Out of place? Emotional ties to the neighbourhood in urban renewal in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

van der Graaf, P.F.

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9. Case Study: Sale, Manchester, United Kingdom

9.1 Booming Manchester?

Manchester paved the way for the Industrial Revolution more than 150 years ago and expanded rapidly over the next century. However, the city was hit hard in the second half of the last century by the outsourcing of labour to third world countries. Manchester lost a large share of its population and with it its economic support. Unemployment and social problems increased dramatically, forcing Manchester to join the ranks of Glasgow and Liverpool as one of the worst places to live in the United Kingdom. Peck and Ward (2006), in their review of 10 years of restructuring in Manchester, sum up the decline in no uncertain terms:

_The first industrial city was the first to experience large-scale de-industrialisation, which from the 1960s onwards started to pull the guts out of the place. Industry had not only been a source of jobs but also of cultural identity for a city that had long prided itself on the tradition of no-nonsense graft and money-making. [..] In 1959 well over half of the Greater Manchester workforce was employed by manufacturing. Today, less than one in five of the conurbation’s workforce is employed in factories._ (Peck & Ward, 2006:1)

For the last ten years the tide has turned for Manchester: new businesses have been secured and the once desolate city centre and deteriorated harbour areas have been restored and repopulated and new stadiums and culture venues have been established. These developments changed the outlook of Manchester considerably and the city has enjoyed rising employment rates along with processes

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of gentrification. Like many other cities, Manchester turns to the creative class as the driving force behind the urban renaissance (Florida). Manchester competes with other areas for the favour of young students and highly educated starters in the housing market as well as well to do families (Hall). Other residents’ groups such social professionals are less recognised and favoured as relevant urban middle class (Watt, 2005).

In the urban audit (ECOTEC, 2007) Manchester is described as a transformation pole: larger cities with a rich industrial past that have been forced into change by great economic shifts which impacted heavily on their traditional economic base. The visible change in transformation poles is often impressive. For example new city centres have been built, districts upgraded and state of the art transportation systems put in place. Cities such as Turin, Birmingham and Glasgow are the prime examples here. Typically large-scale projects are implemented. According to the urban audit, Manchester is now emerging as a well-connected and fashionable city in the UK, well-positioned to be a viable alternative to London in areas of services, culture and arts. Key to this transformation has been the renovation and improved connectedness of its city centre (2007: 85). Compared to other transformation poles, Manchester scores low on security, but high on employment and housing: finding a job and a home is relatively easy in Manchester, which is quite rare in this category of cities: more often when jobs are abundant, housing is scarce and vice versa.

9.2 Urban policy and renewal in Manchester

The change in policy focus and agency described in chapter 6, from a preoccupation with housing by central government to a supporting role for housing towards prime social and economic targets in deprived areas and steered by local councils instead of national governments, can also be witnessed in the city of Manchester. After years of taking a back seat, the local government was brought back into the regeneration process in the 1990s, as part of a partnership with other government agencies and the private sector. In the 1980s regeneration policies were largely focused on property-led initiatives and by-passed local government through the establishment of Urban Development Corporations (UDC’s), which took over planning powers from the local authorities within their area. This change in
power was exemplified by the establishment of the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC). The CMDC enabled the Manchester City Council to become more effective in bidding for regeneration money and in implementing projects. Furthermore, CMDC helped to establish a strategy for regeneration, which included bringing a residential population back into the city centre; diversifying the economic base of the city centre to include visitor attractions; and building on the financial services sector. CMDC’s initial strategy was to focus on the functional and geographical extension of the city centre (Williams, 1996). The city centre was not a residential area; there were a mere 250 residents, the result of a long-standing policy of moving people out of the city centre in slum clearance programmes. Thus, the focus was on economic rather than social regeneration; the low numbers of people living here supported this focus.

Manchester made bids for both the 1996 and the 2000 Olympic Games. Although unsuccessful, the process exerted a strong influence, acting as a unifying force and giving a sense of purpose to the wider regeneration efforts of the city. The bids were quite audacious, but they proved an essential part of learning to think big and of believing that Manchester had real potential. The Eastland area of east Manchester was identified as a site for a stadium (Sport City) that would support the 2000 bid – and this eventually housed the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

The 2000 Olympic bid galvanised an emergent network of public and private sector elites, which for a short period shared a common goal: to achieve regeneration through the bidding process (Peck and Ward, 2006: 13).

