

**Liveable Places: Housing Biographies in a Manchester  
Neighbourhood**

**A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree  
of  
PhD  
in the Faculty of Humanities**

**Dawn Nicola Cole**

**School of Education, Environment and Development**

**2016**

## Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Contents .....   | 2   |
| Figures.....   | 4   |
| Abstract .....   | 5   |
| Acknowledgements .....   | 6   |
| Declaration .....  | 7   |
| Copyright Statement .....  | 7   |
| 1 A Place less Ordinary .....  | 8   |
| 1.1 Introduction .....   | 8   |
| 1.2 Residence matters .....  | 10  |
| 1.3 Taking liveable place for granted .....                                | 13  |
| 1.4 Research questions and the contribution of the research.....           | 17  |
| 1.5 Research area.....   | 22  |
| 1.6 Structure of the thesis .....  | 26  |
| 2. Revealing Liveable Place.....   | 36  |
| 2.1 Introduction .....   | 36  |
| 2.2 Rational man: a utilitarian approach to work, home and in-between..... | 38  |
| 2.3 Rational man: approaching the decision.....                            | 42  |
| 2.4 The life course: pathways of advantage and disadvantage.....           | 46  |
| 2.5 The house as (more than) home.....                                     | 51  |
| 2.6 The household, space-time constraints and managing everyday life ..... | 58  |
| 2.7 Linked lives: home and community .....                                 | 62  |
| 2.8 Conclusion.....  | 67  |
| 3. Researching Liveable Place .....  | 73  |
| 3.1 Introduction .....   | 73  |
| 3.2 A housing biography approach.....                                      | 74  |
| 3.3 Research Design .....  | 77  |
| 3.4 Chorlton: An Insider-Outsider View .....                               | 81  |
| 3.5 Interviewing Chorlton .....  | 87  |
| 3.6 Data Analysis .....  | 100 |

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 3.7 | Conclusion.....  | 101 |
| 4.  | Performing Residence.....  | 103 |
| 4.1 | Introduction .....   | 103 |
| 4.2 | Learning what home looks like .....  | 107 |
| 4.3 | Birds of a feather flock together: a place called home amongst people like us..... | 116 |
| 4.4 | Creating Chorlton .....  | 130 |
| 4.5 | Location, location, location ? Testing preferences .....                           | 140 |
| 4.6 | Conclusion.....  | 149 |
| 5.  | Routes to Belonging.....   | 152 |
| 5.1 | Introduction .....   | 152 |
| 5.2 | Arrival stories: personalised information and finding a place to live .....        | 154 |
| 5.3 | Chorlton as imagined space: the search for community.....                          | 171 |
| 5.4 | Mobility ... and un-reflexive immobility as search behaviour .....                 | 182 |
| 5.5 | Conclusion.....  | 194 |
| 6.  | Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood .....   | 197 |
| 6.1 | Introduction .....   | 197 |
| 6.2 | Lifecourse, infrastructure and managing time-space constraint.....                 | 200 |
| 6.3 | Habitus as a dynamic concept: families and the changing appeal of Chorlton .....   | 205 |
| 6.4 | Househunting and women in the 21st century .....                                   | 219 |
| 6.5 | Conclusion.....  | 226 |
| 7   | Conclusion .....   | 230 |
| 7.1 | Introduction .....   | 230 |
| 7.2 | Summary of the Research.....   | 232 |
| 7.3 | Discussion .....   | 236 |
| 8.  | Appendix 1 – Respondent Biographies .....  | 247 |
| 9.  | Appendix 2 – Socio-Economic Analysis .....   | 254 |
| 9.1 | Ward Profiles.....   | 254 |
| 9.2 | Socio-economic change in Chorlton – Census Profiles .....                          | 257 |
| 10. | Appendix 3 – Biographical Data Collection Form .....                               | 260 |
| 11. | Bibliography .....   | 263 |

Word Count: 83,756

## Figures

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1.1: Wider Greater Manchester Housing Market .....  | 29  |
| Figure 1.2: Chorlton in South Manchester .....   | 30  |
| Figure 1.3: Map of Chorlton .....  | 31  |
| Figure 1.4: Chorlton's Amenity Value .....   | 32  |
| Figure 1.5: Two Sides of the Same Coin - Chorlton's Upmarket Retail Offer .....                              | 33  |
| Figure 1.6: Chorlton's Day to Day Retail Offer .....   | 34  |
| Figure 1.7: Chorlton's varied housing stock .....  | 35  |
| Figure 3.1: Respondent Characteristics.....  | 92  |
| Figure 4.1: % Employed in Industry Sector (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford).....                               | 125 |
| Figure 4.2: % Residents in NS-Sec Categories (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford).....                            | 126 |
| Figure 4.3: Highest Level of Qualification (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford) .....                             | 127 |
| Figure 4.4: The 'limits' of Chorlton.....  | 145 |
| Figure 5.1: Chorlton Student Trail .....   | 160 |
| Figure 5.2: Building up, not moving out.....   | 188 |
| Figure 6.1: The Local Circuit of Education .....   | 212 |
| Figure 6.2: Age Profile of Residents 1981-2011. ....   | 213 |
| Figure 6.3: Households with Dependent Children 1981-2011.....  | 214 |
| Figure 6.4: Performance of Local Primary Schools at end of Key Stage 2 vs National<br>Average over Time..... | 215 |
| Figure 6.5: Performance of Local Schools at GCSE vs National Average.....                                    | 216 |
| Figure 6.6: Family friendly bars in Chorlton .....   | 218 |
| Figure 9.1: SEG Group at 1981 Census .....   | 257 |
| Figure 9.2: NS-SEC Group at 2011 Census.....   | 258 |
| Figure 9.3: Highest level of qualification at 2001 and 2011 .....  | 259 |

## **Abstract**

**The University of Manchester**

**Dawn Nicola Cole**

**PhD**

**Liveable Places: Housing Biographies in a Manchester Neighbourhood**

**January 2016**

This thesis explores how individuals and households experience the places in which they live and examines the potential impact of those places on outcomes across a range of life careers. Residential neighbourhoods have been variously framed as sites of personal expression or alternatively as locations of multiple deprivation that limit the life chances of the local population. This thesis however, argues that the limited framework within which existing studies of housing and residential choice are developed provides only a partial account of the complex and multidimensional nature of the relationship people have with the places in which they live. It addresses this gap by drawing on a wide range of theoretical ideas and by moving away from the deficit model of housing that dominates much academic work. In doing so it opens up the subject to scrutiny from a variety of perspectives and lays bare the varied and competing influences on decisions about housing. Use of quantitative information in the form of detailed housing biographies addresses a gap in existing knowledge by placing housing decisions in the context of past experience and other life careers. The introduction of qualitative techniques to a discipline dominated to date by large scale surveys supplements this evidence with the rich, nuanced data of personal experience.

Three key elements of housing practices are identified, demonstrating the extent to which they are inextricably interconnected with a range of other life careers. Despite the recent ascendancy within geography of a relational sense of place at the expense of the territorial, both are seen to be important. Savage et al's (2005) concept of *elective belonging* is clearly identified as residents construct a narrative of *fit* between self and neighbourhood. Multiple strategies of *social distinction* are observed, each of which serves to transform the house and the neighbourhood into a *home*. Secondly notions of community remain an essential element of residents' sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. The research reveals highly focussed personal networks that serve to produce and sustain location specific capital. An *un-reflexive* immobility is the result, where settled households perceive little need to consider residential alternatives. Finally, the physical and social infrastructure provided by the neighbourhood is identified as an important means of mediating the demands of home, work and childrearing. As such women, as primary care-givers, show greater investment than male partners in the 'right' residential choice.

The thesis reveals liveable place to be complex and multifaceted, difficult to reduce to a simple economic or social variable. Whilst there are constant characteristics which appeal across the social scale, it highlights divergent experiences according to class, gender and life course stage. Choices and outcomes are embedded in social structures so that the research demonstrates the on-going impact of *liveable place* in the accumulation of social, cultural and economic capital to those who live there. Whilst *liveable place* is seen to mean different things according to class, gender and age, those trapped in neighbourhoods they do not consider liveable are potentially excluded from this accumulation.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost thanks should go to my long suffering family who have put up with my disappearing in front of the computer for hours at a time over this last six and a half years. In particular to my husband Neil, who may have found incomprehensible both the content of this research and my desire to carry it out, but who has nevertheless manfully contributed to its proofreading.

Thanks to Kevin Ward and Mark Jayne as my supervisory team for their always supportive comments as they sought to train someone in the basics of a discipline not studied since 'O-Level' in 1986. I can honestly say I've thoroughly enjoyed each supervisory experience we've had over a coffee in *Battery Park*. I should also like to extend my gratitude to the owners of the cafe for the comfortable and conducive nature of their back room which also provided the site for much of the research fieldwork, whether or not the staff were aware at the time. There, amongst other places, numerous local people gave up both their time and their life stories to participate in the research. I often felt I gave so little in return and my heartfelt thanks goes to them.

A particular acknowledgement goes to those with whom I've developed my own narrative of belonging in the Chorlton community. Especially to Emma Liggins, Elana Jowell, Ian McHugh, Sheila and Kenneth Whittles, Pat Cole and all the others who've provided the practical, unpaid support on which women in particular rely as they negotiate the time-space constraints of everyday life. The simple fact of being there to take the kids to school, entertain them in the holidays or provide tea at short notice has been of incalculable value.

Lastly I need to mention the contribution of Sir Eric Pickles. Without his single-minded determination to reduce the extent and scope of local government in England I would not have been able to complete this research. The financial support provided by a redundancy payment, coupled with the time suddenly made available to carry out the research, meant that I no longer needed to juggle a PhD with a full time job and three small children. My sanity, and that of my family, was thus saved.

*For Neil, Ellie, Ruby and Tom*

## Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning

## Copyright Statement

- i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made **only** in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
- iv. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=487>), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations>) and in The University’s policy on Presentation of Theses

## **1 A Place less Ordinary**

### **1.1 Introduction**

... social theory, I suggest, should be concerned first and foremost with reworking conceptions of human being and human doing, social reproduction and social transformation (Giddens, 1984, p.xx).

For amid the Ridley Scott images of world cities, the writing about skyscraper fortresses, the Baudrillard visions of hyperspace ... most people actually still live in places like Harlesden or West Brom. Much of life for many people, even in the heart of the first world, still consists of waiting in a bus-shelter with your shopping for a bus that never comes (Massey, 1994, p.163).

This is a study about housing and neighbourhoods and the relationship people have with them. It stems from work I carried out managing the progress of a housing regeneration programme in Oldham and Rochdale in the first years of the twenty-first century. Housing Market Renewal (HMR) was designed to restructure the nature of housing in the towns with a view to creating high quality, mixed income neighbourhoods which would transform the image and conditions of both boroughs (Oldham Rochdale Partners in Action, 2005). Primarily a renewal project which prioritised physical intervention, it followed in a long tradition of similar activity in these neighbourhoods, albeit this time on a larger scale. Private sector properties were scheduled for improvement works where those across the road had undergone the same treatment ten years earlier. Low quality 'council housing', less than forty years old was demolished in favour of replacement apartments or houses built by housing associations. The need for repetitive intervention in these low economic value neighbourhoods made me reflect on the nature of residential locations and on what makes a popular or a 'successful' neighbourhood. The ongoing failure of physical intervention to deliver a permanent solution pointed at other underlying influences which state-directed activity had so far failed to address. It also made me reflect on the role of residential neighbourhoods in supporting the performance of everyday activity. For most households within the HMR area, as for many others, the neighbourhood had gone virtually unheeded until it came under threat. It was only at this point that campaigns to preserve 'homes' and 'neighbourhoods' were



initiated as residents fought to remain. Others took the financial lifeline they felt they were being offered and ‘got out’ as quickly as possible.

There are two quotations at the head of this chapter, each of which reflects a key understanding within which this thesis has been developed. In the first, Giddens (1984) makes a plea for investigation into the operation of the everyday human world. In the second, Massey (1994) emphasises the continued importance of the local in defining that everyday experience, despite the tumultuous social changes which appear to be taking place around it. It is the contention of this thesis, that local, and particularly local residential, place matters. It matters because, as Lefebvre (1961) points out, individuals dwell in everyday life. It is within the trivialities of *residual space* that the essence of human existence can be discerned. Equally, as Massey highlights, residential neighbourhoods are key locations where that everyday existence takes place. Some people are lucky enough to be in a position to exercise a degree of choice as to where they live. Others are forced by social and financial constraint to occupy a less than ideal location. However, from the moment we get out of bed in the morning, through the daily commute, the school run, buying a pint of milk or sitting in the garden to relax at the end of the day, residential neighbourhoods are a key site of human activity and interaction.

The next section addresses the issues raised by Giddens and Massey in more detail, showing how they frame the terms of reference for the research. Having established the importance of the settings within which everyday life is performed, the chapter then goes on to look at how academic study has traditionally approached the subject residential choice and residential neighbourhoods. It argues that there has been a tradition of ‘fetishising the margin’ (Hopkins and Pain, 2007, p.287) which neglects the variety of ‘ordinary’ experience. Better understanding of a wider variety of residential locations in contrast has the potential to provide valuable insight across the social and physical spectrum. This sets the context for the research questions which are established in the following section before the chapter moves on to introduce the research area. Finally, it closes by outlining the format of the remainder of the thesis.

## 1.2 Residence matters

Lefebvre defined everyday life as the foundation of ‘illusion and truth, power and helplessness; the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control’ (1961, p.40). As such it is the space in which all life occurs, shared by everyone regardless of social class. For Giddens (1984) similarly, routine and the locales of everyday relations become ‘settings of interaction’ (p.xxv) where the serial nature of everyday encounters reveals everything about human nature and human existence. As Ellegard (1999) points out, the activities which constitute ‘everyday life’ have an underlying structure driven both by individual rhythm and by social constraints. The catalogue of largely un-reflexive, habitual performances which characterise everyday life is therefore shaped by both individual dispositions and common understandings as to how activities should be performed. Edensor (2007) shows for example how even the seemingly exotic practices of tourism draw subconsciously on culturally coded social experience. Despite the extraordinary surroundings, he argues that tourists continue to deliver habitual, unreflexive performances informed by collective understanding of what is ‘appropriate’ in the circumstances. However, the repetitious routines of daily life are also reflective of cultural communities, shaped by social class, ethnicity, gender and cultural heritage so that individual experience is undeniably differentiated (Giddens, 1984). Within this context, the seeming mundanities of work, leisure and private life are as important subjects of study as the exceptional, the marginal and the esoteric for what they reveal about the complex nature of social relations.

But the quotidian is not merely reflective of social norms; it is also constitutive of them. Constantly mutating and creating as they come into contact with novel ways of being, daily routines are capable of generating new ways of working and experiencing social interaction (Edensor, 2007). Hägerstrand (1967) for instance shows how innovation takes place as a spatio-temporal process with practical observation and personal communication serving as powerful tools of gradual change. As such human societies are formed by the continuous process of individuals performing micro-level activities to live their everyday lives. To understand that micro-level activity is to reveal the basic structure of society (Hägerstrand, 1967; Ellegard, 1999). Jarvis et al (2001) illustrate this within the context of residential form. By analysing the largely routinized activities

contained within the ‘black box’ of the household they show how the primacy given to the private car within modern society is to be understood through the time-space constraint intrinsically embedded into household management routines. Despite widespread subscription to principles of environmentalism, households find the car essential to successfully mediate the competing public and private fields of work, home, education and leisure. Similarly, Butler and Robson (2001; 2003a), in their study of gentrification in inner London, point to micro-level differences in the deployment of social capital which have had a real physical impact on the shape of the city. In both of these examples, the routinised performance of daily activity, shaped by social and cultural norms, is seen to have implications beyond the household (Jarvis, 1999; 2003). To analyse daily rhythms and everyday activity therefore is to make the otherwise unremarkable transactions, interactions and negotiations of everyday life tangible (Lefebvre, 2004).

This emphasis on the routine, the quotidian and the ordinary brings the role of the local and of local place to the fore. This does not mean that the thesis falls into Purcell and Brown’s (2005) ‘local trap’ and the local is not necessarily equated with the ‘good’ at the expense of any other scale<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, as the opening quotation from Massey (1994) highlights, everyday activity takes place largely in the context of personalised interactions within a relatively limited localised geography; perhaps indeed whilst standing at a bus stop in Harlesden or West Brom. Although the scale and definition of the city and the neighbourhood remain imprecise, they continue to characterize the majority quotidian experience of place as individuals move between home, work, school, shopping or leisure on a daily basis (Purcell and Brown, 2005; Orford and Leigh, 2013). Yet this understanding of the relevance of the local is set against notions of globalisation where the rise of global economic capital is widely believed to have signalled the death of spatialised communities. The intense spatial upheaval and the time-space compression brought about by near instantaneous communications and transfer of information around the globe is held to have destroyed understandings of community and locality (Massey, 1994). Harvey’s (1987) engagement with the concept

---

<sup>1</sup> Purcell and Brown argue that scales and scalar arrangements are socially constructed. No scale has specific inherent qualities and each must be engaged with through a critical analysis of the strategies of the actors involved. By privileging local scale, this thesis examines the micro-rhythms of daily routine which drive decisions about where to live. This does not mean however, that macro-economic and other influences are unimportant.

of place for instance is purely an economic one, constructed through capitalism. Since place is fixed (relatively speaking) it is in constant tension with mobile capital, resulting in a continued cycle of uneven development. Within Harvey's understanding, the export of global capital around the world has given rise to the growth of a superficial, transient and rootless culture where everywhere comes to look the same. Similarly, Giddens (1991, p.2) identifies a 'time-space distancing' in modern day relations where social practices have become detached from face to face communication and are instead 'stretched' across ever greater distances. Sennett (1998) points in turn to increasing demand for labour market flexibility where the resultant lack of security has given rise to individual alienation, dislocation and disorientation. Notions of single, coherent communities are therefore set against a supposed contemporary experience of fragmentation and lack of identity.

However, others point to an alternative future for territorial communities where people in local settings can successfully confront global capital and in turn initiate more equitable growth patterns (DePhilipis, 2004). Both Tomaney (2014; 2015) and Devine-Wright (2015) point out that neighbourhood and region continue to matter in the formation of identity. Through the medium of art and literature, Tomaney (2013) demonstrates how the culture of the local continues to provide a moral foundation for wider human society in the face of cosmopolitanism. Savage et al's (2005) exploration of the nature of belonging in a global world shows 'globalisation on the ground' (p.ix) to be anchored in personal identity derived from a powerful relationship with local residential properties and neighbourhoods. Butler and Robson (2003a) in turn theorise inner London's gentrification as a middle class coping strategy. Physical space shared with like-minded individuals is conceived as a defensive structure to buffer its inhabitants against the worst effects of the global economy. Identity and belonging therefore continue to have resonance. However, this does not mean that physical communities are to be seen only as romanticised escapes from the dynamic of real life. Nor are they sources of unproblematic or cohesive identity for people isolated from the rest of society (Bell and Newby, 1971; Voydanoff, 2001). Massey's (1994; 2005) progressive and global view of place as the site of multiple identities and histories provides one key means of understanding the relevance of local neighbourhoods, cities or even regions in the context of globalised relationships. Time-space compression has seen increased movement and communication between places, in turn engendering

‘stretched out’ social relations, which have brought about new cultural influences to be absorbed into existing traditions (Massey, 1994, p.146). Similarly, Tuan (1979) identifies how practices of negotiation import cultural and social values from elsewhere to mould place identities which are continually in production. Attachment and belonging therefore may draw as much on relationships to other places as they do on an uncritical and exclusionary understanding of ‘heritage’ (Tomaney, 2013).

Even within a globalised world therefore, the local neighbourhood, city or suburb continue to matter as the location for the performance of everyday life. They are the geographical context for the mediation of a range of physical, social and economic processes. This thesis focuses on one particular element of this; the places where we live. Successive governments have placed considerable emphasis on high quality *liveable place* as an important component of successful social reproductive practices (ODPM, 2003; DCLG, 2012b). The interventions pursued as part of the HMR programme in Oldham and Rochdale were made with the intention of creating attractive places to live which would play a wider role in the economic regeneration of these former mill towns (Oldham Rochdale Partners in Action, 2005). However, the thesis will argue that academic research is overly focussed on a ‘deficit’ model of housing which unhelpfully ignores the internal dynamics of a wider variety of residential neighbourhoods. It will affirm that further investigation into what ‘works’ will contribute to wider understanding about how residents interact with the places in which they live and that the outcomes will be relevant across the full range of housing locations, deprived or otherwise.

### **1.3 Taking liveable place for granted**

Hopkins and Pain (2007) point out that the focus of academic studies is most often on the margins, on difference, or even failure. They identify for example how the study of race tends to ignore ‘whiteness’ at the expense of other subject groups, that research on gender is primarily concerned with women and how that on sexuality is largely uninterested in heterosexuality. What the authors (p.287) term a ‘tradition of fetishising the margin and ignoring the centre’ also applies to the study of residential housing and neighbourhoods. Where residents express satisfaction with where they live or where housing is in demand, this often falls within the realm of the *taken for granted*.

Relatively few studies are devoted to exploring the popularity of particular neighbourhoods and Sweet, Swisher and Moen's study of up-state New York remains one of the few exceptions (Moen et al, 2001; Swisher et al, 2004; Sweet et al, 2005). Work by Jarvis et al (2001), Savage et al (2005) and Allen et al (2007), whilst not directly addressing liveable place, has also shed valuable light on why some neighbourhoods are particularly in demand. However, it is difficult to disagree with Ehn and Lofgren (2010, p.99) as they emphasise the 'invisibility' of the routine 'rarely noticed or reflected upon.' A perusal of the issue of *Housing Studies* current at the time of writing (2015, vol 30, issue 1) reveals studies devoted to problematic relationships with the places where we live. The eight articles examine perceptions of renters as a threat to neighbourhood safety, use of social media in deprived neighbourhoods, homelessness prevention, the impact of the economic downturn on individual capacity to make housing choices, racial segregation in public housing, neighbourhood nuisance and criminal behaviour, care leavers' experiences of home and the failure of mixed tenure communities to deal with the impact of concentrated poverty.

Very real problems are of course addressed within such research and funding is frequently dependent on meeting a perceived policy need. However, a significant element of the population has a different experience of housing. Deprivation continues to be largely an urban phenomenon, whereas almost eighty percent of the UK population lives in areas that can be classified as suburban locations (Boland and Simpson, 2007; DCLG, 2012a). In fact Walks points out that much of the urban population across the developed and developing world now lives in the suburbs of the new, dispersed city and that "Suburbanism" would thus appear to have become the dominant mode of urban existence' (2013, p.1471). Despite the recent growth in city centre living prompted by both young professional gentrifiers and an influx of capital investment, typical suburban properties with off-road parking and gardens continue to be an important element of the UK housing stock. Over 50% of England and Wales' population at the 2011 census lived in detached or semi-detached properties. Similarly, despite falling from its peak of over 70% in 1993, the aggregate home ownership rate in England in 2009/10 still stood at 67.4% (Meen and Meen, 2013). A significant proportion of the UK population continue grow up within a paradigm of home ownership where their parents own their own homes and their peers aspire to do the same (Saunders, 1990; Wagner and Mulder, 2000).

Norms about home ownership in particular appear to be particularly strongly entrenched, constituted as they have been by the power of economic wealth and cultural capital (Saunders, 1990). As Ball (2003) illustrates, the middle classes represent themselves as moral subjects so their concerns tend to become universal ones. As opinion formers in the media and with a particular propensity to vote, their attitudes and beliefs are both more likely to be publically disseminated and to attract the attention of politicians. Ball (2003) for instance accuses governments of formulating education policy within a framework that reflects middle class anxieties about ‘standards’ and that is primarily concerned with satisfying their interests. Similarly, state housing interventions, from the sale of council housing to more recent ‘help to buy’ policies consistently reflect a particular relationship with nation and capitalism that places investment in property at the heart of creating a stable society (Forrest and Hirayama, 2015). Various seen as a means of strengthening families and citizenship, of enabling people to have greater control and exercise more responsibility over their living environment, and of stabilising neighbourhoods through a greater commitment to community, middle class representations of housing permeate government policy (Rohe et al, 2013). Home ownership has become established as ‘ordinary’ as structural constraints in the supply of alternatives have limited preferences. Government antipathy towards social housing, lack of finance for self-build or co-housing and ongoing state support for volume house builders, all conspire to focus aspirations towards home ownership (Beer and Faulkner, 2009; Rohe et al, 2013; Clapham et al, 2014). However, norms are of course dynamic. Increasingly the purchase of a property is becoming dependent on inherited wealth and parental gifts as the incomes of young people are becoming progressively more precarious. As a result it is likely that the entrenched cultural persistence of a ‘property owning demoncracy’ will wane over time.

Nevertheless, in the same way that Robinson (2003) bemoans the relegation of the ‘developing’ or ‘third’ world to the status of theoretical exception, this thesis argues that research into a variety of housing choices opens up the possibility for greater understanding of the dynamics of community formation across the social scale. As Sweet et al (2005, p.604) highlight in the context of their research:

Because most studies have focused on a deficit model of community, little is know (sic) about “the good” community, the type of residential environments

contrasted with studies of urban decay. Because our research focussed on middle-class families living in communities of their own choosing, we were able to investigate the stable community structures and positive forms of encounter that facilitate family functioning.

The 'ordinary' is therefore important precisely because it encompasses a range of experiences, including both 'successful' and 'failing' neighbourhoods. There is considerable evidence to show that the underlying needs and wants of the poorest and the newly arrived do not diverge substantially from those with more economic resources. Kearns and Parkes (2003) for instance show how residents in poor areas respond to poor neighbourhood conditions in the same way as the general population, citing the search for 'better' homes in 'better' neighbourhoods as important motivations in relocation. Whilst some differences have been identified in the housing choices of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, other fundamental similarities with the general population prevail. A preference amongst immigrants for remaining close to the cultural amenities and safety in numbers represented by existing settlements has long been recognized for example (Peach, 1998; 2000). Sager (2012) however, points to levels of income and educational attainment as equally important in explaining much racial residential sorting. Similarly, issues such as neighbourhood cohesion and safety are important for neighbourhood satisfaction amongst both minority and majority populations whilst others have identified an inclination to live alongside 'people like us' amongst a range of social groups (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Southerton, 2002; Osborne et al, 2012).

Priorities and preferences are therefore by no means uniform across the social scale, but there are considerable underlying commonalities. As Robinson (2003) points out, an understanding of the urban environment built on binaries of 'success' and 'failure' leads to the closure of alternative possibilities. Each experience deserves rather to be considered within the same field of analysis to create an understanding of each as distinctive and unique. Similarly, Jacobs (2012) criticises work on urban policy for its overly excessive focus on the neo-liberal project which overlooks alternative destinies. This research then sits within a long-standing feminist tradition which demands that 'academic inquiry should be in deep, sustained conversation with those making the city' (Derickson, 2015, p.651). It does this on the basis that capitalist urbanisation processes



function as much at the scale of the home and the body as they do at the state and the planet. By moving away from an interpretation of place which locates it as nothing more than a node within a hyper-networked global world, the thesis reveals the diverse ways in which tactics of survival are played out across ordinary terrains of habitation (Roy, 2011). In this way urban places come to be seen as part of a progressive effort by residents to construct a place in the city (Lombard, 2013)

‘Ordinary’ neighbourhoods are therefore everywhere and encompass multiple influences and a variety of experience. Robinson (2013) theorises the urban as crosscut by intricate connections which facilitate the transmission of knowledge and understanding. She points out how extended ties shape place-specific social, political and economic relations to ensure that each urban location is ‘embedded in multiple elsewheres’ (Mbembe and Nuttall, p.348). In this sense the world is in Chorlton (the fieldwork location for this research) and Chorlton is in the world. Neighbourhoods like it exist in most large UK cities as the middle classes move into inner urban neighbourhoods and former residents are pushed into more marginal locations. Equally however, in the same way that Massey (1994) exposes the multiple identities of Kilburn in her seminal essay ‘A Global Sense of Place’, Chorlton is similarly situated at the intersection of multiple flows. People’s routes to, and through, it draw on multiple connections with the rest of the world. As such, the experiences of those who live there reflect broader understanding about housing, neighbourhoods and *liveable place*.

#### **1.4 Research questions and the contribution of the research**

This thesis has therefore been developed on the basis that urban research should broaden its focus beyond ‘failure’. It is argued that it is important to build understanding of a broad continuum of experience that encompasses popular choices and stable communities. It is within this context that the research questions that directed this thesis have been devised as follows:

- i) What is a *liveable place*? The locality where we live is a key site for the performance of everyday life, facilitating the fulfilment of daily responsibilities and playing a role in individual self-perception (Jarvis et al, 2001; Savage et al,

2005). To understand how residential property and locations are experienced therefore is to understand a central component of everyday existence. The contribution made by this thesis is to open up *liveable place*, by identifying fundamental underlying characteristics, to the extent that they exist.

- ii) Recognising the complexity of residential decision-making, the thesis will further seek to understand how these individual components are blended into an understanding of what a *liveable place* might look like. Chapter 2 will show how traditional models of residential choice have failed to identify the mechanisms through which the individual characteristics of housing and neighbourhoods are combined and evaluated. As a result, knowledge of how households create an overall understanding of *liveable place* is limited. However, by drawing out the social and environmental context within which decisions are made, this thesis will seek to reveal the underlying nature of this process.

The ideas of both Bourdieu (1979; 2009) and those of Giddens (1984) are seen to be important in this account of human activity, where shared societal structures shape individual choices. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as the embodied product of accumulated *cultural*, *economic* and *social* capitals for instance, offers a nuanced account of human activity. By emphasising the importance of habitual, and socio-spatially contextualised, dispositions embedded within the unconscious during childhood, he demonstrates the structural opportunities and constraints within which people conduct their lives. Bourdieu's ideas can be legitimately criticised for their passive account of individual activity as nothing more than the product of shared collective experience, offering little space for social transformation (Bridge, 2005; Holt, 2008). Nevertheless shared institutions, rituals, rules and conventions are seen to be powerful in shaping individual discourse and practices (Webb et al, 2002).

Giddens's (1984) *structuration theory* in contrast embraces a dualism between human agency and social structure as an essential element in understanding the transformational potential of the routinized nature of day to day life. The continuous, repetitive acts of individual actors serve to reinforce and reproduce,

but also occasionally to modify, adjust and transform, societal structures in a continuous cycle. Giddens' assertion that all human beings are knowledgeable agents, but nevertheless drawing on the rules and resources embedded in their *practical consciousness*, forms a central tenet in the development of this thesis. Bourdieu's claim that each individual is *positioned* by their specific social identity(ies) is accepted. However, it is argued in addition that everyday activity is undertaken by social actors with an awareness of the environment within which they act and the consequences of what they do. Human behaviour therefore constantly reproduces a set of social and cultural expectations which in turn frame further activity (Giddens and Pierson, 1998). Within this context, decisions about where to live are made within a dynamic framework, both shaped by collective dispositions and shaping future understanding of what an ideal home and neighbourhood should look like.

iii) From this it follows that *liveable place* may be experienced differentially according to the social characteristics of those involved. The precise combination of Bourdieu's (2009) capitals available to an individual shapes a differential understanding of housing and neighbourhoods. At its most obvious, availability of economic capital, or the lack of it, places constraints on choice and on realistic options. In addition however, Butler and Robson (2003a) amongst others, have argued convincingly that relative levels of social and cultural capital are important in shaping inclinations towards property. Social connections and culturally authorised tastes and consumption patterns are shown to be powerful in shaping acceptable residential choices. This research will demonstrate differential preferences according to a range of social characteristics, most importantly socio-economic class, gender and life course stage. It will, however, also reveal commonalities in practice and in expectations across the social scale.

iv) Finally, the research will examine the personal and social impact of *liveable place*. King (1996, p.22) sees housing as an 'enabling' factor, where fulfilment of accommodation requirements facilitates successful outcomes across a range of life fields. Wiesel's (2013) 'uneven urban mobilities' and 'pathways of

disadvantage' show for instance how deprived housing experiences are restricted by, and in turn restrict, accumulation of economic, cultural and social capital. In contrast, the contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate how stable communities and positive social experiences facilitate successful performances of everyday social reproductive tasks together with the accumulation of all forms of capital.

By providing an answer to these research questions, by unearthing the nature and impact of *liveable place*, this thesis makes a significant contribution to understanding an important context of human existence. In revealing the essential nature of our interaction with the places in which we live, it provides an important alternative to the narratives of atomisation which dominate discussions of globalisation (Giddens, 1991; Sennett, 1998). These important insights are facilitated by the methodological approaches adopted. Firstly, by moving away from a deficit model of housing, an investigation of the ordinary experience contributes to an understanding of collective wants and needs across the social spectrum. Secondly, by drawing on a wide range of research traditions to secure a fuller and more fine-grained analysis of the subject, the thesis fills a major gap in existing research which will be exposed in Chapter 2. Finally, by meeting Halfacree and Boyle's (1993) longstanding plea for a qualitative housing biography approach, the research locates each decision within its particular social and temporal context to deliver an in-depth analysis.

The research is particularly prescient in the context of a number of changes currently being experienced within the UK (and other Anglo-Saxon) housing markets. As Massey and Allen (1984) highlight, place is dynamic, shaped by external power structures; by economic, political and cultural processes which are continually in flux. Saunders (1990) charts the post-war rise in home ownership, identifying its importance for understanding changing social dynamics in the UK during this period. In particular he points to the way in which cheap housing and easy access to home ownership transformed the financial prospects of young working class adults and their relationship with the properties and neighbourhoods in which they lived. Barlow and Duncan (1992) provide a more nuanced analysis of the effects of mass-home ownership on both personal wealth and national economic success, condemning its marginalisation of low income groups, restricted tenure options and the impact of the market on both savings

and investment expectations. Nevertheless it appears to have reached a peak. By 2010 Pattison et al report how, for the first time in a century, the relative size of the owner-occupied sector declined in relation to that of a growing private rented sector. Rising house prices and borrowing constraints have restricted the purchasing power of both first-time buyers and those looking to trade up to larger properties (Pattison et al, 2010). Equally average rental prices have consistently outstripped inflation to the extent that the Department of Local Government (DCLG) reported in 2012 that 43% of household income was spent on accommodation in the private rented sector. This compares with 19% and 29% on owner-occupation and social renting respectively (DCLG, 2012a). Although the overwhelming majority of tenants continue to aspire to home ownership almost half believe that they will not be able to enter the tenure within the foreseeable future (Beer and Faulkner, 2009; Clapham et al, 2014).

In contrast to Saunders' (1990) largely positive picture of post-war individual housing opportunities, Clapham et al (2014) now identify a more diverse relationship with housing at the beginning of the twenty first century. On the one hand high levels of unemployment coupled with welfare benefit reforms and reductions in housing related support services are weakening the economic position of young people in particular. On the other, the reduction in size of the social housing sector along with increasing entry costs to home ownership and the concomitant growth in the private rented sector, are fuelling an exponential increase in housing costs. Private renting remains dominated by Assured Shorthold Tenancies which provide little long-term security. The relationship individuals have with the housing market is therefore increasingly dependent on relative earnings, homeownership affordability schemes and parental financial assistance (Beer and Faulkner, 2009; Andrew, 2010; Clapham et al, 2014). If *liveable place* does indeed confer social, economic and cultural rewards on those who live there, then those denied *liveable place* suffer multiple disadvantage in access to jobs, healthcare and education (King, 1996). By unearthing the nature and effects of *liveable place* this thesis makes a significant contribution to understanding how these impacts might become manifest.

## 1.5 Research area

Rob had never lived anywhere like Chorlton in his life: it bore about as much similarity to Tooting as Clacton-on-Sea might to the French Riviera. The two places just didn't compare. Before Rob had started coming to Chorlton regularly to visit Ashley, he had never seen such a high concentration of vegan delicatessens, boutiques, cafe-bars, gastro pubs and restaurants outside places like Hampstead or Brighton. And, as far as he could determine, the entire area was populated chiefly by *Guardian* readers, actors, senior medical staff, vegans, journalists, musicians, BBC employees, Reiki healers and, that catch-all phrase for the educated and affluent, 'young professionals'. (Gayle, 2005, p.45)

Mike Gayle's novel *Brand New Friend*, relocates Rob, a thirty-something graphic designer from London to live with his girlfriend in early twenty first century Manchester. They settle in the southern suburb of Chorlton, about three miles from the city centre and the locale serves as a back drop to the trials and tribulations of their love life. Gayle's observations of the suburb, in evoking an image of affluence on a par with some of the more prosperous London neighbourhoods, reflect some of the stereotype that is Chorlton to the rest of Manchester. Nevertheless, alongside Gayle's young professionals the neighbourhood contains social housing estates which fall within the bottom twenty percent of the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation and it is a socially and economically diverse area (DCLG, 2010; MCC, 2011). It was therefore chosen as the location for fieldwork precisely because it offered the opportunity to examine housing aspirations and experiences across the social scale. An analysis of the socio-economic profile of the council wards which made up the fieldwork location can be found at Appendix 2.

Chorlton sits within a wider Manchester housing market, encompassing the ten metropolitan boroughs which make up Greater Manchester together with large tracts of north Cheshire within commuting distance of the central conurbation (Figure 1.1). The area immediately adjacent to the city centre bears the scars of what Mace et al (2007) dub Manchester's *suburbanization of the population*. A widespread post-war slum clearance programme saw the removal of a substantial part of the terraced housing so beloved of the gentrifying middle classes elsewhere (Jager, 1986). Inner city residents in Broughton, Hulme, Ancoats and Ordsall amongst other neighbourhoods were

decanted in large numbers to overspill social housing estates at the edge of the conurbation during the 1950s and 1960s (Mace et al, 2007). Replacement of this stock by large tracts of social housing, just as the sector was becoming residualised as the tenure for those without choice had the effect of consolidating the reputation of these areas as suitable only for the poor, the infirm and the newly arrived. Other inner city areas, such as Rusholme and Old Trafford in the south and Crumpsall and Cheetham Hill to the north of the city centre, were not subject to the same degree of slum clearance. These became attractive to recently arrived immigrants frequently excluded from social housing in its early years (Peach, 1998; 2000). The long standing history of immigration in these suburbs has led to a greater degree of ethnic diversity than in some of the traditionally 'working class' areas now characterised by social housing. Nevertheless, what all these neighbourhoods share are relatively high levels of deprivation; all falling within the bottom twenty per cent in the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (MCC, 2010c; Trafford MBC, 2014).

Traditionally, higher value housing markets have been found largely outside the boundaries of the M60, Manchester's motorway ring road. To the south of the conurbation these include suburban neighbourhoods such as Didsbury, the Heaton, Sale, Hale and Altrincham. A more limited number of similar suburbs are found to the north of the city centre, although these areas are generally less wealthy than their counterparts to the south. Further afield Cheshire, Bury, Bolton and a variety of places in between have traditionally served as residential locations for those who do not want, or need, to live close to the city centre and who may be willing to undergo the lengthy daily commute. A boom in city centre living during the late 1990s and early 2000s now means that young professionals have the opportunity to experience the vibrancy of the city centre at first hand (Deas et al, 1999). Certainly, if the experience of one respondent in this research (Evan) is indicative of the general situation, the rental market here is extremely buoyant and flats are 'snapped up' within a few hours of going on the market.

Chorlton itself is located about three miles south of the city centre, within the local authority area covered by Manchester City Council (MCC) and is bounded on the west by Stretford in Trafford Metropolitan Borough (Figure 1.2). Immediately to the north are Manchester's inner city neighbourhoods of Whalley Range and beyond Hulme and

Moss Side, whilst to the east lies what has been traditionally MCC's most affluent suburb, Didsbury. The River Mersey and the M60 orbital motorway both form a natural boundary to the south. Beyond these is Wythenshawe, once one of Europe's largest council estates (Hall, 2005), before the conurbation meets the affluent commuter districts of north Cheshire. Regular bus services into Manchester via the University corridor have long meant that the area is a popular place to live for those working in either the city centre or at one of the universities. The addition of a direct tram service into Manchester in 2011 improved public transport connectivity further, whilst easy access to both the M60 and M56 means that commuting from Chorlton to a variety of locations further afield is relatively easy. Despite an almost continuous history of residential building over the last one hundred and fifty years, residents also have access to a number of small urban parks which typically provide children's playgrounds, grassed playing areas and, in the case of Longford Park, a cafe. In addition, the development of the M63 (now M60) motorway alongside the Mersey floodplain during the early 1970s led to the excavation and construction of Chorlton and Sale Water Parks as sizable local nature reserves adjacent to the southern edge of the suburb. These form part of a wider greenspace network which stretches along the Mersey Valley from Stockport in the east as far as the Manchester Ship Canal to the west of the central conurbation. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 provide a flavour of the layout and extent of Chorlton's green space and local amenities.

Chorlton is also home to one of Manchester's largest neighbourhood retail centres (MCC, 2010b). Figures 1.5 and 1.6 highlight a varied retail offer, although in common with high streets across the country, it has become more restricted as the supermarkets have taken an increasing share of the market. Nevertheless, all major banks have an outlet and a limited number of national retail chains are also represented including Boots, Thomas Cook, Holland and Barrett and Timpsons. In addition there are independent outlets selling a range of goods including clothing, outdoor wear, stationery and fresh food, including two butchers, green grocers and a well-regarded fishmonger. These are supplemented by a number of small supermarkets and mini-markets together with a variety of hot food takeaways. As other units have become vacant, charity shops have increasingly filled the void. However, vacancy rates remain relatively low; as at 2010 only 7% were empty in the district centre in comparison with rates of up to 30% in other Greater Manchester shopping centres (MCC, 2010b; MEN, 2011).



The main district centre is supplemented by a number of other, much smaller, shopping strips of which the most prominent is centred around Beech Road. Here changes to the retail mix over a twenty year period have transformed what was a traditional neighbourhood offer. As at December 2015 there were eight restaurants or cafes on Beech Road, four clothing outlets, no less than ten galleries and gift shops together with five pubs and bars. This particular road has cemented a reputation for itself as the home of all that is 'trendy' in Chorlton. It is a place where residents come in the evenings and at weekends to browse, meet friends and sip a cappuccino. When identifying what they liked about the neighbourhood, female research respondents in particular frequently mentioned 'mooching' down Beech Road on a Saturday afternoon, looking around the shops and enjoying a drink in (or even outside) one of the bars or cafes with friends. It has become a *consumption destination* attractive not only to local residents but also to others across the city (Zukin, 1989).

This change in the retail mix, which has affected other shopping strips in the neighbourhood but to a lesser degree, has been prompted by a combination of factors. The retreat of traditional neighbourhood shopping, which has been a national feature, has been combined locally with the increasing popularity of Chorlton as a place to live amongst young professionals. Driven by the growth of the railways, the suburb grew up at the end of the nineteenth century, becoming attractive to the lower middle and upper working classes who could afford to pay the train (and later tram) fare for the commute back into the city. It remained a popular location amongst these social groups into the 1970s and 1980s, but during the 1980s a new demographic began to move into the area. These new arrivals were commonly graduates of one of the nearby universities or the then Manchester Polytechnic. They had often lived in the area as students and were now taking the first steps in their careers, frequently in the public sector. The suburb was perceived to be more up-market than Withington or Rusholme, where they may have lived as students, but also offered better value for money than the more traditionally middle class Didsbury. Chorlton's property market offered them a selection of housing options at a range of price points. A long history of residential building in the area has bequeathed the neighbourhood a varied housing stock, including relatively high numbers of properties which date from the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (Figure 1.7). These are precisely the types of

properties which have been seen elsewhere to be popular amongst gentrifying professionals (Bridge, 2001a). Although some of these properties were large enough to warrant conversion into houses of multiple occupation in the latter half of the last century, many were not and have long been popular as ‘family homes’. By the time of the 2011 Census 46% of the working age population was classified as NS-Sec Groups One and Two (working in managerial and higher professional jobs). The comparable figure in the North West of England for 2011 was 28% (Figure 9.2). Although the census classifications have changed since 1981, this represents a considerable transformation, since thirty years previously only 13% of the local population were employed as managers or professional workers (Figure 9.1). By 2011 Chorlton, along with Didsbury, had become very much a place of choice for the highly educated professionals of Manchester, particularly those working in the public sector and ‘creative’ professions (Figure 4.1 and Figure 9.3).

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

Following the introduction the next two chapters follow the process through which the research questions were formulated and the methodology was developed, before Chapters 4 to 6 provide detailed results data.

Chapter 2, *Revealing Liveable Place*, examines the existing body of work concerned with the relationship individuals have with residential housing and neighbourhoods. In the context of the points already made in this chapter it is unsurprising that only some of this literature directly addresses residential decision-making. Instead the chapter draws on a wide range of studies to demonstrate how neighbourhood amenity, a sense of community and emotional responses to housing are mediated through a range of social characteristics as households make decisions about where to live. However, the chapter concludes that current evidence is problematic in that existing theories are largely constructed in isolation with only limited reference to learning from alternative models. It argues that this leads to over simplistic conclusions, focussed on proving the relevance of specific factors rather than developing an holistic understanding of what is in fact a multifaceted social process (Winstanley et al, 2002). *Liveable place* is instead to be understood as a location at the intersection of a myriad of complex social and personal relationships. The thesis therefore argues it is necessary to draw on a range of

theoretical approaches in order to reveal the multiple influences on the decisions people make about where to live.

Chapter 3, *Researching Liveable Place*, takes the learning from Chapter 2 and uses it to develop a methodology designed to put location and the household at the centre of the research. It does this in two ways. First of all it selects a single sought after residential setting as the focal point of the study in order to examine the decisions by a range of households who had made a positive choice to live there. Secondly the chapter mobilises Halfacree and Boyle's (1993) concept of the *housing biography*. It does this in order to set each housing decision within the context of both the social background of residents and of their previous choices. This technique has the added advantage of facilitating access to Gidden's (1984) *practical consciousness* where knowledge and understanding are embedded within taken for granted socially accepted norms.

Where Chapter 2 identified that existing explanations about residential choice fail to provide a comprehensive account of the process, the three data chapters have been designed to do just this, by putting the individual and the household at the centre of the thesis. Each examines one key element of interaction with residential housing and neighbourhoods. Chapter 4, *Performing Residence*, begins this process from the vantage point of Savage et al's (2005) concept of *elective belonging*. Following the example of both Savage et al (2005) and Butler and Robson (2003a), the chapter adopts an approach influenced by Bourdieu's ideas to explore understandings of Chorlton as a liveable place. Mirroring the findings of both these studies, Chorlton is seen to exist as an imaginary concept that individuals exploit to create and bolster their own sense of identity through a process of storying. However, a variety of distinctive identities can be seen within the single location, influenced by differential access to social, cultural or economic capital.

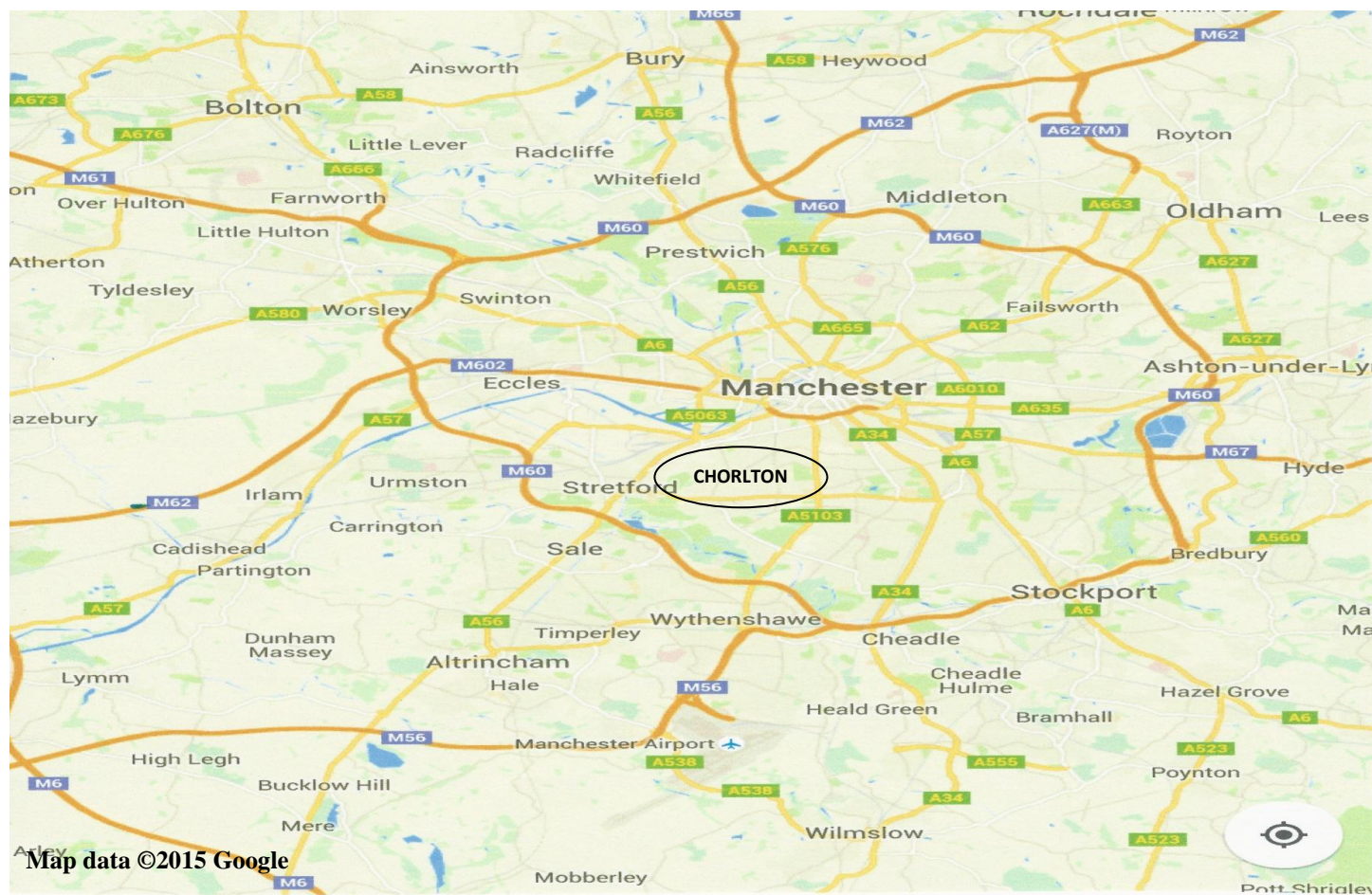
Whilst elective belonging provides valuable insights into individual relationship with residential property and locations, its limits are addressed in Chapter 5, *Routes to Belonging*. This chapter focuses instead on the role that notions of *community* play in both bringing and anchoring Chorlton's residents to the neighbourhood. Dense personal and reciprocal networks of friends, work colleagues and relatives are seen to engender a strong sense of belonging amongst residents. However, where Putnam's (2000)

*bonding social capital* is absent then greater levels of dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood appear to result and thoughts of moving away become more visible.

Chapter 6, *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood*, moves the focus of the thesis from the scale of the individual to that of the household as it turns to the third fundamental strand of everyday interaction with places of residence examined in this thesis. Many studies highlight the physical characteristics of a desirable neighbourhood but few acknowledge the role of these neighbourhood resources in supporting the performance of household reproduction. This chapter shows how a physical infrastructure capable of providing ongoing daily support is a crucial constituent of satisfaction with the neighbourhood. However, experience is seen to be heavily gendered and residents' understanding of the value of the asset is seen to change and develop over the course of time.

Finally, Chapter 7, the *Conclusion* summarises the contribution made by this research. By drawing on a broad range of approaches to residential choice, the chapter shows how it has drawn out the essential dualism of the relationship households have with residential locations. Choices are shown to be embedded in social and economic structures, but human agency in turn plays a fundamental role in shaping the precise form of decisions, restructuring the external environment as it does so. The research has therefore exposed relationships with residential housing and neighbourhoods to be multi-dimensional, subject to a range of social and economic pressures and continually in development. By exposing its complexity, the thesis has generated a fundamentally deeper understanding of what is a key element of everyday social life than that produced by other approaches to date.

**Figure 1.1: Wider Greater Manchester Housing Market**





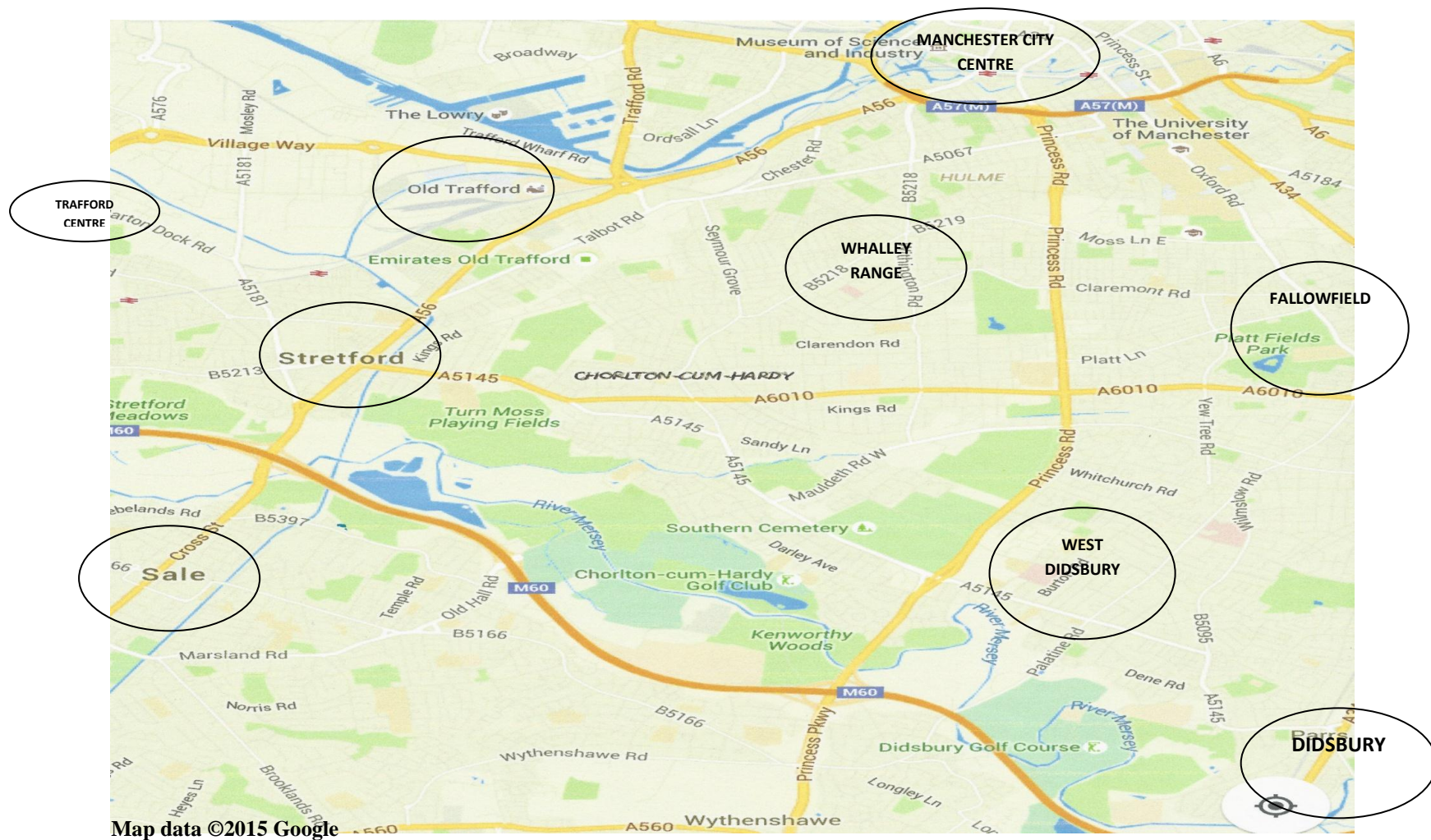


Figure 1.2: Chorlton in South Manchester

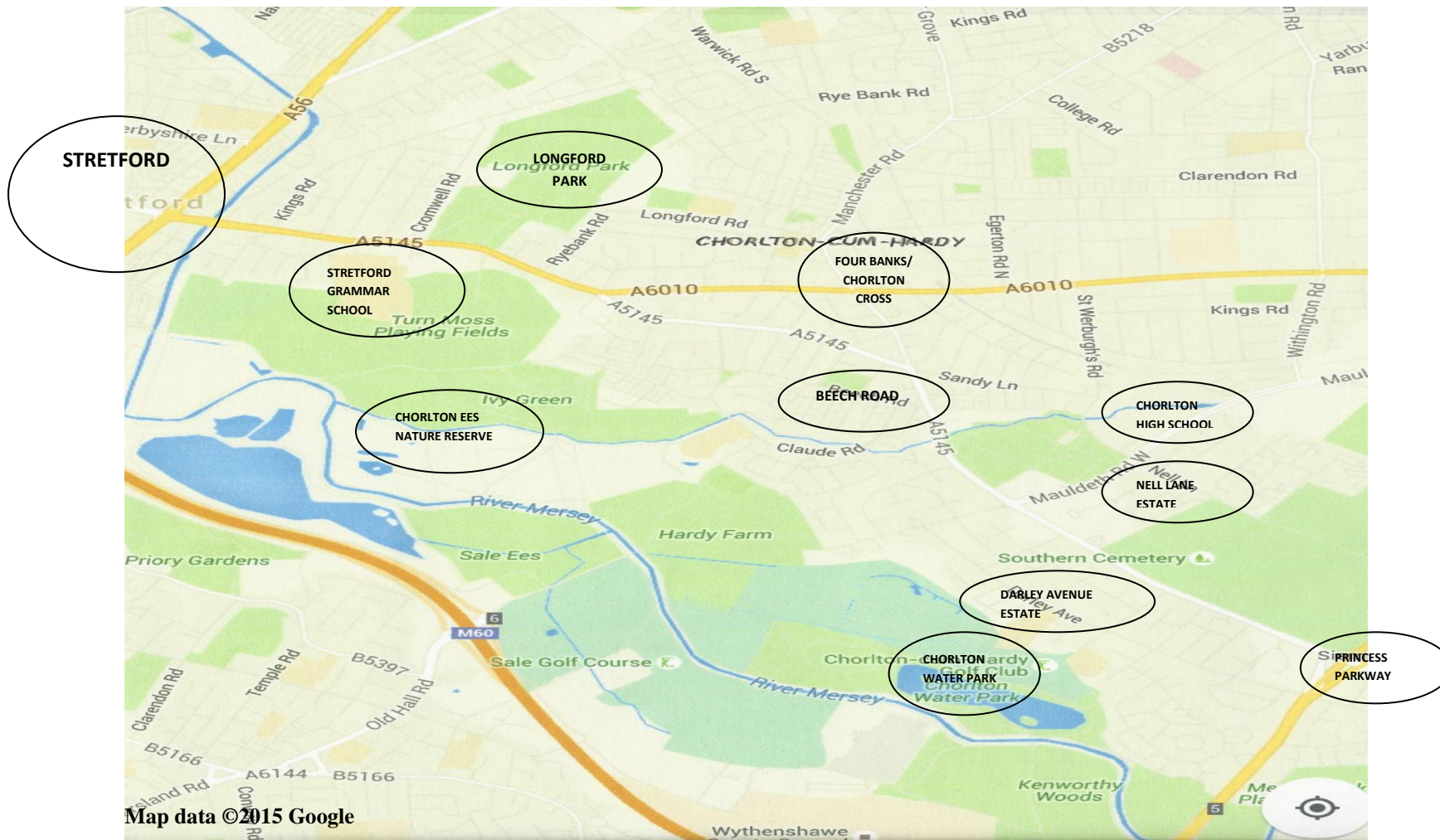
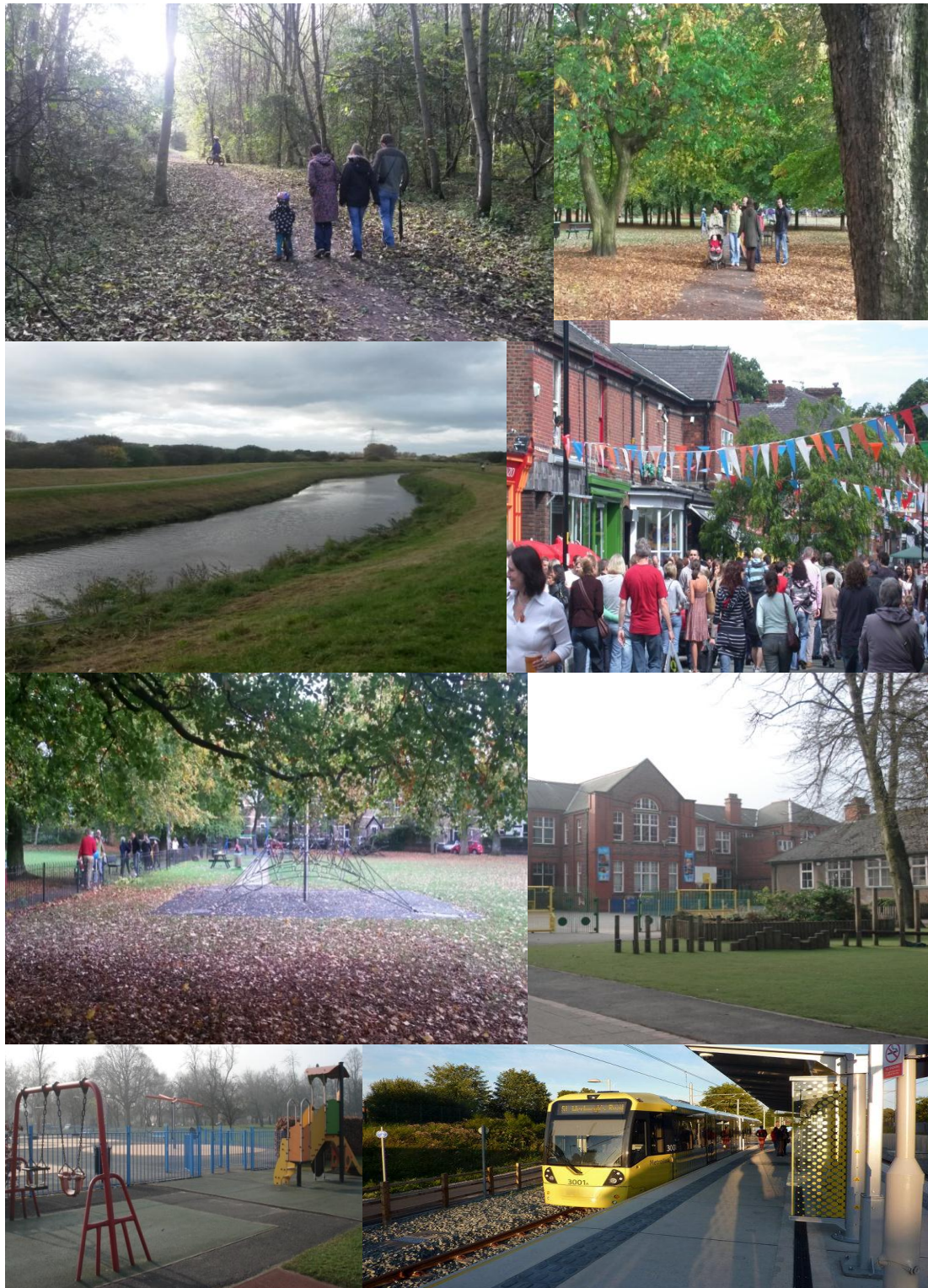


Figure 1.3: Map of Chorlton



**Figure 1.4: Chorlton's Amenity Value**



**Clockwise from top: Family in Chorlton Ees; Sunday Afternoon Beech Road Park; Beech Road Festival (courtesy of Andrew Simpson); Chorlton Park School; East Didsbury Line Tram (copyright Phil Champion and licensed for reuse); Playground Chorlton Park; Playground Beech Road Park; Mersey Valley**



**Figure 1.5: Two Sides of the Same Coin - Chorlton's Upmarket Retail Offer**

Concentrated, but not exclusively, on Beech Road. Clockwise from top: Barbakan Bakery; Betty and Butch dog grooming salon; Creative Recycling art gallery; Hurricane knickknacks; Beech Nook Therapy Room alternative therapies





**Figure 1.6: Chorlton's Day to Day Retail Offer**

Clockwise from top:  
Chorlton precinct with  
Elliot's greengrocer and  
discount furnishers in the  
foreground; Corner of  
Barlow Moor Road and  
Edge Lane – Themis  
Lawyers, Azad Manzil  
Indian restaurant and  
Special FX hairdresser;  
Former Blockbuster  
store and KFC;  
takeaways on Wilbraham  
Road; DIY store on  
Barlow Moor Road;  
Charity Shop Barlow  
Moor Road







**Figure 1.7: Chorlton's varied housing stock**

**Clockwise from top: 1960s 3-bed semi-detached; Family houses, Chorltonville; 2-bed Victorian workers' terraces; 1920s arts and crafts style semi-detached; uniform Edwardian semi-detached for the new lower middle classes; 21<sup>st</sup> Century copies on the site of a former dairy; larger 1920s bay-fronted semi-detached; 21<sup>st</sup> century apartment infill estate; pair of large, Victorian semi-detached villas, Edge Lane; infill homes, contemporary design.**

## 2. Revealing Liveable Place

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 has set the context within which this research was developed. It has emphasised the importance of local, and local residential, place as key arenas within which everyday existence is enacted, reflective of the multiplicity of social activity and collective influences (Massey, 1994). It has nevertheless also identified how residential housing and neighbourhoods occupy a *taken for granted* or *problematised* space within academic research (Forest and Kearns, 2001; Ford et al, 2002; Kearns and Parks, 2003; Wiesel, 2013). This lack of attention has led to an incomplete understanding of the ‘ordinary’ community. The contribution of this thesis is to illustrate the essence of *liveable place* by highlighting both differential experiences and commonalities across the social spectrum. It argues that by opening up the mechanisms underpinning popular residential communities fundamental underlying preferences will be revealed. Equally, by demonstrating the practical and social impact of *liveable place* the thesis contributes to understanding of how inequalities are generated which have ongoing influence throughout the life course. The research does this by building on the understanding generated by existing studies, acknowledging the value of much current theoretical knowledge. Chapter 2 now begins this process by exploring existing theoretical approaches and debates, drawing on a wide range of literature so that insights from traditions as diverse as gentrification and life course studies are drawn together to construct a picture of existing understanding.

As Cadwallader (1992) points out, however, a tension between structure and agency underpins much of existing research. Structural models which set decisions about where to live in the context of household utility maximisation dominated initial research. The very earliest work sets housing choices almost entirely within the context of the economic and temporal costs of the daily commute, giving primacy as they do so to abstract and universal understandings of the human condition (Burgess, 1925; Balchin et al, 1995). Later models, however, by focussing more closely on the decision-making process, facilitate greater recognition of the social and environmental context within which choices are made and often constrained (Cadwallader, 1992). Placing the life course at centre stage for instance highlights

how differential access to financial and social resources has a deep and lasting impact on residential preferences and choices.

More recent studies in contrast give greater prominence to human agency as they explore emotional reaction to housing circumstances. The chapter shows how both humanistic conceptualisations of the home as a place of security and understandings of the physical dwelling as a consumption good have ongoing relevance (Heidegger, 1971; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). I argue that recent gentrification research in particular, by exploring the role of residential choice in bolstering personal identity, has capacity for a wider spatial and social application than has hitherto been the case (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Bridge, 2001a; 2005). The final part of this chapter turns to explore research traditions which are not usually linked with the choices individuals and households make about where to live (Bourdieu, 1979; Jarvis 2003, 2005; Putnam, 2000). Drawing on differing conceptualisations of community which emphasise territorial connections on the one hand and the role of networked social relations on the other, it recognises the potential for residential housing and neighbourhoods to be sources of both practical and emotional support (Massey, 1994; Etzioni, 1998).

*Revealing Liveable Place* argues that each of these theories make important contributions to understanding of residential choice, despite their individual flaws. However, it identifies a fundamental weakness to existing approaches where the lack of interdisciplinary work has limited understanding of the residential decision-making process. It shows how the links made in this chapter are not made elsewhere so that learning from one area of research is rarely incorporated into another. As a result, we are left with a partial account of what is in fact a complex social process. An alternative approach is proposed which puts the household, the property and the neighbourhood at the centre of study. By building on existing research and by drawing on the full range of approaches to residential decision-making, this thesis will reveal the fundamental role of residential housing and neighbourhoods in supporting everyday activity.

## **2.2 Rational man: a utilitarian approach to work, home and in-between**

Traditional residential location theories have their roots in neoclassical economics where individuals allocate expenditures in order to maximise utility. Within this the *travel cost and housing trade-off* remains the dominant variant, giving priority to minimising aggregate housing and travel costs (Balchin et al, 1995). Those with adequate financial means are assumed to seek to fulfil a natural preference for large properties in the pleasant environment of the suburbs where they can afford the cost of commuting to work. In contrast the poor remain in the city, unable to pay the high transport costs associated with a long journey to the centre from the outskirts.

Phe and Wakely (2000) note how its apparent success in replicating empirical regularities in mid-century western cities has made *travel cost housing trade-off* theses popular analytical tools. The models devised by the 'Chicago School' in the 1920s for instance have remained particularly influential (Burgess, 1925).

