

# **Council House Sales, Homelessness and Contact with the Criminal Justice System: Evidence from the NCDS and BCS70 Birth Cohorts**

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## **Abstract**

Focussing on the changes in sitting tenants' right to buy their council house (introduced in the UK in 1980), we explore the long-term impact of this policy change upon the lives of UK citizens. Using two longitudinal studies of UK citizens born in 1958 and 1970, we exam how policies aimed at achieving one set of goals (providing families with their own homes, reducing the control of councils and weakening the Labour Party's voting bloc) may have also altered experiences of housing, homelessness, and contact with the criminal justice system not just for those for whom the policies were initially designed (adults living in council owned properties in the 1980s) but also for subsequent generations (most typically their children). Our contribution examines how legislative changes may have altered the lives of citizens, and highlights some of the unintended consequences of the 'right to buy' in the UK. We are able to investigate what happens when systems which have previously been tightly regulated suddenly become much less well regulated. Our paper utilises ideas developed by life-course theorists and historical institutionalists in order to understand in more depth how radical policy changes may shape and alter the lives of citizens.

Key words: social housing; homelessness; offending; life-course perspective; intergenerational inheritances.

## **1: Introduction**

The changes to housing tenure in the UK in the 1980s were dramatic. A key plank of housing provision from the immediate post-war years (namely council-owned properties which were rented to tenants) was changed via legislation which enabled council tenants to purchase their homes at a discounted rate. In this paper we throw further light on the relationship between housing tenure and the experience of crime and homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system using longitudinal data about those born in 1958 (the National Child Development Study) and 1970 (the Birth Cohort Study). In so doing, we explore how changes in housing provision were associated with homelessness, victimisation and arrest, and make contributions to the literatures on housing pathways (Clapham et al, 2016) and the exploration of intergenerational inheritances (MacLeavy and Manley, 2018). Earlier analyses on this topic (Farrall et al, 2016b) have relied upon national-level surveys to capture general trends but were unable to explore individual life-courses. Herein we explore, at the individual level, the ways in which changes in housing provision affected the life courses of two cohorts of men and women born twelve years apart in the UK. As the privatisation of council housing was geographically uneven (Dunn et al, 1987), it is likely that the unintended consequences also fall unevenly across the UK as they have for domestic property crime (Farrall et al, 2016b) and the changing patterns of urban social divisions (Lee and Murie, 1999).

## 1.1 Our Contribution

Building upon publications that account for who becomes homeless (e.g. Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2017), which try to unpick which social groups bought their council homes (e.g. Kerr 1986), and which contextualise the development of the right to buy (e.g. Malpass, 2011), our contribution follows Carlen's efforts (1996) in seeking to explore some of the more structural causes of homelessness, and their longer-term outcomes for individual's lives. As such, we explore the ways in which macro-level processes (legislation) affect individual-level outcomes, and in so doing respond to Mayer's call for life-course researchers to "unravel ... the impacts of institutional contexts and social processes ... on life-courses" (2009:426). As Mayer notes, "how the internal dynamics of life-courses and the interaction of life-courses and the interaction of developmental and social components of life-courses vary and how they are shaped by the macro contexts of institutions and social policies" (2009:426) has yet to be fully explored. Our work also contributes to the literature on historical institutionalism (Pierson, 2004)<sup>1</sup>, most notably by bringing 'ordinary people' (Sanders, 2006:45) into the picture, and inherited disadvantages (MacLeavy and Manley, 2018:1436) who note that "the problem of inequality can become greater when viewed from an intergenerational standpoint, where inequalities are reinforced and reproduced over time for individuals, families and social groups". By locating our samples in specific socio-political and historical contexts, we are able to develop some of the insights made by Clapham et al (2016) who note how various changes in employment, the welfare system, and the availability of social housing (2016:2021-2) have shaped young people's housing pathways. Our paper is constructed as follows; first, we outline some of the key ideas from the life-course perspective, which has seen much usage in sociology, criminology and health-related research. We then define our research questions, summarise the evolution of the right to buy legislation in the UK, and outline the research studies upon which we rely for empirical data. Then we start to explore how the relationship between tenure and victimisation changed over time, before examining the trajectories of those people who bought their council homes in relation to crime, victimisation and homelessness. In this section we explore the experience of RTB purchasers, non-purchasers and those who owned or were buying their homes privately with regards to levels of homelessness, contact with the criminal justice system, and victimisation. We then go on to explore the outcomes of homelessness for individuals in these two cohorts before summarising what we have learnt about the changing nature of these relationships.

## 2: Drawing Upon the Life-Course Perspective

As many have come to recognise (Sampson 2015), the life-course perspective - defined as exploring "pathways through the age differentiated life span" and as being "manifested in expectations and options that impinge on decision processes and the course of events that give shape to life stages, transitions and turning points" (Elder, 1985:17) - has had a dramatic impact upon thinking within sociology and criminology since the early-1990s. Indeed, a very large part of contemporary criminology's theoretical apparatus is derived from the work of life-course scholars (Elder and Pellerin, 1998, Dannefer, 2003, Ferraro and Shippee, 2009). One of the key aims of the life-course perspective is to draw links between macro-level social history and social structures, and the lives of individuals and communities. Two concepts central to this perspective are the notions of 'trajectory'

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<sup>1</sup> Building temporally sensitive theoretical frameworks has been stressed by Pierson (2004), who has argued that when politics is understood as a slow "moving picture" (2004:2) rather than a static scene, it has the ability to enrich our understanding of social dynamics, and improve the theories and methods that we use to explain them.

and 'transitions'. The first refers to a line of development over the life-course (such as an employment career), and the second refers to events (first job, promotion and so on) which break - positively or negatively - a trajectory. Sampson and Laub (1993:8) describe the perspective as focusing upon "...the duration, timing and ordering of major social events and their consequences for later social development". As Elder, Modell and Parke note, rapid social change has the ability to alter the timing and sequence of events in the transition to adulthood (1993:10). Similarly, they go on to add, "social-contextual factors have an important impact on the operation of non-social processes" (1993:11). In other words, social contexts and changes in social contexts (especially if undertaken rapidly) can impact upon individuals and, for example, their cognitive development or mental health.

The focus on wider social and economic structures in the work of Elder (Elder 1995) and others (Antonucci and Aikya, 1995, Moen and Hernandez, 2009) highlights the ways in which individuals' lives are linked to one another. As such, events and long-term trajectories in the lives of parents in a family may alter the life-courses of their offspring. As the individuals in a family age, they form an aging social network, referred to by some as a 'social convey' (Antonucci and Aikya, 1995); a group of inter-connected people who move through time together. As Moen and Hernandez (2009:259) note, an individual's resources, deficits in these, strains upon them, increases in them and so on, become not just drivers of transitions or turning points in the lives of the individual themselves, but also in the lives those people who are in some way related to them (either socially or biologically). For example, the loss of work for a parent on whom a family had relied, affects not just the individual concerned, but their dependents also. As Elder remarks, "each generation is bound to fateful decisions and events in the other's life course" (1995: 112). Similarly, the individual's social network may also be affected by the individual's loss of work, especially if they too lose their own work. Hence, the concept of a 'social convey' can be extended away from purely family members; school class mates, family members, acquaintances, loosely-engaged strangers and so on can also be considered potential members of such conveys. Nevertheless, as Elder reminds us "people of the same age do not march in concert across major events of the life course: rather they vary in pace and sequencing, and this variation has real consequences for individuals and society" (1995: 110). We draw upon these ideas in investigating the impact of a dramatic policy change in the housing arena (namely the right to buy) and the impact which parental tenure trajectories may have played on the lives of their children in terms of homelessness, victimisation and other negative life-outcomes.