The emerging networks of public and private sector elites redesigned the political landscape for urban renewal in Manchester and were, as Peck and Ward point out (2006:7), quick to adopt the post-1997 discourse of ‘tackling social exclusion, and can even be seen to have engineered a proto-Blairite policy stance by the early 1990s: “The focus was on opportunities of growth, investment and development, rather than licking the wounds of employment decline and public-sector budget

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22 A less conscious decision was the failure to develop good public transport links, as well as the general state of decay in the city centre, both of which led to the suburbanisation of many businesses (Mellor, 2002).
“cuts” (Peck and Ward, 2006: 14). However, Peck and Ward are equally quick to point out that this positive outlook of the new urban policy merely acts as a façade, behind which the real problems of deprivation are not tackled and even ignored: “If there is a feeling in Manchester that the city is winning the regeneration game, more often than not this is framed in terms of winning funds rather than actually turning around entrenched social problems, let alone long-standing economic problems” (Peck & Ward, 2006: 7). Although criticised for its carefully staged performance, it is generally agreed that the private-public partnerships, less affectively known as the Mancunian Mafia, have been to some extent successful in transforming the city centre:

There are few more vivid illustrations of the capacity of the city’s new governance structures than the rapid and comprehensive response to the IRA bomb of June 1996. Couched again in terms of the language of opportunity, the bomb (re)galvanised partnerships and networks that may have otherwise begun to show signs of post-Olympic fatigue or even sclerosis. The vigorous response to the bomb invoked a strong sense of pride: our city would not be beaten. [...] The Mancunian Mafia’ stepped into the breach. [...] Institutional innovations went hand in hand with physical redevelopment (Peck and Ward, 2006: 14).

Williams et al. (2003) reach a similar conclusion in their comparative research on urban regeneration in Leipzig and Manchester. They conclude that key to the success of the Manchester approach was not the development of statutory plans, but the creation of informal networks of public-private partnerships, “creating the right environment to generate rapid change” (Williams, 2003).

After the successful transformation of the city centre, the CMDC started devoting its attention to east Manchester: the residential areas around the city centre, especially the deprived areas in the large ring between the new centre and the affluent suburban areas. CMDC hoped for a spin-wheel effect, in which the centre’s renaissance would set off a regeneration of the deprived areas around the city centre. Unlike the city centre this is in fact a whole series of communities rather than one defined locality. At the end of the 1990s, east Manchester was in a
Case Study: Sale, Manchester, United Kingdom

parlous state, with 13% population loss in the 1990s, a collapse of the housing market, resulting in 20% vacant properties and the creation of negative equity. The remaining population was characterised by low skills, high crime and poor health: 52% of households received benefit, while 12% were unemployed. The neighbourhoods were left with poor community and retail facilities and a fragile economic base.

Therefore, a key difference between the regeneration of the city centre and east Manchester was the sheer range of social interventions in east Manchester. The strong economic focus in the renaissance of the city centre changed into social entrepreneurship when faced with the persistent problems of deprivation in the estates of east Manchester. Concern with the low skills base of residents, high crime rates, poor health and poor community facilities has resulted in an extensive network of initiatives seeking to address these matters.

Manchester had high hopes for a trickle down effect by which the urban renaissance and the continuous arrival of the middle class benefits the poor residents outside the city centre. They should be able to share in the success with new opportunities for employment, schooling, housing and local facilities in an area with an improved reputation.

Poor residents of the pheripherical council estates will not feel the effects immediately, but they will reap the long-term rewards of a restructured economy and a concretely pro-business climate (Peck and Ward, 2006:7).

To this end the city has invested greatly in the well-being of residents living in the ring between the city centre and the more affluent suburbs. Most noticeable is the reduction in anti-social behaviour; however changes in other socio-economic statistics are less visible: indicators for life expectancy, alcohol consumption, employment, and poverty ‘tell a depressingly consistent story’ (Peck & Ward, 2002). The desired trickle down effect appears to be lacking, at least for the moment.
While the centre of the city has been comprehensively reconstructed, both physically and culturally, in ways that would have been hardly imaginable 15 or 20 years ago, many of the city’s underlying social and economic problems have been displaced rather than solved. […] Stare as hard as you like at indicators of poverty, social exclusion and dislocation, political alienation, ‘real’ unemployment and wages and the striking thing is that the lines during the 1990s hardly bent at all, and most continued to track steadily in the wrong direction. (Peck & Ward, 2006: 5-6).

Many of the economic and social efforts are necessary, however not sufficient to provide less well off residents in deprived neighbourhoods with a new perspective. Few of the desired middle class consider living in one of these no-go areas. Only when area reputation is improved, small processes of state-led gentrification are visible. Single households or young couples are most easily persuaded, while families tend to look for more suitable places elsewhere to raise their children, and ‘upscalers’ are struggling to meet the financial demands of living in the regenerated area (Fenton, 2006).

Critics point to an increasingly ‘Americanised’ city, with rapidly growing economic and social polarisation, aided by a set of policies which effectively legitimize the transfer of funds from social safety-net programmes into subsidisation of speculative accumulation, zero sum competition and middle class consumption, with can be classified as a form of regressive social redistribution ((Peck & Ward, 2006: 7-8). Steve Quilly argues that the city council’s embrace of municipal entrepreneurialism during the 1980s must be seen in part as a tactical response to the loss of local-government power and centralising neo-liberalism of the Conservatives nationally.

