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Creating a Modern Home:
Homeownership in Post-War Suburban
Glasgow 1945-1975

Yvonne McFadden
MA (hons), MSc

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of PhD

Department of History
College of Art
School of Humanities
University of Glasgow

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Abstract

This thesis examines how married couples bought and created a modern home for their families in suburban Glasgow between 1945-1975. New homeowners were on the cusp of the middle-classes, buying in a climate of renters. As they progressed through the family lifecycle women’s return to work meant they became more comfortably ensconced within the middle-classes. Engaged with a process of homemaking through consumption and labour, couples transformed their houses into homes that reflected themselves and their social status. The interior of the home was focused on as a site of social relations. Marriage in the suburbs was one of collaboration as each partner performed distinct gender roles. The idea of a shared home was investigated and the story of ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ emerged from both testimony and contemporary literature. This thesis considers decision-making, labour and leisure to show the ways in which experiences of home were gendered. What emerged was that women’s work as everyday and mundane was overlooked and undervalued while husband’s extraordinary contributions in the form of DIY came to the fore. The impact of wider culture intruded upon the ‘private’ home as we see they ways in which the position of women in society influences their relationship to the home and their family. In the suburbs of post-war Glasgow women largely left the workforce to stay at home with their children. Mothers popped in and out of each other houses for tea and a blether, creating a homosocial network that was sociable and supportive unique to this time in their lives and to this historical context.

Daily life was negotiated within the walls of the modern home. The inter-war suburbs of Glasgow needed modernising to post-war standards of modern living. ‘Modern’ was both an aesthetic and an engagement with new technologies within the house. Both middle and working-class practices for room use were found through the keeping of a ‘good’ or best room and the determination of couples to eat in their small kitchenettes. As couples updated their kitchen, the fitted kitchen revealed contemporary notions of modern décor, as kitchens became bright yellow with blue Formica worktops. The modern home was the evolution of existing ideas of modern combined with new standards of living. As Glasgow homeowners constructed their modern home what became evident was that this was a shared process and as a couple they placed their children central to all aspects of their lives to create not only a modern home, but that this was first and foremost a family home.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

But the house was just a house. I could have gone anywhere else. I didn’t feel a great attachment to the house. It was just where we stayed: our home.1

When Mrs Roberts was asked what she liked about her suburban house in the 1960s, she gave the above reply. The house for Mrs Roberts was the empty shell where she lived, worked and more significantly, created a family. It was the occupants of the house who made the home; ‘It was just where we stayed: our home.’ I will show that, through a process of homemaking, couples bought houses and then reconstructed them both materially and imaginatively into a home for their family. The ways in which sexual divisions of labour operated within the home environment will be examined through this process. During the immediate post-war period, the term the ‘companionate marriage’ was used to describe a marriage of partners, in which husbands and wives took on different but equally important roles in their relationship.2 Taking this concept of marriage as a starting point, it will be demonstrated that in both interviews and contemporary literature, couples presented a united front in the story of setting up home. The male ‘breadwinner’ and female ‘homemaker’ were central to the companionate marriage. However, this model often overlooks male contributions to homemaking. Therefore, I shall explore the relationship of both men and women in the process of homemaking. In doing so, homemaking will emerge as a concept not only associated with women’s daily housework but will be redefined to include men’s contributions. This thesis will be framed around the gendered experience of home. It will look at the ways in which a couple transform a house into a modern home; how changes in women’s position in society impacted upon the home; the sexual divisions of labour in the process of homemaking, and finally, how private and social life was formed with the suburban home. The time period under consideration is significant both for changes in wider society and also in the personal lives of those living in suburban Glasgow.

During the Second World War the home became an important symbol to the nation and after the war getting married and having your own home was an aspiration of many. Writing about the urban working-classes in 1951, Slater and Woodside wrote. ‘Marriage

1 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
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and home are synonymous in many people’s minds, the equation of the two is a character feature of our sample at this social level, practical advantages are given higher ranking than temperamental compatibilities. Marriage is less to someone than for something.\(^3\) Women’s position in society meant that at all social levels their access to housing was largely through marriage, therefore a woman’s choice of husband was important for her future security and stability.\(^4\) Home was an ‘essential component of married life’ in the mid-twentieth century.\(^5\) Housing was a key problem for couples starting out their married lives in the fifties. Contemporary sociologist, Rachel Pierce, observed that not having a house to begin married life was a source of distress, with only a quarter of couples starting out married life in an independent home.\(^6\) The couples in this study were privileged in that they could afford to buy their homes to live out their marital life in private away from their parents or beholden to a landlord. Buying their homes when their parents had previously rented indicates an aspiration to access a lifestyle only available through homeownership. It will be shown throughout this thesis that homebuyers bought their house based on the husband’s wage and a many constructed a narrative about the financial burden of affording a home and raising a family on a single wage. However, as we move through the period of this study, wives returned to paid work into professions such as teaching, nursing and clerical work, and consequently, the status of the family increased as they move out the murky grey waters between classes to become more comfortably ensconced within the middle-classes. The changes in women’s relationship to the labour market after 1945 had a significant impact upon the home and their relationship to the home. In the suburbs of Glasgow housewives were increasingly engaged outside the home but still took primary responsibility for the household management, domestic work and childcare. The complexities of the gendered experience of leisure within the home will be explored to highlight women and men’s relationship to house work. It will be shown throughout this thesis that while couples may perceive their relationship as one of partnership and express this in interviews, women’s position in wider society at this time undermined their power within the home.

The focus of this thesis is what goes on ‘behind closed doors’. The suburb has been examined with regard to its relationship to the city, the architecture and design of the

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5 Claire Langhamer, *English in Love*, p. 184
housing and the social provision within the suburban area, this study proposes to look inside the suburban home. To ask what social relationships influenced the internal arrangement of space, to examine how people used and engaged with those spaces in their everyday lives. The rich studies into working-class experiences on interwar suburban estates undertaken by Judy Giles, Elizabeth Roberts and others have been an inspiration to this study. Ann Hughes and Karen Hunt in their study of working-class lives on the municipal Wythenshawe Estate sum up the approach of this thesis in their observation that while there have been numerous studies into town planning and municipal power: ‘Much less attention has been paid to the impact changes in housing have on the lives of the people who live in it, or to the capacity of ordinary women and men to influence the details of their living arrangements.’ This study applies this notion of of looking at ‘ordinary’ peoples’ experiences of home in the post-war period. However, it is distinct in that it considers homeowners who are often positioned within the middle-classes. Unlike municipal renters, owners were unfettered by regulations and largely unaccountable.

The privately owned house raised expectations of social mobility, standards of living and also privacy. Hamnett argues that growth of homeownership from the 1950s has changed it as a signifier of middle-class status, while more common among the middle-classes, by the 1990s it was no longer class specific. There were degrees of status related to what kind of house you bought, where you bought and how you paid. He observes that homeownership did not replace other indicators of their class such as their market position or relationship to production. Changes in occupational structure in the early twentieth century, particularly the failure of heavy industry, has led to decline in the traditional working-class. It has blurred class lines and created the need for new definitions. Glasgow is a city with a strong working-class identity due to the scale of industry. Those

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11 Hamnett, ‘Home Ownership and the Middle Classes’, p. 272

buying in the suburbs of the city in this case-study were in the grey area between classes, many husbands were skilled labourers. As the lives of people progress, particularly the return of women to work, it will be shown that homebuyers narratives of financial struggle and tight budgets were replaced by increasingly more consumer goods and home extensions. ‘Middle-class’ is perhaps misleading as it implies it is a homogenous social group, studies have shown, unsurprisingly, that it is a heteronogous group and we should talk instead of the middle-classes. The middle-classes have swelled throughout the twentieth century, reflecting the social mobility achieved by many. This thesis will posit that homeowners increased their status as time went on to become more comfortable members of the middle-classes. Women’s work will be demonstrated as integral to the changing status of the family in the suburb. For Hinton gender and class are interwoven, ‘if class was gendered, then gender was also “classed”’. Homeownership, as with all access to housing at this time was gendered with women only having access through their husband. This creates a problem in that class is often based on a household unit however, for women their class status is complex and this needs to be kept in mind when discussing social status in this thesis.

By looking at the process of homemaking, this study will engage with the dynamic concept of ‘modern’. Homebuyers in Glasgow at this time were buying an ageing housing stock that needed ‘modernising’. This process of updating and adapting their house into a ‘modern home’ can reveal shared meanings about what constituted a ‘modern home’ at this time. The oral testimony of married couples will be placed alongside other contemporary sources like women’s magazines and government housing reports to illustrate what a modern home was in post-war Glasgow. Homebuyers had a complex relationship to ‘modern’. On some levels, they were free to choose which parts of ‘modern’ they accepted and rejected. However, constraints such as the financial burdens of homeownership limited their choices both in the types of housing they could afford but also as to how they furnished and improved their houses. This was achieved through consumption. The suburban home is often associated with a materialism, a ‘keeping up with the Jones’, [13]

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however, throughout Britain all classes were engaged with consumption within the home at this time. Some argue that this did ‘defuse’ some class tension, though at times it could reinforce class identify and cause class opposition. For Mackay, class identity is bound up in consumption but rather than see it as a secondary process to the production, consumption is an active process through which individuals can create their own sense of self and identity in relation to others, including class and status. For the Glasgow context, it will be shown how consumption could be a creative process for individuals and couples to transform their house into a home and that this was based on sexual divisions of labour that could reinforce notions of caring and loving within marriage.

Social life in the suburbs has been perceived to be less community-based and more ‘home-centred’ in the post-war period. This study will look at the social life inside the home to examine what kinds of activities took place and where social life happened within the home. The impact of design and shared social norms about the public/private nature of living spaces will be compared to lived experience. I propose to demonstrate the social life in the suburban home was gendered due to the presence of a large number of wives giving up their work to have their children. This created for many, though not all, a sense of community as at that time women were experiencing homemaking and childrearing at the same time. Once women returned to work this moment in their lifecycle came to end though friendships were maintained through a pattern of weekend socialising in each other’s homes.

The location of this case-study is significant. Homeownership was an atypical experience in Glasgow and Scotland. Levels of home ownership in Scotland have been much lower here than England throughout the twentieth century. By 1975, twenty-nine per cent of Scots were homeowners compared to fifty per cent in England. Richard Rodger has observed that a central feature of Scottish urbanisation in the twentieth century was the growth of public sector housing with over half of Scots renting from their council by

17 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, pp. 204-5
1981.\textsuperscript{22} As a result, current historiography on Scottish housing reflects the growth of municipal housing with only brief references to the private sector building or experiences. In England, the municipal suburban experience in the inter-war period is well documented, however, there is little comparative studies of Scottish suburbia for that period.\textsuperscript{23} In the years after the Second World War large-scale local and central government building all across Britain has been the subject of some scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{24}

Private housing estates, according to Swenarton, have generally received less attention from both contemporary and modern scholars.\textsuperscript{25} Peter Scott’s recent work on working-class homeownership in inter-war suburbs was called, \textit{The Making of the Modern British Home}, however the Scottish dimension was lacking justified by the low homeownership amongst that class.\textsuperscript{26} A good profile of middle-class homeowners in England can be found in Ross McKibbin’s \textit{Classes and Cultures}.\textsuperscript{27} The issue of social life centred around the home is explored in McKibbin’s book but it focused mostly on external social life within the community rather than what goes on inside the home.\textsuperscript{28} There is a gap in the literature in both England and Scotland examining home ownership in the post-war period. Consequently, choosing to buy a house in a climate of public sector housing dominance was significant. This thesis will use personal testimonies of home buyers to examine how they bought their houses; asking what was important to them in purchasing a house and finally, in what ways did experiences of home ownership vary from renting.

\textsuperscript{25}Mark Swenarton, ‘Tudor Walters and Tudorbethan: reassessing Britain’s interwar suburbs’ in Planning Perspectives, 17:4, 2002, pp. 267-286, p. 277
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid, pp. 85-90
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The rest of this chapter will highlight and define some key areas that will be discussed in the rest of this thesis. The remit of the thesis is to use home-making within the Glasgow suburban home to investigate social relations and the ways in which gender impacts upon the experiences of work and leisure, social class and social life. The central focus is on the interior of the home, looking at what happens inside the suburban rather than the suburb itself. This raises issues of private and public, the ways in which modern is context and locational specific and also that creating a modern house is a gendered experience. Following this section will be an introduction to the sources and methods deployed for this study. Finally, the chapters of the thesis will be outlined.

Gender and the Suburban Home

The gendered nature of the suburban environment is a central focus of this thesis. According to Judy Giles, the suburb is ‘the spatial and symbolic area of women, the signifier of the feminine and private and the primary site of difference and sexual division of labour.’ Swenarton’s reflections upon suburban history specifically identified gender difference and divisions of labour as underlying potential areas of study. Judith Butler suggests that gender is performance stating, ‘the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and completed by the regulatory practices of gender coherence.’ Consequently, if we accept this then everyday acts can reaffirm our identity as a woman or a man. The everyday is important to our understanding of how gender is constructed therefore, the home as a location of the everyday routine and cycles of life is central to this understanding. The suburban home will be approached as a space that men and women experienced differently through their performance of distinctive roles. Notions about gender and everyday life found in housing reports, social surveys and magazines were built into the fabric of people’s houses and influenced, to some extent, their daily experiences. That is not to say that space was totally deterministic as individuals can, to varying degrees, change and adapt their physical domains to suit their needs. I intend to illustrate the ways in which space and everyday life were gendered.