### **3: Incorporating Historical Institutional Thinking**

Historical Institutionalism is concerned with illuminating how institutions and institutional settings mediate the ways in which processes unfold over time (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992:2). Sanders asserts that "If [historical institutionalism] teaches us anything, it is that the place to look for answers to big questions ... is in institutions, not personalities and over the longer landscapes of history, not the here and now" (2006:53). Historical institutionalism, then, is an attempt to develop understanding of how political and policy processes and relationships play out over time coupled with an appreciation that prior events, procedures and processes will have consequences for subsequent events. Sanders writes that "the central assumption of historical institutionalism is that it is more enlightening to study human political interactions: a) in the context of rule structures that are themselves human creations; and b) sequential, as life is lived, rather than to take a snapshot of those interactions at only one point in time, and in isolation from the rule structures that (institutions) in which they occur" (Sanders, 2006:39). Since the initial flurry of activity establishing

the theoretical, analytical and methodological distinctiveness of historical institutionalism (which emerged from the late-1980s), some have criticised it for focussing on the 'institutionalist' aspects of their research at the expense of the 'historical' dimensions (Pierson, 2004:8). In a series of publications, Pierson has pushed historical institutionalism towards a greater acceptance of not just the role of institutions in shaping society, but also that played by particular individuals and groups of individuals (Pierson, 1996, 2000, 2004). Thelen (1999:375) argues that historical institutionalists' approach is premised on the idea that institutions do more than just channel policy and structure political and policy conflict and formulation, rather they define the interests and create the objects of the policies themselves; who articulates which interests, how and under which circumstances is a consequence not just of political desires and imperatives, but is itself a consequence of the sorts of institutions which are created and the contexts which they give rise to. Time is clearly a central variable in the work of historical institutionalists. As one of the leading proponents of historical institutionalism argues, "many of the implications of political decisions ... only play out in the long term" (Pierson, 2004:41). Yet politicians are often chiefly interested in the short term, creating the possibility of a series of unintended and unplanned consequences which unfold and are realised only with the passage of time. The most notable absence within the framework concerns the role of individuals. Individual agency (with the exception of political leaders and opinion formers) is almost totally absent from much thinking, as indeed, are ordinary citizens too. Since much of the focus on historical institutionalism has been on how institutions have been shaped by political processes or have shaped subsequent policies, the impacts of these developments on the lives of 'ordinary' men and women has been overlooked. As such, there is no real way of assessing the ways in which what happens in the political and policy arena has any discernible impacts on everyday lives as these unfold over time and in specific personal, social and geographical contexts.

Alongside this we undertake a process tracing (Goldstone, 2003) of the relationship between changes in the housing market and long-term outcomes in terms of homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system. Process tracing consists of the analysis of a temporally-ordered sequence of events and processes such that the causal relationships and processes are illuminated. The analyst is concerned with the goals and actions of individuals, organisations and informal groups and communities. It is important to keep in mind the fact that not all of these entities operate rationally, are equally powerful or are able to achieve their goals. Goldstone summarises process tracing as "making deductions about how events are linked over time, drawing on general principles of economics, sociology, psychology, and political science regarding human behaviour" (2003:48). Specifically, we pose three research questions:

1. What were the consequences of council house sales for the children of council tenants?
2. What (if any?) bearing did the purchase of one's council house have on their experience of homelessness?
3. And, what were the crime-related experiences of those individuals whose parents bought their council homes?

#### **4: The Evolution of the Right to Buy**

The 1936 Housing Act allowed councils to sell their houses, albeit with the permission of the Minister for Health (Davies, 2013:425). However, in many cases the Minister refused, citing the need to keep housing for 'general needs' and low levels of desire to own one's home (Davis, 2013). In 1952 this situation was to change, when Harold Macmillan (then Minister for Housing) issued a 'general consent' for councils to sell their houses, although sales remained very low. Following electoral gains made in 1966, some Conservative-controlled councils embarked upon large-scale sales. Birmingham City Council, for example, started to offer discounts for longstanding tenants,

which, coupled with a rise in council rents, encouraged more sales. Local governments in London and Manchester followed suit (Davies, 2013:429). Labour limited the number of sales which could be made in any one year (to .25% of the stock) in 1968. Heath raised this to 20% when elected Prime Minister in 1970, leading to around 60,000 sales in 1972 alone (Davies, 2013:432). Nevertheless, the number of sales remained low. Forrest and Murie (1990:6-9) note that many of the pre-1980s' council house purchasers were middle-aged tenants, earning above average wages, working in skilled manual jobs, with families and who had lived in that home for several years, and who tended to remain living in those homes for many years after purchase. This suggested a group of tenants who were happy with their homes and the local area and who were engaged in wider social institutions such as employment, family-formation and schools.

The 1979 Conservative election manifesto focussed on housing; the Tories' key aim at that point had been the introduction of the right to buy one's council house for sitting tenants. Whilst council house sales were in keeping with mainstream Conservative Party policy, it was the Thatcher government which initiated widespread and far-reaching change in this arena. This policy simultaneously spoke to several political ambitions; attacking collective consumption and ownership; dissolving the interests of council tenants and councils; disrupting councils' status as landlords; transferring housing from local council control to private bodies; expanding home ownership (Stewart and Burrige, 1989: 75, Hay 1992); and turning former-council tenants into Tory voters (Francis, 2012:289).

The first key change in the legislation which needs to be documented was the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. This introduced a definition of homelessness and imposed a duty on local authorities to house those individuals and families unable to secure their own accommodation (Atkinson and Durden, 1990:118, Ginsburg, 1997:141). The Act in effect 'increased' the numbers of homeless people (Murie, 1989:213, Atkinson and Durden, 1990:118). However, the 1977 Act did not identify single young people as a priority category; at that point homeless families were a key focus. The right to buy introduced via the 1980 Housing Act, proved popular with the skilled working class, (Stewart and Burrige, 1989:70). This social group might have moved home to become owner-occupiers anyway. One of the consequences of the right to buy was the residualisation of council homes, such that only the very poorest occupied such accommodation. Indeed, during the passing of the Act, a number of amendments were introduced by the Lords; one of which was that accommodation designed or adapted for the elderly or disabled ought to be excluded from the right to buy scheme. This amendment may have had the effect of 'trapping' elderly and disabled people in council accommodation, and may have contributed, albeit in a small way, to the processes of residualisation. As Murie notes, throughout the 1980s there was a growing polarisation between those in council housing and those living in homes they owned (1989: 214) as those in council stock where increasing been drawn from those 'in need'.<sup>2</sup>

Another consequence of the sale of council houses was the rise in homelessness (Murie, 2014:160). Homeless households doubled between 1979 and 1990, as did the proportion of new council tenants who had been homeless, from 16% in 1980/81 to 46% in 1991/92. More homeless households were also placed in temporary accommodation; 4,710 households were placed in temporary accommodation in 1980, rising to 54,930 in 1997. Farrall et al (2016b) use data from The General Household, British Social Attitudes and British Crime Surveys to demonstrate how the social