9.3 Gold Service in Sale, Manchester

A good example of the cities entrepreneurialism is the tenant reward scheme, called Gold Service, developed by a local housing association in Sale to aid the regeneration of deprived areas into more pleasant places to live. Instead of
focusing on the housing stock, Irwell Valley Housing Association (IVHA) starts by defining residents as local customers and puts their needs first on the regeneration agenda. They experimented with the concept of Gold Service: a reward scheme that rewards ‘good behaving residents’ with additional services and amenities. By providing these extra services the associations try to increase the involvement and independency of residents (mostly on welfare benefits) and, in doing so, their attachment to the housing association and the neighbourhood. An explicit distinction is made between good and bad tenants, forcing local governments to rethink their equality-based housing policies.

The assumption behind the scheme is learning by moral example: seeing the benefits neighbours receive triggers residents to comply with the behavioural rules set by the housing association in order to become eligible for the same rewards. The rewards should not only trigger improved behaviour of residents, but also improve the reputation of the area to outsiders, attracting new, and especially more affluent, residents to the area. Increased social ties are a means to improve the reputation of an area. For this purpose not only social ties are stimulated, but also emotional ties of residents are actively triggered to improve the reputation of an area. Deprived neighbourhoods are to be transformed into fantastic places to live, and not only for the present residents. Pride in their home and neighbourhood is stimulated through projects like House Pride, a competition for local residents for the best garden and by enlisting renowned architects to design new social housing in order to create a sense of pride in the housing from the start.

**Methodology**

In May 2007 a study visit was made to Sale in Manchester. Interviews were conducted with staff members of Irwell Valley Housing Association and resident representatives, social workers and members of the evaluation panel. Furthermore, visits were made to areas where Irwell Valley has implemented Gold Service. On-site observations were made and existing documents on the urban renewal of the
area were reviewed, including neighbourhood plans, policy documents and scientific studies on the regeneration of (east) Manchester. Specific data was gathered on proposed goals and interventions, the implementation and usage of these interventions, and the ways residents are involved in restructuring programmes. Based on this data the implementation of the tenant reward scheme in Manchester, as part of the urban renewal programme, was reconstructed and reflected upon with key players.

9.4 Resident Behaviour and Neighbourhood Reputation

The emphasis on the regeneration of Sales is on changing area reputation and behaviour of residents. One of the five mission statements of the IVHA boasts to “create fantastic places to live and enjoy life” (IVHA brochure). The focus on opportunities and social efforts instead of physical regeneration in the urban policies of the city council are repeated by the CEO of IVHA, Tom Manion. Residents of deprived areas should not be spoiled, but challenged and provided with opportunities. His motto is telling: tough rights and tough responsibilities. According to Manion, the main means to achieve this is to change the culture in neighbourhoods. Relocating money to the neighbourhood is a complete waste if it is not followed by residents taking responsibility for themselves and their neighbourhood. Manion is a strong believer in (moral) management by housing associations: “Take away people’s excuses [to be passive and marginalised]”. This is, according to Manion, not to blame the victims, but to firmly place them in the driving seat of their own social mobility. People will always resist change until they reap the benefits of it. Therefore, professionals have to recognise the raw talents of residents and turn them into good uses. As an example, he tells the story of a boy who dazzled him with his mathematics skill when calculating the odds of the cards when gambling while skiving from school. These skills should, according to Manion, be put to use in his education by challenging him to use his skills in the classroom.
Our aim is to break down the barriers and misconceptions in order to inspire our residents to achieve. This is through a partnership approach and recognising that creating sustainable communities is not just about physical regeneration, it requires a variety of community economic activities that reflect the needs of the local community and one size does not fit all (website IVHA).

For Tom Manion, this entails a new role for (housing) professionals: they have to motivate people and lead by example, and thus become teachers instead of social helpers. He is critical about the gap between professional skills and the needs of residents in deprived areas. Professionals do not generally live in the area where they work and, therefore, can not relate to the problems faced and potentials shared by these people.

The vision Manion is trying to sell, points to some interesting differences with the Dutch approach of regenerating deprived areas. Contrary to the Netherlands, the poorest residents are the key agents for change. While in Dutch urban policy, change is brought about by mixing deprived areas with the more affluent middle class; in Manchester and the UK at large, the middle class enters the scene much later. Under the assumption that middle class groups will only feel at home in deprived neighbourhoods when the behaviour of the anti-social residents has changed, much energy and resources are devoted to changing the behaviour of the residents already living in the area, before any time is spent on building homes for the middle class. Changing the attitude of the existing residents is believed to be crucial for changing the reputation of an area, which is necessary for higher income groups to even consider living in these areas. First the original residents need to feel at home in a neighbourhood for it to become attractive for outside middle class groups. Therefore, before any attention is given to the role of higher income groups, activities in urban renewal programmes focus on changing the identity and reputation of an area by changing the behaviour of the poorest residents. Gold Service is instrumental in changing the behaviour of residents and reducing deprivation.