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30 Giles, Women, Identity and Private Life, p. 66
31 Swenarton, ‘Tudor Walters and Tudorbethan’, p. 279
32 Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 33
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This project will engage with the roles men and women undertook within the specific context of making a home. In contemporary culture, immediately after the war, ideals were expressed about women and men within the home. Women were cast as wives and mothers largely responsible for the day-to-day running of the household for both men and children. Men, as husbands and fathers, took on paid employment to establish and provide material comforts for their family. These notions of a private/feminine and public/masculine were rooted in the nineteenth century. Gordon and Nair caution that adopting a separate spheres framework is simplistic, as ‘the multiple ways of thinking and conceiving of social relations and personal identities make it more likely that gender roles were more complex and numerous than suggested by the dichotomies of ‘public/private’ and ‘man/woman’. The image of the male breadwinner and female housewife was a model that continued into the twentieth century. The ideal of the mother housewife and the worker father were replicated throughout contemporary literature and media. In the 1950s, changes within marriage to a relationship based on partnership and companionship arguably led to the greater involvement of men within the home. Peter Willmott and Michael Young’s studies during the 1950s and 1960s into family, social networks, class and home posited that a ‘New Man’ had emerged during this time. While feminist scholars have debated the extent of the ‘New Man’s role, his invention indicates that new roles were being defined for men in relation to the home. The fact that most men were absent from the home during the day can lead to their relationship to the home being overlooked by historians. Though married women were increasingly entering the workforce after the Second World War, housework and childcare was their primary responsibility. For this study, most women were at home for the better part of the day as the period under study focused on couples during their early child-rearing years.

The depiction of women as housewives and mothers within the context of the suburban environment have been remarked upon in scholarly literature. With the increasing accessibility of new ways of living in the twentieth century, such as suburbs and

36 Willmott & Young, Family, Class and Kingship in East London, pp. 23-24
37 Oakley, Sociology; Elizabeth Roberts, Women and Families: an oral history, 1940-1970, (John Wiley & sons, 1995); see Willmott & Young, Family and Class, pp. 31-32
38 For examples that highlight men’s relationship to the home see Bourke, Working-class Cultures in Britain and Roberts, Women and Families
New Towns, to a wider range of society, questions were raised over the isolation of housewives within this decentralised form of housing estate. Dr Stephen Taylor coined the term ‘suburban neurosis’ in the 1930s to describe an alleged psychological condition affecting isolated and under-stimulated housewives in new suburban estates. Later, Taylor, working with Sidney Chave in the early 1960s, found the same mental health issues in inner city London and therefore, refuted his own initial claims about the impact of the suburban environment on mental health. Taylor and Chave concluded that ‘the physical and emotional background of the individual’ was more significant. Despite this refutation, the image of the ‘Desperate Housewife’ has become familiar in both contemporary and present-day culture, with perhaps the most poignant example being Sylvia Plath’s portrayal of stifling domesticity and marriage in her semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* (1963). In Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), she uncovered a group of educated middle-class women trapped in the suburbs by the monotony of routine and lack of stimulation offered by home life. In her study of young wives with small children during 1960s, Hannah Gavron found that both middle-class and working-class women shared a feeling of dissatisfaction in being stay-at-home mothers and expressed a conflict between their responsibilities to their children and their desire to return to work, though this was more pronounced in her middle-class sample. More recently, Wendy Webster’s survey of contemporary literature in the 1950s identified the figure of the ‘housebound mother’ as an educated woman smothered within the home. Ann Oakley argued, based on her interviews with married women, that a significant proportion of working-class and middle-class women were burdened by the demands of their domestic responsibilities. Having grown up well versed in popular narratives about the home as a site of oppression for women, I wanted to engage with this concept of home through the oral testimony.

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40 Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*, p. 84
42 Sidney Chave quoted in Hayward, ‘Desperate Housewives and Modern Amoebae’, p. 54
45 See ‘Mothers and Work,’ in Gavron, *The Captive Wife*, pp. 112-126, p. 138
47 Oakley, *Sociology*
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Adler cautions against what she calls putting the ‘pleasure’ back into women’s roles within the home, arguing this is at the expense of decades of feminist progress. Feminist arguments challenging the sexual division of labour and women’s status in society are significant and essential to problematizing gender within society. Within the oral testimony, sexual divisions of labour were out of balance with women having main responsibility for the home irrespective of their employment status. However, women expressed little dissatisfaction or specific unhappiness about their domestic responsibilities. Interviewees showed an awareness of the changes in women’s lives, one woman reflecting: ‘it’s just the way things were.’ Haggett observed that to the middle-class women in her study the ‘complementary roles within marriage appeared not only as natural and familiar but also pragmatic.’ My study concurs with Haggett’s findings that gender divisions were not necessarily viewed as problematic or oppressive. Annmarie Hughes and Elizabeth Roberts found that working-class women were protective of, and gained a level of satisfaction from, their domestic roles. It is significant to note that proponents aligned with this supposed ‘pleasure’ of domesticity, such as Judy Giles and Ali Haggett, are recent studies that used oral testimony. Oral testimony has shown itself to be essential to uncovering alternative narratives about women in the domestic environment. The studies about the oppression of women in the home were conducted in the 1960s-1980s, during a period of awareness about women’s status in society. Recent studies do not encourage the trivialisation of women’s low status as housewives or the very real burden of housework but rather that, with retrospection, people’s narratives can illuminate how they felt about their domestic roles. Consequently, this thesis will engage with the home as a site of both dissatisfaction and satisfaction, or ‘pleasure’, arguing that the two are not mutually exclusive.

The relationship between gendered representations of homemaking and how gender relations worked on an everyday basis will be explored throughout the thesis. Immediately after the war, discourses about sexual divisions of labour within the home were circulated through different forms of media for example women’s magazines and radio programmes such as Woman’s Hour. The portrayal of archetypes of femininity and masculinity with

49 Haggett, Desperate Housewives, p. 32
50 For Scottish examples of this attitude see Annmarie Hughes, Gender, Politics and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 156; Roberts, Women and Families, pp. 36-37
51 Haggett, Desperate Housewives; Giles, Parlour and the Suburb
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reference to the domestic environment indicate perceived expectations of women and men’s roles, however these do not necessarily relate to individual experiences. Judy Giles’ work on the first half of the twentieth century deploys oral testimony to engage with representations of women within the suburban home in the popular press, reminding us about the multivariate experiences of women. Oral history allows us to examine the day-to-day experiences of living in a house and creating a home. Elizabeth Roberts' seminal oral history study, *A Woman’s Place* (1984), provided insight into the daily patterns and life cycles of working women’s lives and their relationship to ‘home’. In her project on working-class women’s experiences on municipal suburban estates in Birmingham between the wars, Catherine Hall explores women’s relationship to their roles as mother and housewife. Oral history has, and will continue to play a significant role in examining the experience of gender, as it allows the exposition of areas of life not well documented in traditional sources.

A Modern Home

By the mid-twentieth century, the home was increasingly becoming ‘modern’, not only through the technology that entered the home such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners but also through ideas about efficiency and scientific management that were promoted to housewives through exhibitions like the *Daily Mail Ideal Home Show*. Homeowners during the post-war period in Glasgow were buying an ageing stock of inter-war suburban houses that needed to be ‘modernised’. In the context of this study, creating a modern home was a material venture that was influenced by ideas about modern design and taste in addition to incorporating new ways of living with domestic technology. When talking about home, ‘modern’ will be shown to be more than the opposite of ‘old’ or ‘dated,’ but rather that it is a continually evolving concept with a genesis that is historically specific.

Housing reflects an interaction between old and new, the past and the future; often creating a version of ‘modern’ that is an eclectic mishmash of the two but also a reflection of the climate in which it was created. The modern house of the 1930s was out-dated by the 1950s. If a double sink was the modern convenience at the beginning of the twentieth

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53 Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*
54 Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman’s Place*
55 Hall, ‘Married Women’, pp. 62-83
century, then by the close of the century, the dishwasher had replaced it. In Chapman and Hockey’s discussion of the ‘Yesterday’s Homes’ display at the 1995 Ideal Homes Exhibition they examine the Show Guide which highlights the failures of homes from the 1920s and 1960s to meet modern living standards in the 1990s. They demonstrate the evolution of changing tastes in décor, modes of living and the introduction of heating technology such as windows and central heating systems, all things that contribute to making a ‘modern’ home in the 1990s. Bauman states that what constitutes ‘modern’ is reached by the agreement and consensus of contemporaries. ‘Modern’ is a concept that can have distinct meanings within different historical and spatial contexts. ‘Modern’ implies something is the present, the most up-to-date version comparing itself to what has gone before, while at the same time is self-conscious of being an antecedent to the next version. Consequently, what is ‘modern’ is constantly reassessed and redefined in each historical moment. This thesis will bring together contemporary sources and oral narrative to consider consensus and discord in what constituted a ‘modern house’ in the post-war period.

Modernism was a cultural movement used to describe a group of artists, writer, architects and designers around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Proponents of modernism are often referred to as modernists. In architecture, broadly speaking, modernists rejected ornate Victorian and Edwardian buildings and instead created a style that was rational and functional designed to suit the modern industrial age. French architect, Le Corbusier was influential on modernist architecture in Britain, his concrete block designs of high-rise community living was evident in the dominance of high-rises in British cities, particularly Glasgow. Modernist designs had clean lines, simple forms and, were above all, functional. Brindley observes that Modernist style ‘is often described as “functionalist” and the effective and efficient functioning of buildings was a paramount concern of its exponents.’ Modernist design entered mainstream through displays and exhibits that promoted design in everyday life through

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57 The 1995 Ideal Homes Exhibition is described in Tony Chapman & Jenny Hockey, ‘The Ideal Home as it is lived and imagined’, in Tony Chapman & Jenny Hockey, eds., Ideal homes?:social change and the experience of the home, (Routledge: London, 1999), pp. 1-4
59 Peter Childs, Modernism, (London: Routledge, 2007)
official bodies like the government funded Council for Art and Industry. Self-conscious of the permanence of materials such as buildings and furniture, Modernists created objects with the future in mind. In post-war Britain, this attitude was optimistic and revolutionary, breaking the ties to the past and the horror of war, looking to the future of modern living. In modernist literature, Childs notes recent scholarship has moved away from the linear interpretation of modern as a definite break with the past and situates modern within the time it is being defined. He outlines the new definition as: ‘first, styles existing alongside one another in the text, and second, of modernism’s involvement in the broader social structures of the period and with the mass movements and popular cultures of modernity.’ Child’s interpretation emphasises the historical specificity of defining modern. ‘Modern’ was an aesthetic that people brought into the home through décor, furniture and furnishings. The design industry tried to influence the public through a series of exhibitions throughout Britain. The Festival of Britain in 1951 featured concessions by professionals to popular taste by its taming down of extreme modernist designs and focusing on the national character. For this study, modern will be explored as an aesthetic, by considering both what people defined as modern in their homes and how elements of design and form were circulated through retailers, house builders and women’s magazines.

In studying the creation of the modern home, this work will engage with the home as a site where individuals experienced modernity within their daily lives. Felski argues modernity ‘comprises a collection of interlocking institutional, cultural and philosophical strands which emerge and develop at different times which are often only defined as “modern” retrospectively.’ Modernity is constructed of many dependent parts that are constantly evolving, making the study of modernity context specific. For Giddens, modernity’s “extreme dynamism” refers not just to the pace of change but also the scope and profundity of modernity’s impact on social life and behaviour. In the context of this study, the process of industrialisation and its impact upon society in terms of the urban

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62 Childs, Modernism, p. 4
63 Deyan Sudjic & Tulga Beyerle, Home: The Twentieth Century House, (Glasgow: Lawrence King, 1999), p. 68
64 Jeremiah, Architecture and Design, p. 142
environment and the development of technology for the home are significant.\textsuperscript{67} The suburban environment was created due to the pressures of rapid urbanisation and was possible only through technological advances in construction, transportation and telecommunications.

How and where modernity is experienced has been analysed by feminist scholars who question whether modernity has been defined as masculine to the exclusion of female experience.\textsuperscript{68} Modernity has been identified with the masculine, which is influenced by the eighteenth and especially nineteenth century ideal of the separate spheres. Women were associated with their bodies and biological functions as mothers and therefore their place was at the heart of the family within the home. Consequently, the home was conceptualised as a feminine haven away from the rigours of the modern world, while, the public world became a space regarded as suitable for men and associated with masculine pursuits such as work, business, politics and social life. Modernity as a masculine experience is neither correct nor appropriate in guiding our understanding of how individuals negotiated the public and private. Historians have shown that middle-class women in the nineteenth century were intimately involved in the daily operations of family businesses and as widows they could successfully oversee their own affairs.\textsuperscript{69} For working-class women, the middle-class ideal of femininity was not always attainable as circumstances meant they needed to work outwith the home to help support the family income; though many ceased once married, and took on seasonal or casual work at home instead.\textsuperscript{70}

The acceptance that women were cossetted away from modern life in the private sphere has been challenged. Felski argues that in the work of Marshall Berman in the 1980s, modernity is explored through mostly male figures and representations resulting in a portrait of dynamic, self-autonomous individuals who go out and interact with the urban modern world.\textsuperscript{71} In Berman’s analysis, ‘woman’ was portrayed as a static figure aligned with the traditional positioned away from the modern world within the home. Often this is

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
  \bibitem{67} Bauman, ‘Modernity’, p. 167
  \bibitem{69} Leonora Davidoff & Catherine Hall, \textit{Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-class, 1780-1850}, revised edition, (London: Routledge, 2002); Nair & Gordon, \textit{Public Lives}
  \bibitem{71} Felski, \textit{The Gender of Modernity}, p. 4
\end{thebibliography}
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represented as the family, social ties and responsibilities, that is excluded from modernity both physically and metaphorically.\textsuperscript{72} By placing the feminine at the heart of her interpretation, Felski challenges overarching meanings for women and modernity and, instead, explores competing and diverse representations of women and modernity to ‘unravel the complexities of modernity’s relationship to femininity.’\textsuperscript{73} While Felski has attempted to redefine the gender of modernity, for this study it is more useful to problematize the location of modernity as external to the home.