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<sup>2</sup> Ravetz (2001:203) suggests that one of the ways in which council housing became residualised was that the mechanism which produced a socially diverse tenant group (housing managers) was removed from the process, only to be replaced by market mechanisms (which care little for maintaining a broad social mix, and instead tend to produce inequalities).

rented sector was increasingly housing the unemployed, those on low incomes and/or in receipt of welfare benefits in the twenty or so years after 1982. However, whilst such analyses provide a general assessment of the changes experienced over time, they are deficient in a number of ways. Analyses relying on repeated cross-sectional data sets are not able to explore what happened to individuals or their life-courses, and are limited to the sorts of data routinely collected by such surveys, which cannot include mental states such as depression, or an individual's experiences of changes in tenure, such as buying their council house or remaining a council tenant. As such, whilst the Farrall et al (2016b) analyses allow us to explore long-term processes of residualisation at the meso-level, they are unable to offer any insights into how individual life-courses were affected by the right to buy policies of the 1980s. Herein we tackle these deficiencies.

## **5: Outlining the NCDS and BCS70**

The National Child Development Study (the 1958 cohort) had an initial sample size of 17,414, all of whom were born in one week of March 1958. Data were collected on (and from, since 1969) the sample members in 1958 (birth), 1965 (aged 7), 1969 (11), 1974 (16), 1981 (23), 1991 (33), 2000 (42), 2004 (46), 2008 (50) and 2013 (55). The sample has retained very good recontact rates, with 9,100 (52%) being re-interviewed when the survey was last fielded (in 2013). The British Cohort Study (the 1970 cohort) had a slightly smaller sample size (of 16,135), all of whom were born in one week of April 1970. Data was collected on or from sample members in 1970 (birth), 1975 (aged 5), 1980 (10), 1986 (16), 1996 (26), 2000 (30), 2004 (34), 2008 (38), 2012 (42) and 2016 (46). The sample has had generally good response rates, although these were lower at age 16 when the National Union of Teachers was on strike (when about a third of respondents were not reached), resulting in a lower response rate at the 26 sample too. Around two-thirds of cohort members have been interviewed at sweeps since 2000.

Both the NCDS and the BCS70 cohort members were asked a series of questions about hospitalisations following accidents and similar events in the year 2000 (when the NCDS was aged 42 and the BCS70 30). These questions recorded the 'type' of event and the age at which it had taken place. These were used to construct a series of variables which recorded if the cohort member had been a victim of assault in each year between their previous interview and 2000 and were used as a measure of victimisation. The same survey sweeps asked both cohorts about their experiences of homelessness since their previous interview.

### **5.1: Research Design**

Given earlier analyses on the relationship between the right to buy and crime have been undertaken mainly at the national level (Murie, 1997, Farrall et al 2016b), we were keen to explore changes in housing provision and crime at the individual level. Whilst no data set would ever be perfect for this, the BCS70 and the NCDS make extremely good vehicles with which to study the impact of dramatic social, economic and policy changes on cohorts of people. The BCS70 cohort members were born in 1970, and grew up during the 1980s, during which they would have been subject to changes in economic, social welfare, housing and schooling policies. The NCDS were born in 1958, growing up during rather more settled times in which the welfare state was expanding. Both are large enough (each has in excess of 16,000 respondents) for us to explore subgroups, avoiding a tendency to homogenize cohorts (White 2013). This style of research design is referred to by Elder and Giele (2009:16) as the "pairing [of] strategically related longitudinal samples". Hence, by using two cohort studies born twelve years apart, we aim to highlight "variations and differences within and between

individuals as they develop in multidimensional social-historical contexts” (Almeida and Wong, 2009:142). Our research design is therefore in keeping with the calls made by MacLeavy and Manley (2018:1437) for “extensive longitudinal research as a means to understand where and when parental disadvantage is felt by children, and the impact it has throughout the life course”.

## **6: Council Estates and Victimisation Levels: How did the relationship change over time?**

As we shall see presently, the housing market changed quite dramatically between the time that the NCDS and the BCS70 reached adulthood (mid/late-1970s and late-1980s respectively). The NCDS, for example, were likely to be amongst those for whom home ownership was seen as a natural progression (Smith and Ferri, 2003), reaching adulthood in the late-1970s when buying a house was becoming more common, especially so amongst members of the affluent working class. As Murie notes (1997:24), at this point, the affluent working class neighbourhoods, in which many who would buy their homes were living, were not associated with crime and disorder. Similarly, and partly related to this, estates with a dominant local employer were also not associated with crime and disorder, since the disciplines and relationships forged at work were reflected in the social organisation of the communities away from work (Murie, 1997:24). However, at that point (the very late-1970s), the availability of social housing was about to contract (a result of the 1980 Housing Act, and the reduction in council house building), whilst the demand for it would increase (as a result of the 1977 Homeless Persons Act).<sup>3</sup> Following the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s, the UK housing market collapsed, just as the NCDS cohort entered the point (in their 30s) at which they were likely to have young families. On the other hand, the BCS70 cohort were just entering adulthood in the late-1980s and early-1990s, so many would not yet have started to have children. Whilst many of their parents had been able to buy their own homes, this was proving to be harder for the BCS70 cohort members, with house prices rising dramatically in the 1990s. In addition to this, the social rented sector had reduced in size and was increasingly unattractive for many (having undergone a process of residualisation, Murie, 1997). Smith and Ferri conclude that of the two cohorts discussed herein, the BCS70 faced the least favourable housing context in which to embark on establishing a home for themselves and their families (2003:197).

## **7: Individual-Level Analyses**

### **7.1: Identifying the Council Tenants Who Bought their Homes in the BCS70 and NCDS**

Using data provided by the BCS70 cohort members’ parents, we were able to identify those whose parents had been living in houses which they had bought privately (n = 3,090), or were council tenants and who had (by 1986) either bought their council homes (n = 720) or had not (n = 2,009).<sup>4</sup> Repeating this exercise for the NCDS was not quite as easy (since there was no variable which asked if the family had bought their home from the council). Instead we rely on tenure at age 7 (1965) and age 11 (1969) to determine who lived in a council house at age 7 but was in a house they privately owned at age 11 controlling for length of residence at *that* address (so as to exclude those who had

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<sup>3</sup> As Ravetz notes, the 1977 Act would not have destabilised council housing had the numbers of council houses available not been dramatically reduced by the results of the 1980 Housing Act (2001:199).

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the fieldwork in 1986 was disrupted by the National Union of Teachers’ strike, and so the sample N is reduced considerably (by about half). On top of this, when one excludes those cases with various missing data, we are left with a sample of N around 5,800 for the BCS70 analyses. Recent analyses, however, suggest that whilst this reduces the sample N, it did not affect the sample representativeness (Gerova2006:7).

simply left council accommodation and bought a different home). This was repeated for the age 11 and age 16 data too. Excluding those cases with missing values, and those cases in private renting or other tenures, there were 420 (6% of this subsample, Table 1) NCDS cohort members whose parents had bought their council homes between 1965 and 1974; for the BCS70 figure, the figures are higher (720, 12%). This represents the boom in council house sales in the early 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1: Tenure Trajectories in Two Cohorts**

	NCDS	BCS70
Parents who were owner occupiers	3513 ( 51%)	3090 ( 53%)
Parents who bought their council homes	420 ( 6%)	720 ( 12%)
Parents who did not buy their council homes	3006 ( 43%)	2009 ( 35%)
TOTAL	6939 (100%)	5819 (100%)

## 8 Did Council House sales Influence homelessness and Contact with the Criminal Justice System?

In this section we explore the consequences (in terms of homelessness) on BCS70 and NCDS cohort members' parental tenure trajectories. We focus on their subsequent experiences of homeless, their involvement with the criminal justice system, and other life-outcomes.