Conceptualising contemporary city structures as a series of concentric rings of differing land uses set around a central business district (CBD), economists and town planners were able to explain a rising social gradient of occupancy fanning out as far as a commuter zone at the edge of the built-up area. Differing land values and transport costs within each of the rings served to order the population according to their economic means. Other models of urban form followed, including accessibility-induced variations in land values which give rise to 'distinct use sectors' (Hoyt, 1939; Harris and Ullman, 1945). Nevertheless the concentric ring theory has proved particularly durable. Dear and Flusty (1998) attribute some of its popularity to its simplicity, predicated as it is on the idea of competition in the urban land market which ensures that each site is occupied by the 'highest and best use' (Hall, 1997, p.313). There is indeed evidence of elevated values for some inner-city locations of which potential residents must take account (Garner, 1967; Dutton, 2003). Similarly, lower land values at the periphery have long induced migration to the suburbs which residents must balance against increased travel costs (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). However, these models were developed in a context where industrial and manufacturing capacity was still largely located in urban centres, a context which appears increasingly outmoded (Hall, 1997). More recently, low value neighbourhoods are as likely to be found close to inner city areas as old

sources of employment have disappeared to be replaced by new ones in out of town locations (Mace et al, 2007).

Nevertheless bid-rent theories of urban land use continue to be particularly influential in late-twentieth century analyses of urban social structures. Their success is at least partly explained by a move away from the a-historical approach of the original economic models (Phe and Wakely, 2000). Neil Smith (1979, 1986, 1987) adopts a structural Marxist approach to examine the gentrification of US inner cities in the 1970s. For Smith the phenomenon is one outcome of a *rent gap* in the inner city. The flow of cyclical capital towards the city edge leaves space for individual and corporate investment once values have reached an appropriately low point. He is therefore able to place the emphasis squarely on the role of capital in driving decision-making, on the premise that the phenomenon only occurs because there is a profit to be made by someone, somewhere, at some point in time. Hamnett and Randolph (1986) are able to demonstrate this in action in their study of the breakup of the London flat market in the 1960s. Similarly, Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007) show how the contraction of light industry directly contributed to the development of loft spaces for young professionals on the fringes of central London two decades later. However, Beauregard (1986) points to serious weaknesses in the theory which as a result does not appear entirely capable of explaining how some areas gentrify whilst others remain immune. In particular the existence of a rent gap alone appears to be insufficient in determining either the direction or nature of further investment (Zukin, 1989; Smith and Phillips, 2001; Butler and Robson, 2003a).

Indeed the predictive capacity of *travel cost housing trade off* models appears to be further diminishing. The tendency for employment to migrate away from city centres to peripheral sites close to motorway networks means that commuting patterns are becoming progressively more complex (Yinger, 1992; ODPM, 2006). Osland and Pryce (2012) for instance show how there is increasingly a premium on access to multiple employment nodes, a conclusion supported by evidence from a number of qualitative studies (Green, 1997; Jarvis, 1999, 2005; Jarvis et al, 2001). Korsu (2012) further points out that households generally do not have one single binary choice to make between better housing and reduced commuting costs since

the weight attached to either may change over time. The presumption that households can, and do, react immediately to changes in externalities is therefore problematic. In fact the evidence points to their relative immobility and at least to a time delay in any response to conflicting needs and requirements. Homeowners in particular are subject to high costs of moving, both in terms of the time taken to market and sell properties and the associated transaction costs (Cadwallader, 1992). An immediate reaction to changes in either travel or housing overheads is therefore rarely possible, although they may prompt a gradual migration over time should the differential be sustained (Smith, 1979; Balchin et al, 1995). Both van Ommeren (1999) and Kronenberg and Caree (2012) find that individuals act as much through job change as through residential moves to reduce commuting times whenever possible. On the other hand for Punpuing and Ross (2001) commuting in Bangkok is a comparatively elastic fact of life which mitigates other, relatively inelastic, choices about home and workplace.

The a-historical, a-social and a-spatial nature of abstract economic models is therefore a particular problem. This echoes wider critiques of neoclassical economics and of conceptions of rationality voiced by Hodgson (1996), Levi et al (1990) and Ormerod (1994) amongst others:

In starting from allegedly universal and a-historical concepts, neoclassical economics fails to become rooted in any specific socio-economic system.... Instead of attempting to confront a particular economy, or *real* object, it becomes confined to a remotely abstract and artificial *idea* of an economy, the economy in general (Hodgson, 1996, p.383).

An approach therefore which gives a central role to a conception of the individual divorced from the social environment limits its capacity to tease out the nuances of what is a complex, socially embedded process. The fact that decision-makers are assumed to possess equal knowledge of the market, to be subject to the same social influences and to have to account for the same internal household dynamics all fail to reflect the reality of the everyday environment. All households do not have equal access to market information which is instead highly correlated with levels of education and socio-economic status (Clapham et al, 2014). Housing market intelligence is often obtained through intermediaries such as estate agents,



newspapers or friends and family which can only ever represent a partial and subjective basis on which to make an informed choice (Winstanley et al, 2002; Hastings, 2004). Individuals cannot know that current price disparities will be maintained so that choices are instead made in the context of socially and educationally embedded understanding about the market which may not be sustained. De Palma et al (2007) for instance are able to challenge assumptions about the uniform impact of price differentials by identifying differing price sensitivities amongst diverse social groups. Winstanley et al (2002) also point to the increasing involvement of women in the workplace at all levels. Within traditional models, rational 'man' is just that; a male head of the household whose employment and commuting requirements do not need to take account of other family members. Increasingly however, family employment may be in disparate locations, introducing additional complexities to household decision-making (Meen and Meen, 2003; Osland and Pryce, 2012). In sum, Meen and Meen (2003) go so far as to conclude that it is difficult to construct an empirical model for local housing markets because of the inherent non-linearities involved, citing the social interactions which can ultimately lead to segregation and social exclusion.

None of this is to deny that economic utility theories continue to have explanatory capacity, particularly where they focus on the role of capital in shaping spatial form. However, as Phe and Wakely (2000) note, proponents of these approaches, absorbed by the power of capital, tend to ignore other powerful motivations behind residential location. This exclusive focus therefore continues to be a major limitation where other research has been able to demonstrate the influence of other environmental and social considerations behind residential decisions. Kim et al (2005) for instance show that, whilst a bid-rent analysis is valuable in explaining moving behaviour, the presence of children also strongly influences the choice of location. Dissatisfaction with a purely economic understanding has therefore led to interest in alternative utilitarian models which incorporate a range of other social and environmental factors. The chapter now turns to consider these.

### 2.3 Rational man: approaching the decision

In 1982 Cadwallader was able to identify essentially two approaches to residential mobility. The first, rooted in ecological studies of urbanism and termed by him a *macro-analytical* approach has already been considered in Section 2.2 above. The second he identifies as a *micro-analytical* or *behavioural* approach, characterised by an interest in the differing qualities of those who move and those who stay in a particular location. Inherent to the methodologies of behavioural approaches is the construction of models to represent the decision-making process (Cadwallader, 1982). Such models have variously been called *geographical* (Clapham et al, 2014), *disequilibrium* (Coulter et al, 2011; Coulton et al, 2012), *neighbourhood and environmental* (Winstanley et al, 2002) or *maximum housing cost expenditure* (Balchin et al, 1995). However, despite the variety of terminology employed and the multiplicity of models in existence, each developed to examine a different aspect of the decision-making process, they share considerable similarities (Cadwallader, 1992). Achieving maximum household utility continues to be the central assumption, but this is now placed within the context of the socio-economic profile of decision-makers and of neighbourhood and housing amenity values. As such they facilitate a broader understanding of residential decisions than is the case by taking account of commuting costs alone. This is not to say that economic impulses are unimportant, but rather that decisions are now acknowledged as incorporating a variety of social, environmental and financial influences and constraints where sub-optimal *economic* outcomes may be entirely acceptable (Cadwallader, 1992).

Within this context, Rossi (1980) suggests that, in order to better understand the mechanisms involved, the decision to change residence is broken down into three elements: the decision to move; the search for a new location; and finally selection of the new dwelling site. Each stage of this hypothesised decision-making process can be separately modelled to evaluate the social and environmental influences at play (Cadwallader, 1982). Conceptually the initial decision to seek a new place of residence is most usually analysed through the notion of *housing stress* where a number of stressors are identified and present satisfaction with each is compared to the perceived advantage of obtaining better elsewhere (Cadwallader, 1992; Coulter et al, 2011). Households express a desire to move in response to *disequilibrium*

between existing and preferred housing circumstances, where housing components giving rise to dissatisfaction are referred to as *push factors* (Coulter et al, 2011). Both Clark et al (2006) and Kearns and Parkes (2003) find that dissatisfaction with the home is the principal push factor, with changes to household composition most frequently cited as the main reason behind a decision to move. In this case consequent moves are usually only over relatively short distances. In contrast other common housing related push factors, such as the need to provide care to relatives or to take up new employment opportunities, frequently prompt long distance migration (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Moen et al, 2001; Bailey et al, 2004; Cooke, 2001; Feijten and Mulder, 2005; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007).

In other cases perceived failings in neighbourhood quality give rise to housing stress. Kearns and Parkes (2003) for instance identify how poor neighbourhood conditions and disorder in local surroundings significantly increase the possibility of moving home. Similarly, Clark et al (2006) find a continual search for improvement in both neighbourhood and housing quality marks most residential moves. A range of studies have provided extensive information about the neighbourhood components generally deemed to be important. These include access to high quality local amenities, including retail and leisure facilities (Lynch and Rasmussen, 2003; Cowans, 2006; Green et al, 2005; Townshend, 2006); community safety, linked to a high quality public realm (Cowans, 2006; Silverman et al, 2006; Townshend, 2006); connectivity and local transport infrastructure (Meen et al, 2005; Bennett and Morris, 2006); appropriately designed, good quality housing stock (Silverman et al, 2006; Martin and Watkinson, 2003; Cadwallader, 1992); low levels of local deprivation or concentrations of poverty (Meen et al, 2005); and the availability of local schools that have the confidence of parents (Cowans, 2006; ODPM, 2004; Silverman et al, 2006; Oberti, 2007).

However, Coulter et al (2012) point to how the research area is dominated by large-scale quantitative analyses, often dependent on information collected for other purposes. The resultant lack of specific data leads research both to conflate moving desires and expectations and to assume that these are likely to be translated into actual moves (Lu, 1999). The authors argue instead that the decision to relocate needs to be seen in the context of a range of other structural societal factors where

assumptions about a pure, un-segregated market once more cannot be sustained. In particular the ability to act on a preference is unequally distributed. The young and highly educated expect to be able to act on a desire to move whereas lack of access to capital or physical disability may limit the capacity of older or disadvantaged households to realise similar preferences (Coulter et al, 2012; Chen et al, 2009).

The second stage of Rossi's (1980) hypothesised decision-making process is the search for possible alternatives, which McPeake (1998) observes is usually focussed on the three dimensions of information acquisition, 'search effort' and the extent of spatial search activity. The media, estate agents and the household's network of personal contacts are all identified as important sources of information about houses available for sale (Cadwallader, 1982). However, Rossi (1980) concludes that social contacts are by far the most effective resources in directing households towards appropriate locations and properties. The search process itself is for the most part relatively short, featuring only a limited geographical focus and restricted in many cases to a few properties where suitability is assessed very quickly (Barrett, 1976; McPeake, 1998; Chen and Lin, 2012). Although active searches are likely to be the culmination of a longer period of reflection, it remains unclear as to exactly why households appear to devote relatively few resources to what is potentially a significant economic choice (Coulter, 2013). However, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of searchers do appear to influence behaviour. Positive relationships have been reported between search duration and the number of dwellings inspected on the one hand, and owner occupation, higher household income, voluntary relocation, and first-time buyer status on the other (McPeake, 1998). In contrast ethnic minority groups demonstrate a tendency to cluster close to existing settlement locations (Peach, 1998; Cameron and Field, 2000; Ibraimovic and Masiero, 2013). Chen and Lin (2012) show that household dynamics also play a role so that where couples disagree the search area is likely to be larger.

Finally, decision-making turns to the evaluation of perceived alternatives. This involves calculating an overall *utility value* for the new house and neighbourhood by evaluating the relative importance of local amenity, housing quality, location, or social perception of the neighbourhood (Cadwallader, 1992). However, whilst research has yielded a great deal of information about specific housing attributes

which are particularly appealing (or indeed unappealing), the mechanism behind the final selection of an appropriate property is more opaque. In this respect little has changed over the last thirty years since Cadwallader (1982) identified how difficult it had proved to be to develop appropriate combination rules across each of the relevant dimensions. To some extent this is one outcome of the reliance on large-scale quantitative surveys which has dominated the behavioural approach. Whilst they generate large amounts of data, its lack of depth and the extent to which place is reduced to a single variable, places limits on what it can reveal of the nuances of the relationship individuals enjoy with housing (Coulter et al, 2011). Clapham (2002) is therefore able to criticise models for their tendency to generate universal propositions about human behaviour. Individuals are once more assumed to be rational and utilitarian in their approach to housing, hampering understanding as to how different households perceive and react to the housing context facing them (Clapham, 2002).

It has therefore largely been left to geographers working within the qualitative tradition to highlight shades of difference in residential choices. Silverman et al (2006) for instance undertake a detailed examination of the decisions made by young families in British urban communities. They find parents increasingly face a choice as children grow older between the easy accessibility of local amenities and the perceived advantages of larger homes and acceptable secondary schools available elsewhere. They also reveal how choices are made in the context of both financial constraint and the extent to which households feel embedded in a community. In contrast, Fagnani's (1992; 1993) study amongst Parisian middle class mothers highlights how priorities evolve over time. At different points during child rearing years the relative weight given to cultural amenities, property size or length of commute is adjusted to take account of the changing needs of the family. This level of rich detail is difficult to capture from the snapshot data which most often forms the basis of quantitative studies. The mixed method approach advocated by Clapham et al (2014) offers one alternative. By combining analysis of panel survey data with interview responses, the authors develop their concept of *housing pathways* as a means of understanding differential choices and outcomes amongst young people. The resultant research points to the role of opportunity and constraint, framed by economic and social resources, as key elements in shaping property selection.

By focussing on the decision-making process, *behavioural* or *micro-analytical* approaches have generated considerable knowledge about the range of housing components valued by households (Cadwallader, 1992). It is clear that land values alone do not direct housing choices, although of course the sought after qualities identified in behavioural models are often translated into capital gains (Leech and Campos, 2003). The value of these models lies in how they facilitate greater appreciation of the socio-economic environment within which individuals and households operate and which leads to differential opportunities and constraints in the housing market. However, it is clear that the positivist principles which underpin them, as much as neo-classical economic theories, also give rise to a number of important weaknesses (Clapham, 2002). Nevertheless, before turning to examine approaches to residential choice which can be broadly classified as agency-based, the chapter examines in more detail a behavioural model which has been particularly prominent over the last thirty years. A life course approach is worthy of a more in-depth study precisely because of the influence it has exerted over residential mobility research during this period (Clapham, 2002).

## **2.4 The life course: pathways of advantage and disadvantage**

Interested in patterns of order and orders of patterns in the often banal practices of everyday life, life course scholarship seeks to describe the structures and sequences of events and transitions through an individual's life (Bailey, 2009, p.407).

Bailey (2009) identifies three important contributions a life course perspective brings to geographical study through its attention to the structures and linkages which shape individual activity. Firstly, it highlights how personal biographies are intrinsically shaped by multiple, interlinked *careers* in housing, health, employment, parenting, marriage or education (Bailey et al, 2004; Coulter et al, 2015). Lives are theorised as trajectories marked by life course *events* or *triggers* such as births, deaths, marriages, migration, family formation or career moves, where age is important but no longer the defining characteristic (Bailey et al, 2004; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). Each trigger potentially modifies the environment within which individuals and households must operate and may prompt a re-appraisal of current circumstances and

activity (Clark and Huang, 2003). Secondly, Bailey (2009) highlights how a life course perspective demonstrates the extent to which individual lives are synchronised with those of others through time and space. Multiple lives are coordinated within a family context which both directs and places constraints on choice and activity (Bailey et al, 2004; Schwanen and de Jong, 2008). Finally, a life course approach emphasises the structural inequalities which influence and constrain action. By shifting attention away from the single event, it underlines the complex interaction between the lifetime accumulation of resources and experiences and ongoing inequalities in opportunity, assets and participation (Clapham et al, 2014).

Life course models represent a key *behavioural* approach to the analysis of housing decisions where *room stress* and *disequilibrium* in housing satisfaction are triggered by *life events*, inducing changes to household composition (Clapham, 2002). As Mulder and Lauster (2010, p.434) highlight:

In the life courses of individuals, family events and housing events are strongly inter-related. Housing serves as the context for family events and families serve as the context for housing events.

As a result, specific types of residential move are seen to be common at certain points in the life course. Lu (1999) for instance finds that young people are particularly prone to frequent relocation, whilst both Fischer and Malmberg (2001) and Warnes (1992) point out more specifically that completion of education and the associated move into the work force are important precursors of mobility. The mid-phase of life in contrast, understood not in terms of absolutes but rather as a clustered set of activities, responsibilities and routines, is characterised by a different epistemology. It is dominated by the type of events which trigger a move, but once the size of the family has stabilised and its needs have been satisfied, mobility slows dramatically (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Clark and Huang, 2003 Coulter and van Ham, 2013). Feijten and Mulder (2005) show that marriage frequently triggers a move into home ownership, whilst in contrast partnership dissolution tends to lead to a move out of this form of tenure (Dieleman and Everaers, 1998; Feijten and van Ham, 2010; DeWilde, 2008). The birth of a child is a common cause of room stress which results in local adjustment moves (Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). Similarly, empty nests or retirement can trigger a reassessment of need as individuals

are no longer tied to education or labour markets (Beckett-Milburn et al, 2005). They may therefore choose to make a long desired *quality of life* move or relocate to be closer to relatives (Driant et al, 2005; Wulff et al, 2010). Both Weeks et al (2005) and Warnes (1992) find that infirmity in late old age often prompts a further re-assessment, although Robison and Moen (2000) find many individuals envisage ageing in place, embedded in a community which they believe will provide them with on-going support.

However this representation of the intersection between housing and the life course risks creating an overly static view of individual housing transitions. Young people's housing patterns in particular have been radically transformed over the last twenty years. Heath and Cleaver (2003) highlight the ongoing destandardisation of young people's transitions into adulthood, where patterns of movement in and out of a variety of living arrangements have become increasingly fragmented. They argue that the generation of the 1960s and 1970s enjoyed a relatively linear housing pathway, characterised by short periods of parental dependency, often followed directly by progression to family formation. This possibly provides an overly uniform view of the housing transitions of previous generations. However, there is no doubt that the cumulative effects of an acute housing shortage in the UK, the rising cost of living and increased rates of marriage breakdown, mean that young adults today increasingly move in, and out of, a variety of living arrangements as household forms are created and dissolved. Valentine (2003) goes so far as to argue that the boundary between childhood and adulthood is difficult to define; pointing out that the transition between the two is rarely either a one-off or a one-way process. Equally, at the other end of the life course, older people's housing arrangements are becoming similarly destandardised. Partnership dissolution and the need to organise living arrangements around requirements for shared care in particular, are reshaping housing choices (Hill and Sutton, 2010).

A variety of social markers therefore, such as gender, class and sexuality, intersect with the categories children, youth or old-age to establish a multiplicity of housing trajectories (Valentine, 2003). The value of a life course approach in this situation is the extent to which it facilitates an exploration beyond deterministic structures, to identify the role of power relations in creating differential housing pathways where



outcomes are socially and temporally situated (Schwanen and Kwan, 2012). Courgeau's (1985) longitudinal study of French housing outcomes clearly demonstrates for example the lifelong impact of externalities such as war and economic cycles on choice and mobility. Feijten and Mulder (2005) similarly highlight how continued housing quality is strongly determined by educational outcomes, periods of unemployment, timing of partnerships or transition to parenthood. Social inequalities exert a strong and continued influence on housing careers from a very early age. Family background, financial circumstances and educational experience all impact directly on decision-making capacity, imposing constraints and bestowing freedoms. This leads Clapham (2002) to suggest the concept of *housing pathways* as a means of analysing interactions within the housing market. Defined as 'patterns of interaction ... concerning house and home, over time and space' (Clapham, 2002, p.63) these capture the dynamic nature of individual interaction with housing. Clapham et al (2014) show for instance how disadvantaged early experience leading to poor educational outcomes is likely to have an ongoing impact on an individual's ability to access high quality housing throughout the life course. Ford et al (2002, p.2466) similarly identify a number of housing pathways followed by young people in the transition to adulthood, each determined by their ability to plan and control the move to independent living:

... chaotic pathways which characterise the most vulnerable young people, are associated with instability, poor conditions, limited choice and exclusion. Planned pathways by contrast, confer choice and facilitate progression in the housing market and can only be followed by those with more resources.

As Ermisch (1999) points out, this now means that it is those with higher levels of current income who are more likely to leave the parental home at an early stage and to transition to home ownership themselves, particularly if they have help from their parents to do so.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Wiesel (2013) finds the experiences of Australians living in social housing are characterised by frequent mobility, lack of alternatives and housing circumstances which in turn restrict accumulation of economic and social capital. Similarly, in old age, for some the period at the beginning of the twenty first century has been,

... converted from a short 'empty' period marred by ill-health and physical or mental incapacities, to a 'third age' of life during which new social and recreational activities are pursued (Warnes, 1992, p.181).

For others, without the material wealth of home ownership to support them, the outlook can be much bleaker, characterised instead by poverty and isolation. This may be lessened only by the extent to which social and cultural norms about the importance of the family lead sons or daughters to incorporate older people into the family home (Fincher, 1993; Rose, 1993).

*A life course or housing pathway* perspective therefore makes two important contributions to understanding of residential decision-making. First of all models demonstrate one of the key social structures which shape choices. Life course trajectories, marked by periodic life events are seen to establish both housing need and preferences. Secondly the approach also facilitates understanding of the variety of individual experience. An assortment of social markers, including age, gender, ethnicity and social status, come together to shape diverse *housing pathways*. Perceptions of facilities or realistic housing possibilities are therefore seen to be framed by a multiplicity of differing personal histories which serve to bestow or constrain choice (Hopkins and Pain, 2007; 2008).

However, as an important behavioural model, faults with a life course approach inevitably reflect those highlighted earlier. This is particularly the case as research takes place almost entirely within the context of large scale quantitative surveys. As Coulter et al, (2015) point out, the inability of this type of study to analyse more than one aspect of data at a time limits its ability to tease out the nuances of decision-making. Moreover Winstanley et al (2002) highlight how models remain largely based on a conception of the 'traditional' nuclear family where cultural norms about the household continue to dominate. As the key unit of analysis, the family is once more un-problematically assumed to act with a unified voice with only limited recognition given to the social changes associated with the *second demographic transition* (Buzar et al, 2005). The de-centring of traditional family structures, increasing personal mobility and women's greater involvement in the workforce are embodied in the household and as such have impacted in housing needs (Jarvis 2007;

Duncan et al, 2003). Whilst life course models offer the opportunity to explore trends towards separate living and smaller households, the changing negotiation of gender roles appears to have gone almost unnoticed (Buzar et al, 2005). Moen and Wethington (1992, p.239) identify for instance how individual members may follow competing goals, pointing out that exactly how conflicting strategies coalesce into a household consensus is mostly ‘uncharted territory.’ Coulter’s work has made significant inroads into understanding intra-household processes of residential decision-making (Coulter et al, 2012; Coulter and van Ham, 2013). However, few other studies address what Jarvis et al (2001) call the *black box* of the household, where compromise and negotiation may be necessary to secure a household move.

Having focussed so far on structural approaches to examining residential choice, the chapter now turns to explore alternatives which take an agency-based perspective. At the same time reliance on large scale quantitative surveys is seen to give way to qualitative work focussed on understanding shades of attitudinal difference. It takes a broad-based approach, exploring the insights available from community studies, together with work surrounding social capital and time-space geographies. However, it starts by examining conceptualisations of the house as an emotional construct; as a place of safety and an object of desire.

## **2.5 The house as (more than) home**

So, the city as a sea of faces, a forest of hands, an ocean of lamentation:  
these are the building blocks of modern urbanism just as much as brick and  
stone (Thrift, 2004, p.74).

Anderson and Smith (2001) argue that almost all negotiations and transactions are the product of complex and private emotional interactions. Workplace or financial relationships are as replete with human feeling as are friendships or a love affair. Therefore ‘... to neglect the emotions is to exclude a key set of relations through which lives are lived and societies are made’ (Anderson and Smith, 2001, p.7). Aalbers (2012) similarly makes this point with respect to international financial markets, arguing that whilst they are conceptually rational and utilitarian, they are in reality socially constructed. By highlighting the human input into individual

transactions he shows how the ‘creative’ repackaging and resale of mortgages ultimately led to the 2008 financial crash. In their examination of the Edinburgh housing boom Christie, Smith and Monroe show how housing markets are more than just essentialist entities, subject to external economic laws (Christie et al, 2008; Smith et al, 2006; Monroe and Smith, 2008). Instead they are ‘saturated’ with human emotions, which in turn create concrete economic effects. In the case of the Edinburgh housing market, fear, anxiety and hope inspired by objects of attachment are shown to have further intensified a property boom fast spiralling out of control. In this context, then, a house or flat is more than a mere physical place to which one returns at the end of the day and lays one’s head. Instead it is a *home*, a place of safety, an object of desire, a performed construct which is personal and unique (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). In fact *home* does not need to have a physical manifestation at all, a point demonstrated by Milligan (2005) as she shows how individuals are able to construct a *homely* environment in the most unpromising of physical surroundings.

Perhaps the most common construct of *home* is one which draws on Heidegger’s notion of *dwelling* (Heidegger, 1971). This humanistic conceptualisation is as a place of refuge from the restless, competitive and endlessly challenging *outside* (Tuan, 1977; Rose, 2012; Easthope, 2014). This characterisation continues to exert a tremendous pull on the popular imagination. As Winstanley et al (2002, p.814) put it,

... focus on housing, as a physical structure used in an instrumentalist way, is different to the notion of creating home which is an individual and/or collective process which impacts upon the ways in which residents view their houses and neighbourhoods. (Winstanley et al, 2002, p.814).

Walmsley et al (1998) find for instance that perceptions of the safe and relaxed lifestyle available on the New South Wales coast are sufficient to convince some city dwellers to migrate without ever having visited the particular town in question. Christie et al (2008) report in turn how house buyers were seduced into a bidding war by their ‘love’ for properties which they expected would provide personal pleasure, security and status. Nevertheless the idea has attracted legitimate criticism, not least for its gendered connotations. In giving primacy to a male conceptualisation of a *haven* this understanding ignores women’s experience of the space as a place of work

and entrapment (Cresswell, 2004; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Similarly, the concept of *home* as *refuge* is challenged by the fact that individual experience is inextricably bound up with relative position in the social hierarchy and therefore with differential access to the security of high quality housing (Dufty-Jones, 2012; Wiesel, 2013).

However, the house has also been seen to satisfy an alternative role which draws on notions of it as a consumption good, intrinsically bound up with conceptions of self-identity and with status (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Fagnani, 1993; Bridge, 2005). Miles and Paddison (1998) identify the role of consumption in the development of modernity, pointing to Veblen's (1899) work showing how consumer goods acted as markers of social prestige and status amongst the wealthy at the end of the nineteenth century. As production for subsistence was replaced by wage labour, people inevitably became consumers as well as producers. However, Miles and Paddison (1998) highlight how it is only since the Second World War that consumption has become a real possibility for the working classes and therefore a prime focus for aspirational elements of it. The concomitant growth in home ownership has been accompanied by a profound change in individual attitudes towards housing (Saunders, 1990). This is manifest not only in a greater degree of physical and monetary investment in property to improve and maintain it, but also increased personal emotional commitment. Blunt and Dowling (2006, p.100) point out that in western countries at the beginning of the twenty first century:

A central feature of imaginaries of home is their idealization: certain dwelling structures and social relations are imagined to be 'better', more socially appropriate and an ideal to be aspired to.

In continental Europe, a relatively plentiful supply of high quality, privately and socially, rented stock has meant that households feel sufficiently secure to invest time and money in ensuring rented property meets their needs. However, the lack of high quality alternatives to home ownership in the the UK has focussed both physical and emotional investment on owner-occupation. The expressions *housing career* and *housing ladder*, with their connotations of advancement are commonly used to describe the ways in which households adjust the quality and price of their property to meet aspirations or constraints over the course of their lives (Walmsley and Lewis, 1993; Winstanley et al, 2002; Clark and Huang, 2003; Allen, 2006; Clark et al,

2006). Moves to a 'better' area may say as much about the self-perception of the household as the failings or otherwise of the existing neighbourhood or the housing stock. However, implicit in both of these expressions is the idea that home ownership is a key means of securing control over one's living environment. This is despite the impact of volume housebuilding in creating a largely unimaginative and unvarying housing stock. Allen (2008b) criticises government regeneration policy for imposing a middle class narrative of *housing as investment* on working class people. However, aspirations for improvement appear to hold across the social scale (Kearns and Parkes, 2003). Although financial constraints naturally limit opportunity to 'trade up' to larger properties, with more outside space in environmentally appealing locations, others point out that the working classes are not immune from buying in to such perspectives (Ronald, 2010; Saunders, 1990).

However, a view of housing as an item of consumption is not only associated with utilitarian ideas of 'advancement'. Choices about housing appear to be bound at a fundamental level with individual self-perception. Christie et al (2008) find that making a house purchase can be a rite of passage, a transition to the adult world. At the other end of the life course spectrum, Wulff et al (2010) show how relocation to a new area and a different type of property are more common when a person's identity shifts from 'parent' to 'empty nester'. Other perspectives on personal emotional investment in housing come from studies examining gentrification. The chapter examined earlier how Smith's (1979; 1987) analysis was predicated on an economic theorisation of the *rent gap*. However, alternative interpretations are set within an understanding of housing as a commodified good which assumes cultural significance on becoming associated with a particular lifestyle. Ley's (1996) analysis of gentrification in Canadian cities depicts a process of urban transformation led by a young and highly educated population, employed in the burgeoning service and public sector of the 1960s and 1970s. Attracted to the city not only by the prospect of an easy commute and low rents, but also by a narrative of *urban liveability* and *cultural distinction*, these individuals transformed the image and practice of city centre living (Zukin, 1989).

More recent gentrification research however, puts *belonging* and *place attachment* at centre stage. Drawing on Boudieu's concepts of *distinction*, *habitus*, *capital* and

*field* to understand how space is created and consumed, a range of authors have undertaken a fine-grained examination of residential space (Butler and Robson, 2001, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005; Bridge, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2005). This work shows individual trajectories determined by a class *habitus*, directed by shared social, cultural and ethical norms and shaped by differential access to economic, cultural or social *capital* (Bourdieu, 1979; 2009). Bourdieu proposes that everyday life is performed across a number of *fields*, each governed by a particular set of social relations. Individuals feel at their most secure when they feel suitably comfortable with the *rules* governing activity within the field. By constructing *housing* as a *field*, Butler and Robson (2003a) show a process of residential sorting in London driven primarily by a preference for residential space alongside those of a similar social outlook. Whilst most obviously this might mean space shared with others with a comparable social or economic background, it is clear that other values also drive activity.

... individuals pursue complex strategies towards [these] housing markets, which are influenced primarily by their stocks of economic capital but also by decisions about the nature of the area's *habitus* – or perceived *habitus*. This is often articulated in terms of the 'attitudes, beliefs and feelings' held by individuals, which, in many cases, are the outcome of their period of compulsory and post-compulsory schooling and primary socialisation (Butler and Robson, 2003a, p.74).

Within this context, residential locations grow to be desirable when they become *symbolically meaningful* to potential residents, in this case when they feel there is a fit between their own *habitus* and the values of the neighbourhood. Butler and Robson's (2003a) research participants placed considerable value on the distinctiveness built into their domestic and neighbourhood environments. The concern they expressed at their devaluation by the homogenization of global culture is therefore unsurprising.

Savage et al's (2005) concept of *elective belonging* also draws on Bourdieu's ideas to develop a similar understanding of how individuals select a neighbourhood as a suitable place to live. Dismissing communitarian understandings of belonging focused on a spatially fixed, bounded and historically rooted community, the authors

instead re-interpret space as a site for *performing identity*. By attaching what they term a 'biography' (p.207) to their chosen residential location, Savage et al (2005) argue that individuals set it within a framework appropriate to their sense of themselves. As such,

One's residence is a crucial, possibly *the* crucial, identifier of who you are. The sorting process by which people choose to live in certain places and others leave is at the heart of contemporary battles over social distinction (Savage et al, 2005, p.207).

*Elective belonging* therefore is premised on a location matching the individual's expectations of their lifestyle and self-assessment of their social position. Sites are chosen by those wishing to 'announce their identities' (Savage et al, 2005, p.207). The assessment they make about shared consumption practices is at least as important as the neighbourhood's amenity value or the pressure to live close to a place of work. For both Butler and Robson (2003a) and Savage et al (2005) the local comes to the fore as an important context within which everyday life is experienced. Echoing Massey's (1994) understanding of the individual's sense of place in an increasingly interconnected world, these studies act as a counterpoint to claims about the impact of global financial and consumption trends on individual existence.

Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas, these interpretations share an understanding of the neighbourhood as a key social field and therefore as a means through which an individual may distinguish themselves (Bourdieu, 1979). The different forms of capital accumulated by residents are converted to symbolic capital through sharing residential space with others. Claims to belonging are validated where this is recognised and legitimated by peers (Benson, 2014). In this context, the role of third parties, including estate agents, the media and even friends and relations, in creating and supporting a housing market is a complex one. The price of a property is 'not a single figure but a series of meanings affecting the parties involved' (Clarke et al, 1994, p.75). Bridge (2001a) in his study of the gentrifying Sydney housing market, highlights for instance how estate agents, as intermediaries, convert cultural into economic capital by arbitrating the tastes of the departing working classes and new middle class arrivals. As mediators they are fully aware of the need to appeal to a new kind of clientele in order to achieve a high price for the sale:



... if I'm writing an ad for a property, I'll go through the property and I'll look at the character and the Victorian history of the home and write the ad around that, rather than write about how many bedrooms, how many lounge rooms, what it's got. I'll look at the character first. And we're finding the buyers who are buying it are sophisticated, and they're looking for character. They buy it because of the history. They buy it because they're turned off by the modernization of a terrace, so you're looking at a cultural-different type of person who is looking for a home which has character. (Inner Sydney Estate Agent quoted in Bridge, 2001a, p.90)

In Glasgow both Hastings (2004) and Kearns et al (2013) describe a similar, though multi-faceted, process of transmission involving not only estate agents but also journalists and bureaucrats. Their studies of deprived social housing estates demonstrate the importance of a common narrative in the process of creating and sustaining the image of a location. Johansson (2012) insists that such narratives need to be linked to an underlying material reality in order to successfully implant themselves in the wider consciousness. However, Birdsall-Jones (2013) points out the extent to which they become self-sustaining where the social characteristics of those living in a locality may come to exemplify the neighbourhood itself.

To date analyses which place *capital* and *habitus* at their heart have focussed largely on middle class housing choices. This is perhaps hardly surprising since the logical conclusion of *elective belonging* is that a mismatch between *habitus* and *field* can be solved by re-location (Benson, 2014). Those without sufficient financial and social capital have more limited flexibility. However, a range of other studies have also shown how the perspectives provided by Butler and Robson (2001; 2003a), Bridge (2001a; 2003; 2005) and Savage et al (2005) are capable of providing insights into the residential decision-making process across a range of social groups and spatial contexts. Both Allen et al (2005, 2007) and Watt (2009) for instance identify a *habitus* amongst the *middle middle class* characterised by practicality and a form of *inconspicuous consumption* that should provide *value for money*. Similarly, using Bourdieu's schematic, Southerton (2002) is able to provide a fine-grained analysis of residential *habitus* in the environment of a new town where self-narratives are strongly influenced by relative stocks of cultural, economic and social capital.

However, as Southerton (2002) also points out, researchers need to be wary of oversimplifying a complex social process. In this case a variety of other considerations, including housing status, geographic boundaries and historical connections, were all seen to play a role in grounding normative perceptions of social status. This points to the need to adopt a multifaceted approach to understanding housing choice which draws on the myriad of influences within which everyday life is played out.

## **2.6 The household, space-time constraints and managing everyday life**

The chapter therefore now turns to examine a broad body of work which is rarely associated with residential choice, but which has the potential to bring valuable insights to the subject. It starts by exploring how households manage day to day social reproductive responsibilities. Indeed implicit in all the theories examined so far lies an assumption that residential choice is one means by which households manage the complex web of activities which together comprise their everyday lives. For Balchin et al (1995) *rational economic man* is prepared to pay a high price for a shorter commute and therefore more time at home. Similarly, *behavioural* models highlight the importance of a range of accessible amenities which together support *quality of life* objectives (Lynch and Rasmussen, 2003; Meen et al, 2005). However, these studies, predominantly quantitative in nature, have a tendency to examine and value characteristics of a desirable neighbourhood in isolation. In contrast, by taking the household as the starting point and by examining decision-making in the context of *time-space constraint*, a range of authors are able to show how a combination of assets are sought after as key elements of *spatially situated strategies* for managing everyday life. This is particularly the case for households with children because of the greater degree of conflicting time-space pressure they are under (Moen et al, 2001; Forsberg, 2009).

Within this context, proximity to the workplace, to schools or nurseries, or ease of access to shopping facilities for instance, should be seen as a central element of strategies adopted by households to juggle responsibilities at home and at work (Jarvis, 1999; Schwanen and de Jong, 2008). Jarvis (1999) in particular argues that social and ‘*non-material*’ (p.242) motives are as important in determining household (im)mobility as are economic ones, where the co-ordination of home, work and

family life is embedded in a series of complex familial strategies. She conceptualises this as the *social and spatial situatedness* of the household:

The connections between home and work are manifest in tensions which exist between individual employment mobility and the social and spatial situatedness of the household micro-economy. This nexus is a significant dimension of a growing number of dual earning households. At a fundamental level, the co-ordination of home and work hinges on opportunities and constraints pertaining to residential location and mobility and the way this issue is negotiated through the life-course. However, this is not simply determined by the many logistical difficulties associated with the co-ordination of more than one employment from a single residential location. Households are 'situated' in place in a variety of ways which feed into strategies of relative mobility and attachment to place. It is suggested that the way that households accommodate the demands of home and work are constituted through a meshing together of the action spaces and social relations of individual household members in these spheres. In effect, household behaviour emerges from a 'tangled web' of networks: of social and kin relations; of resource provision; and of information, knowledge and learning (Jarvis; 1999, p.225).

Similarly, Sweet et al (2005), identify the importance attached to schools, parks, libraries and community events by parents in up-state New York as representing a *family adaptive strategy*, set in motion in response to the stresses associated with social reproduction. They argue that community selection, for dual-earning parents in particular, should be articulated as a coping mechanism facilitating responses to the potential conflicts of paid employment and the *unpaid job* of childrearing (Bowen et al, 2000).

These family adaptive strategies make use of two key assets embedded within the neighbourhood. Proximity to high quality physical amenities together with localised social networks both help to satisfy practical care needs and provide a suitable social environment for transmission of cultural capital to the next generation. At their most prosaic, community selection strategies are predicated on the need for ready access to practical support in coordinating everyday responsibilities. Niedomysl (2008) shows

that neighbourhood, the child-friendliness of amenities and close proximity of family and relatives become more important as individuals progress through to family formation. In turn there is less emphasis on access to work and entertainment. More specifically the extent of outdoor space and the availability of larger homes grow to be particularly relevant for many families (Fagnani, 1992; Kim et al, 2005; Clark et al, 2006). Local schooling which is perceived to be of high quality is often a pre-requisite (Butler and Robson, 2003a; 2003b) as are low crime levels (Swisher et al, 2004; Sweet et al, 2005; Rabe and Taylor, 2010).

Similarly, localised social networks are a valuable resource for help with childcare in an environment where child rearing appears to have become increasingly *intensive* (Pratt and Hanson, 1991; Jarvis, 1999, 2005). Higher levels of residential mobility which have reduced access to traditional familial networks of support have encouraged reliance on alternative networks of friends and neighbours to supplement increasingly commodified childcare arrangements (McDowell et al, 2005). The consequences of a lack of such a support network are highlighted by one of Green's (1997, p.648) research respondents:

The logic of Nottingham was that it was a nice city and somewhere midway between our respective families ... That was a mistake ... when it comes to having children we didn't have the family support. I think if we were to do the thing again we would favour either moving closer to one family or the other so you actually get that support.

Where parents are seen to be becoming progressively more child centred, emotionally involved and active managers of their children's lives (Forsberg, 2009), mothers in particular are heavily reliant on reciprocal help from relatives and other mothers in handling the busy schedules of their children (Arendell, 2000). The networks of support sustained through spatial proximity are therefore a vital means of buffering work and family strain (Moen and Sweet, 2004; Moen et al, 2001).

In addition to the practical support provided by physical amenity and localised social networks, the neighbourhood is a key environment within which social and cultural capital is transmitted to the next generation. Blunt and Dowling (2006) chart the rise of the twenty-first century *ideal* home as the detached, owner-occupied house, on a

large plot in the suburbs. Whilst this is certainly a culturally and historically specific ideal, it nevertheless remains a powerful reference point for families in Europe and the US (Fagnani, 1992; Driant et al, 2005; Corcoran et al, 2008). The suburbs and countryside continue to signify safety and a healthy lifestyle as the ideal environment in which to raise the next generation in a pure, innocent experience of childhood (Moen et al, 2001; Sweet et al, 2005; Clark et al, 2006; Niedomysl, 2008; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). Conversely:

Paralleling the social construction of the suburban house as an ideal home is the presumption that a city dwelling cannot accommodate normative ideals of home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.107).

The prevalence of other social groups in the city and a housing form which is not held to be conducive to family life continues to exert a powerful negative influence on households with children in Anglo-Saxon countries (Jarvis and Alvanides, 2008; Reay et al, 2007; Hollingworth and Williams, 2009). Whilst some of this is undoubtedly articulated in terms of the practical advantages of suburban and rural neighbourhoods, it is also possible to detect other undercurrents. Skeggs (1997) argues that *respectable* households, most obviously but not necessarily middle class households, look to distance themselves physically and metaphorically from the working class *other*. Instead they seek to articulate their own sense of identity, passing it on to their children in a specific form of cultural and social capital (Skeggs, 2004; Lawler, 2005; Reay et al, 2007). Blunt and Dowling (2006) argue that such prejudices do not play the same role in residential decision-making on continental Europe where there is not such a clear distinction between the public and the private. However, other evidence appears to show that French and German parents are as keen to avoid inner city schools with large populations of ethnic minorities as their UK and US counterparts (Noreish, 2006; Poupeau, 2006).

In fact a number of studies show how the local education market is a critical field to be negotiated in ensuring appropriate social reproductive outcomes. Where the middle classes in particular are seen to be anxious about their place in a competitive world, an investment in educational credentials and social networks bolsters the future prospects of their offspring (Butler and Robson, 2003a). In this context, access to high quality, and preferably local, education becomes of paramount

importance for those with school-age children (Ball et al, 1995, 1996; Butler and Robson, 2003a, 2003b). There is considerable evidence to show that schools, as an essential local service, contribute significantly to the *value* of local housing markets so that a house price premium exists for access to the right educational offer (Cheshire and Sheppard, 2004; Leech and Campos, 2003; Fack and Grenet, 2010). At a simplistic level, the most popular schools are those with above average attainment and high mean pupil socio-economic status (Croft, 2003). However, fear of, or antipathy towards, the working class or ethnic *other* has also been shown to steer families away from inner city schools where these groups form the majority population (Reay, 2007; Reay et al, 2007; Crozier et al, 2008; Hollingworth and Williams, 2009; Hamnett et al, 2013). Households can, and do, adopt a variety of strategies to avoid what may be seen as a poor local educational offering (Butler et al, 2007; Maloutas, 2006; Noreisch, 2006; Poupeau et al, 2006; Oberti, 2007).

Much of the work examined in this section is not primarily engaged with residential choice. Nevertheless it highlights the variety of ways in which households manage time-space constraints and the complex process of social reproduction. In doing so it demonstrates the key role of the neighbourhood in mitigating the potentially competing demands of household management and labour market commitments, and brings an additional layer of understanding to residential choices. Households with children are seen to be particularly under pressure in an environment where both men and women find their time is increasingly devoted to the workplace (Perrons et al, 2005; Burchell et al, 1999).

## **2.7 Linked lives: home and community**

Finally, the chapter turns to examine the body of work concerned with *community*, focussing in particular on the role that notions of *belonging* play in situating households within their residential neighbourhood. *Community* is of course a contested and imprecise concept that a variety of authors have argued has no analytical value because it means so many different things to so many different people (Valentine, 2001). Within geography ‘community’ traditionally assumed a territorial connection, within what Cater and Jones (1989, p.169) define as a ‘socially interactive space’ dependent on proximity, territory, social homogeneity and time.

The role of the neighbourhood is therefore important in supporting face to face relationships which only take shape over time. Young and Willmott (1962) for instance show how slum clearance programmes in East London disrupted the strong personal bonds which existed within demolished neighbourhoods in Bethnal Green. As already seen in Chapter 1, this has led writers such as Tönnies (2001) and Sennett (1998) to argue that such communities have become irretrievably 'lost' as a result of advances in capitalism. Pahl (1966) identifies a 'rural-urban continuum' which sees country areas capable of maintaining a strong sense of belonging amongst close-knit face-to-face communities after capitalist forces have transformed personal relationships within urban locations. However, both Bell and Newby (1971) and Rose (1990) point out how the 'neighbourhood community', which formed a staple of community studies in the 1950s and 1960s, has been romanticised. They argue that in reality evidence of a causal relationship between spatial proximity and social cohesion has been exaggerated and that such locales were as much sites of conflict and isolation as they were solidity and unity.

Wellman (1979) has characterised debates about the continued existence of *community* as communities 'lost', 'saved' and 'liberated'. Whilst those who promulgate a 'community lost' approach have been particularly prominent, a variety of authors show how spatially focussed relationships continue to have relevance in the twenty first century (Tomanay, 2013, 2014; Devine-Wright, 2015). However, more recent conceptualisations have broadened understanding of how individuals position themselves within a variety of social locations. As such 'communities liberated' are detached from the local area. Social changes such as separation of home and work, high rates of residential mobility and increasing urban heterogeneity, together with developments in communications technology, have created and facilitated spatially wider and more complex social linkages (Wellman, 1979). Massey (1994) goes so far as to argue that bounded space is no longer necessary for the creation of a shared identity. Because social space is 'the vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations' (p.168) places are rather complex locations where different communities come together at different times. In this sense space is relational; made and remade by social processes which ignore taken for granted boundaries on a map (Allen et al, 1998). Locations are capable of enjoying a variety of simultaneous identities which individuals may relate

to concurrently, drawing on other relationships and experiences stretched across space and time (Massey, 1994; 2005). Similarly, communitarian discourse emphasises how shared values, norms and history are converted into mutual benefits and commitments as a key means by which individuals mobilise community. Etzioni (1998) describes them as:

... webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values (Etzioni, 1998, p.xiii).

He points out that contemporary communities exist as part of a pluralistic web where individuals are frequently members of more than one simultaneously. This may encompass the community of the immediate family, the physical space of the neighbourhood or the socio-normative networks which surround institutions such as churches or clubs. Once more these understandings of community do not address residential choice directly. However, an understanding of personal networks and how they operate to create a sense of belonging provides a valuable context to decisions about where to live.

Putnam's (2000) work in particular has been important in generating widespread interest in community and communitarianism since the millenium. By mobilising the concept of *social capital*, his analysis provides a means of understanding how communities function. This holds true whether those communities are territorially or relationally focussed. Essentially a set of social relations mediated by space, *social capital* facilitates development of the reciprocal networks of mutual obligation which are key to sustaining trust and connections between individuals (Naughton, 2014). This is what Fukuyama (1999, p.1) describes as 'an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals.' Within this context, shared physical location is not a pre-requisite for the establishment of a community. Importantly Putnam, in drawing attention to different dimensions of social capital, facilitates recognition of the diverse ties which have the potential to bind individuals to their communities, whether spatial or social. *Bridging social capital*, Granovetter's (1973) 'loose ties' link individuals through communal institutions to wider social networks. By focussing on the decline of this type of social capital in the post-war western world, Putnam's lament has been widely criticised for its neo-liberal and objectivist account (Holt, 2008; Naughton, 2014). However, his



conceptualisation of *bonding social capital*, demonstrates an alternative understanding of how individuals continue to create mutual obligations. Inward looking and supporting strong private relationships, he recognises how this type of social capital continues to be an important element of modern community building where shared values and norms are reinforced through personal friendships. There is evidence that both bridging and bonding social capital play a role in mediating decisions about where to live.

Taking the close knit ties generated by *bonding social capital* first, there is considerable evidence to demonstrate how they inform residential decision-making. Enhanced connections to place engendered through ties to relatives, friends and shared cultural institutions have been shown to explain many residential moves (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). Bailey et al (2004) go so far as to conceptualise the household as a network of *linked lives* where connections to children and parents are powerful influences on choices about where to live (Weeks et al, 2005). Whilst the previous section showed how families and friends are important sources of reciprocal care, income or resource pooling, they also act as significant providers of mutual emotional support. Mulder and Wagner (2012) highlight for instance how local connections to place underpin a network of consolation in the case of partnership breakdown. Those whose parents are nearby or who have a long history of living in the same locality are subsequently far less likely to undertake long distance moves than those with few social ties. Peach (1998) similarly shows how residential choices amongst first and second generation immigrants are often set within the context of the emotional security derived from living close to both near relatives and shared cultural institutions (Cameron and Field, 2000). Finally, although neighbourhoods consisting of single dwellings continue to exert a powerful draw on the imagination, Jarvis (2011) shows how visions of communality have modern day relevance in the North American co-housing movement. As places where collaborative social activity is designed to promote solidarity, their popularity rests on an alternative to disconnected and *stretched out* social relationships. The family unit therefore, together with non-familial networks and relationships with extended kin are important ongoing sources of identity and support. Whilst migration patterns have had the effect of increasingly stretching relations across space, both intimate

personal relationships and proximity nevertheless continue to matter (Wasoff et al, 2005).

*Bridging social capital* appears to play an equally significant, if occasionally more intangible, role in decisions about where to live. White and Hurdley (2003) for instance show that for Japanese corporate movers the presence of others sharing a cultural heritage is a powerful reason to locate in a particular area. A range of other studies highlight how a *sense of community* features highly on the list of desirable neighbourhood attributes (Silverman et al, 2006; Warr and Robson, 2013). Whilst Walters and Rosenblatt (2008) show the extent to which this may be nothing more than an idealised search for nostalgia and security, they nevertheless also accept that the illusion of community is an important element of residential satisfaction. The qualities of a family friendly neighbourhood in upstate New York identified by Sweet, Swisher and Moen (Sweet et al, 2005; Swisher et al, 2004) are heavily reliant on perceptions of community and *neighbourliness*. The presence of other residents at similar life course stages and the existence of organised social events are seen to be as important for neighbourhood liveability as recreational, cultural or educational opportunities. Within this context, Sennett (1998) sees a strengthening attachment to local networks and activities as an important defensive mechanism in the face of modern ways of working which have generated increasing personal uncertainty. Indeed, whilst both Savage et al (2005) and Butler and Robson (2003a) emphasise the role of residential space in performing individual identity, this needs to be understood in the context of Giddens' (1990) understanding of globalisation. The disconcerting changes brought about by information technology and the increasing pace with which global capital is transmitted around the world have provoked personal alienation through a perceived lack of control over one's own destiny. For Butler and Robson (2003a) gentrification in London therefore is a means of coping with modern day life for the beleaguered middle classes as they manage the transmission of social and cultural capital to the next generation. However, what Atkinson (2006) might describe as a process of *insulation*, Butler and Robson portray rather as a mechanism of engagement. Physical space, preferably shared with like-minded individuals is a site for everyday social interaction, rather than a place of retreat. Residential space therefore becomes desirable precisely because of the sense of *community* it invokes.

Others similarly show how familiarity and place attachment play a significant role in influencing decisions about where to live (Feldman, 1990; Chen et al, 2009).

Hinrichs (1999) for example, demonstrates how East Berliners continue after reunification to enjoy particularly close ties to Brandenburg and to specific Bezirke to the east of the city. Westerners in contrast sustain a greater tendency to migrate to the western districts of Brandenburg or to the familiarity of the old Laender. Others have noted the sense of attachment that derives from simply being part of a community for an extended period of time and how this appears to induce residential inertia (Jarvis, 1999; Sweet et al, 2005). Cadwallader (1992) points out that as a result, a significant proportion of residential searches are restricted to less than three miles.

Massey (1994) argues that place cannot be associated solely with bounded space, occupied only by those with a shared history. Instead place identity is formed by the ‘juxtaposition and co-presence there of particular sets of social interrelations,’ (p.168). In this sense both *bridging* and *bonding* social capitals play different but specific roles in anchoring individuals to residential space through the relationships they have with others. *Community* therefore has ongoing resonance for those searching for a place to live.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined a range of approaches to residential choice and residential mobility. Household utility theories, behavioural theories, life course and humanistic understandings of home have long formed a central part of traditional analyses and each has been seen to make valuable contributions alongside their particular limitations. Rational utilitarian theories identify many of the important characteristics of a desirable neighbourhood, despite their overdue focus on commuting distances. Behavioural approaches supplement understanding by incorporating a range of other neighbourhood and environmental attributes (Phe and Wakely, 2000; Clark et al, 1997; Clark and Huang, 2003). However, in both cases conceptualisation of an a-historical individual, divorced from ‘his’ social environment, condemns explanations to the abstract and the artificial which are often

difficult to demonstrate in practice (Hodgson, 1996; Meen and Meen, 2003). Incorporating the impact of the life course provides a complementary approach by highlighting how patterns of need are shaped by external household pressures and transitions in other life fields (Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). This also brings with it recognition of how decisions are constrained and shaped by a variety of socio-economic markers to create contrasting housing pathways of advantage and disadvantage (Monk and Katz, 1993).

Household utility and behavioural theories sit squarely within a rational and positivist research tradition. However, the chapter has also demonstrated how interpretations which draw on a range of sociological thinking are important in constructing understanding about residential choices. Incorporating a conceptualisation of the physical dwelling as a place of *safety* brings with it an appreciation of the role of emotion in decision-making; a feature conspicuous by its absence from rational utilitarian theories (Tuan, 1977; Easthope, 2014; Winstanley, 2002). However, such humanistic notions have been seen to be limited by gendered connotations which ignore differential experiences where *home* may be constituted as much as a place of danger as a place of safety (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Recent work within specialised literature on urban gentrification has drawn on ideas about *home as status symbol* to place accounts of residential choice within an understanding of housing markets as social constructions (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Bridge, 2001a; Savage et al, 2005). To date this approach has been largely limited to research into particular groups of middle class people in particular types of urban location. However, I have argued that it could and should be applied to a variety of spatial situations in order to unpack how individuals across the social spectrum experience property and neighbourhood.

The links between these approaches and residential choice research are well established. However, Chapter 2 has examined in addition other approaches, not traditionally associated with the subject. In doing so the thesis recognises an opportunity to draw on a wider range of knowledge than is usually the case. The role of the neighbourhood in providing both practical and emotional support has so far attracted only limited academic interest, Jarvis's work and a variety of studies around school choice notwithstanding (Jarvis, 1999, 2003; Jarvis et al, 2001; Butler and

Robson, 2003b; Leech and Campos, 2003). Within the context of societal changes that have increasingly seen both adult members work outside the home, intensification of work schedules and increased job insecurity, the role of residence in managing *time-space constraint* appears to have been underplayed (Crompton et al, 2005; Burchell et al, 1999; Moen and Wethington, 1992; Perrons et al 2005). Similarly, it is argued that learning from community studies and from conceptualisations of social capital provide an important contribution to understanding of the choices individuals and households make about where to live. It has been seen how notions of community and belonging continue to be influential, even whilst traditional bounded communities are being dispersed in the face of globalisation (Voydanoff, 2001; Warr and Robson, 2013). Equally Putnam's (2000) bridging and bonding social capitals expose the household as a network of linked lives where choices about where to live are to be understood within the context of wider social connections and dependencies (Bailey et al, 2004).

This thesis recognises value in each of these aforementioned approaches, as well as their individual flaws. However, by examining the variety of academic traditions, this chapter has highlighted the extent to which studies draw on only one or two of these approaches at most. Only rarely is there acknowledgement of possible alternative modes of analysis (Coulter et al, 2015). Little interest has been shown in moulding a rational or behavioural understanding for instance with one which takes a humanistic or sociological approach. Coulter's recent work has been important in broadening the horizons of residential mobility research both by recognising the temporal and spatial relationality of individual lives and by making links to the new mobilities literature (Coulter et al, 2013; 2015). However, even this continues to follow a solidly quantitative, positivist approach. Indeed this chapter started out by highlighting the fundamental division which dominates research in the field. On the one hand sit theoretical understandings which emphasise the external structures which frame individual activity, whilst on the other the emphasis is squarely on the role of human agency (Cadwallader, 1992). Winstanley et al (2002) point out how this essential divide leads to different starting points for different types of research. Both *rational utilitarian* and *behavioural* approaches for instance place the act of moving at the centre of study (Smith, 1979, 1986; Rossi, 1980). The resultant trigger epistemology which focuses attention on motivation behind individual moves

provides valuable data but this is usually at the expense of a longitudinal view (Coulter and van Ham, 2013; Coulter et al, 2015). In contrast it is the individual which takes centre stage within studies drawing on notions of housing as a social construction (Bridge, 2003; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Whilst this has the benefit of drawing attention to the wider environment within which moves are made, it is often at the risk of a fragmented understanding which ignores commonalities in experience.

It is difficult to disagree with Winstanley et al (2002) therefore when they argue that too many residential studies start by examining evidence in the context of a particular theory. By focussing on ‘proving’ the relevance of specific factors they fail to acknowledge the potential impact of alternative influences and an overly narrow view can lead to over-simplistic conclusions. This is perhaps most obvious in the context of the earliest household utility theories which focus on commuting distance to the exclusion of alternative household requirements (Balchin et al, 1995; Phe and Wakely, 2000). However, despite advances which have incorporated a wider range of neighbourhood attributes, the criticism Cadwallader made in 1992 still applies. Research has so far failed to reveal how households make sense of these attributes to construct an overall image of the neighbourhood as a suitable place to live. Southerton (2002) shows how residential choices are in reality part of a complex social process where multiple influences impact on decision-making. He finds a variety of considerations, including housing status, geographic boundaries and historical connections, all play a role in grounding normative perceptions of residential areas. This points to the need to adopt a multifaceted approach to researching housing choice, which draws on a variety of research traditions to construct an understanding of the myriad of influences within which everyday choices are made.

This thesis therefore takes the existing research base as its starting point, intending to build on it by drawing together current knowledge across a variety of research fields in order to develop a comprehensive and unified understanding of residential choice. *Revealing Liveable Place* has begun this process by highlighting the range of ideas which it believes provide useful insights, some of which are not regularly linked with residential choice or mobility. By drawing on studies of work-life balance, social

capital, gentrification and community for example, the chapter has highlighted the potential basis for a detailed analysis. The challenge is to make liveable place operational by drawing these perspectives together in such a way as to identify how individuals and households assemble an understanding of it.

The thesis uses Blunt and Dowling's (2006) three components of a *critical geography of home* as a powerful starting point and the three data chapters are organised to reflect this. By placing households, housing and neighbourhoods at the centre of the research, experiences are examined independently of specific theses and approaches. In turn, decisions and choices are revealed as complex and multifaceted. First of all, by conceptualising home as *simultaneously material and imaginative*, liveable place is seen to represent a matrix of social and economic relations where lives are constructed according to a variety of rhythms and routines, practices of consumption and internal identities. *Performing Residence* lays bare the key role of both house and neighbourhood in identity formation, whilst *Routes to Belonging* demonstrates how understandings and experiences of community play a powerful role in shaping relationships with liveable place. In contrast, *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood* concludes by emphasising a material and utilitarian understanding of 'home'. The second component of Blunt and Dowling's geography of home is similarly weaved through the three data chapters. By positioning home, and by extension liveable place, as the *nexus between power and identity* we are reminded of the extent to which external social, economic and cultural structures shape individual housing destinies by bestowing or restricting access to capital. Despite commonalities of experience, preferences and practices are shown to be shaped by a variety of social markers. The three chapters show in turn how strategies towards property, attitudes towards community and preferences for neighbourhood facilities, are shaped in particular by class, gender and life course stage. Finally, constructing an understanding of the home as *multi scalar* brings with it recognition of how internal identities exist at a variety of dimensions from the body, through the neighbourhood and the city, to the nation. Together these three elements of a *critical geography of home* extend and coalesce an understanding of liveable place as dynamic, flexible and durable. Individual relationships with it are seen in turn to be complex and multifaceted where residential choices cannot and should not be reduced to the outcome of simple, binary assessments.

Chapter 3 now turns to set out the research methodology designed to operationalise this understanding.



### 3. Researching Liveable Place

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 have so far highlighted two of the methodological deficiencies apparent in existing residential choice studies. The *Introduction* emphasised the need for an alternative to a ‘deficit’ model of housing research which had problematised relationships with residential locations and which ignores the experience of a significant element of the population. This thesis has sought to counteract this by setting fieldwork in a mixed income neighbourhood and accessing respondents from across the social spectrum. *Revealing Liveable Place* then highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to examining residential choice which draws on the full range of existing theoretical concepts. The chapter explained how this research will bring out the multiplicity of influences on individual and household choices by putting property, household and neighbourhood at the centre of enquiry. Chapter 3 now turns to a further challenge which shaped the research methodology. The need to unearth unconscious understanding behind decisions about where to live necessitated a methodological approach designed to encourage respondents to question their everyday activity.

The chapter begins with a critical reflection on the researcher’s understanding of the social and cultural environment within which decision-making takes place. Drawing on the work of Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1979; 2009) it demonstrates how choices about where to live are *situated* within a network of social rules and conventions, which may be only rarely consciously examined. Within this context, the chapter outlines how and why a *life course approach* was adopted as a key means of understanding decisions about where to live. The nuances of these decisions may be difficult to identify where they are closely entwined with activity across a range of everyday fields. They may in fact be the outcome of deliberations pursued over an extended period of time or of actions deeply embedded in the past (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). Eliciting their true nature therefore required an approach which situated them within the framework of other life careers. The life course concept was operationalised through use of *housing biographies* and the collection of extensive quantitative data, supported by semi-structured interviews as a means of obtaining rich and nuanced information. In addition the research drew on background census data, photographic evidence and an analysis of

local and national media output to provide a detailed representation of the fieldwork location and its inhabitants.

A variety of issues arose before, during and after the fieldwork and the chapter examines each of these. In particular it considers the challenges presented by the respondent cohort, the interview process and by data analysis. In doing so, it highlights the impact of the *blurred research boundaries* which arose from the researcher's situation as resident herself of the fieldwork neighbourhood. Simultaneously *insider* and *outsider*, her positionality in reconstructing social action and social actors was brought to the fore.

### **3.2 A housing biography approach**

Human agents or actors ... have, as an inherent aspect of what they do, the capacity to understand what they do while they do it. The reflexive capacities of the human actor are characteristically involved in a continuous manner with the flow of day-to-day conduct in the contexts of social activity. But reflexivity operates only partly on a discursive level. What agents know about what they do, and why they do it – their knowledgeability *as* agents – is largely carried in practical consciousness. Practical consciousness consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression (Giddens, 1984, p.xxii-xxiii).

Giddens' (1984; 1991) asserts that all human beings are knowledgeable agents but that they nevertheless draw on the rules and resources embedded in their *practical consciousness*. Actors are ordinarily capable, when asked, of discursively describing their deeds and behaviour and their reasons for undertaking activity. However, this *knowledgeability* is bounded by unconscious and unacknowledged conditions and consequences. Bourdieu's (1979; 2009) notion of *habitus* similarly highlights how activity is undertaken and choices are made within taken for granted socially accepted norms. Habitual and socio-spatially contextualised dispositions are embedded within the unconscious from early childhood. Therefore what the researcher might at first perceive as a choice situated within a limited time-space boundary, is in fact the outcome of a complex interplay between time, space and social differentiation.

Decisions about where and when to move house, which might at first sight seem to be relatively discreet ones, should be analysed as calculations shaped by the rules and conventions of the wider social environment. Such choices are fixed as much in the *practical consciousness* and the *habitus* as they are in mindful aspects of cognition and motivation and this produces particular challenges for the researcher intent on extracting knowledge embedded at a variety of levels.

With specific reference to residential decision-making and migration, this research takes up Halfacree and Boyle's (1993) appeal for a conceptualisation which emphasises the extent to which it is situated within everyday life. Chapter 2 saw how Rossi (1980), breaks down the decision to move house into three distinct, and consecutive elements, where the initial decision is perceived to flow naturally into the search for a new location and culminates in its selection. However, Halfacree and Boyle (1993) argue that this over-simplifies the process, providing the reader with a false sense of order. They are especially critical of what they perceive to be an excessive focus on the *point* at which the migration decision is taken. Whilst the specific nature of the move may indeed be related to the precise conditions experienced by the individual at the time, they argue it is in fact embedded within the *practical conscious*. They argue (p.337) that because '... a specific migration exists as a part of our past, our present and our future; as part of our biography' in order to transfer the memory to the *discursive* realm, capable of communication to the researcher, it can only be effectively explored within the context of a life biography. In this sense, the spatial action of migrating from one location to another should be seen as part of a response to wider social and environmental pressures. It is also rooted in past choices, activities and experiences. It is therefore only through adopting a wider temporal and spatial perspective that we can fully understand migration activity in the context of the gamut of influences, emotions and activity which surround it (Coulter and van Ham, 2013).

The concept of the life course has already been identified in Chapter 2 as a key means of exposing both the intersectional nature of human life (Dieleman and Everaers, 1998; Clark and Withers, 2007; Bailey, 2009) and the extent to which individual outcomes are subject to external, societal constraint (Courgeau, 1985; Ford et al, 2002; Mulder and Wagner, 2012). McCormack and Schwanen (2011, p.2801) identify how '... the decision remains a spectral event, difficult to pin down or isolate as a bounded

moment.’ However, a life course approach offers the prospect of valuable insights into decisions and decision-making by placing the here and now within a temporally and spatially broader environmental context (Jarvis, 1999; 2003). Analysis of the chronological relationship between moving desires and actual moving behaviour shows how moving decisions develop over time and are situated within life course biographies (Lu, 1999; Coulter et al, 2011; Coulter et al, 2015). As outlined in Chapter 2, many housing careers may follow what is perceived to be a ‘conventional’, if western, pattern where individuals leave the parental home, establish a partnership, raise a family and perhaps downsize at retirement (Mulder and Lauster, 2010). However, research increasingly shows that experiences in other careers, including educational, labour market and marital careers have a lasting impact on housing quality (Feijten and Mulder, 2005; Ford et al, 2002; Clapham et al, 2014). Choices about where to live should be seen as situated as much within prior experience as in current circumstances. Winstanley et al (2002, p.825) for instance show how ‘mobility trajectories’ are shaped by previous activities and outcomes where relocation may represent a break with the past or alternatively fulfil a need for security after personal tragedy. Importantly a growing body of work illuminates how people do not behave in accordance with previously expressed wishes. Individuals may desire a move but this may or may not transpire as both life course events and material inequalities work to shape actual activity (Coulter et al, 2011; 2012). Similarly, as Massey (1994) highlights, an individual’s relationship with space is as much about sets of social relations stretched across space and time as about a territorially grounded community. A focus on the everyday nature of the relational frame brings to the fore associations with places previously inhabited, those where loved ones remain, and even the spaces where we would like to be. Bailey et al (2004) go so far as to imagine the household as a network of ‘linked lives’ where connections to children, parents and friends in other locations shape patterns of both migration and immobility.

A housing biography methodology was therefore selected because it represents an opportunity to access decisions buried within the *practical consciousness* (Giddens, 1984). Individual action is lifted out of the ‘taken for granted’ norms and structures within which everyday activity is performed (Bourdieu, 1979). Choices about housing in particular are seen to be temporally, socially and spatially situated, surrounded by a myriad of other places and by a series of prior relationships and decisions (Heinz and

Kruger, 2001; Bailey et al, 2004). The next section now turns to examine how a housing biographical approach was operationalised during research fieldwork.

### 3.3 Research Design

Both Davies and Dwyer (2007) and Crang (2005) note the multiplicity of qualitative techniques becoming widespread within geographical research, including a variety of embodied explorations and performative engagements. However, whilst the choice of strategy is shaped by a variety of factors, it is difficult to disagree with Pole and Lampard (2002) when they point out that the methodology chosen must fit the research topic and the research questions. In this case the need to examine the detail of differential experience and to evaluate the impact of liveable place pointed to the need to obtain in-depth contextual data which was nevertheless capable of being compared with results from other research studies. In order to achieve this, a dual approach was adopted which incorporated both qualitative interviews and quantitative biographical data.

