Ahmed Butt 11A3

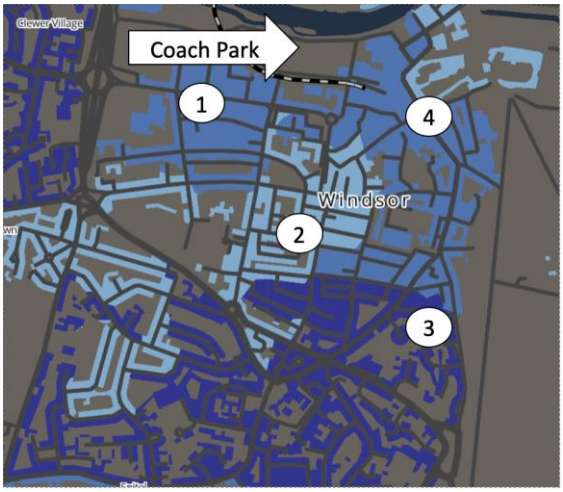
Investigating how Quality of Life varies in Windsor - Geography Write Up

Introduction:

On June 6th 2023, me and my group conducted a human geography field work investigation on how Quality of Life varies in various parts of Windsor.

The 3 main hypotheses were:

1. Quality of life will be highest at site 3, Kings Road, where levels of deprivation are lowest.
2. Quality of life will be highest where there is a higher environmental quality.
3. Quality of life will vary for different groups of people within Windsor.



CDRC Mapmaker: Deprivation Indices (IMD) (English 2019 IMD (E19))

Sample site locations,

1. Arthur Road, inner city, (9th on the IMD)
2. Claremont Road (8th on the IMD)
3. Kings Road (10th on the IMD)
4. Peascod Street and High Street (9th on IMD) (questionnaire only)

We visited 3 sections of Windsor for investigation and 1 final sector exclusive for Questionnaire. The sectors were chosen based upon IMD rating, (Index of Multiple Deprivation). This is shown as per the accompanying image. The index follows that the lower the number, the more deprived a region is. Moving from sites 1 to 4 the environment becomes increasingly more suburban until we reach the CBD of Windsor. The IMD is an example of secondary data we collected, while primary data we collected included a variety of different points such as crime prevention installations, the number of pedestrians and vehicles, the noise count in decibels, number plate surveys to see how recently cars were purchased, and filling out an environmental quality index of the area, relating to quality of the housing, environment, services, and various social factors. We also made some general observations for each site.

There were some risks involved such as slips and trips, managed by wearing sensible shoes and looking where we're going, especially when crossing the road. Interacting with strangers was also another risk so when answering people, we were to answer in groups, and not to follow people who don't want to answer a question. A third risk posed was getting lost, so it was important to stay within the designated area with the group and to be aware of the meeting points and the times at which we needed to be there. This is largely a reason that the variety of our results may have been held back, as the area must be smaller to be easier to supervise and cover in the span of a day, so we were limited to lower deprivation areas throughout the investigation. But despite this there were still noticeable differences between areas.

Methodology:

Data collection method 1 : EQI

Site 1 with a considerably lower EQI as compared to the other two sites, had narrow pavements with little to no separation from the houses, dense smaller terraced housing, and parking space was relegated to the already narrower roads. Interestingly, it seemed to be a lot cleaner and more well maintained, with the area being tidier of litter, and the pavements showing signs of upkeep and investment, earning it the highest environment score. Finally, this site had the lowest social factor score of the three sites by far, with smaller housing, little community spirit and we didn't feel as though we would feel safe walking alone at night. These aspects could be attributed to site 1 being a more industrial area. General observations noted only occasional signs of gentrification, cheaper cramped housing, and a strong smell of vinegar, likely from nearby industry.