### 8.1: Did Parental Tenure Trajectories Influence Levels of Homelessness?<sup>6</sup>

What was the relationship between parental tenure trajectories and cohort member's experiences of homelessness between 16 and 30 (1986-2000) for the BCS70 and 33 and 42 (1991-2000) for the NCDS? Let us start with the NCDS (Table 2). We are interested in their parents' tenure status up to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthdays (in 1974). The data suggests that the cohort members did not experience significantly different levels of homelessness based on their parental tenure trajectory ( $p = .076$ ). This suggests that the most vulnerable group (council renters who did not buy their council home) were protected from the risk of homelessness as well as less vulnerable groups.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 2: Tenure Trajectories and Homelessness (NCDS)**

	Owners/Mortgaged	Council Renters who Bought	Council Renters who did not buy	Total
Homeless	69 ( 5%)	14 ( 8%)	70 ( 7%)	153 ( 6%)
Not homeless	1363 ( 95%)	167 ( 92%)	984 ( 93%)	2514 ( 94%)
	1432 (100%)	181 (100%)	1054 (100%)	2669 (100%)

<sup>5</sup> Of course, some of those whose parents bought their council homes subsequently experienced financial difficulties and ended up living in housing worse than the council homes they had purchased. We hope to chart the experiences of these individuals in future papers.

<sup>6</sup> Our analyses are based on 'parallel' analyses of the two datasets. In order that we definitively establish that the two cohorts did indeed experience different rates of homelessness from one another, we brought all of the data on parental tenure trajectory and homelessness into one file, and then cross-tabulated this by homelessness. Examining the Standardised Residuals for each cell in the crosstabulation table, we found that both the NCDS and BCS70 owner-occupiers had Standardised Residuals of greater than -2, meaning that there were indeed fewer of these cases whose children experienced homelessness than one would have expected, whilst the reverse was true for the BCS70 council house non-buyers, meaning that *far more* of them experienced homelessness than one would expect. The other three groups (NCDS council buyers, NCDS council non-buyers and BCS70 council house buyers) had standardised residuals which are between -2 and +2, meaning that these observed counts are no more or less than one would expect. An additional 'safety check' of the data using a logistic regression confirmed the analyses from the crosstabulation.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, many of those who experienced homelessness shared experiences in keeping with those Clapham et al (2016:2027-8) describe as being 'chaotic'. See also section 8.5 below.

Chi-Sq = 6.243. p = .076.

Of course, those who did not buy their own homes tended to come from poorer sections of society or to be living in the less desirable accommodation. For the BCS70 cohort, for example, non-buyers tended to be in households whose mothers had had children when they were in their teens, tended to live in flats or maisonettes, to have been claiming benefits, to have got on less well with their neighbours, tended to come from non-white households, and tended to have fathers who did not work, or, if they were working, tended not to have jobs in which they supervised other staff. These broad demographics are supported in the wider literature (Forrest and Murie, 1990, Kerr, 1986).

What happened, in terms of experiences of homelessness, to the BCS70 cohort? Very few of those who, at age 16, were living in homes which were being bought or were owned outright experienced homelessness up to age 30 (like the NCDS, this was around 5%, Table3). Those whose parents had bought their council homes were only slightly more likely to experience homelessness up to age 30 (about 8%). However, for those whose parents lived in council accommodation and did not buy their homes, the figure is about twice that for owners (at 9%), suggesting that homeless was (in part) explained by parental ability and willingness to buy their own homes by the time their child was 16 (p = .000). This suggests that homelessness is, in part at least, associated with macro-level policy changes (in this case the housing Acts of the 1980s). In short, when a key plank of the welfare state was challenged by Thatcherite social policies, so homelessness rose for the next generation.

**Table 3: Tenure Trajectories and Homelessness (BCS70)**

	Owners/Mortgaged	Council Renters who Bought	Council Renters who did not buy	Total
Homeless	111 ( 5%)	40 ( 8%)	115 ( 9%)	226 ( 7%)
Not homeless	2137 ( 95%)	467 ( 92%)	1126 ( 91%)	3727 ( 93%)
	2245 (100%)	507 (100%)	1241 (100%)	3993 (100%)

Chi-Sq = 25.422. p = .000.

## **8.2: Did Parental Tenure Trajectory Influence their Children’s Contact with the CJS?**

In the year 2000, when the BCS70 cohort was aged 30, and the NCDS were aged 42, both cohorts got near-identical sets of questions. Using this data, we explored the extent to which they had been in contact with the criminal justice system since the previous interview. Contact with the criminal justice system, in the context of our study (parental housing tenure) could be interpreted in a number of ways. First and foremost, it could (and most obviously) indicate engagement in wrongdoing (which would have peaked for the NCDS at around 15-16 in 1973/74, and for the BCS70 slightly later at around 18-19 in 1988/89). Contact with the criminal justice system, however, also represents the consequences of differential policing practices whereby some communities or individuals are subject, over time, to greater levels of surveillance and supervision. The battery of questions asked in 2000 of members of both the BCS70 and NCDS focused on whether they had since the previous interview been:

- moved on by the police,
- stopped and searched by the police,
- let off with a warning by the police,
- arrested and taken to a police station by the police,
- formally cautioned at a police station by the police, and,
- found guilty in a court.

Comparing the tenure groups' experiences of contact with the criminal justice system by cohort provides some striking evidence (Table 4).

**Table 4: Contact with the Criminal Justice System by Cohort and Tenure Trajectories**

	NCDS				BCS70			
	Owners	CH buyers	CH non-buyers	Stat Sig	Owners	CH buyers	CH non-buyers	Stat Sig
Moved on	3	4	4	*	17	20	24	***
Questioned	19	21	19	NS	40	43	40	NS
Warned	13	14	11	NS	27	27	30	NS
Arrested	3	4	5	**	13	15	24	***
Cautioned	3	3	5	***	11	11	20	***
Convicted	4	4	5	NS	10	11	18	***

All figures are %. Chi-Sq tests based on crosstabulation tables. CH = council house.

Starting with the NCDS, it is apparent that very few people, in general, from that cohort had much contact with the CJ. This might be reflective of the period in which the NCDS sample spent their late adolescence (the age at which an individual is most likely to get involved in crime), when crime was lower overall and policing strategies were less focused on PFI targets, as they were from the late 1990s.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it is not clear that there were very strong relationships between tenure types and contact (although the children of council house tenants who did not buy their homes were marginally more likely to be moved on, arrested or cautioned by the police).