This approach is however unusual within a research area dominated by quantitative analysis. Chapter 2 highlighted how a divide between structural and agency-based approaches marks residential choice and mobility studies. Schwiter (2011) notes a similar methodological divide between quantitative and qualitative approaches across life course research. However, within this, life course approaches to residential migration are dominated by large-scale demographic surveys and by quantitative analysis (Pooley and White, 1991). These have yielded significant knowledge about the timing and consequences of *life events* and *triggers* on individual and household activity (Lu, 1999; Clark and Huang, 2003; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). However, they are by their very nature, less capable of providing answers to the questions of *why* and *how*. Lu's (1999) analysis of migration behaviour for instance highlights a link between residential satisfaction and subsequent moves. However, he notes the study's limitations in explaining apparent inconsistencies in behaviour, highlighting the potential for supplementing quantitative data with qualitative information in order to scrutinize the nuances of household intentions. Pooley and Whyte (1991, p.4-5) go further, critical of what they see as an emphasis on quantitative research with an overly aggregate bias within the field. They argue that this creates

... an impersonal, dehumanised approach in which flows replace people and the motives for migration are assumed rather than proven ... [where] individuals become lost.

Nevertheless comparative, qualitative studies within a life course framework remain rare in comparison with the plethora of published quantitative survey work. Monk and Katz (1993) employ the concept to examine the boundless variety of women's lives in modern societies. Others apply the idea to examine patterns of criminal behaviour (Laub and Sampson, 1993; Warr, 1998; Sampson and Laub, 2005) and health inequalities (Bartley et al, 1997; Graham, 2002). Residential choice research remains dominated by quantitative techniques, despite the important work of Jarvis (1999; 2011), Green (1997) and Hardill et al (1997). This study therefore makes a significant contribution to the body of academic knowledge by subjecting residential choice to the detailed scrutiny of a qualitative survey within a life course framework.

In order to penetrate the 'black box' identified by Jarvis et al (2001) within which much household decision-making takes place, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary research tool. This study should in no way be interpreted as a grounded theory approach, though the methodology acknowledges some of its key tenets. In particular it recognises that building theory depends on interpreting the detail of the specific case. Exploring social phenomena from the perspective of individual actors provides a rich pool of data and results which should be capable of generalisation across a variety of similar contexts (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Semi-structured interviews were therefore chosen on the basis that they represented the most appropriate method for collecting fine-grained insights in the context of the intensely personal nature of the knowledge required. The meanings individuals attached to their neighbourhood, their property and their *home*, meant that nuance, depth and richness were important prerequisites for the underlying data.

This type of qualitative data collection remains one of the primary methods for studying personal experience. As de Lyser and Sui (2014, p.295) point out:

Methods endure for their ongoing relevance and purchase on the ever-changing problems of our time. While some issues urge novel approaches, others can best be addressed through research grounded in methods already proven.

Jarvis et al (2001), Savage et al (2005) and McDowell et al (2006a) each make extensive use of in-depth conversations to generate complex narratives from the hum-drum of daily routines and taken for granted activity. Semi-structured interviews remain important because they allow the researcher to interact directly with the participant. Face to face contact provides the opportunity to clarify particular points and to seek elaboration where necessary (Hoggart et al, 2002). The non-verbal gestures which frequently punctuate explanations can be observed and new or interesting lines of enquiry can be followed up as appropriate (Valentine, 2005a). As May (1997, p.129) puts it they are:

... a resource for understanding how individuals make sense of their social world and act within it.

It is acknowledged that this technique cannot supply the same degree of comparability or subject coverage as large-scale structured questionnaires (May 1997; Dyck, 1993). The research also recognises that, as Dingwall (1997) points out, an interview itself is a social construct, during which the respondent is concerned to present him or herself as a competent source of information. As such they may diverge from literal descriptions of reality. Nevertheless, interviews do provide the researcher with an effective means of obtaining rich insights into aspirations, histories, experiences, feeling and opinions and of establishing the meaning of particular phenomena to participants (May, 1997; Robson, 2002). Because the interviews followed the same broad pattern and were directed by housing biography data provided by the respondents, they still offered a structure for comparability (Valentine, 2005a).

In addition to the semi-structured interview, collection and analysis of quantitative personal biographical data formed a central element of the research. Where possible prior to, but otherwise during, the interview, detailed *housing biography* information was collected on a pre-designed template (Appendix 3 – Biographical Data Collection Form). The fact that data was available in a standard format meant that patterns of behaviour were relatively easy to identify. It also facilitated recognition of additional themes which were followed up in later interviews as appropriate (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). At the same time, the act of compiling the template performed a number of additional functions during the interview. It acted primarily as a highly effective ‘prompt’ where the effort of recalling previous residences within a temporal sequence

helped to ensure that respondents provided a complete set of data (Evans and Jones, 2011). Equally it ‘moved the conversation along’, helping to maintain a comparable structure for each interview whilst providing opportunities to probe more deeply at appropriate moments (Robson, 2002). New themes were followed up and information specific to the interviewee obtained. Finally, the act of talking through the template assisted in creating an environment which grounded the interview in a context relevant to the respondent where he or she was confident in knowing what was required of them (Mason, 2002).

Although the fieldwork consisted primarily of qualitative interviews based on quantitative housing biographical data, other qualitative and quantitative data provided a complement to the individuals’ accounts of themselves (Gillham, 2005). This is in line with De Lyser and Sui’s (2014, p.303) plea for an ‘engaged methodological pluralism where different and divergent methods flourish to tackle issues from different angles.’ On the basis that no single method offers the ‘One True Solution’ (de Lyser and Sui, 2014, p.304) a range of additional data was utilised during the research. Analysis of population-based information from the four most recent Censuses both supported conclusions drawn from other sources and gave rise to new lines of enquiry. Similarly, economic data and policy documents produced by both national and local government were scrutinised to construct a picture of the wider political and economic environment within which the Chorlton housing market operates. A corresponding analysis of media output in relation to the fieldwork location provided a counterpoint to both a data-based approach and the inward focus of residents during their interviews. Representations of Chorlton, from sources outside the immediate neighbourhood, were seen to be produced and reproduced through a variety of discourses to construct an alternative account, sometimes at odds with that assembled by local residents (Kearns et al, 2013). Finally, careful inclusion of photographs of the neighbourhood within the final thesis document is a means of effectively *bringing the locality to life* for the reader. Images aid development of a *thick description* of resident housing choices through the provision of rich contextual detail. This facilitates an experiential understanding of the spatial environment within which those choices are made (Pink, 2013).

The research methodology has been developed to illuminate the multifaceted personal influences on individual migration decisions. By setting them within a temporal and



spatial relational frame, it provides a nuanced and in-depth account of housing choice. The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches reflects the increasing use of multiple techniques within geographical research as an effective means of fully accessing individual actions, intentions and influences (Dowling et al, 2015). Quantitative biographical data highlighted key themes and facilitated comparability. Semi-structured interviews complemented this by supplying rich, nuanced data about the relationship individuals had with their residential surroundings. Nevertheless a series of challenges arose during fieldwork and the following sections examine these in more detail, beginning with issues arising from the fieldwork location.

### **3.4 Chorlton: An Insider-Outsider View**

Chapter 1 outlined the principle reason behind the selection of Chorlton as the location for research fieldwork. As a 'less poor' area within a relatively poor city, it offered the opportunity to examine residential choices amongst a range of socio-economic backgrounds in a mixed income neighbourhood. However, a number of other issues also played a part in its selection. Firstly, I as researcher was a long-term resident of the neighbourhood which brought both practical advantages and methodological challenges in carrying out the research. Secondly, the fact that Chorlton had served as a fieldwork location for a number of other studies also offered the opportunity to pursue a longitudinal approach to investigating households' relationship with their neighbourhood. However, at the same time this also gave rise to specific problems as a result of revisiting prior research studies. This section addresses the challenges arising from these two particular issues.

As a popular home for academics employed at the universities in Manchester and Salford, Chorlton has featured as a fieldwork location in a number of studies. Most relevant for this research are two ESRC funded projects. The first by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst mapped differences in middle class lifestyles across four residential neighbourhoods of Greater Manchester and Cheshire, fieldwork being undertaken during 1996 and 1997. Savage et al's work (subsequently published in *Globalisation and Belonging* (2005)) seeks to understand the nature of local belonging within a global world. In particular it examines middle class consumption patterns and lifestyles within the context of residential processes. Within an analysis which drew heavily on

Bourdieu, four different fieldwork locations were chosen as exemplars of different forms of middle class culture according to the relative amounts of social, economic and cultural capital available to residents. The resultant focus on place provides considerable information about residents' relationship with Chorlton in the late 1990s. The second research project is a study by Fagan, McDowell, Perrons, Ray and Ward focussed on gender, employment, work-life balance and childcare in London and Manchester, carried out during 2003 (McDowell et al, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Perrons et al, 2005; Ward et al, 2007, 2010). The focus of this research lay with the impact of changes in women's employment patterns and family formation on childcare arrangements. Nevertheless close analysis of the transcripts provides an insight into residents' understanding of their neighbourhood and their relationship with it.

The timing of these two studies and the access that this research had to interview transcripts from the latter meant that it was possible to make longitudinal comparisons about residents' relationship with the Chorlton neighbourhood. The results of this are presented in Chapter 6. As Farrall (2006) highlights, longitudinal study provides an opportunity to link the micro to the macro where social change takes time to unfold. Although common in quantitative research, there are fewer examples of qualitative longitudinal studies (Corden and Millar, 2007). In particular data re-use by different research teams is relatively limited and the literature on these issues reflects this (Holland et al, 2006). This is perhaps because such studies are subject to a number of particular difficulties. As has been seen, neither of the earlier projects directly addressed the questions posed by this thesis. Whilst respondents' relationship with the fieldwork neighbourhood was of importance in both studies, the research focus was subtly different. Participants were chosen according to criteria relevant to that research and the interviews shaped by a different set of research questions. As a result, directly relevant data was limited.

This was the case even where this thesis had access to full interview transcripts as was the case with McDowell et al's study. Whilst I transcribed interviews from this fieldwork myself, I did not have access to interview tapes from either of the former studies. Turning any interview recording into a transcript is akin to an act of translation and data is subject to interpretation by the individual making the transcription (Witcher, 2010). Non-verbal communication forms an important part of any interview, but

physical gestures or pauses in the conversation may be either missing or else only loosely recorded in any transcript (Oliver et al, 2015). Whilst the intention of the transcriber is not to mislead, the end result is a document which is subject to his or her interpretation (Witcher, 2010). Where access to the verbal record is available, the researcher is able to return to the data and check understanding but this was not possible when reviewing transcripts from the McDowell et al study. The lack of face to face contact with the interviewee meant that I lacked an interpretive history to draw on when looking to understand the answers (Cloke et al, 2008). This issue was magnified in the case of the research carried out by Savage et al where no interview recordings or transcripts were available. In this case only data from published books or articles could be accessed (Bagnall et al, 2003; Savage et al, 2005). The space available for publication is inevitably limited and the data was therefore only accessible where the authors deemed it necessary to evidence their particular arguments. The problems facing the researcher therefore were much the same as those historical geographers need to address when contemplating the selectivity with which data is recorded and retained (Ogborn, 2003). Nevertheless, in this case sufficient data was obtained and was considered appropriately reliable to facilitate conclusions about the changing relationship residents had with Chorlton over a fifteen year period.

A further consideration behind setting the fieldwork in Chorlton was the fact that I, as researcher, was a long-term resident of the neighbourhood myself. At a practical level, in the context of a part-time PhD, combined with a young family and a (at times full-time) professional career, use of Chorlton as a fieldwork location represented an opportunity to ensure that the thesis was manageable and that the PhD would be completed on time. It was often possible for instance to organise meetings with research participants at short notice and without the need for a long commute. Similarly, familiarity with the history, local geography and social make-up of the neighbourhood helped in targeting recruitment activity. I had in-depth knowledge of the most suitable locations to advertise for participants and this helped to obtain maximum exposure for the project whilst targeting particular social groups. In order to fill gaps identified in the participant profile, and particularly to access a pool of ex-Chorlton residents, I was also able to draw on a number of my own local contacts, approaching them to become involved in the research.

As a result of my close relationship with the fieldwork location, the research inevitably involved me addressing topics and issues in an academic context that I had considered as a 'lay person' over a number of years. Despite this, it is not an *auto-ethnography* because the data presented in the thesis draws almost exclusively on the semi-structured interviews and housing biography information collected from participants recruited specifically for the research. In contrast

Auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al, 2011, p.1).

Nevertheless because of my relationship with the neighbourhood, the practicalities and ethics of an ethnographic study are relevant. Such studies, 'at home' are not uncommon in anthropology or sociology where there are longstanding debates about researching one's own culture (Hall, 2014). Hall (2014, p.2180), as a geographer, refers to the activity she undertook rather as 'ethnography on her doorstep' to emphasise the distance between herself and her research subjects, although fieldwork was carried out within the neighbourhood in which she lived. However, it is relatively uncommon within geography to situate fieldwork within the residential neighbourhood of the researcher, particularly where semi-structured interviews form the primary research methodology and where participants are mostly previously unknown to the researcher. DeSena's (2006) study of gentrification in New York involved participant observation, alongside formal and informal interviews undertaken in her own neighbourhood. Similarly, Karsten (2013) charts the changing pattern of family consumption within the Amsterdam neighbourhood in which she had lived for over 25 years through use of both observation and interviews. However, these studies mention little of the potential problems arising from the researcher's situation as a resident of the fieldwork location. Nevertheless this activity did have particular implications both for my positionality as a researcher and the ethics of engagement with participants.

Holloway et al (2003) point out that all research is shaped knowingly or otherwise by the partialities of the researcher and that therefore it is important that he or she is aware of his or her positionality. Ethnographic studies of course by their nature lead to a particularly close relationship between researcher, researched and fieldwork location

(Hall, 2014). Cloke et al (2008, p.170) point out that in ethnography the researcher is an important tool in the research herself:

Ethnographic findings are not therefore ‘realities extracted from the field’ but are ‘inter-subjective truths’ negotiated out of the warmth and friction of an unfolding, iterative process.

Knowledge is situated and researcher positionality is heightened in this scenario, demanding increased reflexivity (Hoggart et al, 2002). The close relationship I had with the fieldwork location therefore gave rise to issues surrounding my position as both *researcher* and *researched*; simultaneously an *insider* and an *outsider*. On the one hand as an individual embedded within existing social networks in the neighbourhood, I inevitably came to the project with a particular experience of my neighbours and of the wider vicinity. Some of this I was able to acknowledge during the research, but some inevitably remained subsumed within Giddens’ (1984; 1991) *practical consciousness*. Challenges from the supervision team helped to highlight particular presumptions about local residents and to expand my understanding beyond the purely personal. As Hoggart et al (2002) point out, by confronting rationalities which are different from the researcher’s own, he or she is forced to critically reflect on personal biases. The simple fact of conducting a literature review also situated both the research neighbourhood and its inhabitants within a well-documented geography of similar suburbs which served to test pre-existing personal perceptions. Equally, and inevitably, the level of understanding which came from unearthing the multi-layered personal histories of research participants was important in triangulating the experiences of my own social networks with those of others living in close proximity.

As a result, it was felt that the risks were effectively controlled by researcher and supervisor during fieldwork (Lewis and Russell, 2011). Nevertheless it is recognised that this study, as much as any other research, is in no way wholly neutral, impersonal or objective (Bochner, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The thesis fully acknowledges and accommodates the extent of the researcher’s own subjectivity on the basis that it strengthens the research. In particular it brings additional understanding of the social interactions, behaviours and perceptions of those inhabiting the fieldwork location over and above what could have been possible from an entirely traditional methodology (Haigh et al, 2006). Though this research did not set out to be an ethnographic study,

inevitably *inside* knowledge gained over a number of years was drawn into play. I was offered the prospect of empirical insights into social practices that are normally *hidden* from the public gaze and particularly from the researcher who may only be involved with the subject for a limited time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). To take a particular example, my nuanced knowledge of the residential geography of Chorlton and of the impact that this has on the intake of local primary schools facilitated translation of coded responses to questions about school choices. Middle class preferences might be expressed in terms of academic outcomes, which could be taken at face value. However, hints at underlying attitudes towards the racial and class make-up of particular schools were clearly evident. Such embeddedness, as Haigh et al (2006) point out, has the potential to yield a deep, rich coverage informed by the particularity of the researcher's own detailed knowledge.

The main challenge to the study in this respect lay in the extent to which the *boundaries* of the *research field* were blurred and how it was not always possible to maintain a meaningful separation between *the field* and everyday life. Conversations held in the normal course of day-to-day activity frequently served to add to research data. This reflects Bennett's frustrating experience as an ethnographer in the field, surrounded by information, not knowing what was important and not knowing where to start with analysis (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2001, p.255). Such evidence both corroborated and sometimes contradicted that gathered within the formal confines of an interview. The question arose therefore as to how to deal with this information. For instance, findings from interview data indicated that the majority of research respondents with school-age children were happy with the local secondary education offer. However, subsequent to completion of the fieldwork two of my daughter's school friends moved away from the area. Whilst their parents did not explicitly say so, conversations nevertheless led me to believe that dissatisfaction with the quality of local schools had played a significant part in the decision. This additional data obtained outside the formal fieldwork process was not subject to the same level of scrutiny carried out during interviews, but nevertheless the information was acknowledged and incorporated into the research. Although sometimes problematic, this level of detailed insider information, arising directly from the broad fieldwork boundaries, yielded a far richer set of data than would have been possible to obtain from traditional fieldwork methods alone (Dowling et al, 2015).

### 3.5 Interviewing Chorlton

As outlined in Section 3.3 above, semi-structured interviews formed a major element of the research and the chapter now turns to examine a number of important issues which arose as a result of using this specific methodology.

#### *Recruitment*

The fieldwork began with a limited number of *stakeholder* interviews carried out with local councillors and a number of local business people. These included proprietors of local retail outlets, cafés and restaurants and estate agents, chosen on the basis that they were all likely to be familiar with the neighbourhood. These interviews were undertaken in order to provide a counterpoint to the views of local residents about the perceived intrinsic qualities of the locality. The practices of local estate agents were of particular interest, fulfilling as they do a number of roles within the housing market. Bridge (2001a) identifies them as key market intermediaries, whilst others perceive them as occupying an *urban gatekeeper* role, responsible for attaching an appropriate *official value* for the trade in private homes (Smith et al, 2006; Munro and Smith, 2008). Hastings (2004) also points out how estate agents provide one of the key routes through which potential renters and purchasers gather information about the neighbourhood. As such their close relationship with the housing market meant their views were of particular importance.

Each stakeholder was approached first of all via email, with contact followed up by telephone. In general business people were interested in the research and very willing to participate. This was particularly the case amongst those who ran locally based independent outlets, who often had close associations with Chorlton themselves. The exceptions were estate agents who proved more reluctant. In some cases the Chorlton offices were only part of a larger regional or national chain so that the local staff had fewer connections to the area themselves, often living in other parts of Manchester. They were also less likely to have autonomy over their own workload in order to take the time to participate (Robson, 2002). One office also showed signs of participant fatigue, commenting that they had already taken part in more than one academic study and were unwilling to make themselves available again in the near future (Valentine,

2005a). Nevertheless, four interviews were eventually obtained with estate agents and property developers, together with three councillors and four local retailers.

Subsequently, the main body of the fieldwork involved thirty-five further interviews with forty eight individual participants. The sample size was chosen to allow collection of sufficient data from participants with a range of socio-economic characteristics without being overwhelmed by too much of the rich detail usually yielded through the interview process (Hall and Hall, 1996; Gillham, 2005). In order to explore potentially differing attitudes towards the neighbourhood and towards the process of moving house, households who had chosen to live and remain in the area and those who had moved on were targeted separately. Within both of these groups residents with school age children were of particular interest and again this line of research was the direct product of my personal experience as embedded researcher. Savage et al's (2005) study had identified a level of discomfort amongst people with young children living in Chorlton who felt their lifestyles no longer fitted with the dominant, youth oriented, local culture. This was not in line with personal experience and as a result I was keen to explore the issue more widely. In particular I was interested in identifying the extent of any changes in attitude over time. Nevertheless, in order to identify both commonalities and differential experience amongst different socio-economic groups, the research required data from a cross-section of the local population. I was also interested in understanding attitudinal differences amongst those who stayed in the neighbourhood compared with those who subsequently moved on. Accordingly data was once again sought from a wide pool of participants according to socio-economic class, age and gender amongst both of these groups.

Recruitment activity followed the broadly based methods adopted by McDowell et al (2006a, 2006b) during their study of childcare in London and Manchester, by utilising a variety of channels targeted within a relatively tight geographical area. Existing and potential residents were primarily enlisted via open recruitment. Advertisements were placed in local public libraries and church halls and contact made with community organisations serving social housing estates in the area. This was supplemented with a notice posted on the discussion board of a Chorlton neighbourhood internet forum and through snowballing. This approach differs slightly from that used by other studies which have also sought to access residents from specific geographical areas, but where



focus on particular socio-economic groups necessitated a more targeted approach. Butler and Robson for instance (2001; 2003a) identified what they perceived to be gentrified middle class streets within their research areas. They then wrote to all addresses in those streets, subsequently discounting those who did not fit the research criteria. Savage et al (2005) adopted similar methods, taking a sample of particular roads in chosen neighbourhoods which were deemed more likely to yield middle class respondents. They then 'door-knocked' one in three of the houses on each street, recruiting participants on a face to face basis. However, because this research was interested in the experiences of a geographically concentrated, but nevertheless broadly based, socio-economic group, recruitment channels were chosen which were deemed to be readily accessible to a wide audience.

Open recruitment was supplemented by a number of other channels, both to obtain a balanced profile and to access particular groups. In order to explore changing attitudes about raising a family in the neighbourhood, potential respondents with school-age children were sought via local primary schools. Schools were contacted and asked to include details of the research in the weekly newsletter produced by many. This is similar to the recruitment methods adopted by Reay (2007) and by Reay et al (2007) in their study of middle class experiences of inner-city London comprehensives where children and their parents were accessed through a small number of primary schools. Similarly, Boterman (2012; 2013) targeted midwife clinics in Amsterdam as a means of recruiting gentrifiers who were about to become parents for the first time.

It had been hoped that estate agents would be able to help in contacting households who were either considering moving out of the area or who had already relocated. However, these proved difficult to engage in the research over and above providing the time for short interviews. Instead recruitment flyers were created and posted through the doors of houses in the neighbourhood with 'for sale' or 'sold' signs. Participants in this category were also recruited through snowballing and through use of personal contacts. Such techniques have been widely used in similar studies. Bridge (2003) for example mailed a selection of properties displaying 'for sale' or 'sold' signs during his study of gentrifier housing preferences in Bristol. Clapham et al (2014) also pursued a mixture of purposive sampling and recruitment through snowballing during their national study of young people's housing pathways. Together these methods proved to be an effective

means of generating sufficient number of research participants in this research both amongst former residents and households planning to leave Chorlton.

### *Interviewing Chorlton: Securing a balanced profile*

The research questions set out in Chapter 1 required a broadly balanced participant profile to explore potentially differing attitudes to residential decision-making across a range of social characteristics. Within this the research was particularly interested in exploring attitudes and experiences amongst different socio-economic groups, between men and women and uncovering variances across the life course. This was largely achieved through use of the recruitment channels outlined above and Figure 3.1 provides a summary of the final sample with regard to these key social characteristics. Whilst of course each respondent was an individual, with a complex combination of characteristics, it is possible to identify five broad categories of participant, where age is largely the defining feature. Other elements, specifically the likelihood of having grown up in Manchester, of having young children in the household and of having experienced tertiary education, frequently appear to follow from this. Respondents aged under thirty all had university level education, were less likely to have children and, unsurprisingly given their age, had the shortest period of residence in the neighbourhood. Of respondents between the ages of thirty and fifty, a significant proportion worked in professional occupations, but a substantial number were also occupied in manual roles. These participants had a longer average period of residence prior to the research and almost all had school-aged children living at home. Respondents over fifty divided more or less evenly into two socio-economic groups, though both of these were almost exclusively owner occupiers and long-term residents of the neighbourhood. Any children were now adults. The total participant population numbered thirty-one women and seventeen men.

| Category 1   | Category 2   | Category 3  |
|--|--|---|
| Aged <30   | Aged 30-50   | Aged 30-50  |
| All NS-Sec Classifications   | NS-Sec Classification 1  | NS-Sec Classification 2-3   |
| <p>This category was the smallest of the three, partly a function of the high levels of recruitment from local primary schools since these were also least likely to have children at home (only one respondent with a child under four).</p> <p>All had university degrees, although not all were in jobs which could be classified under NS-Sec Group One.</p> <p>Three of the five were currently renting their homes and most had lived in Chorlton only since 2005.</p> | <p>By far the largest group, reflecting both the main recruitment methods used and the socio-economic profile of the area. All but four had dependent children in the home.</p> <p>Very few were originally from Manchester, mostly originating from other towns and cities across the north of England, having either studied at one of the Manchester universities or relocated to the city after graduation. All had university degrees.</p> <p>This group had predominantly moved to Chorlton between 2000 and 2005, although this was mostly age dependent and four of the older respondents had lived in the area longer.</p> <p>All owned their own property.</p> | <p>A significant group, almost all with pre-school and school-aged children.</p> <p>50% had university degrees.</p> <p>All but one had moved to Chorlton before 2005, with most doing so between 2000 and 2005, although two had been born and brought up in South Manchester.</p> <p>Two respondents rented properties privately, although all over forty owned their own homes.</p> |
| <p>Respondents:</p> <p>Mark Rebecca<br/>John Claudia<br/>Sharon</p>  | <p>Respondents:</p> <p>Matthew Harriet Angela<br/>Heike Rachel Grace<br/>Reuben Sheila Laura<br/>Russell Jeremy Daniel<br/>Elaine Evan Aaron<br/>Diane Orla Alexandra<br/>Penny Paula Daisy<br/>Carl Tony</p>  | <p>Respondents:</p> <p>Nicky Donna Lydia<br/>Chris Peter Anna<br/>Jane Sonia Miranda<br/>Elizabeth Lesley</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Category 4   | Category 5   |
| Aged 50+   | Aged 50+   |
| NS-Sec Classification 1  | NS-Sec Classification 2-3  |
| <p>All had lived in Chorlton since 1995 at the very latest, almost half having been brought up in the wider south Manchester area.</p> <p>More than half had experienced some form of tertiary education.</p> <p>Any children were now adults and respondents owned their own homes.</p> | <p>Mostly long-term residents, living in the area since before 1995, two having been born and brought up in the neighbourhood.</p> <p>One respondent had a university degree.</p> <p>Mostly older or adult children, although one had a child aged under eight.</p> <p>All owned their own home.</p> |
| <p>Respondents:</p> <div> <div>Rodger</div> <div>Joan</div> <div>Mervyn</div> <div>Irene</div> </div> <div> <div>Simeon</div> <div>Margaret</div> <div>Jude</div> </div>   | <p>Respondents:</p> <div> <div>Iris</div> <div>Emlyn</div> <div>David</div> </div> <div> <div>Susan</div> <div>Julie</div> <div>Edward</div> </div>  |

**Figure 3.1: Respondent Characteristics**

Social class allocations using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-Sec) Three Class Version (ONS, 2013a) were attributed to participants by the researcher, based on employment histories provided by respondents. It has been argued that old employment-based descriptors of class are becoming progressively less capable of illuminating the nuances of class in a society where patterns of consumption are increasingly important markers (Crompton et al, 2000; Savage et al, 2014). Nevertheless for the purposes of this research the broad NS-Sec classifications provided a suitable shorthand for recruitment and analysis. Whilst recruitment routes were chosen on the basis they were accessible to a range of individuals, initial response was heavily biased towards those in NS-Sec Class One. A high proportion was in possession of university first degrees, frequently having studied at one of the nearby Manchester universities. As Ford et al's (2002) work highlights however, housing pathways and outcomes are heavily influenced by socio-economic circumstances. It was therefore considered important to secure a balanced profile in this regard, to explore the full range of experience. In this instance I was able to use my position as researcher embedded in the fieldwork neighbourhood to approach a number of personal contacts with alternative socio-economic characteristics to become involved in the research. In this way the number of participants without a university education and working in occupations covered in NS-Sec Classes Two and Three was increased.

Another feature of recruitment was the extent to which the final sample was heavily biased towards women. This is not unusual and previous studies have encountered a similar gender imbalance (Savage et al, 2005; Warr and Robson, 2013). To some extent this is a function of the fact that women are more likely to work part-time or to not be working while they look after children and therefore to have more time to participate in such studies. In addition, as Valentine (1999) points out much research within sociology and geography has tended to be based on interviews with women because the *home* and the *family* have been viewed largely as the female domain. Holloway's (1998a; 1998b) study of the experience of childcare involves largely female participants for instance, as does the similar study by McDowell et al (McDowell et al, 2006; Perrons et al, 2005; Ward et al, 2010). There are some exceptions to this (Pahl, 1984; Hardill et al, 1997; Jarvis et al, 2001) but household research appears to be one area where women's voices continue to be particularly well heard. A *gender culture* of caring, within which, it is sometimes argued, women are fully complicit (Hakim, 2002;

2006), appears to ensure that the *home* and the *domestic* persist in being constructed as *women's work* (Duncan et al, 2003; Scott and Innes, 2005). Television stations continue to feel confident in filling the daytime schedules with home make-over and house hunting programmes in anticipation of a significant audience of 'stay at home mums' and housewives. However, this research was particularly keen to explore potential differences in male and female attitudes to housing and residential choice and therefore efforts were made to recruit additional male participants. This included use of personal contacts once more and a local web forum where a high proportion of the users were male.

Finally, within the limits of the sample size, the research sought to attract respondents from across the full range of the life course. This was because both retirement from employment and later old age have been identified as key *trigger points* for residential relocation (Warnes, 1992; Robison and Moen, 2000; Weeks et al, 2005; Wulff et al, 2010). However, given the current demography of Chorlton (Figure 6.2) where 36% of the population were between the ages of thirty and fifty at 2011, it was unsurprising that respondents were predominantly also from this age group. As already seen Chorlton has experienced significant in-migration by university educated professionals since the mid-1990s. Many of these initially moved into the area after graduation or whilst in their mid-20s. Although the area remains popular with new graduates, rising property prices mean that more recent cohorts have started to look elsewhere when making the transition from renting a property to buying. This has meant that the age profile of the neighbourhood has changed in recent years with increasing numbers of residents aged between thirty and fifty and fewer between the ages of twenty and thirty (Figure 6.2). The focus on recruitment through primary schools also unbalanced the final sample in favour of respondents with school-age children which in turn led to a relative lack of respondents aged over sixty. Although the final sample did include four respondents approaching, or over the normal retirement age, in the final event it did not prove possible to fully explore residential activity or plans amongst older people. Further work could usefully be carried out on this.

#### *Joint interviews and seeking the views of all household members*

Individuals rarely take decisions about housing alone. Instead they are most often undertaken collectively with other household members (Wallace, 2002). As Moen and

Wethington (1992) point out however, the household is not a unified, homogeneous structure. It is instead a collection of individuals, each with their own priorities and preferences. Decisions therefore need to be understood as the product of negotiation, where outcomes are reliant on personality, intra-household power structures and external social norms (Jarvis 2006, 2008; Clapham, 2002; Wallace, 2002). In recognition of this, the research sought to open up the *black box* of household decision-making to external scrutiny (Jarvis et al, 2001). In order to expose the dynamics of household relationships and the negotiated and conflictual basis of much decision-making the research intended where possible to interview all adult household members involved in residential choices (Valentine, 1999; Coulter et al, 2012). This follows Jarvis' study of 'nuclear family' households in London and Manchester (1999; 2001) and the work of Green (1997) and Hardill et al (1997) with dual earner couples in the Midlands. However, joint interviews proved to be difficult to organise. In particular many partners were frequently simply not interested in taking part in the research. Family care schedules and working patterns meant that others claimed they were too busy to participate. In the final event fourteen interviews with the entire adult population of the household were obtained (including single-person households). Where it was possible to organise joint interviews the dynamics frequently encouraged spontaneous further discussion and helped to validate and modify individual accounts. Valentine (2005a) on the other hand highlights the possibility that joint interviews may limit discussion where one member does not feel free to fully express his or her own views. Although it is difficult to be certain in this regard, this did not appear to be the case during any of these research interviews. Indeed joint interviews provided an opportunity for each participant to reconcile their own opinions and histories and, where there were competing accounts, allowed the researcher to consider how differences may have arisen (Hertz, 1995).

In the case of both joint interviews and where there was an absent spouse, as each house move was discussed the respondent(s) was (were) questioned about their partner's attitude towards the property concerned. This was done to ascertain the extent of any disagreement and to understand how it might have been resolved. Both Coulter and Lu suggest that differing preferences amongst partners and a resultant process of negotiation are important features of residential decision-making (Coulter et al, 2012; Coulter and van Ham, 2013; Lu, 1999). However, by far the most common response

amongst participants was that these decisions had not caused any serious disharmony and that both partners had been in agreement about the key requirements of a residential move. It is of course highly likely that previous experiences had been subject to post-event rationalisation by the time of the interview. Memories of deliberations and actions had become distorted as participants constructed their own narrative of the event (Ritchie et al, 2003). This is a key element of what Lawler (2002) characterises as the *plot* created by individuals to connect past and present in a manner which renders the present meaningful. Individuals set their understanding of the past within the context of their current situation. They may be reluctant to challenge present understanding of a past event where the outcome has subsequently been justified. In the context of work elsewhere, the fact that only six participants reported any level of discord is surprising (Coulter et al, 2012). Where joint interviews did take place, it was possible to triangulate responses and to make a more nuanced judgement as to the extent of any intra-household dispute. Lack of access to all adult members of the household in some cases therefore meant that this corroboration was not possible.

#### *The Social Dynamics of the Interview*

The varied nature of the final sample, in terms of age, gender and socio-economic class as well as the presence of more than one individual in some cases, meant that each interview was different and each presented a unique set of challenges. Interviews lasted between forty five minutes and one and a half hours and usually took place in a mutually convenient location. Because recruitment was mainly via open invitation issued through a variety of channels, it was felt prudent to conduct many of the sessions in a public place, usually a local café (Hoggart et al, 2002). However, a number of interviews did take place in respondents' homes and a limited number were also carried out in my own home where participants were personally known to me in advance. All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed with the permission of the respondents. Immediately after completion 'interview notes' were taken which reflected the major methodological and substantive subject matter arising from the session. These acted as an 'aide memoire' to feed back into subsequent interviews and to assist with the early identification of key themes. Ethical considerations were paramount in negotiating relationships in the field and maintaining the well-being and privacy of those who had consented to give their time to the research was very important (Valentine, 2005b). As Summerfield (1998, p.26) points out, use of an alias



helps protect individuals from public embarrassment ‘which ... arbitration between their words and “the public” might cause.’ Participants’ anonymity was therefore maintained in order to protect them from public recognition and pseudonyms utilised throughout the thesis.

The intention during the interview was to follow Gillham’s (2005) advice and conduct each at a certain *distance*; in a friendly but not confiding tone. However, in fact a range of social relations were played out during each interview. As Bourdieu (1979) points out, the social world functions as a system of power relations where one’s place within each *field* is dependent on individual *habitus* and the extent to which it ensures the *rules of the game* are clear. Each individual has not only ‘a “sense of one’s place” but also “a sense of the place of others” and conducts him or herself accordingly (Bourdieu, 1989, p.19). The unnatural nature of a research interview therefore inevitably reproduces a series of social interactions which are equally unnatural and in which the rules of the game are not necessarily clear to all participants. Interactions in this research fell into three main categories: the *formal professional interview*, the *open confiding interview* and the *closed reserved interview*, each of which was very different. The relative positionality of myself as researcher was an important factor in shaping this difference (May, 2002).

*Formal professional interviews*, took place predominantly with *stakeholders* who were interviewed in a professional capacity. These interviews were often relatively *closed*, initially yielding limited amounts of data as interviewees were unsure about how much information they felt comfortable in disclosing. Where respondents were employees of larger concerns, they were aware that they were there to represent the position of their employer rather than their own opinion. As a result, it was challenging to obtain personal views as opposed to the official company message (Harvey, 2010). Although every effort was made to ensure the privacy of respondents, all *stakeholders* were warned that the specific nature of some of the research questions, and therefore that some of their responses, may mean that their identity could be apparent (Hall 2014; Cloke et al, 2008). Whilst all expressed themselves to be comfortable with this, a certain reticence was nevertheless detected. One estate agent for instance predominantly repeated the marketing literature of his firm and which were largely devoid of personal opinion. In this situation patience and flexibility were needed as the

interview probed 'official' responses to obtain more in-depth information (Cloke et al, 2008). On the other hand, other *stakeholders* felt empowered by their possession of specific, valuable information which they considered put them in a position of authority. They felt able for instance to dictate the timing of interviews, sometimes postponing them at short notice. These experiences reflect research elsewhere amongst professionals and elites where participants seek to control the research environment (Harvey, 2010; Mickcz, 2012). In this situation Theusen (2011) underlines the value of understanding the interview context in order for the researcher to regain control. The extent to which I, as researcher, was embedded in the neighbourhood and therefore in possession of an in-depth and nuanced knowledge of the local housing market therefore helped me to gain the respect of these professionals (Hoggart et al, 2002). Despite the difficulties encountered during these formal professional interviews high quality data was obtained.

*Open confiding interviews* were qualitatively very different. Many of these participants responded spontaneously to the advertisements distributed locally and were very willing to take part. They frequently had experience of the research process themselves. In particular, links to higher education meant that many had undertaken research at either undergraduate or postgraduate level whilst others worked in university departments. As such they had a degree of understanding about the nature of such a study and were comfortable in taking part. They understood their role and the type of data they were expected to supply (Mason, 2002). Frequently highly educated, these respondents were mostly extremely reflexive and sufficiently interested in the subject matter themselves to have considered some of the issues covered during the interview in advance. They were therefore ready to provide a well-considered response to the questions posed. These interviews were also characterised by a *warm* and *chatty* atmosphere. As Richards and Emslie (2000) point out, contextual details of the interview, such as the gender and age of the interviewer and respondent, interact and influence the interview process. These, mainly middle class, respondents tended to align themselves with me as researcher, assuming a relationship of equals where they were comfortable in expressing their opinions (May, 2002). As a result, they frequently digressed from the immediate topic, yielding as they did so an enormous quantity of rich and varied data.

In contrast a different type of power relation was at play during *closed reserved interviews*. The interview is meant to be a personal and intimate encounter in which detailed and intimate narratives are elicited (DiCiccio-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). However, this was not always the experience and a limited number of interviews were noteworthy for the reduced length and content of the responses obtained. This was particularly the case where participants had not come forward independently but had been accessed through personal networks. These individuals tended on the whole to be less reflexive with reference to the subject matter and were less likely to be educated to degree level or have experience of the research process. These interviews reflect Bowler's (1997) experiences of trying to obtain potentially sensitive information from South Asian female users of the health service. In general, these participants were not part of what Silverman (1997) has called the 'Interview Society' where the self is an accepted subject of narration. With less understanding of what the research required of them, they were therefore often unwilling to divulge what they felt was personal information. As a result, as Bowler (1997) found amongst her research subjects, it often proved difficult to obtain *depth* in responses from this group and in general interviews were shorter. Spradley (1979) describes a process whereby the researcher and the interviewee develop a rapport over time. However, during a semi-structured interview which may only reasonably be expected to last an hour, it is necessary for the researcher to elicit information within a relatively short time frame. Open-ended questions ('*tell me about your current property ....*') which worked well during *open confiding* interviews were therefore often abandoned during interviews with the third group. Instead direct and specific questions were adopted ('*do you like where your current home is ? Why (not)?*'). This reduced the burden on the participant to understand the context of the research or to interpret the purpose of the question (Robson, 2002). In this way a great deal of information about specific aspects of the respondents' property and relocation decisions was gathered despite the difficulties encountered.

It was important during fieldwork to maintain an awareness of these three interview types. This involved a willingness to modify the interview approach according to the type of respondent involved, frequently as the event progressed. Other adaptations were also required in response to participant reactions. Parahoo (2006) believes that there is potential for psychological harm as a result of interview-based research. Indeed the extent to which housing choices are intricately bound up with events and decisions in

other aspects of life meant that occasionally the interview touched on issues sensitive to a participant. On a limited number of occasions the interviewee responded emotionally, by withdrawing for a period. Where this happened, Kirby's (1997) advice was followed, to be supportive and to offer to switch off the tape recorder in order to give the respondent time to recover his or her composure.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The first stage of analysis began during transcription as broad descriptive codes were identified where it was clear, even in the very early stages, that the themes involved were central to the research. Beneath these headline codes, sub-codes were highlighted which had the function of capturing interesting or important information to be followed up during subsequent interviews or whilst re-analysing existing transcripts (Gillham, 2005). This was an iterative process where codes were continually amended and attribution of evidence repeatedly reviewed. This was carried out both as later interviews were transcribed and whilst I listened again to dialogues and re-read transcripts. During this stage, detailed textual coding was supported through the use of the data analysis software package Nvivo (version 10). This proved a particularly useful tool for counting the number of instances themes were raised or issues discussed. This helped to sustain or eliminate initial conclusions and in addition provided assistance in locating supporting data within the transcripts.

Interpretation of the data took place alongside coding activity as it was felt that it was not possible to separate what are in fact two intrinsically entwined processes.

Interpretation was guided by the research questions and initial identification of key themes. Semi-quantification, or counting the number of incidents under each heading, proved a useful means of establishing the shape and content of the data (Clark, 2003). It should be emphasised however, that no attempt was made to use this process to make numerical claims about the data which the small sample size could not support. As already highlighted, the research did not follow a fully grounded theory approach. Nevertheless some of its key techniques informed data analysis. In particular attention was focussed on maintaining an open mind about the subject matter, on *listening* to the data and on understanding what respondents *had to say* and *what they could possibly mean* (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.95) point out:

Each of us brings to the analysis of data our biases, assumptions, patterns of thinking, and knowledge gained from experience and reading. These can block our seeing what is significant in the data, or prevent us moving from descriptive to theoretical levels of analysis.

Inevitably the extent to which my own everyday life was embedded in the research neighbourhood gave rise to particular difficulties. However, to a greater or lesser extent all knowledge is shaped by the experiences, understanding and practice of the researcher and therefore subject to the weaknesses identified by Strauss and Corbin (Holloway et al, 2003). I argue that in this instance the knowledge gained as a result of the blurred lines of the fieldwork boundary was all the more rich and fine-grained for it.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined how the research and the fieldwork were designed in order to answer the research questions set out in Chapter 1. A methodology was developed based on an understanding of decision-making as situated within a complex network of habitually unacknowledged social and cultural conventions (Bourdieu, 1979, 1989; Giddens, 1984, 1991). The chapter has described how an approach focussing on *biography* and the *life course* was therefore adopted as a means of eliciting the *unconscious* and *unquestioned* knowledge accumulated by individuals over an extended period of time (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Coulter et al, 2015). It is argued that the decisions they make about where to live can only be understood within the context of other choices, events and pressures.

Methods were chosen for recruitment and analysis to support the acquisition of detailed and nuanced data which would generate understanding of decisions made mindfully by individuals about where to live as well as those that inhabit Giddens's (1984) *practical consciousness*. Unusually in the context of both residential mobility and life course research, this thesis has brought together qualitative interviews with a quantitative data led approach in order to achieve this. Although Bryman (1984) identifies how these methodologies are frequently seen as oppositional, there is increasing precedent for this. Schwanen and Kwan (2012) for instance identify the complementary nature of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a theorisation which privileges neither.

Similarly, Clapham et al (2014) provide a nuanced understanding of the housing pathways of young people in the UK by adopting a methodology which contextualises empirical analysis with qualitative interviews. In this instance extensive quantitative biographical data aided identification of important themes and facilitated a degree of comparability during fieldwork. Semi-structured interviews then provided rich, contextualised data about the meanings individuals attached to their neighbourhood, their property and indeed their home.

Finally, the chapter has examined the key challenges arising during the fieldwork, in particular the position of myself as a researcher *embedded* in the fieldwork neighbourhood. Whilst the research acknowledges Holloway et al's (2003) understanding of the inevitability of researcher positionality, nevertheless it took care to guard against unnecessary bias arising from prior personal understanding of the neighbourhood, its inhabitants and their histories. The chapter has argued that the embedded nature of the research served to enrich the thesis. Familiarity with the fieldwork area meant that nuances of meaning about living in Chorlton were captured during interviews which would almost certainly otherwise have been lost. The *blurred research boundaries* meant that data acquisition continued, almost uninterrupted, throughout the duration of the PhD study. This data was multi-layered, rich and derived from a variety of verbal and visual sources and it is argued that the research benefited significantly from this.

The thesis now moves on to set out the results of this work.

## 4. Performing Residence

### 4.1 Introduction

The following three chapters draw two different articulations of place. On the one hand they demonstrate Massey's (1994, p.154) identification of space and place as 'articulated moments of social relations' which meet and weave at unique points of intersection. On the other, place is also seen to have a territorial identity, where community and belonging is generated through day-to-day acts of neighbourliness. The home and the neighbourhood are therefore seen to be complex sites of social interaction where a variety of micro-social processes combine to create a symbolically discreet sense of place (Atkinson et al, 2009). Whilst each of the three chapters shows how residents engage with their locale through everyday discourses and practices, each does so by focussing on the differing but discreet ways in which social relations are embedded in, and developed through, residential space.

*Performing Residence* begins by examining the role of housing and the neighbourhood in creating personal identity, demonstrating how individuals draw on multiple understandings of Chorlton as they pursue varied strategies of *social distinction*. People are seen to be drawn to a place dependent on how its characteristics and people are perceived as desirable (Atkinson et al, 2009, p.2819). Individual experiences of *belonging* and understandings of *community* are the themes of *Routes to Belonging*, where social networks are shown to be of fundamental importance in cementing people to place. Finally, *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood* explores how these networks, embedded in space and place, enable individuals to manage the competing demands of everyday life, further reinforcing belonging in the process.

Additionally each chapter weaves Blunt and Dowling's (2006) components of a critical *geography of home* into an understanding of the relationship that Chorlton's residents have with their house and their neighbourhood. Firstly the idea of home as *simultaneously material and imaginative* is seen to be a powerful incentive behind conscious and unconscious decision-making. The ideal home does not just offer shelter or act as a store for material objects, but is rather intricately dependent on ideas of the self and of belonging. Further to this, if place is indeed to be understood as a network of social relations, then uneven access to resources means that place and individual

identity should also be seen as constituted through relations of power (Massey, 1994). Blunt and Dowling's *nexus between home, power and identity* is played out in Chorlton as residents are observed pursuing a range of housing strategies designed to display their own *social distinction*. Belonging is constituted both emotionally and practically, whilst differing levels of economic, social or cultural capital lead to similarly differential experiences of the neighbourhood. Finally, the concept of home is *multi-scalar*, capable of expression at a variety of levels from the household, through the neighbourhood to connections beyond the city (Dieleman, 2001).

Clearly as Massey (1994) points out, places do not have single, unique identities. Whilst place is constituted in terms of a particular set of social relations which intersect at a precise location, it is also apparent that a variety of connections exist at each site. Each set of relations is shaped in turn by a multiplicity of economic, political and cultural histories so that, whilst individuals may share *physical space*, they do not simultaneously share a single coherent sense of *place*. This is certainly true in Chorlton where a variety of individuals are seen to be pursuing differing strategies towards the housing market, many of which have traditionally been viewed through the prism of *social class* (Saunders, 1990; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Savage et al, 2014). Allen's (2006) analysis is typical in this respect where it identifies a fundamental difference in the way in which individuals relate to the housing market in the United Kingdom. He first recognizes a *located habitus*, driven by proximity to labour markets and a sense of sociability which he sees as tying predominantly working class individuals to a particular neighbourhood, frequently one where they grew up. He contrasts this with what he sees as a middle class *cosmopolitan habitus* dominated by an instrumental view of the housing market as a means of climbing the *housing ladder* and bettering one's social situation. However, such analyses (see also Allen 2008a) are problematic in a number of ways.

First of all they presuppose a conceptualisation of class which, in its emphasis on division of labour within a system of stable employment patterns, appears to be increasingly outdated. Instead, as Byrne (2009) points out, a generalised popular view appears to increasingly prevail whereby the majority see themselves as either middle class or as having no class at all. Crompton (1998) makes a powerful argument that class analysis should move beyond what she calls the *class aggregate approach* since it



is increasingly difficult to identify discreet social groups sharing specific and immutable characteristics directly derived from employment patterns. Instead it is increasingly through the prism of collective cultural practices that analysis of class is taking place at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Miles and Paddison, 1998; Bridge and Dowling, 2001; Skeggs, 1997, 2004). Interpretations of class which assert the need to prioritise the workings of the social field beyond economics have resonance here (Savage et al, 2014; Butler and Robson, 2003a). By emphasising the potential for capital (whether economic, cultural or social) to accumulate and be converted into advantage, these provide for a distinctive analysis of class, dependent on the differing ways in which assets are deployed. The realm of the social comes to centre stage, where class is a set of individuals whose shared dispositions and interests direct them to act in particular ways (Savage et al, 2014). Whilst these individuals *may* share a similar economic position, this is certainly not necessary (Byrne, 2009).

By moving attention away from the ‘collar line’ (Savage et al, 2014, p.11), class differentiation is seen to be as much the result of age, prior educational attainment or parental input as position in the economic hierarchy (Savage et al, 2014). This is in direct contrast to Allen’s (2006, 2008b) approach which, by homogenizing individuals, ignores the extent to which norms about home ownership in particular have spread across the social spectrum in the twentieth century (Saunders, 1990; Dieleman and Everaers, 1998; Wagner and Mulder, 2000). In Chorlton all social groups were actively engaged in a housing career where home ownership was an accepted and expected aspiration. These aspirations remained entrenched, despite mounting, and widespread, evidence of a ‘new normal’ which is seeing increasing numbers of households continuing to rent after marriage and the birth of children (Andrew, 2010; Beer and Faulkner, 2011). Allen’s (2006; 2008b) reflections on middle class attitudes to property are also particularly relevant in the context of the participants in this research. They were by no means homogenous, but many of them did share an education and a working life rooted in a specific social and cultural geography which may well have led Allen (2006) to categorize them as middle class. Nevertheless few demonstrated a sustained interest in housing as a purely financial transaction. Rather they shared an understanding of the housing market which placed the concept of *home* rather than financial gain at the forefront of activity. Indeed these chapters show that the extent to

which financial value dominates the way individuals understand property transactions is not straightforward and is generally limited; *rational man* is indeed no more.

Chapter 4 starts by exploring an important aspect of this concept of *home*, drawing on Savage et al's (2005) claim that residential space is a key arena through which individuals define their social position. It shows how the choice of where to live owes as much to how individuals want to see themselves as sharing certain lifestyles as it does about the intrinsic qualities of the physical space. Whilst Chapter 2 identified attributes of popular properties or neighbourhoods, it also highlighted how research has so far failed to understand how these are assembled together to construct an overall picture of the neighbourhood as a suitable place to live. This chapter contends that individual housing attributes are subsumed beneath an understanding of a home as an *appropriate* place for the performance of self. In this sense an individual's relationship to housing is no different to the one they have with any other consumer good where satisfaction is intricately bound up with how it is perceived to reflect individual personality.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first begins by identifying two distinct housing strategies pursued by the residents of Chorlton. A focus on *value for money* on the part of one group appears to sit comfortably spatially alongside strategies of *social distinction* pursued by another. Whilst preferences are seen to be formed through social contacts, there is no evidence of a clear binary divide along the 'collar line' between 'working class' and 'middle class' preferences. Consumption choices are seen to provide an alternative means of categorization, heavily influenced by the relative amount of economic, social and cultural capital individuals had at their disposal (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005). The second section turns its attention to the neighbourhood where similar mechanisms are revealed. The extent to which individuals felt it was a good *fit* for their own beliefs, values and social experience profoundly influenced their attitude towards the neighbourhood. Whilst the majority of respondents were extremely enthusiastic in their understanding of being *at home* in Chorlton, a minority expressed discomfort to the extent that some felt the need to move on. Given that the image of an authentic and cosmopolitan Chorlton appeared to play such a significant part in residents' understanding of themselves, the third section examines how and by whom this image was created. This reveals a variety of actors,

not least the residents themselves, involved in a self-reinforcing process of identity confirmation. Finally, at a time of rising housing costs, the chapter turns to examine the complex trade-offs that households were forced to make between property and neighbourhood under conditions of housing stress. Whilst the chapter clearly demonstrates that both should be seen to be constitutive of identity, it seems that attachment to the neighbourhood is particularly strong. Savage et al's (2005) claim about the primacy of place in identity formation certainly plays a part in this, but the chapter concludes by arguing that it is to other, more mundane functions of the neighbourhood that we need to turn for a full explanation.

## **4.2 Learning what home looks like**

Chorlton has been chosen as a research site in other sociological and geographical research studies specifically as an example of a gentrifying neighbourhood (Savage et al, 2005; McDowell et al, 2005, 2006a, 2006b). Indeed, as seen in Chapter 2, the residential preferences of the middle classes have been subject to considerable investigation ever since Glass (1964) first noted the emergence of a new urban phenomenon in the 1960s. Post-war expansion of higher education coupled with growth in white collar urban employment and an increasing number of women in the workforce have been seen to drive qualitatively different residential choices from those made by the generation which went before (Glass, 1964; Ley, 1996).

Alongside this, *gentrification* has come to be seen in terms of a distinctive urban landscape driven by singular consumption preferences. Zukin (1995) for instance notes the importance of cultural production in the modern symbolic economy where the narrative web surrounding a particular place depends on a vision of cultural consumption. Bridge (2001a, p.93) goes so far as to identify a qualitatively different characterisation of good taste amongst the gentrifying middle classes, mobilised across a range of fields, which he christens the *gentrification aesthetic*.

An inner urban lifestyle is distinct in two ways. In its location at the historic core of the city, close to the centre, at the heart of things, it is defined against the lack of distinctiveness, the homogeneity, the 'anywhereness' of the suburbs ... It is to transform working class housing into a display of bourgeois good taste.

This involves emphasising the historical qualities of the house by stripping back to the original. Floorboards are stripped, sash windows re-installed, fireplaces restored or reinstated in what is familiarly known as the gentrification aesthetic.

The *aesthetic* is characterised by a search for *authenticity* which is manifest in the neighbourhood as much as in individual properties (Zukin, 1995). This is typified by the existence of independent shops on the high street (Ley, 1996; Bridge and Dowling, 2001), a predominantly Victorian or Edwardian housing stock exemplifying continuity with the past (Jager, 1986; Davison, 2009), proximity to exotic immigrant communities and easy access to a range of ethnic cuisines, all against a grimy backdrop of ‘colourful’ local street life (Merrifield, 2000). These sites of ‘visual delectation’ (Zukin, 1995 p.10) serve to distance consumers of inner-city neighbourhoods from the conformity of the mass-produced suburbs with their car-reliant and supermarket-based culture (Ley, 1996; Bridge, 2005; Zukin, 2008).

Such preferences were clearly in evidence amongst a significant proportion of respondents to this research, indicating that Chorlton appears to have been well chosen previously as a site in which to study the experience of a gentrifying neighbourhood. Since these preferences have been extensively documented, in Chorlton and elsewhere, it is not proposed here to revisit them in any great depth (Savage et al, 2005; Ward et al, 2010). Instead, this chapter begins by providing evidence as to how they are acquired and the extent to which they change and develop throughout the life course, neither questions having been addressed previously. The link between involvement in higher education and with employment in the artistic and cultural sectors and preferences for gentrified properties or neighbourhoods has been well made (Ley, 1996). It is clear that a socio-cultural milieu exists with shared property and neighbourhood preferences (Bridge, 2001a). However, little attempt has been made to examine how the *gentrification aesthetic*, or indeed any other property preference, emerges amongst members of specific social groups. By adopting a *housing biography approach* this research highlights the context within which preferences are set and provides evidence as to how they change and develop over time. Social networks and the preferences of those around us appear to be vital and continuing influences over how aesthetic appeal, practicality or indeed value-for-money are prioritised. This does not appear to be articulated purely in traditional economic class terms.

Chapter 1 showed how Chorlton's history of residential development has left it with a varied residential legacy, including an extensive stock of Victorian and Edwardian properties of all sizes which were much in demand. Respondents such as Lydia frequently articulated how these properties offered a 'character' absent from newer housing. *Character* was most commonly articulated through the presence of 'period features' such as stained glass, picture rails, high ceilings or original floorboards. It could be further enhanced through sanding and polishing floors, knocking through rooms, installing period bathroom furniture, covering the walls with vintage colour schemes and finishing off the effect with appropriate soft furnishings. The same Anglo-Saxon, middle class fetishising of Victoriana that Jager (1986) describes in Melbourne is much in evidence in Chorlton over twenty years later.

My ideal property is where we lived before we moved here, which was Provis Road. Love those houses. Real floor boards, exposed wood everywhere, really old floorboards, you can actually see the grain of the wood. More cottage-y feel but also quite period ... (Lydia)

Many respondents in Chorlton clearly sought to mark themselves out through a cultural strategy that involved specific displays of cultural discrimination and 'good taste' (Bridge, 2001). In particular, this involved the refutation of mass modernity and a return to the authenticity of 'simpler' times. Thus original fireplaces and mantelpieces, lofty ceilings, cornices, picture rails and stripped floorboards became oft-mentioned objects of desire (Bridge 2001). However, as Jager (1986) also noted, these houses also come replete with fully up-to-date kitchens, bathrooms and lighting schemes since an unconditional adherence to the authenticity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ultimately proves impractical.

As Savage et al (2005) evidence, adherence to this particular aesthetic amongst a significant proportion of the local population was a visible means of demonstrating to the outside world their belonging to a particular social group; a representation of *who they were*. Largely people with high levels of cultural capital but only middling stocks of economic capital, this representation centred on their understated *taste* as experienced urban residents (Bridge, 2005):

We'd want a Victorian red-brick because that's our kind of taste. We wouldn't want a 30s semi and I know Chorltonville have got lovely gardens but I can't stand the houses.... I'm not interested in living somewhere that's really sort of poncy and flash. I don't need that as an expression of my lifestyle. (Susan)

As a university educated professional working in the arts, Susan and her partner had relatively limited disposable income and therefore *taste* was demonstrated through low key expenditure on decoration, furnishings or cars. Although she and her partner had thought about moving to a larger property, they had decided against it:

I think we're both thinking, 'Well actually why get a huge house when you don't really need it and put yourself into that level of debt and stress so that you have to ...' You're forced to work all the hours that god sends and that's something that isn't what you want to do. ... And in some ways we're really fortunate. There's a lot of people who aren't in that position.

Instead expenditure was focussed on a restricted number of quality items intended to highlight individuality. This *ostentatious thrift* is typical of the liberal, ascetic fragment of the middle class described by Savage et al (1992).

In a similar way, Harriet recalled being brought up in East Anglia in a series of modern houses on 'manufactured' estates which to her engendered feelings of emptiness and rootlessness. When deciding to move in with her partner she rejected moving into the property he had previously occupied:

Oliver had been living in the slightly newer housing like on Egerton Road and round there, Egerton Road South isn't it? Which are sort of fifties semis and I don't like the feel of those at all ... Those feel suburban and I don't like suburban, I'd rather have slightly more urban feeling. That spread out people with their own driveways and stuff isn't like the vibe that I like really. So I didn't want to live over that way.

Harriet had earlier noted disapprovingly how John Major had been the local Member of Parliament as she grew up. Living in a higher density, older property closer to the inner city therefore was one way of demonstrating how she had moved on from the social and political conservatism which had characterised her youth. Occasionally there was some

acknowledgement of the limitations of tightly packed Victorian and Edwardian properties in inner city locations. Lack of off-road parking was a frequently raised issue. But for many the thrill of what Merrifield (2000) calls the ‘dangerous’ and the ‘garish’ in city life was sufficiently fascinating to outweigh the negative elements.

However, others distanced themselves consciously from what they saw as the ‘frippery’ of housing aesthetics. Amongst this group *down to earth narratives* were the dominant ones, focussed on practicality, value for money and respectability. Identity amongst these respondents was not constructed through a shared culture revering the *authentic* or the aesthetically pleasing, but frequently rather in one which rejected those same features. Indeed, some went so far as to congratulate themselves on their astute financial sense in buying a thirties semi-detached property or a new-build town house, perhaps a little further from the centre of Chorlton than was deemed fashionable.

It’s only 15 minutes to walk into Chorlton but, yeah, for what I paid ... I paid one nine two and a half for mine. At the time that wouldn’t have even got me a two-bed round the Green. I’ve got a three bedroomed house with a detached garage, a conservatory looking out onto a cricket pitch. (Irene)

The ‘beauty’, or otherwise, of the house was never mentioned by this group. Instead they prioritised space, light, practicality and, perhaps most importantly, value for money. Large gardens, off-road parking and size were key attractions. Of course all respondents looked to make the most of the financial resources at their disposal, however this group showed a marked tendency to occupy newer properties at the edge of the research area which were usually cheaper than the in-demand ‘period’ housing closer to the centre of the neighbourhood. These were also frequently valued for what it was felt they could offer in their own right.

She can never park outside her house. It’s always people either at the school or at Barbakan or wherever who park outside her house. And she comes home and can’t park. She has to park on Kensington Road. That would drive me mad. For us, we’ve got our little driveway. (Rueben)

This differing emphasis is frequently elsewhere explained in *economic class* terms. Christie et al (2008) for instance find that narratives of beauty and desire were prominent in high status neighbourhoods whilst those featuring value for money were

prevalent in lower value ones. Allen (2007; 2008b) similarly identifies an emphasis on the practical amongst what he terms the ‘marginal middle’ class as well as the working classes. However, in Chorlton a clear binary class divide was much less in evidence. Those who championed a value for money approach came from a variety of professional and educational backgrounds, just as one or two of the most ardent adherents of the gentrification aesthetic had no post-sixteen education. Instead, as both Southerton (2002) and Watt (2009) identify, a more nuanced interpretation shows a stronger link between the varied preferences of respondents and differing access to cultural, as opposed to economic, capital. The precise nature of individual preference was seen to be heavily influenced by both the everyday social milieu and the past experience of the individual concerned.

Common understandings of *good taste* for instance were developed through everyday interaction with a social circle whose members in the main exhibited similar preferences, or at least aspired to them. Benson (2014) comments on how the local residential *habitus* may have a transformative effect on the individual as they learn the local *rules of the game*. In Chorlton individuals were operating within a shared understanding of what a home should look like, developed as they went about their everyday lives with other residents, friends and work colleagues.

... everyone we were mixing with was stripping floorboards and doors and going to Ikea every other weekend, cushion covers and ... you know what I mean ?  
(Elaine)

For Elaine, buying a ‘two up-two down’ Victorian terrace and renovating it was just ‘what you did.’ As a buyer for a fashion company she had a social circle gained via work and university with a common interest in art and design and who lived in similar properties. Chapter 1 noted how Chorlton has comparatively high numbers of residents employed in arts-related fields, teaching or in other areas of the public sector. These are precisely the people identified by Ley (1996) as the ‘shock troops’ of gentrification and for many the purchase of a first home was marked by the desire to renovate it in the style as that which they found around them. Most were remarkably un-reflexive as they described sanding floorboards, knocking through walls or their preference for original skirting boards, ceiling roses and picture rails. Surrounded by the gentrification aesthetic, they absorbed preferences from friends and from the dominant residential



environment, aspects of which they observed on a daily basis. Simeon commented on the latest project he and his partner were planning to undertake on their Edwardian villa where they would 'have a couple of bi-fold doors that you see on every good house refurbishment, that go out onto the deck area'. The couple had drawn on ideas from neighbouring properties, those of their friends and the wider environment reflected in television makeover programmes.

Conversely an unreserved preference for 'new' properties was also nurtured within a wider social context. Matthew's partner had come to England from Germany and he commented:

... it's a completely different housing culture over there, where you buy a plot of land ... and the houses are generally built to your custom specification on whatever budget. ... it is designed specifically around their needs at the time and you're going to find the fixtures and fittings are better, people have cellars, they have more sophisticated oil heating systems, the window fittings and door casings are far better than they are here.

For Matthew and Heike the purchase of a new build house off-plan offered the closest they could get to this option in the UK and, by allowing them a greater say in the final specification, they considered this was a far more practical undertaking. Chris, who had grown up in south Manchester and who now worked as a self-employed gardener, represents another perspective. He suggested that his strong preference for a 1930s property had been absorbed from his parents, where these were perceived as well-built, practical, aspirational homes. On a 'good road' (Chris), not over-looked by other housing, surrounded by gardens and with suitable off-road parking, his house represented a suitable progression from the first, small, terraced property he had been able to afford. These preferences are perhaps more closely aligned with traditional interpretations of the *housing ladder* where acquisition of a suburban semi- or detached house is the ultimate goal as households accumulate sufficient financial capital (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Nevertheless it was a preference absorbed from those around him. He commented that his immediate social circle had comparable aspirations or already lived in similar homes.

Chris had spent his immediate post-schooling years travelling round the country, looking for work and living in a series of bed-sits. Similarly, a significant number of those who owned suitably renovated Victorian and Edwardian properties had also rented prior to purchasing their first house, frequently as students in shared housing. During this period of their lives it was noticeable how few respondents voiced any noteworthy interest in the external appearance of any rental property they had occupied. In fact a distinct *life-course* element to the development of housing preferences emerged during the research. For young people in rented properties priorities centred primarily on a convenient location, achieving a minimum property standard and on the personality of any potential housemates. Many younger respondents (and older respondents reflecting on their younger selves) were reluctant to venture far from shops, bus routes, nightlife or other friends, even when it would otherwise have reduced accommodation costs. Rachel for instance recalled a property occupied during her twenties almost entirely in terms of the housemates she shared it with; 'It was a really sociable place. It had two kitchens and it was just really sociable.' Sharon reflected on the way she went about choosing a rented property as a student:

Just the fact that it was right by the Spa shop, it was right by the bus stop, you could walk into town and it did have a really big living room as well, with quite a lot of seats and a dining room in the living room as well, which I guess ... a lot of them were quite cramped and this one was a bit bigger ... the living space.

At this stage housing appears to have performed a much more instrumental role and this life course effect poses a challenge for the claim that *habitus* alone is the key to understanding individual preferences within the housing *field* (Savage et al, 2005; Butler and Robson, 2003a). Whilst a number of residents in Chorlton clearly displayed property dispositions in line with the gentrification aesthetic, this was certainly not something they had either grown up with or been interested in as young adults. If *habitus* is indeed to be understood as the *structuring structures* that make sure classes are reproduced securely over time (Bourdieu, 1979) then there does not appear to be an overarching habitus which directs housing choices throughout the life cycle.

In fact it appears that the move to owner-occupation marks a distinct watershed in attitudes towards the value of a property both as a *home* and as a means of displaying an appropriate personal identity. Blunt and Dowling (2006) point out, home ownership has

significant cultural purchase in that it is the tenure which is most closely identified with dominant notions of *home*, in the UK and US at least. It is ownership that makes ‘real and possible the control, the security, the status, the family life that people seek through their houses’ (Rakoff, 1977, p.94). Although Jarvis (2013) points out how the power of volume housebuilders in reality works to restrict the freedoms and choices individuals have over the type of property they live in, entry to home ownership nevertheless generated a particular degree of enthusiasm amongst respondents. They believed it presented an opportunity to bring a property in line with a ‘suitable’ aesthetic. Many respondents recounted the excitement of acquiring their first ‘proper’ *home* and proceeding to ‘do it up’ according to their own tastes. In contrast, Lydia, commented on the ‘make-shift’ character of the rental property she shared with her daughter, which provided security but was devoid of any personal character. Whilst the eagerness of the first-time buyer may have waned as they acquired other responsibilities, most obviously children, those who owned their own home continued to feel greater control over, and show greater interest in the way it looked (Saunders, 1990).

In this sense therefore it is difficult to disagree with Southerton (2002) when he states that a Boudieusian schema of social classification presents too simplistic an argument. This research has identified two main attitudes towards property in Chorlton: those intended to publically demonstrate a particular kind of social and cultural distinction alongside another set where the focus was on practicality and value for money. Whilst the former were frequently pursued by middle class graduates, deploying high levels of cultural capital and the latter by those with lower stocks of the same, this was not universally the case and economic class had limited value in predicting preferences. Instead the distinction between the strategies adopted by younger and older respondents (including the younger selves of middle aged participants) are particularly noteworthy. Use of property as an element of identity creation appears to be a phenomenon almost entirely associated with home ownership. Prior to that it is possible to identify what might be termed a student or young person’s *habitus* with a distinctive narrative centred on convenience, furnishing and sociability. Other studies emphasise the transient nature of younger people’s housing experiences (Lu, 1999) and it is likely that this has an impact on their relationship with the properties in which they live. It is home ownership which appears to trigger a change in the bond individuals have with *home*. In the UK, unlike other European housing regimes, the lack of security provided by the private

rented sector means that households turn to home-ownership as almost the sole means of securing a sense of permanence and control (Saunders, 1990). However, the precise nature of that bond is clearly informed by the social and cultural networks within which individuals operate.

#### **4.3 Birds of a feather flock together: a place called home amongst people like us**

The chapter has so far focussed on the important role that property plays in the creation of an identity for the residents of Chorlton. However, Blunt and Dowling (2006) in their critical geographies of home also emphasise its *scalar* nature. Home as a spatial imaginary exists at a variety of scales. House, neighbourhood, nation and globe each have the capacity to act as simultaneous sites of personal and collective home-making. This section moves therefore to look at another scale of identity creation through residence: the neighbourhood. Indeed the use of property to bolster identity has traditionally been associated with displays of power or wealth through either possession of an ostentatious house or through domicile in a wealthy neighbourhood (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). In the case of Chorlton, the Chapter argues that, in addition to an association with a particular type of property, identity was also created through the complex relationship individuals formed with the locality itself.