When this has been achieved, mixing becomes an option for the housing association. This can be witnessed in Sale, Manchester by the recent completion of
new build housing at the fringes of the neighbourhood, specifically designed and priced for the middle class after eight years of urban renewal and Gold Service. Members of the creative class are the most desirable new residents for the IVHA. Next to young intellectuals and families, employees of the city council and the social services are given priority when the new houses are released. Present housing is sold under the Right to Buy act to further attract this group to the neighbourhood. IVHA prefers teachers over lawyers in order to raise the quality of life for other residents, not so much by bringing more money to the neighbourhood, but by attracting creative capital, teachers who can function as role models for the present population. They need to “raise the level of existing community to the level of the new entering community”.

According to the association, both groups are dependant on each other: if residents in social housing behave badly, this will be reflected in the housing prices and, therefore, it is in the interest of the middle class home owners to invest in their poorer neighbours. Likewise, it is in the interest of the original residents to keep the new affluent residents in their neighbourhood, because failure to do so will damage the reputation of the area with undesirable consequences such as red lining (when banks refuse this give mortgages or charge more interest to residents from certain areas), increased segregation and even cultures of poverty. The dream of win-win gentrification is supported by local residents: “We are working on a integrated community in Sale, by creating a seam between old and new residents and to raise the capacities and expectations of the old existing community” (Sale resident and Board Member of IVHA).

IVHA acknowledges that not every resident is a winner and that some residents are forced out of the neighbourhood due to increased housing prices and demolition of undesirable homes to make room for the new housing, but this is perceived necessary to stop further deterioration; a price to pay for success. However, the housing association agrees it is important to keep hold of the successful tenants who are able to climb the societal ladder as an example for other residents. This does not require separate institutions or any form of self-organisation: providing enough housing opportunities (mixed tenure) to remain in the neighbourhood is deemed sufficient. The arrival and continued stay of the middle class will (further) improve the reputation of the area.
Therefore, reputation and culture are crucial to the regeneration of Sale: as a means to civilise the original residents and an end to attract creative middle classes. Physical regeneration is supportive towards this overarching goal. When IVHA bought the Sale West Estate from the city council in March 2000, improving the quality of life of residents and changing more than bricks and mortar was their key selling point in the promotional plans for the estate. The general goal was to improve the estates’ dire reputation. The estates are in an area of extreme contrast and inequality, with areas of prosperity and areas suffering from decline laying side by side. The properties were in a poor state of repair, approximately 12% of the properties were void and around 80% of the properties on the estate were considered long term unlettable by Manchester city council. Rent arrears were in the region of £180,000 and over 70% of the residents were dependant on social benefits. Vandalism, youth congregating, empty and abandoned properties were the top three priorities highlighted in the local area consultation (source: Neighbourhood Plan 2007-2010, Sale West, Heatherway & Surround, IVHA, 2007:4). At that time, buses and taxis did not dare to venture into the estate, further segregating the residents from the world outside their neighbourhood.

It was never a lack of internal social cohesion that troubled the housing association, but a deficiency of external cohesion which caused the housing association the greatest concerns. The area was a so-called overspill estate and owned by a bordering borough council who bought the estate when they ran out of land and property in their own borough while expanding their business. This resulted in an early detachment of residents towards the borough in which they lived since they officially belonged to another borough. The borough they were part of, however, didn’t make any effort to improve their detachment. A new housing association which actively sought communication with residents was therefore warmly received by the residents, though equally met by suspicion.

Following Irwell Valley’s success in securing the stock transfer of the Sale West Estate (formerly the Racecourse Estate) from Manchester council, a redevelopment master plan for the estate was drafted. This included improvements

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23 For the regeneration of one of their neighbourhoods IVHA hired a renowned architect to design the social housing in order to dramatically polish up the look and hopefully the reputation of the area.
to the existing stock, selected demolition of so-called ‘hard to let properties’ to enable the redevelopment of these areas and the various vacant land sites dotted around the estate. Part of the master plan was to provide new build housing for sale on some of these sites, both for outright sale and shared ownership, allowing existing residents to purchase a minimum share in a property, for example a 50% share, and pay rent on the remainder. Further shares can be obtained after a qualifying period and the rent is then reduced proportionately. In the redevelopment of Sale, the existing residents took priority, not only concerning housing, but also and especially concerning their health and care. IVHA reinstalled communication lines with the existing residents by conducting a resident survey, auditing the health, care and housing needs of their new customers.

The communication lines with the neighbourhood are maintained by a specially appointed neighbourhood manager. This person upholds strong relationships with all the parties involved in the regeneration of the area and their job is comparable to a neighbourhood coordinator or social worker in the Netherlands. One of their main responsibilities is to draw up a neighbourhood plan, which sets out a shared vision for the area to guide its future developments in great detail for the next five years, including yearly targets for the housing association. These so-called key performance indicators (KPI’s)\(^{24}\) are reviewed every six months. All the parties involved in the regeneration of the estate, including local residents, are consulted at length to ensure community wide support for the plans and are kept in the loop by a six monthly progress review.

The plan is organised into seven different themes\(^{25}\) representing the wider local and national political agenda and run concurrently with the Audit Commission’s Key Lines of Enquiry and the Respect Standard\(^{26}\). Each theme is coordinated by a partnership of professionals and residents. For instance, the

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\(^{24}\) The Key Performance Indicators are: customer satisfaction, turnover, available homes, average re-let time, average re-let costs, rent collection, arrears, ASB Category A, B, and C.

