidised) tenure groups sometimes boiled down to "us-versus-them tensions", as identified by existing research (Bartz et al. 2011:5). A second indication of tenure-based prejudice was seen in the way that some respondents rationalised these generalisations regarding the conduct of social renters through their lower levels of 'investment'. As Fraser et al. (2011:14) identify, discourses of homeownership privilege the exchange value of property over its use-value. In this respect, social renters' 'deviant' conduct was naturalised as a characteristic of their housing tenure – and, specifically, their lack of an equity stake in their properties. A third indication of prejudice against the case studies' social renters was expressed as resentment over the perception that they were not 'paying their way' and instead were 'getting for free' something which others 'worked hard to pay for'. Again, this was indicative of stigma that was directly associated with social renting as a mode of housing 'consumption' – rather than, say, a reflection on the perceived characteristics of the schemes' social renters themselves.



Together, it therefore appeared that social renters were ‘othered’ in the discourses of those from intermediate and market rate tenures, based on naturalising and essentialising assumptions regarding their conduct.

The assertion that social renters living in mixed-tenure schemes will face less stigmatisation or prejudice based on their housing tenure constitutes a persuasive rationale for tenure mixing on the grounds of social justice (Berube 2006). However – and whilst many respondents held either positive or agnostic attitudes towards the mix of tenures in their development – it was also apparent that forms of prejudice and social division were reproduced within the context of the case study mixed-tenure schemes in various ways. Where tenure mixing ostensibly seeks to avoid the segregation of lower-income households within ‘monolithic’ social housing estates, all three schemes were themselves perceived by some respondents to be segregated along the lines of tenure. Where tenure mixing might be expected to reduce perceptions of social difference through encounters between those from different backgrounds, many respondents perceived their day-to-day experiences of contact with other residents as characterised by relative social homogeneity. And, most importantly, where tenure mixing promises to avoid or alleviate stigma, it appeared that forms of tenure-based prejudice – focused on perceptions of conduct and responsibility – were in fact reproduced within the case study schemes. It must be stressed that the interviews provided no evidence that social renters had directly experienced overt or explicit expressions of prejudice (although, given the relatively small number interviewed in each case study, this is no guarantee that such incidences had not occurred). However, the evidence of underlying division, stigma and prejudice along the lines of housing tenure is nonetheless suggestive that there is no guarantee of social ‘cohesion’ and ‘integration’ within these forms of mixed-tenure housing development. The physical separation between tenure groups within the case study developments therefore appeared to be accompanied by a symbolic division between ‘owners’ and social renters. And if one accepts that stigmatisation at the level of discourse can be equally harmful to those at the receiving-end (cf. Dean and Hastings 2000), then these insights raise serious and potentially-troubling concerns, not just regarding the ‘passive inclusion’ rationale for tenure mixing, but also regarding the fundamental nature of social relations in mixed-tenure schemes.

## Chapter Nine: The Promise of Mixed Communities?

In the context of almost overwhelmingly contrary evidence for the propositions advanced by policy discourse, this concluding chapter considers the question of what promise – if any – remains for the aspiration of creating ‘mixed communities’. A set of conclusions are offered here which address these propositions in turn – to argue the need for critically re-evaluating expectations of mixed-tenure housing, rather than assume that policies, designs, and residents themselves have ‘failed’ to realise the propitious outcomes of tenure mixing. Ultimately, it is argued that moving beyond assumptions of the exceptional qualities of mixed-tenure development is especially important if we are to respond to the prospective demise of tenure mixing as a means of providing much needed affordable housing.

The first set of conclusions offered here relate to new mixed-tenure development as a means of providing ‘affordable’ housing. Drawing, firstly, on reflections from residents themselves, questions are raised regarding the proportion of new homes supplied in these and other similar schemes that are genuinely ‘affordable’ for the those in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Critical questions are also raised regarding the potential ‘gentrifying’ pressures associated with developments in which the majority of properties are destined for comparatively expensive forms of consumption. In response to these questions, however, insights from those involved in the provision process for the case study schemes assert the financial pressures and constraints within which they operate. Moreover, respondents’ reflections on the changing political and economic climate suggest that reductions in government funding will only make it harder for developers of mixed-tenure schemes to provide a higher proportion of affordable – and especially social rented – housing.

A second set of conclusions responds to assertions that tenure mixing may foster ‘active’ forms of social inclusion for lower-income social renters. The scant evidence to support the ‘active inclusion’ rationale – which is premised on the assumption of instrumental interactions between residents of different tenure groups – is reiterated in the context of the findings from this research. It is argued that ‘casual’ or fleeting contacts constituted the prevailing experience for most residents of all three schemes, with conversational, friendship-based, or instrumental interactions each being progressively less commonplace. On the one hand, it is argued that this can be seen to constitute a reflection of seemingly orthodox design strategies that work to ensure the separation of tenure groups and limit

opportunities for passing interaction or 'mixing'. On the other hand, however, it is argued that we should adapt our 'exceptional' expectations of the nature of social relations in mixed-tenure schemes – and instead accept, in line with residents' own experiences and expectations, that interactions predominantly take an ordinary and prosaic form. As such, an argument is present in Section Two for an alternative view of social relations that moves beyond the assumptions of 'active inclusion' and instead accepts the realities of 'banal neighbouring' in these – and other – 'mixed' urban residential contexts.

The third set of conclusions presented here relate to the assertion that mixed-tenure housing may offer other, 'passive', forms of 'inclusion' for lower-income residents. In line with most existing research, it is argued that there is little empirical or theoretical basis to support the proposition of passive 'role modelling' effects in this context. Instead, social renters held matter-of-fact – and mostly 'tenure-blind' – attitudes towards their more affluent counterparts. And besides, the design of the case study schemes offered few opportunities even for 'passive' social contacts. Whilst social renters did express sentiments of pride, esteem or even 'aspiration' as a result of living in the case study schemes, these were reflective more of the quality, location or 'tenure-ambiguity' of their new homes. In response to the assertion of greater social inclusivity or cohesion within these schemes, it appeared that contrary forms of tenure-based stigma, prejudice and division could equally be reproduced within mixed-tenure contexts. Once again, it is argued that the presumption of tolerance constitutes another example of attributing exceptional expectations to housing contexts simply because they comprise a mix of tenures. This is not, of course, to excuse tenure-based prejudice – but rather to question the assumption that 'mixed' residential settings may be immune from such attitudes, which are otherwise widely reproduced in both the discourses and practices of housing policy, provision and management.

A fourth set of conclusions responds to assumptions regarding the relationship(s) between mixed-tenure housing developments and their surrounding neighbourhoods, within the context of the post-'urban renaissance' policy discourse on 'sustainable communities'. It has been asserted that demand for local shops and services may be broadened and bolstered by a more 'balanced' mix of housing tenures within an area. However, evidence from the case study schemes suggests that the consumption preferences of residents were mostly focused beyond the immediate neighbourhood – raising questions both of the positive assertion for a more 'balanced' demand, and of the critical contention of 'gentrification' pressures arising

from new-build, mixed-tenure development. Secondly, implicit assumptions are also made regarding the operation of informal 'social control' in mixed-tenure schemes. Again, there was limited and often contradictory evidence from the case study residents – suggesting that crime and disorder was a (relatively small) part of life in these schemes over which residents felt they had little control. There was even some suggestion that the developments themselves may even have constituted a focus or 'target' for crime or 'anti-social' behaviour. Moreover, where problems of nuisance or disorder were experienced within the developments themselves, these tended to be attributed – by assumption rather than evidence – to social renters, thus constituting another potential source of stigma. Finally, in response to the assertion that housing mix may foster greater levels of inter-ethnic 'cohesion', it was found that – whilst most attitudes were either positive or agnostic – a minority expressed prejudiced or even racist views. In turn, the developments themselves were viewed by some residents to be divided or 'segregated' along racial lines. Questions are therefore raised regarding the assumptions that tenure mixing may bolster demand for goods or services, regulate against problems of crime or disorder, or alleviate racial tensions.

The fifth and final set of conclusions steps back from the terms of critical engagement set by policy discourse, to instead consider how the promise of 'mixed communities' was conceived by residents and housing professionals in their own terms, based on interview discussions regarding tenure mixing as an aim for housing policy and provision. Firstly – and despite the fact that life in the case study schemes was generally discussed in prosaic terms – it is argued that residents were far from ambivalent towards the fundamental idea of tenure mixing. A number of respondents gave the impression that they supported the normative ideal of 'mixed communities', at least as an alternative to forms of residential segregation. Secondly, while many of the housing providers interviewed discussed the task of delivering their own mixed-tenure schemes with a degree of pragmatic rationality, interview responses also reveal a distinct vein of scepticism over the apparent orthodoxy of separating tenures. In turn, some housing professionals retained a belief in the aims of 'mixed communities' – providing that schemes could be designed in such a way as to afford opportunities for 'mixing'. Others, however, were overtly critical of the instrumental demands placed on social relations in policy discourse, given their own interpretation of residential life as a far more routine or – indeed – 'banal' set of practices. Despite these contrasting perspectives, what was clear is the value of turning towards residents' and practitioners' for analytic insights into housing processes, their implications, and their limitations.

## I. Affordable Housing Provision

Whilst academic engagements have tended to focus on the social policy rationales and instrumental sociological assumptions behind tenure mixing, in practice the relevant policy guidance can primarily be seen to constitute a material intervention in the supply of 'affordable' housing. As housing economists have argued, providing some proportion of subsidised housing operates as a 'tax' on the increased land values resulting from gaining planning permission for a proposed development (Crook et al. 2002, Tiesdell 2004, Crook et al. 2006, Crook and Monk 2011). Between 2004 and 2008, it is estimated that the total value of new affordable housing secured through planning negotiations for mixed-tenure development exceeded ten billion pounds (Crook and Monk 2011:1007). At the same time, however, the process of securing affordable housing through 'Section 106' agreements has attracted criticism for its lack of transparency and accountability, slowness and complexity, and highly-variable outcomes (ibid. 2011:1013). More scathing and fundamental criticisms have been levelled by those who argue that tenure mixing constitutes a form of 'state-led gentrification' – whereby property developers are able to secure lucrative access to inner-city sites in exchange for a modest contribution towards 'affordable' housing, with the risk of transforming neighbourhoods to the detriment of existing lower-income residents (Davidson and Lees 2005, Davidson 2008, 2010). Critical questions therefore arise regarding the efficacy and equity of tenure mixing as a means of providing affordable housing, especially given the seemingly egalitarian discourse of 'mixed communities'.