This work draws on the findings of both Butler and Robson (2001; 2003a) and Savage et al (2005) as it shows how individuals attach what Savage et al term a 'biography' (p.207) to their chosen residential location in order to set it within a framework appropriate to their sense of themselves. Whilst Bridge (2003) has questioned the extent to which there is space for the fine-grained residential arrangements demonstrated by Butler and Robson (2003a) outside of London, this research is able to show a similar process taking place in Chorlton (see also Dutton, 2008 for a description of the process in Leeds). The research finds a majority of respondents at ease in a location which they felt to be full of *people like them*. Reflecting observations about homophily in social networks, elsewhere, similarity bred connection and reinforced a sense of security (McPherson et al, 2001). Where there was a 'lack of fit' (Butler and Robson, 2003a) then it also identifies a distinct tendency for residents to *move on*. As with attachment to a particular type of property aesthetic explored in the last section,

these dispositions are seen to be informed by the relative amounts of cultural, economic or social capital individuals have at their disposal.

Chapter 1 detailed a change in the social make-up of Chorlton during the 1990s and early 2000s which in turn had an impact on the physical environment, particularly the retail landscape along Beech Road. Although it has been seen how this site of urban 'delectation' (Zukin 1995, p.9) was only one element of Chorlton's overall retail offer, an understanding of Chorlton itself as a site of *distinction* informed the way in which many local residents saw their neighbourhood. The independent shops, the arts festivals, the variety of bars and restaurants and its reputation as the home of Manchester's artistic community all coalesced into a distinctive understanding of the neighbourhood:

... student background, young professional, left-leaning, veggie-friendly, lesbian-loving ... It's just all those things isn't it? You have to be quite easy going. (Nicky)

For many local residents, individual narratives of self were heavily bound up with the space in which they lived. University educated respondents, working in professional occupations, felt that the dominant local *habitus* was increasingly middle class, left leaning and probably family friendly and they felt at home in this environment. Orla reflected on the attraction of Chorlton for her:

...the thing about cities, it's not necessarily that you go to the theatre, I can't remember the last time I went to the theatre, but it attracts people who go to the theatre and I quite like them. They can go for me and I'll chat to you about it or about something else. It attracts interesting people so even though you don't ... it's a bit simplistic when people say, 'Well we never go to restaurants,' or 'We never go to the theatre.' You might not but you quite like the people who do or the kind of ... and there's knock on effects of all of that. Maybe you don't go to that. Maybe you don't go to restaurants but I bet you like being able to buy celeriac when you want it or maybe you like a bookshop and all of that ... they're all interconnected so even when you're not using some bit of a city you might use another bit. And it's all to do with the people I think.

Similarly, Elaine's comments reflect a widely held belief that respondents were surrounded by others with similar values and backgrounds and that this contributed to an understanding of Chorlton as *home*:

I think I live in a community of like-minded individuals ... something might happen and I observe it and I feel that the reaction I get, generally, from people in Chorlton is similar. But if I was to take that situation I'm reacting to elsewhere, there would be a different reaction.

Middle class residents were not oblivious to the other social and ethnic groups with whom they shared a geography, but their own social outlook was perceived to be sufficiently well represented for them to feel at ease within that geography. This reflects the results of research elsewhere. Fagnani (1992) identifies the extent to which individuals feel the need to live in an area which conforms to the understanding they have of themselves. Similarly, Swisher et al, (2004) find greater neighbourhood satisfaction amongst those who consider themselves to be surrounded by 'people like us', particularly those in the same income bracket.

Indeed the 'Chorlton Bubble' was a commonly used metaphor as residents sought to describe their position in the neighbourhood, as a minority, albeit a comfortable one. In a manner reminiscent of Atkinson's (2006) process of middle class *insulation*, middle class respondents were acutely aware of the presence of a local *other* but were also accustomed to managing such proximity (Skeggs, 1997; 2005). When respondents were asked who they thought lived in Chorlton, each was quick to reference those on local social housing estates, an Irish community which had long lived in the neighbourhood and the significant numbers of residents of Pakistani and Indian origin. They voiced pride in the neighbourhood's social mix, Elaine capturing a frequently expressed desire that her children should mix with others from a variety of backgrounds:

... my niece, who goes to school in Trafford, I looked at her school photo and its all white faces. I think there was one Chinese kid tagged on the end. Our class photo, it's like the United Nations, it's like a Benetton advert isn't it? And I like that, that my kids are mixing with children from all different walks of life, all different ethnicities and I like that because that's the way of the world. Being honest, where we live is a microcosm of the world. Whereas I think my niece

goes to school with Irish catholic children of Irish catholics and they're all white.

Fifteen years previously Savage et al (2005) accused Chorlton residents of 'effacing' an 'other' (p.206) with whom it had little to do on a day-to-day basis. Findings from this research make their reflections appear exaggerated in 2011-2 where there was widespread appreciation of all those with whom respondents shared a local space. However, although the nature of close adult social relationships was outside the scope of this research, little evidence emerged of any outside the same social background. For most, relationships with other social groups were *tectonic* where the *other* formed little more than a social backdrop to everyday activity (Butler and Robson 2001; Jackson and Butler, 2014). They were a key element in the imagining of Chorlton as a cosmopolitan and easy going neighbourhood, but they rarely took centre stage. As McPherson et al (2001) note, the tendency towards homophily in social networks means that relationships between individuals of differing ages, ethnicities or education require more effort to sustain, than amongst those of similar social backgrounds. In Chorlton, therefore, there is a clear tension between the desired convivialities of multiculturalism and the reality of only fleeting engagement. This strikes a chord with Amin's (2012) reflections on the need for a political conceptualisation of immigration and race relations which progresses beyond traditional ideas of multiculturalism to recognise the need for a respectful distance in collective use of the commons.

If respondents displayed a rather benign relationship with their Chorlton co-residents, they were consistently less forgiving of those who had chosen to live in adjacent suburbs. Indeed a key element in participants' sense of identity as residents of Chorlton was expressed in relation to an understanding of other places in Manchester. As Savage et al (2005) elaborate in their concept of *elective belonging*, belonging is dependent on a relational sense of place where the meanings of places are critically judged in terms of their relationship to other locations. Southerton (2002) highlights this across socially differentiated suburbs of a new town where individuals are seen to create social identities through reference to those living elsewhere. Whilst Savage et al's (2005) earlier study found that Chorlton's residents tended to understand the neighbourhood in the context of a comparison with London, the neighbouring suburbs of Didsbury and Stretford frequently emerged as natural reference points in this research.

Didsbury, immediately to the east, has a much longer history as a natural home of Manchester's middle classes. Average house prices are slightly higher than in Chorlton and the suburb has a median household income amongst the highest in the city (MCC 2011). It too has a thriving district centre with a high proportion of independent shops and restaurants, although a number of national chains are also represented. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 show that neither employment by sector nor levels of educational attainment were in fact significantly different to those in Chorlton as at the 2011 census. Nevertheless, its status as a long standing desirable address meant that its residents were generally perceived to have higher levels of economic capital than those living in Chorlton. As such respondents frequently referred to its *corporate* culture, and a shopping and nightlife mix which was felt to be dominated by national chains.

I think a lot of people think, 'Well, I'm perhaps more comfortable in Chorlton than I am in Didsbury.' ... I think that people are a lot more relaxed and down to earth than in Didsbury. (Estate Agent 2)

Didsbury strikes me as a place where people who have never been to Manchester are advised to live. It does get a lot of people who don't have that much connection with the city there and it's also got a lot more money. (Retail 4)

Two respondents commented about the possibility of moving in with partners who already lived in Didsbury but for the most part the neighbourhood was spoken of in terms of antipathy. Participants commented that they wouldn't *fit in* there, Susan explaining why she had moved to Chorlton:

It had a bit more of an edge than Didsbury, bit more mixed. There's quite an Irish community here and a good smattering of everything else, whereas Didsbury for me was a little bit cloying, white middle class.

A sense of self for many was seen to be intrinsically linked to the 'magical site' (Savage et al, 2005, p.94) of Chorlton and to a particular perception of it as a liberal, independent, vibrant community. Whilst neither the physical nor the social landscape of Didsbury is in reality very different to that in Chorlton, the role it plays in local imaginings means that it appeared difficult for respondents to move between the two



neighbourhoods. Neighbouring *West Didsbury* enjoyed more of a bohemian reputation and a number of participants had moved from there to Chorlton. However, only three (Peter, Claudia and Susan) had previously lived in Didsbury itself.

Stretford, to the west, was a reference point largely for those who had grown up in south Manchester. Many respondents had come to the city as students and were less familiar with Stretford because it does not lie on the *university trail* which is explored later in Chapter 6 (Figure 5.1). Stretford's shopping is focussed on the covered 'Stretford Mall' (or Stretford Arndale as it is often still known) where a number of traditional high street chains can be found, including Wilkinson, Clark's shoes, Claire's Accessories, Boots and The Card Factory. In general the population has lower levels of economic capital than is the case in Chorlton. Fewer residents are employed in professional and managerial positions and a significant proportion work in routine and semi-routine occupations (Figure 4.2). Levels of cultural capital are also arguably lower, with on average lower educational attainment, a greater proportion of residents employed in the wholesale or retail trades and fewer in the education, health or public administration sectors (Figure 4.1).

Comparisons between Stretford and Chorlton were made almost entirely in pejorative terms, emphasising the perceived parochial nature of its inhabitants and preferences which were not seen to be in keeping with accepted displays of *good taste*. Respondents felt sufficiently confident in their own social authority to make judgements about the moral worth of others according to self-defined criteria, in what Bridge (2001) understands as a form of *symbolic violence*.

Chris's sister and nephew live in Stretford and Chris said, 'Tony's got the definite Stretford mentality.' And he does, he walks about all day in a tracksuit. Really in a tracksuit! It's that kind of ... it's different. (Julie)

Skeggs (1997; 2004) blames such value judgements on a commodification of culture where the economically disadvantaged are excluded from circuits of symbolic control. The perceived dominant local values in middle class Didsbury were described in terms of difference, but they were nevertheless held to have a certain degree of legitimacy. In contrast, attitudes towards the predominantly working class residents of Stretford were largely negative and articulated in terms of residents' lack of complexity. Where

incomers were perhaps more muted in their judgements, those who had been brought up locally, like Julie and Elaine, were far less reticent. Elaine had left the area for university but on returning to Manchester after completing her degree she had chosen to move to Chorlton.

I come originally from Stretford/ Urmston, near the Trafford Centre, and I, I was talking to James. One of the big things that drew us towards each other, mad for music, both really studenty, stood out in our local area as students and hated Stretford because I found it was really narrow minded and small town community. And that's why I wanted to move out. And I find Chorlton's really different to Stretford because when you go past Stretford Arndale that's when the transformation begins. You know where the tram ends ... and there's the Arndale on the left ... just reminds me of my childhood, being dragged round it. Bad memories. And going nowhere. And Chorlton's really different, so for me there's a big, big, difference. I just wanted to leave and Chorlton is more me. ... trust me, you can't wake up in Stretford and Urmston on a Saturday morning and think, 'I'll go and have my breakfast at the Barbakan,' because it doesn't exist in Stretford and Urmston. The biggest thing is going to Urmston Market and having a bacon bap.

The higher levels of cultural and economic capital deployed in Chorlton were perceived to have created a qualitatively different physical environment, exemplified by the lack of high street chains and the larger number of independent stores. Whilst this in itself was appealing for Elaine, a move to Chorlton also demonstrated how she had *moved on*. She had been able to make her home in a new community that she felt suitably represented the cultural and economic capital she had accumulated through higher education and a high-pressured managerial career.

It has already been seen how Chorlton provided the space for several identities articulated through preferences for different types of properties. Whilst the dominant identity amongst those interviewed was clearly predicated on a form of *cultural distinction* centred on an *alternative* lifestyle, a range of others co-existed. In the same way that identity formation through property had a variety of manifestations across economic and educational backgrounds, attachment to the *veggie loving ethos* was similarly diffuse in its distribution. University arts graduates were as likely to express

frustration with what they felt to be the more outlandish attitudes they encountered, as those born and bred in the area.

Rueben's links to Chorlton stretched back to his childhood, although he had come to live in the area after university, attracted by the suburb's retail and leisure facilities. He nevertheless felt compelled to comment on what he saw as the perverse priorities of some of his neighbours and their patronising attitude.

I'm not criticising people who want to go to the fish shop and spend thirty or forty quid and go to Frost's [the butchers] and do the same ... if you want to do that's fine. You've got the choice. If you want to go in there and shop because you want to say to people that ... Frosts. Fine. I don't. ... Who do I think lives in Chorlton ? Well ... some people who possibly think they're better than other people ...

In terms of retail consumption at least, Reuben's focus on value for money led him to reject paying 'over the odds' for fresh produce which could be obtained at a fraction of the price in the local supermarket. This contrasts starkly with recently arrived resident David, who as an engineering technician, might be identified in purely economic terms as *working class*. He nevertheless had been instantly attracted to the neighbourhood whilst on an outing along a local cycle route:

And I popped up parallel with Corkland, down the track that comes out at the back. ... And I just thought, 'What an amazing place.' I just loved the houses and I loved the look of the houses and the architecture and that. The stained glass windows. 'What a marvellous place ! Why have I never been ?' Popped out on Wilbraham Road and realised where I was.

Having taken up residence, David had gone so far as to make a point of shopping entirely locally for Christmas presents that year, using only independently owned shops. The arguments made by Butler and Robson (2001; 2003a) are borne out in Chorlton where consistency of *fit* and attachment to the neighbourhood owed as much to common consumption practices as to a position in the economic hierarchy. It is of course acknowledged that these consumption practices are influenced by relative stocks of each type of *capital* and that therefore there is a strong correlation between economic class and practice. However, a simplistic link is not borne out by the evidence here.

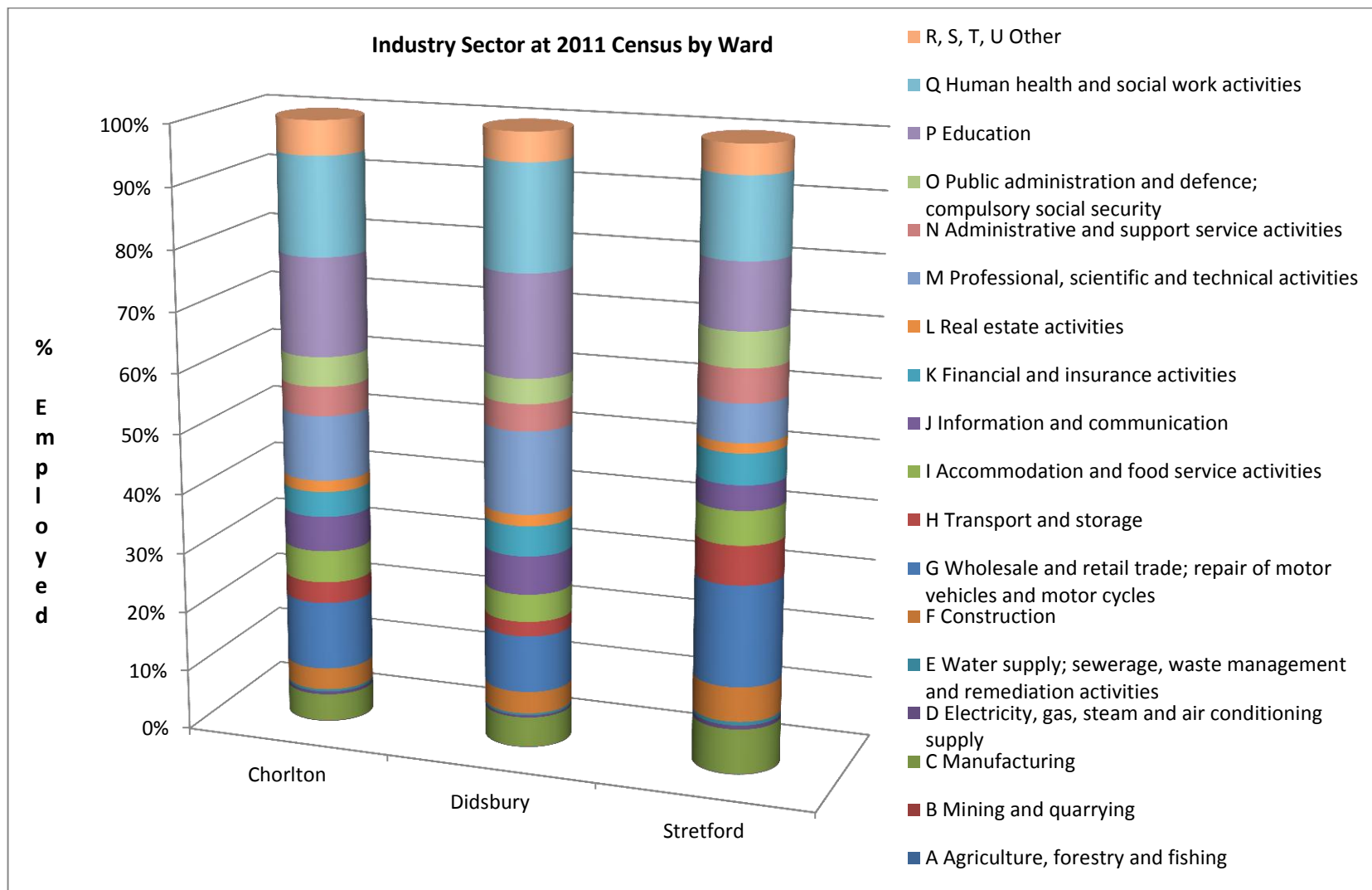
Despite his frustration with certain aspects of the local culture, Rueben was happy to stay in the area. Others however, felt uncomfortable in the dominant local *habitus* and moved away. Whilst the role of residential and personal *habitus* in driving residential choice behaviour has been well chronicled by both Butler and Robson (2001) and Savage et al, (2005), there is less evidence about the effect of a *lack of fit*. Benson (2014) is able to point to ambivalence about the neighbourhood amongst residents who sense that the consumption infrastructure associated with their 'tribe' is located elsewhere. Similarly, Watt (2009) sees households *disaffiliate* as they begin to experience disquiet about the space surrounding them. Similar processes were observed in Chorlton where there was a disjunction between *field* and *habitus*. Where Nicky was able to talk affectionately about the neighbourhood's reputation as the home of 'Yoghurt weaving, lentil eating, vegetarian lesbians,' Elizabeth in contrast found her neighbours' commitment to organic food, recycling and cloth nappies completely incomprehensible:

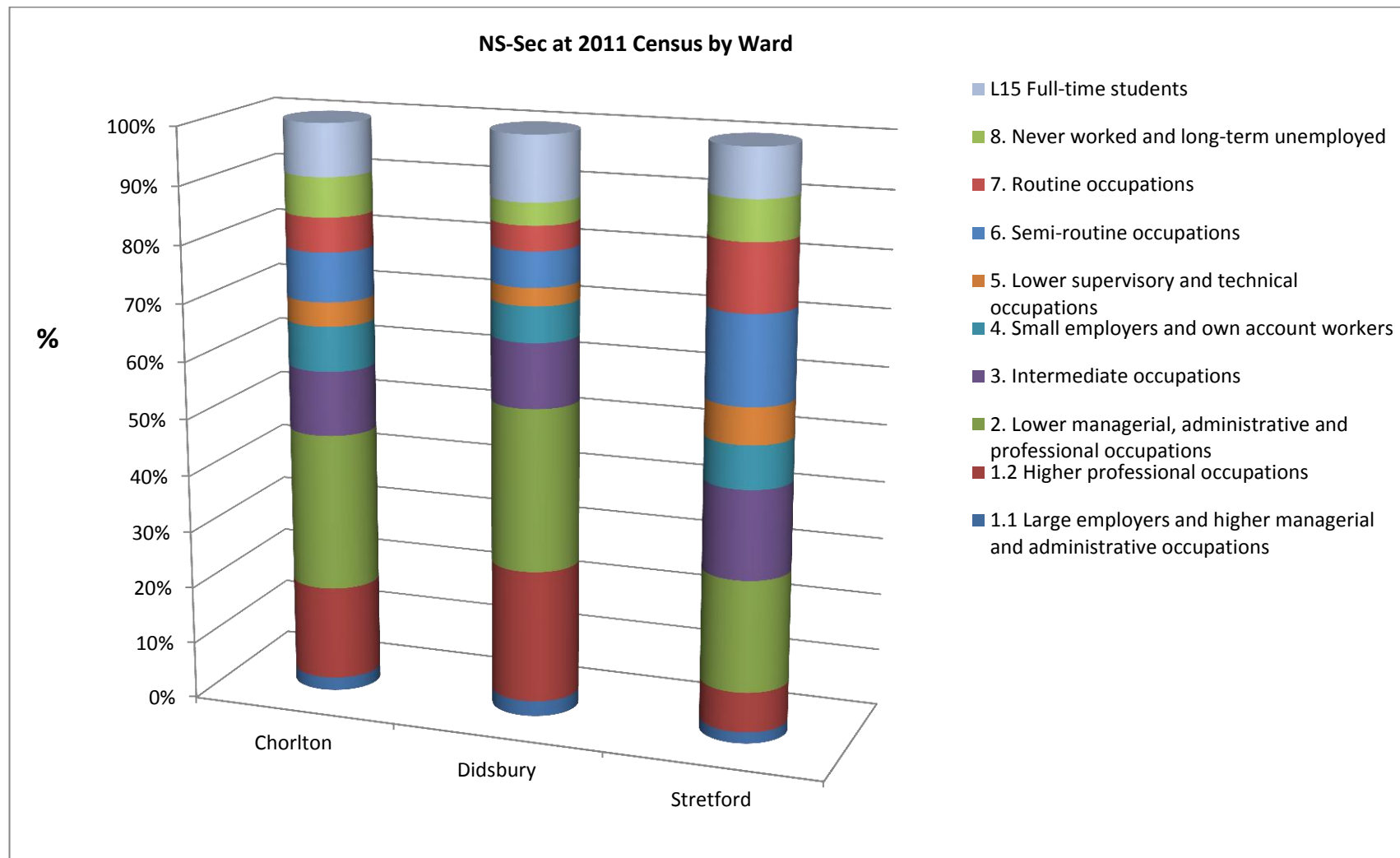
**Figure 4.1: % Employed in Industry Sector (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford)**

**Chorlton**  
(Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Whalley Range wards)

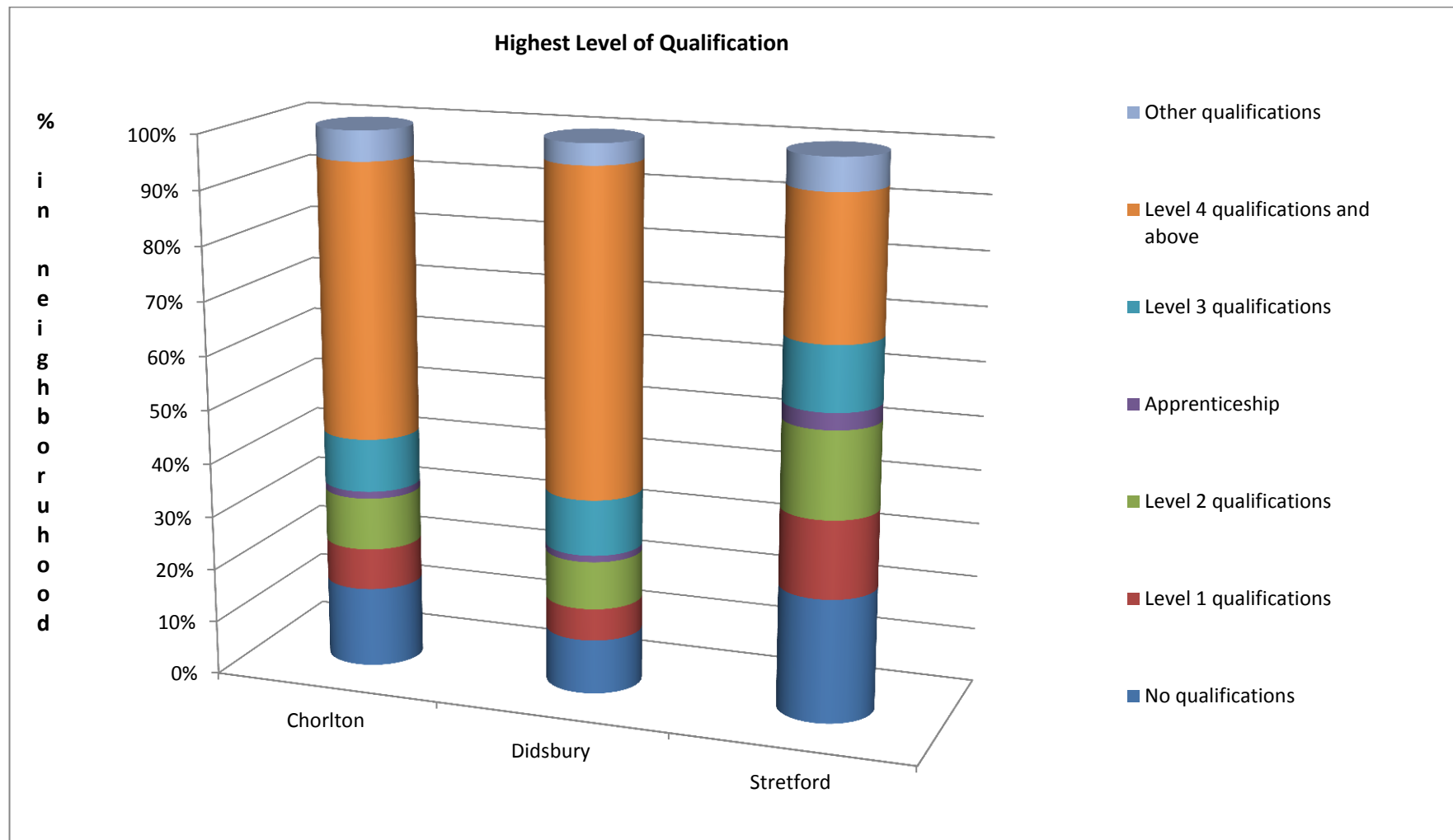
**Didsbury**  
(Didsbury East, Didsbury West wards)

**Stretford**  
(Gorse Hill, Longford, Stretford wards) as at 2011 Census





**Figure 4.2: % Residents in NS-Sec Categories (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford)**



**Figure 4.3: Highest Level of Qualification (Chorlton/ Didsbury/ Stretford)**

... and I'm going to be really awful, I don't like most of the people that live in Chorlton. Because they are ... they think they're better than they are and they've got this real ... really opinionated about what other people should be doing. They get on the bandwagon on something ... so recycling or using organic this and that, shouldn't be feeding your baby this and ... and they really are just way off the scale, way off. And they're not my type of person because they're not normal. They're just ... and I managed to carve out some really normal people in Chorlton but you have to really look hard. ... then you start mixing with other people and you think, 'Oh crikey, my child's going to be going to school with your child and she's got flipping bin bags on and out in the garden in the freezing ...' You know just doing crazy things and I just ... no ... and I thought, 'Ooh no. Not my type of person.' And I think maybe because I never lived in a big city when I was young and I was there to try it when I first came up but actually that's probably not who I am really and it doesn't appeal. I don't like that edge to it which is you've got to have your wits about you all the time. You've got to be careful. There are some crazy people around. Not all the time but ... and maybe I didn't want to live in that kind of having to be aware of things. Whereas here I feel I can literally just wander out and not even think about it. I'm out. I'd be normal and look after myself but I wouldn't be thinking, 'Who's out today and what have I got to be careful of and am I going to get my car ... my bag pinched or ...' You know. That's how it got.

Although she and her husband had moved to Chorlton specifically because they enjoyed its bars and restaurants, neither were graduates and she had spent her working life in private sector retail employment. Arguably with lower levels of cultural capital at her disposal than some of her neighbours, she found the norms with which she came into contact as a new mother claustrophobic. This is reminiscent of Duncan and Smith's (2002) suggestion that differences in local mothering cultures may encourage households to move. Indeed ultimately the couple chose to relocate elsewhere in south Manchester where they felt they had been able to build up a network of 'normal' (Elizabeth's term) people amongst whom they were at ease.

The research also encompassed a small group of women who had moved to Manchester when their partners' jobs had been transferred in a major BBC relocation from London



to Salford. Chorlton's popularity as a residential location amongst those working in the cultural sector meant that it was heavily promoted by the BBC as a suitable place to live for those relocating. However, each of these households interviewed had actively chosen not to live in Chorlton precisely because they felt the *fit* was wrong. Two of the group had initially investigated the area, but ultimately discounted it as a place to live, one commenting that it would not have suited her family at all.

We've never lived anywhere as nice as Chorlton or Sale ! So it felt more comfortable to us to live somewhere [Stretford] where there was such a broader mix of people in styles, ages, everything ... it kind of felt homely ... I see so many designer prams and think, 'Yes, we couldn't have lived in Chorlton'. (Penny)

Whilst ostensibly her husband's media job might have indicated an affinity with a liberal *habitus*, Penny perceived herself as an 'ordinary' person and was alienated by an apparent consumer culture with which she felt she could not compete. In contrast her friend Diane categorically discounted Chorlton after she felt the BBC's relocation services aggressively marketed the area in a way which did not appeal to her personal cultural or social values:

... they sold it to us as a lifestyle ... 'There's a newsagents and that newsagents sells the most Guardians in the country.' ... And I'm going, 'Don't be a tosser. Who cares ?' (Diane)

With high levels of both cultural and economic capital at her disposal, her new home was indeed chosen very carefully on the basis of the lifestyle it could offer her family. Her decision to live in Sale, a well-established, middle class suburb two miles to the south west of Chorlton was based entirely around the reputation of the local secondary schools. As Chapter 2 highlighted, schools with high mean average attainment and low numbers of ethnic minority or working class pupils continue to be popular with middle class parents anxious to secure transmission of cultural and social capital to the next generation (Ball et al, 1995, 1996; Butler and Robson, 2003a, 2003b; Reay et al, 2007). Diane therefore deliberately chose a local *habitus* which she felt demonstrated a commitment to education which would deliver suitable outcomes for her children. Chorlton's relatively poor reputation in this regard, together with its image as a suburb of *left-leaning Guardian readers*, was sufficient for her never to seriously consider living there.

It is difficult to argue with Bridge (2003) that there is less scope in Manchester for the intensity of residential sorting of the type described by Butler and Robson (2001; 2003a); Manchester's middle class is simply too small. Nevertheless this section shows how similar mechanisms do appear to be operating even across south Manchester. A strong attachment to the neighbourhood, full of affection, was certainly much in evidence and this was driven by what was perceived to be a distinctive *habitus* within which residents felt at *home*. Whilst they were fully aware that they shared their geography with a variety of other social and economic groups, participants nevertheless believed that they had sufficient like-minded neighbours, with comparable stocks of social, cultural and economic capital. Some of this identity as a Chorlton resident was articulated with reference to neighbouring suburbs which were felt to be qualitatively different. Similarly, others felt unable to share what they perceived to be the prevailing values of Chorlton to the extent this played an important part in decisions to move elsewhere in the city. As Van Ham and Feijten (2008) highlight, the practical effect of this perceived *lack of fit* is that many others, like Diane and Penny, never consider particular places as a potential home.

But what about those who did feel *at home* in Chorlton? Just how did they come to consider the neighbourhood as a suitable place to live? How did they learn about those neighbourhood qualities which were to ultimately prove so attractive? The next section examines one aspect of this process as it turns to look at how preferences and emotions were shaped and manipulated through the fashioning of Chorlton's image.

#### **4.4 Creating Chorlton**

Places have so far been seen to be the product of a particular combination of people, objects, myths and materials brought together at a specific point in time (Hannam et al, 2006). However, whilst they are particular and unique to the experience of the individual, practices and understandings coalesce into a common narrative of a place where 'a space achieves a distinct *identity* as a place, albeit a place understood as an imagined state or moral location' (Tomaney, 2013, p.660). In Lefebvre's terms (1961) then the physical and imaginative manifestations of place are each valid as elements of everyday experience, contributing to common understandings of a location and in turn

facilitating belonging (Tomaney, 2013). As Kearns et al (2013, p.3) point out, these ‘shared images’ become *reputation* when enough people believe in them and consistently state that belief to others in a ‘shared voice’. *Reputation* in turn then forms the setting in which other narratives about the neighbourhood are constructed. This section explores how *belief* about Chorlton was created and transmitted throughout the neighbourhood and beyond to create a distinct identity which, whilst often far from reality, was nevertheless widely shared.

Chapter 1 set out some of the practical appeal of Chorlton as a residential neighbourhood, in particular its range of housing and retail options and easy access to both the city centre and the surrounding countryside. It also highlighted the appeal of the independent boutiques, cafes and galleries for which the area was well known, particularly those along Beech Road. However, despite Chorlton’s city-wide reputation as a centre of chi-chi shopping, it is clear that the majority of the retail offer in the neighbourhood is more prosaic and increasingly dominated by a limited number of uses. The Chorlton District Centre Action Plan (MCC 2010b) notes the handful of high quality independent food outlets (Out of the Blue fishmongers, Barbakan bakery and Unicorn organic supermarket) but remarks that the distribution of these is fragmented. It also highlights that more than half of the non-food retail offer consists of charity shops and low-budget value retailers. It points out that the district centre does not offer either the range or the quality of outlets available in neighbouring West Didsbury and Didsbury.

Retail benchmarking identifies the vulnerability of Chorlton’s retail offer. While it ranks relatively well in the provision of retailers, it is apparent that the offer is centred around the middle to lower end of the retail market. It underlines the fact that a very small number of high-performing, high-quality stores in Chorlton are supplemented by a large number of value and discount retailers. The absence of any retailers from the very top end of the market is also a striking characteristic. (MCC, 2010b, p.18)

Equally the Action Plan highlights the extent to which the local physical urban environment is degraded in parts. It points to heavy traffic, poor quality retail units and a night time economy which threatens to overwhelm the daytime offer as threats to the continued success of the district centre.

Ostensibly it is difficult to reconcile this with the image of a ‘magical’ Chorlton, which provides a ready comparison with the ‘imagined cosmopolitan space’ of London (Savage et al, 2005, p.94-95). This chapter has shown however, how many residents have successfully come to understand the neighbourhood in these terms, even if the common narrative largely ignores evidence which contradicts it (Johansson, 2012). It now therefore turns to provide an insight into how this understanding is created, as it examines how narratives of the neighbourhood have been constructed. Kearns et al (2013) identify two sources of information about *reputation*, namely direct experience and second hand reports. Whilst both Chapters 5 and 6 explore the role of personal experience later in some detail, this chapter now focuses on how transmission of belief through second hand accounts plays an important role in shaping residents’ understanding of their neighbourhood. It appears that a range of actors are involved and, whilst estate agents might be obvious candidates, the role of the local authority, of the media and indeed of the local residents themselves cannot be ignored.

In Chapter 2 it was seen how a variety of third party intermediaries interpret the realities of physical space to create a housing market replete with meaning. Estate agents are the most prominent of these as they seek to create and sustain a unique selling point which can be turned into financial capital (Christie et al, 2008; Bridge, 2001a). Local estate agents in Chorlton, JP&Brimelow and Sherlock Holmes provide the following synopses of the suburb on their web-sites:

Chorlton village provides a lively and vibrant atmosphere and includes street cafes, bars and restaurants. There are a variety of local shops catering for day to day requirements including the popular award winning Barbakan delicatessen and the Unicorn. The highly popular Chorlton Green/Beech Road locale provides individual boutiques and array of bars like the Lead Station, Horse & Jockey and a number of restaurants catering for all tastes. Whilst more extensive facilities are available at the nearby Trafford Centre and Manchester City Centre itself.

Both Chorlton and Whalley Range <sup>2</sup> offer a range of leisure and recreational facilities including Chorlton Cum Hardy golf course, nature reserve, parkland and the Water Park. Schools in the area are academically renowned making Chorlton and Whalley Range popular for discerning families. There are excellent transport links with a fantastic bus route into the centre of Manchester and a motorway network close by linking to the M56, M6, M60 and the M62 and nearby to Manchester's International Airport. With the metro link linking Chorlton to surrounding areas, direct access into the City Centre & Media City (JP and Brimelow Website, 2014)

<http://www.jpandbrimelow.co.uk/sales/chorlton> (accessed 2nd February 2014)

... the tree lined streets of Beech Road in Chorlton Green, known as the heart of Chorlton, ... the hubbub of the independent retailers, bars and restaurants where the most discerning Chorlton residents and visitors frequent.' (Sherlock Holmes website, 2014) <http://www.sherlockhomes4u.org/about-us/> (accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2014)

It can be seen how JP and Brimelow place some emphasis on the practicalities of the location; the accessibility of greenspace, easy transport links and successful schools. However, the website starts by focussing on the area's leisure and retail facilities. Although it acknowledges the variety of the local shopping offer, the summary concentrates on a few iconic outlets which have a reputation across the city in Barbakan, Unicorn and the shops located in the Beech Road area. The words *lively*, *vibrant*, *hubbub* and *discerning* on both websites contribute to an overall image of *cultural distinction*. Supplementing this is a narrative of Chorlton as a retreat from the city, through use of the words *tree-lined* and *village*. This also has the effect of situating Chorlton within the possibility of a nostalgic community where everyone knows each other. Nevertheless the proximity of the *international* airport ensures the sense of *cosmopolitanism* is maintained with the neighbourhood networked into a wider global community.

---

<sup>2</sup> The 'idea' of Chorlton is frequently extended to include parts of south and west Whalley Range, closest to Chorlton. However as a separate neighbourhood it has an identity of its own in the imagination of local people as slightly more 'edgy' with its leafy Victorian villas, frequently in multiple occupation, and its reputation as a site for prostitution (Figure 4.4).

During interviews carried out with agents operating in Chorlton, the words *bohemian* and *trendy* appeared in each one, one agent going so far as to describe Chorlton as 'The Notting Hill outside of London' (Estate Agent 3). Agents all also reported how, during viewings, they highlighted the independent shops, the restaurants and bars and locally run festivals as an important part of residents' image of their prospective 'local' community.

I always find down Beech Road is quite continental, if you go in France or Spain or ... everybody goes out with their families ... take their children with them late and stuff like that. ... I think that's the way Beech Road is going ... (Estate Agent 3)

Using the example of tourism, Edensor (2007) identifies how normative performances are reinforced through printed, visual material, such as brochures, which are designed to inform the individual about the *common sense* rules of a practice. He points out that this has the effect of reducing these practices to a series of un-reflexive, habitual procedures and rituals. It appears that at least some of the understanding residents had of their neighbourhood should be seen in this context. Whilst the idea of activities more associated with the warmth of continental Europe than the damp of the north west of England might seem rather ridiculous, such subliminal messages were part of the corpus of information presented to residents and potential residents. It was available for them to draw on as they constructed a personal understanding of the neighbourhood. Whilst estate agents provide a prominent example of this activity, a range of others are also implicated.

Since 1987, Manchester City Council and the neighbouring boroughs have worked hard to create a desirable brand for the city as one means of replacing jobs and population lost to industrial decline (Peck and Ward, 2002; Quilley, 2000). Funding has been secured from competitive sources to deliver the Commonwealth Games, a revamped post-bomb Arndale Centre together with a plethora of eye catching buildings across the city, including the Bridgewater Hall, the Urbis building, the Lowry Centre and the Imperial War Museum. These physical changes, accompanied by an aggressive *civic boosterism* aimed explicitly at changing external impressions of the city, have had some success in creating a renewed external confidence in its prospects. This in turn has

played a part in attracting and retaining more highly educated and higher income individuals to live in the area (MIER, 2009; AGMA, 2012; Smith, 2013). The role of such place marketing in promoting the external image of a city is well documented (Niedomysl, 2004), but less attention has been paid to the efforts of cities to develop the ‘whole package’. A glossy city centre may contain a ‘Selfridges’, a big wheel and iconic museums, but it also needs a range of residential suburbs capable of sustaining a lifestyle increasingly based on high quality retail and leisure opportunities. MCC therefore has as much of an interest in sustaining a particular representation of Chorlton and other south Manchester suburbs as it does the city centre.

Traditionally higher income groups within Greater Manchester have either settled in Didsbury, relatively close to the city centre, or have moved outside the M60 in search of what is usually perceived to be a higher quality family offer. However, over the last twenty years Chorlton has increasingly come to be seen as an affordable and viable alternative and as such increasingly forms part of MCC’s strategy for the economic development in the city as a whole. This vision is set out in the two key planning documents published by MCC: The South Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (SMSRF - MCC, 2008) and the Chorlton District Centre Action Plan (CDAP – MCC, 2010b). The SMSRF is one of a series of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks designed to provide a focus for the development of service provision over the medium to long-term. Whilst this document recognizes the pockets of deprivation which exist within Chorlton and the specific problems associated with traffic and crime, the overall tone in relation to the neighbourhood is upbeat and focussed on its positive attributes. Descriptions of Chorlton emphasise its ‘vibrant’ nature (p.16, p.24), a centre which is ‘distinctive and lively’ (Executive Summary p.4) and the extent to which it has an idiosyncratic independent retail offer (p.24). The SMSRF has as its strap-line ‘The Living City’ and the document explicitly sets out the role MCC expects Chorlton and other South Manchester suburbs to play in supporting the future economic growth of Manchester. Chorlton and Didsbury, with their vibrant night time economy, varied retail offer, proximity to greenspace, good transport connectivity and visually pleasing housing are already popular with higher income groups. The City Council sees them with an ongoing role in ‘attract[ing] and retain[ing] the higher income households that are essential to the city’s onward economic growth’ (MCC, 2008 p.49). It is clear that MCC has a clear vision for these neighbourhoods within the overall city-wide housing

offer as a *neighbourhood of choice* for those with sufficient economic capital to be capable of exercising that choice.

The Chorlton District Centre Action Plan also reflects these expectations. An outcome of the SMSRF, it sets out a series of improvement actions focussed on both the retail offer and the quality of the environment within the district centre. Even if subsequent austerity cuts have meant that the plans it contains have so far failed to come to fruition, it is still an important document in revealing how MCC both perceive and wish to promote Chorlton. Incorporating extensive local consultation, the plan includes a realistic and detailed analysis of both the neighbourhood's strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless the CDAP is a glossy brochure with prominent pictures of a small number of high-end independent retailers, bars and restaurants. The overriding pictorial presentation of Chorlton is of an affluent suburb, devoted to the pleasures of the pocket, even if a more nuanced picture is buried within the narrative.

Councillors interviewed during the research commented how they felt that these perceptions of Chorlton influenced MCC policy towards the neighbourhood. Concerns were voiced that Chorlton ward in particular was apt to lose out to poorer wards in the city deemed to have greater need. One councillor reported:

... there's this underlying perception of, from the City Council, that Chorlton is this more middle class area and its priorities are festivals and stuff rather than new housing and stuff, which I don't like it, you know. ... maybe I'm exaggerating the situation slightly but ... no one would actively not help Chorlton, but they have that thing in the back of their minds. (Councillor 2)

In his opinion preconceptions of Chorlton as affluent, polished and predominantly interested in culture also influenced mundane, everyday council activity such as the type of press release it might issue about the area. Although this was by no means a universal opinion, even amongst the councillors interviewed, he perceived a greater emphasis on events such as the Book Festival and other local activities than might have been the case in other wards.

However, it is arguably the media that is responsible for creating an image of Chorlton that is the most widely diffused across the city. A number of studies (Kearns et al,



2013; Hastings, 2004) show the power of newspapers in creating and sustaining a negative image of deprived social housing estates. Less attention has been paid to their role in fashioning and transmitting self-fulfilling positive neighbourhood imagery (Luckins, 2009). Manchester's main local paper is the Manchester Evening News (MEN), now produced by Trinity Mirror Newspapers who also print a range of accompanying local free newspapers drawing on the same content. Chorlton, alongside other south Manchester suburbs, was until 2014 served by the South Manchester Reporter distributed weekly to local homes, although this has since been replaced by a series of alternative titles. The quotation below is drawn from the MEN's website which provides a précis of local neighbourhoods covered by the newspaper's content.

Popular with trendy young professionals, leafy Chorlton proudly boasts a wealth of independent shops and cafes both in and around Chorlton Cross and along Beech Road. By night, visitors come from across the city to drink craft beers in the suburb's bustling bars. But there is another side to Chorlton - Chorlton Park is among Manchester's most deprived wards while fried chicken restaurants sit alongside exclusive shops and bars on Wilbraham Road. (MEN, 2013)  
<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/all-about/chorlton> - accessed 2nd November 2013.

Whilst the abundance of opportunities to purchase fried chicken on the high street is acknowledged, we are first told about the *trendy* nature of the retail offer. References to *craft beers* and *independent* shops in the ubiquitous *leafy* streets help construct a carefully crafted backdrop for cosmopolitan residents. Indeed this description provides an excellent and representative example of how Chorlton is frequently depicted in the local press.

In a process very similar to that noted by Kearns et al (2013) the established reputation of the area creates a framework within which all media stories are analysed. Thus the failure of a bid to obtain village green status for the Chorlton Green area is reported with the inevitable reference to Chorlton as 'the trendy suburb' (Brooks-Pollock, 2013). Similarly, in an article outlining proposals for redevelopment of the shopping precinct, Chorlton becomes 'one of Manchester's most desirable suburbs' (Manchester Evening News, 2012). Neither reference is strictly relevant to the news story being reported and both are reminiscent of the *uninformed hyperbole* Hastings (2004) identifies in

journalistic reporting of deprived Glasgow social housing estates. The transmission of reputation becomes a self-reinforcing process as the actors, in this case journalists, ‘buy in’ to an existing narrative and pass it on. Logan and Molotch (1987, p.70) attribute local media’s promotion of the city or neighbourhood to its need to sustain a reader base, where the locality needs to be seen as providing a ‘good business climate’ in order to attract jobs. Alternatively, both Hastings (2004) and Kearns et al (2013) claim that this is merely the outcome of lazy or unimaginative journalism where reporters devote only cursory examination to the evidence.

Whatever its source, this dominant narrative shapes the framework within which residents come to see themselves and their neighbourhood. Birdsall-Jones (2013) identifies a process of *stigmatisation* amongst Australian Aboriginals as the social problems of those living in the neighbourhood come to characterise the neighbourhood itself, both in the minds of others and those living there. Similarly, albeit incorporating a greater degree of optimism, Kearns et al (2013) note how local residents with a positive opinion of their area are particularly keen to ‘talk it up’. It is possible to observe a similar process at work in Chorlton as local residents both draw on external narratives constructed by others and pass them on in a self-reinforcing process of transmitted judgments and beliefs. Sharon described the preconceptions she had of Chorlton before she visited and subsequently moved into the area:

I don’t know if knowledge or stereotype, but it was ... what’s the best way to word it ? I thought it was full of hippies and happy go lucky people who ride around on their bicycles with their bread baskets and stuff. I thought it was bohemian, that kind of ... and you know the Unicorn supermarket ...

In this case the mental picture she was drawing on had been created by work colleagues who lived in the area themselves and who recommended it as a place to live. As has already been seen, for many residents, living within a community perceived to be pro-active, close-knit, politically liberal, culturally aware and relatively youthful, was an important part of their self-identity.

So if you ask anyone where’s a cool place to live who doesn’t really know Chorlton they’d say it’s Didsbury. But people who know ... (Claudia)

Appendix 2 contains detailed census information about the wide socio-demographic profile of those living in the area. Despite this, all respondents were particularly apt to focus on one element of the population and to describe the neighbourhood as *bohemian*, *trendy* or *alternative* when asked. There was a constant reiteration of the same imagery and of the same terminology as if respondents were reading from a learnt script. It could be argued that home owners had an economic stake in promoting their neighbourhood as a means of sustaining their investment in the housing market. However, there was little evidence of a financial motive behind the vast majority of individual housing decisions other than a widespread understanding of home ownership as a natural progression within a *housing career* (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Instead this repetition served both to pass on a message to others but also to reinforce the speaker's own understanding of his environment and in turn himself. The next chapter shows how many residents had come to live in the neighbourhood as a result of personal recommendation. As such their belonging in Chorlton was at least partly based on a narrative of place transmitted amongst friends and work colleagues. Kearns et al (2013) point to extensive research which shows how negative neighbourhood reputation has a similarly negative impact on a person's status, self-image and wellbeing. Savage et al's (2005) *elective belonging* similarly shows how the individual constructs their place of residence as redolent with specific cultural meanings. For the respondents in this research, Chorlton did indeed exist as an imaginary relational space which provided the freedom for them to develop and perform an identity focussed on themselves as individualistic, cultured and socially liberal. The transmission of narratives based around this was therefore an important element of how they made sense of Chorlton and their residence there.

This section has sought to demonstrate that one way in which residents come to understand their neighbourhood is as an environment constructed by internal and external agency. A range of research shows how any successful attempt at place branding has to have a link to material reality which enables the customer to engage with the brand (Johansson, 2012; Niedomysl, 2004). Nevertheless Hastings (2004) identifies how a range of actors are involved in this process as they *respond* to, *shape* and *challenge* neighbourhood stereotypes. A variety of actors have been seen to *shape* the *reputation* of Chorlton by transmitting a collective understanding of the neighbourhood, even where that understanding is not always based on reality. Little

evidence is found of a *challenge* to commonly held stereotypes, the protestations of a few councillors notwithstanding. Instead, even as the local population and local stakeholders *respond* to Chorlton's reputation, they support and transmit it in a self-reinforcing process of *identity confirmation*. The housing choices of local residents therefore need to be understood in the context of a housing market which is constructed as much through an imaginative lens as through its practical qualities.

#### **4.5 Location, location, location ? Testing preferences**

A strong attachment to Chorlton and considerable affection for the neighbourhood were noticeable features of the research. That this was strongly bound up with participants' sense of who they were was clear, whether this was expressed through the type of property they occupied or the fact of their residency in the neighbourhood. Whilst this chapter has so far shown that Chorlton's residents demonstrated a variety of preferences with regard to property and amenity value, there was nevertheless a perceptible preference for the *gentrification aesthetic* amongst participants (Bridge, 2001a).

Victorian and Edwardian terraced and semi-detached properties commanded a premium, particularly where 'period features' were still in evidence (Jager, 1986). Similarly, the visual amenity of the Edwardian buildings in the commercial centre was deemed to provide a suitable back-drop for the cafe culture, the nightlife and the artistic qualities which respondents felt defined the neighbourhood (Ley, 1996; Zukin, 1989; Corcoran et al, 2008).

However, rising house prices were beginning to put these preferences under pressure. Common life course events such as moving in with a partner, marriage or the birth of children frequently forced respondents to reconsider the suitability of their home and, if necessary, to move (Dieleman and Everaers, 1998; Clark and Huang, 2003; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). Six interviewees, who had mostly lived in Chorlton since at least the 1990s, had found it relatively easy to move up the property ladder whilst remaining in appropriate period properties within the neighbourhood. However, continually rising prices meant that the cost of such homes in Chorlton in 2011-2 were often perceived as prohibitively expensive relative to the market across Manchester as a whole and four distinct *strategies* to deal with the problem were identified. For some, attachment to both the Victorian and Edwardian aesthetic and to Chorlton was

sufficiently important for them to accept living in a smaller home than was perhaps ideal. Others sought to preserve this *gentrification aesthetic* within reach of Chorlton, if not actually in the suburb itself. A third group took the opportunity to re-assess how they valued the neighbourhood and subsequently chose to access the ‘right’ kind of properties but in suburbs traditionally more popular with the middle classes. A final group, as strongly attached to Chorlton as the first, were prepared to trade *authenticity* for practicality in order to remain. This section considers each of these *strategies* in turn.

The first group in fact were numerically small, with only four respondents willing to settle for a smaller or a rented ‘period’ property in order to live in the neighbourhood. David described his experience of being captivated by Chorlton and Whalley Range on an unplanned visit, such that he and his wife decided to trade a three bedroomed semi-detached house in the east of the city for a two-bedroomed flat in the neighbourhood:

I went through Whalley Range ... at the edge of Whalley Range. I don’t know why, I had this image of Whalley Range as awful and I thought, ‘Why ? All the trees. It’s an amazing place.’ So that just set it going. And we talked about it and we agree on nothing, me and my wife. We’ve been together thirty years and we agree on nothing. ‘It’s just ... we should move here.’ She said, ‘I know ... If we’re going to move somewhere closer to town it’s going to be round here.’ Nowhere else appealed ... It was a big move because we’d always lived in a house ... Yeah, because we realised straight away that the house prices there ... (David)

The couple had not only moved house but, in moving across the city, away from the neighbourhood where they had spent almost all their lives, they felt this constituted a key part of a lifestyle change.

My wife’s never in. She joined the WI in Didsbury, they didn’t have one in Chorlton, she joined a Zumba club and allsorts. [Was she involved in the WI before ?] She never did anything, never did anything, so she’s just poured herself into it. ... [And what about you ?] Me ? I’m a watcher. I love being there. I like watching live music. I love live music in Chorlton. ... I just like wandering around, going from cafe to cafe, from bar to bar. It’s all I do at weekends. (David)

‘Leafy’ Chorlton and Whalley Range offered easy access to both the vibrancy of the city centre and cosmopolitan amenities closer to home and as such marked a change from the neighbourhood they had come from. This new lifestyle was cemented through their occupation of an apartment in an *authentic* Edwardian property, close to shops and restaurants.

Similarly, despite harbouring a desire for a house with a garden, Susan accepted that she couldn’t afford to trade up her Victorian semi for a similar property with a large outside space.

One of those nice old redbrick houses, but that’s not going to happen. I haven’t got anyone who’s going to leave me anything and Dave’s mum is old, but what she’s got to leave, when you split it with his brother would never take a move.

Moving from the area never emerged as an option during the conversation with Susan. Lydia and her partner in contrast purchased their first home in Salford after renting for an extended period in Chorlton and Whalley Range. This provided them with the opportunity not only to get on the housing ladder but also to live in the type of property, a small Victorian terrace, which Lydia had always wanted. However, at the end of three years they sold the house and moved back into rented accommodation in Chorlton. Describing the new neighbourhood as ‘a long way’ from Chorlton, both figuratively and physically, she explained how it did not have the bars, the restaurants, the shops or the ‘vibe’ that appealed to her. Despite the transition into owner-occupation, moving there created a ‘spoiled’ identity where her identity as a vibrant, cultural cosmopolitan was brought into question (Allen et al, 2007). To bring this back into equilibrium the solution was to sell up and move back to Chorlton.

Lydia’s reaction to financial stress in placing housing aesthetic over and above location was in fact relatively rare amongst respondents. A variety of other compromises were much more common. The second strategy observed in Chorlton was a move to more affordable property in nearby neighbourhoods such as Old Trafford and Stretford, which, whilst cheaper, still contained a considerable stock of Victorian and Edwardian properties. This provided another four respondents with a means of maintaining proximity to the amenities and the identity of their preferred neighbourhood whilst achieving an acceptable property aesthetic. Ley (1996) points out that gentrification is

most likely to occur close to other middle class sites as those involved in the gentrification process become progressively more conservative. *Pioneers* might be willing to settle in an entirely new de-valorised neighbourhood with poor quality amenities, socio-economic and ethnic diversity and high levels of crime. However, the young professionals, ex-students and would be gentrifiers of Chorlton in 2011-2 belonged rather to the *follower* category. The qualities of an already gentrified neighbourhood in the cafes, bars, restaurants, shops and the ready community of like-minded people were particularly important to respondents. Peter describes how he and his partner very nearly bought a 'really lovely' house in Levenshulme:

We came out of the house, walked into the ... is it the A6 at that point ? And all the shops were boarded up with vandalism on them, a guy outside, apparently doing some kind of dodgy deal. And then we went round the back and there were two blocks of flats and when we were there the police turned up at the flats and ran into the flats. And we thought, 'It's not attractive is it ?'

Old Trafford and Stretford however, were sufficiently similar and geographically close to make the move a relatively painless one. Rebecca made extensive use of Chorlton's nearby facilities to supplement what was available nearby:

It's really good, I go in on the bike; go to the Unicorn, Barbakan to do our middle class shopping. And that's one of the things I'd love to see change about Stretford is better shops. I can't get meat or fish from anywhere other than Tescos in Stretford. I can get a handful of fruit and veg from a little place in the Arndale. I can't get good bread from anywhere. ... I really miss that.

She remarked that the surrounding streets of Victorian terraces in Stretford were filled with people who were living there because they couldn't afford to live in Chorlton. The contrast with Lydia's move to Salford, where she experienced a sense of isolation, is striking. Although Stretford represents very much a 'marginal' middle class neighbourhood as Allen et al (2007) understand it, Rebecca considered there were a sufficient number of like-minded residents, with high levels of cultural capital, for her to feel at home. There was no sense of her experiencing any 'spoiled identity' through proximity to other social groups and she echoed the sentiments of Chorlton's respondents in celebrating the diversity of her neighbourhood whilst keeping a distance from it. Although those who were planning to move to other nearby neighbourhoods

recognised that they wouldn't physically be living in Chorlton, there was a sense that they were taking it with them.

Figure 4.4 shows how far Chorlton was constructed by participants an imagined space. Echoing Allen et al (1998) the research revealed the extent to which Chorlton has a symbolic geography which transcends the lines on a map. This flexible location is a relational space where individual personal trajectories meet within the context of a specific understanding of Chorlton (Massey, 2005). Its identity, created and sustained through the mechanisms identified in this chapter, was frequently mapped by participants onto neighbouring locations. Parts of Whalley Range council ward, closest to Chorlton district centre had long been considered to be 'Chorlton' and these areas were included in this research on that basis. The extract from the JP & Brimelow website quoted in Section 4.4 above shows clearly how estate agents sought to maintain and extend these links. In addition however, parts of Stretford and Old Trafford were increasingly becoming incorporated into the 'Chorlton of the Mind' as residents found themselves priced out of their preferred neighbourhood. For some this actually excluded areas ostensibly within the neighbourhood but largely outside the middle class 'Chorlton Bubble'. A number of respondents noted how, other than to visit Chorlton Water Park and the Mersey Valley Nature Reserve, they rarely ventured into the south west extremities of the neighbourhood. Lesley, resident herself in this area, noted the social and spatial divide, attributing it to the predominance of social housing in the area and its working class reputation. Nevertheless these residential neighbourhoods are situated also within Chorlton and Chorlton Park council wards and their residents look to Chorlton as their main district centre (Appendix 2 – Socio-Economic Analysis).



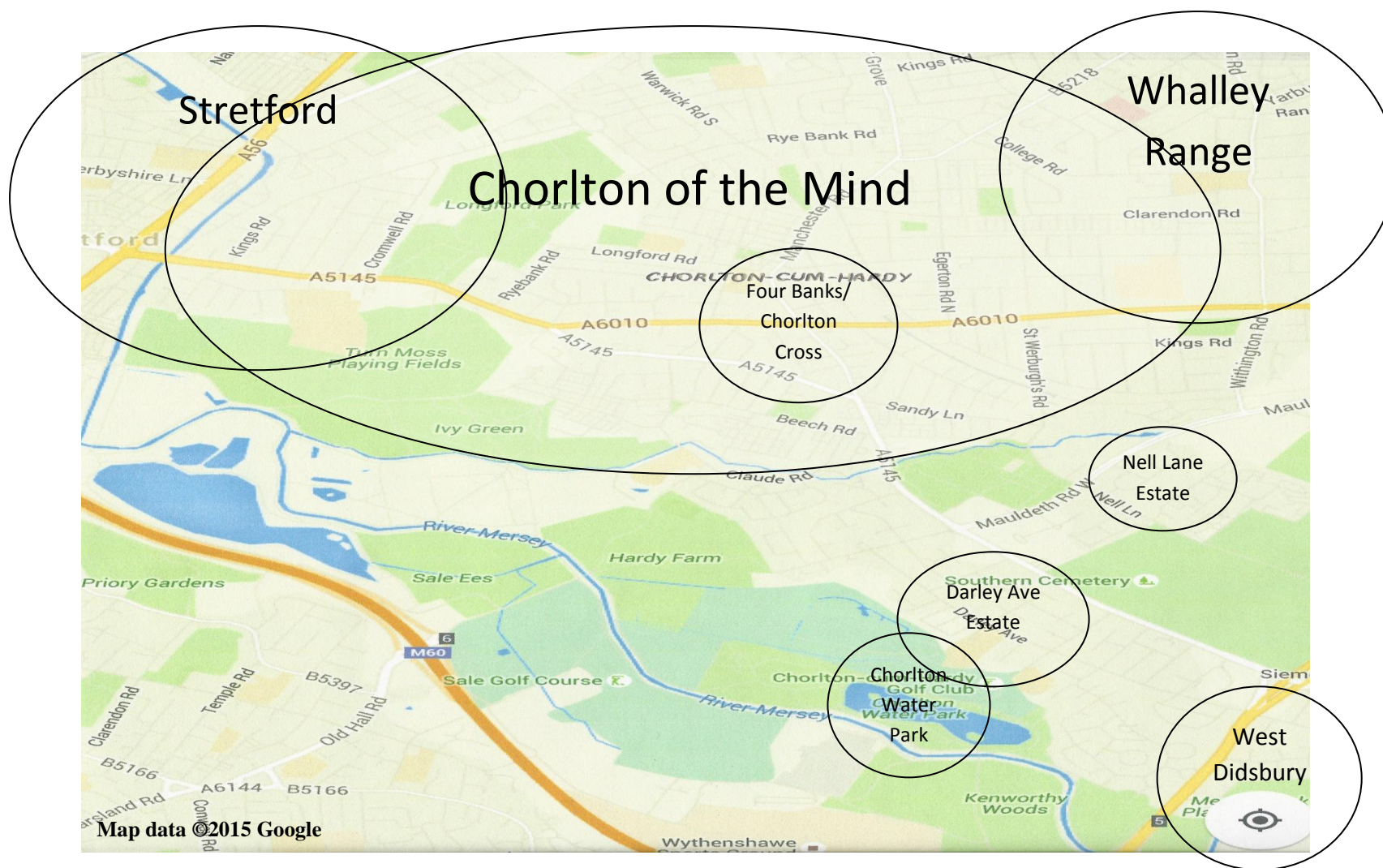


Figure 4.4: The 'limits' of Chorlton

The third strategy observed in response to rising house prices was most often adopted by those for whom attachment to Chorlton was relatively weak. Residency in the neighbourhood generally coincided with a life course phase in which they were young, single and childless. These residents frequently reported few very local friends or other ties to the neighbourhood. When the time came to either purchase a first home or to up-size on the birth of a first child, then traditional understanding of what constitutes an appropriate 'family location' came to the fore (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Clark et al, 2006). It was common to begin a property search in Chorlton but then be unable to reconcile the usual gentrifier preference for a 'period' property with the relatively high prices they commanded in the neighbourhood. The visual identity of the property was sufficiently important for these residents to then re-assess their relationship with the neighbourhood and ultimately to look further afield in order to maintain the *gentrification aesthetic*:

... because the house we wanted to move to [a Victorian or Edwardian semi], although in an ideal world we would have stayed in Chorlton, but the houses in Chorlton, for the size we were after, were outrageously expensive. We didn't have the money to spend six hundred grand on a four bedroomed house or whatever. (Aaron)

Investigating further, participants found not only lower property prices but also 'better' schools in established middle class centres elsewhere in the city. These new neighbourhoods contained the same aesthetically pleasing housing stock, shops, bars and restaurants as those left behind, but with the added advantage of lower crime levels and better schooling options than was perceived to be the case in Chorlton. Sheila's experience is fairly typical in this respect:

We drove round and looked at areas we liked the look of and we happened to drive round a particular area where my friend from work lives and it looked really nice. There was a local school there that we researched and that's a good school. So I think we just set our heart on this one road really because it had some characteristics of Chorlton. It had the old character housing but it just seemed a little bit safer.

These moves were the closest examples encountered in this research of traditional middle class suburban aspiration (Allen, 2006; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). However,

they did not represent in reality a significant lifestyle change. These people were not moving to the country nor to an edge of town estate; for the most part they remained faithful to 'what they knew'. Objectified cultural capital in the form of visual amenity and proximity to cultural assets remained important reference points for most, albeit supported by what were seen to be more effective institutions of social reproduction (Bridge, 2005). The research sample was predominantly focussed on those still living in the neighbourhood so that only a limited number of movers were interviewed. However, the lack of 'life-style' relocation is noticeable. Only one respondent moved to a rural locality after leaving Chorlton, and this was as part of his retirement planning.

For by far the largest group of respondents, attachment to the cultural and social amenity of Chorlton was sufficiently strong to outweigh preferences for specific property types, where they were tested. In all fourteen residents chose to remain in what they considered to be their ideal location at the expense of their inclination towards pre-1919 properties. For some a 1920s property represented a compromise which was still capable of distinguishing the owner from the perceived mundanity and uniformity of new build, whilst for others it was the practicality of a modern townhouse which ultimately proved attractive.

Elaine and her partner had enjoyed renovating a small Victorian terrace in their early twenties but his subsequent illness had necessitated a re-appraisal of their priorities.

I don't particularly like modern houses because the walls are paper thin and the rooms are smaller and you lose all your lovely stripped floors and stripped doors, fireplaces etc, but practically it ticks a lot of boxes doesn't it. Loo ensuite, drive, we've got a garage, garden which by Chorlton standards isn't bad if you know what I mean ... Plus in our situation, with disability, you need it. It's a bloody nightmare. We lived on [names road] and you'd come back and you couldn't park there.

Ease of heating, downstairs toilets, lower repair costs, off-road parking and a larger garden were enthusiastically noted as the practical benefits of a newer house. However, Victorian and Edwardian properties frequently remained objects of desire, particularly where the respondent's wider social circle remained faithful to the typical *gentrification aesthetic*. Elaine confessed that she still harboured occasional thoughts about living in a

splendid Victorian detached residence but had to force herself to consider the practicalities of this. Whilst she acknowledged the virtues of her new build property, a tinge of regret is nevertheless perceptible in her attitude towards her friend's five bedroomed Victorian villa:

It's the coldest house in the world. We've got the top floor with a bathroom, a study and we've got a bedroom of our own when we stay. It's the coldest house in the world ... I said 'Amy, I'm not being funny but I could never live here.' And it's like *Homes and Gardens* that house, it's beautiful. Big garden, all of this, but I couldn't live there. And they're all miserable because they've got cardigans and ... I would rather live in a smaller house that's warm than a big, beautiful house that's freezing bloody cold. So it shows you.

This group of people were acutely aware of the concessions they had made:

I remember being gutted because it was ... it's a 1920s house, all the features ripped out of it so it wasn't ... and then three months after we moved in a house down the road, Edwardian, beautiful, stained glass front door, blah, blah, blah and I was so pissed off. Bloody hell, if we'd just waited ! (Rachel).

The lack of any distinctive characteristics in Rachel's property was a source of frustration since it compromised her ability to display appropriate *social distinction*. However, the extent to which she felt that Chorlton provided a suitable *social fit* for her family meant that neither she nor her partner seriously considered a move outside the area. In fact despite minor irritations with their property, residents who had made similar choices on the whole expressed satisfaction with them. Angela for instance expressed her delight at the lightness and airiness of her 1920s semi and her enthusiasm was echoed by Miranda in her love for the enormous south facing garden of her mid-century house. Through a process of 'satisficing' (Simon, 1959) they had settled for something that might be considered less than ideal. In this case their inclination for a 'period property' had been sacrificed within an overarching preference to remain within a neighbourhood where they felt very much at home.

What this chapter therefore shows is that the *right* location appears to be more important than the *right* property. However, whilst the mantra location, location, location has some resonance this should not be seen in terms of financial motives

which, other than the un-affordability of the 'right property', were rarely mentioned. Respondents were not driven by the possibility of capital accumulation. Home ownership was rather a natural progression on the *housing ladder* (Saunders, 1990). Their parents had often also been homeowners and most of their peers followed the same housing pathway. Owning a property was perceived as an obvious means of providing both financial and familial stability in a situation where renting was often considered 'a waste of money'. Most recognised that the Chorlton housing market was a popular one and appreciated that this provided them with some level of financial security where they felt it was unlikely the value of their house or flat would diminish. The symbolic capital embodied in the *right* type of property within the *right* neighbourhood appeared to be readily convertible into economic capital through higher prices. However, the fact that the *right* type of property appeared to be of less importance than the neighbourhood indicates the presence of other factors influencing decisions about where to live. In most cases respondents had lived in Chorlton for a number of years before their property preferences were tested and they had become embedded in a variety of place-based social and emotional networks. These networks were frequently extremely tightly geographically defined within the confines of Chorlton itself. In short respondents felt they *belonged* in the neighbourhood and this should be seen as an important element in the property compromises they made. In the final event the pursuit of social distinction proved less important than friends, family and community. Chapter 5 turns next to examine how this *belonging* was played out in Chorlton.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

*Performing Residence* has focussed on how property and neighbourhood are used to create and bolster a sense of identity amongst residents. Place is indeed seen to be as much a complex relationality, drawing on other places and persons as it is a territorial connection (Massey, 1994). Chorlton residents understood *who* they were through their residence in a particular neighbourhood and, frequently by living in a particular type of property. In this sense, *liveable place* was represented by a specific alignment of images, material objects and individuals (Hannam et al, 2006). Liveable place is also heterogeneous, a site of multiplicity which is always under construction (Massey, 2005). The chapter began by showing how a variety of strategies towards property were

pursued alongside each other, although the dominant strategy was one of *social distinction* through displays of understated *good taste*. A strong preference for the *gentrification aesthetic* identified by Bridge (2001a) was observed alongside alternative narratives which emphasised *practicality* and *value for money*. Previous studies have presented such strategies as intrinsic to a particular combination of *capital* and *habitus* (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005). However, by adopting a housing biography approach, this study has shown how strategies change and develop over time, where the transition to home ownership is a key watershed. Whilst property appears to form an important element of individual identity subsequent to a house purchase, prior to that a distinctive young person's strategy was observed where the emphasis is very much on convenience, cost and conviviality.