Site 2 ultimately had the highest EQI with general observations of semi-detached housing 2-4 stories tall, with wider pavements and clear separation from the pavement by use of front gardens/ garages. However, what seemed to have set it particularly apart were its highest availability of services of all the 3 sites, including access to nearby local schools, good access to shopping, and the best social factors including leisure opportunities, house size and a general feeling of safety within the area (although some of the EQI ratings like this one could be subjective depending on the persons background and situation).

Site 3, while being cleaner, carried a lot of the qualities from Site 2, in fact, with better housing and more outdoor space, however fewer available services led to it losing some score compared to site 2, and some general observations showed the houses to be of a very high quality, with semi-detached and detached houses boasting wide pavements and large gated driveways. They had high signs of gentrification with good paint quality and all houses falling between 2-4 stories tall.

We as a group reached the conclusion that site one had the total EQI score of 26, with site two and three having a total of 40 and 36 respectively. Although it was quite surprising to find the site with the lowest IMD of the 3 to have the highest EQI score, we felt as though it was justified due to the high degree of quality to which the houses were built and maintained, with lots of visible evidence of gentrification, and compared to the other two sites, superior access to services like shopping and education.

Data collection method 2 : Pedestrian count, vehicle count and noise level reading

We collected this data by taking a 5-minute tally of number of pedestrians we see and repeated this 3 times for the site and calculated a mean, and then repeated this for every site. The same

method was used when counting number of vehicles. The noise level was taken 3 times per site and a mean calculated for each site as well.

In site 1, we found that the mean number of vehicles and pedestrians were similarly low, both being 5.6 in 5 minutes. Its noise level in decibels had a mean of 70.6, but also had the highest range of results, of 6 decibels between our lowest and highest readings. This could indicate there can be a variety of results depending on the time and where we are in the site.

Site 2 had an average of 9 pedestrians in 5 minutes, and 6 vehicles in 5 minutes, while its mean decibel level was the same as site 1s. This can be linked to the EQI score, as since public services were a strong point of Site 2, this could correlate to the preference of pedestrians as opposed to vehicles, because services are more available nearer to where people live, so driving a car to go to where you need to go is unnecessary, and walking would be a more viable option. Additionally, this could be linked to the wider more well-lit pavements of site 2 making it easier and safer to travel by foot.

Site 3 has the opposite trend of pedestrians to vehicles, with the mean number of pedestrians being 5.3, but the mean number of vehicles being 8.6, showing a strong preference for travelling by car in the area. This could lead to why site 3 has a mean decibel count higher than the other two sites at 71.6, as more people travelling by vehicle rather than by foot will generate more noise in the environment. The higher number of mean vehicles could benefit an argument that site 3 has the highest QoL because with the highest house prices, the residents are likely to have more expendable income than those in sites 1 and 2, and may be more likely to buy and travel by car to wherever they need to go, an indication that they have a higher quality of life.

Data Collection Method 3 : Number plate survey

Site 1 had a mean car year of around 2015.875 with 32 cars being recorded, site 2 had a mean car year of around 2017.105 with 29 cars being recorded and finally site 3 had a mean car year of around 2014.964 with 28 cars being recorded. These results seem to further indicate that, contrary to the hypothesis 1, site 2 is better off, as more new cars are seen in the site as compared to Kings Road.

Data Collection Method 4 : Crime Prevention Mapping

Crime Prevention Mapping involved counting the number of certain crime prevention methods we can see in use in the site, for example CCTV Cameras, neighbourhood watch signs, burglar alarms, security lights etc.

Site 1 had the least crime prevention methods, site 3 had the second least crime prevention methods, and site 2 had the most crime prevention methods. This could be because of fewer numbers of homes being seen in site 3, as they are more spread out and larger with more private land, so there may be fewer CCTV cameras or burglar alarms needed, or perhaps it is generally a more crime free neighbourhood with less need for crime prevention.