At the time the case study schemes were proposed, applicable policy guidance stated that "a community's need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, [...] should be taken into account [...] in deciding planning applications" (DETR 2000:9). Tower Hamlets' planning policy also reiterated that "the greatest need in the Borough is for social rented housing" (LBTH 2007[1998]:93). Moreover, the analysis in Chapter Four illustrated how all three case study schemes were situated in areas of relative material disadvantage, with large concentrations of – and demand for – social rented housing. Yet insights into the provision processes discussed in Chapter Five showed that all three case studies provided a proportion of social rented housing that was below Tower Hamlets' target (LBTH 2007[1998]:92). With the exception of Island Heights, intermediate tenure properties comprised a significantly higher proportion of the 'affordable' housing provided. As discussed in Chapter Five, those involved in the development of the case study schemes suggested that financial considerations were the primary rationale when negotiating the mix of 'affordable' housing

provided, arguing that any higher proportion of social housing would have rendered the schemes 'unviable'. Planning policy guidance, in turn, encouraged local authorities to consider the economic viability of proposed schemes when negotiating over the mix of tenures (GLA 2004:65) – which still remains the case (CLG 2012:13). Arguably as a result of this, research into nation-wide affordable housing supply reveals a proportional increase in the supply of intermediate tenure properties when compared to those for social rent (Crook et al. 2006:370, Crook and Monk 2011:1008). As Crook et al. (2006:370) conclude, this trend is problematic in that it "raises major difficulties about how those in the greatest need are to be enabled to obtain affordable rented housing". This certainly appears to be a concern in Tower Hamlets, where it is estimated that twelve thousand households were on the social housing waiting list at the time that the case study developments were being completed – a figure which the local authority itself described as 'daunting' (LBTH 2009b:18).

A number of residents of the case study schemes – especially those in social rented properties – expressed dissatisfaction with what was perceived as an inadequate provision of genuinely-'affordable' housing through mixed-tenure development. One resident of Limehouse Wharf, in which less than one-third of the development's non-market rate properties were made available for social rent, complained of an apparent disconnect between local housing 'needs' and the type of properties delivered in new developments:

"In Tower Hamlets there's huge demand, a huge waiting list and huge waiting times. I've lived in this borough for twenty years, and what we can't understand is that there's always been a demand for housing, so why have these developments been built and then half or more are given to professional people? Most of the residents here are low income families. It's one of the poorest boroughs in the whole country."

In similar terms, a Shadwell Plaza social renter commented that:

"We have a housing shortage, a housing crisis. Because they give it all to private ownership, to the rich, you know, they're the only ones who can afford it. And they put away just a small amount for social housing."

In the eyes of some respondents, the high proportion of those properties provided in new mixed-tenure schemes destined for private ownership was thus seen as incongruous with the local demand for social housing for 'low income families'. Again, the fact that only a small proportion of new homes – including those built by housing associations – were destined for social rent appears as a strong point of contention. As Crook and Monk

(2011:1009) argue, shortfalls in the supply of social housing in mixed-tenure schemes, coupled with the increasing focus on intermediate 'affordable' housing products, have proved a particular source of controversy in the light of an ever-growing demand for social housing. This view was reflected by a number of social renting residents of the case study schemes, who appeared acutely aware of the demand for social housing, the size of waiting lists, and the overall impression of there being a 'housing crisis' in Tower Hamlets. One resident even commented on their perception that planning authorities' affordable housing targets tended to go un-met because "there's always an angle or an excuse that the developer uses to push to get the proportion of social [housing] down".

In addition to the perception that mixed-tenure development was predominantly providing expensive properties for higher-earning 'professionals', some social renting respondents also suggested that the newly-built properties – including those of an intermediate tenure – were mainly aimed at people from outside the local area. This was echoed by a Shadwell Plaza resident who remarked that "they're just building more flats, but they're not for social housing, they're for attracting the high earners from Canary Wharf or The City". Another social renter from Limehouse Wharf described how "a lot of housing associations are buying-up land for flats for professionals, so they're mainly attracting high income people from other areas". These residents' concerns thus appear to reflect academic critiques of tenure mixing policies as a license for 'new-build gentrification', permitting a "middle class recolonisation of the central city" (Davidson and Lees 2005:1167). In this vein, one shared-owning respondent went further still in stating that mixed-tenure housing provision;

"...might achieve the objective of developing a poorer area, but then you just push the people that really need properties nearer central London out of the areas they were originally living and further out to the suburbs".

Some residents thus appeared apprehensive over what some academic observers have also argued constitute direct or indirect 'displacement pressures'. In promising to 'diversify' the socioeconomic profile of poorer neighbourhoods, Davidson's (2008:2388) argues that mixed-tenure housing developments "clearly signal to the potential they contain to gentrify huge swaths of cities and consequently displace those low-income communities who are identified in policy rhetoric as the main beneficiaries".

A number of residents therefore offered critical reflections on the perceived efficacy and equity of providing 'affordable' housing through new mixed-tenure development. Of course,

not all respondents expressed such critical perspectives and many were largely just content with the new housing they had been provided with. For their part, most shared owners appeared to appreciate the opportunity to access what – for them – were comparatively 'affordable' properties. As one respondent commented, "shared ownership properties are a brilliant idea in a market like London, when it's so difficult to get on the property ladder". Perhaps understandably, those who had accessed intermediate tenure properties as 'key workers' also viewed the provision of these 'affordable' units in a positive light, as one respondent described – "you need to have an incentive for key workers, they've made a decision to work in the public sector, so why shouldn't society give a little back to them?". Understandably, attitudes towards the provision of different housing 'products' thus appear to be shaped, in part at least, by residents own circumstances and position within the 'political economy' of housing. From these insights, we cannot therefore generalise a widespread state of dissatisfaction or disillusionment towards affordable housing supply through mixed-tenure development. However, these observations nevertheless help to bridge the 'phenomenological gap' between the concerns of housing researchers and the concerns of residents (Allen 2009, Flint 2011). And as Davidson (2008:1402) concludes, even 'nuanced' or marginal responses that reflect existing residents' dissatisfaction with the dynamics of housing development "cannot be dismissed". Indeed, these concerns are reflective of wider criticisms of policy-making and development activities – for instance, the fact that private homeownership continues to occupy a 'hegemonic' position in political ideology, policy programmes and housing provision (Davidson 2008:1402), or that access to 'home' or 'place' appears to "be premised solely upon ability to pay or the residential desires of other, more affluent, groups" (ibid. 2008:1402).

The intention of these reflections has not been to assess the relative success or failure of the three case study schemes in providing new 'affordable' housing. Indeed, those involved in the development process(es) expressed a view that they did the best job possible in providing a balanced mix of tenures, given a host of constraints and contingencies, and whilst ultimately ensuring that the schemes were financially viable in the context of some of the highest-value areas of East London. More broadly – as Crook and Monk (2011:1013) conclude – mixed-tenure housing has proved broadly successful in delivering affordable homes prior to 2007, with a combination of buoyant demand and rising prices allowing developers the financial scope to fulfil their obligations, whilst the 'dissemination of good practice' amongst local authorities helped them to negotiate the best possible outcomes for



affordable housing provision in proposed schemes. However, the most pressing question now concerns the future potential of new mixed-tenure development to constitute a supply of affordable housing, given the ongoing financial crisis and the apparent liberalisation of Government planning and housing policies (Crook and Monk 2011:1015). Indeed, the housing providers interviewed here appeared sceptical as to whether the outcomes achieved by the case study schemes could be replicated in the current political and economic climate. Speaking in 2010, one housing association manager described falling house values as having “a huge impact on some of the schemes we’ve been working on”, as land purchased prior to the recession was “no longer as financially viable” for mixed-tenure development. Another respondent remarked that the housing association sector is “running scared” and “downscaling their development activities” because “lots of us lost loads of money” in 2008. On the other hand, however, falling land prices were seen as a potential source of opportunity for new development.

Perhaps more significant are the recent changes in policy, which include reductions in grant funding for new affordable housing development and changes to the planning system that may make it harder for local authorities to negotiate for the provision of affordable housing in new sites (see Crook and Monk 2011:1014). As a result of these policy shifts, one housing association manager – interviewed in 2011 – remarked that “the whole game has changed”. A private sector development manager described the difficulties of grappling with “the fact that the whole affordable house regime is completely up in the air”. Ultimately, most concerns in this regards came down to the scarcity of financing. As one respondent remarked that “the amount that we would get paid for schemes like this has more than halved” – meaning, needless to say, that developments such as the case studies featured here “would be really hard to stack up financially” in the current economic and policy climate. As one respondent concluded, “delivering affordable housing now is incredibly difficult”, and yet at the same time there remains “a political aspiration for an unrealistic amount of affordable housing”. The concerns voiced by residents of the case study schemes regarding the modest supplies of social housing delivered through new mixed-tenure development therefore appear unlikely to be appeased in the current economic and policy climate – in which, as Crook and Monk (2011:1015) conclude, we have seemingly witnessed the end of significant grant-funding for new affordable housing provision.