This thesis will argue that modernity was an experience accessible to women within the suburban home due to the particular emphasis on the modernisation of the domestic environment. Giles observes that for women in the first half of the twentieth century, ‘domestic modernity appeared to offer the dignity and self-esteem that was so often perceived as lacking from the lives of their mothers and grandmothers.’\textsuperscript{74} Of women’s relationship to modernity within the home, Giles sums up their contradictory position:

On the one hand they were encouraged to see themselves as agents of modernisation and scientific rationalism in their domestic roles, while on the other hand they remained caught up in conceptions of home that valued it precisely because it was constructed as the antithesis of modernity.\textsuperscript{75}

While women were encouraged to become experts on the modern home, particularly with regards to consumption, on the other hand their roles were unchanging; that of housewife and mother. In considering women’s relationship to modernity and everyday life, French philosopher Henri Lefebvre observed that women were affected acutely by burdens of everyday life within the home yet posits that women also were unable to articulate their own complicity in the trappings of modern life.

Everyday life weighs heaviest on women. It is highly probably that they also get something out of it by reversing the situation, but the weight is none the less on their shoulders. Some are bogged down by its peculiar cloying substance, others escape into make-believe, close their eyes to their surroundings, to the bog into which they are sinking and simply ignore it; they have their substitutes and they are substitutes; they complain – about men, the human condition, life, God, the gods – but they are always beside the point;

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, p. 2
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, p. 7
\textsuperscript{74} Giles, The Parlour and The Suburb, p. 11
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p. 22
they are the subject of everyday life and its victims or objects and substitutes (beauty, femininity, fashion, etc.) and it is at their cost that substitutes thrive.\textsuperscript{76}

Women, as both subject and objects of every day modern life, are in a contradictory position according to Lefebvre. Felski acknowledges the conflict of women within the home and encourages us to image the home differently that while the home is associated with cycles of routine and familiarity, this is actively produced over time by the effort and labour of women in everyday life.\textsuperscript{77} Abrams and Fleming argue that second wave feminism raised women’s consciousness of their oppression to both value and challenge their roles as housewives and mothers.\textsuperscript{78} While women are to some extent the objects in modern life with regard to consumption and advertising, in everyday life they do have agency. I propose to engage with this notion of an unconscious experience of everyday life that is presented in Lefebvre’s exposition and will explore both men and women’s agency and relationship to modern through an examination of the material transformation of the suburban home. In addition, the routines and cycles of everyday life within the home will emerge as important for making sense of the wider world but also for individuals to construct their identity.

In the social and private rental market, tenants were restricted by their landlords or social housing inspectors in how they could modify their houses. Homeowners, on the other hand, could reject and accept their own version of ‘modern’ when homemaking; although, in order to modernise, homeowners in Glasgow had to contend with an aging housing stock. Given the significant growth of public sector housing after 1945, council tenants in some ways had ‘modern’ built into their housing design such as the layout and arrangement of rooms or fitted kitchens due to the influence of the Modernist architecture in social housing in Britain.\textsuperscript{79} Where tenants had to adapt to modern living as they found it, homeowners had to mould and shape their homes to meet contemporary notions of modern. The modernity of the home environment was through the influx of technology and science during this period. Television sets became a feature of family leisure, washing machines changed women’s work, new materials such as Formica sterilised their kitchens. ‘Modern’ here will be considered as central to the experience of home in post-war

\textsuperscript{77} Rita Felski, ‘Invention of Everyday Life’, p. 24
\textsuperscript{79} Gledinng, \textit{Rebuilding Scotland}
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suburban Glasgow, examining how a modern home was created and imagined by both individuals and contemporary culture.

The Private Home

In the case of private sector housing, as its name implies, it is less scrutinised than public sector housing. Rarely does the speculative builder survey its purchasers to ask how satisfied they are with their new home and neighbourhood. Swenarton’s assessment of inter-war suburban research highlights the experience of private sector residents as an area for further study, this is also relevant for post-war housing studies. As previously discussed, most studies of the experience of home have focused on new municipal suburbs in the inter-war period or New Towns, after the war. A shift towards homeownership was slower in Scotland than England, where growth started in between the wars. Due to the political, social and cultural climate in Scotland, homeownership did not emerge until after the 1980s. Public sector expansion was the dominant case for the period of this study. The private sector story was beginning to emerge and will become the tale of the last quarter of the twentieth century. Between 1981 and 2004, homeownership in Scotland had increased from 36 per cent to nearly 66 per cent, almost on par with England where the level was 70.7 per cent. Private sector experiences of home will provide a comparison to existing literature on the inter-war experience of municipal suburban life in England. This study of post-war suburban Glasgow examines the meaning of home for a section of society not well documented in contemporary or recent scholarship: the homeowner. The home is an area of interdisciplinary scholarship contributed to by sociologists, geographers, architects and art historians to name a few. While the home is approached from varying perspectives, most do agree that that home is historically and locationally specific. The home is ‘powerfully shaped by broader social currents, attitudes and desires.’ Given the historical nature of home, Adler in 2009 observed that historians were not well represented in recent scholarly activity, adding that ‘only one thing is definite: that historically, there was something called “home”. Precisely what the home is though, is a little less certain.’

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80 Swenarton, ‘Tudor Walters and Tudorbeian’, p. 279
84 Adler, ‘Gendering Histories of Homes and Homecomings’, p.462
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The home has been subjected to gendered ideology about the public/private nature of space. To classify the home as a private space, in general, is too simplistic and overlooks the levels of sociability that occurs within the home both between occupants and with outsiders. Saunders and Williams argue that the private nature of the home is central to their definition of home, breaking it into three key parts: privacy, privatism and privatisation. The home provides privacy for the individual or group to relax and be less self-conscious, away from the prying eyes. Privatism is identified with the increasing twentieth century trend towards looking inwards for leisure and social life. Finally, privatisation as the rise of home ownership giving people greater control and freedom over their home and more power to create their home through consumption but also creating social tensions with those who own and those who still rent. Somerville challenges Saunders and Williams’ definition as too rigid and narrow to embrace the complexities of different meanings of home. He posits that researchers should remain flexible when defining home arguing that ‘what is important is to analyse what home means to different people and to attempt to explore the range of different meaning that we find.’ While for this study, in the suburban environment greater privacy was expected and achievable when compared to living in a three-storey tenement, Saunders and Williams' definition is insufficient and fails to take into account the complexities of different experiences of home life, particularly between men and women. Defining the home should recognise the multitudes of homes that people create, imagine and experience. Consequently, home is a complex but flexible concept that needs to be situated within its context.

The physical space available for homemaking has profound consequences on residents’ feelings and ideas of privacy. In 1951, a quarter of Scots still resided in two rooms or fewer; therefore privacy within the home was simply not achievable. New suburban forms of architecture offered the opportunity for new ways of living that could encompass an element of private life impossible in a two roomed flat with recessed sleeping areas off each room, known as a room and kitchen. The semi-public nature of spaces within the home undermines the notion of a private home. Visitors entered the home in a number of different capacities as friends and relatives, acquaintances, delivery

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85 Peter Saunders & Peter Williams, ‘The constitution of home: towards a research agenda’, in Housing Studies, 3:2, pp. 81-93
87 Abrams & Fleming, ‘From Scullery to Conservatory’, p. 50
people, health visitors and social workers.\textsuperscript{88} Allan and Crow argue residents did have the power to restrict access and exclude others.\textsuperscript{89} In English middle-class housing design, the inclusion of the parlour accommodated the presence of intruders to the home. The decline of this space in modern housing design created problems both practical and emotional for household occupants as the living space was merged with receiving space. Traditionally the house was divided into front/back living with the front of the house being reserved for display and the rear of the house for family life. This was turned on its head in the 1960s as the ‘open-plan’ living room design appeared in new housing. Family life and public life within the home were combined within the one room creating more work for women as they had to maintain a standard of presentation as well as live everyday life in the one room.\textsuperscript{90} Residents of the home also had to negotiate and compromise to find privacy from each other.\textsuperscript{91} The suburban houses of Glasgow varied in size and design, the impact of space upon privacy and sociability will be explored in this project.

For this study of suburban housing, the family is a crucial part of defining home. There has been some debate over the place of family when defining home. Saunders and Williams posited that the family was in decline, replacing the centrality of the family with the idea the ‘household’, a social unit bounded within a house.\textsuperscript{92} Their repositioning of the family at first seems liberating from traditional notions of family, allowing for variation in how homes can be constituted, such as extended families, groups of friends and single persons. However, the family has an important and powerful association with the home, regardless of the complexities of household make up. Critiquing Saunders and Williams, Somerville argues that the family remains the way that a great proportion of people prefer to arrange their home life. She suggests that their definition is too rigid and does not allow for the social context of meanings of home.\textsuperscript{93} I would argue that it is the context in which home is being defined that should indicate the level of importance given to the family. In post-war British suburban housing, the family is a key feature in constituting home.\textsuperscript{94}

Introducing their collection of essays entitled \textit{Home and the Family}, Allan and Crow

\textsuperscript{90} Moira Munro, & Ruth Madigan, ‘’The more we are together”: Domestic Space, Gender and Privacy’, in Tony Chapman & Jenny. Hockey, eds., \textit{Ideal Homes?:social change and domestic life}, (London : Routledge, 1999), p. 69
\textsuperscript{91} Munro & Madigan, ‘The more we are together’, p. 71
\textsuperscript{92} Saunders & Williams, ‘The constitution of home’, p. 82
\textsuperscript{93} Somerville, ‘Home Sweet Home’
observe that family and home are often synonymous with each other and have been used by some researchers interchangeably, stating that ‘the creation of home life inevitably bears the strong imprint of the modern domestic ideal in which “home” and “family” run together.’ The ideal of the small nuclear family was found in the literature during the 1950s and 1960s, which implies specific sets of relationships and roles within the home that are gendered in nature.

**Sources and Methods**

There were a number of sources used in this study to position the experience of living in post-war suburban homes within a wider context of contemporary debates about the issue being explored throughout. Tosh argues that, in oral history, individuals often do not understand or realise the ‘deeper structures and processes’ that influence their lives, suggesting that triangulation with other sources is essential when using personal testimony for historical study. Norquay advocates that the interview can reflect social discourses and dominant cultures. This leads to questions of where the language in interviews can be found and how it circulated in society such as through magazines or advertising. On the other hand, the interviews can perhaps reveal that the discourses in society at that time may have had very little impact on the identity and lives of participants. The interaction between individuals and discourses is a central approach in this thesis. Consequently, the discourses found in interviews and contemporary sources were contextualized within each other to see points of convergence and divergence. In addition to oral testimony, a variety of other contemporary sources such as women’s magazines, government reports, household manuals and furniture catalogues were used to explore the circulation of discourses about the home, family, privacy and gender during the post-war period. The following section will discuss how the project was designed and carried out, exploring some of the methodological and theoretical issues arising when dealing with sources.

**Using Oral History**

The everyday experience of the home is an area of the past not easily accessible. Home as we have discussed is regarded as private and therefore largely unaccountable. With this in mind, collecting oral testimony was decided upon as one of the best methods to access how people lived their daily lives in relation to the space they occupied. In terms of creating a history that focused on issues surrounding the family, or in this case the

95 Allan & Crow, ‘Introduction’, p. 1

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family home, Paul Thompson notes that oral history has opened up what was ‘effectively secret areas.’\(^{96}\) While architects, urban planners and media can suggest ways for people to carry out their lives, I really wanted to ask people themselves. To enquire what did they thought of their kitchen, or what room they chose to watch television in. Oral history has grown alongside women’s studies as a key methodology.\(^{97}\) It has been crucial in uncovering and reinstating women’s voices into history. As it has developed, there has been a shift from ‘women’ towards examining ‘gender’ and what that means.\(^{98}\) This is a central aim of this thesis to examine gender relations as experienced in the post-war suburban home.

**Carrying Out the Interviews**

The sample of interviewees was created by taking into consideration the aims of the research, which is to study how home was experienced and created by married homeowners who lived in the suburbs of Glasgow during the period 1945-1975. To achieve this, certain areas were identified as suburbs and people were recruited from these areas. In total thirteen interviews were carried out with eighteen individuals.\(^{99}\) There were six couples interviewed together. The interviews were carried out in three batches between 2009-2012 and lasted around an hour. In accordance with ethical guidelines of the university and the ESRC, potential interviewees were given an Information Sheet explaining the project with contact details and asked to sign a Consent Form.\(^{100}\) Finding interviewees was more difficult than anticipated. First a method called snowballing was used that involved starting with a few contacts who introduced more potential participants. In most cases, the initial contacts approached potential interviewees and acted as an intermediary. After a good start, the second wave of contacts all said ‘no’ highlighting the problems of relying on snowballing as a recruitment method. The challenges of finding interviewees slowed the whole project down and the recruitment method was reconsidered. Next, I contacted local interest groups, in exchange for talking to their group about local housing history they were willing to let me recruit at their meetings. The formality of my being an ‘expert’ speaker received a positive response in two of the three groups that responded. The collating of oral testimonies turned out to be more complex than


\(^{98}\) Bornat & Diamon, ‘Women’s History’, p. 20

\(^{99}\) See Appendix 1 for biographies of the participants.