\(^{25}\) The seven themes are: resident consultation, children & young people, a safer community, quality of life, employment and training opportunities, economy and viability of the area and environment.

\(^{26}\) For more information visit http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/kloe/. The ‘Respect Agenda’ Action Plan published in January 2006, states that landlords, like Irwell Valley, need to be committed to: ‘reward responsibility by providing incentives for those who respect their neighbourhoods and community’.
partnership for theme two, children and young people, joins the forces of police officers, patrollers, community support officers, youth workers, and children and young people on the estate. The themes, and the goals set within each theme, echo the importance of increasing the desirability of the area, not only for the benefit of local residents, but also for the KPI’s of the housing association:

Creating A Safer Community (theme 3) improves the desirability of the estate and this in turn will impact on the organisation’s corporate KPI’s. Both housing and environmental improvements are complementary to each other and residents will feel that they are not only benefiting from an improved home, but also an improved community (Neighbourhood Plan 2007-2010, 2007:13).

All the themes, which strikingly do no include any reference to housing, are supportive to this overarching goal. To achieve these goals a diverse range of projects and activities were developed (partly) under the umbrella of Gold Service. This is the focus of the next paragraph.

9.5 Rewards

Irwell Valley Housing Association (Irwell Valley) owns over 7,000 homes and just under 400 supported housing units concentrated within five boroughs in Greater Manchester. The group was set up in 1975 and grew considerably in March 2000 with the transfer of approximately 1,600 properties in Sale from Manchester City Council. In April 2005 Irwell Valley expanded again, with the transfer of 1,000 properties in Haughton Green from Manchester City Council. It also provides homes for shared ownership and outright purchase. Since 1998, the Irwell Valley Housing Association in Manchester has been experimenting with a new service system in which customer relations are at the centre stage. The new element of this system is the distinction that is made between good and bad tenants. Good tenants are entitled to extra services, such as quicker repairs, discounts, saving points that can be used to improve their home or neighbourhood, and even funds in areas such as
education and employment counselling. Bad tenants must settle for basic service and maintenance.

In order to become a member of this service, the good tenant has to fulfil a number of conditions. Rent has to be paid on time (in case of overdue rent, payment arrangements have to be made), the maintenance of the house must be good, and neighbours must have no complaints about the tenant. The emphasis of the system is on good tenants, and not, as is very often the case, on bad tenants. Tenants must be responsible and loyal, and in return they receive good service.

Table 9.1 Overview of service facilities in Manchester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gold Bonus cash rewards</td>
<td>Gold Service members receive £1 for every week they are members. This reward is paid out three times a year in the form of Bonus Bonds, which can be spent in 25,000 shops all over Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Gold</td>
<td>Residents can opt to use their bonus points collectively and allocate them to the neighbourhood. In this case (Community Gold), IVHA doubles the amount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold repairs service</td>
<td>Emergency Gold Service helps members in case of urgent repairs within three hours, less urgent repairs within three days. Non-members are served within a day in case of emergencies, other repairs can take up to five days (urgent repairs) or 20 days (standard repairs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold home contents (insurance package)</td>
<td>IVHA and its insurance company have agreed on an inexpensive package of fire and theft insurances for members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold discounts</td>
<td>The Bonus Bonds can be spent by means of a Countdown card, offering a 5 to 20 per cent discount in a large number of stores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold health care</td>
<td>This service is part of the Gold discounts and enables members to join the Hospital Saturday Fund which entitles them to a variety of refunds in case of illnesses, both long and short term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold magazine</td>
<td>Promotion magazine for Gold Service with discount tokens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold access (hotline to Chief Executive)</td>
<td>On the pretext of ‘Talk to Tom’, members can call the chief executive 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Outside opening hours they are answered by a voicemail system. Members are guaranteed to get an answer or visit from Tom within 48 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold house pride</td>
<td>Following on from popular British television shows, members can win a makeover for their garden or one of their rooms. IVHA provides the work force and a budget of £500. A design agency helps with the design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold education</td>
<td>IVHA provides funds (£10,000) for schooling. Children of non-members may also apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold employment and training</td>
<td>IVHA hires local workers, but also demands from its subcontractors that they use the local work force. Furthermore, IVHA manages the Phoenix Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold credit (loan facility)</td>
<td>Funds or loans for members in financial distress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, specific services were developed for the Sale West Estate in order to tackle a number of persistent social issues in the area. By co-operating with the Employment and Regeneration Partnership, the IVHA managed to obtain a subsidy from the European Social Fund for setting up an employment and training advice centre called the Phoenix Centre. This job centre is based in Sale and offers educational funds, assistance in filling in and writing job application letters, training in interview techniques, appropriate clothing for a job interview and a reimbursement of travel expenses for the interview. IVHA also stimulated employment directly by deploying local workers for large-scale renovation projects and for small jobs such as building fences and setting up shuttle services in the neighbourhood. Up to October 2005 over 1200 clients have accessed training courses, advice and guidance and over half have achieved employment and training. The project started in 2001 and was extended after the European grant in 2004, allowing IVHA to run the centre directly. More recently the focus of the centre has extended to other areas, like Haughton Green.