The chapter then moved on to explore how an imaginative conception of home was created at the scale of the neighbourhood (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). It identified a process of residential sorting similar to that identified by Butler and Robson (2003a) in London driven by the extent of *fit* between *habitus* and *field*. Residents expressed a strong attachment to Chorlton and the *idea* of Chorlton as a *magical place* (Savage et al, 2005, p.94) and this was a key element in the way in which they perceived themselves to be free-thinking, independent, experienced urban residents. However, whilst a great deal is understood about the process by which individuals come to identify a neighbourhood as suitable (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005) so far less attention has been paid to the impact of a *lack of fit*. By exploring perceptions of the neighbourhood amongst those who subsequently moved out, or who never considered living there in the first place, this study makes steps towards remedying this. It found residents who were ambivalent about the neighbourhood as well as those who felt it did not adequately reflect their sense of self. Through this sketched out possibilities for a greater understanding of gentrification and other aspects of neighbourhood change. As Benson (2014) points out, the fit between *habitus* and *field* is not static. Population shifts can lead to a lack of fit amongst long-term residents, encouraging them to move on, just as perceptions of the dominant neighbourhood ethos is off-putting to others who would choose never to move in.

Interpretations of neighbourhood preferences and especially gentrification have traditionally focussed on the influence of class with an emphasis on occupational status.

However, whilst there was a correlation between strategies towards property and the neighbourhood and occupational position, the chapter argues with Butler and Robson (2003a) against a straightforward link between preferences and *objective* class position. Long-term residents such as Julie and Chris were just as enthusiastic in their use of local bars and restaurants as more recent incomers. Others, who might ostensibly have felt at home amongst the prevailing economic demographic, found it uncomfortable. Instead the interplay between social, cultural and economic capital and *habitus* is seen to provide a more nuanced approach in explaining how individuals come to find a place attractive.

Given the apparent importance of the idea Chorlton in respondents' sense of who they were, this chapter moved to examine how an identity for the neighbourhood was shaped and maintained. A number of actors were found to be involved in a process of belief transmission continually reinforcing an image which was only partially based on reality (Kearns et al, 2013). Lack of challenge allowed a certain stereotype to become the dominant narrative of the neighbourhood both externally and for residents themselves (Hastings, 2004). They were seen to have considerable investment in bolstering a particular understanding of Chorlton which supported their self image. By promoting a generalised perception of local residents as 'bohemian', liberal and free-thinking, residents' cemented their own sense of belonging to these same social groups. However, finally, the chapter showed the limits residential space has to play as 'a key arena in which residents define their social position,' (Savage et al, 2005, p.207). By examining responses to the pressure of rising house prices, a variety of strategies were observed but the most frequent solution saw prioritisation of the neighbourhood over a particular type of property. Whilst it is possible that individuals considered the neighbourhood to be a more important indicator of social distinction than the property they occupied, in reality other forces appear to be involved. Residents were entrenched in a network of mutual support provided by friends, family or institutions. Their children were in local schools, they had close friends who lived nearby and they were members of a variety of community oriented groups. In short a process of *belonging* was important in tying them to place. Chapter 5 now turns to examine elements of this belonging in more detail.

## 5. Routes to Belonging

### 5.1 Introduction

*Performing Residence* showed how individuals use property and neighbourhood as means of bolstering their identity. In particular it showed how the *fit* between the dominant account of the neighbourhood and the narrative individuals create around their sense of self is a key element in cementing attachment to the neighbourhood. Savage et al's (2005) concept of *elective belonging* is acknowledged as important in explaining how individuals construct a residential location as home, though this type of *belonging* also appears to have limits. In particular, it is now argued that by dismissing the role of one-on-one relationships as a means of anchoring individuals to place, Savage et al neglect an important element of how individuals and households make sense of residential space. This holds true despite longstanding concerns about the fate of spatialised communities in the face of globalisation (Harvey, 1987; Sennett, 2003).

During the research respondents were questioned in detail as to how they felt about Chorlton as a place to live. Whilst initial responses focussed unsurprisingly on the neighbourhood's physical attributes, many interviewees also articulated that its *strong sense of community* made it a particularly attractive place to live. Chapter 5 argues that, despite the changes brought about by globalisation explored at the beginning of this thesis, everyday lives continue to be framed in the context of the local and *belonging* persists in having resonance (Tomaney, 2013; Savage et al, 2005). Despite Putnam's (2000) belief in the collapse of contemporary community, local attachments remain central to human life, as Tomaney and others point out (Easthope, 2014; Tomaney, 2014; Devine-Wright, 2015). Whilst Massey (1994), quite rightly, demonstrates that that belonging is sometimes to a place understood as an imagined location, equally 'local attachments ... involve the search for practical solidarities which emerge from the shared ways of life and experiences in place and territory that give individuals a sense of being part of a collective' (Tomaney, 2013, p.3).

This chapter therefore explores how *community* was understood and mobilised by the residents of Chorlton and the extent to which the associated sense of *belonging* impacted on residential decision-making. Despite the widely perceived decline in the importance and relevance of territorial relations, territorial boundaries continued to be



the main reference point for respondents as they talked about their own *community* in Chorlton:

There's something really special about growing up in Chorlton ... Such a close-knit community ... it's almost like a village in the good sense, that they know people and have got a really strong friendship network. (Margaret)

I certainly feel this is quite village-y, community feel ... I go to Zumba which again, is a very Chorlton thing. It's got a community feel, it's at Brookburn and I know quite a lot of people who go so it becomes quite a bit of a night out with a bit of exercise. (Angela)

However, as Angela's comments reveal, what participants understood at a superficial level as a purely territorial connection reflects the importance of an underlying network of local relationships through which they became embedded in a particular place. Participants reported considerable social interaction which was tightly geographically located within the neighbourhood. However, these relationships did not arise merely as a result of shared common space. Instead a series of co-existing and overlapping communities existed and were maintained through sustained social interaction which evoked feelings of membership of a *commons* (Amin, 2005). Indeed, whatever Putnam's (2000) pronouncements about the death of *bridging social capital*, its *bonding* equivalent was very much in evidence in Chorlton.

The chapter starts out by exploring the *arrival stories* of respondents. Through these it shows how households were heavily networked into the neighbourhood even before they came to live there. By identifying the four principle routes of knowledge transmission through which they came to know and understand the area, it shows how *belonging* commenced for many even before they moved in. In these cases respondents had a ready-made, in-situ community of friends or work colleagues through whom they acquired an understanding of the neighbourhood. Through a continual, self-reinforcing, process of knowledge transmission it was slowly being transformed into a suitable place to live for an increasing number of 'people like us' as individuals followed the advice of friends and colleagues and moved into the area.

The chapter then turns to look at the depth and variety of ways in which respondents were embedded in the *community* that they called Chorlton. Echoing Warr and Robson's (2013) findings in suburban Melbourne, differing levels of involvement in local activity and local social networks are identified. These in turn engender differential experiences of belonging. Whilst on the one hand, close personal relationships sustained *co-operative*, *organisational* or *camaraderie* community experience, on the other, the romanticised images of the *gemeinschaft* community seen in Chapter 4 created expectations for others which were not always sustained (Tönnies, 2001). Neighbourhood satisfaction and the experience of liveable place appears to be closely related to how individuals feel part of a geographically focussed community of intimate personal relationships.

Finally, the chapter examines how these and other relationships work to tie individuals and households to place. Whilst generalised wisdom might be that western citizens live in a hyper-mobile world, in reality it appears that this is a phenomenon principally of the young (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Lu, 1999). Instead the bonds created through the acquisition of location specific capital and the sentiments of belonging that they engender are seen to be a key means through which households are anchored to residential space.

## **5.2 Arrival stories: personalised information and finding a place to live**

The chapter starts by examining the *arrival stories* narrated by Chorlton's residents. Savage et al (2005, p.87) use the term when exploring the meaning of *place* to individuals but otherwise they are relatively under-researched within the field of residential choice. Green (1997) and Hardill et al (1997) for instance both examine how dual earner couples seek out places to live, highlighting sources of information and household priorities. But this is rare and their research was focussed rather on the final residential outcome, so that understanding about knowledge transmission was essentially a by-product of the study. Instead residential choice literature has a tendency to focus on why individuals wish to leave particular neighbourhoods (Kearns and Parkes, 2003; Clark et al, 2006) within the context of identifying popular neighbourhood characteristics (Lynch and Rasmussen, 2004; Clark and Dieleman, 1996). The value of studying arrival stories on the other hand lies in the opportunity

they offer to ‘get behind’ the ‘here and now’ of individuals’ perceptions of their neighbourhood. These are inevitably shaped by the everyday experience of residents subsequent to moving in. As Benson (2014) points out, people are frequently remarkably un-reflexive about their residential choices. A line of questioning therefore which focuses on the *how* of choices made in the past, brings that particular time frame to centre stage and allows the respondent to focus on the act of moving in, with all its attendant options, assessments and judgements.

The research began by interviewing local *stakeholders*; councillors, estate agents and proprietors of local restaurants and shops and each was asked why they thought Chorlton was an attractive place to live. The responses, what I call here the *official* view of Chorlton, were unsurprising in the context of *rational economic* and *neighbourhood and environmental* models of residential choice explored in Chapter 2. They focussed very much on the locality’s physical assets, location and amenity value (Cowans, 2006; Silverman et al, 2006). So ‘... the high grade of schooling,’ (Councillor 3) was seen to be an attraction for families, as were ‘... nice parks, green area, Longford Park, Chorlton Ees, Beech Road park ...’ (Councillor 1). ‘The age of Chorlton, in terms of period properties,’ (Estate Agent 2) provided a suitable aesthetic backdrop to activity, whilst ‘... twenty minutes into town on a bus [or] you’ve got the metro,’ (Estate Agent 3) reflected its easy connectivity. Councillor 1’s comments sum up this *official view* of Chorlton:

... it’s an attractive area here for professionals. Particularly in the last fifteen years we’ve had a lot more bars, restaurants, cafes opening. I mean I moved to Chorlton twenty five years ago, just after our first child was born and I think there was one restaurant and two or three pubs. Now, you know there’s lots of bars, lots of restaurants, lots of cafes ... But it’s always been a nice place to live, it’s always had good schools. ... Beech Road park is quite small but ... a little larger Chorlton Park ... so it’s always had those kind of areas that’s made it popular. Some of the festivals, all that sort of thing, that has been in the last twenty years or so those have developed. (Councillor 1)

These attributes were of course also frequently mentioned by residents themselves as they talked about the attractions of living in Chorlton. However, it was noticeable that

they were rarely cited as primary motivation behind moving to the neighbourhood in the first place.

It is perhaps not surprising that individuals in their mid-twenties were largely unconcerned with the qualities of the local schooling offer. However, the relative lack of importance attributed to the area's other assets by those narrating their *coming to Chorlton* stories is perhaps more unexpected. Instead what the research revealed was that many had chosen Chorlton as a place to live specifically because family or friends already lived there, or in other neighbourhoods close by. An understanding of Chorlton's amenities was based either on personal experience or on the advice of friends or acquaintances. This led few to consider alternative neighbourhoods, even where they later admitted these may have more closely matched their needs. Heike had moved from Chorley to Chorlton, partly to be closer to work in Salford but also because she and her partner had been spending weekends in south Manchester, socialising with friends:

... there are nice areas in Worsley. But I didn't know that and I didn't know anybody there and it would have been for work even closer for me ... But it was always south Manchester because it was something we felt more comfortable with and have been to as well ...

Savage et al (2005, p.92), note that the *arrival stories* of their Chorlton respondents were heavily dependent on *hot* information derived from local contacts or personal experience, far more so than for those living in their other research locations. This research found the same reliance on 'hot' information in Chorlton. However, in contrast to Savage et al's understanding, it concludes there is no reason to believe that this local knowledge acquisition is unusual. More specifically, by identifying at least four *types of residential knowledge acquisition*, it contends that personal experience and personal networks form an important part of many residential moves. Where these are not in place individuals appear to go to great lengths to gather information and create networks. The four types of residential knowledge acquisition discussed in this chapter are: direct personal experience of the neighbourhood; a variant of personal experience I call here the *university trail*, specific to those residents who had been students at university in the city; use of personal social networks; and lastly utilisation of virtual networks. The remainder of this section covers each of these types in turn before taking

a look at residential choice in the context of a lack of access to this frequently informal and casual, but always personalised information.

Taking prior personal experience first, this was a major means by which potential residents developed a view of the suitability of the neighbourhood as a place to live. There were varying degrees of prior connection but the vast majority of interviewees had at least frequented local bars and restaurants during nights out, visited friends or family, or used its shops and supermarkets whilst living in neighbouring areas. This reflects Savage et al's (2005) findings in Chorlton where residents were already firmly networked into the neighbourhood even prior to moving in. Massey's (1994) interwoven webs of social relations acted to draw individuals into the residential space of Chorlton. Through these visits potential residents developed an informed opinion about the neighbourhood's facilities and others who lived there, usually over an extended period of time. Rachel commented, 'Well I'm spending all my time going over to go out in Chorlton, I may as well live there.' Others used the opportunity to assess the potential neighbourhood *fit*. Nicky had visited the pubs in Chorlton and made the decision to move after coming to the conclusion that '... it seemed to have a bit of a community ... I thought it's got something to it'.

***Margaret and Jude – A Community of Like-Minded People***

Margaret and Jude had settled in Levenshulme (again south Manchester) after graduating from Manchester university in the late 1970s, starting their working lives, having children and becoming increasingly involved in housing co-operatives. However, becoming disenchanted with their experience of the co-operative they started to think for the first time about buying a property in their early 30s:

*Jude:* So there were people who we knew who lived in Chorlton and we visited and liked it and we enjoyed being here and thought, 'Oh, it's nice round here.' And gradually got this idea that we would want to move. I mean at that point, because we'd been in the housing co-op, we had no money, no capital, house prices were really rising ... We thought property was theft ! There was no way we were going to go in for that. But then suddenly we thought, 'Oh, yeah, you

know !'

*Margaret:* We've missed the boat !

Typical middle class concerns about securing social reproduction had suddenly become important to them but as a same-sex couple they were also keen to find a supportive environment in which to bring up their children. Having visited friends in Chorlton and taken their children to local playgroups they thought the neighbourhood could provide what they were looking for:

*Jude:* We wanted the park and the school at the end of the street, we knew people whose kids went there ...

*Margaret:* Oh, yes. Now that became quite important at the time. Not for us, but for future people because that school became the school where people sent their kids, didn't they, for years. I mean ... Joe, in his time there I think there were like six kids in his year. So that was important.

*Jude:* ... that was also something; that we knew there were other lesbians with kids around in Chorlton. I think that was also something we thought about in terms of building a for a longer term community. There was a sense, we knew that. We did look at Todmorden actually, which was the other little lesbian ghetto.

Although their children had now left home, they remained in the same Edwardian semi-detached property they had purchased in 1991. Although they occasionally considered an idealistic move to the country or beside the sea, they acknowledged that in reality they were unlikely to leave what they considered their *home*, embedded in a tight knit community.

More particularly Chorlton's location, approximately two miles from the university corridor on Oxford Road, meant that many potential residents gathered knowledge in a very specific way, through what I call here the *University Trail*. Around eighty thousand students study at the universities in Manchester centred on Oxford Road, south of the city centre and in Salford. A great number of them live in the nearby suburbs of Withington, Victoria Park and Fallowfield, adjacent to Oxford Road (Figure 5.1).

Through the respondent biographies, well-worn *trails* were identified amongst students who began their lives in Manchester, clustered around the amenities of the university corridor. On graduation they left their student haunts, frequently no longer feeling comfortable there, to find shared houses and flats further down the Oxford or Wilmslow Roads or across Alexandra Park into Whalley Range. Ultimately, as young professionals, they found their way further south to West Didsbury or Chorlton. These respondents often followed friends into new, previously ‘undiscovered’ neighbourhoods, finding accommodation themselves after having visited for nights out. Chorlton and West Didsbury at the end of these trails were seen as mature versions of the student neighbourhoods they had previously inhabited. These suburbs provided a significant night-time economy, but the local demographic was slightly older, with a young professional profile which was more in line with how these twenty-somethings saw themselves (Figure 6.2):

... a lot of students who graduated, their kind of natural progression was to West Didsbury. ... I would never have stayed in Fallowfield. It’s just a student place. I would never live there. ... I think some more of my friends moved to West Didsbury as well. So we managed to all stay around the same area. (Paula)

This *trail* is reminiscent of the local circuits of mobility Benson (2014) identifies in south west London amongst ‘home counties’ educated young professionals who tend to cluster together in a limited number of neighbourhoods. Because most students in Manchester live to the south of the city centre whilst at university, they frequently have very little knowledge or experience of other areas of the north, east or even west of the city. Chapter 4 has already noted for instance how Stretford was less of a reference point for this group than Didsbury by virtue of its location to the west of Chorlton. Amongst the residential biographies of those participants who had been students in Manchester, there were almost no exceptions to these university *trails*. All had moved through the southern suburbs of the city before settling in Chorlton or Whalley Range. Lack of experience of other areas meant they never seriously considered other areas of Manchester as possible places to live

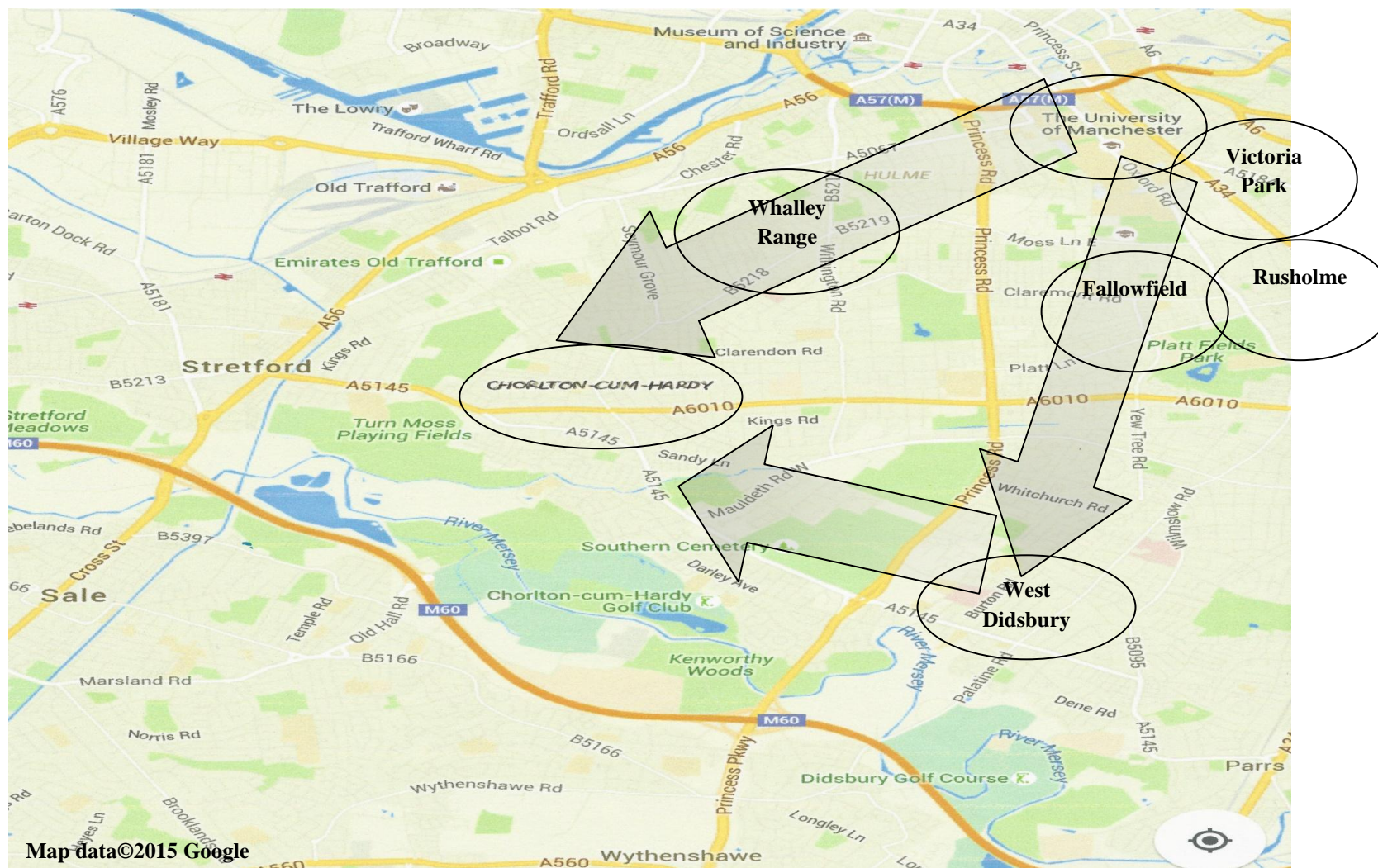


Figure 5.1: Chorlton Student Trail



### ***Claudia - The Student Trail***

Claudia had grown up in Chorley, twenty five miles north of Manchester, coming to study at Salford University at the age of eighteen. After a year in halls in Salford she moved into shared houses in Fallowfield, a student neighbourhood, a few miles from Salford but close to the other Manchester universities. Despite the distance from their university and the inconvenience involved, she and many other Salford students felt the facilities and nightlife available on the Oxford Road/ Wilmslow Road corridor made the journey worthwhile.

On graduation she and two friends chose to rent a house in Withington, a mile further down Wilmslow Road from Fallowfield:

I'd graduated, I didn't want to live in Fallowfield anymore. After a couple of years you get sick of it. ... And Withington's nice...I still wanted to be in that South Manchester general area. I've only ever lived in South Manchester. Still really easy to get into town. Withington's got nice bars ... It was just a kind of more grown up version of Fallowfield.

For Claudia, Withington was a pleasant environment which offered similar facilities to those she had enjoyed as a student. Its residents however, were slightly older and more likely to be working, which was more in keeping with how she now saw herself. From there she spent two years in another shared flat a little further to the south down the Wilmslow Road corridor in Didsbury, before moving to Chorlton with her sister. She had remained in Chorlton in a series of rented properties with her boyfriend, always close to the district centre, shops and public transport. Although they were now looking to buy, they were finding it difficult to save a deposit and were reconciled to a move either further from the centre or to one of the surrounding suburbs in search of an affordable property.

***Lesley – From Student to Graduate in Manchester***

Lesley came to study in Manchester at the age of eighteen, staying first of all in halls of residence on Oxford Road. This was followed by typical student moves through five- and six-bedroomed shared houses in Victoria Park and Rusholme. Her final year as a student was spent in a flat in Victoria Park with her boyfriend, but on graduation they decided to mark the start of their lives as adults by moving away from the areas dominated by students:

The reason I knew about Chorlton was because we'd started, in that final year, to mix with people that lived around Chorlton. So I was becoming more aware of other areas. I didn't just want to be one of those students on the Oxford Road corridor. I wanted to broaden what I was doing. And I'd started working then so I was working in different places around the city. I did temping and I got to know different areas.

Participants who had been students in Manchester tended to cluster in the centre of Chorlton, close to shops and bus routes. Unusually Lesley and her partner settled first of all in a rented property in the Merseybank estate, some way away from the centre of the neighbourhood. They saved quickly for a deposit and bought a house in the same location, citing the area's relative affordability and proximity to the local nature reserve, Chorlton Water Park.

A third group of respondents had little direct experience of Chorlton before moving to the neighbourhood and for these personal social networks were an important source of advice. This was particularly the case when relocation involved a move to a new city, as it did in the case of ten respondents at various points in their housing careers. School friends were one source of advice, so that Angela, who had grown up on the edge of the Peak District, began her search in Didsbury after securing her first permanent job '... because that's just what you've heard: "Oh move to Didsbury."' In other cases, where employment opportunities had required relocation, work colleagues were a valuable source of information. Unsurprisingly colleagues tended to recommend those areas

with which they themselves were familiar and frequently this also meant the same neighbourhoods as where they themselves lived.

Personal opinion could of course also act to prejudice decisions against locations with less favourable reputations even where confidantes had little experience of these areas themselves. Such judgments were inevitably influential for those who were unfamiliar with the wider area:

So originally, because I thought I'd be working there, I thought it's easier to live where you work and then the more I looked into the areas ... and the more I heard about it ... that it wasn't the nicest part of town, that the south was probably nicer than the north of Manchester... (Sharon)

So we started off with a friend of ours who lives in Manchester, going through the map and saying, 'You don't wanna live here. You don't wanna live here.' Because how else do you start? (Grace)

Decisions were not made within the context of an open market but rather within a structured, situated field. Whether or not neighbourhood reputations were deserved, the social networks within which individuals were enmeshed served to steer them in a particular direction. Presented with a range of *acceptable* options and with little direct experience of the local housing market, it would have been difficult to make a choice which contradicted the prevailing wisdom of their social circle. Whilst participants expressed satisfaction with the advice they had received, these were choices nevertheless made within the context of limited information. It was noticeable that more than one research participant pointed out the high number of people living locally who also operated in their specific professional field. Perhaps only in Chorlton would it be possible for someone to report that no less than four shiatsu practitioners were living in neighbouring streets.

### ***Elizabeth – Using Networks as a Newcomer***

Growing up in Hampshire, Elizabeth arrived in Manchester at the age of thirty one in order to establish a regional office for her employer. Initially housed by the company near to her new base in Cheshire, she was unsettled there:

... people who were not my scene at all. Way too up their own ... just basically not my type of person, too into what cars they were driving and what clothes they were wearing and too much show and not enough substance. ... I then decided that Manchester area would be better, more urban, bit more maybe my style ...

Not knowing the city at all, and working to the south in Knutsford, she enquired around at work as to the ‘good areas’ in Manchester and acted on the consensus that Chorlton and Didsbury would be suitable places. Initially renting a shared flat in West Didsbury, she chose to take time to get to know the area before putting down roots and re-entering the housing market as an owner-occupier.

... so I think it was just, ‘Stay where I am for a bit because I’ve got to make some friends and then suss out the area,’ But probably at that point I was only in my job by another year so I didn’t want to ... I still wasn’t quite sure so I didn’t want to buy until I was sure I was staying. So that’s probably why that flat was ok because it was easy, I could get out any time. I had people around me that I was getting to know. That was it really and just bimbled along doing that for a bit...

For Elizabeth renting offered her the opportunity to ‘try out’ the area before buying, although she was keenly aware of the possibility of being priced out of a rapidly rising housing market. Finding both West Didsbury and Didsbury too expensive and now having a much better understanding of the local possibilities, she subsequently settled on Chorlton as both affordable and suitable for her lifestyle.

Where respondents reported a lack of physical social networks as sources of advice, many made active attempts to create them. The internet of course was an accessible source of information for those house hunting and all participants reported increasing use of the medium over time (Zumpano et al, 2003). Orla lamented the lack of information available during her overseas relocation in the late 1990s for instance. However, Paula and Carl described extensive internet searches of Brisbane as part of theirs twelve years later. In addition however, group of women who had relocated with their partners during the BBC's move to Salford made extensive use of virtual on-line support networks. Lacking personal experience of Manchester, work colleagues or other family or friends able to provide advice, they had made extensive use of Facebook and Mumsnet, a parenting website.

That was the best thing, the Mumsnet thread. You were all really good. ... there's a BBC Partners' Facebook group as well ... which has kind of saved us all I think.  
(Penny)

Even though initially they hadn't known each other, these sites had allowed the women to share knowledge about potentially suitable neighbourhoods. In the case of those participating in Mumsnet discussion threads, this meant gleaning information from other largely middle class parents about 'family friendly' locations. There was also considerable reliance on both the representatives hired by the BBC to help their employees find somewhere to live, and on work colleagues familiar with the wider area. Although BBC re-locators were spread over a wide geographical area, respondents reported a preference for south Manchester neighbourhoods. This is not surprising since they were heavily promoted both by the relocation company as one of the traditional homes of BBC employees in Manchester and by other employees already resident there.

***Moving to Manchester and I have no-idea where to go ! Mumsnet Thread 2009***

Diane, relocating to Manchester with her husband as part of the BBC move to Salford, posted a 'thread' on Mumsnet in January 2009 (as 'Ohforfoxsake') appealing for advice about suitable areas to live. Primarily focussed on schooling, the replies helped her narrow down her search area. The following is

a series of extracts from a 'thread' which lasted two months and reached almost five hundred posts.

*Ohforfoxsake*: Fri 30-Jan-09 21:10:35

So, we are going to Manchester, DP has a job in Salford.

...

*Ohforfoxsake*: Fri 30-Jan-09 21:33:44

... My older children love school and are quite academic, but also love sport.

I initially was looking at Trafford because of the 6 grammar schools. I'd rather keep them in state schools, especially at Primary school.

Open space is quite important to us, somewhere to run about. We could spend up to £400k on a house I think.

I suspect that it will be similar to London insomuch there are deprived inner-city areas up against more well-to-do areas. We can't really decide whether to go for this as we are now, or make a move to the country. But that's because we don't know anywhere.

...

*ZZMumSat* 31-Jan-09 09:58:12

OK I would agree with Trafford for good grammar schools.. Some places I would look at are Hale which has some lovely restaurants and bars - quite close to country but backs onto the city.. Also Bowden but you might not get a big enough house for £400K there as it is quite expensive. Try Sale or Altrincham - they are nice and get you close to the grammar schools. I would personally stay in south manchester or cheshire - it has more similarities with London and the south east.. cheshire is very much like surrey..

...

*WilfSell*Sat 31-Jan-09 13:42:19

One of the brilliant bits about Chorlton, Sale, Stretford, Didsbury etc is closeness to the Mersey Valley park land (Chorlton Ees/Meadows) lots of open space to walk and play, lots of wildlife. Makes it a brilliant place to bring up kids. I grew up there and miss it a lot.

Parts of Stockport (Heatons especially but also Bramhall etc) good also (and I think still a direct train to Salford...?) and Stockport Grammar (though a

private school not an actual grammar in the old style) is very academic.

Not completely up to date but as far as I know the state schools in South Manchester are not awful - it is not like London at all.

If a commute to Salford is important, you either need to be on the trainline, the Metro or close to the M60. But TBH that is most of South Manchester!

...

*Ohforfoxsake*: Sat 31-Jan-09 13:55:20

oops 🤦

Isn't Salford a bit, umm, shit? I mean there are apparently gated residences (I believe they call them), then boarded up squats next door. I may be stereotyping here, I read an article in the Guardian about Salford once. 🤔

...

Hundreds of messages later she had put in an offer on a house in Sale

*Ohforfoxsake*: Sat 13-Mar-10 18:50:48

Hello, I'm resurrecting this thread because we are hoping to move at the end of May.

The house we wanted seems to be going through..... 🤔

*cornsilk*: Sat 13-Mar-10 19:02:40

where...you have to tell.... 🤔

*Ohforfoxsake*: 13-Mar-10 19:08:43

Yes, Sale.

I saw the house twice.

I've been round the schools.

I've walked around the town centre once.

Massive leap of faith.

Not that I want to make you all feel responsible.... 😊 🤔

...

*Ohforfoxsake*: Sat 13-Mar-10 19:09:48

I went up for the day to see some schools.

Got to Picadilly (sic). Got on the tram. Got to Sale. How bloody easy was that?!!

I'm not letting myself get too excited, but I am looking forward to it.

And I owe you all a pint 🍺

Diane's focus was very much on securing transmission of cultural and economic capital to each of her four children. Although she saw a number of properties across a wide geographical area, the advice gleaned from the website was significant in directing her search towards the amenities of Sale and its local grammar school.

In contrast, some interviews demonstrated how difficult relocation can be without access to any of this personalised knowledge. These respondents found it hard to find accommodation in a city they didn't know at all, reporting feelings of powerlessness and disorientation when confronted with an undifferentiated mass of information. Orla reported how, on relocating from south Manchester to Adelaide in Australia, she had felt dependent on estate agents and other official sources she was unable to trust.

... it's very hard because even when you read up before you go it's not ... you'd think people would produce more guides actually to big cities but they don't ... in Adelaide ... there'd be places called Paradise or Elizabeth and they were actually quite rough. ... So for instance, there was one place ... why did we ring this guy? We must have rung an estate agent and said, 'Have you got ... we want at least two bedrooms, blah, blah, blah.' 'What do you like doing?' We said, 'Oh, we like restaurants and food. I love cooking.' And we didn't have kids then. 'Oh my god, I've got the perfect place for you. You'll love it.' Westlakes. Have you been to Westlakes?!! .. Jesus Christ, it's just the worst of Australian tack. It's just not our scene at all. It's really artificial, manufactured, an artificial lake with chain-style restaurants. Not necessarily MacDonalds, but ... I was far too snobby for it. It's not my cup of tea at all.

Realising real estate agents were unable to understand the nuances of her preferences, Orla and her partner resorted to 'pounding the pavements' of Adelaide in search of a



suitable neighbourhood. Others moved to Manchester from outside the city and initially lived in what they came to consider as unsuitable locations, though not necessarily unsuitable properties.

Because we moved from Preston ... and we didn't know anything about the city. ... We didn't know anybody in Manchester so we literally just got the train in one day and just got the local paper and just ran about addresses. Went to see a few and thought, 'That flat looks quite nice.' It was a bit random. We were out on a limb. It wasn't the best place to live really. (Nicky)

Similarly, Lydia described how she carried out her house-hunting from Stoke-on-Trent simply by contacting estate agents at random with a Manchester (0161) dialling code. Knowing nothing of the city or the reputation of individual suburbs, she was captivated by a large apartment in a converted Edwardian villa in Whalley Range. Once living in the property, she was less happy about the prostitution at the end of the road and both she and Nicky moved on as soon as they could.

By examining the *arrival stories* narrated by respondents this chapter has revealed four types of residential knowledge acquisition. These potentially represent only a small element of the total, many of which may not be in use in Chorlton at all. A number of studies show how information about residential neighbourhoods is transmitted between households (Green, 1997; McPeake, 1998; Badcock, 2001; Dutton, 2008). As Savage et al (2005) found, much of the knowledge deployed by residents in this particular location is highly personal, based as it is on direct experience. Nevertheless this research highlights the multiplicity of routes through which households gather information and form a view of the neighbourhood as a suitable place to live. It also highlights the extent to which residential choice is highly dependent on trusted information sources and where these are absent then individuals go to considerable lengths to construct them.

The prominence of this personalised knowledge transmission in residential decision-making has two important implications. First of all it creates a form of *path dependence* where personal networks clearly act to direct individuals towards locations favoured by colleagues, friends or relatives (Robertson, 2010). As Roth (2015) points out, human decisions are intrinsic to all markets, irrespective of the involvement of money or prices.

The extent to which Chorlton is a socially constructed housing market has been demonstrated in Chapter 4 as it revealed the narratives created around the neighbourhood by a variety of actors. This market is situated within a complex web of information transmission which serves to reinforce Chorlton's value relative to that of other local housing markets (Smith et al, 2006; Christie et al, 2008). Decisions are made within a structured field where households are dependent on a limited range of trusted information sources, selected precisely because of shared cultural norms, beliefs and expectations. Operating within the same structured field themselves, these sources make recommendations based on their own limited knowledge and preferences, and households have little choice but to follow them. The homophily which has been seen in Chapter 4 to shape the place-based, personal networks of Chorlton's residents, in turn limits the information they receive and therefore the choices that they make (McPherson et al, 2001). Butler and Robson's (2003a) analysis of spatial difference in middle class settlement patterns clearly maps a variety of housing market strategies, each specific to a particular segment of the middle classes. Their work of course sheds considerable light on why particular neighbourhoods become attractive to specific groups. However, they do not attempt to examine the mechanisms through which knowledge about places to live is transmitted to potential residents. The results of this research have provided evidence as to how the nature of this activity.

These findings have further implications for area regeneration policies which are frequently predicated on the development of mixed income communities (Silverman et al, 2006; Audit Commission, 2009). It has already been seen that MCC is aware of the extent to which south Manchester is attractive to higher income groups (MCC, 2008; 2010b). However, the contents of the SMSRF (MCC, 2008) indicate they believe this attraction to be based largely on the physical qualities of these neighbourhoods. By turning the focus onto how individuals and households make connections with localities, this chapter has shown how neighbourhood choice should also be seen in the context of knowledge transmission. The location of the universities in Manchester is important in that it means that where students remain in the city after graduation, they tend to cluster within the 'comfort zones' of what they know. Figure 5.1 demonstrates this student trail across south Manchester. As other young professionals move to the city, they rely heavily in turn on the *inside knowledge* of work colleagues and friendship groups. It is therefore not surprising they also tend to choose to live in precisely the

same neighbourhoods. The stated aim of GM councils is an improved housing offer across the city to encourage the development of neighbourhoods where people of all socio-economic groups want to live (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, 2012). However, this will continue to be difficult to achieve in the context of the significant role played by personal knowledge and experience in residential choice, which directs households and individuals towards those locations which are favoured by *people like us*.

### 5.3 Chorlton as imagined space: the search for community

Having revealed how households use pre-existing social networks to gather information about their future place of residence, the chapter now turns to examine the nature of place-based communal involvement subsequent to their moving into the area. In doing so it identifies four separate and distinct experiences, each of which is focussed on a different type of network of individuals or institutions and each of which appears to engender very different levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live. Firstly it finds *cooperative communities* which were primarily grounded in reciprocal neighbourly relationships. *Camaraderie communities* in contrast were based on private friendship groups, where participants sometimes, but not always lived locally. A limited number of residents were members of *organisational communities* centred on common cultural or political institutions. Finally, however, a more significant number of participants were members of what I term here *vicarious communities*, where *community* was little more than an undefined back-drop to a largely private everyday existence. The first three types of community generated a sense of belonging amongst respondents, but in contrast those involved only in the final kind demonstrated a more ambivalent attitude towards their place of residence. *Gemeinschaft* notions of community (Tönnies, 2001), promulgated through a variety of media, appear to have been appropriated by residents to create a nostalgic and impossible notion of the community that Chorlton *should be*. Where the reality was disappointing there was some dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood and increased the likelihood of moving on. These findings echo those of Warr and Robson (2013) in suburban Melbourne, although there are differences in the specific types of networks operating in and through Chorlton.

The first type of community identified in Chorlton, *cooperative communities*, were those based around close reciprocal relationships with neighbours. For the most part neighbouring existed as what Savage et al (2005) recognize as a *public activity* where individuals ran errands for each other, socialised across the garden fence or attended street-based events. These were largely relationships which maintained a respectful distance but where everyday interaction nevertheless contributed to the overall sense of membership of a strong and close-knit community (Bulmer, 1986). The *life course* was particularly important here, since sustained interaction was frequently maintained between like-minded individuals at similar stages. The arrival of children in a household was a key moment at which *cooperative communities* were forged (Robinson and Wilkinson, 1995). Specific child-centred locations such as schools and parent and toddler groups provided shared public spaces in which community could be performed and relationships initiated and sustained (Moen et al, 2001; Bagnall et al, 2003; Sweet et al, 2005). Informal social contact between neighbours was also more frequently reported amongst those with young children. Parents spent time taking their children to school and to a variety of social activities or in local parks providing increased opportunity for neighbourhood encounters (Kuo et al, 1998).

There was a greater tendency to express satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live amongst this group (Swisher et al, 2004; Sweet et al, 2005; Corcoran et al, 2008). Harriet for instance talked in an affectionate way about the shared activities organised by those who lived on the same road; about reciprocal favours between neighbours; about sustained (if sometimes superficial) relationships; and about the everyday interaction of children who lived close together:

...it's a really nice road to live on. It's really friendly, we've been having street parties for the last few years, I don't know if we're having one this year, but you know. The road is closed and everybody organising ... So we know both our neighbours quite well, the kids go through the hedge next door to play with Rosie, things like that. ... I remember one time them coming round saying, 'My son's just been sick everywhere, could you please just look after my baby while I sort it out.' In the sense that you've got somebody there who can do something like that. Or like we've got next door's keys and they've got our keys and they come feed our cat, you know all things ... and it's not just the neighbours, it's like lots of people

you just sort of say hello to. Sometimes I hear these things on the radio where they say, 'Oh living in the country's better than living in the city because you don't speak to ...' And I always think, 'Well they obviously don't live on [X Road because it has actually got quite a community feel about it really.' It's got quite a lot of people who we would at least say hello to or sometimes have a bit more of a chat with.

Similarly, Susan had enjoyed a particularly close relationship with a previous next-door neighbour but the familiarity of others in the street, even if the association was relatively superficial, meant she felt part of a wider network of relationships:

Dave also knows all the people in this row and a lot of people on the street and it's quite nice because we know our neighbours. There's some people who live in next door, they're new from four months ago, but before that they lived here for fourteen months and me and Hannah just hit it off, it was brilliant. The sun was shining, she had two little ones, Tom had just started going off to school, but in the evenings he was home from school and the sun from the south, we'd sit on the steps in the evening while our kids were playing and it was just lovely. We know the others a bit, we actually say hello and have a quick natter. You bump into people in town or the cinema and think, 'Oh, yeah, you live a bit further up don't you ?'

In contrast the lack of reciprocal neighbourly relationships was a source of dissatisfaction for Matthew and his partner Heike. Whilst they had close friends amongst one or two near neighbours, a significant proportion of properties on their small new build estate were rented out to young couples or groups of young professionals. Matthew cited the transitory nature of the population and the resultant lack of on-going personal relationships as a contributory factor in what he saw as a neglected social and physical environment.

... regards to this immediate estate here, that hasn't quite lived up to my hopes and expectations. And that's possibly because I'm a little bit idealistic or had a vision of the place that was perhaps meant to be, I don't know... And our view is, if when we do eventually move out, if we haven't made any money, we've had a lovely home, we've had a wonderful time living here. That's why we bought it. It wasn't to make money on it. But what you tend to find is that there's people

in the area who don't have that investment, emotional investment in their home, don't take care of their environment. So things get a bit shitty ... and a bit run down and again, the nostalgic concept of 'an Englishman's home is his castle' which is people have pride in their home and our garden and make sure our bins away and our cars are parked. And other people don't ... it really depresses me. I kind of accept it of the wider area but I hope, which is why I've got so involved in all these community things, try and engender that sort of thing. In the neighbourhood there's so little crime goes on. What I've tried to do is get the community meetings together. Get the neighbours talking to each other. Find out what people's issues are and what we can do to solve them and this sort of thing. You get the same sort of half dozen people coming out every time ...

Edensor (2007) points out that space is made homely through being collectively performed, particularly where that space is created through repetitive and collective practice. Matthew's comments reveal how he felt that the shared 'common sense' of cultural norms which arise as a result of this performance were lacking on his estate, giving rise to a degree of alienation from it (Edensor, 2007). Both Matthew and Heike worked full time and, unusually, their primary aged son was being educated in a private school outside the local *circuit of education* which in Chorlton, at primary level at least, was principally predicated on local state schools (Ball et al, 1995). As a result, they made more limited use of the shared spaces such as parent and toddler groups or the school run which were a common feature of these *cooperative communities* elsewhere in Chorlton (Bagnall et al, 2003; Sweet et al, 2005). The resultant lack of very local acquaintances with whom they could share an experience of the neighbourhood, was a contributory factor in their broader dissatisfaction with it. The couple were not planning an imminent move away from the area, but had started to consider this as an option.

In addition to these reciprocal *cooperative communities*, a wide circle of friends who also lived locally was an important element of the *camaraderie community* some respondents constructed for themselves (Swisher et al, 2004; Jamieson et al, 2009). This is perhaps unsurprising in a locality where it has been seen that arrivals were often predicated on pre-existing social networks and certainly echoes the findings by Savage et al (2005) in Chorlton some years earlier. Peter explained how he and his wife,

having become unsettled in their home after a burglary, initially considered alternative locations all over the country. He describes how they returned from viewing a property elsewhere in south Manchester to explain the realisation that the presence of a wide social circle living within a tightly defined locality was sufficient to outweigh their short-term unhappiness in Chorlton.

So we came back to Chorlton, went for a walk and as we walked round Claude Road, just round the corner, we bumped into three people also going for a walk at half ten at night we knew, and thought, 'No, we've got a community here, let's stay in Chorlton.'

Corcoran et al (2008) point out that where people don't have local ties they frequently make efforts to build them. Length of residence increased opportunity for new friendships and the presence of children was once more seen to be of particular significance, as acquaintances acquired through this route frequently went on to become good friends (Lilius, 2014; Savage et al, 2005). Margaret's children were now grown up but the child-centred networks created in their youth endured, so that when asked about the best bit of living in Chorlton she replied:

The belonging I think. You always joke, lots of people do, Saturday morning when you go down to the shops, you've got to add a bit of extra time because you'll go and meet people. Sometimes I don't want to do that so I might drive to Sainsbury's in Sale or somewhere to be in and out. Because if you go down there you'll meet people and have a natter ... I was in the Woodcraft Folk for years. Just lots of that kind of community bit, which is nice, still see people all the time.

Similarly, whilst Orla predominantly entertained friends in the private space of her back-yard prior to having children, the birth of her first child prompted increased use of a communal garden space behind her property. As a result, she encountered and formed close friendships with other neighbours whose children also played there. It was these friendships that she credited with introducing her to a wider social network situated within the neighbourhood which still endured. Their creation however, had been dependent on the presence of children in the household, providing new and additional opportunities for socialisation through newly formed networks.

Less in evidence than those based on neighbourly relations or friendships, the third type of community observed during the research were *organisational communities*, grounded in common cultural institutions. Nevertheless a significant proportion of respondents were able to point to membership of activity or social groups as evidence of their participation in the Chorlton *community*. Common examples included amateur dramatics, book groups, a variety of playgroups, school parent teacher organisations, social clubs and sports clubs. For some respondents the activity represented nothing more than a night or afternoon out once a week, whilst for others membership had led to integration into a wider social circle. Jane's family had recently joined one of the local cricket clubs and, although neither adult played, they enjoyed the social aspect of drinking at the club on a Saturday night. Similarly, Rueben's participation in a theatre group not only involved weekly rehearsals, but also regular socialising in local bars, restaurants or at the homes of other members.

However, these communities consisted primarily of individuals gathered to perform private social activities. Putnam's (2000) wider criticism about the decline of civic involvement was reflected in Chorlton where participation in civic or political organisations was very low indeed. Susan described how membership of political organisations had shaped her partner's understanding of his local community and how he had met many like-minded individuals living locally through this:

Dave used to be very politically active and a lot of the people he knows are from those days ... If we go to the Barbakan on a Saturday, I have to say to Dave, 'Please just go there and come back.' Because otherwise he bumps into so many people. You like go and get a loaf of bread and an hour and a half later, 'We're still waiting for our toast ! Come back !'

However, this level of involvement was very rare. Elsewhere studies report how the relationships created through *organisational communities*, churches or cultural institutions amongst migrants for example, extend to encompass the entire social activity of participants, creating a strong common identity for members (Gafford, 2013). However, in Chorlton, Matthew's experience was perhaps more common. His efforts at instigating a residents association and Neighbourhood Watch group were largely rebuffed or met with disinterest. Jeremy drew on his experience of small scale



community activism as evidence of a wider concern about the quality of the local environment in Chorlton, which he felt local residents were prepared to defend.

... I think there's quite a lot of people like that knocking about in Chorlton that are prepared to ... you know more sort of neighbourhood focussed people ... I'm a member of the Chorlton Civic Society and 'Keep Chorlton Interesting' if they still exist, I don't know. Chorlton Civic Society; that still exists, but 'Keep Chorlton Interesting' I think that was just to stop the Tesco's. I've not had any emails from them recently.

However, Jeremy's lack of knowledge about the organisations of which he was a member indicates how his involvement in these community groups was peripheral. Although, unlike Matthew's neighbours, he was prepared to support the activity of others, he lacked the time and inclination to take a central organising role. This reflects findings from other studies of suburban residential communities, where a small core of committed volunteers have been found to maintain momentum across a range of organised networks (Lupi and Musterd, 2006; Walters and Rosenblatt, 2008). The presence of others who were vocal in their support for particular causes or who were prepared to organise political and social activity themselves, provided a ready-made community of which Jeremy could claim a part. However, his involvement was limited to signing petitions or occasional attendance at meetings.

Walters and Rosenblatt (2008) propose that for a significant number of individuals, community is little more than a back drop from which they derive a sense of security through living amongst others perceived to be like themselves. Indeed *community* for a significant number of residents in Chorlton was largely a *vicarious* experience. Despite voicing the importance of the Chorlton community to their sense of belonging, many respondents struggled to articulate it. Rather a 'fuzzy' and feel-good image was frequently invoked, in which vague notions of Chorlton as a village predominated, where everyone potentially knew one another. These respondents pointed to the wider range of organised activities which went on in the area as evidence of the vibrant community of which they felt a part. Prominent local occasions such as the Arts Festival, Beech Road Festival, Beer Festival and the Green Festival were frequently mentioned in connection with this. However, with the exception of a shop keeper who was also chair of the local retail association, respondents were not involved in

organising these occasions, although all had attended at least one. The mere presence of the occasion itself, and of the people who did care sufficiently to organise it, provided these respondents with the security of knowing there was a *community* of like-minded people out there. In a sense, this represents one strategy to secure some degree of protection within Sennett's (1998) unforgiving world of workplace flexibility, increasing globalisation and loss of personal structure and stability. This is what Giddens (1991) describes as 'ontological security'; the sense of safety which individuals derive from the predictability of their surroundings.

Life course stage was an important influence on membership of these *vicarious communities*. They were predominant amongst younger residents, without children, who often worked full time elsewhere in the city. Their experience of Putnam's (2000) *bonding* social capital was frequently very strong, but the community spaces they shared with others were largely privatised ones. When they met with locally based friends it was principally by pre-arrangement, to socialise in Chorlton's bars and restaurants. These activities provided little opportunity for the everyday encounter that Kuo et al (1998) identify as important in generating connections to others living in the locality. As such *bridging* social capital (Putnam, 2000) was particularly weak amongst this group. They lacked the numerous and broad-based links to members of the wider neighbourhood which were a defining feature of the *cooperative*, *camaraderie* and *institutional communities* explored already in this chapter. Although these individuals actually had relatively little contact with others outside their own tight social circle, they nevertheless felt part of a wider local community. For instance John starts out by enthusiastically detailing the annual Chorlton events calendar:

... there's an underlying sense of community in Chorlton. You don't necessarily have to know somebody but there's always events happening all the time where the entire community joins in.

Walters and Rosenblatt (2008, p.45) describe this experience as 'membership in terms of group spectacle,' where residents can share physical space with other residents, but have no need to interact with them. Later in the interview John reveals something of the reality of this type of community.

... it's not all a bed of roses here though . We know virtually no one in Chorlton and yet I know three hundred people where I was brought up. I can walk into any pub and I'll know half the pub. Whereas here I could walk into the pub and I wouldn't speak to anyone. I'll go and watch the football after this and I probably won't speak to anyone in the pub because I don't know anyone and I've lived here three years ... It's a weird situation. People participate and go back to their own life.

John's understanding of what a community should be was based on childhood experience of growing up in what he described as a tight-knit, working class community in Wigan. Reminiscent of bounded, territorial notions within the community studies tradition, belonging was sustained through everyday physical contact where people shopped, worked and socialised locally (Bell and Newby, 1971). Although he claimed to be perfectly happy with his experience of Chorlton, his understanding of its community was challenged by the reality of his limited everyday interaction with others in the neighbourhood.

This *vicarious* experience of community appears to be influenced by the messages explored in the previous chapter. Estate agents, the media and residents themselves promulgated an ideal of a leafy, cosmopolitan, yet 'village-y' Chorlton. Reminiscent of the findings by Walters and Rosenblatt (2008) in suburban Australia, the reiteration of the assertion that residents lived in a community, was sufficient for many of them to unquestioningly come to believe this. In reality for many respondents, *community* was a nebulous concept, generating nothing more than warm images of a village environment where everyone shopped and socialised locally and where they all knew one another. Many were indeed able to construct a network of personal relationships, but for others the reality was one of *co-presence* rather than *co-operation* (Walters and Rosenblatt, 2008).

Warr and Robson (2013) explore the role of house builders in promoting a similar idealised, *gemeinschaft* model of community to attract residents to new developments in the outer suburbs of Melbourne. Criticising their methods for promising a nostalgic and impossible template, they find residents were ultimately disappointed with the reality of an isolating, suburban landscape. In Chorlton, whilst John was prepared to accept

membership of something which was little more than a stage set, Daisy and Tony did not view the situation so positively. They talked of the *brochure* they felt they had authored as they moved into the neighbourhood, one which drew on the popular imagery of Chorlton as a bohemian, artistic, family friendly community of which they were keen to be a part. In reality they were disappointed by their inability, after a number of years living in the area, to make either close local friends or to develop a wide circle of locally based acquaintances.

... it's not ... reality ... by reality I mean human beings, don't come to life ... there's a picture but they don't actually step out off that picture and walk into your lives. I find a lot of people round here hard to engage with. I've got a fairly good guess that they're just the same as me ... I just guess that possibly if you're an alien you could group together, like you can with star signs. But it doesn't mean to say that they actually do group together and they do get on and do things together. It doesn't have the depth, it's got the gloss but it doesn't have the depth I don't think. (Tony)

Similarly, Daisy:

Because we've lived in this house for nine years and I could walk past the majority of people on this road and not even know they were my neighbours. And that does make me a bit sad. You do feel that everyone's passing ... they're all in their own separate, very busy lives and I'd always imagined that by this point you'd be ... you'd been to your neighbours and somebody would be knocking on here. ... But you move here and you realise you can live here for ten years and you're still not actually in the thick of it. Kind of watching from the edges.

Tony and Daisy had reconstructed a performance of Chorlton according to the norms and mythologies projected by estate agents, the media, the local council and other residents (Edensor, 2007). In their case they encountered a reality far from the easy neighbourliness they had imagined and it was no coincidence that they were now considering a move away from the area. Both worked full time which limited their daily presence in the neighbourhood. Although in this case they had a young pre-school age son, he was in full time, private day care. This undoubtedly curtailed the opportunity for local interaction on a daily basis and they were unable to point to

significant participation in networks of shared mutual care or support (Robinson and Wilkinson, 1995).

This section has explored the nature of *community*, on the understanding that it provides a key means of anchoring individuals and households to the neighbourhood and in driving residential choice in turn. In doing so four different types of community have been identified in Chorlton. *Cooperative* and *organisational communities*, grounded in either reciprocal neighbourly relationships or common cultural institutions appeared to generate particularly high levels of neighbourhood satisfaction. *Cameraderie communities*, centred instead on networks of locally based friendships, were associated with lower levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live. These relationships reflect high levels of Putnam's (2000) *bonding* social capital and this was particularly strong amongst older residents who had lived in the area for a considerable period of time, accumulating local friends, acquaintances and shared experiences. The life course played a particularly important role in influencing this (Robinson and Wilkinson, 1995; Corcoran et al, 2008). The presence of young children appears to have been an important factor in generating a degree of mutual dependence which worked to sustain relationships (Swisher et al, 2004; Sweet et al, 2005). In contrast there was little evidence of significant *bridging* social capital in Chorlton. Despite the extent to which it was commonly described by participants as a liberal neighbourhood, whose residents had an affinity for left-of-centre politics, there was only limited involvement in organised political activity or civic institutions. Instead active membership in local organisations appears to have been supplanted by a *vicarious* type of involvement, where individuals were often content to participate through attendance.

For a good number of respondents the community of which they felt a part was reduced to 'a backdrop, an experience of aloof co-presence in which a sense of security is derived through living amongst similar others,' (Warr and Robson, 2013, p.20).

Members of *vicarious communities* generally had little interaction with their co-residents over and above socialising with a limited group of personal friends. Most expressed themselves to be satisfied with this manifestation of community. However, there was also considerable frustration that it did not provide sufficient opportunity for the close, social interactions promised by the 'Chorlton Brochure' composed by estate agents, the media and other residents. Dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood was a

direct consequence. Communities grounded in familial relationships were relatively less common amongst respondents than has been noted elsewhere (Peach, 1998; Ward et al, 2007). This directly reflects the importance of friendship and work networks seen narrated in respondent arrival stories. This is an area popular with incomers and in particular with those who stay in the city after studying at one of the universities. As a result, many participants had no family living locally. Whilst Savage et al (2005) noted a similar respondent profile during their study in Chorlton, it is likely that the findings would have been different had more participants come from the sizable south Asian community in the area.

Having examined the nature of community in Chorlton, and in particular the variety of respondent experience, the chapter turns finally to study what impact this experience had on residential moving behaviour.

#### **5.4 Mobility ... and un-reflexive immobility as search behaviour**

Recent interest in the *mobilities paradigm* has turned academic focus onto how individual experience of place is intricately bound up with understandings of other places and with personal history (Hannam et al, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006). For Massey (2005) this has the effect of releasing the concept of place from its constraining boundaries, facilitating an understanding of how individuals make sense of their environment in relation to past experience and other places. Whilst the effect of this has been clearly demonstrated in both Chapters 4 and 5, place in its physical manifestation also continues to play a significant role in everyday life. In this sense then household *immobility* as much as mobility becomes important; in a world commonly held to be constantly on the move, the housing histories of these research respondents were characterised rather by stability within limited geographical boundaries. Put simply, and reflecting the results of other studies, people moved house infrequently and where they did, moves were usually within a comparatively confined area unless prompted by significant changes in other aspects of their lives (Cadwallader, 1992; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Coulter and van Ham, 2013). This chapter argues that this is an essential, but largely *unreflexive*, outcome of individual *belonging*, where settled households rarely need to, and indeed rarely do, consider alternatives. The influence of

the life course is seen to be of particular importance (Warnes, 1992; Lu, 1999; Clark and Huang, 2003).

As has been seen, many respondents initially came to Manchester either as students at one of the higher education institutions or to work in the city, predominantly in their late teens or twenties. Several (including Lydia and Sharon) recounted *arrival stories* which demonstrated the attraction of the ‘bright lights’ of the ‘big city’, reporting the reputation of Manchester’s nightlife as a key element in their decision to relocate. Another group of respondents had grown up in the area, some remaining whilst others left to work or study elsewhere themselves before returning to Manchester. Reflecting the life course analysis outlined in Chapter 2, initial relocation for both groups of young people was frequently followed by a period of heightened personal mobility (Lu, 1999; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). Facilitated by the low transaction costs of moving and few personal or financial ties, individuals moved around as rental contracts expired, friendship groups changed, housing expectations increased and financial resources grew. This footloose attitude was captured well by Rachel as she explained why she chose to leave one student house after a year and move round the corner to another:

... nothing against the house, it just seemed to be that was what you did.

Sonia described how she grew to dislike the length of the walk from her flat into the centre of Chorlton and simply decided to move closer. At this point in the life course, these people were extremely comfortable with mobility and fully expected to be able to realise their desire to move (Coulter et al, 2011; Clapham et al, 2014).

For most this mobility came to an end when they met, and subsequently moved in with, a long-term partner. Where partnerships were settled and remained stable, further moves were usually only made as a reaction to specific *triggers* and there was a noticeable reluctance to consider relocation unless absolutely necessary (Coulter and van Ham, 2013). The two types of *trigger* identified amongst respondents in Chorlton reflect those common elsewhere at this life course stage. *Internal*, family-oriented, triggers induced short-distance moves whilst *external* employment-related or environmental ones were more likely to provoke long-distance relocation (Clark and Huang, 2003; DeWilde, 2008; Niedomysl, 2008; Feijten and van Ham, 2010). Within this partnership formation and the birth of children were by far the most common

reasons for relocation in response to *room stress*, as existing properties no longer met their needs in terms of space or privacy (Clark and Huang, 2003). Miranda's situation may have been extreme when she reported living in a 'two up-two down' terrace with three children, but her response was not unusual:

I think when we got to child two and I was pregnant with child three and I was thinking, 'We can't live here.' And then when we had child three and we went upstairs and went, 'Oh my God there's children everywhere !

Almost all respondents reported moves related to partnership formation or the birth of a child during the course of their housing biography and these were generally understood as an entirely normal element of housing practice. The previous chapter demonstrated the variety of compromises and trade-offs households made in response to *room stress* as residents weighed the relative importance of displaying social distinction through property and neighbourhood. However, rises in the cost of housing increasingly put the price of larger family properties in Chorlton beyond the reach of even these relatively affluent residents. Rachel for example felt powerless to deal with the unexpected arrival of her son shortly after moving into her current home:

We can't really afford to move anywhere else now ... my son has got the smallest bedroom in the whole world ... So we think we'll probably have to do the attic instead of moving.

It was becoming financially less demanding to *build up* rather than *move out* as changes in the housing market acted to constrain choice (Coulter and van Ham, 2013). Loft conversions and house extensions were therefore becoming increasingly popular solutions to the room stress caused by the presence of growing children in the household (Figure 5.2).

A number of other *triggers* were present, if far less common. Partnership dissolution necessitating relocation was only experienced by eight respondents. However, this was particularly unsettling where it led to straightened financial circumstances alongside emotional disruption (Mulder and Wagner, 2012). Others were occasionally confronted with an unpleasant aspect of their housing situation which prompted a move (Kearns and Parkes, 2003). Rachel for instance had been the victim of a crime:



... after I got mugged I just felt unsafe in those big long roads with no lighting on them and wanted to be somewhere a bit busier.

It was the noisy marital arguments of a neighbour which prompted Elizabeth to reassess her circumstances.

We had the neighbours from hell. That had quite a bit to do with it. ... not necessarily moving out of the area but that had a lot to do with thinking about moving.

Finally, an offer of employment in a new city or country resulted in relocation for five respondents (Cooke, 2001; White and Hurdley, 2003; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007; Niedomysl, 2008). These patterns of residential mobility and immobility were largely replicated across the social scale. Although other studies frequently draw a sharp distinction between middle class and working class relocation patterns, (Allen, 2008; Ward et al, 2007) the evidence from this research reveals considerable similarities. As Chapter 3 has acknowledged, the study did not encompass a significant number of individuals with chaotic housing lifestyles or housing histories. Nevertheless respondents from across the social spectrum shared similar experiences, demonstrating substantial mobility during their youth, followed by long periods of immobility as they became settled in the neighbourhood.

For the majority, absence of specific *triggers*, meant that *immobility* was the norm. In contrast to the 'footloose and fancy free' attitude of younger respondents, reluctance to contemplate moving house was at least partly the result of residents wanting to avoid the upheaval associated with the process. Studies into the impact on the individual of moving house are limited. However, the work of Smith, Christie and Monroe in Edinburgh demonstrates clearly how the process of purchasing a property can be filled with tension and anxiety (Smith et al, 2006; Christie et al, 2008; Monroe and Smith, 2008). Similarly, the serial relocations experienced by professionals in the banking industry were a source of stress for households where they necessitated a repeated process of matching household needs with available properties (Green, 1997; Hardill et al, 1997). Amongst participants in this research, house-hunting and relocation themselves were described as stressful situations: the reliance on others whilst being part of a 'chain' (Orla); the disappointment of moves falling through as vendors took

their property off the market or sold to others (Mervyn); buyers sensing their purchasing power diminishing during periods of rapidly rising prices (Evan); the physical demands of moving furniture (John); the disorientation caused by continually having to get used to new flat- or house-mates (Sonia); the associated transaction costs and the pressure of having to purchase or sell furniture when up- or down-sizing (David). It is unsurprising therefore, in the absence of imperatives, that people felt little need to invest the time, energy and money involved in moving house once they felt settled. It would be short-sighted to characterise respondents' residency in Chorlton as either the pinnacle or end of their housing biographies (many were only in their mid-to-late forties at most at the time of the research). However, few when questioned, reported contemplating a move away from the area. For many the next planned move would come as they neared the end of their working life.

However, the value of a housing biography approach, as Coulter and van Ham (2013) point out, is to move the focus away from transitions to reveal the importance of immobility by gathering data over an extended period of time. Whilst much residential research tends to focus on isolated moves, here each residential change is seen in the context of previous relocation (Clark et al, 2006; Feijten and Mulder, 2005; Kearns and Parks, 2003). A housing biography approach has the effect of highlighting the extent to which even multiple moves amongst the young were relatively geographically confined. Whilst this reflects evidence from elsewhere, other studies rely on large scale quantitative data which provides evidence of trends, but which often fails to explain the underlying causes (Coulter et al, 2012; Coulter, 2013). This qualitative exploration provides the personal context missing from quantitative research. Residential searches now come to be seen as confined to a familiar, spatial comfort zone where only occasionally are individuals prompted into properly reassessing the value of staying within their neighbourhood.

The elements of *belonging* explored earlier in this chapter were clearly important in generating this relative *immobility*, in particular the extent to which residents were embedded within a geographically compact community. As Hannam et al (2006) point out, even those who don't move have networked lives and this is clearly evidenced in the variety and depth of the relationships which tied residents firmly to place.

Another conversation that's been had recently is, 'If you won the lottery ...?' I don't buy the ticket so I wouldn't, but if I did buy a ticket and won it what would you do ? ... I kind of struggled with that a bit because I wouldn't want to buy a two million pound mansion in Wilmslow because I want to live here. My friends are here, my socialising's here. I can find a million pound house in Chorltonville, but no I can't envisage moving away. (Rueben)

We would have gone somewhere else but we wanted this side of Manchester anyway and Chorlton ... because Janet lived in Chorlton as well so about three or four rows away from me. So she wanted to stay close to her parents as well because they were getting on. It suited us. (Edward)

I wanted to keep hold of this [my house] and my job and my friends and I'd just lost my partner of nine years so I was feeling a bit wobbly and I wasn't going to [move away]... and as I say, I start looking after myself at these points, put up my defences and not take big leaps. (Mervyn)

Chapter 6 explores in more detail the role of the neighbourhood in providing practical support to households as they manage every day *time-space constraints* (Jarvis et al, 2001). However, these experiences highlight how the personal and physical infrastructures of a familiar locality are also a source of significant emotional support during times of personal stress. In Mervyn's case the house and the locality provided him not only with physical refuge, but also the emotional security of a familiar backdrop against which everyday life could continue after the break-up of a long-term relationship. The *home* was both a physical and imaginative reality, positioned at the intersection of a web of external connections to kin, friends and neighbours (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; McKie et al, 2005).



**Figure 5.2: Building up, not moving out**  
**Three building companies advertise their work on Torbay Road**

The chapter has clearly demonstrated how, where these were lacking, residents had lower levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood. The inability of Daisy and Tony to forge close relationships with neighbours, outlined earlier, was a significant contributing factor to their decision to move away. Similarly, for Matthew and Heike, the lack of relationship with others living on what they described as a transitory new build estate, engendered a broader dissatisfaction with the area. Matthew in particular expressed how he had now come to the end of the 'ten-year plan' established when first moving into Chorlton and had begun to contemplate the 'next move on the housing ladder' which was likely to be outside the area. Just as a range of studies have shown how *community*, in its widest possible sense, is an attractive feature of a neighbourhood, the lack of locally based relationships was a source of dissatisfaction for these couples (Cameron and Field, 2000; Swisher et al, 2004; Chen et al, 2009). Neither were able to point to significant participation in the *cooperative*, *camaraderie* or *organisational* communities seen in this chapter to be particularly important in generating neighbourhood satisfaction. The attachment to local networks and activities were missing that both Sennett (1998) and Giddens (1991) have identified as important household defensive mechanisms in managing the external pressures of modern day life.

When residential moves were undertaken the constrained nature of the geography was a noticeable feature. Not only was long distance relocation by settled households a rare phenomenon, for most the search area was confined to a radius of three or four miles and frequently much less (Cadwallader, 1992). In some instances house hunting was limited to the few streets which perhaps contained the sought after Victorian or Edwardian house-type (Margaret and Jude) or were deemed to be suitably close to the district centre (Claudia and John). For others the 'Chorlton of the Mind' was spatially limited and they admitted that their search area was shaped by this. Rachel for instance reported viewing a railway bridge as an invisible barrier, across which she didn't feel comfortable looking for a property. Both Claudia and Lydia confessed that they rarely ventured to the southern extremities of the neighbourhood and it was only with hindsight that they realised how properties there were more affordable than they were closer to the centre of the neighbourhood (Figure 4.4).

In the context of quantitative evidence from elsewhere this immobility is unremarkable (McPeake, 1998; Clark and Huang, 2003; Clark and Davies Withers, 2007). However, the qualitative approach adopted as part of this research provides important insights into why households have such a limited geographical search area. In particular it highlights the *unreflexive* nature of much search activity so that at first sight residents appear to invest little thought or effort into where they want to live. The familiar and the known become a *default* starting position so that, in the absence of any other imperatives, a spatially restricted relocation becomes almost inevitable. Whilst a new relationship had been the *trigger* for Harriet's move from Leeds to Manchester, her description of the subsequent house-hunt in Chorlton demonstrates this practice clearly:

... I suppose I tend to not cast my net very wide in terms of, I don't think, 'We'll go and look at all these possibilities.' I think, 'Well I'll just look at where I know. ... . We didn't say shall we look in Didsbury or shall we look in Withington, or ... we just looked in Chorlton ... and I think it's just because this is where we knew everybody. So it's that kind of sense of ... my partner had already lived in Chorlton for quite a long time, I don't know how long, I can't really remember ... Oliver's quite an accepting sort of person so he'd just ... if he finds himself somewhere, he's not going to go, 'Well we need to look at the options.' He's going to go, 'This is nice, let's live here.' And I suppose I just knew a lot of people here so ... and I did know some people ... I had a couple of good friends who lived just up Burton Road. But we didn't think, shall we go and see if we want to live near them ? We were, 'Oh we're just going to live in Chorlton'.