\(^{100}\) ‘Information Sheet’, Appendix 2; ‘Consent Form’, Appendix 3
anticipated and this, combined with personal circumstances, resulted in long gaps between interviews. However, the first batch of interviews served as a pilot that helped re-evaluate research questions and highlight sources for the rest of the project. So, while the project did not initially go to plan, the problems of gathering testimony enhanced the study over all.

The format of the interviews was semi-structured, based on an Interview Guide. The semi-structured format is flexible enough to allow participants to speak freely but also keeps the interviewer on track with their research agenda. In practice, the guide was valuable but by no means strictly followed. Some interviewees were so expansive and detailed in their narrative that they covered the guide without prompting. This was reassuring as it indicated that the questions in the guide were relevant for talking about home. The questions and language of the interviewer should be clear and jargon free but also in this case, awareness of terms used in the past that may need clarifying is required. The researcher was cautious to avoid asking leading questions that could bias the process, though this is inevitable to some extent. There can be an exchange of power in the interview process. Some argue the interviewer is in a position of power, so considering a feminist approach may to some extent address this issue. Minster posits that the interview format is gendered. The traditional question and answer style of interviewing is a masculine way of communicating, placing the power with the interviewer; therefore a more conversational, feminine model of the unstructured interview could be substituted with some power being rebalanced by the interviewer participating in revelation to an extent. For this project, I was asking women and men to reveal private details about their home lives and was conscious of a level of intrusion. To counter this, I was open to answering some personal questions about my own house and family, and to some extent exchange personal details, while being careful not to talk too much. Therefore, feminist methods were useful to consider and reflect upon. A semi-structured approach was planned to maintain a focus on the research questions but this was flexible and allowed people to talk as they felt comfortable. Some interviewees did prefer to be asked questions,

101 See ‘Interview Guide’, Appendix 4
especially if they were finding it difficult to create their own narrative. The process had to be adapted to each individual and how they preferred to talk.

Oral History Analysis

A cultural approach to oral history has been used throughout this thesis to place oral testimony in wider context but also to examine the relationship between personal experience and wider cultural identities or discourses that circulated within society. Summerfield observes that memory is mediated through events and discourses and advocates studying how people interpret their past through language and concepts available to them.  

Discourses are where systems of knowledge in our society are most accessible. According to Foucault, ‘the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formulation.’ The language of a discourse in the modern age is internalised by the individual, therefore the discourse has the power to enforce social norms or regulate behaviour. The individual’s relationship to discourses and their power, Brown argues, is what is attractive to the historian. Significantly, some discourses are more dominant than others; discourses are a way to study power in our society. Historians should no longer ask who wrote a source and how is it authentic but rather can we find this discourse elsewhere, how is it circulated and who gains from it? Critics of this approach argue it undermines individual agency. Are the interviewees the author of their testimony or are they, as Foucault suggests, the filter through which we can study and access the discourses that constituted society at the time? Green cautions against taking this approach too far at the expense of the individual and argues for reinstating the importance of the individual by focusing on ‘points of conflict and rupture’ in personal experiences and their relationship with dominant discourses. In oral testimony, it is the individual who indicates which discourses they rejected, accepted or were unaware of and it is their relationship to power and the society they lived in that is interesting. This study will examine how individuals compose themselves to their audience whilst setting their experience in a wider cultural context. Particularly of interest is the idea that people negotiate their relationship with discourses and therefore can have multiple

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107 Brown, Postmodernism for Historians, p. 64
108 Keith Jenkins, Re-Thinking History, (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 30-31
110 Foucault, “What Is an Author?”, p. 119
identities that are context specific. The interview is an engagement with both the past and the present, participants are aware of collective memories and shared meaning about home and its occupants. Together the narrator and interviewer work to articulate the past on terms that can be mutually understood.

The interview process, not just the testimony, is part of what is studied in oral history. The story of the past is created not only through the ways interviewees articulate themselves but also through the participation of the interviewer in the process. Abrams emphasises that the practice of oral history is inseparable from the outcome and is part of the interpretation. Oral historians have moved away from seeing their presence in the interview as in any way neutral or objective and reflect upon their own presence and role in the process. The interviewer brings their research aims, their personal beliefs and their previous knowledge into the interview. The term intersubjectivity refers to the relationship and interaction between the subjectivities of both the narrator and the interviewer.

According to Giles, an interview is based on ‘negotiated meanings between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is in the interview itself that personal testimony can be used to say something about cultural and collective society. The intersubjectivity between the historian and the participant is based on a shared network of cultural meaning.’ This thesis embraces the interpersonal dynamics of the interview process as part of what makes using oral history so interesting and exciting to participate in.

The subjectivities the narrator brings into the interview are twofold: firstly, their experiences of both past and present and secondly, their awareness of their audience. The nature of memory means that individuals are affected by all past experiences not just the ones of interest to the historian. A person has time to reflect with hindsight on events from their past. This influences the way in which people evaluate and value their past. Passerini describes memory as ‘an active production of meanings and interpretation, strategic in character and capable of influencing the present.’ Frustrated while using oral history in the late 1980s, Riley observed that ‘that needs and wants are never pure and undetermined in such a way that they could be fully revealed, to shine out with an absolute clarity, by

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112 Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians*, pp. 64-65
114 Giles, *The Parlour and The Suburb*.
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stripping away the patina of historical postscripts and rewritings.¹¹⁶ This ‘patina’ has been embraced rather than seen as an obstacle to oral history and has become part of the meanings created through the interview process.¹¹⁷ In this project, interviewees were aware of how different home and family life is now compared to the post-war period. Female respondents were especially aware of the choice of many women in society today who choose to undertake paid work when they have young children, often comparing their lives to that of their daughters’ families now. For one group of interviews I was heavily pregnant and therefore a visible representation of the time of their lives we were talking about. Not only were they buying a first home but they were also starting their family. Women were warm towards me but also conscious that I was working while heavily pregnant which was not generally their experience of pregnancy and asked me would I return to work after having the baby.

My Role in the Interview Process

There were a number of factors for reflection upon my role and influence on the interview. Firstly, as a young woman associated with an institution creates a dynamic that is different from if they were speaking to an older man or a close friend. Secondly, personal relations did play a role in some of the interviews as they were contacted through a family connection. This personal relationship did make the interviews quite comfortable and my respondents talked easily but at times this resulted in an unexpected power dynamic where I felt like a guest coming to tea rather than a researcher; they were very reassuring and kind to me as if I were a grandchild. The personal connection did occasionally lead to sadness when talking about their social life and children, as we discussed their close friend, my partner’s grandmother, who was no longer with us. In any interview, the interviewer needs to be aware that they may be asking about or reminding the interviewee of painful memories or perhaps a change in their relationship such as divorce or a time shared with a loved one no longer here. Sinding and Aronson’s work into the sensitive subject of the death of a loved one found that recounting the process can cause someone to re-evaluate their experience as a negative one, particularly when talking to older participants.¹¹⁸ The age of my group did lead to times when they reflected upon nearing the end of their lives. One woman, now sadly deceased, felt that doing the

interview was a way for her to be remembered and did not want to be anonymous, calling into question the blanket anonymity desired by ethics committees as this discounts an individual’s choice to have their story heard and recognised if desired.

For those that knew my personal life in some ways I represented the time in their past that I was asking them about; newlywed and having just moved into a semi-detached house similar to the ones we were talking about. As previously mentioned, I was eight and half months pregnant while conducting some interviews. On the last interview I did while pregnant, I began to feel unwell and had to stop for a break. While I collected myself, the woman revealed she was bed-bound for both her pregnancies and had to hire someone to take on the housework. If I hadn’t been pregnant this would not have arisen as we were not discussing fertility or pregnancy but the revelation about housework when she was incapacitated was a fascinating insight into the sexual division of labour within her household. My large presence impacted on these interviews, it created a slight tension with one male interviewee who repeatedly asked after my wellbeing. My experiences of living in a post-war semi-detached house; being a newlywed; and working while pregnant were all subjectivities I brought to the process.

My life experiences of co-habitation, home ownership and marriage were different from the interview group. While they all married before they moved into their house together, I cohabited for almost a decade before getting married. Moving from a tenement to a semi-detached house in the suburbs was something I personally was uncomfortable with, having grown up with feminist culture about escaping the home and the suburban environment; it felt like a regression. This was a prejudice I had to be aware of and I was initially disappointed at the lack of oppression I encountered in suburb. However, it made me re-evaluate the narratives I was exposed to and realise that alternative experiences were missing from the discussion. Living in the same style of house mean that I was familiar with daily life in an inter-war designed house but I also had my own prejudices and dislikes about my home that I was careful not impose upon others. The small kitchenette was a feature I felt out of step with my life as my husband and I liked to cook together so found the space frustrating. At one point during my thesis I was renovating my kitchen so how others had used and adapted the space was of particular interest to me.
Becoming a mother had a profound impact on both my life and my understanding of the topic of home and gendered divisions of labour. I gained insight into why people had laughed when I asked about privacy when you have small children, and I became in awe of these women who washed nappies by hand every night in between bedtime and late night feeds. Experiencing the physical demands of motherhood, such as feeding, lifting and washing, gave me a new awareness of the issues women were discussing. It prompted me to ask new questions such as how do you supervise a toddler whilst operating the twin tub or hanging out the washing near steps. Both my respondents and I shared an awareness of how parenting, housework and women’s lives had changed over time. My partner and I had been together for more than a decade before we decided to have children, while the interviewees had their children within one to three years of marriage. I was interviewing at eight months pregnant and later working with an eighteen month old in nursery. This was not the typical experience of the interview group, only one returned to full-time work whilst her child was small. Mrs Roberts on reflecting upon the interview said, ‘I just feel, that looking back I realise how women have changed and how it has changed.’

For the topic we were discussing my visual presentation as myself as a young, married and for some interviews, pregnant woman was something my respondents were able to relate to within the context of remembering their early married life. At the same time, this should not be confused as my having an insight into their lives during that time as I was not there, they were the eyewitnesses offering their valuable insight. More often than not I was someone who symbolised change rather than continuity in women’s lives.

Talking Together

Couples approached for this project preferred to interview together. This led to a re-evaluation of my interpretation of home in this context. Initially, I planned to interview the couples separately to gain an insight into two experiences of the same home. In practice, the first three couples approached were unwilling to be interviewed separately. Often after arranging the interview with the wife, her husband was also present ready to participate. When the subject of interviewing separately was approached, there was hesitancy and silence. Pursuing this seemed to encourage suspicion of my agenda and negatively impacted upon the relationship between myself and the interviewee from the offset. Similarly, Fisher, in her study of birth control, observed interviewing couples separately

119 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
created a suspicion that interviewer intended to ‘play each partner off against the other’. \(^{120}\)
It was decided to go ahead with couple interviews to see where it would lead; therefore, all six couples who participated were interviewed together. This is not a common approach and has brought both benefits and pitfalls. To date there is little work in either social sciences or history involving interviewing couples. \(^{121}\) A number of reasons as to why couples preferred to be interviewed together were contemplated. For practical purposes, both were retired and in the house at the same time. Individual interviews of a couple would have to have taken place within a short time to avoid conferring over what the first person had been asked. In addition, the presence of a spouse in the other room could may lead to concerns about being overheard, creating similar problems of composure as being in the same room. Also, on reflection I think the topic of the home itself was something they considered a shared space and therefore felt I would gain more insight by talking to both of them.

The obstacles to overcome when interviewing couples ranged from the practical matter of transcribing multiple voices to more serious ones like interviewees undermining each other’s testimony. Narrators compose themselves in the interview using a number of familiar cultural frameworks that they and the interviewer are aware of. Often aware of the invisible audience that will eventually hear their words, the interviewees may wish to present themselves using recognisable cultural identities, from the housewife or working mother to the breadwinner husband or DIY expert. \(^{122}\) One man was unable to compose himself around the role of DIY in terms of his contribution to home-making due to the presence of his wife. Once the O’Connells could afford to renovate their attic, the couple’s telling of the story led to confusion. Mr O’Connell began by taking ownership of the job but his wife’s interruptions reminded him that he had help. This required him to change his narrative from ‘I’ to ‘we’. His attempt to construct himself within a traditional masculine role of manual labour and home improvement was a failure due to the presence of his wife.

Mr O’Connell: When you say doing the attic, it wasn’t a first class, polished job, it was one of my jobs. I got a whole crowd of …

\(^{120}\) Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 21

\(^{121}\) Fisher interviewed couples for her study of birth control and sexual practices, Fisher, *Birth Control*; See Lisa Taylor’s research on gardening, gender and class in the 1990s, Lisa Taylor, *A Taste for Gardening: Classed and Gendered Practices*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Also see Sarah Cunningham-Burely, “‘We don’t talk about it…’: Issues of Gender and Method in the Portrayal of Grandfatherhood”, in *Sociology*, 18:3, 1984, pp. 325-338

\(^{122}\) Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure’, p. 69
Mrs O’Connell: We got the attic floored and we raised the beams. Well we got somebody in then, we had to raise the beams in the attic, and there was a ladder up, an opening ladder
Mr O’Connell: The attic, the roof if you can imagine, it’s like that with a cross strengthen, then to get the head room we moved these up and that sounds simple but that was a really big job you see that was a lot of disturbance. And then, I floored the whole thing
Mrs O’Connell: My brother and a friend helped as well
Mr O’Connell: We had it floored, and then, I don’t know, aye we lined the roof, we got profe…, a joiner in to line the roof, and it was very good very suitable.