Data Collection Method 5 : Questionnaire

Finally, in the questionnaire conducted in Windsor's CBD, as a group we asked a variety of questions from pedestrians walking around, with half of them being from Windsor, and the other half of them being from other areas of the UK. We found that on average people were quite pleased with the city, with its low crime levels, air pollution and overall happiness (specifically from residents of Windsor) being around the above average range. It was more difficult to draw correlations between income and occupation and these ratings as most people preferred not to say, but it is a reasonable assumption to make that those people who were professionally employed or retired, had a larger amount of disposable income and are able to freely enjoy Windsor with comfortable homes and shopping in the CBD. The majority of people we interviewed were 36 years and older, and in a relationship with a partner, so this could indicate they see Windsor as a suitable place to live for a long time, and with a comfortable environment to perhaps start a family or work close to home, meaning the quality of life would indeed be high in and around these low deprivation areas of Windsor. Finally, when asked to give 3 words to describe Windsor, residents of Windsor overall described it in a more positive light with nobody using any negative words, whereas respondents were slightly more negative, sometimes commenting on its cramped nature.

Linking data back to hypotheses:

To begin with, hypothesis 1, with this data, could be disproved, with the EQI rating yielding highest in Site 2, Claremont Road, rather than Site 1. Furthermore, the highest number of crime prevention methods we saw were in site 2 as well (although this could be because site 2 has a higher level of crime compared to site 1 meaning it has more of a need for these methods), and finally as per data collection method 3, site 2 had the largest numbers of new cars, indicating residents of the area have a higher level of disposable income from better quality lifestyles to afford luxuries such as newer, more expensive model cars. So, in summary Site 2 appears to have the highest QoL due to more available services, higher financial security, good housing quality and a well-maintained environment.

Hypothesis 2 is backed up by the EQI as we can determine site 2 has the highest quality of life, and the highest score on the environmental quality index as well.

Hypothesis 3 is true as we can see even within the lower deprivation index scores there is some variation of QoL, with the cramped, terraced houses of the more industrial site 1, returning lower QoL as compared to sites 2 and 3, and within Windsor's CBD and a variation in results for how people rate Windsor's crime and pollution levels in the questionnaire. And lastly a variation in results for people who live in Windsor, and people who live outside of Windsor when answering the questionnaire, showing Windsor residents are more likely to talk favourably of the city whereas people from outside of Windsor have a slightly higher tendency to view it negatively.

Presentation:

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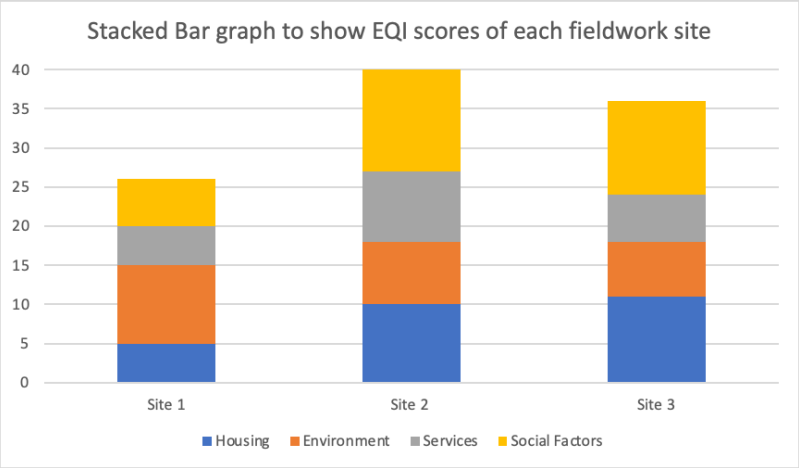