## II. Active Inclusion

As is discussed in Chapter Two – and, indeed, throughout the thesis – tenure mix is presented not just as a means of providing new 'affordable' homes, but also as a means of creating more socially mixed and 'balanced' neighbourhoods, which promise instrumental benefits for their inhabitants (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Cole and Goodchild 2001, Ostendorf et al. 2001, Musterd and Andersson 2005, Joseph 2006, Joseph et al. 2007, Power 2007, Lupton and Fuller 2009, Colomb 2011). The advocacy of 'social mix' is premised on the assumption that interpersonal interactions will occur between residents from different tenure groups, and that these social contacts may in turn bring tangible advantages in terms of fostering 'social inclusion'. On the one hand, it is suggested that lower-income social renters in mixed-tenure housing schemes are less likely to suffer from the multiple forms of social exclusion associated with 'monolithic' estates of social housing (Power 2007). For instance, as the Government argued, "living in deprived areas can help perpetuate worklessness as there are fewer employed contacts through which individuals can find work" (ODPM 2005a:35). Inversely, an 'active inclusion' rationale suggests that the relationships formed between social renters and their higher-income neighbours in a mixed-tenure context may reduce or reverse these forms of disadvantage. As Joseph et al. (2007:393) observe, this ambitious 'social networks' thesis states that "through social interaction among neighbours of different incomes and backgrounds, mixed-income development can connect low-income people to networks that provide access to resources, information, and employment". For instance, the Government have also argued that "finding work through personal contacts is the most common route into employment for the unemployed" (ODPM 2005a:35). The 'active inclusion' proposition for tenure mixing thereby asserts that proximity will foster interpersonal contacts between residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds, through which 'life changing' information or resources may be exchanged (Joseph et al. 2007:377-8). Ultimately, this rationale therefore posits social *interaction* as an "essential preliminary" to social *inclusion* (Camina and Wood 2009:470).

Chapter Seven examined the nature and extent of interpersonal contacts between residents. The picture was one of considerable variation in terms of whether, in what ways, and how often residents engaged with each other. On the one hand, 'fleeting' forms of interpersonal contact – such as passing greetings – were routine. Respondents also gave a clear impression that such contacts, whilst apparently casual in nature, were nonetheless valued as everyday aspects of friendly and convivial 'neighbouring'. On the other hand, sustained forms of

interaction – such as engaging in conversation with other residents, or visiting their homes – were far less commonplace. This corroborates the findings of research into other mixed-tenure contexts (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Kleit 2005), in which being 'good neighbours' was not taken by residents to mean socialising together (Camina and Wood 2009:473). Indeed, very few of our respondents lamented the paucity of closer forms of interpersonal contact between neighbours. And neither were such contacts or friendships entirely absent from the 'social life' of the case study schemes, with some respondents reporting socialising with their neighbours on a regular basis. Moreover, most respondents also felt that they could rely on their near neighbours for occasional assistance – even when these were not described as 'close' contacts or friends. This broadly reflects Camina and Wood's (2009:474) observation that "practical support [...] was the norm for neighbourhood relationships". The case study mixed-tenure schemes were thus seen by the majority of their residents to offer a civilised and amicable environment, which broadly met their needs and expectations of day-to-day life, despite the absence of evidence for the formation of opportunity enhancing acquaintanceships between residents. Similarly, Jupp's (1999:58) study of ten mixed-tenure schemes also found that "most residents do not have informal social networks which span across estates". Researchers have also concluded that there was "limited scope for passing know-how" and "no evidence of owners acting to link renters to labour market opportunities" where such 'weak ties' were found to be more commonplace (Camina and Wood 2009:473). In this regard, experiences of life in mixed-tenure housing appear at odds with the claims of fostering 'active inclusion' through the instrumental interactions of owners and renters within capacity-building 'social networks'.

Insights from residents of the three case study schemes suggested a range of possible explanations for the apparent (if not unexpected) paucity of closer or more sustained forms of interpersonal interaction between neighbours. Firstly, individual volition appeared as a major factor, with many respondents stating that they neither sought nor expected to engage in close or frequent social contacts with other residents. In some cases hectic lifestyles constituted a practical obstacle to socialising with neighbours, whilst other respondents explained that they valued their privacy and simply preferred not to engage closely with other residents. Instead, for many residents it appeared that "communities of interest" – whether centred around work, hobbies or lifestyle activities, or existing friendship networks – were held to be more important social outlets than the neighbourhood itself (cf. Gwyther 2009). Secondly – and despite the fact that 'benefits' of

mixed-tenure housing developments have been said to include greater opportunities for interaction between ethnic groups (Bailey et al. 2006:20) – cultural, religious and language differences were reported by some respondents to constitute a 'natural' barrier to further interaction with neighbours. For instance, several respondents suggested – whether rightly or wrongly – that those from Bengali or Somali backgrounds spoke too little English to allow for passing conversation. This echoes the findings of Kleit's (2005:1437) study of planned mixed-income communities in the US, in which she found that "language is the most important factor" in influencing interactions between residents.

Thirdly, the findings discussed in Chapter Seven suggest that physical proximity was perhaps the most important factor in enabling or constraining social contacts between residents of the case study schemes. Where more frequent interactions or closer relationship were reported by respondents, these almost inevitably involved adjacent or near neighbours. This also reflects the findings of other studies, which identified propinquity as "playing an important role" (Kleit 2005:1439), or even as constituting "the most important factor" (Jupp 1999:87), in the formation of relationships between residents. Moreover, the fact that people appeared most likely to engage with those they lived nearest to, or with whom they shared communal spaces, is a particularly significant observation when considering the fact that all three schemes were designed to ensure a degree of physical separation or distance between properties of different tenure groups. As Joseph et al. (2007:382) observe, the 'social networks' proposition is premised on the assumption that that mixed-tenure housing schemes are "appropriately designed in ways that promote the spatial integration of residents at different income levels". However, the analysis of the housing provision process presented in Chapter Four suggests that providers of mixed-tenure schemes favour the physical separation of tenure groups, so as to maximise marketability and manageability. As a result, none of the six hundred and sixty-odd households featured in this research had any households from a different tenure group on the same floor, and the vast majority entered their property through an entrance, lobby, lift or staircase that was not shared with any other tenure groups. It is therefore unsurprising that anecdotal evidence from residents suggested that contacts *between* tenure groups were few and far between. As Jupp (1999:46) also concludes, the fact that social renters are often housed separately from other tenure groups makes it "unsurprising that tenure groups mix little". Given the seeming importance of propinquity in encouraging interpersonal interactions between residents of mixed-tenure schemes, the preference for a 'segregated' distribution of housing tenures

therefore fundamentally violates the rationale for tenure mixing on the grounds that it may foster 'active inclusion' and 'cohesion' amongst residents from different income groups and backgrounds (ODPM 2005b:5, LBTH 2007[1998]:87).

In the absence of greater opportunities for interpersonal contact between residents from different tenure groups inside the developments' buildings, a number of those involved in the design and development of the case study schemes suggested that communal spaces – such as courtyards, gardens, or streets – might constitute an alternative sphere in which contacts between residents might take place. This echoes a key principle of 'new urbanist' thinking, that posits that "public space provides a venue for chance encounters, which serves to strengthen community bonds" (Talen 1999:1364). Chapter Five described how the case study developments comprised various forms of public and semi-public spaces. In some cases, however, due to a lack of seating or other features, residents understandably described these (often hard-landscaped) spaces as uncondusive to the sorts of 'lingering contacts' supposedly characteristic of an inclusive 'public realm'. Housing providers again described practical and/or financial concerns as constraining their ability to design more 'sociable' public spaces (such as concerns over noise or disturbance in close proximity to dwellings). In the case of Island Heights, a communal garden had been intentionally designed to afford opportunities for "diverse uses", whilst a playground and ball sports area were provided elsewhere to accommodate noisier activities. However, respondents rarely reported using any of these spaces to socialise with one another. The development of Shadwell Plaza, in turn, included a number of new streetscapes and a publically accessible square – all spaces that appear as part of a usable 'public' realm – and yet these were most commonly discussed by residents in the context of disorderly or anti-social behaviour, rather than as venues for interaction. In reality, therefore, there is little evidence here to support an environmentally deterministic argument for the link between public spaces and interpersonal interaction. As Talen (1999:1370) concludes, environmental factors are at best likely to be foster social contact "at the level of superficial, impersonal interaction". This again suggests that the ideal of fostering inclusive 'social networks', based on interactions in public or communal areas of mixed-tenure schemes, appears as both poorly evidenced and fundamentally unrealistic (Joseph et al. 2007:385-6).

This research therefore finds little evidence that mixed-tenure housing development works to foster the 'active inclusion' of lower-income tenants into networks of acquaintanceships

with their more affluent neighbours, who ostensibly endow such networks with capacity-building or life-improving qualities. It certainly appears to be the case that the emerging orthodoxies for the design of mixed-tenure schemes reduce the potential for contacts between social renters and owners. As Jupp (1999:81) bluntly concludes, it is "difficult to see the practical social network benefits for the majority of those living in the types of mixed tenure estates which are typically built today" simply "because they are unlikely to meet people from different economic groups". However, it is argued here that we should also revise our fundamental assumptions and expectations regarding 'neighbouring' in these – and other – 'mixed' residential contexts. The sorts of deterministic thinking upon which 'active inclusion' is premised appears largely out-of-step with residents' own experiences, attitudes, and personal volition. Perhaps, therefore, we are simply asking the wrong questions of mixed-tenure schemes, by expecting both the buildings and their inhabitants to act in such seemingly 'exceptional' ways. Indeed, the weight of empirical evidence suggest that interactions between residents of such schemes are largely 'casual' in nature (and most 'ordinary' city-dwellers' expectations and experiences would likely affirm this). Of course, closer relationships do occasionally form between residents and instrumental interactions (such as exchanges of favours) do occasionally take place. More importantly, however, amongst the vast majority of respondents – who engaged only in fleeting or 'casual' interactions with other residents – hardly any lamented on the absence of more frequent, intimate or instrumental relationships. Given that social contacts were neither expected to be, nor were experienced as, 'exceptional' in the ways in which discourse on 'social mixing' asserts – perhaps it is therefore time to adapt out expectations in line with more 'ordinary' visions of neighbouring. This is not to say that we must accept pessimistic predictions of anomie or 'community lost' within mixed-tenure contexts (cf. Gwyther 2009). Nor must an assertion of 'ordinariness' necessarily condone strategies that introduce divisive elements into the design of mixed-tenure housing. Instead, it is argued that we should simply accept what residents of mixed-tenure schemes have told us all along, that social contacts are mostly civil, convivial, and generally friendly. That neighbourly support or assistance is most often available when needed, without impeding on peoples' different preferences for privacy or solitude. In other words, that neighbouring is in many ways a 'banal' activity or aspect of most residents' lives. Moreover, 'banal neighbouring' was something of value to most residents, suggesting that casual interactions are not, in fact, "without substantial significance" in the way in which theorists of social capital have argued (Granovetter 1973:1361).