Later, despite being asked twice about DIY, Mr O’Connell mishears or does not acknowledge me and continues to tell me about the central heating whereas his wife answers my question directly:

Interviewer: So did you do the DIY yourself?
Mr O’Connell: Sorry
Interviewer: Did you do the DIY round the house?
Mr O’Connell: No, the two lads, no. It went onto just one system and a pump and it was fine, it worked fine
IOH: No he didn’t, he’s not a great DIYer (Mr O’Connell laughs) He can drive a few nails but that’s about it
Mr O’Connell: Not too good at that.123

Mr O’Connell seemed to disregard the opportunity to create himself within the DIY context but also with his wife present there is no space for him to articulate himself as she has told me he is not good at DIY. The complexity of interviewing two people at the same time is clear here. The presence of another person who knows them intimately can inhibit or undermine the individual’s narrative or the image of themselves that they wish to portray. Therefore, the inability to compose themselves due to another’s presence will be explored throughout this thesis when examining gendered identities within the home. Revelations within the interview may also be inhibited. A wife may not want to undermine her husband’s impression that she never sat down all day by admitting that she enjoyed having a coffee while listening to her favourite radio show. The more confident spouse can dominate the interview, often this was the wife. Some husbands found it easier to describe what their wives did in the home rather than talk about themselves. This may be the dynamic of their marriage or it may be that the home was seen as woman’s domain and therefore felt their experience was insignificant. There was one case where the husband was more dominant than the wife; at points it was fairly clear that she was not keen to

123 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
participate but did not want him to take part alone. In general, women were more comfortable talking about home than men.  

The couple interview can actively demonstrate shared social and gender norms as they work together to create an account of their home together. In group interviews, Warr has observed that the results can be unreliable, as there is an element of persuasion and social conformity. As part of a married couple within the interview context, the individual may perform expected roles and tailor their responses accordingly. Cunningham-Burley’s work on grandfathers explored how men talked differently when being interviewed and at times seemed not to share the same understandings of the questions as their wives or the interviewer. In an individual interview, the style or format could be adapted to suit a more masculine way of speaking to encourage men to talk more confidently about topics such as the family. The theoretical and practical considerations when interviewing couples are significant but not necessarily limiting. In practice, it encouraged a re-evaluation of what home was in this suburban post-war context by considering the importance of the choice to be interviewed together. By choosing to talk together, the couple were indicating that their home was a shared space, something they constructed together as a married couple. Through a process of negotiation and compromise, both within their lives and in the interview, they created a shared meaning of their home. Married couples prompted each other’s memories and enriched each other’s stories. Couples were generally supportive, emphasising their partner’s contribution to the home, through both internal and external work. Marriage, in these interviews, was represented as that of partnership with husband and wife taking valuable but different roles. In her study of the impact of class and gender on gardening, Lisa Taylor interviewed couples. In both individual and couple interviews, she found traditional gendered divisions of labours were performed when a heterosexual couple lived together. When not interviewing couples, Taylor found that the ‘gendered location of absent partners were represented by those who were available to speak’. This was also found to be the case in my study, that even in single interviews traditional gendered roles were performed and talked about. Concerns about undermining individual narratives and the presentation of

124 Sarah Cunningham-Burley interviewed couples for her study of grandparenthood and found similarly that grandmothers found it easier to talk than grandfathers, Cunningham-Burley, “We don’t talk about it”, p. 327
125 Deborah Warr, “ ‘It was fun… but we don’t usually talk about these things’: Analysing Sociable Interaction in Focus Groups” in Qualitative Inquiry, 11:2, pp. 200-225, p. 203
126 See Cunningham-Burley, ‘We don’t talk about it’, p. 336
127 Taylor, A Taste for Gardening, p. 142
128 Ibid
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self are important but there is advantage to examining the collective memory of home. Remembering and making sense of the past is not necessarily an individual or solo act. It is often a shared process. In our everyday life we compare and contrast our memories with those around us our friends, family, work colleagues and so forth.\(^\text{129}\) One aim of this study is to examine gender relations, interviewing couples enables this to be examined within the interview itself. Fisher notes that couple interview reflects the dynamics of the marriage as gives insight into the ‘relationship in action’.\(^\text{130}\) This was certainly the case in this study also and will be engaged with throughout.

Women’s Magazines

This thesis uses women’s magazines to place oral testimony within a wider cultural context. Discourses are articulated and circulated within society through various forms of media such as newspapers, television and magazines. These have been referred to as ‘prescriptive’ in that they portray social norms and reinforce structures of power that operate in our society. Rather than seeing media as an authority or expert, Claire Langhamer uses women’s magazines to study love and emotions and recommends a different approach. She observes that ‘[a]other way of accessing the complex relationship between codes and practice is to read prescriptive literature somewhat against the grain, paying particular attention to the mechanisms through which such advice circulated and the manner in which it was received.’\(^\text{131}\) Therefore, analysing women’s magazines alongside personal experience can reveal the interaction and interplay between the individual and collective representations of gender relations and home. Women’s magazines were chosen as studies have shown that they addressed their readers as primarily wives and mothers, therefore traditional domestic roles were often portrayed.\(^\text{132}\) Also, the high circulation of some magazines meant that there was an increased chance that those involved in the study would have been exposed to them to some degree. Joke Hermes book *Reading Women’s Magazines* (1995) challenged previous approaches to women’s magazines that showed ‘concern’ for readers who were exposed to messages

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\(^{130}\) Fisher, *Birth Control*, p. 22


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about femininity and gender.\textsuperscript{133} Hermes shifted the focus away from content and onto reader reception and found some interesting results.\textsuperscript{134} The content of magazines were often ‘meaningless’ to readers sampled, rather it was act of reading magazines and how this fit into their everyday routine that was significant.\textsuperscript{135} My initial aim was to engage with interviewees as readers of magazines but few actual read or bought magazines regularly. Most emphasised that they preferred to read books. This does question if there was a certain amount of reluctance to admit to me, a university educated researcher, that they read magazines which have a lower cultural status than book reading. This did create a dilemma for me: do they have to have read them? I decided to continue to work with magazines for mainly for the first reason stated above, that magazines could provide a wider cultural framework. In terms of oral testimony, this is particularly useful to highlight the individual’s negotiation with dominant modes of femininity or masculinity circulated through magazines and how people then constructed themselves through conformity or conflict. The following is a discussion of how the magazines were chosen, sampled and approached in this project.

Women’s magazines in the decades after World War Two were primarily concerned with helping women with their traditional domestic duties as wives and mothers. In the inter-war period, Marjorie Ferguson posits that class was an important factor in what magazine a woman would read.\textsuperscript{136} As women’s magazines became politicised to promote the war effort, messages about solidarity when dealing with difficult conditions, such as rationing and participating in the workforce, was something women of all classes could relate to.\textsuperscript{137} Women’s magazines were unique according to Ferguson, as they targeted a wide group of people solely on the basis that gender was a shared experience, regardless of class. Unlike men’s magazines, which tended to target groups of men with shared interests like trains or gardening, women’s magazines were more prescriptive and instructed women on how to be a woman or as Ferguson describes it to be a member of ‘the cult of femininity.’\textsuperscript{138} Post-war magazines played an important role in encouraging married women to return to the home.\textsuperscript{139} With circulation peaking in the

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{134} Hermes, \textit{Reading Women’s Magazines}, p.2
\item \textsuperscript{135} ibid, pp. 14-15
\item \textsuperscript{136} Ferguson, \textit{Forever Feminine} p. 17
\item \textsuperscript{137} ibid, pp. 18-19
\item \textsuperscript{138} ibid, p. 2
\item \textsuperscript{139} ibid, p. 20
\end{footnotes}
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1950s and 1960s, women’s weekly magazines went into decline by the 1970s. Cynthia White observes that the immediate post-war years were a time when socio-economic differences between the middle and working-classes were becoming smaller, meaning that women could relate to each other over running their homes and new technologies to aid their domestic roles.\textsuperscript{140} The decline in readership of weekly magazines was attributed by Ferguson to the wide range of social, economic and cultural changes throughout the 1960s and 1970s that diversified women’s experiences and created divisions among women.\textsuperscript{141} Women’s magazines failed to appeal to women’s changing lives continuing to focus on their roles as wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{142} In contrast, monthlies such as \textit{Good Housekeeping} and \textit{Woman and Home} continued to do well during this period possibly due to their sole focus on the home rather than a broader femininity.\textsuperscript{143}

The magazines were selected for this project based on their circulations and accessibility, therefore \textit{Woman’s Own} founded in 1932 and \textit{Good Housekeeping}, first published in 1922, were chosen. Initially the sample method was devised using a stratified approach. Every third year between 1945-1975 was selected, starting from a randomly generated year. Seasonal variation was taken into consideration and issues from the same three months were chosen to account for this. In practice, \textit{Good Housekeeping} was not widely covered in the archive; the years were sporadic, with no issues from the period 1945-1950, and sometimes only one or two magazines for each whole year, making it impossible to adhere to the sampling method. The anticipated stratified sample of thirty was therefore scaled down as there were more later editions which would have created a bias, therefore one magazine from each year available was sampled to chart change and continuity. As there were more editions from the 1970s, they could be chosen by year and then consequently month. The most commonly held months in each year were October and March. In total twenty issues of \textit{Good Housekeeping} sampled between 1950-1975. \textit{Woman’s Own} had more coverage in the archive and was easier to sample throughout the time period. Earlier years had fewer issues; therefore, the sampling method had to be adapted but was reinstated as much as possible for later years, if one issue was unavailable.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} White, \textit{Women’s Magazines}, p. 170
\item \textsuperscript{141} Ferguson, \textit{Forever Feminine}, p. 80
\item \textsuperscript{142} Both White and Ferguson’s studies into women’s magazines found that magazines were still focused on traditional domestic roles for women despite changes in work patterns, marriage and family size. White, \textit{Women’s Magazines}, p. 170; Ferguson, \textit{Forever Feminine}, p. 198
\item \textsuperscript{143} Ferguson, \textit{Forever Feminine}, p. 33
\end{itemize}
the nearest one possible was chosen. In total twenty-seven issues were sampled over the period 1945-1975, where possible three issues per year were selected.

*Woman’s Own* (1932), a long running weekly that is still in print today, used a new technique of personal identification with the reader when first established, that appealed to a younger audience.\(^{144}\) In 1951 *Woman’s Own*, and its sister publication *Woman*, increased their size and introduced colour photography to compete with monthlies, including coverage of more topics related to the home and family rather than general interest.\(^{145}\) For this project, *Woman’s Own*’s coverage of the home was less than expected, only eleven issues had relevant articles out of twenty-seven selected. When articles did appear about the home, they were often about improving existing décor through do-it-yourself projects rather than with buying new items for the home. From the survey, it was clear that *Woman’s Own*’s content changed over the years. The contents page revealed regular features: Beverly Nicols’ column, problem pages, knitting patterns, cookery, fashion and fictional stories. However, in the late 1960s regular articles like Beverly Nicols’ disappeared from the contents page and new horoscopes and diet sections were added. Ferguson’s content analysis of women’s magazines from 1949-1974, which included *Woman’s Own*, observed that while there were some changes in the content of the magazines the central themes of ‘Keeping and Getting your Man’, ‘The Happy Family’ and ‘Wifehood/Motherhood’ were unchallenged.\(^{146}\)

*Good Housekeeping* (1922), as the name suggests, was a monthly service manual to help women in their domestic responsibilities. Originally an import from the United States, *Good Housekeeping* offered consumer advice and expertise to a middle-class female readership and contributed significantly to what White refers to as the ‘professionalization of housewifery.’\(^{147}\) Though the content varied greatly from cookery and knitting patterns to housing design and fictional stories, *Good Housekeeping* was primarily concerned with home making through consumption. A key difference observed between the two magazines’ coverage of the home was their relationship with consumption. It was assumed that readers of *Good Housekeeping* were engaged with buying goods for the home, whereas *Woman’s Own* advised their audience about how to improve their home with

\(^{144}\) White, *Women’s Magazines*, p. 127  
\(^{145}\) White, *Women’s Magazines*, pp. 138-139  
\(^{146}\) Throughout Ferguson’s book she presents a content analysis of themes in woman’s magazines. Ferguson, *Forever Feminine*  
\(^{147}\) White, *Women’s Magazines*, p. 103
home crafts and DIY projects. The ‘Good Housekeeping Institute’ (GHI) used experts to recommend how to make wise consumer choices - from the best electrical appliances to planning a new kitchen. Given the nature and title of this magazine Good Housekeeping had a larger proportion of its content focused on the home and subsequently more issues were relevant for this study. As previously discussed, Woman’s Own, particularly in the earlier editions, devoted less content to the home, though in the 1950s there was a regular ‘Home’ section but unfortunately, this did not always cover topics of interest to this study, such as décor, design and consumption within the home.