For the BCS70 (again see in Table 4), the data suggested that those whose parents had not bought their council house were more likely than those whose parents had or whose parents had bought their homes privately to have been moved on by the police (24% vs. 20% vs. 17%,  $p < .000$ ), to have been arrested and taken to a police station (24% vs. 15% vs. 13%,  $p < .000$ ), to have been formally cautioned at a police station (20% vs. 11% vs. 11%,  $p < .000$ ), and to have been found guilty at court (18% vs. 11% vs. 10%,  $p < .000$ ), suggesting a strong relationship between parental tenure trajectories and offspring involvement in crime. So, amongst the BCS70 cohort, the children of council tenants who did not buy their homes were much more likely to have been arrested and convicted; almost twice as likely as council house buyers or those whose parents owned their homes. In addition to this, the rates of contact appear to have increased dramatically for *all* groups (irrespective of parental tenure trajectory). As such, this suggests that there was a change in policing which a) increased contact with the criminal justice system for *all* people (an issue we return to in the closing section) and b) which appears to have fallen *especially* on those whose parents had not bought their council homes. It may also represent the 'unintended' consequences of increasing residualisation of social housing stock; sales of council homes to sitting tenants under the 'right to buy' scheme and transfers to other landlords (mainly housing associations) left a residualised council sector containing a high proportion of poor-quality housing located in unpopular estates. Access to the public rented sector became very limited and was allocated on various 'housing need' factors (Anderson and Morgan, 1997). Consequently, if BCS70 families were permitted to rent from their local authority, they would often have been placed in the least popular housing in the more deprived areas, potentially alongside increasingly vulnerable residents who met the 'priority need' criteria (Fitzpatrick, Kemp and Klinker, 2000). The layered effects of poor housing and concentrated disadvantage has been linked to crime (Sampson, 2012) repeated victimisation and violent crime (Sutherland, Brunton-Smith and Jackson 2013).

<sup>8</sup> National and local policing frameworks included Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from 1999. This era of scrutiny saw HMIC introduce and publicise direct comparative data (league tables) about target attainment in individual forces. The inevitable outcome of this was a keen desire by forces to avoid being bottom, which meant all staff were under pressure to achieve targets for such things as arrest rates, detection rates and stop and searches (Reiner, 2007).

### 8.3: What is the Relationship Between Homelessness and Contact with the Criminal Justice System?

Starting again with the NCDS, we see clear differences between homelessness and contact with the CJS, such that those who have been homeless up to age 42 are more likely to have been in contact with the police and the courts than those who have not been (Table 5). The same picture remained for the BCS70 cohort members, however the levels of contact with the CJS had increased dramatically for this cohort up to age 30.

**Table 5: Contact with the Criminal Justice System by Cohort and Homelessness**

	NCDS			BCS70		
	Homeless	Never Homeless	Stat Sig	Homeless	Never Homeless	Stat Sig
Moved on	10	4	***	36	18	***
Searched	36	20	***	55	39	***
Warned	21	12	***	42	28	***
Arrested	16	4	***	36	16	***
Cautioned	11	4	***	31	13	***
Convicted	11	5	***	29	12	***

All figures are %. Chi-Siq tests based on crosstabulation tables.

Notably, the data in this table demonstrates that contact with the criminal justice system had increased for *all* members of the the BCS70 cohort (compared to the NCDS). Those who had never been homeless reported higher rates of criminal justice interactions that the requisite population in the NCDS cohort. This suggests that, changes in policing practices and crime patterns may have acted in such a way as to increase the overall chances of *anyone* coming into contact with the criminal justice system; a topic we will return to subsequently.

### 8.4: Tenure, Homelessness and Victimization

What were the relationships between tenure, experiences of homelessness and victimisation? Both the NCDS and the BCS70 cohorts were asked questions (in 2000) about their experiences of violent victimisation (when aged 42 for the NCDS, and which covered the period of their lives from 33 to 42 (1991-2000) and when aged 30 for the BCS70, and which covered the period of their lives when they were 16 to 30 (1986 to 2000)).<sup>9</sup> For the NCDS there is no statistically significant relationship ( $p = .099$ , Table 6), meaning that parental tenure trajectory was unrelated to victimisation.

**Table 6: Tenure Trajectories and Assault aged 33-42 (NCDS, 1991-2000)**

	Owners/Mortgaged	Council Renters who Bought	Council Renters who did not buy	Total

<sup>9</sup> The NCDS and BCS70 cohorts were asked "... have you been seen by a doctor at a hospital or a health care centre for any of these reasons?". Respondents were then offered a wide range of codes, including "A violent assault or mugging", which is the measure we used to operationalise the concept of violent victimisation. No other questions about victimisation were asked in 2000.

Assaulted	59 ( 2%)	8 ( 2%)	73 ( 2%)	140 ( 2%)
Not assaulted	3454 ( 98%)	412 ( 98%)	2933 ( 98%)	6799 ( 98%)
TOTAL	3513 (100%)	420 (100%)	298 (100%)	6939 (100%)

Chi-Sq = 6.394. p = .099.

What is the relationship between homelessness and violent victimisation? Starting with the NCDS, we see that some 10% of those who had been homeless had experienced violent victimisation, compared with 3% of those who had not experienced homelessness (Table 7). The relationship also has a much lower p-value than that for the tenure-victimisation relationship.

**Table 7: Homelessness and Assault aged 33-42 (NCDS, 1991-2000)**

	Homeless	Never Homeless	Total
Assaulted	38 ( 10%)	146 ( 3%)	184 ( 3%)
Not assaulted	333 (90%)	5527 ( 97%)	5860 (97%)
TOTAL	371 (100%)	5673(100%)	6044(100%)

Chi-Sq = 69.386. p = <.000.

Repeating the above analyses on the BCS70 data (Table 8), we find a statistically significant relationship between parental housing tenure status and victimisation for cohort members (p = .001).

**Table 8: Tenure Trajectories and Assault aged 16-30 (BCS70, 1986-2000)**

	Owners/Mortgaged	Council Renters who Bought	Council Renters who did not buy	Total
Assaulted	146 ( 6%)	56 ( 10%)	114 ( 8%)	316 ( 7%)
Not assaulted	2327 ( 94%)	506 ( 90%)	1314 ( 92%)	4147 ( 93%)
TOTAL	2473 (100%)	562 (100%)	1428 (100%)	4463 (100%)

Chi-Sq = 14.078. p = .001.

However, when we looked at the relationship between homelessness and assault victimisation (Table 9), we find a strong positive relationship for the BCS70 cohort. Compared with the NCDS cohort, the percentages of people in the BCS70 cohort experiencing victimisation has increased.

**Table 9: Homelessness and Assault aged 16-30 (BCS70, 1986-2000)**

	Homeless	Never Homeless	Total
Assaulted	97 ( 15%)	517 ( 6%)	614 ( 6%)
Not assaulted	561 ( 85%)	8339 (94%)	8900 (94%)
TOTAL	658 (100%)	8856 (100%)	9514 (100%)

Chi-Sq = 80.430. p = <.000.

What does this suggest? Irrespective of cohort, there are, as one might expect, strong relationships between homelessness and contact with the CJS and violent victimisation (Tables 4 and 5). What *differs*, however, is the relationship between parental tenure and experiences of homelessness. For the NCDS, born in 1958, whose parents were by that time enjoying good housing, either in the private sector in council houses and who started to look for independent living in the early 1980s, there was no major discriminatory relationship between parental tenure and homelessness (recall that the p value was .076, Table 2). There were also weak (or NS) relationships between parental housing tenure and contact with the CJS for the NCDS cohort (Table 4). The relationship between parental tenure and violent victimisation was also non-significant (p = .099, Table 6).