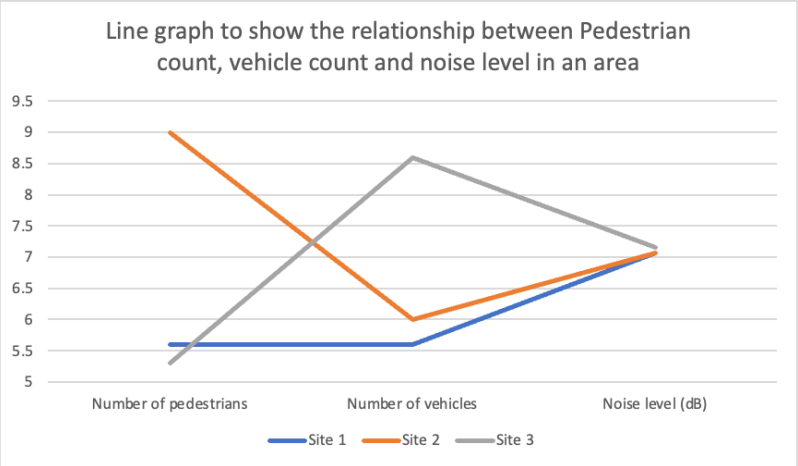

(NOTE: In this line graph, the x axis starts from 5, shows the average number of pedestrians and cars, and shows the average decibel level divided by 10 all to better compare the 3 elements on the same graph, the real noise levels are 70.6, 70.6 and 71.6 for sites 1, 2 and 3 respectively)

Graph one shows that generally, site 2 has the highest EQI score of all the sites, boasting the best services score, and social factors score, of 9 and 13. The services one creating the most difference as it is 3 higher than site 3s score and 4 higher than site 1s score. However, it is not the highest in every category, and these exceptions are housing where its 1 less than site 3s score of 11 and environment where it is 2 less than site 1s score of 10.

Graph two shows that site 1s average number of both pedestrians and vehicles leads to a quieter noise level, that site 2s high number of pedestrians but low number of vehicles also has led to a quieter noise level, but site 3s high number of vehicles and very low number of pedestrians has led to a higher noise level, so we can conclude that on the whole a higher number of vehicles will lead to a higher noise level, and pedestrian count is less likely to affect this statistic, as site 2 had a considerably higher number of pedestrians than site 1 but yielded the same average noise reading.

Conclusion:

Hypothesis 1: Quality of life will be highest at site 3, Kings Road, where levels of deprivation are lowest.

This may be true on the basis that residents of site 3 clearly have a higher disposable income to afford their detached housing with spacious gated driveways, with a large park being available

nearby. However, site 2 with increased numbers of safety features, less noise pollution and access to services while still maintaining good quality housing with multiple floors makes it seem more suitable to have the highest quality of life. So, this hypothesis could be argued for site 2 or site 3, but personally I would disagree with the hypothesis, based on site 2s higher level of security features and services that are available to the entire community rather than just members of the community with a higher disposable income, which site 1 lacks.

Hypothesis 2: Quality of life will be highest where there is a higher environmental quality.

This hypothesis is true as site 2, which we ruled to have the highest QoL also has the highest EQI score of all the 3 sites. However, the calculation of our EQI scores depends largely on our observations of the area we were in, and could be subjective depending on one person's opinion of what makes a good or bad house etc. So, while I agree with this hypothesis there is still a margin for human error in the findings specifically relating to the EQI. But regardless of this in my opinion site 2 would still have a high EQI rating and meet this criteria.

Hypothesis 3: Quality of life will vary for different groups of people within Windsor.

This hypothesis is true as we can infer from our questionnaire that people who live in Windsor as opposed to outside Windsor look at the city more favourably, and additionally, it is evident that people who are employed with more disposable income will have a better Quality of Life within Windsor, as they will be able to afford the higher quality housing and environment offered by sites 2 and 3, whereas people who are less rich will have to live in the poorer quality, terraced housing in the more industrial site 1.

Evaluation

Finally, I would posit that our data collection is quite thorough and reliable but has room for improvement and does still present room for human error. We divided roles well in the group for what to look out for, but it is still possible to leave certain things unnoticed and misrepresent an aspect of the site, but by conferring with each other and exchanging opinions we minimised the chance of this happening.