Mervyn's experience of finding a flat to rent after another partnership break-up is remarkably similar to that of Harriet:

... because I was in Chorlton, on Devonshire Road, we went round the corner and rented a house on Ansdell Avenue ... I must have gone to one of the estate agents and asked if they had any houses to rent and viewed Ansdell Avenue and thought, 'This'll do.'

There is no discernible process of considering the varied options available; a move 'round the corner' for both Harriet and Mervyn was simple, straightforward and unproblematic and the possibility of an alternative simply did not occur to either



respondent. Whilst Jarvis et al (2001) for instance emphasise how the demands of modern day labour markets work to induce residential *inertia* as a household coping mechanism, this research shows the extent to which inertia is an essential element of much residential (in)activity. Equally the unreflexive nature of this inertia is revealed as an important means of securing individuals and households to a limited residential geography.

This *inertia* and an initial limited geographical search range was also an important feature in the decision-making process of those who did ultimately relocate further afield. Many 'leavers' started thinking about relocation by focussing the search on the immediate locality, just as those did who subsequently remained close by. However, on failing to find a suitable property within their price range, they began to consider the possibility of alternative neighbourhoods. This decision was not taken lightly and frequently involved a considerable period of reflection, including a slow process of accommodation and rationalisation. Respondents described an unconscious progression which began with a reluctance to think about leaving the known environment or existing support networks. However, enthusiasm grew when they concluded they could purchase a larger property for a similar or lower price elsewhere. Elizabeth describes the process of adjustment she underwent after deciding to move away from her noisy neighbours:

So I think we probably then started looking at ... not far away ! ... Sort of more towards the centre. ... we looked at up Sandy Lane. We looked at one there which was three or four storeys. ... We looked at one there and I was like, 'No, no.' Nothing was right. That was on a main road and it didn't have parking. So again it had to have off-road parking which we'd had before. I didn't like that, didn't want to go back to that because that was a real bug-bear. And then the three storeys were nice because it was a bit different but it wasn't ... I don't know it still felt quite small. ... And because the trouble that we'd had with the neighbours, sharing also came into play at that point and I was really reluctant to get ... because you never know do you who you're going to live next to ? So ... I think then what we started looking at was ... 'Well, can we afford a detached house because that's what we'd like because of this problem with the neighbours' And I think it was Adam then said, 'Why don't you look in Heaton

Moor because you can actually get more for your money there ?’ I went, ‘No, no, no.’ And we had a real struggle with that. He said, ‘Well just look.’ I said, ‘Alright, I’ll just look.’ And that was it ! ... To me it was like, ‘Right, just got myself to the point where I’ve got lots of friends. I’ve got a support network and then I’m going to move myself out again. Somewhere where I’ve only got my mother in law.’ So I think that was my fear of, ‘Oh here we go again. Moving.’ Because it is hard ... I think, once we started looking, what you could get for your money was amazing, the difference really.’

This section has demonstrated a key mechanism behind the immobility noted by a number of studies (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Cooke, 2011). Households find it increasingly difficult to accommodate the idea of change, where change would mean moving away from place-based networks of support (Bailey et al, 2004; Mulder and Wagner, 2012). This becomes an invisible hurdle, the crossing of which is only contemplated in case of need. However, once participants like Elizabeth had begun to consider the idea then they reported heightened awareness of the negative aspects of living in Chorlton as they rationalised the decision to move away. These negatives became more prominent in a way which reinforced the initial idea about relocating further afield to the extent that it appeared to become almost inevitable. Elizabeth again:

So actually then again when we looked round here they were a lot newer and it was just like, ‘Right actually, newer’s a bit better because you haven’t got all those headaches of – right that’s a hundred years old you need to get that changed.’ So yeah because I mean round here you can still get the three, four storey houses and the really old ones. But the appeal was ... and I think the appeal was as well that the rugby club was over the road and Adam used to play tennis there when he was a boy and said, ‘Oh Alfie can do cricket.’ I think that was ... he said, ‘Oh we can walk there. He can do cricket, rugby, tennis. There’s a massive field there, there’s a massive field there.’ So I think it was this whole ... Chorlton started to feel a little bit unsafe in my mind. And especially with a young boy. .. Just ... you just get a few crazy people when you go shopping and there was a lot more people coming in from out of the area, causing trouble when there was never trouble before. And to me it felt ... once



I'd come out I felt enclosed there and I felt like everybody lived on top of each other.

Elizabeth's comments about 'crazy people' reflect perceptions of high crime rates voiced almost without exception by respondents who had either left the area or were planning to do so. Daisy for instance spoke of the crime she and her husband felt was endemic to Chorlton. Together with the busyness of inner city life, litter and poor quality schools, this was justification for their move to a place where 'it's just that little bit calmer and quieter'. Rates of all types of crime are relatively high in Chorlton, compared with areas such as Sale and Heaton Moor which are favoured family neighbourhoods in Manchester (UK Crimestats). Chorlton has also some notoriety locally as the 'Burglary capital of the UK'. Chorlton council ward is regularly amongst the top three in the country for home insurance claims (MEN, 2014; The Independent, 2015). However, there was a disparity between the perceptions of 'leavers' and those who wanted to remain in the area about levels of crime in Chorlton, with the former hardly mentioning the issue. Identifying Chorlton with 'high crime' and 'poor schools' (perceptions of which are explored in more detail in Chapter 6) were elements of the process of slow rationalisation through which residents put distance between themselves and their former neighbourhood. In this way they freed up space to appreciate the qualities of their new location.

This rationalisation was particularly noticeable amongst respondents who had moved away for work- or family-related reasons. Their reflections on Chorlton still contained a considerable degree of affection but relocation had triggered a similar re-assessment of the neighbourhood as a place to live. Although Paula and Carl had relocated for work-related reasons they had deliberately chosen a suburb of Brisbane for its resemblance to Chorlton. However, it was not now axiomatic that they would return to Chorlton once their stay in Australia was over. The fact that they had friends living in Brighton and London meant that these places had now also become attractive possibilities. Whereas familiarity and the *known* appear to be important considerations in residential moves, the reality of a new location seems to provoke a concomitant 'break' in the way in which the old is perceived. New possibilities are opened up, sometimes for the first time, and once the full range of options is revealed, each can be realistically assessed for its own intrinsic material and social qualities.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 4 examined the extent to which the *fit* between *habitus* and *field* played a role in attracting and anchoring households to residential space in Chorlton. However, whilst ‘visions of living’ (Savage et al, 2005, p.207) were seen to be important in this, the chapter concluded that this account alone was insufficient to explain the level of attachment respondents demonstrated to the locality. Chapter 5 has therefore explored a further element of the relationship residents had with their neighbourhood by examining the extent to which identification with a *community* helped them to choose a residential location and construct it as home.

Belonging in Chorlton was observed to often have its roots in the *arrival stories* of a mobile population. Traditional accounts of community building have focussed very much on the opportunities a *rooted* population has to develop close ties with those around them over an extended period of time (Bell and Newby, 1971). This research has however, demonstrated the extent to which the *routes* through which individuals come to choose a neighbourhood also serve to cement them in the locality. The research identified a variety of networks, each supplying personalised information and enabling respondents to assess the suitability of the neighbourhood as a place to live. Just as Massey’s ‘global sense of place’ (1994, p.157-173) is inherently developed through associations to other places, individual relationships across the *fields* of work, education or leisure are shown to spill over into the *field* of housing. Although four specific types of personal networks were observed in Chorlton, this research asserts that these are not unique and that other networks are in operation across the country. Both Hardill et al (1997), in their work amongst dual earner couples in the East Midlands, and Savage et al (2005) in Wilmslow, show how personalised information is crucial in helping incomers assess the qualities of a residential neighbourhood. However, study of *arrival stories* is limited and further research would help understanding of the mechanisms and information sources in use in other geographies and amongst other social groups.

These networks and the extent to which they serve to direct individuals in a particular residential direction have two important implications. Firstly, this research has

provided an insight into one of the mechanisms driving the neighbourhood sorting process described by Butler and Robson (2003a). The process of information gathering from a limited number of trusted sources inevitably directs households towards a restricted number of options where there is a high likelihood of finding *people like us*. In London the cost of housing has continued to push the line of gentrification further into traditionally working class or economically deprived locations, widening the potential pool of middle class housing locations (Jackson and Butler, 2014; Jackson and Benson, 2014). However, in the absence of such extreme pressures in Manchester, established areas of middle class residence are likely to continue as neighbourhoods of choice for the more affluent. The social networks within which they are embedded work to limit the realm of the residential considered suitable, thus reducing the impact of initiatives aimed at producing mixed income communities.

Equally importantly these mechanisms have the effect of inserting individuals into a ready-made *community* of friends, work colleagues or acquaintances, facilitating in turn a strong sense of belonging for many. A strong life course influence was identified here. Those with young children were most likely to be grounded in co-operative neighbourly relationships or networks of locally based friendships and they demonstrated higher levels of neighbourhood satisfaction as a result. In contrast others, particularly younger, childless individuals, experienced what is termed here a *vicarious* sense of community. Influenced by *gemeinschaft* conceptualisations of Chorlton promulgated by both by other residents and the media, they were often dissatisfied by a lack of meaningful neighbourly interaction.

Finally, the use of housing biographies has allowed this research to highlight *immobility* as an important element of the residential experience. Large scale quantitative surveys have consistently demonstrated the limited nature of most residential moves (Cadwallader, 1992) but the qualitative approach adopted here has shed light onto some of the mechanisms behind this. Respondents narrated a succession of remarkably unreflexive accounts of serial moves across and around a limited geography. Whilst at first sight many households may have been perceived to be hyper-mobile, on closer inspection the majority of these moves were within the confines of South Manchester or even Chorlton. The location specific capital arising from personal relationships played a vital role in anchoring households to the neighbourhood (Holloway and Hubbard,

2001). In the absence of specific reason to relocate further afield, the *familiar* and the *known* provided the unreflexive context for a significant number of residential moves.

Having explored the extent to which belonging and residential immobility are predicated on a network of interconnected lives, Chapter 6 now turns to examine one final way in which individuals are anchored to a territorial location. It has already been seen how the presence of children facilitates a particular kind of cooperative neighbourliness which contributes to a sense of community and neighbourhood belonging. This thesis now goes on to show how these preferences are closely entwined with a more prosaic rationale.

## 6. Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 showed how decisions about where to live are strongly influenced by the extent of residents' sense of belonging, influenced through emotional attachment to others who live in the neighbourhood. It has shown how ideas about community continue to play an important role in the relationship individuals have with their residential location, over and above the *elective belonging* of Savage et al (2005) explored in Chapter 4. This chapter now turns to examine how the neighbourhood's *physical assets*, including its people, also work to influence residential decisions through the practical support they provide for everyday social reproductive activity. This draws and builds on the behavioural and economic models explored in Chapter 2 which emphasise the practical characteristics of residential neighbourhoods. A shorter commute not only reduces the cost involved, but also frees up spare time to spend on household chores or socialising (Phe and Wakely, 2000). Ready access to supermarkets or other retail facilities means that shopping is more easily combined with other activities to save time (Schwanen and de Jong, 2008). The availability of 'good' local schools can save money on private fees or spare children long and tiring journeys by public transport (Cowans, 2006). Such facilities are well-understood as important qualities of a desirable neighbourhood and this chapter does not rehearse these again. Instead it focuses on perceptions of these qualities, the shifting relationship individuals have with them and how the experiences of household members can differ substantially. It does this in the context of changing working patterns and increasing pressures on the household.

So far this research has focussed on the individual's relationship with the neighbourhood. Chapter 6 however, now shifts the scale to the household, since after all, as Wallace (2002, p.281) points out:

In most societies, most people live in households of one kind or other and the organisation and management of the household activity is an important requirement for the reproduction of the society from day to day and from generation to generation.

Individuals rarely take decisions about housing in isolation. Instead choices need to accommodate the differing requirements of other household members with regard to work, schooling, social activities and daily household reproduction. The household is not a unified, homogeneous structure, but rather a collection of, at least partially autonomous, individuals, each with their own priorities and preferences (Moen and Wethington, 1992). Decisions therefore need to be understood as the product of negotiation, with outcomes reliant on a number of factors, not least the object under discussion, but also intra-household power structures and external local social norms. Jarvis et al (2001) go so far as to describe the household as a *black box* which needs to be unpacked to fully understand how hidden interpersonal negotiations are transformed into choices about housing, work and family life. Traditional models of residential location have been predicated on a household *breadwinner* approach and the assumption that location is determined largely by the needs of the male head of the household. However, the complexity of modern working patterns means that this can no longer be taken for granted. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s both increased women's expectations about working outside the home and provided the legislation lifting many of the institutional barriers which prevented them from doing so (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 2000; Crompton et al, 2005). Hakim (2002, 2003) has gone so far as to argue that women in the developed western world now have unprecedented levels of choice vis-a-vis the balance of their commitment to the home and to the labour market. Others (McDowell et al, 2006a; Bondi and Christie, 2000) contest the extent to which this choice is economically constrained. However, it is clear that women's experiences are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, where many employ a variety of strategies to combine work and family in circumstances where two incomes are often seen as a necessity (Bondi and Christie, 2000; Breen and Cooke, 2004; Widmer and Ritschard, 2009).

Coupled with working practices which increasingly expect long hours and high levels of commitment from both men and women (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Burchell et al, 1999; Lewis et al, 2007), it therefore appears there is more pressure on household management systems than ever before. Household coping strategies are developed collectively as a key means of mediating the competing pressures of work and home (Jarvis, 1999; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006). However, since these pressures are subject to frequent shifts, specific coping strategies adopted as a means of negotiating *time-space*

*constraints* must also continually change and develop in response (Ehn and Lofgren, 2010). In this context, it is argued that residential location acts as a major household coping strategy, mediating the *time-space constraints* experienced as part of everyday social reproduction. As such it becomes important to penetrate the *black box* of household decisions in order to understand the precise mechanisms involved. However, with a few notable exceptions, there has been little examination of the impact of changing household forms and employment pressures on the choices households make about where to live (Jarvis, 1999, 2003, 2005; Jarvis et al, 2001; Moen et al, 2001; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006; Sweet et al, 2005). This chapter therefore turns to explore the important role played by the neighbourhood in supporting everyday household reproduction in the context of a rapidly changing environment. It starts by identifying some of the ways in which residents rely on the neighbourhood's physical amenities as a means of managing daily activities. In doing so it notes a strong life course effect as assets assume changing levels of importance at different life course stages. The chapter then moves to focus in greater detail on the life course stage where young children form an integral part of the household unit. Raising the next generation continues to be one of the single most important tasks of the household but also one of the major causes of time-space constraint. The chapter shows how the physical and social assets of the locality are utilised as a key means of managing the complex processes of transmitting social and cultural capital to the next generation. In doing so it highlights how perceptions of neighbourhood assets are subject to change, as residents reported increasing satisfaction with them, and with the neighbourhood as a family-friendly location, over time. Finally, the chapter examines the gendered experiences of space reported by respondents. Women's increasing involvement in the labour market has arguably been a major component of increased pressure on household management. Where they were once at home looking after children and managing household chores, now they are behind a desk or a supermarket checkout, reliant on alternative resource provision. Concomitant increases in their financial contribution have also potentially given them more bargaining power in decisions about where to live. It would therefore be surprising if these developments had not also changed the way women interact with property and the local neighbourhood.

## **6.2 Lifecourse, infrastructure and managing time-space constraint**

Simon ... hankers after country living a bit but it's not practical really because you'd have a big commute and I don't want to start again building up friendships because it's quite a big thing to do really isn't it ? So now we've got a friend round the corner who takes Charlie to school a couple of days a week now. So we've got that sort of thing going on which is really useful and once you move that's it. That's all gone and you're starting again aren't you ? (Angela)

Angela's comments reflect the importance of place-based relationships which were seen in the last chapter to be an important means of generating a sense of neighbourhood belonging. More than this however, they also recognise the practical help and assistance provided by such relationships and the time and effort required to create these. The social networks she had built up over time were an acknowledged part of the way she and her partner managed a busy everyday life and as such they were an important consideration in decisions they made about where to live.

Results from the research in Chorlton reflect findings from other studies, in that physical neighbourhood amenities were seen to be a key element of household management strategies (Cowans, 2006; Green, 2005; Townshend, 2006; Lynch and Rasmussen, 2003; Silverman et al, 2006; Meen et al, 2005; Bennett and Morris, 2006). Easy access to buses, trams and the local road network offered the prospect of an acceptable commute or painless trip into Manchester city centre; 'Getting into town is great' (Angela). More frequently, participants made reference to the range of activities, people and assets in Chorlton itself. For many the plentiful array of local bars and restaurants meant they did not need to travel into the city centre for opportunities to socialise. Aaron pointed out how he and his partner were able to park up their cars on a Friday evening after a busy week at work and did not need to climb into them again until Monday morning. Instead they could socialise, shop and take a walk in the 'countryside', all without leaving the local area. Across the respondent profile easy access to local green space was a valued asset where Lesley walked the family dog and Nicky went for her daily run. The variety of shops available within walking distance was also referred to by many. Although she didn't have access to a car during the day, Harriet could purchase most of her daily groceries in Chorlton:



My partner's got a car but he goes to work in it so I'm here and it's like ... you've got really high quality different possibilities of shopping. So you have got a supermarket to do supermarket-y things but you've got good possibilities of going to Unicorn, I go to Unicorn all the time, go to Barbakan to buy bread and stuff like that. Where in other places you don't ... when I lived in Peterborough ... you had Rainbow supermarket, which was crap, and that was about it.

The easily accessible *infrastructure* was therefore a key means of managing everyday social reproductive tasks. The 'high end' retail offer represented by the independent butchers, fish mongers and delicatessens was a valued resource but it was supplemented by the local supermarket, bargain shops and charity outlets across all social groups. People felt they could just 'pop out' for a pint of milk without significant inconvenience (Lynch and Rasmussen, 2003; Cowans, 2006).

Within this general utilisation of neighbourhood assets, a significant *life course effect* was once more observed, with differing elements of Chorlton's offer important in supporting the performance of *everyday life* at different life course stages. Amongst younger participants, Peter pointed to Manchester's cultural venues on his doorstep, noting how easy it was to visit them from Chorlton. In addition to the shops and green space used by all sections of the population, respondents with young children had a wide range of facilities tailored specifically to their needs. As grandparents, Roger and Joan for instance were able to manage the multiple activities of their grandchildren on behalf of their daughter, without leaving the neighbourhood.

... and we use the library a lot and the sports centre and the girls have swimming lessons there so we still do swimming club on a Thursday and she plays badminton there. ... We like the parks as well. Chorlton Park since they've done up the playground. And we use Manley Park, sometimes go to Longford, Alexandra Park, we go to Northenden as well. But again, living in Chorlton you can get to the other things quite quickly ... (Joan)

In the context of childcare arrangements which are frequently fragile (McDowell et al, 2005; Rose, 1993), Roger and Joan's ability to contribute towards the care of their grandchildren locally helped their daughter to continue to work outside the home (Jarvis, 1999; Bailey et al, 2004; England, 1993, 1994).

Whilst the list of amenities highlighted by Joan and Roger were almost entirely provided by the state, for free or at low cost, Harriet summarises a subtly different child-friendly infrastructure:

... with little kids you're really quite well off for parks and places you can easily go for walks with them and be outside and stuff which in a city is pretty good. And there's lots of cafes where they're quite happy to have kids in there with you. There's lots of stuff ... There's singing classes and lots of different things that people go to.

Whilst she too made extensive use of the free facilities available for her children, her use of cafes and singing classes reflects an alternative circuit of provision used particularly by the middle class parents who formed a significant proportion of the research sample. This alternative provision not only offered entertainment for their children, but also the opportunity to transmit cultural capital through exposure to the 'right' sort of activities. Susan recognised that she could not afford to purchase all her reading needs from the local independent bookshop, but instead talked about how a trip there was a regular Saturday morning treat for her and her son. Attendance at singing groups, 'baby gym', and art sessions were also common amongst those with pre-school children. Just as Holloway (1998b) notes an imbalance in pre-school educational provision between middle class and working class areas of Sheffield, a plethora of privately run activity clubs supplemented public parks, swimming pools and libraries in Chorlton. These were usually priced at commercial rates and therefore tended to attract a wealthier group of carers. Whether or not, as Holloway argues, these activities offer an educational advantage, they did act to socialise families into the *Chorlton Bubble* from an early stage of parenting. They were often the catalyst for participation in a wide friendship group on the part of both parents and children, which frequently endured throughout primary school years. This does not reflect an active process of distancing from the working class *other* as implied by Skeggs (1997) or of middle class insulation as Atkinson (2006) argues. Almost all participants who had had young children reported also attending the playgroups attached to church halls and community centres and used by all social groups. Instead, this rather reflects the findings by Butler and Robson (2003b) in Telegraph Hill during their London research. There the authors cite the role of the local primary school in creating extensive social networks which supported the project of childrearing. In

Chorlton, networks were frequently built much earlier but they had a similar effect. They set in motion a process of socialisation which brought together middle class parents, and their children, in enduring relationships. The *Chorlton Bubble* had its origins in the very earliest stages of child rearing.

The neighbourhood also continued to offer a suitably varied range of activities for older children, designed to promote their cultural and social development. The broad range of amenities available in Chorlton meant that children usually did not have to travel far to participate in sports clubs, theatre groups or music lessons.

His beavers hut is literally round the corner ... Hough End, across the road, it's just on our doorstep really (Jane)

There's stuff put on at the library and all sorts ... it is very, very family centred. (Russell)

Lots of clubs. Ours do taekwondo, they do swimming and athletics at Longford Stadium. So there's lots of stuff like that as well going on ... (Nicky)

Where transport to and from these activities was required, it could be shared amongst the parents who had formed close relationships during the pre-school years. Moreover, for those with teenagers, the bars and cafes of Chorlton together with its proximity to Manchester city centre offered them the possibility of a multitude of social and cultural activities on their doorstep. Chapter 2 showed how it is suburban neighbourhoods which have long been valued for the supposed safety and security they bring to the project of child rearing (Moen et al, 2001; Sweet et al, 2005; Clark et al, 2006; Niedomysl, 2008). However, Fagnani (1992) highlights how, in a Parisian context, parents of teenage children were apt to move back to the city so that both they and their older children could more easily access its cultural amenities. This is perhaps a particular characteristic of childrearing in continental Europe, where there is a longer tradition of middle class city centre living. Nevertheless Harriet makes a similar point with regard to living in Chorlton:

... And I'm kind of thinking ... my kids are nine and seven so they're not quite at the point of doing things independently yet but I think when they do get to that age there's going to be a lot of options for them of things to do independently.

This contrasts with Valentine and McKendrick's (1997) observations about parenting and childcare in rural environments in the UK which they argue frequently lack facilities for older children, who are often bored as a result. They point out how the lack of local amenities places additional responsibilities on parents to act as chauffeur in transporting their offspring to social activities, in turn placing additional constraints on parental time. In contrast Julie was able to reflect that school friends of her older teenage children now came to Chorlton on a regular basis to socialise, attracted by the bars, cafes and shops.

Finally, at the end of the life course, Joan, a pensioner, was even able to identify how she had had recently come to realise that Chorlton was 'a good place to die'. Local and easily accessible hospitals meant that she had not needed to travel far for treatment, whilst she saw the crematorium in Chorlton as an important local amenity:

I went to someone's funeral who lives in Arnside, fabulous place Arnside, but they wanted a cremation, they had to go to Lancaster ! Which is a hell of a way ! ... And if you're ill up in the Lake District, Kendal's no longer got an emergency department. You've got to go to Carlisle or Barrow...

Similarly, Edward commented that he and his wife occasionally considered moving to the countryside now that they were both approaching retirement. However, her ill health meant that realistically they needed to remain close to the doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and indeed hospitals that were plentiful in south Manchester, but which were more difficult to access in a rural location.

This section has shown how residents mitigated 'the messy realities of everyday coordination "dilemmas"' (Jarvis et al, 2011, p.520) through use of neighbourhood assets. A significant element of Chorlton's appeal lay in the ready availability of neighbourhood assets which help alleviate the time-space constraints of everyday life and which have been widely identified as desirable in other studies (Green, 2005; Bennett and Morris, 2006; Silverman et al, 2006; Townshend, 2006). A pronounced life course element was also noted in the household's relationship with the neighbourhood. Although many of the extensive and varied local amenities were attractive across the age range, space-time constraints and the life course intersect in a multiplicity of demands so that different elements of the neighbourhood offer were important at different points in time. In addition, the research highlighted how use of particular

types of asset served to create and reinforce collective relationships. Whilst many amenities, such as parks, the local Morrisons supermarket and playgroups were used by all social groups, selective use of others socialised middle class families into the *Chorlton Bubble* from the earliest stages of childrearing. The next section turns to examine this in more detail. It explores how both perceptions of local amenities and the nature of those amenities themselves changed over time as young professional families began to form a growing element of the local population.

### **6.3 Habitus as a dynamic concept: families and the changing appeal of Chorlton**

Bridge (2003; 2006) hypothesises that gentrification outside major cities is potentially limited to a particular stage of the life course. When the time comes to reproduce social capital then individuals are forced to move to the suburbs for more space, high performing schools and the ‘right’ social environment for their children. Chapters 4 and 5 have already shown however, that those who might be classed as gentrifiers in Chorlton, the graduates and young professionals who saw their residence as a key element of a liberal and youthful identity, were in fact often reluctant to move away. That this included families with children is perhaps not so surprising. Whilst much gentrification research has focussed on how middle class families struggle to meet the demands of social and cultural reproduction in the city, other work shows that the qualities which first attracted many, continue to be a major draw (Karsten, 2003, 2006; Lilius, 2014). Despite the official and unofficial place marketing seen in Chapter 4, which stressed Chorlton’s exciting and bohemian character, many families with children had also made the neighbourhood their home. As well as the bars and restaurants which they now often admired only from afar, these respondents emphasised the importance of its *family friendly* qualities and how these contributed to daily household management.

The previous section showed how participants across the life course valued and made use of a range of neighbourhood assets. Families with children however, were particularly appreciative of amenities which facilitated management of time-space constraints and transmission of social capital to the next generation (Jarvis et al, 2001; Moen et al, 2001). They made frequent mention of how they used local parks, with their playgrounds, landscaping and grassed areas for ball games. Local leisure centres at nearby Stretford and in Chorlton itself were popular local amenities, whilst Chorlton

library enjoyed the highest lending rates in the city (Councillor 2). Participants on the whole also expressed satisfaction with the educational offer in the area. Reflecting the increased number primary school-age children in the neighbourhood (Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3) all but one local school was heavily over-subscribed with two recently expanding their intake to accommodate rising demand (MCC 2013). Residents felt they were lucky to have access to a high quality resource where results had consistently outstripped the national average over time (Figure 6.4). At secondary level there was a wide circuit of education within a two to three mile radius (Ball et al, 1995). This incorporated gender and faith based admissions criteria, state selective education, nationally recognised private schools, together with a local comprehensive whose results had improved significantly over recent years.

These respondents were entirely comfortable living in Chorlton as the parents of both pre-school and school-age children. They emphasised the number of other children living locally and highlighted the numerous opportunities for their own offspring to socialise with others of the same age, whether that be through school, playgroups or otherwise.

This place, as soon as I moved in, I had the neighbours coming and welcoming me and we've become really good friends. There's one that I go swimming with who lives over the road, all the kids play together. It's got a real sense of community round there. (Lesley)

More broadly, participants felt they inhabited a social environment which was supportive of families with dependent children. The contacts generated through pre-school activities and through primary schooling, together with close knit ties to friends in the area, had the effect of creating a wider network of care supporting the daily activities of children.

... it feels really safe, apart from the cars. It feels a place where children are ... people are interested in children, look out for children. I always think ... my daughter is ten, she's starting to go out by herself and I know one of the things I like about it, she will say, 'I'm going to the shops with Emma, I'll be back in an hour.' But I know during that time she will see loads of people I know because they all then text me and say, 'Ooh I just saw Alice in a shop. She was very sensible crossing the road.' And I think it feels that there's other people looking

out for them. I always think I know I would as well if I saw a child upset or something I would step in and ask them if they were ok or phone somebody. It feels like there is a network. Because of the sort of people that live here, not even just friends of mine that recognise my daughter. (Rachel)

For many, the presence of others at similar life stages served to reinforce a sense of familiarity and security so that they felt they were bringing up their children in an environment aligned to their needs (Sweet et al, 2005; Swisher et al, 2004). In this way Chorlton provided a refuge from the insecurities of the modern economy highlighted by Sennett (1998). Respondents with children felt the dense social networks frequently initiated at parent and toddler groups and continued through primary school worked to protect their offspring from the unknown *social other* as they went about their everyday lives.

Estate agents were aware of how the neighbourhood was becoming increasingly attractive to families with children. In turn they sought to promote it as an easily accessible community with plenty of family friendly amenities.

I think the age group that we're dealing with ... they're with families or thinking about families and they want something that is within close proximity to it [the city centre] but they want a little bit further away ... they've got the garden, they've got the parking, they've got the amenities. (Estate Agent 2)

Restaurant owners were similarly eager to tap into a market perceived to be full of families with children:

It does seem to be where those people who want to have children seem to have gravitated. It's the schools, it's the age group and maybe it's just now the culture that breeds itself ... Yeah, we have focussed on families ... we did a headcount once and there was forty babies and children in here one lunchtime, just in that headcount. And if you add in the parents it's an awful lot of people. (Retail 4)

Parents continued to mention the presence of plentiful bars and restaurants as one of the neighbourhood's prime attractions, even if this was often with a rueful smile as they reflected the lack of opportunity they actually had to use these facilities (Lilius, 2014).

Nevertheless, local businesses increasingly saw the value of appealing to the family market. The cafés were praised for their positive attitudes to breast feeding (Susan) and even the pubs and bars increasingly focussed on this new market, organising toddler-friendly film afternoons, promoting children's menus and running special events designed to attract the whole family (Figure 6.6).

However, these attitudes reflect a profound change in the perception of Chorlton as a family-friendly neighbourhood over time. As Chapter 3 outlined, one of the reasons for selecting Chorlton as a fieldwork location was to facilitate longitudinal comparisons with the results of two other studies carried out during the late 1990s and the mid-2000s. Savage et al (2005) selected Chorlton as an exemplar of urban gentrification at the end of the last century, finding a group of people who had *elected to belong* to a locality renowned for its nightlife and cafe culture. Of the study's four research areas Chorlton had the lowest number of school-age children and those who did have children voiced a *lack of fit* in a local economy perceived to primarily cater for the childless. This group were ambivalent about a neighbourhood which was not seen as a 'natural' place to bring up a family. Savage et al's respondents expressed a disconnect between themselves as families with children and their predominantly childless neighbours, one interviewee complaining about a lack of sociability in the area:

It is really vibrant the centre of Chorlton so we like that a lot ...[but] nearly all the people we got on well with have moved out of Chorlton and gone elsewhere. The new influx of people have been mainly young couples and there are no children this end of the street which is a shame now that we have kids. You feel like it would be nice to have other children round. They have to go quite a long way to play with neighbours. (Chorlton resident D50, quoted in Savage et al, 2005, p.62)

Schooling was identified as a particularly difficult issue at the turn of the century for middle class Chorlton residents who, as relatively well educated individuals, attached a high value to education as a means of transmitting resources to the next generation. Whilst they were keen as liberal minded adults to experience the area's diverse cultural and ethnic offer, the reality of the social mix to which their children might be exposed in the local schools was less appealing. Local primary schools were generally perceived to offer a good standard of education but the secondary offer was seen as particularly



problematic. Operating within a local circuit of schooling that included selective education in nearby Trafford Metropolitan Borough, fee paying schools across the city and a number of others selective by gender or faith, the local comprehensive attracted a socially mixed and relatively deprived intake (Ball et al, 1995). Savage et al (2005) identify this as a real source of discomfort where it brought into question respondents' construction of themselves as tolerant, liberal and forward thinking:

You get this sort of dilemma because people choose to live in Chorlton because it's pretty liberal and they come to this stage of oh God, we're not happy about the comprehensive and do we feel comfortable about going back on our principles and sending them to private school. So yes a lot of them opt for other areas because it's easier. (Chorlton resident D27 quoted in Savage et al, 2005, p.69)

Chorlton residents during the late 1990s appeared to be torn between their desire to enjoy the benefits of living in a diverse area and doing what they perceived to be best for their children. At this stage the *Chorlton Bubble* was not fully secure and the working class and ethnic *other* were able to penetrate it at times such as this (Skeggs, 1997). The need to articulate and consolidate an identity separate from the *other* and to pass on cultural and social capital to the next generation took priority (Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 2004; Reay et al, 2007). Bridge's (2003; 2006) hypothesis about the limited space for provincial gentrification appears at this stage to be true. Whilst some respondents opted for selective education in Trafford or chose private schooling, others only resolved the *lack of fit* between *habitus* and educational provision by moving elsewhere.

Moving forward half a decade, close analysis of the transcripts collected during McDowell et al's research provides an insight into how residents' relationship with their neighbourhood had undergone a subtle development (McDowell et al, 2006a; Perrons et al, 2005; Ward et al, 2010). By 2003 the *lack of fit* was much reduced so that a number of interviewees felt able to point out how much they felt at home in an environment which was full of children:

... it is very family orientated. The health visitor, she said when I had Lizzie, that Chorlton had the highest birth rate or something in country. Yeah, something

ridiculous like that. And it's true. Loads of kids. Yeah it's just a nice area.

(Interviewee 130)

Good schools (at primary level at least), libraries, leisure centres and a number of parks that were well used, together with a plethora of parent and toddler groups all contributed to the *family friendly habitus* (Ward et al, 2010). Participants noted in particular how many friends and acquaintances with children lived locally, with whom they could share this particular life-stage. Nevertheless reservations about the secondary educational offer remained, in a neighbourhood where there was considerable concern about social reproduction and accessing the 'right' school (McDowell et al, 2006a; Ward, 2010). This continued to lead some respondents to consider leaving the area:

The Education system is ripped apart by Stretford Grammar, and we're just about to come up to this problem now ... I've always been against private education. Although, so many of my friends suddenly who professed to be against private education have suddenly sent them to private schools, to Cheadle, to Manchester Girls Grammar, and uh, Manchester Boys Grammar. And I don't want to do that, I want them to stay in the public sector, but at the same time I want them to have the best education they can. Um, Oakwood now, looks like it's improving, and I hope that it is. (Interviewee 422)

However, optimistically the local high school might be described as undergoing 'regeneration' (Interviewee 133), it was still not seen to offer a comparable education to that which could be obtained either privately or through attendance at the nearby grammar school. Parents continued to be wary of the negative peer pressure they felt might be encountered at school and which they feared might lead their children 'the wrong way' (Interviewee 128). The conflict between liberal principles and external imperatives about how best to bring up the next generation were still much in evidence, where the local 'circuit of schooling' was now the critical field to be negotiated (Ball et al, 1995). The *Chorlton Bubble* was still permeable.

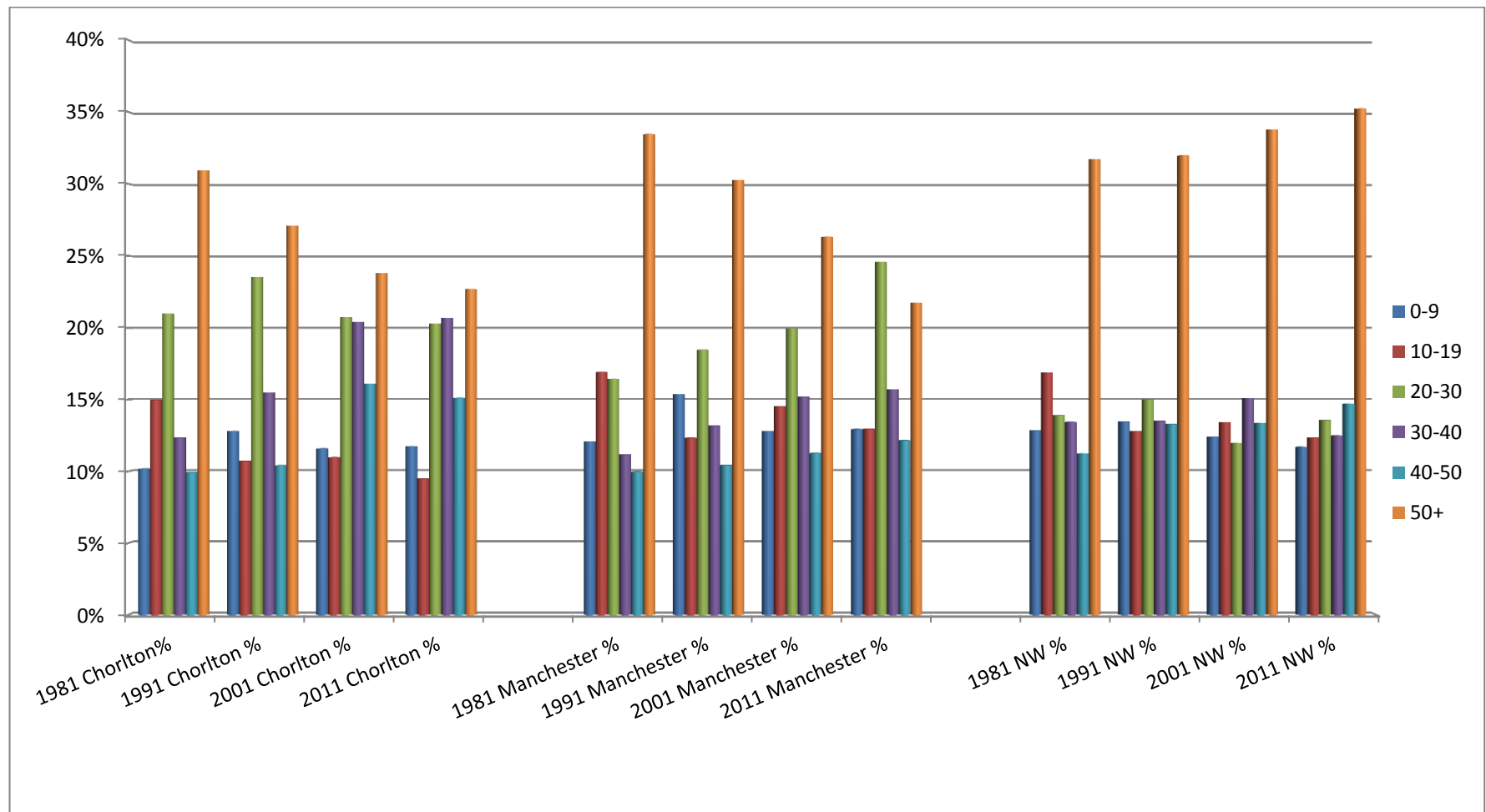
What this longitudinal analysis clearly shows is how perception of the neighbourhood as a family friendly location changed over time. In the late 1990s the dominant *habitus* was clearly that of the young professional. Although the 2003 research identified a neighbourhood where residents appreciated its suitability for young families, parents of

older children continued to express reservations. However, by 2012 Chorlton appears to be a place of choice for families with children. Whilst still occasionally expressing concerns about the local high school, respondents were comfortable with the available secondary offer in its widest sense. Oakwood High had been rebranded Chorlton High with a new uniform and a new school building closer to the centre of Chorlton, away from its former peripheral site in the middle of a social housing estate. An upward trend in GCSE results meant that almost all respondents now viewed it as an acceptable element of the local circuit of schooling, which continued to encompass the area's private, faith and selective schools (Figure 6.5).

Nevertheless, that is not to say that 'better' schools were not a consideration when people did come to consider moving house. For Laura and Daniel, and also for Sheila, thoughts about moving away were initially prompted by their experiences of crime in Chorlton where both had suffered multiple burglaries. However, these feelings were reinforced by the realisation that 'we could get more for our money' (Laura) in other neighbourhoods which had the added attraction of high performing local schools. Nevertheless, not a single resident cited the issue of schooling alone as a reason to move away from the area.

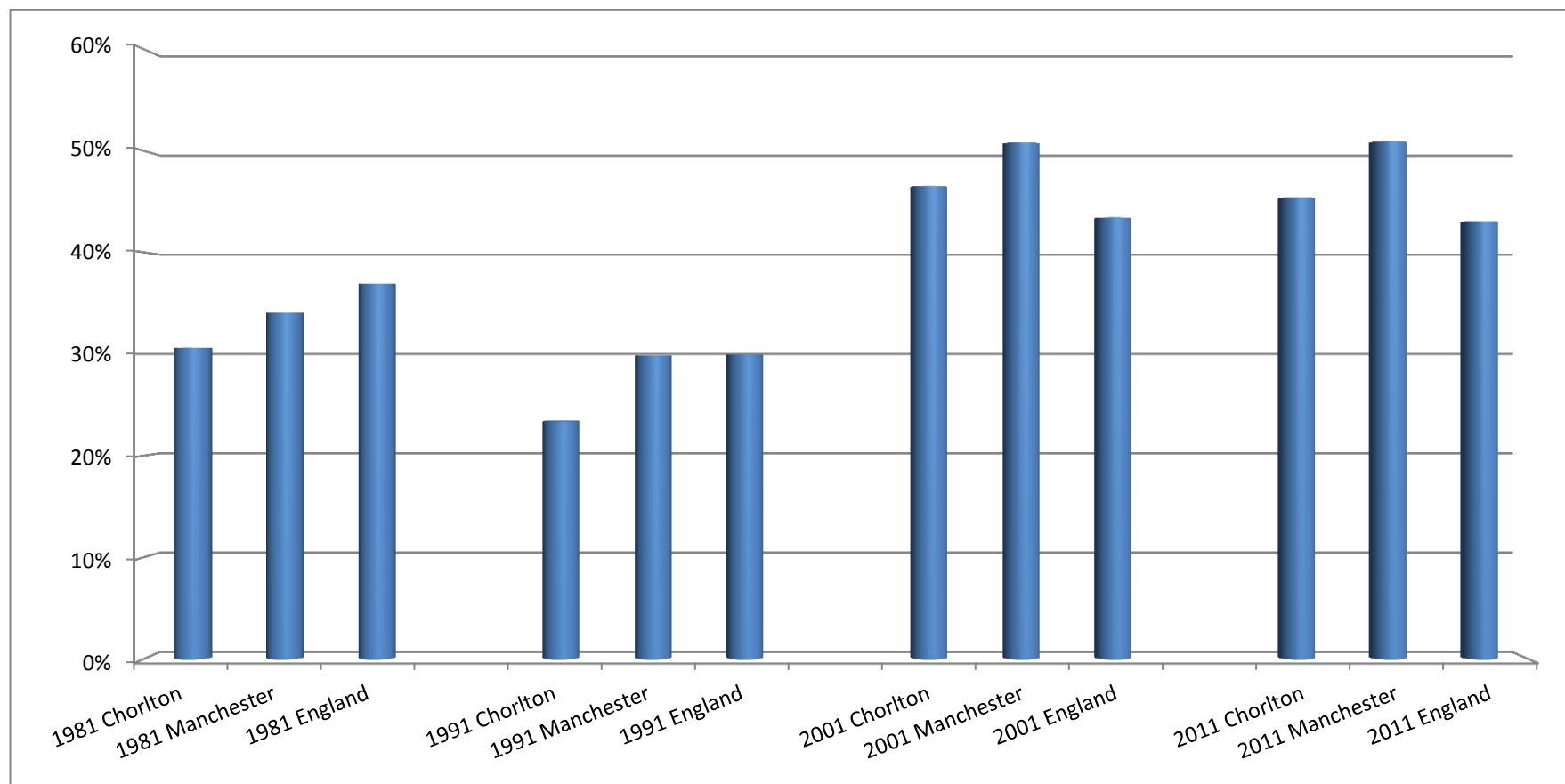


**Figure 6.1: The Local Circuit of Education**



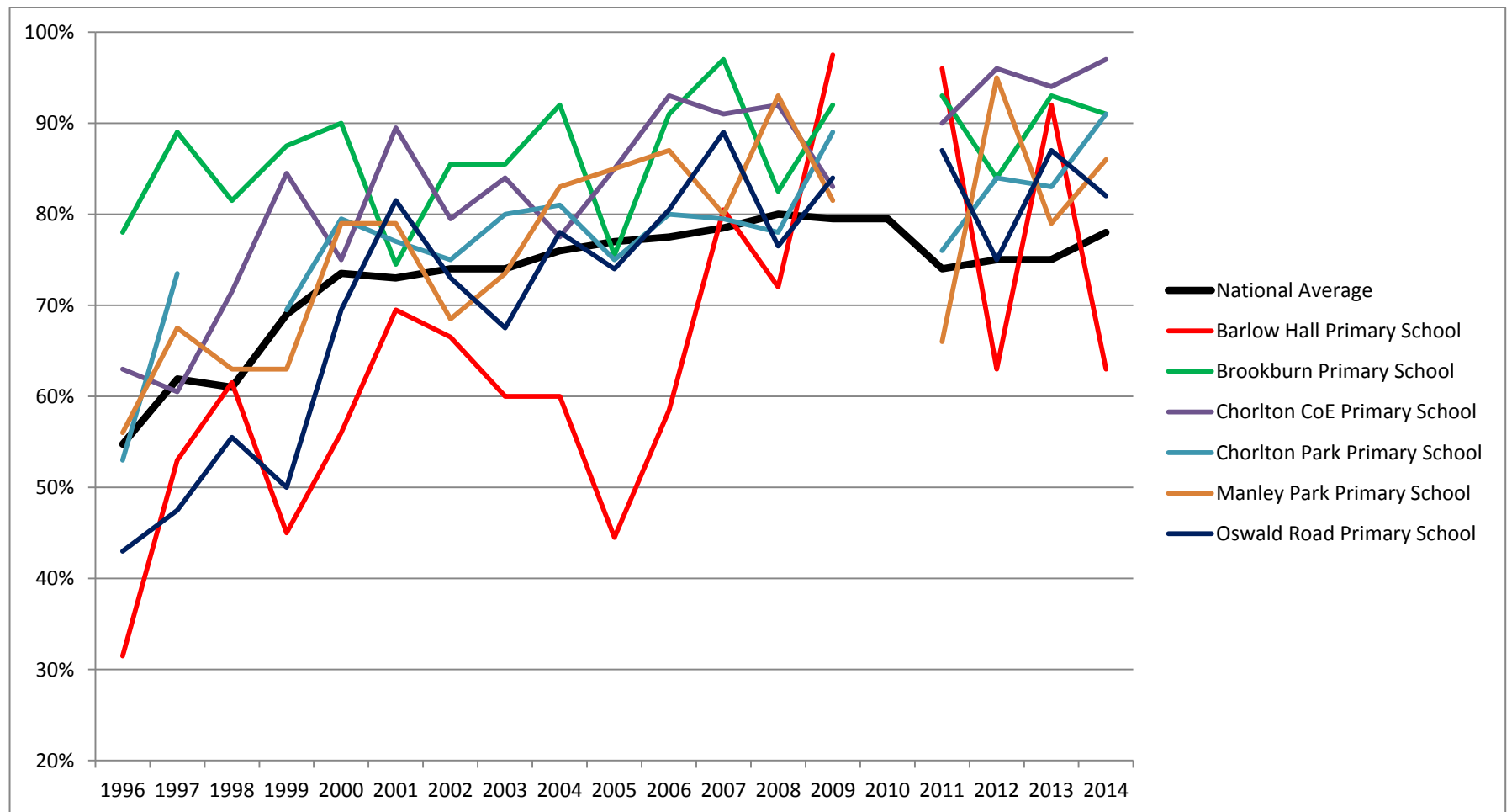
**Figure 6.2: Age Profile of Residents 1981-2011.**

**Chorlton covers Chorlton, Chorlton Park and Whalley Range wards (Appendix 2).**



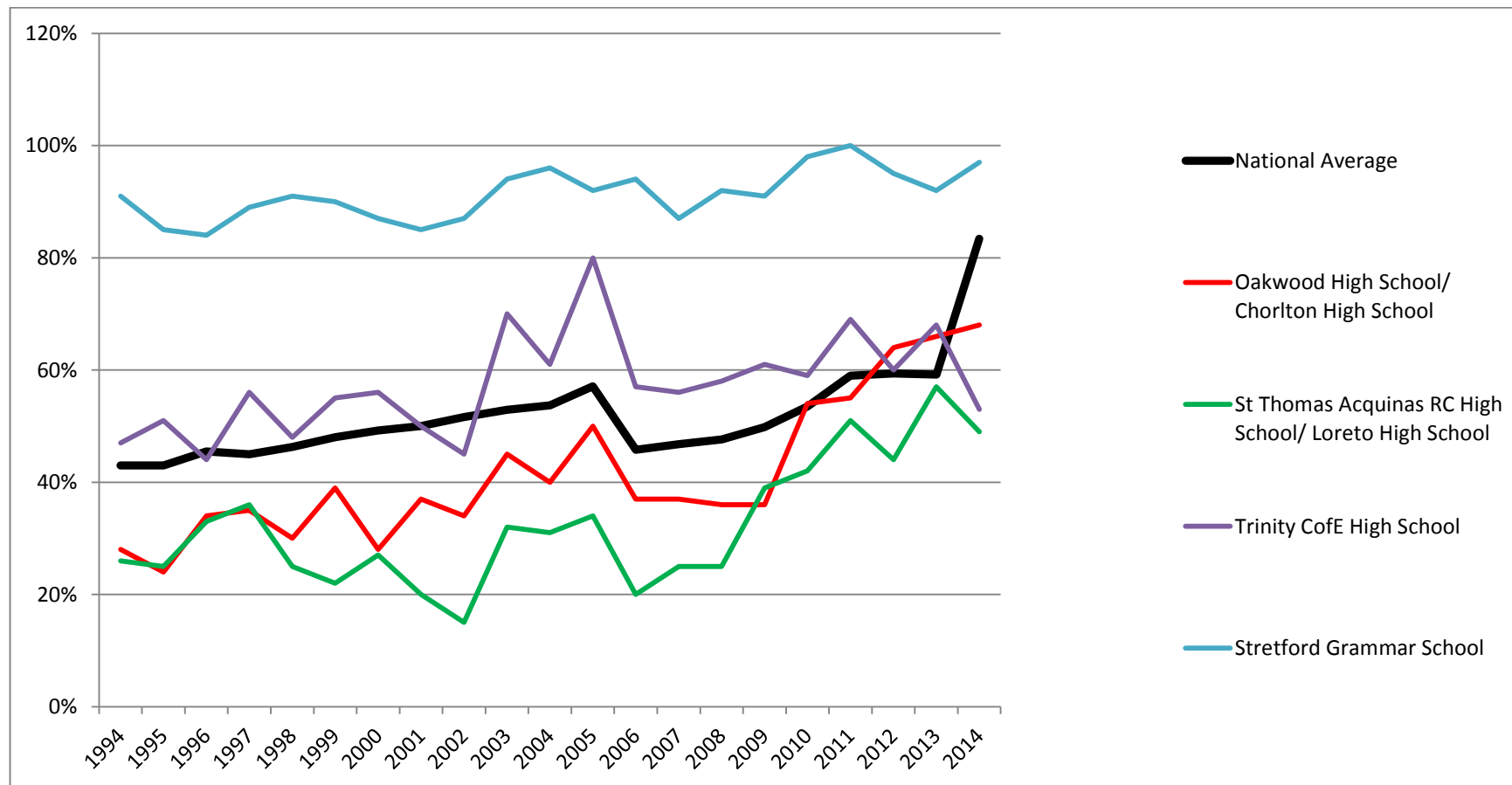
**Figure 6.3: Households with Dependent Children 1981-2011**

1981 and 1991 data is based on 'households'/ 2001 and 2011 data is based on 'families in households'. Chorlton is Chorlton, Chorlton Park and Whalley Range wards (Appendix 2)



**Figure 6.4: Performance of Local Primary Schools at end of Key Stage 2 vs National Average over Time.**

**No local data available for 2010.**



**Figure 6.5: Performance of Local Schools at GCSE vs National Average**

**Note:** At 2006 the national measure was changed from any five GCSE at grades A-C to five GCSE at A-C including English and Maths.



Both Savage et al (2005) and Benson (2014) are able to show that the local residential *rules of the game* might develop over time as residential social profiles change. In Chorlton a *habitus* predicated on youth and pleasure-seeking has been seen to have been gradually modified over time to one which residents felt was entirely supportive of families with young children. This change in the local *habitus* is borne out by the census data. The proportion of residents in the prime childbearing years of between thirty and fifty has grown more strongly in Chorlton than in Manchester or the North West of England over the period 1981-2011. In contrast the proportion of residents between the ages of twenty and thirty has fallen since 1991 against a backdrop of rising numbers elsewhere (Figure 6.2). Similarly, households with dependent children form a more substantial element of the population in Chorlton than elsewhere by 2011, in a complete reversal of the position as at 1981 (Figure 6.3). To some extent this is a function of increasing house prices in the area which have started to price out younger first-time buyers and push them into other neighbourhoods. However, the research has shown how the gradual ageing of the local population has modified the neighbourhood's 'social tone' (Savage et al, 2005, p.30) as the incomers of the 1990s and early 2000s have settled down and had families themselves. These residents were heavily reliant on the *physical and social assets* of the neighbourhood to support *household management strategies* aimed at passing on social and cultural capital to the next generation. Whereas neighbourhood assets had been held to be deficient only ten years before, prompting respondents to consider moving on, in 2011-12 they were perceived to be capable of fulfilling the family's needs and these households were increasingly staying in the neighbourhood. Reflecting Karsten's (2013) findings in Amsterdam, consumption spaces suited to the needs of this new group of residents were therefore becoming increasingly available, as local businesses sought to meet their requirements. Other households at the same life course stage were attracted as a result.



Figure 6.6: Family friendly bars in Chorlton

#### **6.4 Househunting and women in the 21st century**

Historically the needs of the (usually male) breadwinner have been seen as the primary driver in choice of residential location (Edgell, 1980; Cooke, 2001). However, in the context of women's increasingly important role in the workforce, there is some limited evidence that decisions are being made with greater input from wives and mothers (Green, 1997, Hardill et al, 1997; Rabe and Taylor, 2010; Coulter et al, 2012). Fagnani (1993) theorises in particular that women potentially enjoy a more prominent voice in residential choice because of the role that it plays in allowing them to manage home and career. In what Hochschild (1989) calls a 'stalled gender revolution', adjustments in societal attitudes about female involvement in the workplace have not generally been matched with a concomitant equitable redistribution of domestic labour (Crompton et al, 2005; Crompton and Lyonette, 2006). Women's time is squeezed as they combine the demands of both work and family so that the traditional female domains of home and household organisation are potentially increasingly important means of managing competing tensions (Fagnani; 1992, 1993; Katz & Monk (1993). However, there are very few academic studies which explicitly examine the relationship between increased female participation in the labour market and its potential impact on household decisions about where to live. This chapter provides some evidence of increased gender equality in this regard, although this is limited where other issues have already been seen to play an important role in the choices of Chorlton residents. Use of personal networks and a reluctance to consider locations outside of prior experience are factors which influence the residential choices of both genders and limit the scope for disagreement. However, the research demonstrates how the practice of mothering plays an important role in generating increased levels of female attachment to the neighbourhood.

Savage et al's (2005, p.72) research into middle class lifestyles in Manchester highlighted Chorlton as 'a cosmopolitan site of liberal diversity' whose residents enjoyed relatively egalitarian gender relationships, at least with regard to income. They contrasted this with a culture in Wilmslow where mothers were often expected to sacrifice their career interests for those of the wider family, many following geographically in the wake their husband's career. This research found continued gender equality in Chorlton in the realms of education and earnings. Women were

typically part of a dual, or one and a half income family where both partners were educated to the same academic, frequently degree, level. Although many female participants had chosen to work part time after the birth of children, they usually continued to do so in their former employment. There were few examples of one or other career being given priority in terms of residential location at any time. This however, needs to be seen in the context of the fact that few households claimed to have placed work location at the centre of any of their residential choices. Instead, as already seen, the choice of Chorlton as a residential location was largely predicated on its reputation, on the influence of personal ties and on the value of its practical assets.

Nevertheless, whilst a number of respondents had moved to Manchester to live with a partner, subsequently finding work and settling down, there were four instances of women specifically following their husbands' careers to a new residential location. Diane, Grace and Penny were interviewed precisely because they had moved with their husbands as part of a major BBC relocation to Salford. Of the three, Diane most typically matched the 'trailing wife' of Savage et al's (2005) Wilmslow, since she had for some time been a full time mother to four children, although this was the first long distance relocation the couple had made. In contrast Grace had transferred her own employment at the same time as her husband's move, whilst Penny had been made redundant from her role prior to their relocation. Another interviewee, Paula, gave up a job as an IT project manager to emigrate with her husband from Chorlton to Brisbane when he found it difficult to find work in Manchester. At the time of the interview she was at home with their two young children and was planning to resume work when they were older. All the women claimed to have agreed to relocation at a time in their lives when they felt they had some career flexibility and wanted to take time out to be with young children. They were enthusiastic about the change as an opportunity either to travel or to access more affordable housing. However, these were rare examples of career-related housing relocation and there was no evidence of the serial-moves found elsewhere, where 'trailing wives' followed career-oriented corporate males around the country (Cooke, 2001; Savage et al, 2005; Hardill et al, 1997).

During interviews with these women they described a process of consensual decision-making where both they and their partners had come to a mutual conclusion about the desirability of a move. Both Jarvis et al (2001) and Moen and Wethington (1992,

p.239) point out that exactly how potentially conflicting strategies coalesce into a household consensus is mostly ‘uncharted territory.’ This research had intended to capture the nuances of intra-household decision-making by interviewing all adult members. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, this was not always possible and the majority of interviews were carried out with one partner only. Nevertheless, as each house move was discussed the respondent was questioned about their partner’s attitude towards the property concerned and the nature of the move. It had been expected that the research would find a significant level of disagreement, even if only with regard to minor aspects of either the process or the outcome. However, respondents most frequently denied any serious disharmony, arguing that both they and their partner had agreed about essential issues. It is possible, as Valentine (2005a) points out, that respondents did not feel fully able to express the extent of any disagreement during a joint interview. Equally it is likely that there had been some post-event rationalisation so that past events had been re-interpreted as part of a process of coming to terms with the outcome (Lawler, 2002). Nevertheless it is striking that only six participants reported any level of discord and in few cases was the disagreement described as long-lasting.

The most significant disputes involved residential moves over longer distances. This is unsurprising given that these required a greater degree of accommodation and adjustment from at least one member of the household. Lydia reported how she and her partner argued about returning to Chorlton after purchasing their first house together in Salford. With a functional relationship to the housing market and far less attached to Chorlton than she was, he was reluctant to exchange a relatively cheap and affordable location for one which he perceived as overpriced:

He said, ‘You need to get it out of your head, this whole Chorlton thing. We’re not going back there.’ I was like, ‘We are going back there. I don’t want my daughter to grow up anywhere other than Chorlton.’ It was a massive war. So he said alright ... because I wanted to look to buy straight away. He said, ‘Let’s just rent first, get back.’ ... So he wouldn’t buy to come back here. [Did he look ?] ... No. I did on my days off and it really annoyed him so I had to just stop doing it and settle the fact that we were going to rent and see if we could afford to buy. So we got back here and we rented on Egerton Road North. (Lydia)

Claudia also demonstrated a greater degree of attachment to her neighbourhood than her partner. So much so that she was successful in persuading him to relocate to Chorlton when the couple moved in together, despite the fact that this now meant an expensive and lengthy commute to work for him each day. In each of these cases, female partners were far more attached to their place of residence than were men. The sense of belonging in Chorlton for both Lydia and Claudia was sufficiently strong for them to persuade reluctant partners to leave what they perceived to be satisfactory locations. Perhaps equally significant is the fact that they were able to do so.

Indeed, whilst Coulter et al (2012) point to the desirability of a household consensus for the successful realisation of an individual moving aspiration, they also show the importance of female preferences in driving actual moves. It was a notable feature of this research that where one or other partner reported taking the lead in house hunting and moving, in most cases it was women who claimed to direct and manage the process. Whilst couples mostly told how they searched for and viewed properties together, there was a distinct tendency for women to initiate the process of moving and then to begin the search for a new property (Rabe and Taylor, 2010). Elaine reported her frustration with her husband who did not recognise that the imminent birth of their second child necessitated a move to a larger property:

If James had his way we'd still be stuffed into Brookfield Avenue with the cat. James didn't want to move, didn't see why we had to move, he didn't want to move into a new house because the walls were paper thin, he liked being near the park, the school for Ruby, all of this. He was quite resistant to moving. [So how did you persuade him ?] Told him it was happening. Gave him the old, 'James I've got the money, I've put the deposit down.' But he hadn't even seen the show house. I saw that with him a week later, but I'd already said we were having it and I'd given my deposit. And then he came round and saw that it was practical, it was bigger, it would be practically much better for us and even now, I goad him and say, 'You know, we could have still been in Brookfield Avenue if you had had your way.' He's just quite stubborn but he does like it.

Similarly, the prospect of living in a one bed city centre flat with a baby prompted Jane to begin house hunting in the face of her husband's lack of interest in their predicament:

So I went out one day because me and Robert had had an awful row. And he said, 'Oh you go out and find somewhere to live pet.' And I did and came back when I'd found the house. I literally did ...

Elaine and Jane's actions, in going so far as to put down deposits without consulting their respective partners, were perhaps extreme. However, men were, when present, as likely as female respondents to report that it was a partner who had taken the lead in deciding the need to move and in organising the search for a new property. Men tended to claim an apathy and disinterest that consigned them to a largely passive status:

... if she had picked Didsbury then I would probably be living in Didsbury.  
(Aaron)

Nicky does most of the thinking. I'm not really qualified. (Russell)

Bea's forever on the computer on Rightmove and has a short list. Nothing to do with me ! I can't get near the computer. I just get shown the short-list.  
(Mervyn)

Although one or two women did report that they had left the house hunting process to others, this was without exception at an early stage in their housing careers and involved relatively short-term, rented properties. In these cases they were happy to rely on a flatmate to make the right decision in a situation where they felt they were too busy to get involved themselves.

However, where choices involved longer term implications for the way in which family life was managed, then this was a domain in which women not only felt comfortable in taking a lead, but in some cases felt compelled to do so. The on-going relevance of classic gender roles ensured that they had a greater investment in their relationship with the neighbourhood than did their partners (Hochschild, 1989). Whilst Scott and Innes (2005) identify competing discourses for women, dependent on life course stage, care-giving continues to form an important aspect of their lives (Miller, 2004; McDowell et al, 2006b). There is a great deal of evidence for instance to show that women limit their employment to facilitate their role as mothers (Crompton et al, 2005; Lyonette et al, 2011). This chapter started out by showing how households practice residential choice

as an alternative coping strategy where neighbourhood assets are a key means of mediating the demands of work and home. In these circumstances it is unsurprising that women, as primary care givers, demonstrate increased interest in the outcome of choices about where to live. Proximity to 'good' schools, retail facilities and a network of friends and relatives who are able to share childcare arrangements, are far more likely to be important aspects of time-space management for women than they are for men (Fagnani, 1992).

The multiplicity of experience within residential space as a relational location is also once more revealed (Massey, 2005). Women's role as primary care giver was seen to lead to a differential understanding between men and women of the neighbourhood. Savage et al (2005) point out how mothering demands performance of appropriate activities on behalf of children and is therefore a key means by which women with children, more so than men, become attached to a locality (Bridge, 2006). Simeon met his wife in Stoke whilst they were working together but when their office was relocated to Manchester he insisted on a move to a rural village west of the city. Whilst lack of connection to any particular location drove his preference, the decision separated his wife from the everyday support infrastructure of in-situ family and friends and the move was the source of considerable disagreement for the couple. In contrast, Lydia's desire to move back to Chorlton, described above, reflected the personal connections she had developed as a mother with others at the same life course stage. Women's primary role in childcare, marked by periods of extended leave from the workforce as well as reduced working hours, serves to create and sustain the local social networks through which much informal childcare is provided (Jarvis, 1999, 2005). The experiences of Susan and Rachel in Chorlton show clearly how experience of the neighbourhood changed once they had children:

... I'm the sort of person, I needed to get out of the house. Our friends who were having babies at the same time as me ... and my salvation was those little playgroups and I've had a background of depression and I knew that I just had to keep myself out and about and active. I gave myself a visit to every single playgroup to work out which ones I quite liked and which ones I didn't ...  
(Susan)



Rachel in turn noted how her use and experience of Chorlton's retail and leisure amenities changed radically after she had her first child:

... it's been where I've got to know it during the day. When you have a young child and you're working you just inhabit it more than I think somebody that ... when I was 25 and working and just going out at night and what not or pottering down on a Saturday morning and going to the Lead Station for breakfast or that ... you sort of skim the surface of it and when you have children here I think you just inhabit it more. I remember starting to think ... because then when you've got really young children you don't really go out in the evenings, starting to think, 'Right I've got Chorlton by day ! They've got Chorlton by night when I'm at home in bed by half past nine, so I'll hand it over to you young ...' ... I suppose I was just struck at the time by the contrast of thinking how ... because I go in and talk to all the shopkeepers ... you just chat to shopkeepers and people would fuss over your baby and it would just take you ... I remember thinking it just felt like a 1950s old fashioned community. That it would take an hour to go and buy some bread because you'd just chat to everybody and I really like that. I like the slowing down-ness of it.

Putnam (2000, p.95) emphasises 'women are more avid social capitalists than men' because of their greater tendency to become involved in wider community activities. The additional time that Rachel had available during the day transformed the way in which she used and experienced the neighbourhood. Chorlton's shops were no longer purely places of consumption or a backdrop to a busy life; instead they began to provide a myriad of opportunities for social activity. Similarly, through a socialisation process rooted in organised groups, Susan widened her local social network and became increasingly embedded in place as a result.

Bagnall et al (2003) argue that social involvement through children is a dimension of feeling located socially in place. The arrival of children and childcare responsibilities provided respondents with a range of new spaces for social interaction which facilitated ties to the neighbourhood. This supports the work of Respondents with children reported a wide circle of acquaintances, many of whom also provided a range of informal support services, such as baby-sitting and picking the kids up from school. However, just as Savage et al (2005) point out, it is through the narratives of the

childless that the importance of the mothering role in enabling individuals to achieve a sense of belonging becomes clear. It is no coincidence that the disenchantment some respondents voiced about their experience of community in Chorlton was primarily limited to those who worked full time and who mostly did not have children. Those who were rooted in a tightly constructed network of acquaintances gained at the many playgroups in the area, or at the school gate, were far less likely to voice dissatisfaction. Although McDowell et al (2005, 2006b) find little evidence of mothering or reproductive practices to facilitate belonging amongst women in London, they attribute this to the transitory and mobile nature of the London housing and labour markets. Chorlton's population, as has already been seen, was much more stable, with individuals reluctant to consider locations outside their existing 'comfort zone.' Although Ward et al (2010) report findings in Chorlton in 2003 similar to those of McDowell et al (2006b) in London, it is possible that the increasingly family oriented nature of the neighbourhood has changed the way residents experience it. Certainly this research found that the ties fostered through mothering activities such as at the school gate and at playgroups, operated alongside those sustained through work, neighbourly and other friendships.

This section has explored women's experience of residential space. The results reveal qualitative differences between men and women in both their levels of interest in property and involvement in the neighbourhood. It is argued that this is directly related to women's primary role in mothering and care giving. The role not only involves more time spent around the home but also participation in a network of institutions and use of a range of neighbourhood assets to manage everyday social reproduction. Through this, a place-based, social, network is created and sustained, serving to bind women tightly to place. It is argued that women simply have a greater interest in decisions about where to live than do men as a result of their need to manage the competing pressures of home and work.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Chapter 6 has examined how households make use of the physical assets which play an important role in *household utility* residential models. It has demonstrated how schools, parks, community facilities, together with retail and consumption infrastructure are all

important elements of an attractive neighbourhood (Cowans, 2006; Silverman et al, 2006; Green, 2005). However, this thesis has set its exploration within the framework of *household coping strategies* to understand how they facilitate everyday social reproduction (Jarvis et al, 2001). In doing so it has demonstrated the important role that residential choice plays in allowing households to manage their everyday lives. It is argued that proximity and ease of access to residential amenities help to ease the *time-space constraints* which dominate much of modern day household activity. Within this context, high quality green-space, retail facilities, leisure amenities and schools and nurseries are key neighbourhood assets through which household members mediate the demands of home, work and bringing up the next generation.

This has inevitably moved the focus of the thesis from the scale of the individual to that of the household. Despite the increasing variety of living arrangements associated with the second demographic transition, households continue to be an important means of social organisation (Wallace, 2002; Buzar et al, 2005). As such understanding their choices about residential location is important. Whilst early residential choice models largely treated households as monolithic entities, with a single controlling (usually male) mind, this research is set within the context of more recent studies which recognise the complex nature of decision-making (Jarvis et al, 2001; Coulter et al, 2012). Negotiation and compromise were important features of the choices made by respondents, even if much of the detail of this was obscured by the passage of time.