### III. Passive Inclusion

The findings from this research add to the weight of existing analyses which suggest that ambitious claims for the potential of tenure mixing to 'actively include' lower-income residents in the life-improving 'social networks' appear largely fallacious (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Kleit 2005, Joseph 2006, Joseph et al. 2007, Chaskin and Joseph 2011). However, as Berube (2006) argues, upward mobility is not the sole 'social policy' rationale for tenure mixing. Rather, forms of mixed-income housing may simply offer an improved quality of life to low-income residents, when compared to neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty. As Power (2007:188) observes, "the idea of mixed communities implies better, more stable, more attractive places", which prevent "the social isolation and poverty of ghettos". Looking beyond 'active' forms of inclusion may therefore lead us to consider whether 'mixed communities' foster 'inclusion' in other ways, such as through reducing the stigma commonly associated with residing in large social housing estates and instead creating a social milieu that attaches less significance to status or class positions as signified by peoples' housing tenure.

One of the means by which 'mixed communities' have been said to indirectly foster 'inclusion' is through raising the aspirations and self-esteem held by their lower-income inhabitants. Through so-called 'role modelling' effects, the very presence of high-income residents is argued to encourage more positive attitudes that may, in turn, bring more propitious forms of conduct. As Tunstall (2003:157) describes, it has been suggested that better-off residents "may influence neighbours' attitudes and behaviour towards their homes, the area, collective action, and their employment or educational status". The assumption is that such 'role modelling' effects occur 'passively' – through proximity and observation – rather than through 'active' involvement in social interactions or relationships. However, as Joseph et al. (2007) conclude, the 'role modelling' thesis is amongst the least well evidenced and hardest-to-test outcomes of tenure mixing. Indeed, as one housing policy professional interviewed for this research commented:

"There's very little evidence that 'Mr A' getting up and going to work at 8-o'clock consequently gets social tenant, 'Mr B', going and doing the same. I mean, there's very little chance of that."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, none of the social renters interviewed suggest that they had been influenced by residents from other tenure groups, whilst some respondents directly expressed scepticism towards such a claim;

"I presume that the idea of mixing the tenants together was to take some families, dysfunctional families, and move them in with teachers and architects. But does it change them as well? I don't think so!"

Another respondent bluntly stated that "you can't just influence people like that, can you?". Residents therefore appeared to share a sceptical view with regards to the potential for a mix of tenures to positively influence the attitudes or actions of lower-income residents in line with ostensibly desirable social norms or values (cf. Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Cole and Goodchild 2001, Kleit 2005).

Questions must therefore be asked as to what effect – if any – residing in a mixed-tenure scheme might have on the broader attitudes or outlook of social renters. In many ways, these questions remain as difficult to answer as they are problematic to pose. After all, as Ball (1986:154) reminds us, housing tenures merely constitute "consumption categories", despite the tendency for tenure to be used as an essentialising proxy for a host of social policy problems and prescriptions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of social renting respondents spoke in very matter-of-fact terms, both about their tenure status and about residing in a mixed-tenure scheme. Some responses did suggest positive feelings towards the case study developments. One Shadwell Plaza resident described how living in her new property "makes me feel proud". Similarly, an Island Wharf social renter joked that people "think that you're so high class living in a place near Canary Wharf!", adding – in more serious terms, that;

"...a lot of people, even my friends, they're not going to see that it's a council property, so obviously now it's my business who I tell or who I don't."

These comments suggest that the fact of living in a new mixed-tenure development, especially one in a desirable area, may instil more positive feelings regarding social renters' 'housing consumption' (albeit akin to the satisfaction one might expect to come with inhabiting a newly-built home). It could, however, be argued that such sentiments of 'pride' are perhaps suggestive of a potential for mixed-tenure development to counter some of the entrenched negative associations or stigmas attached to residing in social housing. Indeed, another social renting respondent alluded to this in more direct terms;

"You know why it's good? Because the people that have come from nothing – living in, like, crappy housing – they move here and it moves their hopes up..."

Whilst not widely echoed amongst other respondents, this quote is nonetheless reflective of the view that mixed-tenure development may indeed raise aspirations and self-esteem –



albeit as a result of living in a higher quality physical environment<sup>1</sup>, rather than having higher-income neighbours. In this regard, there is perhaps some validity to Berube's (2006) argument that critics of tenure mixing must acknowledge that modest, yet potentially significant, improvements in peoples' outlooks and attitudes may be achieved through new mixed-tenure development, at least in terms of reducing stigma.

Additionally, the Government's references to housing mix in the context of fostering 'inclusion' and 'cohesion' (DETR 2000, ODPM 2005b, CLG 2008a) – coupled with occasional but stronger-still statements regarding the potential for an integrated housing mix to "engender a sense of respect for all" (DTLR 2001:2) – work to imply that tenure mixing may also offer a greater degree of tacit acceptance or even solidarity amongst their inhabitants. In essence, the discourse of 'social mix' and 'community balance' implies that proximity between households from different backgrounds may overcome divisions associated with housing tenure and social class – despite what has been described as "extremely shaky empirical evidence" (Cole and Goodchild 2001:357). Indeed, the findings from this research discussed in Chapter Seven suggest that the case study schemes were by no means immune from other forms of stigma or prejudice based around tenure. Firstly, residents often acutely aware of differences between tenure groups within the schemes – and the fact that these were manifest in spatial terms often viewed as akin to 'segregation' (whether through the location of properties, their external appearance, or the use of different entrances and access routes). Some residents even went as far as to describe their developments as being 'divided along class lines'. In physical terms at least, residents thus appeared sceptical towards the degree to which their developments were 'integrated' or 'inclusive'. This raises questions regarding the practical effectiveness of 'tenure blind' design strategies, intended to reduce stigma or 'labelling', given that the distribution of properties provides an easily-read indication as to the tenure 'status' of particular households. If anything, most residents' experiences of daily life in these 'mixed' developments was therefore reflective of perceived homogeneity, rather than even the most prosaic notions of diversity or difference.

Moreover, a small but sizeable minority of shared owners and owner-occupiers also held negative perceptions of their social renting neighbours. In some instances, problems such as littering, vandalism or noise were attributed to 'naturalised' tendencies in the conduct of social housing tenants. In this respect, social renters were assumed to be less (materially)

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<sup>1</sup> It must also be stressed that a number of social renting households were equally vocal in raising issues or complaints relating to their properties, often due to insufficient space.

'invested' in the upkeep of their own properties, the building or the neighbourhood – and, as a result, less inclined to uphold established rules or norms of conduct. In other instances, a minority of owners expressed resentment towards their social renting neighbours for 'getting something for nothing'. In these respects, the 'use' and 'exchange' value of housing was instrumentally linked within the discourses of (some) owners and shared owners, such that the lack of an equity stake was deemed to make it all-but inevitable that one would mistreat the property and its surroundings. This was indicative of a degree of 'internal' stigma or prejudice, which appeared to suggest that not all residents shared in the Government's view that "different tenures do not make bad neighbours" (DETR 2000:10). Perhaps unsurprisingly, as others have found, mixed-tenure residential contexts are by no means immune to forms of tenure-based stigma or division (Jupp 1999, Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Arthurson 2010, Graves 2010, Bartz et al. 2011, Chaskin and Joseph 2011). On the one hand, this suggests that tenure mixing offers no guarantee of 'passive inclusion' or greater 'cohesion' amongst residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds. However, it can also be argued that – whilst desirable in principle – this constitutes another example of expectations which imbue mixed-tenure housing with exceptional characteristics or qualities (which might not be expected of other residential contexts). While underlying tensions or prejudice raise fundamental questions regarding the promise of 'passive inclusion' – these observations are equally reflective of otherwise predictable ways in which entrenched stigma is associated with housing-tenure more broadly. Accepting the 'banal' or ordinary qualities of everyday life and social relations in mixed-tenure housing schemes (cf. Allen et al. 2005, for a similar argument), would allow us to move beyond ambitious assumptions of 'inclusivity' and accept that forms of stigma – whilst undesirable – are simply part of life in these neighbourhoods. In turn, we should perhaps seek to better understand how residents themselves mediate or resist prejudiced attitudes – and perhaps consider how the practices and discourses of housing policy, development and management may better-counteract these attitudes or perceptions.

#### **IV. Sustainable Communities**

Beyond assertions of the propitious qualities that mixed-tenure developments may offer for their inhabitants, policy discourse also suggests the benefits of a more 'balanced' housing mix may also propagate to the surrounding neighbourhood. For instance, it has been stated that a "more sustainable mix of housing types and tenures" may "address deep-seated

problems" within deprived neighbourhoods (ODPM 2005c:53). In turn, housing mix was said to "provide a number of important community benefits", including "a better balance of demand for community services and facilities", a greater capacity for "community self-help", and the potential to "assist community surveillance" in response to problems of crime or anti-social behaviour (DTLR 2001:1). Tenure mix is thereby associated with the broader aims of 'sustainable communities', which include greater self-governance, a robust and growing local economy, and a socially diverse, cohesive and vibrant local culture (Raco 2005:333). It is thus assumed that mixed-tenure development will achieve a number of 'spillover' effects for the surrounding area. Firstly, as Joseph et al. (2007:394) identify, it is argued that tenure mixing will enhance the local 'political economy', as the higher-income residents attract and sustain local shops and services through their greater spending power. Secondly, it is argued that tenure mixing may engender a greater degree of 'collective efficacy' in response to problems of crime and disorder, as more affluent and 'invested' residents act on behalf of themselves and other residents to exert a greater degree of social control (Cole and Goodchild 2001:356, Uitermark 2003, Joseph et al. 2007:385). Thirdly, it is also implied that housing mix is associated with a greater degree of inter-ethnic cohesion or tolerance (Amin 2002:986, Robinson 2005:1421). These highly ambitious yet empirically 'slippery' neighbourhood-level outcomes have thereby been attributed to the sorts of mixed-tenure developments considered here.