The magazines were sampled to analyse change over the period being studied and to look at content about the home to see how frequently articles about home appeared and which aspects they focused on. There are a number of studies looking at advertising in women’s magazines. Winship’s research looked at full-page advertisements, during the period 1956-1974, in a number of magazines but largely sampled from Woman and Woman’s Own. Her method was to see the images and text of the adverts as signifiers of woman and femininity that was available through commodification. As this project is about home, it was decided to select articles written about aspects of home life, rather than advertisements. Like Winship, the interdependence of text and images was viewed as vital in any understanding of the meaning being constructed. The spatial relations of the image and how the image contains and uses cultural references and symbols identifiable to the viewer to create its message have been given as much importance in this thesis as the text of the article. For each magazine the content page was examined and potential articles about home noted. Relevancy was decided by considering the aims of the research to look at discourses about home, therefore any article about consumer goods for the home, décor, designs, furniture, cleaning or aspects of housewifery were selected and copied. Articles about children, relationships and family life that were not discussing these issues within the home were rejected. ‘Getting Ready for New Baby’ seemed relevant but a brief read revealed it was about knitting patterns and outfitting baby rather than furnishing baby’s room. A basic content analysis was performed on the articles sampled. The decision was made not to study the whole content of the magazines to see what proportion was devoted to home, as other studies have already created useful surveys of general content and trends

150 ‘Getting Ready for New Baby’ Good Housekeeping, March 1950
within women’s magazines.\textsuperscript{151} Content analysis is an effective way to observe trends and patterns over the period of the study.\textsuperscript{152} The motives, meanings or relations within the articles cannot be revealed through this method, therefore it was used to complement a more detailed analysis of the articles in relation to oral testimony.

Women’s magazines reflected and disseminated meanings about home during the period of this study. There is a particular emphasis throughout both magazines sampled on the ‘modern home’ or how to modernise the home, through a wide coverage of modern concerns from new technologies to rational kitchen design. While women’s magazines appealed to their readership based on the shared experience of femininity through domesticity, they also had strong representations of masculinity and male roles in relationship to the home. The extent to which cultural discourses articulated in the magazines relate to how people formulated their experiences of home will be examined and questioned in this analysis. The exploration of representations within the magazines also serves to place this study of Glasgow suburban home life within a wider British context.

**Government Housing Reports**

The government housing reports were useful for this thesis to highlight contemporary debates about housing design. In the twentieth century, government played an increased role in housing provision throughout Britain. The standards of living prescribed by the series of reports, and their resulting acts, indicated changing perceptions on what was acceptable and expected in British homes. While private sector builders were free from the restrictions of central government, builders engaged with housing debates and design issues of the day. The Scottish house builder, Jack Mactaggart, builder of the Glasgow tenement suburb of Hyndland, gave evidence to the Tudor-Walters committee in 1918, promoting the private builder’s case for government aid as opposed to government intervention.\textsuperscript{153} The Tudor-Walters Report was published in 1919 and recommended the State start building homes and set standards for new subsidised housing in England and Wales.\textsuperscript{154} It was influenced by the Garden City design’s low-density, cottage style

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{151} See White, Woman’s Magazines; Ferguson, Forever Feminine
\textsuperscript{153} Jack Mactaggart was the director of Mactaggart Company, he was the father of John Mactaggart who became the Mactaggart in the Scottish house builder, Mactaggart and Mickel Co., Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 21
\textsuperscript{154} Sir John Tudor-Walters, Report of the Special Committee on Housing, 1918, (London: HMSO, 1919)
\end{footnotesize}
housing arranged around open spaces with curved streets.\textsuperscript{155} The Tudor-Walters Report suggested designs for ‘Parlour’ and ‘Non-Parlour’ houses, engaging in a debate about the nature of the parlour in working people lives. In Scotland The Ballantyne Commission, started in 1913 and published in 1918, recommended direct municipal intervention in Scottish house building.\textsuperscript{156} For Scottish architectural historian Charles McKean, the Commission’s impact was the “dilution of the strong urban form of Glasgow, the absence of any architectural identity, and the rejection of the past without anything to replace it with.”\textsuperscript{157} These reports formed the foundations for state housing implemented by local councils between the wars. The homes for sale in Glasgow suburbs after the Second World War were an inter-war stock built in the climate of these early housing reports. Consequently, it was useful to examine some of the tensions raised in these reports to see how they contributed to the post-war experience of home. In the case of Scotland, it will be shown throughout this thesis that these early housing reports had an impact on the inter-war housing, in so far as it changed Scottish people’s housing preferences both in terms of the types of house they wanted to live in and new patterns of living.

Into the post-war period, public sector housing altered under the influence of the Modernist architecture movement. The ageing inter-war suburban house remained static on the landscape in contrast to the new design and improvements within public sector housing. Therefore, private homes were lagging behind the standards set in the new series of housing reports. The onus was on the owners to update and upgrade their house to the modernity found in social housing. In 1948, the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee published its findings in \textit{Planning Our New Homes}.\textsuperscript{158} The recommendations in the report reflected this move towards a modernist ethos in design, stressing the simplicity in the new housing design. It outlined a new modern standard for Scottish houses. Housing should be of a ‘quality in design, accommodation, planning and equipment which posterity will judge worthy of the ideal and aspirations of our time and not unworthy of its own.’\textsuperscript{159} The report detailed kitchen equipment, the inclusion of fitted furniture, the provision of space for future domestic appliances and the new methods for calculating the size of Scottish homes.

\textsuperscript{155} Glendinning & Watters, \textit{Home Builders}, p. 18
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Report of the Royal Commission on the housing of the industrial population of Scotland, rural and urban}, (Edinburgh, 1918) hereafter ‘Ballantyne Commission’, so named after its Chairperson, Sir Henry Ballantyne
\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Planning Our New Homes a report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the design, planning and furnishing of new homes}, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1948). The English counterpart to this report was known as the Dudley Report, Dudley, \textit{Design of Dwellings}, (London: HMSO. 1944)
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Planning Our New Homes}, p. 11
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Drawing on a range of evidence from professional bodies, women’s organisations, public responses and workers’ surveys, the report placed women as the housewife within the home and imagining her working day underpinned much of their recommendations.

Later in 1961, the Parker Morris report, *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* reflected changing patterns of living within Britain. The ‘adaptable’ house was a family house where the needs and routine of family living would be met. While this focused on future housing not readily available in suburban Glasgow, it indicated a significant shift in its attitude towards women and the home. The housewife was absorbed into family, woman’s needs as housewife, which dominated immediate post war housing reports, was understated in favour of focusing on shared use of the home. For this study, Parker Morris highlights shifts in living patterns and the complexities of managing shared space and individual needs. Married women were increasingly entering the workforce during this period and Parker Morris reflected the changing lives of women. This study will demonstrate that Parker Morris perhaps went too far and overlooked that women still largely managed the home in this period. The increased status of children within the home was given more emphasis in the report than the position of women; each child should have their own bedroom for privacy. The waste of space within the home through the lack of heating was noted in the report, stating that ‘A home without good heating is a home built to the standard of a bygone age.’ Sudjic noted that Parker Morris was influential on public sector housing in the 1960s, raising living standards beyond those found in the private home. The housing reports were an official interpretation of what people needed and wanted within their homes. Their focus is on working-class lifestyles and cultures. In the case of homeownership, these reports raised living standards and expectations in the visible form of new housing within the cities of Scotland. Owner-occupiers would have been aware of this and oral testimony can indicate their level of engagement with these.

Surveying People

Dennis Chapman’s *The Location of Dwellings in Scottish Towns*, was a wartime social survey conducted in 1943 to ascertain working Scots preferences in housing. The

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161 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 11
162 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 16
163 Sudjic & Beyerle, *Home*, p. 11
164 Denis Chapman, *The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities, made for the Department of Health for Scotland*, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1943)
manner in which the survey was performed was gendered. It assumed different lifestyles for men and women, identifying them as ‘husbands’ and ‘housewives’, and was based on the assumption that once a woman was married, she would remain in, and take responsibility for the home. As a result, the housewife group was asked a different set of questions from the husband and unmarried groups. According to the report, the location of the house impacted upon two factors of the housewife’s day; childcare and shopping. In contrast, men and unmarried persons, regardless of gender, were asked about work and leisure primarily. All groups were given the same questions about their views on future housing. Chapman’s work looked at working-class housing preferences but it revealed the impact of inter-war housing on a country dominated by flat-dwellers. The indications were that all people surveyed wanted a garden and bungalow away from the city centre. The report demonstrated that working-class people desired, not to own their own home, but to live in a house only found in the private suburban environment.

In 1943, Mass Observation conducted *An Enquiry into People’s Homes*. Social investigators gathered information about housing conditions among the English working-class. The respondents were largely women. The investigators adopted a style developed by Rowntree’s social studies, that of ‘direct observation.’ For example, one respondent was described as ‘A big, rather fat, cheerful working woman’ while another, a Mrs A, was observed as ‘rather an ineffective, colourless little woman.’ So the interviewers’ subjectivity was evident in their interpretation of the people and houses they observed. This survey was a thorough solicitation of people’s views on housing and, like Chapman’s study of working Scots, it presented people’s aspirations and hopes for future housing. While it identified the small suburban house with a garden as the ‘dream’ house, the findings largely suggested that, if their own houses were modernised, they would be happy to stay where they were. So discourses about home and what is a modern home emerge from this survey and offer a good comparison to the Glasgow homeowner case study.

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165 Chapman, *Location of Dwellings*, p. 9

166 Ibid, p. 10

167 Ibid, pp. 69-70


169 MO, *People’s Homes*, 71; 55

170 MO, *People’s Homes*, ix
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Denis Chapman’s later work in 1950 was a detailed study of 250-300 households in Liverpool. In *The Family, The Home and Social Class*, the house is used as indicator of social hierarchy rather than, say, occupations. Chapman provides a good comparison for this study, particularly as he studied all classes whereas other studies have focused on chiefly working-class housing. How people use their rooms is an integral part of Chapman’s analysis and will be useful to compare Liverpool to the Scottish example of Glasgow. However, Chapman posits that people are unconscious of the ways in which the spaces they live in affect their daily lives. Whilst residents have little input into the design of the houses they live in, this does not mean they are unaware of the limitations of their homes. The fact that people extend and alter their houses to meet the changing needs of their family life-cycle indicate that they are engaged with the spaces they live in and mould them to some extent to meet their needs. Homeowners have more freedom to transform the physical boundaries of their houses than renters. This thesis will examine how people use and interact with the houses they buy to construct their families’ homes.

The most influential research examining life in new public housing estates after the war is Peter Willmott and Michael Young’s study of working-class migration and kin networks in the 1950s. Interviewing tenants on a number of issues about status, housing, everyday life, family, and marriage, Willmott and Young provided a starting point for many researchers studying the perceived disruption of family networks. For this project, Willmott and Young’s findings in their well-known *Family and Kinship in East London* is useful to engage with in two key ways. Firstly, they raise the ideal that marriage was changing to become more egalitarian and secondly, the perception that family and social networks were being eroded in the suburban environment. Another survey carried out in 1960 by Willmott and Young, their examination of everyday life in the largely middle-class suburb of Woodford in the 1960s, *Family and Class in a London Suburb*, provides further comparison for this project. A chapter entitled the ‘House-Centred Couple’ focused on the relationship of husbands to their homes. Their profile of the suburban couple raises numerous points of interest for this study, from the nature of men’s work within the house to wives’ social life in the suburb. Hannah Gavron wanted to explore further some of Willmott and Young’s finding with her work into the lives of young

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171 Denis Chapman, *The Family, the Home and Social Status*, (London: Routledge, 1955)
172 Denis Chapman, *Family, Home and Social Status*, p. 3
173 Willmott & Young *Family and Kinship in East London*
175 *Ibid*, pp. 24-33
working-class and middle-class housewives with small children in the 1960s. Gavron engaged with some of the indications from their body of work that the family and gender relations were changing. By examining both classes, Gavron was able to discern similarities and difference in the experiences of housewives due to class. This provides a useful comparative study for this thesis looking at gender and home in the 1950s and 1960s.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the framework for the study of married homeowners in post-war suburban Glasgow between 1945-1975. The next chapters will examine the experience of home life and the meanings of home within this specific historical moment and location, by considering the home as a physical space that had an impact upon everyday life and social interactions of the household occupants. Forming part of the analysis will be the idea that the home is experienced differently by men and women and the ways in which a modern home is created by a married couple through an engagement with wider cultural notions of ‘modern.’ The reciprocal relationship between individual experiences and cultural discourses will be analysed focusing on points of reflection and distortion.

Throughout the following chapters we will explore the suburban home in Glasgow immediately after the war and into the 1970s. In Chapter Two, the post-war period is discussed as a period of stability that became increasingly unsettled as we enter the 1970s. The changes that affected families and home life will be highlighted. The development of suburban Glasgow will be described in order to understand the location of suburban life for this study. Between the wars housing in Scotland was changed profoundly through suburban growth, both public and private. Glaswegians were introduced to house-dwelling as opposed to multi-storey living and these houses that were available to buy after the war will be examined in the last part of Chapter One.

In Chapter Three, we meet our homebuyers as they hunt for a house and examine their motivations and reasonings behind deciding to buy. Once the house has been purchased, the dynamics of marriage will be explored in relation to transforming their house in a modern home. The representation of the ‘shared’ home will be analysed

Chapter 1: Introduction

considering the ways in which the wider position of women in society impacts upon the private. A house is possibly the largest purchase anyone will make in their life, yet in many ways wives did not own their home as it was based on the husband’s income. As we explore work both outside and inside the home in this chapter, it will be shown that married women’s increasing engagement with the labour market was intrinsically linked to their status as wives and mothers. The gendered division of both labour and consumption will be shown to be central to women’s magazines advice to couples about home improvements as we compare representation of men and women’s work within the home.