The household is also changing with regard to women's increasing participation in the workforce and the thesis argues that this has important implications for residential choice since the home and the family remain largely female domains (Buzar et al, 2005). Women's greater financial contribution has the potential to give them more bargaining power in household decision-making and the chapter certainly found evidence that they were prepared to take the lead in choices about where to live. This authority arises in the context of increasing time-space constraints where women require high quality neighbourhood assets to help with childcare in a situation where they largely retain primary responsibility for care giving (McDowell et al, 2006a, 2006b; Crompton and Lyonette, 2006). However, there has been little research as to the impact on residential choices of the changing nature of household form. This chapter has examined three key potential aspects of this, focussed on activities surrounding child-

rearing since this continues to be one of the most important roles performed by the household.

Firstly, the chapter has demonstrated how space-time constraints and the life course intersect in a multiplicity of demands so that different elements of the neighbourhood offer are important at different points in time (Jarvis et al, 2001). Whereas all residents appreciated easy access to shopping facilities and local green space, younger respondents were more regular users of the area's bars and restaurants. In contrast respondents with children placed considerable emphasis on the perceived 'family-friendly' benefits of living in Chorlton. Its parks and playgrounds, pre-school groups and activity clubs were widely used by those with younger children. Equally and in contrast to generalised assumptions about the perceived superiority of rural and outer suburban neighbourhoods for bringing up children, respondents with teenagers also considered Chorlton to be an ideal location (Valentine, 1997; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). Straightforward transport links, a local leisure centre, and a range of activity groups designed specifically for them were felt to provide a suitable environment. In addition, the chapter revealed the socialising impact of the neighbourhood's physical amenities by showing how they worked to create and reinforce social networks. Reflecting Butler and Robson's (2003a) findings in London, parents and children were socialised into the *Chorlton Bubble* from an early stage through a range of child-focussed activities, the cost of which served to reinforce social insulation (Atkinson, 2006).

Secondly, the availability of longitudinal data has facilitated an examination of how perceptions of neighbourhood assets change over time. Chorlton residents with children interviewed by Savage et al between 1997 and 1999 were uncomfortable within a *habitus* where 'the dominant liberal and cosmopolitan ethos was not well-equipped to deal with a culture of *family first*' (2005, p.67). Analysis of research transcripts from 2003 revealed some improvement over time, especially amongst those with younger children who demonstrated more confidence of their place in Chorlton. Nevertheless reservations could still be seen, particularly with regard to schooling. By 2011 and 2012 however, this research found a distinct family-friendly ethos, where households with children considered themselves to be surrounded by others at the same life course stage. Estate agents identified a virtuous circle whereby increasing numbers of families

were attracted to the neighbourhood by its reputation. This echoes findings by Sweet et al (2005) and Swisher et al (2004) who found greater neighbourhood satisfaction amongst households with children when they felt they shared the neighbourhood with others at the same lifecourse stage. Moreover, whilst both Benson (2014) and Jackson and Benson (2014) have found some evidence of changes in neighbourhood *habitus* over time, the longitudinal data available has meant that this study has been able to reveal the process of change as it unfolded over a relatively short timeframe.

Finally, the chapter has shown how the presence of children in the household served to create a differential experience of the neighbourhood for men and women. Women's primary role as care-giver and their tendency to spend a greater proportion of their time in the neighbourhood creates a differential experience of residential space (Orford and Leigh, 2013). Through participation in community activities and community groups they have multiple opportunities to develop personal relationships through which they become anchored in place. Both male and female respondents reported that women almost always took the lead in decisions about where to live when children were present in the household and it is argued that this reflects their primary care-giving responsibilities. Given the importance of neighbourhood assets in mediating the complex demands of home and employment, then women simply have a greater investment in making the right residential choice.

## 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

Place ... is a unique entity, a 'special ensemble'; it has a history and meaning. Place incarnates the history and aspirations of a people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning. (Tuan, 1979, p.387)

What is needed, I think, is to uproot 'space' from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestioningly, so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness ... liveliness indeed) where it releases a more challenging political landscape. (Massey, 2005, p.13)

I came to this research wanting to understand more about the underlying nature of the relationship individuals and households have with the places in which they live. Tuan's understanding of place is essentially a territorial one whereby abstract space acquires meaning from those who inhabit it. Although these meanings might be particular and unique to individual experience, this thesis has argued in addition that individual practices coalesce into a mutual narrative which gives a place a common significance (Hannam et al, 2006; Tomaney, 2013). Massey's conceptualisation of space as 'the sphere of possibility' (2005, p.9) brings with it on the other hand an understanding of place as heterogeneous, pluralistic and dynamic. Personal relations are released from their territorial mooring to be stretched over space and time, maintained by ever more efficient channels of communication. The central achievement of this thesis has been to unpack *liveable place* and the meanings given to it to reveal the essence of social activity. In doing so it has demonstrated the ongoing relevance of both Tuan's and Massey's conceptualisations of place. Through the lens of Chorlton, it has created a nuanced geographical understanding of residential housing and neighbourhoods which is both territorial and relational. Notions of community remain important in creating and sustaining residential satisfaction. Location specific capital has been shown to be an essential source of support in managing the time-space constraint of everyday life. However, the communities identified in this research are neither introverted nor static.

The practices of *display* and *social distinction* revealed in Chapter 4 clearly draw on external media representations and reflect practices observed in other locations, metamorphosing over time as new understandings of the neighbourhood are constructed (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Bridge, 2005; Jackson and Butler, 2014). Relationships stretched over time and space work continually to draw in new neighbours as these understandings are transmitted through multiple routes and via complex networks of social relations.

This research has built on a wide range of residential choice and residential mobility literature, much of which has been developed within opposing academic traditions. It has drawn on the full range of pre-existing research approaches, including positivist, structural epistemologies as well as agency-based understandings. The thesis has also addressed research outside the scope of traditional residential choice studies. In doing so it has filled in gaps in existing knowledge to create a multi-dimensional understanding of changing needs and preferences across the life course and according to gender and socio-economic class. Coulter et al (2015, p.2) criticise dominant conceptualisations of residential mobility as reduced to nothing more than ‘a depersonalised, discreet event that carries people from dwelling A to B’. By revealing the multifaceted nature of the relationship individuals have with their housing and their neighbourhoods, this thesis has extended existing knowledge. It has demonstrated the extent to which residential choice is rather an active *practice* through which individuals reveal the ties which link them and their actions to each other as well as to broader, underlying social structures. Hidden amongst the multitude of ‘everyday’ and mundane interactions which constitute the performance of ‘everyday life’, the relationship an individual has with the place in which they live has been shown to be of fundamental importance in understanding the nature of human existence.

The chapter now turns to review the substantive arguments made in the thesis in more detail, before these are synthesised into a broader account which draws out the benefits of the research.

## 7.2 Summary of the Research

The first three chapters of the thesis set the scene for the research. The *Introduction* established the framework within which the thesis was developed. It took as its starting point both Massey's understanding of space as the product of social relations and that of Tuan as a location created by human experiences. Within this context, the places where we live are shown to be worthy of study as key sites within which everyday social life takes place. Echoing Coulter et al (2015) the chapter argues that geographers need to rethink residential choice by re-conceptualising mobility (and in turn immobility) as intricately connected with other lives and structural forces. The perceived ordinariness of residential locations has however, meant that they are often taken for granted, only deserving of academic interest in case of failure (Hopkins and Pain, 2007; Sweet et al, 2005). By turning the focus away from a deficit model of housing the thesis brings insight into the multifaceted nature of the relationship individuals have with housing and residential neighbourhoods. It argues that an understanding of how successful communities operate to create resident satisfaction and reinforce opportunity reveals practices common across the social scale, alongside differential experiences. In doing so the thesis reveals the wider social impact of *liveable place*.

Chapter 2, *Revealing Liveable Place* exposed a research landscape where residential choice and residential mobility has been scrutinised from a range of academic perspectives but which is characterised by a lack of theoretical cross-over. The abstract models of the structural, positivist approaches which have traditionally dominated this area of research were seen to be deficient in capturing the nuances of choices. Whilst qualitative traditions have lately established the importance of human agency in residential decision-making, they too were found to have explanatory shortcomings. The chapter therefore demonstrated the value of drawing on alternative traditions, including community studies and feminist studies of time-space geography to supplement traditional residential understanding. However, more importantly, the lack of an interdisciplinary approach to research was highlighted as a major shortcoming which has limited understanding. The thesis therefore proposed an approach which draws together multiple theories in order to fully reveal the multi-dimensional nature of the decisions individuals and households make about where to live.



Chapter 3, *Researching Liveable Place* built on this by developing a methodology designed to capture the manifold influences on residential decision-making. In contrast to much of the work in this field, where quantitative techniques dominate, this research was developed within a qualitative epistemology where interviews formed the primary method of data collection (Winstanley et al, 2002). These were designed to capture the rich and complex detail of decision-making over an individual life course. As is becoming increasingly common however, interviews were enriched through use of quantitative housing history data as a supportive tool which facilitated additional insights to the field (Dowling et al, 2015). In response to Halfacree and Boyle's (1993) plea for a longitudinal approach to residential studies, both interviews and quantitative data collection were undertaken within a housing biography approach. The value of this lies how it has facilitated situating residential choices within both wider educational, occupational and family biographies as well as prior housing experiences. As a result, the research was able to take decisions out of 'the moment' to be understood as at least partially the product of prior circumstances and choices. Events and experiences were situated within longer term trajectories, helping to identify the structural effects of cohort differences (Beer and Faulkner, 2011; Coulter et al (2015). By bringing to the fore interconnections between different life course stages, stability and immobility for instance are now seen to be as significant as change and transition in individual experience of housing (Coulter et al, 2011; 2015).

The three data chapters each explored an aspect of the multi-dimensional nature of everyday experience of housing and residential neighbourhoods. Tomaney (2015) identifies multiple facets of belonging and the research reflects this, where it is seen to be not only attached to narratives of identity, but also reflect practical commitments and investment in social networks. Both territorial and relational aspects of the individual relationship with place are clearly identifiable. A variety of neighbourhood attributes, activities and associations are seen to bind individuals to their locality. Chapter 4, *Performing Residence* starts by exploring the mechanisms through which house and neighbourhood are transformed into a *home*. Drawing on Savage's et al's (2005) concept of *elective belonging*, it demonstrates how property and location both form key elements in the varied strategies deployed by residents to display *social distinction*. Both Savage et al (2005) and Butler and Robson (2003a) pointed to specificity in the relationship between strategy and neighbourhood. This research shows in contrast how

a relatively small geographical location is capable of sustaining a variety of social strategies. Neither is the relationship between *habitus* and *field* a static one. The housing biography approach reveals how these strategies change and develop over the life course. Narratives of social display only displace priorities of convenience, cost and conviviality as individuals look to make longer term housing choices, particularly at the point of transition to home ownership.

Tomaney (2015) scrutinises what he terms the normative orthodoxy within human geography, influenced by the cosmopolitan ethic, which disparages local attachments for their supposed reactionary and exclusionary nature. However, Chapter 5, *Routes to Belonging* shows how feelings of belonging and community continue to have resonance. Residents were often networked into Chorlton even before they arrived as they drew on trusted connections to explore the neighbourhood as a suitable place to live. By studying *arrival* stories, the thesis has revealed how networks and information sources shape not only the outcome of a residential search but also the nature of the neighbourhood. By drawing in increasing numbers of residents who share a social *habitus*, the personalised, if often limited, information on which individuals rely plays a key role in shaping the dominant neighbourhood culture. Although a variety of specific sources of knowledge were uncovered in Chorlton, the thesis asserts that use of personalised networks and information is not unique to this location. Research on *arrival stories* has been limited so far, and so further work would add to knowledge about techniques and resources in use elsewhere and the outcomes they engender. In the context of high levels of population mobility a greater focus on *arrival stories* would throw light not only on how different groups of people find a suitable place, but also on how they shape the nature of their residential location.

The desire to ‘belong’ appears to have ongoing resonance, despite premature announcements of its demise (Savage et al, 2005; Tomaney, 2015). The research however, reveals complex and often contradictory experiences where the life course exerts a significant influence. Privatised understandings of community were shown to be prominent amongst the young, where strong ties to friends and family provide little opportunity for socialisation into the wider neighbourhood. However, the research demonstrated how the arrival of children led to a greater tendency to frequent public spaces where respondents had the opportunity to mix with other local residents at

similar life course stages (Kuo et al, 1998). Interaction at mother and baby groups or at the school gate was frequently the catalyst for membership of a broad *cooperative* community, based on reciprocal relationships. This was associated with widespread reports of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live (Swisher et al, 2004; Sweet et al, 2005; Corcoran et al, 2008). In contrast another, *vicarious*, understanding of community was also widespread. Drawing this time on *gemeinschaft* notions of the potential Chorlton community promulgated in the media and dependent on a deep rooted desire to *belong*, this was more likely to lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood (Warr and Robson, 2013). However, for the most part Chapter 5 showed how the networked lives of these Chorlton residents engendered a reluctance to move. The empirical work of Mulder and Malmberg (2014, p.2196) emphasises the importance of location-specific capital which is ‘bound to a particular location ... and cannot be relocated from there or only with difficulty.’ This research demonstrates clearly how the location specific capital arising from personal relationships plays a vital role in anchoring households to the neighbourhood (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001).

Chapter 6, *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood* turned to another aspect of location specific capital, in the form of the practical support provided by both neighbourhood amenities and by co-residents. In the context of an increasing number of women working outside the home and longer working hours for more and more adults, the household has been subject to increasing time-space constraint. This chapter therefore exposed the residential neighbourhood as a key element of everyday household coping strategies. Other research has identified how the easily accessible physical and social infrastructure provided by high quality local amenities and the presence of a nearby support network are important in mediating the demands of home, work and childrearing (Jarvis, 1999; Cowans, 2006; Schwanen and De Jong, 2008). In this respect the results from this research are no different; however, the use of longitudinal data has revealed the dynamic nature of the household’s relationship with the places in which they live. Benson (2014) and Savage et al (2005) have previously found some evidence of changes in neighbourhood *habitus* over time. However, the availability of data from earlier studies in Chorlton has allowed this research to examine the process of change in detail. As a result, it has been able to demonstrate how a *habitus* predicated on youth and pleasure seeking evolved within a relatively short time period into an

environment perceived to be particularly family friendly (Savage et al, 2005; Ward et al, 2010).

Finally, chapter 6 also showed how the presence of children in the household creates a differential experience of residential locations for men and women. Women's on-going primary responsibility for care-giving leads to a more 'in-depth' relationship with the neighbourhood and their fellow residents by virtue of simply spending more time there (Lilius, 2014). In addition however, their caring responsibilities tie them more closely than men to a place-based network of shared care. As a result, they have a far greater investment in making the 'right' residential choice, a need reflected in demonstrably different levels of interest in the subject matter.

### 7.3 Discussion

This research has made a significant contribution to understanding about residential choices and about what constitutes *liveable place*. It has done this by addressing the following questions posed in Chapter 1:

- i) What is a *liveable place* ?
- ii) How are individual components blended into an overall understanding of what a *liveable place* might look like ?
- iii) To what extent is *liveable place* experienced differentially according to social characteristics ?
- iv) What is the personal and social impact of *liveable place* ?

By way of conclusion it is now necessary to revisit these and to situate them within a wider theoretical and substantive content to demonstrate how the research has provided responses.

The opening chapter demonstrated how this thesis was inspired by the author's professional experience, working alongside urban regeneration teams to create *liveable places*. As the programmes progressed, it became clear that there was a fundamental lack of clarity about what 'liveability' meant and that this was having an impact on their success. This is perhaps unsurprising given that ideas about *liveable place* and 'liveability' have been subject to varied academic and policy interpretations. Ley's

(1996) 'Liveable City' for instance was driven by post-war, mass experience of higher education, which fostered a strong pro-urban aesthetic amongst a section of the new, highly educated, middle-class. In this sense 'liveability' was equated with ready access to the social life and entertainment of the inner-city, alongside social mores perceived to be more tolerant of working women and minorities than the 'mass produced' suburbs. Zukin (1989) further demonstrates how this involved the gradual commodification of the aesthetic practices of the artists originally attracted to inner urban locations by affordable accommodation. However, Kaal (2011) shows clearly how the terms *liveable place* and 'liveability' have been appropriated by a variety of interests over time, as each seeks to promote its own policy goals. At times this has led to privileging of economic development and personal consumption, where *liveable place* is reduced to nothing more than a series of economic variables (McCann 2004). At others, a counter-discourse of the 'just city' defends the rights of those marginalised by prevailing competitive discourses (Amin, 2006). As Kaal (2011) points out therefore, liveability is far from being an objective condition and a discourse of *liveable place* contains assumptions about the vision of society of those mobilising the idea.

Creating the 'Liveable City' nevertheless remains a key policy goal for Greater Manchester's local authorities. Suitable sites of social reproduction for the skilled and highly-educated are required to deliver the economic growth promised by the 'Northern Powerhouse'. Indeed Chapter 4 has shown how desirable neighbourhoods such as Chorlton have long been a key part of MCC's urban growth strategy (SMSRF - MCC, 2008). However, as McCann and Ward (2011) emphasise, urban policy, including an understanding of what constitutes *liveable place*, draws on wider, socially produced and globally circulated forms of knowledge. The growing literature conceptualising cities as urban assemblages demonstrates the extent to which they are a dynamic collection of infrastructures, people, identities, objects and laws that are relationally constituted through engagements with places and scales elsewhere (Jacobs, 2012). A discourse of competitive liveability, fused with city regionalism has been especially powerful over recent years. Successful cities are those that can attract investment by first attracting a select group of young, highly-skilled and highly-educated workers and to be attractive to this group, cities must, among other things, offer a specific lifestyle (McCann, 2007). Both the political elites and residents of the Greater Manchester City Region therefore,

draw on a variety of transnational, multi-scalar resources as they conceptualise and construct *liveable place*.

This thesis recognises that Chorlton and Manchester, as much as anywhere else, are situated at the intersection of multiple flows. As such, the research reflects an understanding of housing, neighbourhoods and *liveable place* which draws on diverse, multi-directional and global connections. Nevertheless, the multi-disciplinary approach adopted has been a central element in delivering an in-depth understanding of the complex nature of residential locations. The thesis has drawn on a range of research traditions in a way which is fundamentally different to that in which this subject is usually studied. *Revealing Liveable Place* asserted that the long standing division between structural and agency-based approaches to residential choice, highlighted by Cadwallader (1992), limits understanding of the subject. Instead the research has revealed a fundamental dualism which recognises the importance of underlying economic and social structures in shaping decision-making, but which also has a place for human agency (Giddens, 1984). The significance of utilitarian requirements in driving residential mobility behaviour is acknowledged, constrained as they are by access to economic capital. The research has also shown how personal *habitus*, as the embodied product of accumulated cultural and social capital, shapes preferences towards housing (Bourdieu, 2009). However, whilst the rules and resources embedded within Giddens' (1984) *practical consciousness* are important in explaining decisions and choices, other influences are also evident. By drawing on humanistic approaches as well as work from within time-space geography, the research has established how actors have an awareness of the environment within which they operate and how they seek to make adjustments to it (Heidegger, 1971; Putnam, 2000). Aspirations for a 'home' and for 'belonging' are therefore also intrinsic components of liveable place, embedded amongst other, more practical, needs. Consequently this research has demonstrated that *liveable place*, and the relationship that people have with it, is complex, multi-dimensional and difficult to reduce to a single variable.

Nevertheless in common with studies elsewhere it has revealed a series of fundamental residential characteristics which are enduringly sought after. These include high quality shopping and leisure amenities, local green space, easy access to commuting networks, good schools and communities of like-minded individuals (Phe and Wakely, 2000;

Butler and Robson, 2003b; Leech and Campos, 2003; Schwanen and de Jong, 2008). By moving away from the ‘deficit’ model which pervades much housing research, the thesis has highlighted fundamental preferences and attitudes towards residential neighbourhoods which are valid across the social spectrum. The desire to be part of a ‘community’ and the need for practical support in managing everyday life are experiences of liveable place which this research has shown to be widely relevant (Jarvis et al, 2001; Sweet et al, 2005; Raya and Garcia, 2012; Clapham et al, 2014). Similarly, constraints in the provision of suitable alternatives appear to be shaping ongoing preferences for home ownership across the social spectrum. Homelessness, precarious experiences of neighbourhood safety, social segregation and the effects of poverty are of course important issues which impact not only on neighbourhood satisfaction, but also on on-going individual life chances. Nevertheless, the thesis argues that modern housing research is overly focussed on the ‘margins’ (Hopkins and Pain, 2007). By moving to look at the decisions and choices made by those whose economic capital endows them with a degree of choice in the housing market, this thesis has helped redress the imbalance. In doing so it has opened up the possibility for greater understanding of what constitutes *liveable place* across a wider population.

However, despite identifying individual components of a popular neighbourhood, Chapter 2 highlighted how housing research has so far largely failed to demonstrate how these are combined to generate an overall appreciation of *liveable place*. This thesis has therefore turned to Blunt and Dowling’s (2006) three components of a *critical geography of home* to help bring together the diverse elements of liveable place into a coherent composition. It has demonstrated how ideas of the home as *simultaneously material and imaginative* and *multi scalar* are powerful influences in shaping understanding of housing and residential locations across social groups. *Performing Residence* started by examining how imaginaries of both the house and the neighbourhood play a key role in identity formation. It drew on Bourdieu’s concept of social distinction as well as the extensive body of work on gentrification to show how Chorlton’s residents formed an understanding of who they were through both the neighbourhood and the type of property they chose to live in (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005; Mulder and Lauster, 2010). Cultural distinction was bestowed through a particular residential choice. Whereas much gentrification research has focused on practices of social distinction specific to particular sections of the middle

classes, this research shows how those from a range of social backgrounds seek to mark themselves out through differing housing and neighbourhood practices (Bridge, 2005; Butler and Robson, 2003a).

*Routes to Belonging* explored an alternative ingredient of the imaginative relationship residents have with the places in which they live. It revealed how desire to be part of a community is a consistent element of residents' understanding of what it means to reside in a liveable place (Etzioni, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Bailey, 2009). This underlying need to belong is however sufficiently strong for residents to engage with an imaginative, vicarious experience in the absence of meaningful everyday neighbourly encounters (Walters and Rosenblatt, 2008; Warr and Robson, 2013). Alternatively, *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood* showed how a material, utilitarian interpretation of house and neighbourhood complements imaginary understandings. Location specific capital, in the form of physical amenity or human networks, was shown to play an important role in practical household coping strategies (Jarvis et al, 2001; Buzar et al, 2005; Jarvis 2007). Much research has emphasised how working class residents supplement a lack of economic capital through reliance on close family members for support, particularly for childcare (Holloway 1998a, 1998b; McDowell et al, 2005, 2006b). This study shows how middle class families also make extensive use of very local personal networks to fill in the gaps around paid for care. Such communities were also multi-scalar and, whilst many of the most local were a source of practical and social support, expansive personal networks were also uncovered. The research has shown how these have a profound effect on the neighbourhood *habitus* as they act to draw like-minded individuals to live alongside friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Over time the preferences of a changing resident socio-economic profile shaped and re-shaped the local consumption landscape in turn (Bridge and Dowling, 2001; Karsten, 2013).

Despite these shared practices and activities, *liveable place* was therefore also clearly experienced differentially. The research has uncovered a variety of effects and outcomes according to class, gender and stage in the life course. Drawing on Blunt and Dowling's (2006) third component of a critical geography of home, as the *nexus between power and identity*, liveable place is exposed as relational, and thus politically, socially, culturally, economically and temporally constructed. It is clear that power



relationships, in particular those relating to gender and class, direct and shape choices and everyday experience. These are created at the *scale* of both the individual and the household. The variety of strategies of *social distinction* observed within the relatively confined research location for instance, demonstrates how places are capable of fulfilling a range of meanings to different social groups at the same time. Whilst this reflects the findings of Savage et al (2005), where the effect was demonstrated across different neighbourhoods, this research shows how a single residential location is also capable of comfortably containing a range of meanings. Specific elements of the middle classes saw Chorlton as a *magical place* where strategies of understated *good taste* could be pursued in exactly the same way as the *gentrification aesthetic* is understood elsewhere (Bridge, 2001a; Savage et al, 2005). Yet this reading of the neighbourhood existed comfortably alongside alternative narratives, where working class homeowners in particular were able to emphasise the *practicality* and *value for money* available to them in Chorlton (Southerton, 2002).

Life course was also shown to play an important role in driving differential experience of residential locations. By adopting a housing biography approach, the research exposed how strategies towards neighbourhood and property change over time, with the move into home ownership a key watershed. Previous studies have presented such strategies as intrinsic to a particular combination of *capital* and *habitus* (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Savage et al, 2005). However, this research revealed that, whilst both property and neighbourhood were important means of display amongst homeowners, alternative narratives of convenience, cost and conviviality were far more important during earlier stages of the life course. Moving in with a partner or having children, often marked by the move into home ownership, were important transition points in this changing narrative of property and neighbourhood.

The life course was also shown to be a major factor in shaping residents' sense of being part of a shared 'community' as a key component of liveable place. The high levels of mobility widely observed elsewhere amongst young people, are at least partly explained by the lack of the local contacts, connections and commitments which are commonly held to tie individuals to place (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). The *camaraderie* communities observed amongst this group, largely dependent on privatised relationships, were indeed frequently associated in this research with relative

dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live. In contrast the thesis shows how the arrival of children was important in creating a sense of belonging through involvement in *cooperative* neighbourly relationships and networks of locally based friendships. This in turn led to higher levels of neighbourhood satisfaction and a reduced tendency to move on. *Everyday Life in the Neighbourhood* also illustrated how the presence of children influenced a highly gendered experience of residential neighbourhoods, consequent on women's role as primary care giver. Women's experience as mothers in Chorlton mirrors observations elsewhere, where women have been seen to spend more time in the neighbourhood than their male counterparts (Orford and Leigh, 2013). Similarly, reflecting Lilius' (2014) findings in Helsinki, this worked to generate higher levels of place based personal relationships than was the case for men. This research however, has shown in addition how these personal networks went on to play a key practical role in helping women mediate the demands of home, work and childcare (England, 1993; Jarvis 2003). As a result, they demonstrated far greater investment in the home and the neighbourhood than did male respondents.

Finally, turning to examine the personal and social impact of liveable place, this thesis has explored the housing pathways of a relatively privileged group of individuals. In doing so it has traced how stable communities contribute to the accumulation of all forms of capital. Beer and Faulkner (2011) show the pervasive influence of the property market on issues of equity over the life course, with the timing of home ownership in particular having a profound impact on the potential for wealth accumulation. It is perhaps here that Blunt and Dowling's (2006) *nexus between home, power and identity* is at its strongest. Both Clapham et al (2014) and Ford et al (2002) point to a profound life course effect where early experiences of housing continue to impact opportunities throughout the life course and across a range of life careers. Similarly, a range of studies highlight the potentially damaging 'neighbourhood effect' on individuals of living in deprived areas with inferior services and poor access to the 'bridging' social networks which are held to facilitate advancement (Forest and Kearns, 2001; Bailey et al, 2015). In Chorlton, the economic capital made available through appreciation in house prices provided respondents with financial options in case of the birth of a child, change in work circumstances or the need to release capital for care (Easterlow and Smith, 2004). However, in addition to this the *cooperative* and *organisational* communities observed in the neighbourhood served to create and sustain

the social capital on which residents relied for support in fulfilling the demands of everyday life (Tomaney, 2015). Cultural capital, in the form of improved and newly acceptable schooling options, facilitated the transmission of accumulated assets to the next generation and the symbolic capital embodied in the neighbourhood worked to sustain residents' sense of who they were in an ever changing world (Butler and Robson, 2003b; Savage et al, 2005).

From the simple viewpoint of equity, the inequalities arising as a result of unequal access to high quality housing are therefore disturbing. However, evidence was also seen in this thesis of how existing housing pathways are under pressure (Clapham et al, 2014). The longitudinal approach adopted in this research clearly highlights a fundamental change currently taking place in the UK housing paradigm, the results of which are likely to lead to even greater inequalities. As Forrest and Hirayama (2015) highlight, post-war political rhetoric was dominated by the social project of home ownership. Through this, middle class lifestyles were to be extended to the majority of the population, bringing with them security, stability and belonging. High quality housing, including the promise of home ownership, was an important element of the post-war social contract, whereby the state aimed to cushion the worst effects of capitalism through increased involvement in domestic and social policy. Politicians and academics believed that higher levels of homeownership would encourage social stability, political conservatism and a stronger sense of community attachment (Rossi, 1980). Certainly over a forty year period both government policies and the expansion of financial markets have worked to encourage historically high levels of this form of tenure (Saunders, 1990; Kemp, 2015).

As a result, the UK housing market has a distinctive character, with levels of home ownership reaching 71% of all households at its peak in 1993 (DCLG, 2012a). However, what Kemp (2015) characterises as deep seated institutional factors have worked to bring about fundamental changes in tenure make-up over the last twenty years. The increasingly high cost of housing, tightening mortgage borrowing requirements, the relative cheapness of buy-to-let mortgages and rising levels of tuition fee debt amongst young graduates are together reworking existing cultural norms about property ownership. In 1991 60% of 16-34 year olds in England were home owners. In 2011, the comparable figure was 36% (DCLG, 2012a). As Clapham et al (2014) and

Beer et al (2011) both point out, these changes impact particularly on the young and are likely to have a deep and lasting impact on the future shape of the UK housing market. Both studies highlight how home ownership is still seen as an ideal amongst young people and younger respondents in this study remained optimistic about their prospects of achieving it. Nevertheless, they were indeed finding it increasingly difficult to make the transition. They were renting for longer whilst they saved for a deposit and looking to less favourable, but more affordable neighbourhoods when they did feel able buy. Similarly, residents with young children were less likely to 'trade up' to larger properties and demonstrated an increasing tendency to 'build up' in the search for more space.

As Jarvis (2008) points out, home ownership remains important to the British psyche. High levels of home ownership have played an important role in shaping the nature of many neighbourhoods, including in former social housing estates (Saunders, 1990). However state-sponsored cultural norms about home ownership are becoming increasingly economically and socially unsustainable and this is likely in turn to impact on the relationship individuals and households have with property and neighbourhood. Lauster (2010) for instance, highlights how cultural norms about the size, type and tenure of property have influenced child-rearing practices in the United States since the war. Mulder (2006) similarly, identifies how high housing costs deter family formation in some European countries. Since norms about home ownership appear to be stubbornly widespread, both the high levels of debt many young people today experience and the increasing entry costs to home ownership are likely to cause delays in partnership formation and child rearing, at least in the short term. Given the narratives of convenience and conviviality displayed by those without a long-term stake in housing in this research, a delay in moving to home ownership is likely to reduce the importance of property as a source of display. Similarly, dominant notions of community as *camaraderie* amongst a more transient population may be pursued for longer at the expense of other forms which appear to tie individuals to the neighbourhood to a greater extent. Narratives of homeownership emphasise the extent to which it promotes household investment in both the social and physical environment (Rossi, 1980). In which case decreasing levels of interest in property and neighbourhood has the potential to lead to progressive degradation of the physical and social environment. On the other hand, as Jarvis (2013) points out, release from the

‘tyranny’ of home ownership may instead facilitate modes of housing better suited to the more varied household structures, diverse patterns of mobility and increasingly complex household transitions now being experienced across the life course.

Perhaps more significantly, if the spread of home ownership was indeed a powerful means of post war asset redistribution as Saunders (1990) argues, then its restriction into the hands of a limited few has significant consequences for social equity. This research has shown how high quality housing opportunities are important in shaping access to education, health, wellbeing and jobs (King, 1996; Bailey et al, 2015). Whilst this should not be associated straightforwardly with owner occupation alone, the private sector rental market in the UK is currently characterised by poor quality and insecurity of tenure. Attitudinal changes at the highest level of government will be required to remedy its failings. As a result, the purchase of a house remains the single most important financial transaction for much of the population in Britain and has long been a source of intergenerational asset transfer (Forrest and Murie, 1995). A number of residents benefited from inheritances on the death of relatives to put down a deposit on a property in Chorlton. Although there was little evidence amongst respondents of the commodification of housing which others have identified elsewhere, houses and flats in the neighbourhood were seen as a good investment (Forrest and Hirayama, 2015). Ready access to high quality local amenities, including local schools, together with easy access to the job market through extensive transport links, meant that respondents felt that housing in the area would hold its value. Although Clark and Maas (2015) find no evidence that residents of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are ‘trapped’ in them, they do identify that the level of resources available to a household matters in their opportunities to improve their housing position. Jarvis (2008) points to three micro-practices in particular through which households utilise housing related assets to create wealth or cope with a crisis. Increasing concentration of homeownership in a limited number of hands, alongside the rising cost of living in what is often a poor quality private rented sector is therefore likely to amplify inequalities not just within housing but across a range of life careers (Andrew, 2010). Over and above this, current political rhetoric surrounding the size and responsibilities of the state from a government which advocates financial austerity, mean that its role in both service provision and wealth redistribution is in retreat. Neoliberal notions of self-help within state-lite regimes rely to a large extent on privately held assets as a primary means of

welfare provision (Forrest and Hirayama, 2015). Within this context, uneven allocation of resources will lead inevitably to an even greater degree of inequality in choice and life chances (Jarvis, 2007). Given this shifting environment, it is the contention of this thesis that *liveable place* should be bestowed a more prominent position in housing research. This thesis is a step towards that goal.

## 8. Appendix 1 – Respondent Biographies

| Name           | Age | Occupation          | Housing Biography  |
|----------------|-----|---------------------|--|
| <b>Jeremy</b>  | 36  | Property Developer  | After working as a lawyer in the City, he turned his hand to property development in search of a better quality of life. Now owning a number of rental properties across Chorlton and Whalley Range, he lived in the area with his wife and young son.   |
| <b>Irene</b>   | 54  | Estate Agent        | Lifelong Chorlton resident and partner in a local business for twenty years, she had recently moved into a three-bedroom 1930s semi-detached house in Whalley Range.   |
| <b>Donna</b>   | 39  | Housewife           | Moved to Manchester in her mid twenties to be with the man who was now her husband. After having run two local cafes she and her husband now made a living renovating and selling properties. They lived in Chorlton with two young children.  |
| <b>Emlyn</b>   | 56  | Entrepreneur        | Owner of a long established bar in Chorlton, he had lived in a variety of properties around south Manchester since the 1970s. Currently living in Knutsford, he was now disillusioned with the bar and restaurant business and was planning a move abroad.   |
| <b>Iris</b>    | 56  | Local shop owner    | Although not a native Mancunian, Iris had lived in Chorlton for more than thirty years, bringing up a family whilst running a business on Beech Road, living over the shop.  |
| <b>Mark</b>    | 30  | Journalist          | Although he had enjoyed living in Chorlton in his twenties, he had subsequently moved to Ramsbottom to settle down closer to his girlfriend's workplace.   |
| <b>Evan</b>    | 32  | University Lecturer | A new job had brought him to Manchester after a life to date spent in Cambridge and abroad. Initially living in a city centre apartment, his wife now had joined him and they were looking to purchase their first property together in Chorlton after hearing from work colleagues that it would be a suitable place for them to live.                              |
| <b>Matthew</b> | 46  | Graphic Designer    | Born and educated in the North West of England, he had lived and worked in Preston after graduation. More recently he and his partner had decided to purchase their first home together in a Chorlton location that neither knew well, but which was convenient for work and friends.  |
| <b>Heike</b>   | 42  | Hospital Consultant | Brought up in the former East Germany but had come to the North West in her early twenties to train as a doctor. She had subsequently moved around the wider area to progress her career, using hospital and rented accommodation. However, after meeting her partner they had purchased their first property in Chorlton where they now lived with their young son. |

| Name           | Age | Occupation                                | Housing Biography  |
|----------------|-----|---|--|
| <b>Peter</b>   | 34  | Self Employed<br>Events<br>Organiser      | Born in Altrincham he had returned to Manchester after university, living in Chorlton on the recommendation of a friend. Once he became settled and had met his wife he was reluctant to move away. They now lived in the neighbourhood with their young son.  |
| <b>David</b>   | 49  | University<br>technician                  | Left school at 16 to work in engineering and had spent his whole life living around east Manchester until a chance visit to Chorlton on a bike ride. Looking to relocate closer to work anyway, he was so captivated by the neighbourhood that he persuaded his wife and daughter to move to the area.   |
| <b>Claudia</b> | 34  | Insurance<br>Underwriter                  | Moved from the family home in Chorley to be a student at Salford University at the age of 18. She had subsequently moved around rented accommodation in South Manchester with her partner as they attempted to save enough money for a deposit to purchase their first house.  |
| <b>John</b>    | 32  | IT Analyst                                | After university in Lancaster he had returned to the family home in Wigan, close to work, before being persuaded to move to Chorlton by his girlfriend. They were now living in rented accommodation and saving to buy a property together.  |
| <b>Simeon</b>  | 55  | Computer<br>Systems<br>Architect          | First lived in Chorlton as a student at Manchester University in the 1970s before marrying and embarking on an upwardly mobile housing and professional career that took him around a variety of locations in the north west. After divorce in his mid-forties, he moved in with a friend back in Chorlton. Now in a Victorian semi in Whalley Range with a new partner. |
| <b>Orla</b>    | 39  | Housewife (prev<br>teacher)               | Originally from Dublin she met her husband whilst travelling in Australia and came to live in Manchester with him. They had lived in south Manchester ever since, moving from West Didsbury to Chorlton and now occupying a four-bedroom Victorian semi with their three children.   |
| <b>Paula</b>   | 38  | Housewife<br>(prev IT project<br>manager) | Came to university in Manchester from N. Ireland and had subsequently stayed to work, progressing from rented accommodation to owner occupation in West Didsbury and Chorlton. A lack of work in the UK had prompted her and her husband to move to Brisbane with their two young children. Initially a temporary move they were now considering staying.                |
| <b>Carl</b>    | 38  | Environmental<br>Consultant               | Met his wife at university in Manchester and stayed in the area, finding plentiful work in his particular field. However, this had changed as a result of government spending cuts and he had started to look further afield. Twelve months before the interview he had found work in Brisbane had moved with his family.  |



| Name            | Age | Occupation                      | Housing Biography  |
|-----------------|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Rueben</b>   | 43  | IT Contractor                   | Originally from Derbyshire, he chose to live in south Manchester after university in Leeds because of fond childhood memories of Chorlton and his extended family. Despite a brief period of working overseas he had remained in the area and now lived alone in a 3-bedroom 30s semi-detached house in Whalley Range.   |
| <b>Russell</b>  | 42  | IT Technician                   | After studying in Manchester he had remained in the area, living for a long time in Victoria Park with a student friend before his current wife finally persuaded him to 'grow up' and move in with her in Chorlton. They now lived together in a 3-bedroom Victorian semi with their two children.  |
| <b>Nicky</b>    | 42  | Shop Manager                    | A student in Lancaster, she subsequently came to study for a PGCE in Manchester, meeting her husband and settling down in the area. They lived with their two children in a four-bedroomed semi-detached Victorian property and she worked full-time, managing a local shop.   |
| <b>Sonia</b>    | 35  | PA                              | Originally from South Wales and unwilling to return there after studying in Preston, she took the opportunity offered by a friend to live and work in London for six years. Eventually disillusioned with living in the capital and after having broken up with a boyfriend, she decided on a whim to move to Manchester where she had a friend living in Chorlton. She had subsequently moved around the area, living largely in flatshares but was now keen to buy her first property. |
| <b>Lesley</b>   | 33  | Unemployed (prev admin officer) | A student in Manchester she had moved to Chorlton with her boyfriend on graduation, living in the less 'desirable' Merseybank area. She loved the peace and quiet of the neighbourhood and the proximity to the river and they bought their first property there soon after. Now divorced and with a young child, she was planning a move to York to be with a new partner.  |
| <b>Angela</b>   | 35  | Occupational Psychologist       | Originally from Stockport she and her now husband had moved to Chorlton after studying at university in St Andrews. Renting first of all they had subsequently purchased a two-bedroomed terrace and now lived with their son in a three-bed semi in the area.   |
| <b>Susan</b>    | 45  | Arts Marketing                  | A student in Manchester, she had moved around frequently in her twenties and thirties, working in the arts as a freelance consultant. She now lived with her partner in his house in Chorlton with their young son.  |
| <b>Margaret</b> | 54  | Social Worker                   | After being heavily involved in housing co-ops in the 1980s, she and her partner had purchased a three-bedroom Victorian semi in Chorlton where they had brought up their two sons and where they still lived.   |
| <b>Jude</b>     | 55  | Researcher                      | A student in Manchester in the 1980s, political and social principles had led her and her partner to live in housing cooperatives until one day they 'grew up' and   |

| Name          | Age | Occupation                       | Housing Biography  |
|---------------|-----|----------------------------------|--|
|               |     |                                  | decided to get on the housing ladder before it was too late. They still lived in the same three bedroom Victorian semi where they had brought up their two sons.   |
| <b>Sharon</b> | 27  | Recruitment Consultant           | After university in Lancaster she had returned to her family home in Stoke-on-Trent to live and find work. However, attracted by the idea of the 'big city', she had relocated to Manchester, first of all living in rented accommodation in Salford before moving to Chorlton, again in a house share.  |
| <b>Julie</b>  | 43  | Housewife and Therapist          | Brought up in Chorlton, after leaving school she had travelled and worked abroad before returning to the area in her early twenties. She had subsequently settled down with her husband and three children in a three-bedroom 1930s semi.  |
| <b>Chris</b>  | 51  | Landscape Gardener               | Born and brought up in Chorlton, he had travelled round the UK in his twenties, working in a variety of unskilled jobs and living in rented rooms before coming back to live with family in Chorlton. He now lived in a three bedroom 30s semi with his wife and three children, running a successful business as a landscape gardener and landlord.   |
| <b>Lydia</b>  | 33  | Lettings Manager – Estate Agent  | Having 'escaped' rural Norfolk at the age of 19 to be with her sister in Stafford, she had lived in a series of rented flats for a few years before moving again, this time with her boyfriend to Manchester and Whalley Range. Financial constraints meant they bought their first house in Salford but they had subsequently returned to rented accommodation in Chorlton with their young daughter. |
| <b>Elaine</b> | 47  | Marketing Manager                | Brought up in Stretford, after university in Liverpool she had returned to Manchester to live in Whalley Range, meeting her husband and buying a Victorian 'two-up two-down' in Chorlton. After the birth of their two children and his diagnosis with a debilitating illness, they had relocated to a modern townhouse, still in Chorlton, an area they were strongly attached to.                    |
| <b>Jane</b>   | 41  | Airline Cabin Crew               | Arriving in England from Northern Ireland at the age of 18 she had lived and worked around the North West before meeting her partner and moving to London. Expecting their first child they had returned to Manchester, initially living in a flat in the city centre before moving out to Chorlton and a three-bedroom town house.  |
| <b>Edward</b> | 58  | Unemployed (prev accounts clerk) | He had grown up in Chorlton, where he and his wife stayed once they were married, initially in rented accommodation. After the death of his mother, they had taken the opportunity to move into his old family home, a three-bedroom Victorian semi. They had remained there ever since.   |

| Name           | Age | Occupation                                     | Housing Biography   |
|----------------|-----|--|---|
| <b>Anna</b>    | 37  | Retail assistant                               | Born in Chorlton, she was brought up in North Wales before returning to south Manchester in her teens. She met her future husband at the age of 19 and they moved around a series of rented flats in Chorlton and Whalley Range before buying an ex-local authority house together on the relatively unpopular Nell Lane estate.                            |
| <b>Grace</b>   | 35  | Unemployed (prev civil servant)                | After university in York, she had lived in London for ten years with her husband and (latterly) young daughter. On her husband being offered a transfer with the BBC to Salford, they had swapped a two-bedroom flat in Walthamstow for a three-bedroom semi-detached house in Old Trafford.  |
| <b>Diane</b>   | 46  | Housewife                                      | She had moved with her husband and four children from a flat in south London to a five-bedroom Edwardian detached house near the centre of Sale when his job was relocated as part of the BBC move to Salford.  |
| <b>Penny</b>   | 45  | Unemployed (prev local govt officer)           | Previously based in Slough, she and her husband had used the opportunity of a transfer north through his work to move from a relatively cramped, ex-local authority mid-terrace to a spacious modern townhouse in Stretford with their three children.  |
| <b>Harriet</b> | 40  | University researcher and shiatsu practitioner | She first moved to Chorlton to be with her partner after completing university studies in Sheffield and Leeds where she lived in various rented houses with other students. Initially living in a one-bedroom flat in Whalley Range, they had subsequently purchased a three-bedroom Victorian semi in Chorlton where they remained, now with two children. |
| <b>Rachel</b>  | 44  | Teacher  | A student in Manchester, she had remained in the area after graduation, moving around a series of rented properties in Chorlton and Whalley Range with friends. Returning from Leeds after completing further studies, she had bought a two-bed terrace with her partner, before upgrading to a larger property after the birth of their first child.       |
| <b>Rebecca</b> | 28  | Housewife                                      | Brought up in Didsbury where her parents still lived, she had gone to university in London and stayed on after graduating, living in a flat owned by her parents in Brixton. Now with two children she and her partner had purchased a three-bedroom mid-terrace in Stretford to be nearer their parents whilst he completed medical training.              |
| <b>Rodger</b>  | 75  | Retired (prev teacher)                         | Brought up in Chorlton, he had completed teacher training in Didsbury. He and his wife had purchased their first home together, a three-bedroom 1930s semi in Chorlton, close to his parents and sister. They had remained there ever since.  |
| <b>Joan</b>    | 73  | Retired (prev headteacher)                     | Originally from Leeds, she had met her husband whilst training to be a teacher in Manchester and they had subsequently married and settled in the area, bringing up   |

| Name             | Age | Occupation                       | Housing Biography  |
|------------------|-----|----------------------------------|--|
|                  |     |                                  | their daughter in a three-bedroom 1930s semi.  |
| <b>Miranda</b>   | 40  | Delicatessen Owner               | After moving from Milton Keynes to be with a boyfriend in Stretford at the age of 18, she lived in a variety of rented properties across south Manchester whilst working as a waitress in the city centre. Finally settling down at the age of 29, she and her boyfriend purchased a two-bedroom terrace, subsequently moving to a four-bedroom 1930s semi after the arrival of three children.  |
| <b>Laura</b>     | 36  | Teacher                          | Moving to Manchester from Leeds, where she and her partner had settled after university, she enjoyed life as part of a single couple in a city centre apartment. Later they moved to Chorlton and had their first child before moving again to suburban Warrington in search of more space, peace and quiet and lower crime levels.  |
| <b>Daniel</b>    | 36  | IT Project Manager               | After meeting his partner at university they had made money renovating their first property in Leeds before deciding to move across the Pennines to experience 'city centre living' in Manchester. Restless, they subsequently moved first to Chorlton and then further out into Warrington and were considering a further move at the time of the interview.  |
| <b>Mervyn</b>    | 61  | Retired (prev probation officer) | Returning to south Manchester after university in Hull, he had lived in a variety of properties across the area as his social circumstances dictated; sometimes with friends, sometimes with partners. Since 1988 he had lived in a 5-bedroom Edwardian semi but was now planning a move with his current partner to Norfolk after retirement.   |
| <b>Aaron</b>     | 36  | Civil Engineer                   | Finding work in Welwyn Garden City after university, he had lived for a while in Hertfordshire and Cambridge before moving to Chorlton to purchase a modern terraced house with a girlfriend. Still in the same house but now with a new partner, he was keen to move to a larger family home. They had found what they were looking for in Altrincham.  |
| <b>Alexandra</b> | 32  | Trainee Psychiatrist             | She had met and moved in with her partner whilst studying for a degree at Manchester University. Now planning for the future, they were moving to Altrincham where they had found a suitable, affordable property in a neighbourhood which they considered appropriate for bringing up a family.   |
| <b>Daisy</b>     | 40  | Marketing Manager                | Although originally from Cheadle, she had never visited Chorlton before coming to work in Manchester. Captivated by the neighbourhood whilst visiting it for lunch with a friend, she decided it was a good place to live and had first purchased a two-bedroom Victorian terrace in the neighbourhood. She had then moved to a larger property, still in the area, after meeting a new partner. However, unhappy with the house, they were now planning another move across south Manchester to |

| Name             | Age | Occupation       | Housing Biography   |
|------------------|-----|------------------|---|
|                  |     |                  | an area they considered more affordable.  |
| <b>Tony</b>      | 48  | Graphic Designer | Brought up in Cheshire, he had returned there after university, firstly living with friends and then purchasing a rural cottage with his first wife. After meeting his second wife they had bought a four-bedroom Edwardian house in Chorlton where she already lived. They had subsequently become dissatisfied with the size and layout of the house but, unable to find another suitable property in Chorlton, they were now looking for a house in another area of south Manchester.                    |
| <b>Elizabeth</b> | 46  | Retail Manager   | When her job relocated from Hampshire to Manchester she first of all rented in West Didsbury before buying an ex-local authority house in Chorlton. Moving around the neighbourhood with her partner they had progressed from owning a two-bedroom Victorian terrace to a three bedroom semi before deciding that houses in his native Stockport offered better value-for-money. They now lived in a modern four bedroom detached house with their young son.   |
| <b>Sheila</b>    | 42  | Physiotherapist  | Having met her husband whilst travelling in New Zealand, they returned to the UK to settle down closer to her family. Finding work in Manchester where her sister already lived, they first rented and then purchased a two bedroom Victorian house together in Chorlton. After the birth of their first two children and having experienced some crime, she no longer felt safe in the area and they relocated to a larger home in a neighbourhood they felt to be more suitable for bringing up a family. |

## **9. Appendix 2 – Socio-Economic Analysis**

### **9.1 Ward Profiles**

Administratively Chorlton is split into two wards. Chorlton ward encompasses the district centre at its northern end, with a western boundary formed by the neighbouring borough of Trafford and bordered to the south by the river Mersey. This ward contains large amounts of the popular Victorian and Edwardian housing stock. Chorlton Park ward takes in the area immediately to the east and south of Chorlton ward, with an eastern boundary which is largely coterminous with Princess Parkway. This ward incorporates two social housing estates, the recent redevelopment of a former hospital site into modern townhouses and apartments, as well as pockets of older Edwardian properties. The research fieldwork also took in the adjacent suburb of Whalley Range, covered by the ward of the same name which extends to the east of Chorlton ward and north of Chorlton Park ward as far as Princess Parkway in the east and Moss Side and Hulme in the north. Although residents at the northern and western extremities of Whalley Range are less likely to visit Chorlton on a regular basis, a significant proportion of those living closer to the district centre do consider themselves to be Chorlton residents and use its facilities. Whalley Range ward was therefore included in the research fieldwork. The term ‘Chorlton’ used in this analysis therefore covers a geographical area of approximately six square kilometres (Figure 1.2).

The summaries below are extracted from the most recent ward profiles (at the time of writing) produced by Manchester City Council and provide a useful data-based summary of the socio-economic profile of the area (MCC, 2011).

#### *i) Chorlton Ward*

Chorlton ward is home to relatively high numbers of residents between the ages of twenty and forty-four, but there are fewer dependent children over the age of four than the Manchester average. Residents are relatively wealthy with low levels of unemployment, less likely to claim benefits than others in the city and higher than average household incomes. Educational outcomes for those living in the ward are significantly better than those living elsewhere in the city (93% achieving Five A\*-C grades at GCSE in 2011) and average house prices in 2010/11, at just over £240,000,

were over 60% higher than the city wide average. Residents report higher levels of satisfaction with where they live than other areas of Manchester and are particularly likely to feel they ‘belong’ to their neighbourhood. The dominant ACORN classification (<sup>3</sup>) is described as *well off professionals, larger houses and converted flats*, sitting within the sub-set of the *prosperous professionals* group and the *urban prosperity* category.

ii) *Chorlton Park Ward*

Chorlton Park also has a population profile which shows higher numbers of people in the twenty to thirty age bracket than across England and Wales as a whole, together with a higher than usual number of children under five. Despite the fact that much of the housing stock was originally built as social housing, 73% of it was classified as private residential in 2011, above the city average and reflecting high levels of ‘right to buy’ purchases in the Darley Avenue/ Mersey Bank and Hough End estates in particular. Nearly half of properties were in Council Tax band A at November 2011 which, although below the city average, represents a lower value housing stock than that found in Chorlton where properties were predominantly classified within bands B and C. Nevertheless average house prices, at £215,000 were only a little below those found in Chorlton ward and still above the Manchester average. Relatively high levels of economic activity, lower levels of unemployment than otherwise found in the city and higher educational attainment amongst school-age children mark an area which is less deprived than the Manchester average, but not so much as some other areas of south Manchester and which has some concentrated areas of deprivation. Residents express satisfaction with the local area as a place to live, although they are less likely to report a *sense of belonging* than those living in Chorlton ward. The dominant ACORN type in Chorlton Park is described as *low income, older people, smaller semis* within the *struggling families* group and the *hard pressed* category.

---

<sup>3</sup> Acorn is a geo-demographic segmentation of the UK’s population which segments households, postcodes and neighbourhoods into sixty-two types according to demographic, behaviour and attitudinal attributes (CACI; 2013).

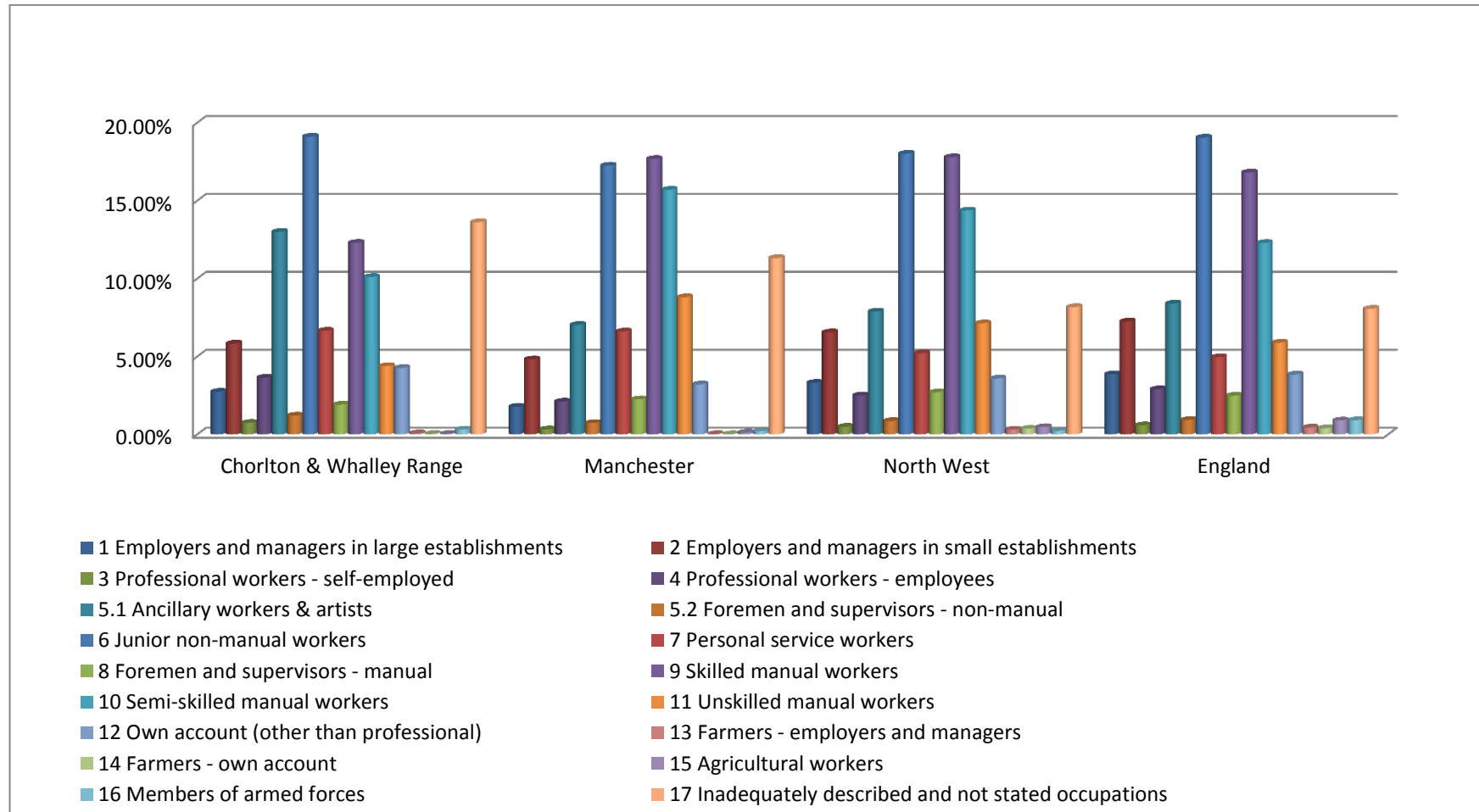
### *iii) Whalley Range Ward*

In Whalley Range there is again an age profile in which those in the twenty to thirty age group predominate, with a higher than average number of children under five. This is an area with relatively low levels of social housing and average house prices of £169,000 as at 2011, which although slightly above the local authority average masks a growing number of sales at the higher value end of the market, above £200,000. Again there are relatively high rates of economic activity, with particularly high numbers of self-employed individuals living in the ward. Alongside lower levels of deprivation and lower numbers of benefit claimants, there are higher levels of educational attainment than in other areas of the local authority. Once more residents report high levels of satisfaction with the area as a place to live and strongly identify with it. The area is home to a substantial south Asian community (25% at the 2011 census) and the dominant ACORN type in Whalley Range is described as *home owning Asian family areas*, sitting within the subset of the *secure families* group and the *comfortably off* category.

In summary, in the context of Manchester, these three wards are relatively affluent, though, as their ACORN classifications show, they are by no means amongst the wealthiest in the country as a whole. The area immediately adjacent to the district centre, Chorlton ward, represents the most affluent part of the neighbourhood with a substantial proportion of home owning professionals. This ward contains significant amounts of the 'older' housing stock, typically constructed at the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth century, which has been shown to be popular with the 'gentrifying' middle classes in other parts of the UK, north America and Australia (Bridge, 2001a; 2003; Butler and Robson, 2003a; Davison, 2009; Lees, 2003; Ley, 1996). However, moving away from the centre the demographic becomes poorer. There is a concentration of white working class residents in social housing estates to the south and west of the neighbourhood and a significant, though generally comfortably off, south Asian community in Whalley Range.

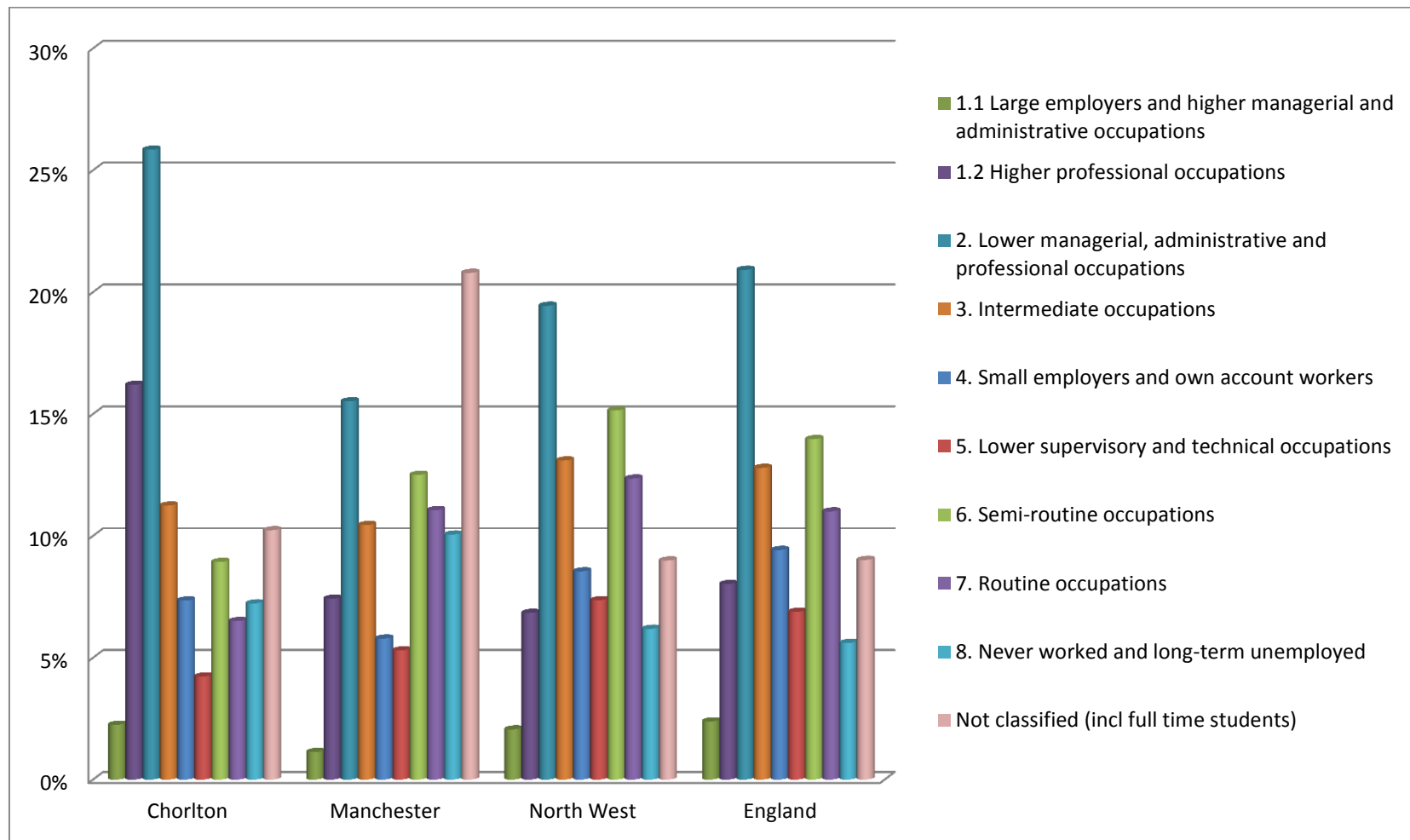


## 9.2 Socio-economic change in Chorlton – Census Profiles



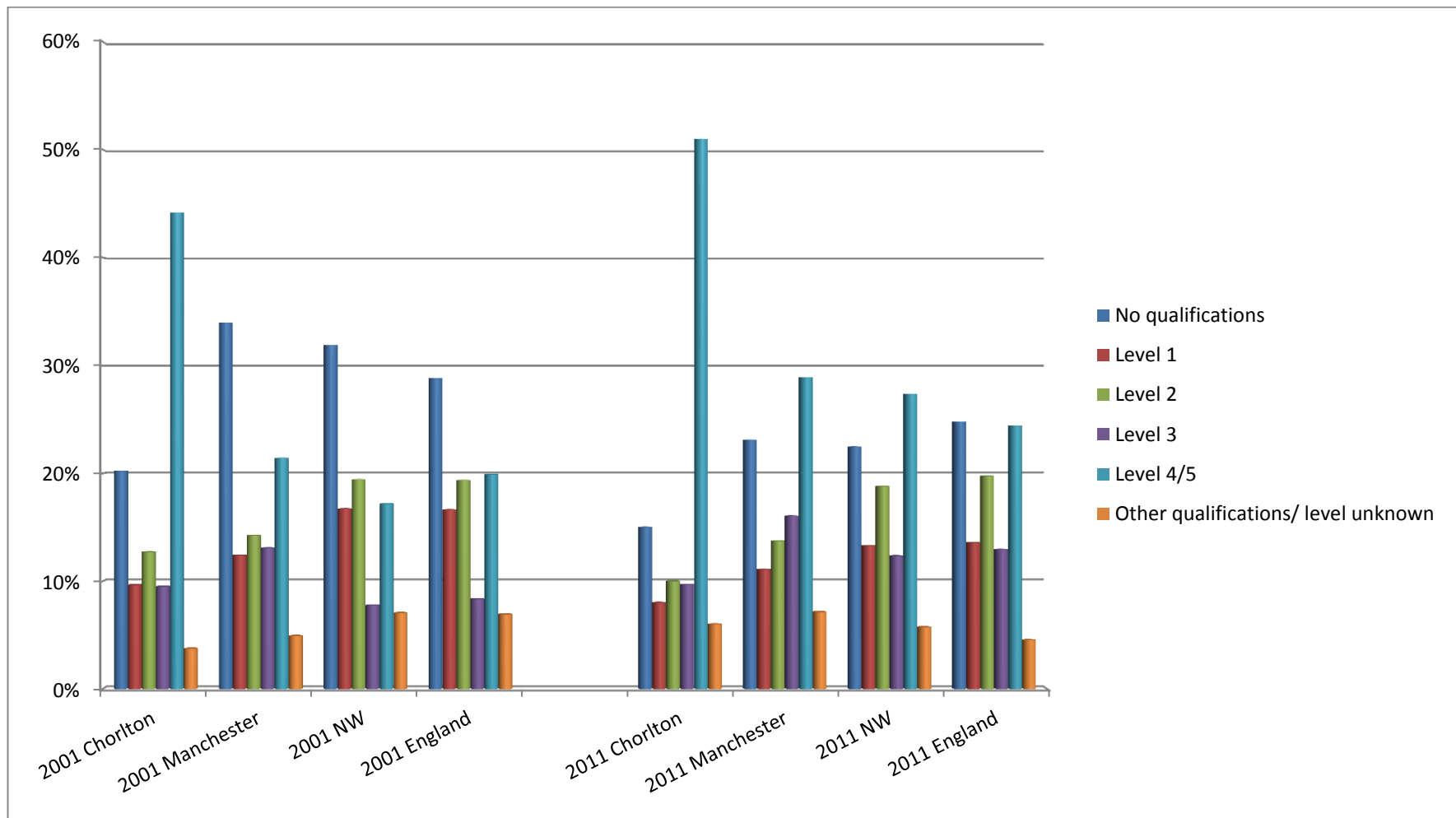
**Figure 9.1: SEG Group at 1981 Census**

(Chorlton, Manchester, North West, England. At 1981 Chorlton covers Chorlton, Barlow Moor and Alexandra wards )



**Figure 9.2: NS-SEC Group at 2011 Census**

(Chorlton, Manchester, North West, England. At 2011 Chorlton covers Chorlton, Chorlton Park and Whalley Range wards)



**Figure 9.3: Highest level of qualification at 2001 and 2011**

(Chorlton, Manchester, North West, England. At 2001 Chorlton is Chorlton, Barlow Moor and Whalley Range wards. At 2011 Chorlton is Chorlton, Chorlton Park and Whalley Range Wards)

## 10. Appendix 3 – Biographical Data Collection Form

### Householder Pre-Interview Survey Information

**Name:**

Please provide details for your most recent property first.

| When did you live there (approximate dates) | Location and type of property (Which city/ suburb and was the property a flat/ detached/ terrace etc) ? | How old were you when you lived there? | Who else lived there (parents, partner, children, flatmate etc) ? | What job did you do when you lived there ? | How much did the property cost you ? (Roughly how much rent did you pay or how much did the property cost to buy?) | Any other information (use this box to provide any other details you think would be useful in helping us understand your time at this property) |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|   |   |  |   |  |  |   |

| When did you live there (approximate dates) | Location and type of property (Which city/ suburb and was the property a flat/ detached/ terrace etc) ? | How old were you when you lived there? | Who else lived there (parents, partner, children, flatmate etc) ? | What job did you do when you lived there ? | How much did the property cost you ? (Roughly how much rent did you pay or how much did the property cost to buy?) | Any other information (use this box to provide any other details you think would be useful in helping us understand your time at this property) |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|   |   |  |   |  |  |   |
|   |   |  |   |  |  |   |

| When did you live there (approximate dates) | Location and type of property (Which city/ suburb and was the property a flat/ detached/ terrace etc) ? | How old were you when you lived there? | Who else lived there (parents, partner, children, flatmate etc) ? | What job did you do when you lived there ? | How much did the property cost you ? (Roughly how much rent did you pay or how much did the property cost to buy?) | Any other information (use this box to provide any other details you think would be useful in helping us understand your time at this property) |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|   |   |  |   |  |  |   |
|   |   |  |   |  |  |   |

Please ask if you need a further sheet

## 11. Bibliography

Aalbers, M.B., (ed), (2012), '*Subprime Cities: The Political Economy of Mortgage Markets*,' Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.

Allen, C., Camina, M., Casey, R., Coward, S. and Wood, M. (2005), '*Mixed Tenure, Twenty Years On: Nothing out of the Ordinary*', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Allen, C., (2006), '*Understanding Residential Mobility and Immobility: Full Report of Research Activities and Results*,' ESRC Grant RES-000-22-0827, <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-000-22-0827/outputs/Download/b097eccc-2842-442b-9f59-4677b198a173> - downloaded 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013)

Allen, C., Powell, R., Casey, R. and Coward, S., (2007), 'Ordinary, the Same as Anywhere Else: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity in "Marginal" Middle-Class Neighbourhoods', *Sociology*, 41, 2, p239-258.