Chapter Six explored residents' day-to-day engagements with their local area. As one would expect, the vast majority made use of local shops and services. However, the frequency with which residents patronised nearby businesses varied widely and only a small proportion reported to rely on local shops for the majority of their needs. The consumption preferences of many residents appeared more aligned towards established shopping, entertainment and nightlife destinations within easy reach of all three case study schemes. This appears to reflect Atkinson and Kintrea's (2000) observation that consumption needs and aspirations tend to be focused outside the immediate environs of 'mixed' inner-city neighbourhoods (especially for 'middle class' residents). In the case of Shadwell Plaza, for instance, the spatial analysis presented in Chapter Four illustrates the surrounding area's broad range of discount, convenience and 'specialist' shops. Whilst many respondents did frequent these local outlets on occasion – the extent to which the influx of new residents had any tangible impact on demand in the local economy was unclear at best. Moreover, Chapter Six also revealed little evidence that residents of the case study developments made much use of

local amenities. For instance, the pub adjacent to Shadwell Plaza was dismissed as 'dirty' and 'run down' – and was more often seen to constitute a nuisance rather than an amenity. In turn, residents from all three case studies expressed a preference for visiting other nearby areas with more established bar and café scenes. Two of the case study schemes also included the provision of purpose-built community centres, which in both cases were barely used by respondents. A combination of lifestyle factors and volition therefore seem to suggest that, for higher-income owners in particular, local outlets and facilities were only used infrequently. For this reason alone, the promise that shops might offer an alternative space of 'inclusive sociability' (Watson 2009:1583) – or that community facilities might encourage interaction between diverse groups (Kleit 2005:1416) – did not appear to be realised in practice.

These observations inevitably reflect idiosyncratic aspects of the case study neighbourhoods – although the general picture nonetheless suggests that the presence of more affluent residents does not inevitably equate to tangible or observable impacts on local shops or services. The assumption that higher-income residents may support greater demand in the local economy is perhaps most starkly undermined by the fact that four of the commercial units provided on Limehouse Wharf's ground-floor were unoccupied for five years, before finally being converted into flats. In contrast, a greater range of shops and services were accommodated within Shadwell Plaza's (fully occupied) ground floor units. This suggests that in certain contexts – such as when a scheme is close to existing shopping areas and transport links – new mixed-tenure housing development may have an observable impact on the range of local businesses (albeit simply through the provision of new commercial floor space). Inversely – however – it has also been argued that mixed-tenure development might alter the nature of the goods and services provided in the local area to the detriment of less-well-off residents (Davidson 2008), by affecting the demand for affordable goods or services that are tailored to their needs (Cheshire 2008:23). Whilst by no means generalisable – neither the insights from residents presented in Chapter Six nor the spatial analysis in Chapter Four provide any such indication of a 'gentrification pressures' on the areas surrounding the case study schemes (cf. Davidson 2008:2399). Where a mix of local business was altered by new mixed-tenure development – such as in the case of Shadwell Plaza – residents simply viewed this in matter-of-fact terms as a potential source of amenity, rather than a threat of gentrification or an indication of a 'sustainable' community.

A more implicit assumption within policy discourses on 'sustainable communities' suggests that "behaviour can more easily be controlled if there is 'diversity' within a balanced community" (Haworth and Manzi 1999:162). This assumption posits that higher-income residents – and homeowners in particular – may exercise social control, whether by intervening to encourage or enforce rules or norms of conduct, or by eliciting the assistance of police or other authorities in response to problems of crime and disorder (Joseph et al. 2007:387-88). However, Chapter Six also casts major doubt over the validity of this assumption of 'collective efficacy' in response to problems of order and safety (cf. Sampson et al. 1997). Residents reported that problems of crime or disorder were an aspect of life in all three schemes, with minor forms of nuisance or 'anti-social' behaviour being the most commonplace issues, while more serious incidences of crime were less prevalent. In the case of Shadwell Plaza in particular, a number of residents reported more serious and sustained problems – including fights, drug dealing, and muggings – which they often associated with 'gangs' of youths who congregated around the development (often utilising newly-build public spaces). Some residents even felt that the 'novelty' of the new development made it a 'target' for vandalism, property crime, and even harassment aimed at residents. This suggests that mixed-tenure schemes are by no means immune to problems of crime and disorder – and, inversely, may even attract such problems. Moreover, respondents gave little impression that they felt empowered with 'collective efficacy' to respond to "signs of social disorder" or "intervene for the common good" (Sampson et al. 1997:918-9). As Smith (2002:22) aptly concludes, "the role of a mixed-income approach in reducing negative behaviour appears to be limited". The notion of mixed-tenure schemes as inherently better-able to self-regulate problems of crime or disorder therefore appears problematic if not fallacious.

Moreover, whilst only a very small minority of residents actually perceived their mixed-tenure developments to be 'unsafe', Chapter Eight revealed that a number of owners tended to associate problems – whether real or imagined – with the conduct of social renting households. These residents' complaints generally focused around problems that would likely be common to most housing schemes – such as litter, minor vandalism and graffiti, and the smoking of marijuana (Jupp 1999:70). These complaints generally identified a perceived lack of care or consideration for public areas of the development, a tendency towards poor upkeep of individual properties, and a propensity amongst social renters to 'flaunt the rules' – and were, in turn, rationalised as a reflection of social renters' lack of 'investment' in the

development (again, reflecting the findings of Jupp 1999:71). Whilst it must be reiterated that such sentiments were expressed only by a minority of owners, it nevertheless reflects an additional source of tenure-based prejudice and stigma that may arise within mixed-tenure contexts (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, Graves 2010, Chaskin and Joseph 2011). Some owners' calls for more intensive management also invited the sorts of punitive interventions – such as probationary tenancies, selective allocations policies, or neighbourhood warden schemes – that risk further marginalising or stigmatising social renters (Haworth and Manzi 1999, Cole and Goodchild 2001, Uitermark 2003, Flint 2004). In practice, as Camina and Wood (2009:478) conclude, there is no inherent reason or evidence to suggest that crime will proliferate in mixed-tenure settings. However, where even problems occur, there does appear to be a risk that these may constitute a focus for the sorts of tenure-based stigma or prejudice that are incongruous with the ambitions of 'sustainable communities'.

A third and final implicit assumption within some policy and advocacy discourses on 'sustainable communities' suggests that housing mix may facilitate diversity and foster greater cohesion between groups from different ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds. For instance, the final report the Commission on Integration and Cohesion stated that "cohesive and integrated communities are more easily achieved where there is a mix of housing types and tenures" (2007:123). On the one hand, tenure mixing can be seen as a means through which to avoid the levels of racial segregation within subsidised housing (Rowlands et al. 2006:7). In turn, tenure mixing may arguably be implicitly held as a means of 'restructuring' neighbourhoods in which it is feared that 'ethnic enclaves' may threaten 'liveability', or even the integration of minority groups within society as a whole (Uitermark 2003:538). On the other hand, some have simply suggested that encountering diversity in everyday life may help mediate against problems of racism or intolerance, as Watson (2009:1528) argues;

"inhabiting the same space as those who are different from oneself [...] has the potential to play a part in challenging racist discourses and stereotypes of unknown others".

'Mixed communities' have thus come to be posited both as forms of housing provision "which prevent increasing segregation" and as "spaces to encourage racial, ethnic or religious cohesion" (DCLG 2010:8). In this context, Chapter Four illustrates how all three case study schemes are situated in areas with sizeable ethnic minority populations. The majority of respondents held positive, or at least agnostic, views towards what were often described as 'mixed', 'diverse' and 'multicultural' neighbourhoods. However, comments from a

minority of residents were suggestive of perceived tensions between ethnic groups or, in a few cases, underlying racism. A small number of Shadwell Plaza's residents felt that the area was 'dominated' by the cultural and religious practices of the British Bengalis. Incidences of crime and disorder were also attributed to 'gangs' of Asian youths. Whilst some residents reflected on what they perceived to be the presence of a racist minority amongst the areas' longer-term White British residents. As one respondent concluded, "the idea that there are no issues here is nonsense, people seem to rub up against each other quite a bit".

The assumption that mixed-tenure development may automatically engender greater ethnic 'cohesion' was further undermined by the fact that a number of respondents commented on a perceived lack of ethnic mixing within the developments themselves. This was, in no small part, reflective of the separation of tenures within the case study schemes, given the over-representation of ethnic-minority households within Tower Hamlet's social housing stock (Mayhew and Harper 2010). Some respondents therefore perceived there to be a degree of racial 'segregation' within parts of the developments where social rented housing was located. One British Bangladeshi social renter starkly observed that his block was "predominantly Asian" (with "maybe one white family" amongst the seventeen flats). In this respect, it can perhaps be argued that apparently-orthodox design strategies that aim to separate social rented housing also work to reproduce tenure-based patterns of ethnic segregation that might be seen across the city as a whole (cf. Ratcliffe 1999, 2009). However, there was also some (albeit limited) evidence from Bengali residents themselves that was suggestive of a preference for a certain degree of insularity (cf. Ahmed 2005). Together, these factors appear to challenge the commonly-held assumption, as critiqued by Robinson (2005:1421), that "housing interventions can promote residential integration and increasing ethnic mix, from which interethnic interaction will inevitably flow". Whilst residents of the case study schemes were, by and large, accepting of diversity – insights into the case study schemes support Amin's (2002:968) conclusion that housing mix is no guarantee of inter-ethnic tolerance. Together, these insights provide cause for scepticism regarding the potential for housing mix to deliver the broad-based aims of 'socially sustainable' communities (Manzi et al. 2010:228). With the assumption of 'sustainability' again appearing indicative of the tendency to imbue mixed-tenure residential contexts with 'exceptional' expectations, whether in terms of creating demand for goods or services, self-regulating against problems of crime or disorder, or being somehow immune to racial tensions. In reality, area-based interventions – such as the diversification of housing tenures – are

therefore limited in their potential to address broader neighbourhood-level problems (Andersson and Musterd 2005:387).