Once established within the home and starting to raise a family. In Chapter Four how the housing design and the demands of everyday life will be examined. When architects designed suburban homes they catered to the small, young nuclear family. A negotiation between interior spaces and the needs of the family was evident in how people used and changed their homes. The use of a second public room as the ‘good’ room will be highlighted. In the suburb there is a continuation of this practice which has implications for both housework and the public face of the family to outsiders coming in. Here social life within the home is discussed. The presence of women in the home due to the expectation that mothers will stay at home when children were small at this time, will be shown to have created a community of women who engage with each other, which extended into a wider social life for couples. The introduction of the television into the home is the focus for a discussion about gendered nature of leisure within the home. Lastly, the chapter explore alterations and extensions to the home and consider its implications about the suitability of suburban housing design for the growing family.

Finally, Chapter Five of this thesis will bring together the issues of gender and work in the creation of the modern home under examination in this thesis. By considering the kitchen as ‘woman’s workplace’, it will be demonstrated that the design of the kitchen was imbued with ideas about ‘modern’ and housewifery. The modernisation of the kitchen will highlight men’s relationship to the kitchen but also contrast with the hidden nature of women’s everyday mundane work within the kitchen. The adoption of technology in the home was most recognisable in the kitchen and women’s relationship to housework is brought to the fore through the case-study of the washing washing.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis will demonstrate the ways in which gender relations were acted out and perceived in some homes in suburban Glasgow between 1945-1975. It will explore the concept of home as collaborative, presenting an examination of how couples created a home together gradually throughout the period of the study. The underlying tensions about woman’s position in wider society will be explored to examine its impact upon the personal life and relationship. Women’s relationship to work and leisure will demonstrate the gendered nature of home life at this time. Notions of privacy and social life will be challenged by considering how the rooms of the house were used by the family. Finally, the construction of home both as an imagined and material reality will be demonstrated through the process of modernisation with which homeowners were engaged in.
Chapter 2: Finding A House in Suburban Glasgow

The first step in buying a house is finding the right location. This chapter will create a profile of suburban Glasgow where married couple were buying their homes. Firstly, what a suburb is will be discussed and a definition created for this study. Secondly, some characteristic of suburban life will be placed into the historical context of post-war Britain. Thirdly, a brief history of suburban expansion in and around Glasgow will be given and lastly, the homes available will be introduced.

Defining Suburban Glasgow

This section will outline the characteristics of the suburb in this study. As a starting point, the suburb is located away from the urban centre, usually around the city boundary, but connected to the city through transport links, allowing suburbanites to work, consume and play in the city. A semi-rural location, surrounded by parkland, gardens and open spaces, the suburb offers the ‘best’ of both city and country. The suburban expansion of the inter-war period, when a substantial proportion of suburban Glasgow was built, was closely associated with the private family. The suburban house is an important factor in defining the private suburb, often associated with the semi-detached house. Mass speculation had made suburban life affordable to lower levels of the middle and upper working-classes enabling them buy a home in these more affordable suburbs. The suburb has been recognised as a site of consumption in the post-war context, with the consumer housewife in the home. These formulations of the suburb will be engaged with throughout this thesis, using the Glasgow case study to look at the ways in which a modern suburban home was constructed by the married couple.

Suburbia has been heavily criticised in the twentieth century despite its popularity with the British public. From George Orwell’s unflattering look at suburban life in Coming

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5 McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, p. 71
Chapter 2: Finding a House in Post-War Suburban Glasgow

*Up For Air* published in 1939 to the Modernist Movement who felt the suburbs were out of step with modern living, the suburb provoked a strong reaction in many.\(^7\) Architectural historian Charles McKean, one of its more articulate critics, states that ‘the absence of any identity or any form of recognisable urbanity in the new bungalurbias, the monotony of wide roads, and their undeviating remorselessness, stick in the craw.’\(^8\) This abhorrence of the suburb in its bungalow form on the Scottish landscape illustrates an approach based on aesthetics and design rather than considering its social and cultural significance. Under the title, ‘Dream Homes for the Future’, Mass Observation in 1943 summarised that the people’s ideal home was ‘a small modern house with plenty of labour-saving devices, self-contained and as private as possible.’\(^9\) Living in a house in the suburbs was desirable and attractive to the British public. Mark Clapson challenges the passivity ascribed by critics to suburbanites and identified a motivation to move into these areas called ‘the suburban aspiration’. This was based on an impetus to live away from the city centre but near enough to access its economic, commercial and culture amenities. The desire to buy a suburban house, usually semi-detached, with a garden. The suburban environment itself was attractive to potential residents with its low-level housing, green spaces and amenities such as golf courses.\(^10\) In Clapson’s recent review of ‘New Suburban’ scholarship, he notes the continuing trend towards negativity in approaches to the suburbs and those who choose to reside there.\(^11\) Despite this suburban living has in the past, and still continues to be a popular choice in Britain as a whole.

The overwhelming consensus from contemporary reports was that people wanted their homes to be self-contained with a garden. And yet the island nature of Britain meant that the space to create self-contained family homes around existing cities simply did not exist. Owner occupiers sampled in the 1971 *General Household Survey* lived solely in houses, just under half in semi-detached houses and around a quarter in both terraced and detached housing.\(^12\) The suburban expansion both between the wars and after 1945 has

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\(^10\) Clapson, *Suburban Century*, pp. 51-52


been explored in relations to England.\textsuperscript{13} While suburban expansion was not as extensive in Scotland the suburban aspiration was evident. In Denis Chapman’s survey of working class Scots and their housing preferences, around nearly two thirds of all married people wished for a self-contained home, a strong indication of changing living patterns in a nation where the majority were flat-dwellers.\textsuperscript{14} While it was admirable for Mass Observation’s \textit{People’s Homes} to urge planners to listen to people’s preferences, in the face of housing shortages the Scottish government’s housing report, \textit{Planning Our New Homes} in 1949 recognised that though self-contained homes were preferred it would not be possible to meet this expectation.\textsuperscript{15}

The inter-war expansion of suburban Britain for all tenures has significantly eroded the image of the homogenous, white, middle-class suburb. The relocation of urban dwellers to new municipal suburbs between the wars has been well documented in England. Domesticity in working-class suburbia was the subject of Judy Giles’ research looking at issues of respectability, consumption and homemaking.\textsuperscript{16} Peter Scott’s study includes a detailed analysis of the one-fifth of working-class suburban homeowners and takes a new approach to inter-war suburbia by focusing on private suburbs as well as public.\textsuperscript{17} The Scottish dimension is lacking in Scott’s work, possibly due to the lack of source material with only an estimated 5.9 per cent of working-class Scots being homeowners in 1937/8.\textsuperscript{18}

Both Scott and McKibbin agree that the development of private suburbia during the inter-war period did not create a new class of homeowners. McKibbin observes that the new housing stock and the builders’ pool system meant homeownership was now accessible to the middle-middle or lower-middle classes.\textsuperscript{19} The ‘pool’ system was an agreement between builders and building societies to provide long-term mortgages with only a low deposit required; making finance more accessible and cheaper. In the Glasgow area a four-apartment semi-detached bungalow in the 1930s cost £555 with a deposit of

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Denis Chapman, \textit{The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities, made for the Department of Health for Scotland} (London: s.n., 1943)
  \item \textit{Planning Our New Homes}, Report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the Design, Planning and Furnishing of New Houses, (Edinburgh HMSO, 1948)
  \item See Scott, \textit{Making of the Modern British Home}
  \item Ibid, p. 129
  \item McKibbin, \textit{Classes and Cultures}, p. 73
\end{enumerate}
£40 including legal fees. While Scott asserts that working-class homeowners retained their class identity, McKibbin argues that if they could afford to buy they were more likely to be lower middle-class to begin with. For Clapson, the aspiration to live a suburban home was middle-class based: The desire to live in area with other of the same class who symbolised by shared values and lifestyle choices. The diversity of the suburbs early to mid-twentieth century can be overlooked by the negative anti-suburban discourses found in both contemporary and recent media and scholarship. Therefore, buying a house in the suburbs was strongly associated with middle-class cultural and lifestyle aspirations. The studies discussed have investigated English suburbs. Scotland developed a different tenure pattern during this period.

Homeownership was much lower in Scotland than in England. A survey of Scottish workers for the Planning Our New Homes report asked: ‘Would you prefer to buy a house?’ The response was split down the middle, with 48 per cent saying “Yes” and 49 per cent replying “No” (3 per cent did not answer). In England and Wales, home ownership increased from 42 per cent in 1961 to 52 per cent by 1971. In contrast, in Scotland, it only grew from 25.2 per cent to 29.3 per cent over the same period. In 1971, Glasgow had below average home-ownership at only 25.7 per cent. While renting from the local authority increased from 38.1 per cent to 59.1 per cent over the same decade. Homeownership then, was not the typical experience in Scotland.

Scotland had a similar occupational structure to England during this period with the largest occupational group being skilled manual workers and the growth of junior non-manual jobs increasing between 1951-1971. A survey in the 1970s asking people to place themselves within a social class, revealed less Scots considered themselves middle-class than their English counterparts despite their shared occupational structures, just under a quarter compared to two fifths. This highlights the complexity of defining class by occupation as class-consciousness plays a significant role. However, husband’s occupation

20 Miles Glendinning and Diane Watters, eds., Home Builders: Mactaggart and Mickel and the Scottish Building Industry, (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1999), p. 64
21 Clapson, Suburban Century, p. 52
22 Clapson, ‘Suburban Aspiration’, p. 152
23 Planning Our New Homes, Appendix 3, pp. xxxi
24 General Household Survey, 1971, p. 91
26 Census for Scotland, 1971, Housing Report, pp. xviii
28 Foster, ‘Proletarian Nation’, p. 206
Chapter 2: Finding a House in Post-War Suburban Glasgow

is a useful way to stratify a household for the purpose of general analysis. Armstrong advocates occupational stratification stating:

Occupation may only be one variable in a comprehensive theory of class, but it is the variable which includes more, which sets more limits on the other variables, than any other criterion of status.29

Occupation can indicate a standard of living and a status associated with the job. Female occupation is problematic due to the nature of women’s work. The household did not establish itself based on a double income at this time.30 It will be shown through this study that wives’ earning were significant for class and status in the suburbs of Glasgow and its significance overlooked. There is little work investigating class based on tenure for the post-war period. Annette O’Carroll’s work in inter-war home ownership in Glasgow and Edinburgh found new homebuyers were coming from new professions such as white-collar workers, particularly clerical. The number of Glaswegians able to buy based on income was similar to Edinburgh yet Glasgow had a lower level of owner occupation. O’Carroll concludes that this may also be due to the good quality housing in Glasgow’s public and private rental sectors.31 In the oral history sample of Glasgow homeowners after 1945, the highest-ranking occupation was a self-employed businessman, three were rescue services and one teacher but the remaining nine were engineers or skilled manual workers, including two electricians. If these occupations were classed by the social class from the 1951 census, it would place most in Class III either manual or non-manual, apart from the small businessman who would be Class II. Using occupation as a general indication of social status would indicate that the sample group was a combination of lower-middle or upper working class.

The story of buying a house in this study was often portrayed as one of struggle and getting by. All had stable incomes except the electrician whose work was dependent on demand. McKibbin and Scott emphasise the importance of a regular steady income to buy a house, though McKibbin posits having this is a defining difference between the working and middle classes.32 The small businessman, Mr O’Connell, ran a family business and was supporting his wife and six children. He worked long hours and faced periods of

30 This will be discussed further in Chapter Three
32 McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, p. 71; Scott, Making of the Modern British Home, p. 129
financial uncertainty. The O’Connells were the only family in the study to live in a red sandstone 1920s terraced house, considerably larger and more expensive than other inter-war suburban housing. Mr O’Connell's middle-class status was not necessarily based on the stability of his job but rather on his occupation as an employer and the value of his house, regardless of how well decorated it was or whether they could afford a new or second hand television.\textsuperscript{33} The ‘suburban aspiration’ as defined by Clapson was attainable for many amongst the skilled working-classes in the inter-war period and after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{34} For this study, homebuyers were socially mobile, buying when their parents had previously rented, however many were on the boundary between classes.

**Post-war Britain and Scotland**

Between 1945-1975, Britain and Scotland changed dramatically, from a relatively stable country in which a young couple could marry and raise a family in improved living conditions to one with economic uncertainty, rising divorce rates, and worker revolt. This section will look in some detail at some of changes in British society impacted upon the family and the home in post-war Britain.

In 1945, British people looked towards the socialist left to rebuild Britain after the destruction of war, electing a Labour Government into Westminster. Through a programme of large-scale nationalisation, the foundation of the National Health Service and the construction of the Welfare State based on National Insurance in 1946, Labour did indeed take Britain into new era of active government. The dominance of Keynesian economic policy, by both Labour and successive Conservative governments until the 1970s, saw central government invest and spend on public welfare and works at a level never seen before. The period from 1945 until the 1970s has been referred to generally as an era of ‘consensus’ politics where neither Labour nor the Conservatives seemed to radically depart from their opponent’s policies.\textsuperscript{35} Immediately following the war, there was both a baby and marriage boom alongside lower infant mortality and increased life expectancy. A rise in real wages saw many, though by no means all, experience a rise in standards of living and the advent of a ‘consumer boom’ as well. However, this was not to last. From the late sixties into the seventies the British and Scottish economy entered a

\begin{itemize}
  \item Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
  \item Clapson, *Suburban Century*, pp. 54; 56
\end{itemize}

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rapid decline with rising inflation, the devaluation of the pound in 1967, the collapse of heavy industry and conflict between trade unions and central government culminating in the International Monetary Fund bailout of 1976.