This project is similar to the project ‘Hulp en activering’ developed in Emmen (chapter 7) and the projects initiated in Hoogvliet to increase the social mobility of residents. An important difference, however, is the accessibility of the service offered to residents: while Dutch residents, both in Emmen and Hoogvliet, are able to participate unconditionally, the residents in Sale are only allowed to join the project when they have fulfilled their membership criteria for Gold Service. This difference is illustrative for the approach favoured in Manchester: not just offering help and support, but support based on reciprocity: residents have to prove their commitment to the neighbourhood.

A number of services specifically aimed at improving the emotional ties of residents to their neighbourhood. Take, for example, the garden makeovers that IVHA offers its residents. By entering a competition residents can win professional help and a budget of £500 to redesign their garden or a room of choice in their home. The competition is extremely popular among local residents (especially since gardening is a national sport in Britain), and has the advantage for IVHA that it increases the attractiveness of the property, while residents are urged to take a stroll in the neighbourhood to review and discuss each others gardens. The project stimulates residents to keep their gardens and homes tidy and makes them aware
of their neighbours, which is one of the main contributors for increasing the place attachments of residents to their neighbourhood (see chapter 5).

Another contributor was spending time in and around the house, which IVHA stimulated by offering residents cheap toolboxes for DIY in and around the house. Although a large percentage of residents will be unlikely to actually use the toolbox, the group that does saves the housing association time and money on repairs and the time these residents spent on repairs increases their attachment to their neighbourhood. In a similar vein IVA encouraged people to stay in their homes longer by publishing articles in its tenant magazine on such things as decorating children’s bedrooms. By showing how to furnish a room for two children, the corporation hopes to prevent families with children from moving house due to lack of space in their current home. This reduces the corporation’s high transfer costs and increases the attachment of residents to their neighbourhood by decreasing their likeliness to move. A final concept IVHA is working on is equity stakes, where loyal customers get shares in their rented houses for every year they live there. Each year a percentage of the profit is paid out to the tenants. The idea behind this is that it stimulates customers to stay in their homes longer, which makes them more inclined to invest in their homes themselves. This may even offer tenants a ‘leg up’ to buying their rented house.

9.6 What Does Gold Service Achieve?

Irwell Valley Housing Association (IVHA) has commissioned a considerable amount of research into the functioning and results of Gold Service. Prior to the introduction of Gold Service in Manchester, a one-year research project was carried out among tenants into the current state of affairs and the desirability of the new system. A considerable percentage of all tenants were interviewed. In addition to these interviews, an independent market research agency has conducted two surveys among tenants of IVHA on questions concerning the implementation of Gold Service and the way default payers and troublemakers should be addressed. 95% of all tenants were positive about the new system and supported a discriminating approach toward defaulters and anti-social families.
In addition to the above-mentioned research, the Housing Corporation funded independent consultants to monitor the process and assigned an independent panel of experts to evaluate the project. This panel consisted of prominent members (chief executives of other housing associations and senior government officials from various cities and included a researcher from Glasgow University) and met six times during the year to discuss the monitoring data from the RDHS Ltd (independent housing consultants) and to make recommendations towards the Housing Corporation and Irwell Valley Housing Association.

It is obvious that ample evaluation and monitoring has been carried out. There is no lack of reports and surveys that speak highly of the visions and results of Gold Service. For example, through an elaborate question-and-answer session, the Irwell Valley briefing kit on Gold Service takes away any doubt that may exist on the success and intentions of the method. People who are still not convinced will be persuaded after reading the sound bites in which many of the chief executives pronounce their appreciation of and support for the concept. It can be argued that Manchester has learned a lot from the PR-qualities of its overseas American neighbours. However, picking through the sales talk, the accumulated evidence is impossible to deny. An important piece of evidence is the report from the previously mentioned experts of the Independent Evaluation and Development Panel that was published in March 2001. In this report, the panel presents the results of four years of monitoring, comparing the results to control groups, based on similar data from regional housing associations.

The results after three years are impressive indeed: more than two thirds of all tenants are free of debt, all rent is being paid, costs for security and prevention of vandalism have decreased by 25% and the transfer rate has decreased significantly. Before implementation, 60% of all tenants did not pay their rent on time, leading to 40% having rental debts. The costs for the new service (£400,000) are more than covered by the income (decreased negative capital due to rent arrears) of £700,000. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Gold Service did not only serve as a considerable economy measure for IVHA, but also led to better relations with and more satisfaction among tenants, causing a decrease in transfers and vacancies. This, in turn, diminished the maintenance costs for the residences. Furthermore, the spirit of the staff members at IVHA improved considerably, which
undoubtedly had an effect on customer satisfaction. In 2005 around 90% of the residents were a member of Gold Service.