## **V. The Promise of a 'Mixed Community'?**

Having critically addressed the various assertions associated with mixed-tenure housing development – as established within policy, practitioner and academic discourses – this final section turns one last time to the insights gained from the residents and housing professionals, by way of presenting some broader reflections on the promise of 'mixed communities'. As Kemeny (1988) argues, 'housing realities' are too often defined by researchers in line with the dominant 'social engineering paradigms' established in material and discursive practices of housing policy and provision. The 'social engineering' paradigm of 'mixed communities' thus invites researchers to focus on questions of acquaintanceship networks, collective efficacy, and sustainability – as discussed above. However, concepts such as these arguably lack 'real' meaning beyond the discourse surrounding particular policy programmes (King 2009). Therefore, in order to explore what – if any – attitudes or opinions towards the possibilities and limitations of 'mixed communities' were held by residents and housing practitioners themselves, all respondents were asked to share their thoughts on mixed-tenure development more broadly. Residents were generally asked whether they felt their own development could be viewed as 'successful', whether they would support its replication elsewhere in the city, and what thoughts and feelings – if any – they held towards the notion of 'mixed communities'. Housing professionals were also asked to share their thoughts and opinions on 'mixed communities', beyond the specific context of the schemes about which they were being interviewed. In response to these open-ended questions, interviewees reflected upon a broader set of issues: Such as what planned 'mixed communities' could really offer for their inhabitants, for neighbourhoods, or the 'structures' of housing provision as a whole; what housing providers out to be aiming to achieve through the design of mixed-tenure schemes; and what can we realistically expect from the actions and interactions of their inhabitants. This penultimate section of the discussion thereby draws on responses to these respondent-framed questions, in an aim to move beyond the already established concepts, claims and critiques within policy-oriented research – and allow space, instead, for the perspectives of those with local, lived or hands-on experience of mixed-tenure housing development.



Jupp (1999:79) invites “critics and champions of mixed tenure schemes” to take note of residents’ apparent agnosticism towards tenure mixing. Yet our respondents were not all ‘agnostic’ as such – with some vocal in expressing criticisms, concerns, or even castigations regarding their own developments (the likes of which appear throughout this thesis). Overall, however, the insights from residents presented throughout this thesis corroborate the observation that “fears [...]mixing is very unpopular with residents appear largely unfounded” (ibid. 1999:79). When asked about tenure mixing as a policy aim, the majority of respondents expressed broadly supportive sentiments. In particular, ‘mixing’ was discussed as a more equitable and desirable alternative to what some viewed as existing forms of spatial segregation. For instance, one resident discussed the need “to mix things up and get things on a more even footing”, whereas another suggested tenure mixing “as a way to stop pockets of the very, very wealthy and the very, very poor”. In turn, one interviewee stressed that “it is against my nature to believe you need to have gated communities”. Residents also reflected more directly on the perceived need to address segregation, with one respondent describing what she felt to be “huge benefits of integrating communities and not isolating people who are working class”. When asked whether they would support the idea of continued mixed-tenure development, another answered:

“Personally, I think it’s necessary. There’s a lot of segregation in housing which causes so many problems in society. If you have people who are all of a similar economic, social or cultural backgrounds, you basically have ghettoisation.”

Housing professionals also reflected on the spatial de-concentration of poverty as a desired outcome of mixed-tenure development, as one senior regeneration manager explained:

“I would always support mixed communities absolutely. Even if the outcome might simply be that we don’t have concentrations [of poverty] in one place or another, for me that’s a good thing.”

Far from appearing agnostic or ambivalent, a number of respondents therefore appeared united around concerns regarding the problematic nature of spatial concentrations of poverty, on the grounds of equality, welfare, or personal principle.

As Chapter Five demonstrated, housing providers tended toward a calculating and pragmatic ‘rationality’ when considering the practical task of delivering mixed-tenure schemes. This is understandable given what is at stake in the design, development, marketing, and management of these multi-million pound projects. However, respondents adopted a greater degree of critical ‘reflexivity’ when asked to consider the broader aims of the

creating 'mixed communities'. Some housing professionals were immediately dismissive of the rhetoric of social mix – as one respondent remarked, “I don’t think there is a causal link between mixed communities and any positive [social] outcomes” – and instead felt that they were simply engaged in an exercise to provide a mix of tenures to satisfy planning requirements for affordable and social housing. Another respondent – a housing association development manager – described his focus as on delivering quality housing *despite* the prevailing planning policy guidance:

“My view is that you try and do the best scheme you can, despite the kind of policy frame work you’re working with. So you just try and push boundaries [of the policy guidance]. It’s just a kind of practical response really...”

For some housing providers, the idea of a 'mixed community' therefore lacked any substantive meaning beyond that of the rhetoric which accompanied planning policy. On the other hand, some of those involved in the case study developments did reflect on what they saw as the promise for creating 'mixed communities' rather than simply 'mixed housing'. In this regards, several respondents cited what they saw as the incongruity between the aim of social mixing and the apparent orthodoxy amongst housing providers to separate tenure groups in their designs. As one respondent – a housing association manager who described having worked on dozens of 'segregated' developments – commented:

“I think we know that full integration is the right thing. Certainly, I think that if you have separated blocks by tenure, and separate front doors and separate garden areas, I can’t see how it can ever achieve any of the hopes and aims that tenure mix is intended to achieve.”

When reflecting on the 'hopes and aims' of tenure mixing, the same respondent went on to explain how “that all gets lost” amidst the challenge of balancing affordable housing provision and commercial viability. Despite having offered logical explanations for the decision to separate tenures – other respondents expressed being “very uncomfortable” with this outcome, whilst one architect went as far as to describe what he saw as the prevailing design approach being akin to “a sort of social apartheid”.

Some of the housing providers interviewed therefore appeared to imply that positive outcomes would be more likely were mixed-tenure schemes to be designed in a more 'integrated' way. However, there remained considerable disagreement over what these positive outcomes might be – and, moreover, whether it is realistic to expect residents to engage in the sorts of instrumental actions (or interactions) required to bring these about.

On the one hand, some of those interviewed advocated 'mixed communities' in terms which corresponded closely to advocacy discourses, as one housing association manager explained:

"I don't think people could tell you why mixed communities are important – what it's supposed to achieve. But for me, it's clearly about maximising opportunities for interaction, so that you raise aspirations and encourage better behaviour."

However, the above respondents' allusion to a lack of widely-held agreement on the aims of 'mixed communities' appeared to be supported by the fact that most responses expressed scepticism towards these aims. One senior manager with a major housing developer explained that, in his view, most people are ambivalent towards their neighbours, adding that "people just rub along" and "want to get on with their lives". Similarly, one respondent who had worked on Government policy guidance for 'mixed communities' was candid in her assessment of policy-makers' attraction to overly-ambitious notions of 'community':

"I just think we prescribe 'community' as a resolution for all things. But policy makers are sometimes a bit dewy-eyed about the extent to which people want to associate with a 'neighbourhood' in day-to-day life. They want to get on with their neighbours. They want to be able to help each other in absolute necessity. But they don't always want to chat across the fence and share a cup of tea.'

A 'mixed community' was therefore seen by some on the 'coal face' of housing provision to reflect a naïvely-utopian vision of the neighbourhood, which neither reflected the desires of residents themselves, nor the actual potential of housing schemes to foster outcomes of interaction or 'mixing' in practice. What was clear, more broadly – and unsurprisingly – is that residents and practitioners share an awareness of housing processes, their implications and their limitations. With this knowledge in hand, many appear to view tenure mixing as a desirable alternative to segregation – yet remain aware of the risks that forms of territorial-segregation may be reproduced in mixed-tenure schemes as a result of prevailing design orthodoxies. Equally, scepticism towards the 'social engineering' paradigm surrounding 'mixed communities' suggested – as has been argued throughout this chapter – that we may simply be asking too much of housing schemes and their inhabitants, given that a banal or prosaic role for neighbouring is widely accepted as the norm in other residential settings.

## **VI. Whither Mixed-Tenure? Conclusions and Implications**

This thesis began by presenting contradictory readings of the 'exceptional' characteristics of mixed-tenure housing. It was suggested that these questions were as, if not more, pertinent

in the context of an apparent shift away from a governmental commitment to ensure a mix of tenures within future housing developments. On the one hand, there can be little doubt that tenure mixing does constitute a novel form of housing provision in a number of respects. The discursive aspects of the policy, which have garnered critical scholarly attention from the outset, are of course reflective of the ideological and rhetorical step-change of Third Way policy, as encapsulated in the mobilisation of 'community' for instrumental ends (Amin 2005). Equally, the material practices of mixed-tenure housing provision constitute a novel mobilisation of interests, activities and capital from beyond the state (Rose and Miller 2010[1992]). At least one hundred and fifty thousand new 'affordable' homes were provided as part of mixed-tenure schemes between 2000 and 2008 (Crook and Whitehead 2010:110). This constitutes an almost certainly unprecedented mobilisation of private capital and energies in the provision of subsidised housing – which, for better or worse, cannot be overlooked. It could perhaps even be said that the adoption of 'post-modern' principles of design constitute a peculiar aspect of many of these schemes (a number of which have received critical praise in architectural circles). On the other hand, however, it is argued here that the ostensible 'exceptionalism' of mixed-tenure forms of housing development obscures many of their 'real' characteristics and qualities. For instance, there is nothing novel about the spatial separation of tenure groups that is often insisted upon by the developers of these schemes. Rather than reflecting a progressive 'mixophilia' espoused in critical social theory – these schemes therefore reproduce forms of residential sorting and segregation that are instead reflective of long-standing 'mixophobic' responses to city-life (Bauman 2003). In this respect, it can be argued that an exceptionalist view of mixed-tenure development is little more than a form of 'fetishism' that obscures the real relations, structures and operations of housing provision. Ultimately, novel ways of mobilising capital and discourse offer no guarantee that space-shaping practices will adopt an equally novel egalitarian form in the face of underlying logics of residential development.