For the BCS70 cohort, however, the relationship between parental housing tenure and homelessness is much stronger ( $p < .000$ , Table 3), as is the relationship between parental tenure trajectory and assault (Table 8). The relationship between homelessness and assault was strong for the BCS70 sample (Table 9). This suggests that the parental tenure-homelessness relationship changed in the period between these two cohorts embarking on the early housing careers. The BCS70 cohort were nine years old when Thatcher was elected in 1979, and 14 at the peak of council house sales. They therefore started to look for their own homes (around 1990-1995) just as council property became harder to access. Before we conclude (with a discussion of what this means, both substantively and theoretically), let us examine some of the other life-outcomes associated with homelessness. This suggests that political power structures (policy changes and legislation) operated in such a way as to drive young people into or towards situations in which they were criminalised.

### **8.5: What Were Some of the other Consequences of Homelessness?**

In order to assess the other consequences of homelessness for those in the two cohorts, we ran a series of crosstabulation tables and t-tests. These suggested that, for the NCDS, the following were consequences of homelessness:

- Self-reported ill health at age 42: whilst 18% of non-homeless people reported ill health, this rose to 28% for those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- Claiming Job Seeker's Allowance at age 42: some 3% of those who had not been homeless were claiming JSA, compared to 7% of those who had been homeless. ( $p = .002$ )
- Satisfaction with accommodation at 42: 7% of those who had not been homeless were dissatisfied with their accommodation. This compared with 15% for those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- Satisfaction with the area they lived in at 42: 10% of those people who had not been homeless were dissatisfied with the area they lived in, compared with 15% of those who had been homeless. ( $p = .001$ )
- General Health Questionnaire (a measure of general mental health) and the Malaise Inventory (a measure of psychiatric morbidity) were both statistically significantly associated with homelessness (those who had been homeless by 42 were more likely to have higher scores on both, indicating greater levels of mental ill-health and psychiatric morbidity). Both  $p < .000$ .
- In terms of the reasons why NCDS cohort members had become homeless, changes in data coding between the data collected at age 23 (1981), age 33 (1991) and age 42 (2000) make direct comparisons difficult. However, when 23, some nine percent of the 759 who had experienced homelessness said they had been unhappy and left their former accommodation, whilst seven percent said that they had been 'made to leave' and three percent said they the accommodation had got too expensive for them. At age 33, some three percent of the 400 who had become homeless said that they had left for reasons related to domestic violence and five percent due to 'friction'. Just over seven percent said that they had become homeless because they had defaulted on their mortgage or the rent had become too expensive. At age 42 11% of the 371 who had been homeless said that this was a result of domestic conflict with their partner, and a further three percent conflict with their parents. Fourteen percent either could not afford their rent or mortgage, or had their their home reposessed or been evicted for some reason.

The same analyses repeated for the BCS70 data suggested almost identical findings:

- Self-reported ill health at age 30: whilst 14% of non-homeless people reported ill health, this rose to 29% for those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- Claiming Job Seeker's Allowance at age 30: some 4% of those who had not been homeless were claiming JSA, compared to 12% of those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- Satisfaction with accommodation at 30: 10% of those who had not been homeless were dissatisfied with their accommodation. This compared with 25% for those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- Satisfaction with the area they lived in at 30: 13% of those people who had not been homeless were dissatisfied with the area they lived in, compared with 23% of those who had been homeless. ( $p < .000$ )
- General Health Questionnaire and the Malaise Inventory were both statistically significantly associated with homelessness (those who had been homeless by 30 were more likely to have higher scores on both, indicating greater levels of mental ill-health and psychiatric morbidity). Both  $p < .000$ .
- In terms of the reasons why they had become homeless at age 30, six percent reported conflict with their partners (lower than the NCDS when aged 42, although this could be due to later marriage rates amongst the BCS70). More BCS70 members said that they had experienced conflict with their parents (some 19%, compared to three percent of the NCDS), whilst 12% (just lower than the NCDS' 14%) had become homeless after being unable to pay their mortgage or rent, or having been evicted or having their home repossessed.

At first glance, this might suggest that little had changed in terms of the relationship between having been homeless and these outcomes. However, as the percentages of cases indicate, what was happening was that the proportion of people who had been homeless and who were dissatisfied with their homes or the areas they lived in, or who were claiming JSA or who had experienced ill-health were all increasing for the BCS70 cohort. The same was true when we looked at the mean differences between the scores on the measures of contact with the CJ, mental health and psychiatric morbidity. For example, the mean difference in terms of the number of times those who had been homeless had been stopped and searched by the police was .46721; when the difference for the BCS70 is examined, this has risen to 1.02343, suggesting an increasing experience of having been stopped and searched amongst the BCS70. In short, the negative outcomes which were associated with homelessness became more commonly associated with homelessness for the BCS70, suggesting a bifurcating process was taking place, whereby those who had experienced homelessness were more likely than the previous generation to have subsequently experienced negative outcomes. Similarly, more of the BCS70 were reporting friction with their parents (in keeping with living at home for longer than the NCDS cohort had, Smith and Ferri, 2003:198). These results chime with other recent work on 'concentrated disadvantage' (Sampson, 2012). Sampson's research found that neighbourhoods characterised by increasingly deprived social and economic conditions are limited in their ability to control or supervise behaviour. This work prompts us to consider neighbourhoods or discrete spaces (such as a housing estate) from a developmental or life-course perspective, since neighbourhoods change over time in ways that can be considered 'trajectories', and that they experience transitions and turning points (Sampson and Laub 1993). From this vantage point the present circumstances of a locale are intricately linked to its 'past' much like an individual's current state is conditional on his or her prior biography. As such, we might reflect on the neighbourhoods occupied by the two cohorts studied herein in a more dynamic context. These temporal dynamics are theoretically important and show how housing policies were compounding

and escalating the negative effects of homelessness over time. By linking macro and the micro processes we can assess the intersection of policy and people.