The big question is whether it has also affected the quality of life in, and attachment to, the neighbourhoods. The report does not go very far into this subject matter and merely states that there are “improved neighbourhoods and community spirit”, but fails to give specific evidence for this statement. IVHA, however, claims success in the redevelopment of Sale: the neighbourhood has become a more desirable place to live. Proof is for IVHA the rising value of the housing stock, although with the unintentional (but accepted) side-effect that not every resident is able to afford the new housing and rental prices and, therefore, is not able to return to the neighbourhood.

The reinstatement of the old community centre appears to be a major contributing factor to the claim of improved neighbourhoods and community spirit. The centre quickly became a focal point for community life and established links between the different services. For instance, when residents were offered training towards an qualification as day care staff, they were also offered a job at the new day care centre, which was located in the same building, to put their newly acquired qualification into practise and, more importantly, to earn money with it. The Phoenix Centre closed in 2005: not only did the funding stop after the project term was completed, but apparently interest for the centre was declining in the neighbourhood. Is it not clear whether this is due to such a successful application rate, making unemployed residents hard to find, or whether it proved difficult to activate an increasingly difficult and remaining core of unemployed residents who showed more resistance and were faced with a multitude of social and economic problems. The community centre, however, remains extremely popular with 30,000 visitors a year for projects like the Sunshine Café and the IT Centre.

The popularity of the centre, unfortunately does not tell us much about improvements in the social ties with and between residents, let alone their emotional attachments to the estate. One could argue that the greatly increased satisfaction of residents and the dramatically reduced turnover rate should account for something. Interviews with local professionals and residents furthermore indicate that some residents developed more contacts in their neighbourhood, although the resident panels that are set up within the Gold Service scheme consist
of the usual residents’ elite that is all too similar to Dutch resident participation in urban renewal: white, female and over forty years old.

Perhaps the most persuasive evidence for the limitations of social effectiveness is the popularity rate of Community Gold. This part of Gold Service aims explicitly at collective action of neighbourhood residents. When individual residents pool their saved bonus points together to finance a neighbourhood project the housing association doubles the budget. However, few neighbourhoods were willing to do this and those who did belonged usually to one of two groups: young families who raise money for a playground for their children or the elderly who look for joint activities. These groups already have a strong focus on the neighbourhood and are easily mobilised. The less neighbourhood-orientated groups, who are a likely target for housing associations to mobilise, were more difficult to persuade into collective action by Community Gold. It is probably safe to say that Gold Service does not particularly excel in mobilising passive residents or connecting different resident groups.

IVHA (and other housing associations which developed similar schemes\(^{27}\)) maintain the potential of tenant reward schemes for improving social cohesion and social-emotional ties to the neighbourhood. They argue that residents increase their commitment to their neighbourhood and their neighbours, by improving the relationship between landlord and tenant. The trust Gold Service generates towards the housing association can act as a catalyst for trusting other residents. This line of reasoning has its flaws: why should a resident invest time and effort into his neighbourhood when fellow residents are already doing it for him or her? In the social sciences this problem is know as the free riders-paradigm. A solution to this problem is group pressure: if there is a majority of residents who participate they can sanction the free rider by social exclusion. If you don’t co-operate you won’t be part of this neighbourhood. The Dutch Housing associations, therefore, aim at involving a majority of the neighbourhood residents in Gold Service and hope this

will create enough shared involvement in the neighbourhood to generate mutually enforced social relationships between residents.

Some evidence for this claim comes from a survey held among 11 Dutch and 7 English housing associations, which developed their own tenant reward scheme (Van der Graaf, 2007). Asked about their achievements, most housing associations in both countries (although some associations were not able to see any particular results yet) claimed an improved image (80% in the NL; 83% in the UK) and improved customer relations. The Dutch housing associations defined the latter in terms of increased commitment from tenants (60%), while the British housing associations witnessed improved communication with tenants (83%). In both cases trust between tenants and landlords has increased considerably, with beneficial effects for housing associations in both countries: the UK associations reported more financial gains (50%), mainly in terms of less rent arrears, while the Dutch housing associations reported increased liveability in neighbourhoods (40%). It remains debatable whether social cohesion can always become strong enough to exercise social control over all the residents in an area, neither is it arguable that this should be the case for every neighbourhood. Not every resident wants to participate on the same level in their neighbourhood and is equally committed to it.

More direct evidence toward changes in the emotional ties of residents can be found in the BHPS-data used in chapter 5, although this data does not allow for the specifying of the results for the residents in Sale, because data is only available at the local authority level and therefore only the emotional ties of Manchester residents can be analysed. However, this does allow for an assessment of the general approach towards urban renewal in Manchester: is the Mancunian mafia not only able to improve the image and outlook of the city, but also to change the place attachment of its residents to their neighbourhood?