The second question posed at the start of this thesis was how we might better understand social relations – and the nature of everyday life more broadly – within the sorts of large, high-density, mixed-tenure schemes that were typically created within British inner-cities. Again, much of our current understanding is shaped by the 'exceptionalism' advanced through policy discourse. This is logical, given that the ambitious claims and assertions made regarding the instrumental qualities of social relations in 'mixed communities' – supported by shaky 'sociological' thinking – are so inviting of direct critical engagement. This thesis

does not claim to make a radical departure from these terms of engagement (although it does suggest that such a departure may be due). However, a question remains as to how we – as researchers and commentators – interpret the almost inevitable conclusion that 'mixed communities' do not live up to these ambitious expectations. Are we led to conclude – as Amin (2005) warns – that 'communities' have somehow 'failed' to seize the opportunity for greater self-sufficiency, upward mobility, and inclusivity? Alternatively, do we conclude that housing design and development has 'failed' to deliver the blueprint for 'social engineering' implicit in policy discourse? Ultimately, neither of these conclusions would be valid if one accepts that the expectations placed on mixed-tenure schemes and their inhabitants are fundamentally out-of-step with what we would expect to find in other residential settings. The argument is therefore made here for an alternative – banal – understanding of social relations in mixed-tenure housing. Seeing neighbouring as 'banal' allows conceptual room for a spectrum of attitudes, preferences and actions which reflect the multiple 'realities' of life in such schemes (which, for instance, reflect neither complete atomism nor full social integration). That is to say, the idea of the banality of residential life allows for a rejection both of the prescribed intimacy of communitarianism and – equally – of the nihilistic view of placelessness, dislocation or individualisation. 'Normalising' and grounding expectations of neighbouring in mixed-tenure schemes instead allows space for additional critical insights. For instance, recognising that residents do engage with and even assist one another – but this is conditioned by practical constraints such as physical proximity and opportunities for interaction (as well as individual volition and circumstances). A banal view of neighbouring suggests that increasing propinquity or providing shared spaces does not offer a guarantee of greater interaction – but it does permit us to question whether design strategies to ensure separation might work to render opportunities for 'neighbouring' even less likely.

So, if mixed-tenure housing developments constitute banal and unexceptional settings for residential life – what are the implications for policy and practice, especially given the argument that tenure mixing has fallen by the wayside under the current Coalition Government (cf. OU 2012)? If tenure mixing indeed merely an 'artefact' of past political thinking, this would, of course, render any reflections on current or future policies irrelevant. However, as was argued in Chapter One, it is possible to identify a tangible 'legacy' for tenure mixing within the current National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012). There remains a distinct possibility that forms of mixed-tenure housing provision will continue – whether as part of the activities of housing associations, or in areas where local planning

authorities remain committed to tenure mixing as a means of ensuring the supply of affordable housing. With this in mind, there is perhaps a risk that the overwhelmingly critical tone of academic insights into social relations in existing mixed-tenure schemes will propagate a sense of nihilism with regards to tenure mixing's worth as a policy instrument. Some may well believe that such a view is founded. However, it is argued that the insights from this research suggest cause for caution in this regard – and an anecdote may help to illustrate this concern: A group of our Geography undergraduates were provided with extracts from these interview transcripts during a seminar on 'community regeneration'. The students were quick to identify where residents' comments appeared to undermine instrumental notions of 'social capital' or 'collective efficacy'. However, there was also a profound and obvious sense that they felt these questions mattered little beyond the realm of social scientific thinking. Instead, the students' attention focused on the comments which reflected on the perceived quality of the new housing in these case study schemes, the 'high demand' areas in which it was provided, and residents' overall sense of satisfaction with the physical 'product' they had received. This, it is argued, may constitute grounds upon which mixed-tenure development is still worth advocating. For all its faults, mobilising private capital to subsidise high-quality housing products remains a laudable alternative to the unfettered logics of marketised housing provision, especially as demand continues to exceed supply, prices are once again on the rise, and the options for those without sufficiently deep pockets are increasingly torn between temporary accommodation or 'getting on their bikes'.

It is therefore argued that mixed-tenure development offers a desirable alternative – albeit an imperfect one – to fully marketised forms of new housing development, increased spatial segregation within dwindling pockets of remaining 'affordable' housing, and the further residualisation of social renting as a 'tenure of the last resort' (cf. Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2007). A question remains, of course, as to what approach housing providers should adopt for potential schemes in the future. In this respect, it is difficult to condone the apparent orthodoxy of 'micro segregation' pursued through design and technologies that are intended to ensure the separation of different tenure groups. Ultimately, the insights from residents suggested that these often-elaborate exercises in 'tenure gerrymandering' created legible divisions – not only between tenures – but also along the lines of socioeconomic status, class, and even race. Moreover, these divisions permeated aspects of everyday life in ways that, if anything, seemed more likely to deepen rather than alleviate feelings of tension and dissatisfaction on the part of equity owning residents. Only a minority of residents felt this

separation to be necessary, whilst most were either ambivalent or uncomfortable towards this feature of their developments. On the other hand, housing providers defended this design approach on the grounds of commercial viability, warning that the full dispersal of tenures would mean fewer affordable homes, of a lesser size and quality, costing more to manage and maintain. The question must therefore be whether a middle-ground can be established between segregation and integration. Shared or communal spaces constitute one option – however, whilst this was something some residents advocated, few appeared to make use of those spaces which were provided. Instead, one alternative may perhaps lie in forms of 'clustered' tenure mix. Whilst by no means a radical suggestion (Tiesdell 2004, Rowlands et al. 2006, Roberts 2007), a 'clustered' grouping of tenures within flatted schemes, retaining shared entrances and communal areas, would at least afford some opportunities for the sorts of prosaic interactions that – whilst not guaranteed – are not ruled-out of the possibilities for 'banal neighbouring'. Accepting that instrumental notions of social relations constitute an inherently-weak rationale for the physical integration of different tenures does not mean that residents themselves may not benefit from 'de-segregation' within the design of mixed-tenure schemes in the future. Regardless of how it is achieved in practice, and despite its flaws, the prospect for the demise of 'tenure mixing' should be met with concern rather than capitulation, even from those of us who rallied around the task of critically scrutinising the 'first round' of widespread housing development in this vein.

## **Appendix I: Residents' Survey**

[Reproduced below]



## Island Heights Residents' Survey



### About the research

This questionnaire has been sent to every household in the Island Heights development on Maritime Way as part of an academic research project looking into residents' experiences of newly built mixed-tenure housing.

The aim of this research is to learn about everyday life in a range of new housing developments in London. That is why we are asking residents to share their experiences of living in the Island Heights scheme. This information will help us to better understand what it is like to live in new mixed-tenure housing from a residents' point of view. We hope that the findings from this research will ultimately assist in the creation of popular and successful mixed communities in the future.

### Completing this form

This questionnaire should take around 10 minutes to complete. Most of the questions are about your own experiences of living in your development and we hope that you will find them interesting.

If possible, every adult living in your household should please complete one of these forms. Two forms have been provided and you can request additional forms by writing to the email or postal addresses below.

Please try to answer every question. However, if you come to a question that you are not able to answer, then just leave it blank and move on to the next one.

Once you have completed the form(s) for your household, then please fold them in half and post them back to us in the Freepost envelope provided.

### Privacy

Your answers are anonymous. No information that could be used to identify you will be retained or disclosed. Your answers will only be used for data analysis by researchers at the London School of Economics, they will not be passed on to any other organisations or agencies. By completing this form you are agreeing to participate in this research.

Thank you for taking part in this research, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Best regards,

Daniel Kilburn  
LSE Cities Programme

For more information on this research please contact:  
Daniel Kilburn  
Cities Programme  
London School of Economics  
Houghton Street  
London WC2A 2AE  
d.kilburn@lse.ac.uk

# RESIDENTS' SURVEY

## Section A - About Your Household

office use  
only

1 How long have you lived in this property?

years  months

() write  
in

2 Were you living in the local area before you moved here? (Say, within a 15-20 minute walk?)

Yes ☐ No ☐

() tick  
one

3 How many separate bedrooms does your property have?

(please state)

()

4 Are you...

The only adult living in the property? ☐

Living with someone as a couple? ☐

Sharing with (an) other adult(s) ☐

()

5 Are there any children (aged less than 18) currently living in your household?

Yes ☐ No ☐

()

6 Does your household own or rent this property?

Own it outright (go to question 9) ☐

Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan (go to question 9) ☐

Part rent and part own/mortgage (e.g. shared ownership) ☐

Rent ☐

Live here rent-free (go to question 9) ☐

()

7 Who is this property rented from? (If you don't rent please go to question 9)

Private landlord, property company or letting agent ☐

Housing association or trust ☐

Local authority/council ☐

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

()

8 Was any Housing Benefit deducted from the last rent payment, such as a rent rebate or rent allowance?

Yes ☐ No ☐

()

9 Was anyone in your household required to meet any of the following criteria in order to buy or rent this property?

First-time buyer ☐

Keyworker ☐

Existing resident in  
Tower Hamlets Borough ☐

Resident in  
East London ☐

Not applicable ☐

()

**Section B - About Your Development**

We would like to ask you some questions about the Island Heights development.

1 On the whole, how much do you like living here?

Very much

☐

Quite a lot

☐

Not very much

☐

Not at all

☐(✓) tick  
one

2 If you could choose, would you prefer to continue living here or would you rather move somewhere else?

Continue living here

☐

Move somewhere else

☐

(✓)

3 How much of a problem would you say that each of the following issues are, in/around the development?  
(Even if it has not affected you personally)

Not a problem at all

Sometimes a problem

A serious problem

Noisy neighbours or  
loud parties☐☐☐

(✓)

Litter or rubbish  
left lying around☐☐☐Vandalism, graffiti or deliberate  
damage to property☐☐☐Teenagers hanging around on the  
streets or in public areas☐☐☐Property being stolen or homes  
being broken into☐☐☐Verbal abuse, insult or  
harassment☐☐☐

4 Overall, how satisfied are you with the **external appearance/design** of the new buildings in the development?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐Neither satisfied  
nor dissatisfied☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

(✓)

5 How satisfied are you with the **public and communal areas**, such as entrance lobbies and outside spaces?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐Neither satisfied  
nor dissatisfied☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

6 In general, how satisfied are you with the way the development is **run, maintained and managed**?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐Neither satisfied  
nor dissatisfied☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

7 On the whole, how satisfied are you with the **interior design and layout** of your own property?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐Neither satisfied  
nor dissatisfied☐

Fairly dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

**Section C - About Life in Your Development**

*We would like to ask you some general questions about how well you know the other residents in your development.*

- 1 Do you know the first name(s) of one or more of your next-door neighbours?