### **9: Making Sense of Parental Tenure Trajectories, Homelessness and Later Life-Outcomes**

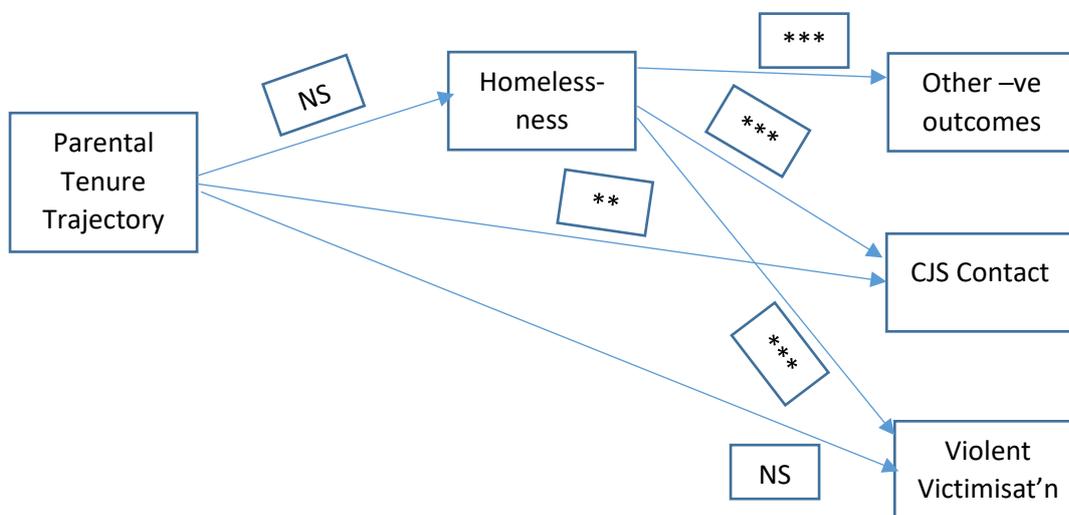
This paper started by asking questions about the extent to which legislative changes may have altered the lives of citizens, how such changes take place, and with which intended and unintended consequences. A further consideration was to explore how long it might be before any distributional changes could be detected, and for how long such changes might shape the lives of any citizens, and in what ways. Using the right to buy legislation of the 1980s, we sought to establish if the Acts associated with this appeared to be part of the story of increasing homelessness in the 1980s and 1990s, and to throw more light on crime- and other-related experiences of those individuals who bought their own council homes, or whose parents bought their council homes. In answering these questions, we have also had to explore, if only in the broadest of senses, what happened to council estates as a result of the sale of council houses. Figures 1a and 1b graphically summarise the changing relationships between parental tenure, children's experiences of homelessness and their contact with the CJS and victimisation.

Our findings have tended to suggest that it was those most vulnerable members of society (young people, leaving home for the first time from lower class families, whose parents could not afford to buy their council homes) who paid the highest price for the policy changes which were initiated in the early-1980s, echoing MacLeavy and Manley's observation that "the same families have experienced the consequences of live in the most disadvantaged communities for multiple generations" (2018:1437). As well as experiencing, for example, increases in their levels of depression in their early- to mid-20s when compared to a cohort 12 years older, those born in the late-1960s and early-1970s appear to have had their life-courses altered (in that they experienced greater levels of homelessness), and especially so if their parents had not had the means to buy their council homes. Homelessness in turn appears to be related to contact with the criminal justice system, and higher rates of violent victimisation, higher rates of unemployment, satisfaction with their homes and neighbourhoods. In short, the right to buy legislation appears to have increased homelessness rates, homelessness led to victimisation (and contact with the criminal justice system) and long term negative outcomes. Although these consequences have always been associated with homelessness (and possibly may always be so) this does not detract from the fact that the BCS70 cohort saw stronger relationships between these variables than was the case for the NCDS.

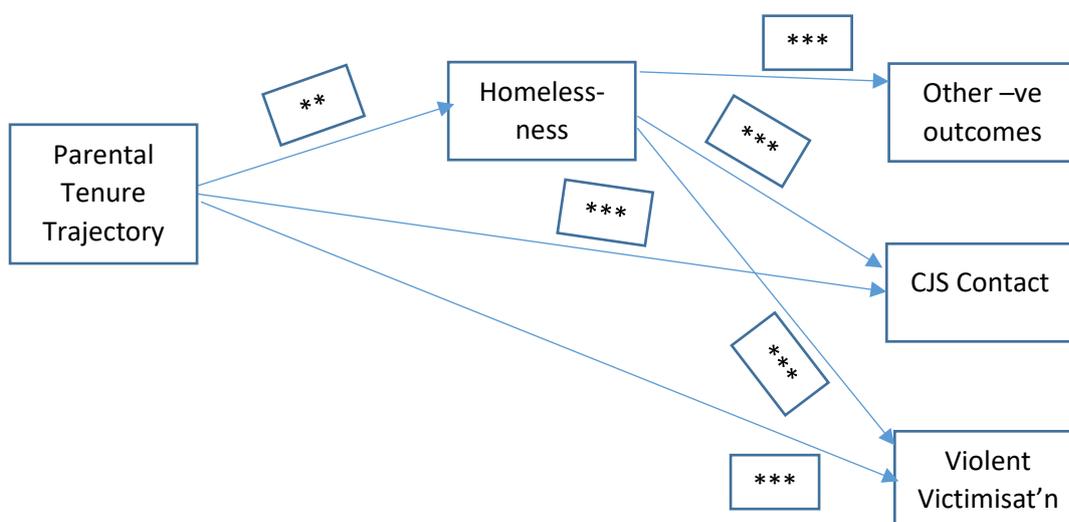
Of course, the right to buy was not the only explanatory factor which needs to be cited; as Carlen reminds us, the synchronised changes in the social security system (especially the 1986 Social Security Act) meant that 'urgent needs payments' (which would have allowed people with no money to book into cheap accommodation) were replaced with repayable loans, whilst one-off grants for clothing and bedding were also replaced with repayable loans, (1996:29). Alongside this, access to income support was removed for those aged 16 and 17, whilst the board and lodgings regulations imposed limits on the length of time those under 25 who were unemployed could remain in bed and breakfast hostels, encouraging them to move home frequently (see also Clapham et al 2016:2021 on more recent changes). But even these too, are just one part of a wider picture of disinvestment in council housing. In the 1970s, in the region of 100,000 council properties were built each year; by 1990 this had dropped to 15,000. After 1980, the existing housing stock was reduced by around 1,500,000 homes as a result of the right to buy, whilst the number of properties available for private renting also halved (Carlen, 1996:29. See also Clapham et al, 2016:2021-2 for an updated review of

both the social and private rented sectors). Alongside this, there was the reduction in men employed outside of the home. In 1965, when they were aged 7, only four percent of the NCDS had an unemployed father at the time of the interview; 10 years later, when the BCS70 were interviewed at age 5, this figure had risen to almost 21%. Men, often the perpetrators of crime, almost always the perpetrators of domestic violence against partners and their children were at home more than had previously been the case, leading to increases in tension and the 'friction' referred to by the BCS70 cohort members. Those young people who got work, or whose parents remained in work, found their ability to buy bigger houses to accommodate 'returning'/'non-leaving' children diminished, as salaries for many were outstripped by the increases in house prices bought on by the fetish for owner occupation. In this respect, our account of the increase in homelessness witnessed during the 1980s suggests that it was social structural causes which were the 'key movers', rather than individual failings.

**Fig1a: Summarising the NCDS Parental Tenure, Homelessness and Crime Outcomes**



**Fig 1b: Summarising the BCS70 Parental Tenure, Homelessness and Crime Outcomes**



In addition to this was the Home Office's desire for police services to more directly tackle offending. In 1994 Michael Howard (then Home Secretary) issued a statutory notice to the police (no. 2678), directing them to tackle offending.<sup>10</sup> Following this, in 1998, Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw issued a further statutory notice (no. 216) which followed the same vein.<sup>11</sup> The motivations for issuing these order was both Howard and Straw's desire to 'get tough' on crime, itself a result of rising crime rates (themselves a result of rises in unemployment and reductions in social security payments, Farrall and Jennings, 2012, Jennings et al, 2012). These had the effect of encouraging the police to arrest 'the usual suspects' (i.e. those disproportionately drawn from the young, males, ethnic minorities, and who spent more time on the streets or who were living on the streets). This started in late-1994 when the criminal justice system in England and Wales was becoming more punitive (Farrall et al 2016a), and the BCS70 cohort members were in their mid-20s, and as such likely to be amongst the targets for policing activities. The NCDS at this stage were in their mid- to late-30s, and less likely to be targeted by the police. As such, those people who were deprived of social housing were also more likely to come in contact with the criminal justice system, which served only to criminalise them as part of a wider 'clamp down' on crime.

