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ISPA

Intersectional Stigma
of Place-based Ageing



Economic
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Research Council



Housing LIN

sfha
Scottish Federation of
Housing Associations

My journey to this project

- PhD: 'Reconfiguring Housing Governance in Glasgow Post-Stock Transfer in Glasgow: liberatory and regulatory possibilities' (2004-07)
- *Urban Studies* PDF (2007-10) - tenant empowerment
- Grew up in Motherwell – deindustrialisation – council housing – housing co-operatives

Where are the women in this story?

“the tenement stair was self-evidently a natural setting for the social organisations of the women [...] the women in a stair had to learn to co-operate [...] The women borrowed and lent from each other – the proverbial cup of sugar, or small sums of money for the rent or the messages (shopping). It was the women who spoke to the factor about that empty house two closes away for a married daughter or son [...] It was the women who looked after each other’s children”

(Damer, 1990: 88-89)

LHA- First Management Committee 1975



(Source: Linthouse Housing Association archives)

The case study

- In-depth interviews with 13 women (aged 64-85) who were committee members of community-based housing associations (CBHAs) formed in 1970s & 1980s.
 - Wave I CBHAs: from mid-1970s
 - Wave II: from mid-1980s



(Source: McKee)

Theme 1 – Urban Decline & Urban Stigma

- Poor private housing, BTS & threatened demolition (1970s)
- Dilapidated public sector housing & poor management (1980s)
- Peripheral schemes – place-based stigma & exclusion
- Across both waves – how investment in housing could transform lives

Poor housing was associated with a lot of illness, stress, breathing, asthma, all that stuff. And kids don't thrive the same if they're overcrowded [...] [one board member] saw a lot of the effects of overcrowding in kids who couldn't do their homework, because they hadn't a heated room and things like that, [...] housing's integral to everything you know

(Participant 3, Wave 1 CBHA).

*And when you say to people
you live in [this scheme],
they go, oh [there]...! [...]
And I go there's nothing the
matter with [here]. It's like
everywhere else, it's got its
good bits and it's got its bad
bits (Participant 8, Wave II
CBHA).*



(Source: McKee)

Theme 2 – Local People Leading

- ‘Local’ knowledge & tenacity to deliver change
- Set up new organisations to make things better
- Felt like ‘a movement’ & camaraderie
- Dedicated funding & nurturing

It wasn't all roses. You did have to work hard to do it. But there was a feeling that, actually, everybody wanted to achieve the same thing, at the end of the day. And that was to get decent housing in communities. And committees fought for that, they were really strong [...] it was about development, and getting these houses up to a good standard for people (Participant 13, Wave 1 CBHA).

Theme 3 – Challenges facing Women

- Women brought key skills
- The home was their domain
- Traditional gender roles
- Family not always supportive of their volunteering

Because at the end of the day, to me the women were the most important people, because it was our house, it was family. We're the ones who did the budgets, paid the bills, did all the cooking. And looked after the children while the men were out. So, at the end of the day, it was what we wanted (P01, Wave II CBHA)

Theme 4 – community ownership 50 years on

- Proud of what achieved
- Better places to live, improved housing +
- Enjoy being active & people side
- Redevelopment of homes
- Save other historic buildings
- Community facilities & assets
- Lever in funding for local groups
- More than ‘bricks and mortar’



(Source: GWSF photo archives)

Conclusions – Learning from the past

- Lots we can learn from CBHAs (celebrated 50 years!)
- Post-Grenfell wider debates on professionalism – customer engagement – regulatory standards
- Difficult relationship between LL-TMO-local people
- CBHAs show value of local people leading & community

*‘...occupants of the tower regarded the TMO as an uncaring and bullying overlord that belittled and marginalised them’
(Grenfell Phase II report, 2024)*

*“We’re not going to change the world,
but we can make this wee corner of
the world a whole lot better”*

John Butterley (original chairperson of Reidvale HA).



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E: kim.mckee@stir.ac.uk



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