The table below illustrates that compared to other local authorities the physical and social attachments of residents in Manchester have increased more; even compared to the general positive trend in New Deal for Community-areas, the city show a larger increase in attachments than the other NDC authorities: Mancunians feel more attached to the place where they live and the people they live with.
Case Study: Sale, Manchester, United Kingdom

Table 9.2 Changes in Place Identity and Attachments in Manchester, 1998-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Manchester (N=77)</th>
<th>Other NDC Areas (N=719)</th>
<th>Other 86 Most Deprived Areas (N=910)</th>
<th>Other Areas (N=3,908)</th>
<th>Total (N=5,614)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Identity</td>
<td>+ 15.4%</td>
<td>+ 16.7%</td>
<td>+ 18.3%</td>
<td>+ 16.1%</td>
<td>+ 16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Attachment</td>
<td>+ 16.9%</td>
<td>+ 14.9%</td>
<td>+ 12.7%</td>
<td>+ 12.3%</td>
<td>+ 12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Attachment</td>
<td>+ 19.5%</td>
<td>+ 13.5%</td>
<td>+ 12.4%</td>
<td>+ 13.2%</td>
<td>+ 13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest improvement takes place for residents who reported a low affection for their neighbourhood and neighbours in 1998: five years later they feel more at home, either with their neighbours or with the place where they live. That residents with the smallest affection are affected most is further confirmed when patterns of attachment are reviewed. In spite of a substantial group of Mancunians (23%) for whom no change in attachment is visible, residents who felt displaced and alienated from their neighbourhood are uplifted the most: not only do they feel less detached and display a more neutral stance towards their neighbourhood; a considerable group of these residents report more relative ties (30%) and even feelings of community rootedness (50%).

These results are remarkable; it appears the Mancunian mafia has been successful in reaching the group of residents they had in mind when they turned their eyes to east Manchester: the ones least involved with their neighbourhood and the least accessible for social professionals. However, considering the small number of respondents, the results have to be reviewed with care. To establish the effect of Gold Service in Sale more precise information is needed on the emotional ties of Sale’s residents in future research.

9.7 Discussion

Although Gold Service has been successful in creating a better landlord-tenant relationship, the evidence on improved community cohesion and emotional ties to the neighbourhood is limited. In spite of this Irwell Valley Housing Association raises a valuable point: Tenant Reward Schemes might not be the panacea for neighbourhood deprivation and social issues, but they do provide an opportunity for
housing associations to become normative mediators in a space where a normative consensus about how to live together in a neighbourhood has long broken down.

However, the ambitions have to be modest: Gold Service cannot enforce norms or commitment on residents. A shared norm can only be created by residents themselves. The creation of norms and values is, in the words of Thaddeus Muller, a process of image shaping, weighing, negotiating and reciprocity. But institutions, such as housing associations, can, even from a perspective of self-interest, facilitate this process. In these post-modern times this process has become more complex: the public space we share with others is not only more dynamic but also far more extensive that it used to be. This means that residents have to, much more than they were used to, search for common norms and values to act collectively upon. In some cases that means they have to invent them from scratch in ongoing interaction with each other. Housing associations can create a safe framework for these interactions by tempting residents into involvement with their own housing property and environment, which they partly share with other residents.

The starting point is not an increased social cohesion between residents or improved neighbourhood attachments, but a shared trust in the housing association that facilitates the negotiation process between resident about common norms and values that make life in the neighbourhood more satisfactionary. Ongoing interaction requires trust, which can be based on trust in institutions that are involved in the everyday life of residents. Gold Service and Community Gold can therefore be seen as an institutional condition for the development of trust between residents.

An important aspect of this institutional condition is closeness: for trust to develop, the housing association needs to be visible in the housing environment of residents. Key to the implementation of Gold Service in Manchester was a reorganisation of the organisational structure that emphasised the execution level. Employees from housing associations were urged to spend time on the street and talk to residents on a daily basis. Before the introduction of Gold Service in Manchester the housing officers were so occupied with rule enforcement, maintenance, housing contracts and projects in social housing, redevelopment and special needs that there wasn’t any time left to have a chat with local residents.
To reduce their workload a call centre was set up to take care of the rule enforcement and maintenance. The time gained was invested in community work: in every neighbourhood the housing officers drew up a community plan with the residents followed by a service plan in which a course of action was stated for providing the Gold Service amenities the residents required. IVHA described this reorganisation as a transformation from housing officers to community officers. For the organisation it meant a bigger front office and a smaller back office: a move that proved crucial for building up a good relationship with and between tenants and ultimately for contributing to an improved reputation for the area.

The improved landlord-tenant relationship creates a safe environment to become more active in their neighbourhood. The trust created in the interactions with the housing associations can makes residents feel safer in addressing the behaviour of their neighbours. This is likely to affect the emotional ties of residents: increased interactions between residents in a safe environment will increase their attachment to the neighbourhood and allows new meanings to become attached to the environment. The next chapter reviews a more collective strategy by the borough councils of Newcastle and Gateshead to alter the reputation of a deprived area and the place attachments of its residents. In the regeneration of the quaysides of the river Tyne both councils opted for a macro-level cultural strategy of urban renewal. Does a collective approach, instead of an individual strategy as favoured in Manchester, lead to better and more visible results?