Our contribution, has highlighted the ways in which housing policy in the 1980s led to not just a concentration of crime in specific locales (in keeping with Farrall et al, 2016b), but also led to a cohort of people, born some ten years before the policy was enacted, becoming both socially excluded (via being locked out of the housing market) and increasingly targeted by agencies of social control (the police). We therefore reinforce Pierson's claim that "...a conservative government's main impact on the welfare state might be felt a decade or more after it had left office" (2004:88). Reviewing the Thatcher governments' impact on housing, Pierson argues that "...among the losers were those not yet in council housing or in marginal residences who might have hoped eventually to move into better dwellings" (1994:79). Whilst the losses suffered by the losers were abstract (that is, a loss of opportunity, rather than a loss of something more tangible), the consequences of these losses were not; we have found that the BCS70 experienced increased homelessness, greater involvement with the criminal justice system, poorer health, and greater reliance on welfare are hardly abstract. To this Carlen adds involvement in prostitution, drug use, offending and begging

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<sup>10</sup> The wording was: "The objectives for the policing of the areas of all police authorities established under section 3 of the Police Act 1964(2)are—

- (a)to maintain and, if possible, increase the number of detections for violent crimes;
- (b)to increase the number of detections for burglaries of people's homes;
- (c)to target and prevent crimes which are a particular local problem, including drug-related criminality, in partnership with the public and local agencies;
- (d)to provide high visibility policing so as to reassure the public; and
- (e)to respond promptly to emergency calls from the public." This came into force in November 1994.

<sup>11</sup> This came into force in April 1998, and was worded: "The objectives for the policing of the areas of all police authorities established under section 3 of the Police Act 1996 are—

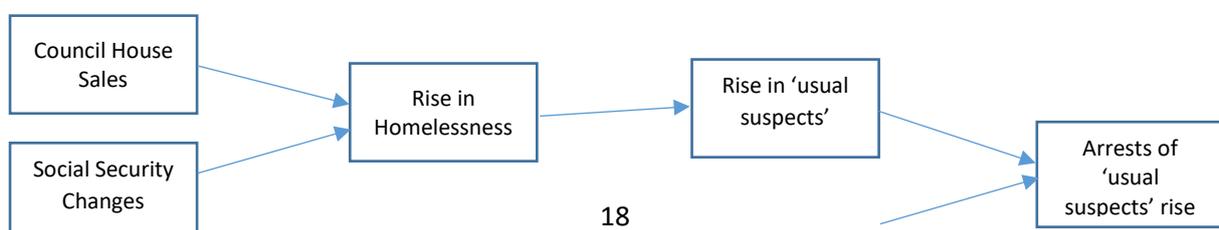
- (a)to deal speedily and effectively with young offenders and to work with other agencies to reduce re-offending;
- (b)to target and reduce local problems of crime and disorder in partnership with local authorities, other local agencies and the public;
- (c)to target drug-related crime in partnership with other local agencies;
- (d)to maintain and, if possible, increase the number of detections for violent crime;
- (e)to increase the number of detections for burglaries of people's homes; and
- (f)to respond promptly to emergency calls from the public." We are grateful to Mike Hough for bringing the role of these two instruments to our attention.

(1996:126-136); all aspects of what she terms 'survivalism'. Having identified such problems future research might look to quantify the likelihood of these effects.

However, the implications of our research go further than this. Given that there is a strong relationship between being arrested and subsequent offending (Farrington, 1977, Farrington et al 1978, McAra and McVie, 2007), it follows that the change in frontline policing such that more people were arrested, could have contributed to the initiation and/or lengthening of criminal careers for those affected. Indeed, studies of the policing of homeless people (e.g. Fooks and Pantazis, 1999) suggest that homeless was indeed criminalised by political discourse (p126), which worked its way into both policing discourses and policing practice. For example, police officers actively sought out homeless people (p142), partly on the basis of the idea that they would be begging, and that passive begging would lead to aggressive begging (p147). Set alongside a wider culture during the late-1990s of 'zero tolerance', this produced a 'clamp down' on the visible homeless (Brogden and Nijhar, 1997). Whilst the police had discretion in terms of who to arrest, it appeared that officers were using this in a way which selected homeless people *into* the criminal justice system, rather than out of it (p143, emphasis added). These processes are underscored by the fact that it is easier to police public rather than private spaces (McConville et al, 1991). That the obvious and easiest targets included young, homeless people means that those whose housing was made more precarious by the 1980 Housing Act, were amongst those, some 15 or so years later, to become the targets for changes in policing policies. In this respect, macro-level social policy changes influence criminal careers and their trajectories.

Our work provides further evidence to support the theory of cascading policy radicalism as put forward by Hay and Farrall (2011). They argue that Thatcherite policy radicalism 'cascaded' through different policy fields. The first fields targeted were those central to the construction of 'a crisis' which demanded immediate action (namely the economy). In addition, were those fields key to the consolidation of a Thatcherite electoral base (housing and the right to buy). Once these had been reformed, attention turned to those policy domains not immediately implicated in the 'crisis' narrative, but which were reformed in order to bring them into line with a Thatcherite instinct (social security and education stand out). However, these processes took a considerable amount of time and effort; translating the Thatcherite instinct into legislation and complex institutional reform was no easy task. From 1987, we witnessed the radical reform of the entire public sector (brought about by the Education Reform Act (1988), NHS reforms, and the Local Government Finance Act (1992)). However, it increasingly became necessary to deal with issues arising as a 'spill over' of the earlier changes in policy domains such as criminal justice. Indeed, as Farrall and Jennings (2012) have demonstrated empirically, increased rates of unemployment and inequality in the 1980s led directly to increases in crime rates, which in turn led to mounting public concern with crime. It is this rise in both crime and public concern which led the government to radicalise its approach to crime (Farrall, Burke and Hay, 2016a). As such, the subsequent radicalisation of criminal justice policy was a consequence of the need to respond to the effects arising from earlier radicalism in other fields. This model is summarised in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Summarising the Cascade Theory of Policy Radicalism with regards to Homelessness**





One of the criticisms of historical institutionalist thinking has been that it has been poor at incorporating the experiences of ‘ordinary people’ into its accounts (Sanders, 2006, Katznelson, 2003). Herein we have shown the effects which macro-level policies can (and did) have on the lives of people. The paper also shows how people can affect and are affected by the decisions and behaviours of others; those parents who chose not to (or, more likely could not afford to) buy their own homes unwittingly helped to place their children on a pathway which led some of them to experience homelessness and all that came with it. In this way, the pathway chosen for the country by the political leadership of the day, became translated into individual-level pathways which helped to shape the life-courses of those born in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Whilst it is wrong to say that these trajectories were automatic or ‘path dependent’ when it comes to housing (Malpass, 2011), for some they would appear to have been ‘roads without exits’.

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