Allen, C., (2008a), 'Gentrification "Research" and the Academic Nobility: A Different Class?', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32, 1, p180-185

Allen, C., (2008b), '*Housing Market Renewal and Social Class Formation*', Abingdon/ New York, Routledge

Allen, J., Massey, D., Cochrane, A., Charlesworth, J., Court, G., Henry, N. and Sarre, P., (1998), '*Rethinking the Region*,' Routledge, London

Amin, A., (2005), 'Local Community on Trial,' *Economy and Society*, 34, 4, p612-633

Amin, A., (2006), 'The Good City,' *Urban Studies*, 43, p1009-1023

Amin, A., (2012), '*Land of Strangers*', Polity Press, Cambridge/ Malden

Anderson, K. and Smith, S.J., (2001), 'Editorial: Emotional Geographies', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS 26, p7-10

Andrew, M., (2010), 'The Changing Route to Owner-occupation: The Impact of Student Debt', *Housing Studies*, 25, 1, p39-62

- Arendell, T., (2000), '*Soccer Moms and the New Care Work*,' Working Paper No.16, Centre for Working Families, University of California, Berkeley.
- Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), (2012), '*Greater Manchester Growth Plan*', AGMA, Manchester
- Atkinson, R., (2006), 'Padding the Bunker: Strategies of Middle-class Disaffiliation and Colonisation in the City,' *Urban Studies*, 4, p819-832
- Atkinson, R., Dowling, R. and McGuirk, P., (2009), 'Home/ Neighbourhood/ City,' *Environment and Planning A*, 41, 12, p2816-2822
- Audit Commission, (2009), 'Housing Market Renewal: Programme Report 2008/9', London, Audit Commission.
- Badcock, B.A., (2001), 'Thirty Years On: Gentrification and Class Changeover in Adelaide's Inner Suburbs, 1966-96', *Urban Studies*, 38, 9, p1559-1572.
- Bagnall, G., Longhurst, B. and Savage, M., (2003), 'Children, Belonging and Social Capital: The PTA and Middle Class Narratives of Social Involvement in the North-West of England,' *Sociological Research Online*, 8, 4  
[[www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/bagnall.html](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/bagnall.html) – accessed 04/11/13]
- Bailey, A.J., (2009), 'Population Geography: Lifecourse matters', *Progress in Human Geography*, 33, 3, p407-418.
- Bailey, A.J., Blake, M.K., and Cooke, T.J., (2004), 'Migration, Care and the Linked Lives of Dual-Earner Households', *Environment and Planning A*, 36, p1617-1632.
- Bailey, N., Besemer, K., Bramley, G. and Livingston, M., (2015), 'How Neighbourhood Social Mix Shapes Access to Resources from Social Networks and from Services,' *Housing Studies*, 30, 2, p295-314
- Balchin, P.N., Bull, G.H. and Kieve, J.L., (1995), '*Urban Land Economics and Public Policy (Fifth Edition)*', Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave



- Ball, S., Bowe, R. and Gerwitz, S. (1995) 'Circuits of schooling a sociological exploration of parental choice of school in social class contexts', *Sociological Review*, 43, pp. 52–78.
- Ball, S.J., Bowe, R. and Gewirtz, S., (1996), 'School choice, social class and distinction: the realisation of social advantage in education', *Journal of Education Policy*, 11, 1, p89-112
- Ball, S.J. (2003), '*Class Strategies and the Education Market*,' Routledge Falmer, London
- Barlow, J. and Duncan, S., (1992), 'Markets, States and Housing Provision – 4 European Growth Regions Compared,' *Progress in Planning*, 38, p93-177
- Barrett, F., (1976), 'The Search Process in Residential Relocation,' *Environment and Behavior*, 8, 2, p169-198
- Bartley, M., Blane, D. and Montgomery, S., (1997), 'Socioeconomic determinants of health: Health and the Life Course: Why safety nets matter', *British Medical Journal*, 314, p1194.
- Beauregard, R. A., (1986), 'The Chaos and Complexity of Gentrification', in Smith, N. and Williams, P., '*Gentrification and the City*', Allen & Unwin, Boston.
- Beckett-Milburn, K., Airey, L., and McKie, L., (2005), 'Intersections of Health and Well-Being in Women's Lives and Relationships at Mid-Life', in McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S., '*Families in Society: Boundaries and Relationships*', The Policy Press, Bristol.
- Beer, A. and Faulkner, D., (2009), '*21<sup>st</sup> Century Housing Careers and Australia's Housing Future*,' Australia Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne
- Beer, A. and Faulkner, D. with Paris, C. and Clower, T., (2011), '*Housing Transitions Through the Life Course: Aspirations, Needs and Policy*,' Policy Press, Bristol
- Bell, C. & Newby, H., (1971), '*Community Studies: An introduction to the sociology of the local community*', Allen and Unwin Ltd, London

- Bennett, J. and Morris, J., (2006), '*Gateway People: The aspirations and attitudes of prospective and existing residents of the Thames Gateway*', IPPR, London.
- Bennett, K. and Shurmer-Smith, P., (2001), 'Handling case studies,' in Shurmer-Smith, P. (ed), *Doing Cultural Geography*, Sage, London
- Benson, M., (2014), 'Trajectories of middle-class belonging: The dynamics of place attachment and classed identities,' *Urban Studies*, DOI: 10.1177/0042098013516522 (published online 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014)
- Birdsall-Jones, C., (2013), 'The Bronx in Australia: the Metaphoric Stigmatization of Public Housing Tenants in Australian Towns and Cities,' *Journal of Urban History*, 39, 2, p315-330
- Blunt, A. and Dowling, R., (2006), '*Home*', Routledge, Abingdon.
- Bochner, A.P., (2002), 'Perspectives on Enquiry III: The Moral of Stories,' in Knapp, M.L. and Daly, J.A. (eds), *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*, Sage, Thousand Oaks
- Boland, L. and Simpson, J., (2007), '*State of the Suburbs: An Economic, Social and Environmental Analysis of the English Suburbs*,' Local Futures Group, London
- Bondi, L. and Christie, H., (2000), 'The best of times for some and the worst of times for others ? Gender and class divisions in urban Britain today', *Geoforum*, 31, p329-343
- Boterman, W.R., (2012), 'Residential mobility of urban middle classes in the field of parenthood,' *Environment and Planning A*, 44, p2397-2412
- Boterman, W.R., (2013), 'Dealing with Diversity: Middle-class Family Households and the Issue of "Black" and "White" Schools in Amsterdam,' *Urban Studies*, 50, 6, p1130-1147
- Bourdieu, P., (1979), '*La Distinction: Critique Sociale du Jugement*,' Les Editions de Minuit, Paris

- Bourdieu, P., (1989), 'Social Space and Symbolic Power,' *Sociological Theory*, 7, 1, p14-25.
- Bourdieu, P., (2009), '*The Logic of Practice*,' Polity Press, Cambridge/ Malden
- Bowen, G., Richman, J.M., and Bowen, N.K., (2000), 'Families in the context of communities across time,' in Price, S.J., McKenry, P.C. and Murphy, M.J. (Eds), *Families Across Time: A Life Course Perspective*, Roxbury, Los Angeles.
- Bowler, I., (1997), 'Problems with Interviewing: Experiences with Service Providers and Clients,' in Miller, G. and Dingwall, R., *Context and Method in Qualitative Research*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi
- Breen, R. and Cooke, L.P., (2004), '*The Persistence of the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour*,'  
[http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/sociology/Group/Breen%20papers/breen\\_cooke.pdf](http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/sociology/Group/Breen%20papers/breen_cooke.pdf)  
 (accessed 14th October, 2010).
- Bridge, G., (2001a), 'Estate Agents as Interpreters of Economic and Cultural Capital: The Gentrification Premium in the Sydney Housing Market', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 25, 1, p87-101.
- Bridge, G., (2001b), 'Rational Action and the Time-Space Strategy of Gentrification', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 26, 2, p205-216
- Bridge, G., (2003), 'Time-Space Trajectories in Provincial Gentrification', *Urban Studies*, 40, 12, p2545-2556.
- Bridge, G., (2005), 'It's not just a question of taste: gentrification, the neighbourhood, and cultural capital', *Environment and Planning A*, 38, p1965-1978.
- Bridge, G. and Dowling, R., (2001), 'Microgeographies of Retailing and Gentrification,' *Australian Geographer*, 32, 1, p93-107
- Brooks-Pollock, T., (2013), 'Bid to Protect Chorlton Green from Developers Fails,' *Manchester Evening News*, Trinity Mirror Newspapers, Manchester

<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/chorlton-green-bid-campaigners-attempt-6338583> - accessed 14/02/14)

Bryman, A., (1984), 'The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology?' *British Journal of Sociology*, 35, 1, p75-92

Bulmer, M., (1986), '*The Work of Philip Abrams*,' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Burchell, B.J., Day, D., Hudson, M., Ladipo, D., Mankelow, R., Nolan, J.P., Reed, H., Wichert, I.C., Wilkinson, F., (1999), '*Job Insecurity and Work Intensification*', York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Burgess, E.W., (1925), 'The Growth of the City,' in Park, R.E., Burgess, E.W. and McKenzie, R.D., (eds), '*The Growth of the City*,' University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Butler, T. and Robson, G. (2001), 'Social Capital, Gentrification and Neighbourhood Change in London: A Comparison of Three South London Neighbourhoods', *Urban Studies*, 38, 12, p2145-2162.

Butler, T. and Robson, G. (2003a), '*London Calling: The Middle Classes and the Re-making of Inner London*', Berg, Oxford; New York.

Butler, T. and Robson, G., (2003b), 'Plotting the middle classes: Gentrification and circuits of education in London', *Housing Studies*, 18, 1, p5-28

Butler, T., Hamnett, C., Ramsden, M. and Webber, R., (2007), 'The best, the worst and the average: secondary school choice and education performance in East London', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 1, p7-29

Buzar, S., Ogden, P.E. and Hall, R., (2005), 'Households matter: the quiet demography of urban transformation,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 29, 4, p413-436

Byrne, B., (2009), 'Not just Class: towards and understanding of the whiteness of middle class schooling choice,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32, 3, p424-441

CACI, (2013), '*Acorn User Guide*', CACI, London

- Cadwallader, M., (1982), 'Urban residential mobility: a simultaneous equations approach,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 7, 4, p458-473
- Cadwallader, M., (1992), '*Migration and Residential Mobility: Macro and Micro Approaches*,' Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press
- Cameron, S. and Field, A., (2000), 'Community, Ethnicity and Neighbourhood', *Housing Studies*, 15, 6, 827-843.
- Cater, J. and Jones, T., (1989), *Social Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Issues*, Edward Arnold, London
- Chen, C., Chen, J. and Timmermans, H., (2009), 'Historical deposition influence in residential location decisions: a distance-based GEV model for spatial correlation,' *Environment and Planning A*, 41, p2760-2777
- Chen, C. and Lin, H., (2012), 'How Far Do People Search for Housing ? Analyzing the Roles of Housing Supply, Intra-household Dynamics, and the Use of Information Channels,' *Housing Studies*, 27, 7, p898-914
- Cheshire, P. and Sheppard, S., (2004), 'Capitalising the Value of Free Schools: The Impact of Supply Characteristics and Uncertainty', *Economic Journal*, 114, 499, pF397-F424(1)
- Christie, H., Smith, S. and Monroe, M., (2008) 'The Emotional Economy of Housing', *Environment and Planning A*, 40, p2296-2312
- Clapham, D., (2002), 'Housing Pathways: A Post Modern Analytical Framework,' *Housing, Theory and Society*, 19, p57-68
- Clapham, D., Mackie, P., Orford, S., Thomas, I., Buckley, K., (2014), 'The housing pathways of young people in the UK' *Environment and Planning A*, 46, 8, p2016-2031
- Clark, J.P., (2003), 'How to peer review a qualitative manuscript,' in Godlee F, Jefferson T. (eds) *Peer Review in Health Sciences*, BMJ Books, London

Clark, W.A.V. and Huang, Y., (2003), 'The Life Course and Residential Mobility in British Housing Markets', *Environment and Planning A*, 35, p323-339.

Clark, W.A.V., Duerloo, M.C. and Dieleman, F.M., (2006), 'Residential Mobility and Neighbourhood Outcomes', *Housing Studies*, 21, 3, p323-342

Clark, W.A.V. and Davies Withers, S., (2007), 'Family Migration and Mobility Sequences in the United States: Spatial Mobility in the Context of the Life Course', *Demographic Research*, 17, 20, p591-622.

Clark, W.A.V. and Maas, R., (2015), 'Spatial mobility and opportunity in Australia: Residential selection and neighbourhood connections,' *Urban Studies*, DOI: 10.1177/0042098015572976 (published online 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015)

Clarke, M., Smith, D. and McConville, M., (1994), '*Slippery Customers: Estate Agents, the Public and Regulation*,' London, Blackstone Press

Cloke, P., Cook, I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J. and Philo, C., (2008), *Practicing Human Geography*, Sage, Thousand Oaks/ London/ New Delhi/ Singapore/ Washington DC

Cooke, T.J., (2001), '"Trailing wife" or "trailing mother" ? The effect of parental status on the relationship between family migration and the labor-market participation of married women', *Environment and Planning A*, 33, p419-430.

Cooke, T.J., (2011), 'It is not Just the Economy: Declining Migration and the Rise of Secular Rootedness,' *Population, Space and Place*, 17, p193-203

Corcoran, M.P., Gray, J. and Peillon, M., (2008), 'Ties that Bind ? The Social Fabric of Daily Life in New Suburbs', in Fahey, T., Whelan, C.T. and Russell, H., (eds) '*Quality of Life in Ireland*', Springer, Heidelberg/ New York, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/t07m02q182658112/fulltext.pdf> (accessed 14th October, 2010)

Corden, A. and Millar, J., (2007), 'Qualitative Longitudinal Research for Social Policy – Introduction to Themed Section,' *Social Policy & Society*, 6, 4, p529–532

- Coulter, R., (2013), 'Wishful thinking and the abandonment of moving desires over the life course,' *Environment and Planning A*, 45, p1944-1962
- Coulter, R., van Ham, M. and Feijten, P., (2011), 'A longitudinal analysis of moving desires, expectations and actual moving behaviour,' *Environment and Planning A*, 43, p2742-2760
- Coulter, R., van Ham, M. and Feijten, P., (2012), 'Partner (dis)Agreement on Moving Desires and the Subsequent Moving Behaviour of Couples,' *Population, Space and Place*, 18, p16-20
- Coulter, R. and van Ham, M., (2013), 'Following People Through Time: An Analysis of Individual Residential Mobility Biographies,' *Housing Studies*, 28, 7, p1037-1055
- Coulter, R., van Ham, M. and Findlay, A.M., (2015), 'Re-thinking residential mobility: Linking lives through time and space,' *Progress in Human Geography*, DOI: 10.1177/0309132515575417 (Published online before print 16th March 2015).
- Coulton, C., Theodos, B. And Turner, M.A., (2012), 'Residential Mobility and Neighbourhood Change: Real Neighbourhoods Under the Microscope,' *Cityscape*, 14, 3, p55-90
- Courgeau, D., (1985), 'Interaction between spatial mobility, family and career life-cycle: A French survey', *European Sociological Review*, 1, 2, p139-162.
- Cowans, J., (2006), 'Cities and Regions of Sustainable Communities – New Strategies' *Town and Country Planning Tomorrow Series*, Paper 4.
- Crang, M., (2005), 'Qualitative Methods: There is Nothing Outside the Text ?', *Progress in Human Geography*, 29, 2, p225-233
- Cresswell, T., (2004), '*Place: A Short Introduction*', Blackwell, Oxford.
- Croft, J., (2003), 'Gating communities for children ?: The perennial problem of school choice, residential location and their (continuing) relationship with neighbourhood', *Centre for Neighbourhood Research, Research Paper 14*, September 2003.

- Crompton, R., (1998), '*Class and Stratification*, ' Polity Press, Cambridge
- Crompton, R. and Le Feuvre, N., (2000), 'Gender, Family and Employment in Comparative Perspective: the Realities and Representations of Equal Opportunities in Britain and France', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 10, 4, p334-348
- Crompton, R., Brockmann, M. and Lyonette, C., (2005), 'Attitudes, Women's Employment and the Domestic Division of Labour: a Cross-National Analysis in Two Waves', *Work, Employment and Society*, 19, 2, p213-233
- Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C., (2006), 'Work-Life "Balance" in Europe', *Acta Sociologica*, 49, 4, p379-393
- Crozier, G., Reay, D., James, D., Jamieson, F., Beedell, P., Hollingworth, S. and Williams, K., (2008), 'White middle-class parents, identities, educational choice and the urban comprehensive school: dilemmas, ambivalence and moral ambiguity', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29, 3, p261-272.
- Daily Telegraph, (2014), '*There are greater rail priorities than HS2*,' Daily Telegraph, London (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/10625654/There-are-greater-rail-priorities-than-HS2.html>) - accessed 14/02/14)
- Davies, G. and Dwyer, C., (2007), 'Qualitative Methods: Are You Enchanted or are you Alienated?', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31, 2, p257-266
- Davison, G., (2009), 'Carlton and the Campus: The University and the Gentrification of Inner Melbourne 1958-75', *Urban Policy and Research*, 27, 3, p253-264
- Dear, M. and Flusty, S., (1998), 'Postmodern Urbanism', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 88, 1, p50-72
- Deas, I., Peck, J., Tickell, A., Ward, K. and Bradford, M., (1999), 'Precipitating Urban Regeneration the Mancunian Way,' in Imrie, R. and Thomas, H., (Eds) *British Urban Policy*, Sage, London



- De Lyser, D. and Sui, D., (2014), 'Crossing the qualitative-quantitative chasm III: Enduring methods, open geography, participatory research and the fourth paradigm,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 38, 2, p294-307
- DePhilipis, J., (2004), '*Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*,' Routledge, London, New York
- De Palma, A., Picard, N. and Waddell, P., (2007), 'Discrete choice models with capacity constraints: An empirical analysis of the housing market of the greater Paris region,' *Journal of Urban Economics*, 62, p204-230
- DeSena, J., (2006), "'What's a Mother to Do ?" Gentrification, School Selection, and the Consequences for Community Cohesion,' *American Behavioural Scientist*, 50, 20, p241-257
- DeWilde, C., (2008), 'Divorce and the Housing Movements of Owner Occupiers: A European Comparison,' *Housing Studies*, 23, 6, p809-832
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., (2000), 'Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Department for Education (DfE), (2012), '*School Performance Tables*,' DfE, London
- Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), (2010), '*The English Indices of Deprivation 2010*,' DCLG, London
- DCLG, (2012a), '*English Housing Survey*,' DCLG, London
- DCLG, (2012b), '*The National Planning Policy Framework*,' DCLG, London
- Derickson, K.D., (2015), 'Urban geography I: Locating urban theory in the 'urban age'', *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 5, p647-657
- Devine-Wright, P., (2015), 'Local attachments and identities: A theoretical and empirical project across disciplinary boundaries,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 4, p527-530

- DiCiccio-Bloom, B. and Crabtree, B.F., (2006), 'The Qualitative Research Interview,' *Medical Education*, 40, p314-321
- Dieleman, F.M. (2001), 'Modelling Residential Mobility; A Review of Recent Trends in Research', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 16, p249-265
- Dieleman, F.M. and Everaers, P.C.J., (1998) 'From Renting to Owning: Life Course and Housing Market Circumstances', *Housing Studies*, 9, 1, p11-25
- Dingwall, R., (1997), 'Accounts, Interviews and Observations,' in Miller, G. and Dingwall, R., *Context and Method in Qualitative Research*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi
- Dowling, R., Lloyd, K. and Suchet-Pearson, S., (2015), 'Qualitative Methods 1: Enriching the interview,' *Progress in Human Geography*, Published online before print 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2015, doi: 10.1177/0309132515596880
- Driant, J-C., Drosso, F. And Vignal, C., (2005), '*Les Francais et Le Logement: Bouleversements de la Demographie et de la Famille. Quelles Choix Residentiels pour Demain ?*', Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris, Paris, <http://www.hlm.coop/IMG/pdf/jcd05a.pdf> (accessed 11/04/10).
- Duffy-Jones, R., (2012), 'Moving Home: Theorizing Housing within a Politics of Mobility,' *Housing, Theory and Society*, 29, 2, p207-222
- Duncan, S. and Smith, D., (2002), 'Geographies of family formations: spatial differences and gender cultures in Britain', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series 27, p471-493.
- Duncan, S., Edwards, R., Reynolds, T. and Alldred, P., (2003), 'Motherhood, paid work and partnering: values and theories,' *Work, Employment and Society*, 17, 2, p309-330
- Dutton, P., (2003), 'Leeds Calling: the influence of London on the gentrification of regional cities,' *Urban Studies*, 40, 12, p2557-2572
- Dutton, P., (2008), '*The Urban Renaissance of Leeds: Provincial Gentrification, a sustainable and Equitable Urban Future ?*', Paper presented to the 'Regeneration and

Wellbeing Conference' at Bradford University, April 2008.

[http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/research/Regeneration/Conference\\_papers/Paul\\_Dutton.pdf](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/research/Regeneration/Conference_papers/Paul_Dutton.pdf) (accessed 09/02/10)

Dyck, I, (1993), 'Ethnography: A Feminist Method?', *The Canadian Geographer*, 1, p52-57

Easterlow, D. and Smith, S.J., (2004), 'Housing for Health: Can the Market Care?', *Environment and Planning A*, 36, p999-1017

Easthope, E., (2014), 'Making a Rental Property Home,' *Housing Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2013.873115 (published online 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

Edensor, T., (2007), 'Mundane mobilities, performances and spaces of tourism,' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 8, 2, p199-215

Edgell, S., (1980), '*Middle Class Couples*', Allen and Unwin, London

Ehn, E. and Lofgren, O., (2010), 'Routines – made and unmade,' in Shove, E., Trentmann, F. and Wilk, R., '*Time, Consumption and Everyday Life: Practice, Materiality and Culture*,' Berg, Oxford

Ellegard, K., (1999), 'A time-geographical approach to the study of everyday life of individuals – a challenge of complexity,' *GeoJournal*, 48, p167-175

Ellis, C., Adams, T.E. and Bochner, A.P., (2011), 'Autoethnography: An Overview,' *Qualitative Social Research*, 12, 1, (<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095> - accessed 23rd December 2015)

England, K., (1993), 'Suburban Pink Collar Ghettos: The Spatial Entrapment of Women', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83, 2, p225-242.

England, K., (1994), 'Reply to Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 84, 3, p502-504

Ermisch, J., (1999), 'Prices, Parents and Young People's Household Formation', *Journal of Urban Economics*, 45, 1, p45-71.

- Etzioni, A. (ed), (1998), *'The Essential Communitarian Reader'*, Roman & Littlefield, Lanham
- Evans, J. and Jones, P., (2011), 'The Walking Interview: Methodology, mobility and place,' *Applied Geography*, 31, 849-858
- Fack, G. and Grenet, J., (2010), *'When do Better Schools Raise Housing Prices ? Evidence from Paris' Public and Private Schools'*, London School of Economics, London. <http://cee.lse.ac.uk/ceedps//ceedp119.pdf> (accessed 29/05/11)
- Fagnani, J., (1992), 'Interactions Conjugales et Choix Résidentiels des Couples Bi-Actifs en Région Ile-de-France: Négociations, Arbitrages et Compromis', Centre de Documentation de L'Urbanisme, Paris, <http://www2.urbanisme.equipement.gouv.fr/cdu/datas/docs/ouvr7/cilog14.htm> (accessed 16/10/09).
- Fagnani, J., (1993), 'Life Course and Space: Dual Careers and Residential Mobility among Upper-Middle-Class Families in the Ile-de-France Region', in Monk, J. and Katz, C., *'Full Circles. Geographies of Women over the Life Course'*, London, Routledge.
- Farrall, S., (2006), 'What is qualitative longitudinal research?' *Papers in Social Research Methods*, Qualitative Series, Number 11.
- Feijten, P. and Mulder, C.H., (2005), 'Life Course Experience and Housing Quality', *Housing Studies*, 20, 4, p571-587.
- Feijten, P. and van Ham, M., (2010), 'The impact of splitting up and divorce on housing careers in the UK', *Housing Studies*, 25, 4, p 483–507.
- Feldman, R., (1990), 'Settlement-Identity: Psychological Bonds with Home Places in a Mobile Society', *Environment and Behaviour*, 22, 2, p183-229
- Fincher, R., (1993), 'Women, the State and the Life Course in Urban Australia', in Monk, J. and Katz, C., *'Full Circles. Geographies of Women over the Life Course'*, London, Routledge.

- Fischer, P.A. and Malmberg, G., (2001), 'Settled People Don't Move: On Life Course and (Im)Mobility in Sweden', *International Journal of Population Geography*, 7, p357-371.
- Ford, J., Rugg, J. and Burrows, R., (2002), 'Conceptualising the Contemporary Role of Housing in the Transition to Adult Life in England', *Urban Studies*, 39, 13, p2455-2467.
- Forrest, R. and Murie, A., (1995), *Housing and Family Wealth: Cross-national Perspectives*, Routledge, London
- Forrest, R. and Kearns, A., (2001), 'Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies*, 38, 12, p2125-2143
- Forrest, R. and Hirayama, Y., (2015), 'The financialisation of the social project: Embedded liberalism, neoliberalism and home ownership,' *Urban Studies*, 52, 2, p233-244
- Forsberg, L., (2009), 'Managing Time and Childcare in Dual-Earner Families,' *Acta Sociologica*, 52, 2, p162-175
- Fukuyama, F., (1999), 'Social Capital and Civil Society,' presentation to the IMF Conference on Second Generation Reforms, 1999.  
[[www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm)] – accessed 06/04/06]
- Gafford, F.D., (2013), "'It Was a Real Village": Community Identity Formation among Black Middle-Class Residents in Pontchartrain Park,' *Journal of Urban History*, 39, 1, p36-58
- Garner, B.J., (1967), 'Models of Urban Geography and Settlement Location,' in Chorley, R.J. and Haggett, P., *Models in Geography*, Methuen, London
- Gayle, M., (2005), *Brand New Friend*, Hodder and Stoughton, London
- Giddens, A., (1984), *The Constitution of Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge

- Giddens, A., (1986), '*Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*', University of California Press; Reprint edition (January 1, 1986)
- Giddens, A., (1991), '*The Consequences of Modernity*,' Polity Press, Cambridge
- Giddens, A. and Pierson, C., (1998), '*Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*,' Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Gillham, B., (2005), '*Research Interviewing: the range of techniques*' Open University Press, Maidenhead
- Glass, R., (1964), '*London: Aspects of Change*,' MacGibbon & Kee, London
- Graham, H., (2002), 'Building an inter-disciplinary science of health inequalities: the example of life course research', *Social Science and Medicine*, 55, 11, p2005-2016
- Granovetter, M.S., (1973), 'The Strength of Weak Ties,' *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 6, p1360-1380
- Green, A.E., (1997), 'A Question of Compromise ? Case Study Evidence on the Location and Mobility Strategies of Dual Career Households,' *Regional Studies*, 31, 7, p641-657
- Green, G., Grimsley, M. and Stafford, B., (2005), '*The dynamics of neighbourhood sustainability*', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Hägerstrand, T., (1967), '*Innovation diffusion as a spatial process*,' University of Chicago Press, Chicago
- Haigh, M.M., Pfau, M., Danesi, J., Tallmon, R., Bunko, T., Nyberg, S., Thompson, B., Chance, B., Cardella, S., Mink M. and Temple, B., (2006) 'A Comparison of Embedded and Non-Embedded Print Coverage of the US Invasion and Occupation of Iraq,' *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 11, p139-153
- Halfacree, K.H. and Boyle, P.J., (1993), 'The challenge facing migration research: the case for a biographical approach,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 17, 3, p333-348

- Hall, D. and Hall, I., (1996), '*Practical Social Research: Project work in the community*', MacMillan, Basingstoke and London
- Hall, P., (1997), 'Modelling the Post-Industrial City', *Futures*, 29, 4-5, p311-322
- Hall, P., (2005), '*Cities of Tomorrow*', Blackwell, Oxford
- Hall, S.M., (2014), 'Ethics of ethnography with families: a geographical perspective,' *Environment and Planning A*, 46, p2175-2194
- Hakim, C., (2002), 'Lifestyle Preferences as Determinants of Women's Differentiated Labour Market Careers', *Work and Occupations*, 29, 4, p428-459
- Hakim, C., (2006), 'Women, Careers and Work-Life Preferences,' *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 34, 3, p279-294
- Hammersley M., and Atkinson P., (1995), *Ethnography: principles in practice*, Routledge, London
- Hamnett, C. and Randolph, B. (1986), 'Tenorial Transformation and the Flat Break-up Market in London: the British condo experience' in Smith, N. and Williams, P., '*Gentrification and the City*', Allen & Unwin, Boston.
- Hamnett, C. and Whitelegg, D., (2007), 'Loft Conversion and Gentrification in London: from Industrial to Post-Industrial Land Use', *Environment and Planning A*, 39, p106-124.
- Hamnett, C., Butler, T. and Ramsden, M., (2013), '"I wanted my child to go to a more mixed school": schooling and ethnic mix in East London,' *Environment and Planning A*, 45, p553-574
- Hannam, K., Sheller, M. and Urry, J., (2006), 'Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings', *Mobilities*, 1, 1, p1-22
- Hardill, I., Green, A.E., Dudleston, A.C. and Owen, D.W., (1997), 'Notes and Issues: Who Decides What ? Decision Making in Dual-Career Households,' *Work, Employment and Society*, 11, 2, p313-326

Harris, C.D. and Ullman, E.L., (1945), 'The Nature of Cities,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 242, p7-17

Harvey, D., (1987), *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Harvey, W. S., (2010), 'Methodological Approaches for Interviewing Elites,' *Geography Compass*, 4, 3, p193-205

Hastings, A., (2004), 'Stigma and social housing estates: Beyond pathological explanations,' *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 19, p233-254

Heath, S and Cleaver, E., (2003), *Young, Free and Single? Twenty-Somethings and Household Change*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke

Heidegger, M., (1971), *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper and Row, New York

Heinz, W.R. and Kruger, H., (2001), 'Life Course: Innovations and Challenges for Social Research,' *Current Sociology*, 49, 2, p29-45

Hertz, R., (1995), 'Separate but Simultaneous Interviewing of Husbands and Wives: Making Sense of their Stories,' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 4, p429-51

Hill, K. and Sutton, L., (2010), *Housing transitions: older people's changing housing needs*, CRSP, Loughborough

Hinrichs, W., (1999), *Wohnsuburbanisierung am Beispiel Berlin: Ein Erklärungsrahmen (FSIII 99-401)*, Forschungsschwerpunktetes: Sozialer Wandel, Institutionen und Vermittlungsprozesse, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin fuer Sozialforschung, Berlin. <http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/1999/iii99-401.pdf> (accessed 16/10/09).

Hochschild, A.R. with Machung, A., (1989), *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*, Viking Penguin, New York

Hodgson, G. M., (1996), 'Varieties of Capitalism and Varieties of Economic Theory', *Review of International Political Economy*, 3, 3, p380-433



Hoggart, K., Lees, L. and Davies, A., (2002), '*Researching Human Geography*,' Arnold, London

Holland J., Thomson, R. and Henderson, S., (2006), 'Qualitative longitudinal research: a discussion paper,' *Families and Social Capital ESRC Research Group*.

Hollingworth, S. and Williams, K., (2009), 'Constructions of the working class "Other" among urban, white, middle-class youth: "chavs", subculture and the valuing of education', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12, 5, p467-482.

Holloway, L. and Hubbard, P., (2001), '*People and Place: The Extraordinary Geographies of Everyday Life*', Prentice Hall, Harlow.

Holloway, S.L., (1998a), 'Mother and Worker ? The Negotiation of Motherhood and Paid Employment in Two Urban Neighbourhoods', *Urban Geography*, 20, 5, p438-460

Holloway, S.L., (1998b), 'Local Childcare Cultures: moral geographies of mothering and the social organisation of pre-school education,' *Gender, Place and Culture*, 5, 1, p29-53

Holloway, S.L., Rice, S.P. and Valentine, G., (eds), (2003), *Key Concepts in Geography*, Sage, London

Holt, L., (2008), 'Embodied social capital and geographic perspectives: performing the habitus,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 32, 2, p227-246

Hopkins, P. and Pain, R., (2007), 'Geographies of Age: Thinking Relationally', *Area*, 39, 3, p287-294

Hopkins, P. and Pain, R., (2008), 'Is There More to Life ? Relationalities in Here and Out There: a Reply to Horton and Kraftl', *Area*, 40, 2, p289-292

Hoyt, H., (1939), '*The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighbourhoods in American Cities*,' US Federal Housing Association, Washington

Ibraimovic, T. and Masiero, L., (2013), 'Do Birds of a Feather Flock Together ? The Impact of Ethnic Segregation Preferences on Neighbourhood Choice,' *Urban Studies*, (published online before print July 11, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0042098013493026)

Jacobs, J., (2012), 'Urban geographies I: Still thinking cities relationally,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 36, 3, p412-422

Jackson, E. and Benson, M., (2014), 'Neither "Deepest, Darkest Peckham" nor "Run-of-the-Mill" East Dulwich: The Middle Classes and their "Others" in an Inner-London Neighbourhood,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38, 4, p1195-1210

Jackson, E. and Butler, T., (2014), 'Revisiting 'social tectonics': The middle classes and social mix in gentrifying neighbourhoods,' *Urban Studies*, published online before print, September 5, 2014, doi: 10.1177/0042098014547370

Jager, M., (1986), 'Class Definition and the Esthetics of Gentrification: Victoriana in Melbourne,' in Smith, N. and Williams, P. (eds), '*Gentrification and the City*,' Allen & Unwin, Boston

Jamieson, L., Wasoff, F. and Simpson, R., (2009), 'Solo-Living, Demographic and Family Change: The need to know more about men,' *Sociological Research Online*, 14, 2, 5 <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/2/5.html> (accessed 11th March 2005)

Jarvis, H., (1999), 'The Tangled Webs We Weave: Household Strategies to Co-Ordinate Home and Work', *Work, Employment and Society*, 13, 2, p225-247

Jarvis, H., (2003), 'Dispelling the Myth that Preference makes Practice in Residential Location and Transport Behaviour,' *Housing Studies*, 18, 4, p587-606

Jarvis, H., (2005), 'Moving to London Time: Household co-ordination and the infrastructure of everyday life,' *Time and Society*, 14, 1, p133-154

Jarvis, H., (2007), 'Home Truths about Care-less Competitiveness,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31, 1, p207-214

- Jarvis, H., (2008), ““Doing Deals on the House” in a “Post welfare” Society: Evidence of Micro-Market Practices from Britain and the USA,’ *Housing Studies*, 23, 2, p213-231
- Jarvis, H., (2011), ‘Saving space, sharing time: integrated infrastructures of daily life in cohousing,’ *Environment and Planning A*, 43, p560-577
- Jarvis, H., Pratt, A.C. and Cheng-Chong Wu, P., (2001), ‘*The Secret Life of Cities: The Social Reproduction of Everyday Life*’, Harlow, Prentice Hall.
- Jarvis, H. and Pratt, A.C., (2006), ‘Bringing it all back home: The extensification and ‘overflowing’ of work. The case of San Francisco’s new media households,’ *Geoforum*, 37, p331-339
- Jarvis, H. and Alvanides, S., (2008), ‘School choice from a household resource perspective: Preliminary findings from a north of England case study,’ *Community, Work and Family*, 11, 4, p385-403
- Jarvis, H., Pain, R. and Pooley, C., (2011), ‘Multiple scales of time-space and lifecourse,’ *Environment and Planning A*, 43, p519-524
- Jarvis, H., (2013), ‘Against the ‘tyranny’ of single-family dwelling: insights from Christiania at 40,’ *Gender, Place and Culture*, 20, 8, p939-959
- Johansson, M., (2012), ‘Place Branding and the Imaginary: The Politics of Re-imagining a Garden City,’ *Urban Studies*, 49, 16, p3611-3626
- Kaal, H., (2011), ‘A conceptual history of livability,’ *City*, 15, 5, p532-547
- Karhula, A., (2015), ‘Comparing Overall Effects of Family Background on Homeownership During Early Life Course,’ *Housing Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2015.1014781
- Karsten, L., (2003), ‘Family Gentrifiers: Challenging the City as a Place Simultaneously to Build a Career and to Raise Children’, *Urban Studies*, 40, 12, p2573-2584.

Karsten, L., (2006), 'Housing as a Way of Life: Towards an Understanding of Middle-Class Families' Preference for an Urban Residential Location', *Housing Studies*, 22, 1, p83-98

Karsten, L., (2013), 'From Yuppies to Yupps: Family Gentrifiers Consuming Spaces and Re-Inventing Cities,' *Tijdschrift voor Economische Sociale Geographie*, 105, 2, p175-188

Katz, C. and Monk, J., (1993), 'Making Connections: Space, Place and the Life Course', in Monk, J. and Katz, C., '*Full Circles. Geographies of Women over the Life Course*', London, Routledge.

Kearns, A. and Parkes, A., (2003), 'Living In and Leaving Poor Neighbourhood Conditions in England', *Housing Studies*, 18, 6, p827-851

Kearns, A., Kearns, O. and Lawson, L., (2013), 'Notorious Places: Image, Reputation, Stigma. The Role of Newspapers in Area Reputations for Social Housing Estates,' *Housing Studies*, Published online 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2013.759546

Kemp, P. A., (2015), 'Private Renting After the Global Financial Crisis,' *Housing Studies*, 30, 4, p601-620

Kirby, S., (1997), 'The Resurgence of Oral History and the New Issues it Raises,' *Nurse Researcher*, 5, p47

Kim, T-K., Horner, M.W. and Marans, R.W., (2005), 'Life Cycle and Environmental Factors in Selecting Residential and Job Locations', *Housing Studies*, 20, 3, p457-473

King, P., (1996), '*The Limits of Housing Policy: A philosophical investigation*,' Middlesex University Press, London

Korsu, Emre., (2012), 'Tolerance to commuting in urban household location choice: evidence from the Paris metropolitan area', *Environment and Planning A*, 44, p1951-1986

- Kronenberg, K. and Caree, M., (2012), 'On the Move: Determinants of Job and Residential Mobility in Different Sectors,' *Urban Studies*, 49, 16, p3679-3698
- Kuo, F.E., Sullivan, W.C., Coley, R.L. and Brunson, L., (1998), 'Fertile Ground for Community: Inner-City Neighbourhood Common Spaces,' *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26, 6, p823-851
- Laub, J.H., and Sampson, R.J., (1993), 'Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime', *Criminology*, 31, 3, p301-325.
- Lauster, N.T., (2010), 'Housing and the Proper Performance of American Motherhood, 1940-2005', *Housing Studies*, 25, 4, p543-557.
- Lawler, S., (2002), 'Narrative in Social Research,' in May, T. (ed), '*Qualitative Research in Action*,' Sage, London/ Thousand Islands/ New Delhi
- Lawler, S., (2005), 'Disgusted Subjects: the Making of Middle-Class Identities', *The Sociological Review*, 53, 3, p429-446
- Leech, D. and Campos, E., (2003), 'Is comprehensive education really free: a case-study of the effects of secondary school admissions policies on house prices in one local area', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, 166, 1, p135–154.
- Lees, L., (2003), 'Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City', *Urban Studies*, 40, 12, p2487-2509.
- Lefebvre, H., (1961), '*Critique de la Vie Quotidienne II*', (trans John Moore), Verso, London
- Lefebvre, H., (2004), '*Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*,' Continuum, New York
- Levi, M., Cook, K.S., O'Brien, J.A., and Faye, H., (1990), 'Introduction: The Limits of Rationality' in Cook, K.S. and Levi, M., '*The Limits of Rationality*', Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

- Lewis, S., Gambles, R. and Rapoport, R.,(2007), 'The Constraints of a "Work-Life Balance" approach: an international perspective,' *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 3, p360-373
- Lewis, S.J. and Russell, A.J., (2011), 'Being Embedded: A Way Forward for Ethnographic Research,' *Ethnography*, 12, 3, p398-416
- Ley, D., (1996), 'The New Middle-Class and the Remaking of the Central City', Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Lilius, J., (2014), 'Is There Room for Families in the Inner City ? Life Stage Blenders Challenging Planning', *Urban Studies*, 29, 6, p843-861
- Logan, J.R. and Molotch, H.L., (1987), *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*, University of California Press, Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London
- Lombard, M., (2013), 'Struggling, suffering, hoping, waiting: Perceptions of temporality in two informal neighbourhoods in Mexico,' *Environment and Plannin D*, 31, p813-829
- Lu, M., (1999), 'Do People Move When They Say They Will ?', *Population and Environment*, 20, 5, p467-488.
- Luckins, T., (2009), 'Gentrification and Cosmopolitan Leisure in Inner-Urban Melbourne, Australia, 1960s-1970s', *Urban Policy and Research*, 27, 3, p265-275
- Lupi, T. and Musterd, S., (2006), 'The Suburban Community Question,' *Urban Studies*, 43, 4, p801-817
- Lynch, A.K. and Rasmussen, D.W., (2003), 'Proximity, Neighbourhood and the Efficacy of Exclusion', *Urban Studies*, 41, 2, 285-298
- Lyonette, C., Kaufman, G. and Crompton, R., (2011), 'We both need to work: maternal employment, childcare and healthcare in Britain and the USA,' *Work, Employment and Society*, 25, 1, p34-50

Mace, A., Hall, P. and Gallent, N., (2007), 'New East Manchester: Urban Renaissance or Urban Opportunism?', *European Planning Studies*, 15, 1, p51-65

Maloutas, T., (2006), 'Middle class education strategies and residential segregation in Athens', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 1, p49-68.

Manchester City Council (MCC), (2008), '*South Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework*,' Manchester City Council, Manchester.

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=7416](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=7416)

(downloaded 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

MCC, (2010a), '*Corporate Research and Intelligence Population Publications*,' Manchester City Council, Manchester.

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/364/corporate\\_research\\_and\\_intelligence\\_population\\_publications](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/364/corporate_research_and_intelligence_population_publications) (downloaded 15th November 2010)

MCC, (2010b), '*Chorlton District Centre Action Plan 2010-2020*,' Manchester City Council, Manchester

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/4384/chorlton\\_district\\_centre\\_action\\_plan](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/4384/chorlton_district_centre_action_plan) (accessed 10th January 2014)

MCC, (2010c), '*Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010*,' Manchester City Council, Manchester,

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/414/research\\_and\\_intelligence\\_population\\_publications\\_deprivation](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/414/research_and_intelligence_population_publications_deprivation) - accessed 16th February 2014)

MCC, (2011), '*Ward Profiles*,' Manchester City Council, Manchester

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/200088/statistics\\_and\\_census](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/200088/statistics_and_census) (accessed 15th December 2013)

MCC, (2013), '*Applying for Your Child's Primary School Place*,' MCC, Manchester

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/705/school\\_admissions/5426/primary\\_school\\_admissions\\_2013\\_14](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/705/school_admissions/5426/primary_school_admissions_2013_14) - downloaded 4th February 2014)

Manchester Evening News (MEN), (2011), 'High Street study shows one in four shops lie empty in Eccles and Altrincham,' *Manchester Evening News* 15<sup>th</sup> February 2014,

Trinity Mirror Newspapers, Manchester

(<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/high-street-study-shows-one-854062> - accessed 26/10/14)

MEN, (2012), '£15m new look in store for Chorlton Precinct,' *Manchester Evening News* 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012, Trinity Mirror Newspapers, Manchester

(<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/15m-new-look-in-store-for-chorlton-679110> - accessed 14/02/14)

MEN, (2014), 'Chorlton named burglary hotspot of the UK following analysis of insurance claim figures,' *Manchester Evening News*, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Trinity Mirror Newspapers, Manchester (<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/chorlton-named-burglary-hotspot-uk-6557629> - accessed 31st December 2015)

Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER), (2009), '*Reviewers' Report*,' MIER, Manchester

Martin, G and Watkinson, J., (2003), '*Rebalancing Communities: Introducing Mixed Incomes into Existing Rented Housing Estates*', York Publishing Services, York, for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Mason, J., (2002), 'Qualitative Interviewing: Asking, listening and interpreting,' in May, T. (ed), '*Qualitative Research in Action*,' Sage, London/ Thousand Islands/ New Delhi

Massey, D., (1994), '*Space, Place and Gender*, Polity Press, Cambridge

Massey, D., (2005), '*For Space*,' Sage, London

Massey, D. and Allen, J., (1984), '*Geography Matters! A reader*', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

May, T., (1997), '*Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*', Open University Press, Buckingham



- May, T., (2002), *'Qualitative Research in Action,'* Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi.
- Mbembe, A. and Nuttall, S., (2008), 'Writing the World from an African Metropolis,' *Public Culture*, 16, 3, p347-72
- McCann, E.J., (2004), 'Best Places': Interurban Competition, Quality of Life and Popular Media Discourse,' *Urban Studies*, 41, 10, p1909-1929
- McCann, E., (2007), 'Inequality and Politics in the Creative City-Region: Questions of Livability and State Strategy,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31, 1, p188-96
- McCormack, D.P. and Schwanen, T., (2011), 'The space-times of decision making', *Environment and Planning A*, 43, p2801-2818
- McDowell, L., Ray, K., Perrons, D., Fagan, C. and Ward, K., (2005), 'Women's paid work and the moral economies of care,' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6, 2, p219-235
- McDowell, L., Ward, K., Fagan, C., Perrons, D. and Ray, K., (2006a), 'Connecting Time and Space: The Significance of Transformations in Women's Work in the City', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30, 1, p141-158.
- McDowell, L., Ward, K., Perrons, D., Ray, K. and Fagan, C., (2006b), 'Place, Class and Local Circuits of Reproduction: Exploring the Social Geography of Middle-Class Childcare in London,' *Urban Studies*, 43, 12, p2163-2182
- McKie, L., Cunningham-Burley, S. and McKendrick, J.H., (2005), 'Families and Relationships: Boundaries and Bridges', in McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S., *Families in Society: Boundaries and Relationships*, The Policy Press, Bristol.
- McPeake, J., (1998), 'Religion and Residential Search Behaviour in the Belfast Urban Area,' *Housing Studies*, 13, 4, p527-548
- Meen, D. and Meen, G., (2003), 'Social Behaviour as a Basis for Modelling the Urban Housing Market: A Review', *Urban Studies*, 40, 5-6, p917-935.

- Meen, D. and Meen, G., (2013), 'Home ownership for future generations in the UK,' *Urban Studies*, 50, 4, p637-656
- Meen, G., Gibb, K., Goody, J., McGrath, T. and McKinnon, J., (2005), '*Economic Segregation in England: Causes, Consequences and Policy*', Policy Press, Bristol, for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Merrifield, A., (2000), 'The Dialectics of Dystopia: Disorder and Zero-Tolerance in the City,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 2, p473-489
- Mikecz, R., (2012), 'Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues,' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18, 6, p482-493
- Miles, S. and Paddison, R., (1998), 'Urban Consumption: An Historiographical Note,' *Urban Studies*, 35, 5-6, p815-823
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L. and Cook, J.M., (2001), 'Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks,' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, p415-444
- Miller, P., (2004), 'Making Love in Supermarkets', in Amin, A. and Thrift, N., '*The Cultural Economy Reader*', Blackwell, Oxford
- Milligan, C., (2005), 'From home to "home": situating emotions within the caregiving experience,' *Environment and Planning A*, 37, p2105-2120
- Moen, P. and Wethington, E., (1992), 'The Concept of Family Adaptive Strategies', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, p233-251.
- Moen, P., Sweet, S. and Townsend, B., (2001) '*How Family-Friendly is Upstate New York?: Executive Summary*', Ithaca, NY, Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute
- Moen, P. and Sweet, S., (2004), 'From "Work-Family" to "Flexible Careers". A Life-Course Reframing,' *Community, Work and Family*, 7, 2, p209-226.
- Monk, J. and Katz, C., (1993), '*Full Circles. Geographies of Women over the Life Course*,' London, Routledge.

- Mulder, C. H., (2006), 'Home-ownership and family formation', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 21, 3, p281–298.
- Mulder, C.H. and Lauster, N.T., (2010), 'Housing and Family: An Introduction', *Housing Studies*, 25, 4, p433-440.
- Mulder, C.H. and Wagner, M., (2012), 'Moving after Separation: The Role of Location-specific Capital,' *Housing Studies*, 27, 6, p839-852
- Mulder, C.H. and Malmberg, G., (2014), 'Local ties and family migration,' *Environment and Planning A*, 46, p2195-2211
- Munro, M. and Smith, S.J., (2008), 'Calculated Affection ? Charting the Complex Economy of Home Purchase,' *Housing Studies*, 23, 2, p349-367
- Naughton, L., (2014), 'Geographical narratives of social capital: Telling different stories about the socio-economy with context, space, place, power and agency,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 38, 1, p3-21
- Niedomysl, T., (2004), 'Evaluating the effects of place marketing campaigns on interregional migration in Sweden,' *Environment and Planning A*, 36, 11, p1991-2009
- Niedomysl, T., (2008), 'Residential Preferences for Interregional Migration in Sweden: Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Geographical Determinants', *Environment and Planning A*, 40, p1109-1131
- Noreisch, K., (2006), 'School catchment area evasion: the case of Berlin, Germany', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 1, p69-90
- Oberti M, (2007), 'Social and school differentiation in urban space: inequalities and local configurations', *Environment and Planning A*, 39, 1, p208–227
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), (2003), '*The Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future*', ODPM, London
- ODPM, (2004), '*Best Value User Satisfaction Survey 2003/4*', ODPM, London

ODPM, (2006), '*A Framework for City Regions – Working Paper 1: Mapping City Regions*', London, ODPM

(<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/regeneration/pdf/143855.pdf> - accessed 29th December 2010)

ONS, (2013a), '*The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC rebased on the SOC2010)*', London, ONS, (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html> - accessed 5th December 2013)

ONS, (2013b), '*Interdepartmental Business Register - 2013*', ONS, London

Ogborn, M., (2003), 'Finding Historical Data,' in Clifford, N.J. and Valentine, G., *Key Methods in Geography*, Sage, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi

Oldham Rochdale Partners in Action, (2005), '*Transformation and Cohesion: The scheme update for the Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder*,' Oldham Rochdale Partners in Action, Oldham

Oliver, D.G., Serovich, J.M. and Mason, T.L., (2005), 'Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research,' *Social Forces*, 84, 2, p1273-1289

Orford, S. and Leigh, C., (2013), 'The Relationship between Self-reported Definitions of Urban Neighbourhood and Respondent Characteristics: A Study of Cardiff, UK,' *Urban Studies*, Published online before print August 23, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0042098013499795

Ormerod, P., (1994), '*The Death of Economics*', London, Faber and Faber.

Osborne, K., Ziersch, A.M., Baum, F.E. and Gallaher, G., (2012), 'Australian Aboriginal Urban Residents' Satisfaction with Living in Their Neighbourhood: Perceptions of the Neighbourhood Socio-cultural Environment and Individual Socio-demographic Factors,' *Urban Studies*, 49, 11, p2459-2477

- Osland, L. and Pryce, G., (2012), 'Housing Prices and Multiple Employment Nodes: Is the Relationship Nonmonotonic ?' *Housing Studies*, 27, 8, p1182-1208
- Pahl, R.E, (1966), 'The Rural-Urban Continuum,' *Sociological Ruralis*, 6, 3-4, p299–329
- Pahl, R.E., (1984), '*Divisions of Labour*', Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Parry, O. and Mauthner, N., (2004) 'Whose data are they anyway? Practical, legal and ethical issues in archiving qualitative data', *Sociology*, 38,1, p139-152
- Pattison, B., Diacon, D., Vine, J., (2010), '*Tenure Trends in the UK Housing System: Will the Private Rented Sector Continue to Grow ?*,' Building and Social Housing Federation, Coalville.
- Parahoo, K., (2006), '*Nursing Research: Principles, Processes and Issues*,' Pallgrave McMillan, London
- Peach, C., (1998), 'South Asian and Caribbean Ethnic Minority Housing Choice in Britain,' *Urban Studies*, 35, 10, p1657-1680
- Peach, C., (2000), 'The Consequences of Segregation', in Boal, F. (ed), '*Ethnicity and Housing*', Ashgate, Aldershot
- Peck, J. and Ward, K., (2002), 'Placing Manchester,' in Peck, J. and Ward, K., '*City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester*,' Manchester University Press, Manchester
- Perrons, D., Fagan, C., McDowell, L., Ray, K. and Ward, K., (2005), 'Work, Life and Time in the New Economy: An Introduction', *Time and Society*, 14, 1, p51-64
- Phe, H.H. and Wakely, P., (2000), 'Status, Quality and the Other Trade-off: Towards a New Theory of Urban Residential Location', *Urban Studies*, 37, 1, p7-35
- Pink, S., (2013), '*Doing Visual Ethnography*,' Sage, London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi/ Singapore.
- Pole, C. and Lampard, R., (2002), '*Practical Social Investigation*', Pearson, Harlow

- Pooley, C. and Whyte, I., (1991), 'Introduction: Approaches to the Study of Migration and Social Change,' in Pooley, C. and Whyte, I., (eds), *'Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants,'* Routledge, London
- Poupeau, F., Francois, J-C. and Couratier, E., (2006), 'Making the right move: how families are using transfers to adapt to socio-spatial differentiation of schools in the greater Paris region', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 1, p31-47
- Pratt, G. and Hanson, S., (1991), 'On the Links Between Home and Work: Family-Household Strategies in a Buoyant Labour Market,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, ' 15, p55-74
- Punpuing, S. and Ross, H., (2001), 'Commuting: the Human Side of Bangkok's Transport Problems', *Cities*, 18, 1, p43-50
- Purcell, M. and Brown, J. (2005), 'Against the local trap: scale and the study of environment and development,' *Progress in Development Studies*, 5, 4, p279–297.
- Putnam, R. D., (2000), *'Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community'*, (Simon & Shuster, New York)
- Quilley, S., (2000), 'Manchester First: From Municipal Socialism to the Entrepreneurial City,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 3, p601-615
- Rabe, B. and Taylor, M., (2010), 'Residential Mobility, Quality of Neighbourhood and Life Course Events', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 173, 3, p531-555
- Rakoff, R.M., (1977), 'Ideology in everyday life: the meaning of the house,' *Politics and Society*, 7, p85-104
- Raya, J. and Garcia, J., (2012), 'Which are the Real Determinants of Tenure ? A Comparative Analysis of Different Models of the Tenure Choice of a House,' *Urban Studies*, 49, 16, p3645-3662
- Reay, D., (2007), '"Unruly Places": Inner-city Comprehensives, Middle-class Imaginaries and Working-class Children', *Urban Studies*, 44, 7, p1191-1201.

Reay, D., Hollingworth, S., Williams, K., Crozier, G., Jamieson, F., James, D. and Beedell, P., (2007), "'A Darker Shade of Pale?'" Whiteness, the Middle Classes and Multi-Ethnic Inner City Schooling', *Sociology*, 41, 6, p1041-1060.

Richards, H. and Emslie, C., (2000), 'The 'doctor' or the 'girl from the University'? Considering the influence of professional roles on qualitative interviewing,' *Family Practice*, 17, 1, p71-75

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C. and Ormston, R., (eds) (2003), 'Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore.

Robertson, D., McIntosh, I. and Smyth, J., (2008), '*Neighbourhood Identity: People, Place and Time*,' Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

Robertson, D., McIntosh, I. and Smyth, J., (2010), 'Neighbourhood Identity: The Path Dependency of Class and Place,' *Housing, Theory and Society*, 27, 3, p258-273

Robinson, D. and Wilkinson, D., (1995), 'Sense of community in a remote mining town: validating a neighbourhood cohesion scale,' *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23, 1, p137-148

Robinson, J., (2006), *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*, Routledge, London

Robinson, J., (2013), "'Arriving at" Urban Policies/ the Urban: Traces of Elsewhere in Making City Futures,' in Söderström, O., Randeria, S., Ruedin, D., D'Amato, G., Panese, F., *Critical Mobilities*, Routledge, London

Robison, J.T. and Moen, P., (2000), 'A Life-Course Perspective on Housing Expectations and Shifts in Late Midlife,' *Research on Aging*, 22, 5, p499-532

Robson, C. (2002), '*Real World Research*', Blackwell, Oxford

Rohe, W.M., van Zandt, S. and McCarthy, G., (2013), 'The social benefits and costs of homeownership: a critical assessment of the research,' in Tighe, J.R. and Mueller, E.J., '*The Affordable Housing Reader*,' Routledge, London and New York

- Ronald, R., (2010), Book Review: 'Chris Allen – Housing Market Renewal and Social Class', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 25, p153-155.
- Rose, D., (1993), 'Local Childcare Strategies in Montreal, Quebec: The Mediations of State Policies, Class and Ethnicity in the Life Courses of Families with Young Children,' in Monk, J. and Katz, C., '*Full Circles. Geographies of Women over the Life Course*', London, Routledge.
- Rose, G., (1990), 'Imagining Poplar in the 1920s: contested concepts of community,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16, p425-37
- Rose, M., (2012), 'Dwelling as marking and claiming,' *Environment and Planning D*, 30, p757-771
- Rossi, P.H., (1980), '*Why Families Move*', Thousand Oaks/ London, Sage
- Roth, A. E., (2015), *Who Gets What and Why: The Hidden World of Matchmaking and Market Design*, William Collins, London.
- Roy, A., (2011), 'Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35, 2, p223-238
- Sager, L., (2012), 'Residential Segregation and Socioeconomic Neighbourhood Sorting: Evidence at the Micro-neighbourhood Level for Migrant Groups in Germany,' *Urban Studies*, 49, 12, p2617-2632
- Sampson, R.J., and Laub, J.H., (2005), 'A Life Course View of the Development of Crime', *The Annals of the American Academy*, 602, 1, p12-45.
- Saunders, P., (1990), '*A Nation of Homeowners*,' Unwin Hyman, London
- Savage, M., Barlow, J., Dickens, P. and Fielding, A., (1992), '*Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle Class Formation in Contemporary Britain*,' Routledge, London
- Savage, M., Bagnall, G. and Longhurst, B., (2005), '*Globalisation and Belonging*,' Sage, London.



- Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Friedman, S., Laurison, D., Miles, A. and Snee, H., (2014), 'On Social Class, Anno 2014,' *Sociology*, DOI: 10.1177/0038038514536635
- Schwanen, T. and de Jong, T., (2008), 'Exploring the Juggling of Responsibilities with Space-Time Accessibility Analysis,' *Urban Geography*, 29, 6, p556-580
- Schwanen, T. and Kwan, M-P., (2012), 'Critical space-time geographies,' *Environment and Planning A*, 44, p2043-2048
- Schwiter, K., (2011), 'Anticipating the transition to parenthood: the contribution of Foucaultian discourse analysis to understanding life-course patterns,' *Area*, 43, 4, p397-404
- Scott, G. and Innes, S., (2005), 'Gender, Care, Poverty and Transitions', in McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S., *Families in Society: Boundaries and Relationships*, The Policy Press, Bristol.
- Sennett, R., (1998), *The Corrosion of Character*, Norton & Co, London
- Sennett, R., (2003), *Respect in a World of Inequality*, Norton, New York/ London
- Sheller M. and Urry, J., (2006), 'The New Mobilities Paradigm,' *Environment and Planning A*, 38, p207-226
- Silverman, D., (1997), 'Towards an aesthetics of research,' in Silverman, D., (ed), *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory and Method*, Sage, London
- Silverman, E., Lupton, R. and Fenton, A., (2006), 'A Good Place for Children?: Attracting and Retaining Families in Inner Urban Mixed Income Communities', Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry, for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Simon, H., (1959), 'Theories of decision-making in economics and behavioural science,' *The American Economic Review*, 49, p252-286
- Skeggs, B., (1997), *Formations of Class and Gender*, Sage, London Thousand Oaks New Delhi

- Skeggs, B., (2004), '*Class, Self, Culture*', London, Routledge
- Skeggs, B., (2005), 'The Making of Class and Gender through Visualising Moral Subject Formation,' *Sociology*, 39, 5, p965-982
- Smith, D.P. and Phillips, D.A., (2001), 'Socio-cultural representations of greentrified Pennine rurality', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 17, p457-469.
- Smith, N., (1979), 'Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 45, 4, p538-548.
- Smith, N., (1986), 'Gentrification, the frontier and the restructuring of urban space' in Smith, N. and Williams, P., '*Gentrification and the City*', Allen & Unwin, Boston.
- Smith, N., (1987), 'Gentrification and the Rent Gap', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77, 3, p462-478.
- Smith, O., (2013), 'Manchester: the rebirth of a city,' *Daily Telegraph*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013
- Smith, S.J., Monroe, M. and Christie, H., (2006), 'Performing (Housing) Markets', *Urban Studies*, 43, 1, p81-98
- Southerton, D., (2002), 'Boudaries of "Us" and "Them": Class, Mobility and Identification in a New Town,' *Sociology*, 36, 1, p171-193
- Spradley, J., (1979), '*Asking Descriptive Questions. The Ethnographic Interview*,' Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., (1990), '*Basics of Qualitative Research*,' Sage, London/ Newbury Park/ New Delhi
- Summerfield, (1998), *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, Manchester University Press, Manchester
- Sweet, S., Swisher, R. and Moen, P., (2005), 'Selecting and Assessing the Family Friendly Community: Adaptive Strategies of Middle-Class, Dual-Earner Couples', *Family Relations*, 54, p596-606.

Swisher, R., Sweet, S. and Moen, P., (2004), 'The Family-Friendly Community and its Life Course Fit for Dual-Earner Couples', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, p281-292

Thrift, N., (2004), 'Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect,' *Geografiska Annaler*, 86 B, p57-78

The Independent, (2015), '*Britain's burglary hotspots revealed: London, Manchester and Yorkshire postcodes top list*,' 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015, The Independent, London (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britains-burglary-hotspots-revealed-london-manchester-and-yorkshire-postcodes-top-list-9997967.html>) - accessed 31st December 2015).

Theusen, F., (2011), 'Navigating between dialogue and confrontation: Phronesis and emotions in interviewing elites on ethnic discrimination,' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17, 613-622.

Tomaney, J., (2013), 'Parochialism – A Defence,' *Progress in Human Geography*, ' 37, 5, p658-672

Tomaney, J., (2014), 'Region and place II: Belonging,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 4, p507-516

Tomaney, J., (2015), 'Understanding parochialism: A response to Patrick Devine-Wright,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 4, p531-532

Tönnies, F., (2001), '*Community and Civil Society*,' Cambridge University Press, New York

Townshend, T., (2006), 'From Inner City to Inner Suburb ? Addressing Housing Aspirations in Low Demand Areas in NewcastleGateshead, UK', *Housing Studies*, 21, 4, p501-526

Trafford MBC, (2014), '*Ward Profiles – Gorse Hill*', Trafford MBC, Trafford (<http://www.infotrafford.org.uk/profiles/profile?profileId=564&geoTypeId=33#iasProfileSection13>) – accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February 2014)

Tuan, Y-F., (1977), '*Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*,' University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Tuan, Y-F., (1979), 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,' in Gale, S. and Olsson, G. (eds), *Philosophy in Geography*, Reidel, Dordrecht

UK CrimeStats.com, (2015), *Neighbourhood Crime League Table – Chorlton*  
[http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Neighbourhood/Greater Manchester Police/Chorlton](http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Neighbourhood/Greater_Manchester_Police/Chorlton) -  
accessed 31st December 2015)

Valentine, G., (1997), 'A Safe Place to Grow Up ? Parenting, Perceptions of Children's Safety and the Rural Idyll', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 13, 2, p137-148

Valentine, G., (1999), 'Doing Household Research: Interviewing Couples Together and Apart', *Area*, 31, 1, p67-74

Valentine, G., (2001), '*Social Geographies: Space and Society*,' Prentice Hall, Harlow

Valentine, G., (2003), 'Boundary Crossings: Transitions from Childhood to Adulthood,' *Children's Geographies*, 1, 1, p37-52

Valentine, G., (2005a), 'Tell me about ... using interviews as a research methodology', in Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D., (eds), '*Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project*', Edinburgh Gate, Addison Wesley/ Longman

Valentine, G., (2005b), 'Geography and ethics: moral geographies ? Ethical commitment in research and teaching,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 29, 4, p483-487.

Valentine, G. and McKendrick, J., (1997), 'Children's Outdoor Play: Exploring Parental Concerns About Children's Safety and the Changing Nature of Childhood', *Geoforum*, 28, 2, p219-235.

Van Ham, M. and Feijten, P., (2008), 'Who wants to leave the neighbourhood ? The effect of being different from the neighbourhood population on wishes to move,' *Environment and Planning A*, 40, p1151-1170

- Van Ommeren, J., (1999), 'Job Moving, Residential Moving and Commuting: A Search Perspective', *Journal of Urban Economics*, 46, p230-253
- Veblen, T., (1899), *'The theory of the leisure class'*, Constable, London (2nd ed, 1994).
- Voydanoff, P., (2001), 'Conceptualising community in the context of work and family,' *Community, Work and Family*, 4, 2, p133-156
- Wagner, M. and Mulder, C., (2000), 'Wohneigentum im Lebenslauf: Kohortendynamik, Familiengruendung und Soziooekonomische Ressourcen', *Zeitschrift fuer Soziologie*, 29, 1, p44-59
- Walks, A., (2013), 'Suburbanism as a Way of Life, Slight Return,' *Urban Studies*, 50, 8, p1471-1488
- Wallace, C., (2002), 'Household Strategies: Their Conceptual Relevance and Analytical Scope in Social Research', *Sociology*, 36, 2, p275-292.
- Walmsley, D.J. and Lewis, G.J., (1993), *'People and Environment: Behavioural Approaches in Human Geography'*, Harlow, Longman
- Walmsley, D.J., Epps, W.R. and Duncan, C.J., (1998), 'Migration to the New South Wales North Coast 1986-1991: Lifestyle Motivated Counterurbanisation', *Geoforum*, 29, 1, p105-118
- Walters, P. & Rosenblatt, T., (2008), 'Co-operation or co-presence? The comforting ideal of community in a master planned estate,' *Urban Policy and Research*, 26, 4, p397-413.
- Ward, K., Fagan, C., McDowell, L., Perrons, D. and Ray, K., (2007), 'Living and Working in Urban Working Class Communities', *Geoforum*, 38, p312-325
- Ward, K., Fagan, C., McDowell, L., Perrons, D. and Ray, K., (2010), 'Class transformation and work-life balance in urban Britain: the case of Manchester', *Urban Studies*, 47, 11, p 2259-2278

- Warnes, T., (1992), 'Migration and the Life Course', in Champion, A. and Fielding, T., *'Migration Processes and Patterns Volume 1: Research Progress and Prospects'*, London, Bellhaven.
- Warr, D. and Robson, B., (2013), "'Everybody's Different": Struggles to Find Community on the Suburban Frontier,' *Housing Studies*, published on line 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013, DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2013.778959
- Warr, M., (1998), 'Life Course Transitions and Desistance from Crime', *Criminology*, p183-216.
- Wasoff, F., Jamieson, L. and Smith, A., (2005), 'Solo living, individual and family boundaries: findings from secondary analysis,' in McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S., *'Families in Society: Boundaries and Relationships'*, The Policy Press, Bristol.
- Watt, P., (2009), 'Living in an oasis: middle-class disaffiliation and selective belonging in an English suburb', *Environment and Planning A*, 41, 12, p2874-2892
- Weeks, D., Wilkinson, H. and Davidson, H., (2005), 'Families, Relationships and the Impact of Dementia: Insights into the "Ties that Bind"', in McKie, L. and Cunningham-Burley, S., *'Families in Society: Boundaries and Relationships'*, The Policy Press, Bristol.
- Webb, J., Schirato, T. and Danaher, G., (2002), *'Understanding Bourdieu'*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi
- Wellman, B., (1979), 'The community question: the intimate networks of East Yorkers,' *American Journal of Sociology*, 84, p1201-1231
- White, P. and Hurdley, L., (2003), 'International Migration and the Housing Market: Japanese Corporate Movers in London,' *Urban Studies*, 40, 4, p687-706
- Widmer, E.D. and Ritschard, G., (2009), 'The De-Standardisation of the Life Course: Are Men and Women Equal?', *Advances in Life Course Research*, 14, p28-39

- Wiesel, I., (2013), 'Mobilities of Disadvantage: The Housing Pathways of Low-income Australians,' *Urban Studies*, published online before print June 3, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0042098013489739
- Winstanley, A., Thorns, D.C. and Perkins, H.C., (2002), 'Moving House, Creating Home: Exploring Residential Mobility', *Housing Studies*, 17, 6, p813-832
- Witcher, (2010), 'Negotiating Transcription as a Relative Insider: Implications for Rigor,' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9, 2, p122-132
- Wulff, M., Champion, A. and Lobo, M., (2010), 'Household Diversity and Migration in Mid-Life: Understanding Residential Mobility among 45-64 Year Olds in Melbourne, Australia', *Population, Place and Space*, 16, p307-321
- Yinger, J., (1992), 'City and Suburb: Urban Models with More Than One Employment Center,' *Journal of Urban Economics*, 31, p181-205
- Young, M. and Willmott, P., (1962), '*Family and Kinship in East London*', Penguin, Harmondsworth
- Zukin, S., (1989), '*Loft Living: culture and capital in urban change*', Rutgers University Press, Chapel Hill.
- Zukin, S., (1995), '*The Cultures of Cities*,' Blackwell, Cambridge Mass
- Zukin, S., (2008), 'Consuming Authenticity: From outposts of difference to means of exclusion,' *Cultural Studies*, 22, 5, p724-748
- Zumpano, L.V., Johnson, K.H. and Anderson, R.I., (2003), 'Internet use and real estate brokerage market intermediation,' *Journal of Housing Economics*, 12, p134-150