Yes ☐No ☐

(✓) tick one

- 2 Now thinking about all the people who live in your development, how many people's first name(s) do you know?

(please estimate) None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Over 5 ☐ (✓)

- 3 And finally, how many people in the development do you know well enough to stop and have a conversation with?

(please estimate) None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Over 5 ☐

*We would now like you to think about all the occasions when you might normally have contact with other people who live in the development.*

- 4 On average, how often do you **greet other residents** in the public or communal areas in/around the development, for example by waving or saying 'hello'?

Most days

☐

At least once a month

☐

(✓)

At least twice a week

☐

Less than once a month

☐

At least once a week

☐

Never

☐

At least every two weeks

☐

- 5 On average, how often do you **stop to have a chat or conversation** with a neighbour from the development?

Most days

☐

At least once a month

☐

At least twice a week

☐

Less than once a month

☐

At least once a week

☐

Never

☐

At least every two weeks

☐

- 6 On average, how often do you **visit the home of someone else** who lives in the development?

Most days

☐

At least once a month

☐

At least twice a week

☐

Less than once a month

☐

At least once a week

☐

Never

☐

At least every two weeks

☐

- 7 On average, how often do you **invite neighbour(s) into your own home**?

Most days

☐

At least once a month

☐

At least twice a week

☐

Less than once a month

☐

At least once a week

☐

Never

☐

At least every two weeks

☐

**Section C - continued**

office use

*Thinking about the neighbourhood you live in, how far to you agree with the following statements?***8** "People around here are willing to help their neighbours"

Strongly agree

☐

Somewhat agree

☐Neither agree  
nor disagree☐

Somewhat disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐(✓) tick  
one**9** "This is a close-knit neighbourhood"

Strongly agree

☐

Somewhat agree

☐Neither agree  
nor disagree☐

Somewhat disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐**10** "People in this neighbourhood can be trusted"

Strongly agree

☐

Somewhat agree

☐Neither agree  
nor disagree☐

Somewhat disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐**11** "People in this neighbourhood generally get along with each other"

Strongly agree

☐

Somewhat agree

☐Neither agree  
nor disagree☐

Somewhat disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐**12** "People in this neighbourhood generally share the same values"

Strongly agree

☐

Somewhat agree

☐Neither agree  
nor disagree☐

Somewhat disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐**Please continue to the final section**

**Section D - About You**

*Lastly we need to ask you a few questions about yourself. Remember that your answers are anonymous and confidential.*

**1** Are you...

Male ☐

Female ☐

(✓) tick one

**2** What was your age last birthday?

(please specify)  Years

(✓) write in

**3** Please select the *highest* level of educational qualification that you have attained from the list below

GCSEs or O-Levels ☐

A/AS-Levels, Scottish Highers, vocational qualification (e.g. BTEC, NVQ, etc.) or equivalent ☐

A university first degree (e.g. BA or BSc) ☐

A postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSc, PhD) ☐

A professional qualification (such as for nursing, teaching, dentistry, etc.) ☐

Other (please specify) : \_\_\_\_\_

(✓)

**4** Which of these best describes your current employment situation?

In paid employment ☐

Self employed ☐

Unemployed or seeking work ☐

Retired ☐

Full-time student or in training ☐

Looking after family or the home ☐

(✓)

**5** Do you currently receive any benefits such as Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(✓)

**6** What was your total household income in the last 12 months, before any deductions for tax?  
(please estimate to the nearest thousand pounds)

less than £10,000 ☐

£40,001 to £50,000 ☐

£80,001 to £90,000 ☐

(✓)

£10,001 to £20,000 ☐

£50,001 to £60,000 ☐

£90,001 to £100,000 ☐

£20,001 to £30,000 ☐

£60,001 to £70,000 ☐

more than £100,000 ☐

£30,001 to £40,000 ☐

£70,001 to £80,000 ☐

**Please continue to the last question**

## Section D - Continued

office use  
only

7 To which of the following groups do you consider you belong?

White	Black or Black British	Asian or Asian British	Mixed
British <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Black background <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese or any other ethnic group		Any other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed background <input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>			
Any other (please specify): _____			

Thank you for your help in completing this questionnaire

Please return this form as soon as you can  
in the Freepost envelope provided

We'd also like to talk to residents of Island Heights about life in the development. If you can spare 30 minutes for a chat, then we'll give you a **£10** voucher to spend at **John Lewis** to say thank you.

If you are interested in taking part in a brief and informal interview with an LSE researcher, please complete and return the card enclosed with your survey(s) and we'll get back to you with more information.

Interviews will take place either in your home or over the telephone, at a time that is convenient for you. They will be tape recorded for analysis by LSE researchers and your comments may be published in research output, although no information that could identify you would be disclosed. We aim to interview most volunteers but in some instances we may have to select a smaller number at random. A John Lewis/Waitrose gift voucher or gift card to the value of £10 will be provided on completion of the interview (however, this cannot be redeemed for cash).

## RESIDENTS' SURVEY

**Please fold here and return your form(s) in the freepost envelope provided**

---



## **Appendix II: Residents' Interview Informed Consent Form**

Dear Island Heights resident,

Thank you for taking part in a resident's interview as part of this research. These interviews are of great value as they provide further insights into residents' perspectives of life in the development.

This information sheet contains the key facts about the project and about your involvement in the research. If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact the researcher (Daniel Kilburn) by any of the means of contact shown above.

### **About the Research**

This is an independent research project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, and conducted by a PhD researcher in the Cities Programme at the London School of Economics. The research aims to explore residents' experiences of life in a variety of newly-built 'mixed tenure' housing developments. A number of new housing developments across London have been chosen to take part in the study. The research is due for completion in 2012.

Participation in the research project is entirely voluntary. You may decide to withdraw at any point during the interview and you may also request that certain parts of your interview are not included in the research. You can also request to withdraw your participation in the research by notifying the researcher within 10 days of the interview date.

You will receive a £10 gift card as a token of gratitude for taking part in the research. This is limited to 1 per household. This must be used in conjunction with the terms and conditions shown on the card.

After you have completed the interview, you will not be contacted again or asked to participate further in this research project. However, if you would like to receive updates on the research findings, or if you would like any further information, you may contact me at any time.

## RESIDENTS' INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### **Your privacy**

Your interview will be tape recorded for further analysis by an LSE researcher. The voice recording will be processed and typed-up by a professional transcription service who are bound by strict confidentiality in compliance with the Data Protection Act. Your voice recording or any written transcripts will not be shared with any other organisations. The information gathered from your interview will only be analysed by researchers in the LSE Cities Programme. Any personal information that you provide in the course of the interview will be treated as strictly confidential. We will never disclose your identity, nor will we disclose any information that could be used to identify you. However, some of the comments from your interview may be quoted anonymously in our future research output and publications. Please let the researcher know if there are parts of your interview that you do not want to be included in research publications.

### **Your consent**

We need to obtain your consent before you can take part in the research. By signing below, you indicate that you have read and agree with the information provided on this sheet.

### **I agree to take part in this research**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/ 11 / 2011

Thank you once again for your assistance with this research project

### Appendix III: Interview Volunteer and Prize-draw Postcard

#### Front

Return this card with  
your completed survey  
for a chance to win **£100**  
in **John Lewis** vouchers

Name:

Phone number:

This card will be handled separately from your survey form(s) to ensure that your answers remain anonymous. Due to our sampling procedures not every volunteer will be interviewed. More information can be found on the back of the survey form.

#### Back

We'd also like to talk to residents  
about life in your development.  
If you can spare 30 minutes for  
a chat then we'll give you a **£10**  
**John Lewis** voucher to say thanks

Name:

Phone number:

## Appendix IV: Residents' Interview Topic Guide

### 1) Life history / background

- *When did you move in?*
- *What made you choose to move here?*

### 2) Satisfaction

- *On the whole, do you like living here?*
- *Have you encountered any problems?*
- *How about the local area?*

### 3) Feelings towards / influence of design factors

- *Do you think the development is well-designed?*
- *How do people use the public areas?*

### 4) Relationships with neighbours

- *Do people generally socialise together in the development?*
- *Would you say that people generally get on well with each other?*
- *Would you say that your neighbours can be relied on for help?*
- *Do you think that there is a 'sense of community'?*

### 5) Perceptions of tenure mix/development

- *On the whole, do you have any feelings about living in a mixed-tenure development?*
- *Do you think that people are aware of differences between tenures here?*
- *Do you think this is the sort of housing development we should be building elsewhere?*

## **Appendix V: Expert Interview Introduction Letter**

Dear Mr Smith,

I am a PhD researcher in the Cities Programme at the London School of Economics, where I am currently conducting an Economic and Social Research Council funded research project which explores how design and development decisions influence residents' experiences of mixed-tenure housing.

The research compares a range of recently-built housing schemes in London. Having completed two case studies, I have selected the Island Heights scheme as a third and final case study. The scheme is of particular interest to the research due to its height and density (both of which set it aside from my existing case studies). I am also interested in the project's role in providing off-site affordable housing for the Maritime Way development. I'd be keen to find out more how these and other factors influenced the scheme's design and development and, in particular, the decisions that were made regarding the mix and integration of tenures.

It would be of great value to the research if we could meet briefly to discuss your experience of the design process for Island Heights. I will also seek interviews with representatives of [the housing developer], [the housing association], and planning department. The research would then proceed to a survey of the development's residents, for which every household would receive a postal questionnaire and an invitation to take part in a face-to-face interview, in order to gain their perspective on life in the development. It is hoped that the joint involvement of residents and housing professionals will provide new insights into how the design and development of mixed-tenure housing may affect the lives of its inhabitants. I would, of course, be pleased to discuss these findings with your practice at a later date.

I do hope that you will be able to take part in the research, which will just involve us meeting for a brief and informal discussion about the development at a time and location of your convenience.

I look forward to the opportunity of discussing the scheme with you further and, in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the research.

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