Scotland had a different economic profile from the rest of Britain for the first half of the twentieth century. The dominance of staple industries such as cotton and spinning, shipbuilding, coal mining and engineering meant that there was less diversification in the Scottish economy. In 1913 a third of a million men, equalling about one quarter of the Scottish male labour force, were employed in interrelated heavy industries that were dependent upon the export market and international trade, especially within the Empire. Scotland was slow to adapt to changing economic conditions and, while rearmament in the build-up to the Second World War and the following post-war boom sustained these industries in the short term, the withdrawal of public monetary support meant that these industries began to fail in the 1970s. It was not until the 1970s that Scotland began to readjust its economy with the growth of the service sector and business and financial services. The difficult collapse of the major industries led to increasingly troubled times for many Scottish families. Towards the end of the period of this study, male unemployment was gradually increasing faster than the rest of Britain. At the beginning of the 1960s, 5 per cent of Scottish men were out of work and 3 per cent in Britain as a whole. By the start of the 1970s this had risen to 8.2 per cent in Scotland, 9.8 per cent in Glasgow, compared to 5.4 per cent in Britain.

The suburban house was made affordable to the rising number of affluent workers in the period between the war and after 1945. The husband’s income, as discussed, was the basis of homeownership. Stories of buying a house in this case-study were one of temporary financial struggle until women returned to work or men gained career advancement. While the social mobility of the suburban couple was evident in the impetuous that initially prompts them to buy a house, it is the progression of their lifecycle as a couple that moves them from a grey area between classes and become more comfortably situated among the middle-classes. Women’s work is a significant factor in this change in status. Whereas at the 1931 only 10 per cent of married women in Britain

37 Payne, ‘Economy’, p. 16
38 Ibid, p. 22
39 Ibid, p. 23
were engaged with the labour market, by 1972 they accounted for 47 per cent.\textsuperscript{41} Married women working had a significant impacted upon women’s and families lives.

As men began returning home from the front, women as wives and mothers in the home were seen as an essential part of homecoming and were encouraged to leave paid work. By 1947 two million women in Britain had left work to start families.\textsuperscript{42} Unlike the end of the First World War, Bruley notes there was ‘no wholesale removal of women workers’ and by the end of 1947 there was still more women in work than in mid-1939.\textsuperscript{43} The increased participation of married women in the labour market was a marked trend of the second half of the twentieth century. In Scotland the number of married women in occupations increased by 185 per cent between 1931 and 1951 and by 1971, two fifths of married women in Scotland were economically active.\textsuperscript{44} The main employment sector for all women in Scotland was the non-manual services sector, including occupations such as teachers, nurses, secretaries, retail assistants and clerical administrators. By 1971, seventy-five per cent of Scottish female workers were clustered in these occupations in the banking, insurance, and public sectors.\textsuperscript{45} Sexual segregation of work meant that women’s were largely consigned to low pay and low status occupations where training and career advancement were limited.\textsuperscript{46} The educational sector was popular as it allowed women to balance the demands of family life with paid work, particularly with regard to school hours. In Scotland between 1951 and 1981, the number of female teachers and nurses doubled.\textsuperscript{47} Lewis argues female occupations represent a continuation of their domestic roles in a public capacity often within the Welfare State.\textsuperscript{48}

Mydral and Klein identified a bi-modal work pattern among married women during this period.\textsuperscript{49} Women were leaving the workplace shortly after marrying and having their children closer together then returning to work once their children reached school age. This was evident in the 1971 Scottish Census, which showed less than a third of wives aged 25-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} Sue Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain since 1900}, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 122
\item Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain}, p. 120
\item Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain}, pp. 120-121
\item Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain}, p. 122
\item McIvor, “‘Gender Apartheid?’”, p. 198
\end{itemize}
29 in Scotland engaged with economic activity compared to over half of those aged 44-49.\textsuperscript{50} Married women’s relationship to work was largely dependent upon balancing their domestic responsibility. Dolly Smith Wilson’s research on post-war married women’s work and the ‘good mother’ suggests that part-time work offered an acceptable solution in an atmosphere dominated by strong discourses about mother-child bond.\textsuperscript{51} To accommodate the demands of pregnancy, caring for young children and school hours, women tended to dip in and out of employment and often took on part-time work. In 1943 the war time government introduced part-time schemes for war work which which suited many women as they could then continue to meet their domestic responsibilities.\textsuperscript{52} Among women in employment part-time work quadrupled during the 1950s and 1960s compared to pre-war levels.\textsuperscript{53} However, Joshi and Owen observe that the wording of census questionnaires about occupation and also the inconsistent definitions of what constituted part-time work meant that married women’s work was under-enumerated.\textsuperscript{54} Women’s work was complex and sporadic, often dependent upon the needs of the family either with regard to child-bearing, caring for children or financial support, this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

The suburb was associated with the small, private family. McKibbin found evidence that homeownership was associated with the declining birth rate between the wars.\textsuperscript{55} The birth rate was in decline just prior to the period of this study and alarm at the low birth rate in the early part of the twentieth century saw the Royal Commission on the Population set up in 1943. In 1901-5, England and Wales had around 28.2 live births per thousand of the population and Scotland 29.2. By 1936, this had declined to 14.7 in England and Wales with a slower fall in Scotland to 17.6.\textsuperscript{56} When the Royal Commission on Population reported in 1949, concerns about population were no longer as pressing as birth rates did in fact rise. There was a ‘baby boom’ in Scotland from 1952-1964, followed by a sharp fall in the birth rate between 1964 and 1978 as births went from 104,355 to

\textsuperscript{50} Census for Scotland, 1971, Population Tables, pp. xvii
\textsuperscript{51} See Dolly Smith Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain’, Twentieth Century British History, 17:2, 2006, pp. 206-229, p. 208; This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.
\textsuperscript{52} Sue Bruley, Women in Britain, p.96
\textsuperscript{53} Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 208
\textsuperscript{55} McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, p. 80
Scotland’s population actually fell by 1.4 per cent during 1961-1987, while England’s rose by 8.8 per cent and Northern Ireland’s increased by 10.4 per cent. During the twentieth century, advances in medical science, better nutrition, improved living conditions and the extension of welfare services and education about disease meant infant and maternal mortality significantly decreased. The discovery of penicillin greatly reduced post-partum death and most children now survived their childhood due to vaccination programmes starting in the 1920s.

Twentieth century families were getting smaller. At the beginning of the century, women had an average of six children throughout their life. By the 1930s, this had decreased to an average of two children when the mother was in her twenties. The Royal Commission on Population concluded that women were choosing to limit family size to achieve a better quality of life. One working-class mother told a Mass Observation social survey after the war, 'I don't think I'm being selfish not wanting more, but I've got other ideas for my children. I want them to have every opportunity so we can be proud of them.' All taking part in the oral history in this study had children. The largest family had six children but the most common family size was two or three children, with an average of 2.9. Family size remained low through the remainder of the century with only the spacing of children and the age of the mother changing after the 1970s. Better access to birth control, particularly oral contraception for married women through the National Health Service (extended to single women in 1968), meant that controlling family size was increasingly more reliable and in the hands of women, previous methods relied on male compliance. However, Thane posits social, cultural and economic changes in women’s lives had more impact on reduced family size and the birth rate, than birth control and the legalisation of the existing previously dangerous practice of abortion before 1967. This seems to be supported by Kate Fisher’s study of gender relations and birth control, where she found that the attitudes of both men and women placed the man in charge greatly undermining the assumption that women, whose bodies and everyday life were most significantly affected by pregnancy and child rearing, were in control of their own fertility.

57 Callum Brown, ‘Charting Everyday Experience’, in Lynn Abrams & Callum Brown, eds., A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2010), Figure 1.1, p. 21
59 Thane, ‘Population and the Family’, p. 47
60 Thane, ‘Population and the Family’, p. 44
61 Mass Observation quoted in Thane, ‘Population and Family’, p. 44
62 Thane, ‘Population and the Family’, p. 45
in the post-war period.\textsuperscript{64} So while the pill was important, Thane identifies the long-term trend in the rising use of birth control since the late nineteenth century as a crucial social change that changed women and girls expectations and experiences of life.\textsuperscript{65} During the period of this study, there were numerous changes in women’s lives throughout this period. Women were becoming better educated; married women were increasingly entering the workforce and improved standards of living and expectations of lifestyle meant that limiting family size could provide both children and themselves with a better quality of life.

During the immediate post-war period, in contrast to the suffrage campaigns and activism of the inter-war period, the feminism as movement did not seem as vigorous. After the gaining of partial suffrage in 1918, women’s organisations continued to flourish often focusing on single point issues such as health care, pensions and housing reforms.\textsuperscript{66} A wealth of legislation was passed in the 1920s due to the successful lobbying of women’s groups from divorce reform to state pensions for widowed mothers and the raising of the marriage age for both sexes to sixteen years of age.\textsuperscript{67} Thane argues that feminism in the 1950s and 1960s was not necessarily gone but ‘muted’.\textsuperscript{68} These decades were an era of conservatism and moderation with higher living standards for many. During the 1950s, women voters were largely Conservative, more than half polled in 1951 and 1955.\textsuperscript{69} Consequently, the Conservative Party to keep their female electorate happy by supporting some women’s issues, like equal pay in the public sector, that were not necessarily in line with their ideology of women in the home.\textsuperscript{70} Bruley observes that feminism was fragmented at this time, both individuals and organisations were committed to a separate but equal ideology that did not challenge gender divisions in society.\textsuperscript{71} Throughout 1969 local Women’s Liberations groups emerged around Britain. The beginning of Women’s Liberation Movement in Britain credited to a women’s conference held in 1970, originally a history conference, where delegates adopted four main demands: equal pay; equal education and opportunity; 24-hour nurseries; and free contraception and abortion on

\begin{footnotes}
\item[64] Kate Fisher, \textit{Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain}, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 11-12
\item[65] Thane, ‘What difference did the vote make?’, p. 281
\item[67] Thane, ‘What difference did the vote make?’, pp. 273-274
\item[68] Ibid, p. 277
\item[69] Ibid, p. 277
\item[70] Ibid
\item[71] Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain}, p. 145
\end{footnotes}
Chapter 2: Finding a House in Post-War Suburban Glasgow

demand.72 Yet before Second Wave Feminism really took hold in Britain, Thane notes that there was a wave of liberal legislation comparable with the surge of inter-war legislation in the 1920s.73 The Labour Party achieving power in 1964, 1966 and 1974 was significant on the passing of permissive legislation at this time. The legalisation of Abortion was passed with the support of male MPs.74 Women led campaigns throughout the 1960s resulted in a number of the reforms such as abortion, free birth control for all women, increased rights to marital property, equal parental rights with fathers and the setting up of the Equal Opportunities Commission in 1975.75 By the time the Women’s Liberation Movement became established, women’s lives were already undergoing transformations in particularly with regards to work, sexuality and family.

The number of men and women entering into marriage immediately after the war was however remarkably high creating a ‘marriage boom’ alongside the ‘baby boom’.76 Coontz argues that the long decade of the 1950s into the 1960s was the ‘golden age of marriage in the west.’77 Marriage rose sharply after the Second World War until it peaked in Great Britain in 1970, at 447,000. It then declined until by 1991 there was a 24 per cent drop in the number of marriages.78 In Scotland the number of married women had increased by 27.8 per cent since 1931, accounting for 56.6 per cent of the female population in 1951 as opposed to 48.6 per cent in 1931.79 This also explains the rise in births but not a rise in family size as more marriages created more families with fewer children.

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72 Ibid, p.149
73 Thane, ‘What difference did the vote make?’, p. 278
74 Ibid
75 Thane, ‘What difference did the vote make?’, p. 279
78 Marwick, ‘Social Trends’, p. 246
Chapter 2: Finding a House in Post-War Suburban Glasgow

Table 2.1: Marital Condition as a proportion per 1,000 in Scotland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Proportion per 1,000 Males over 15 years old</th>
<th>Proportion per 1,000 Females over 15 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>419 322 290 276</td>
<td>415 316 270 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>524 621 661 674</td>
<td>475 556 592 604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>56 54 46 43</td>
<td>109 122 131 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1 3 4 7</td>
<td>1 5 7 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for Scotland, 1971, ‘Population Tables’, Table 17

The table above shows the dramatic increase in the proportion of married men and women in Scotland after the war and it continued to grow steadily. In Scotland, the average household size fell from 4.62 in 1901 to 3.39 in 1951 and then to 3.16 person in 1961, a fall of 6 per cent.80 In the 1961 census, it was observed that the number of the households increased six times faster than the growth of the total population in the decade between censuses.81 The impact of the Divorce Act of 1969, effective from 1971, which allowed divorce based on ‘irredeemable differences’ led to dramatic increase in the divorce rate. In the 1970 as can be seen in Table 2.1.82

By the 1970s, attitudes towards marriage were changing both in terms of seeing it as a life-long commitment and containing parenthood. House buyer Mrs Barrett explained she had to bring her wedding forward in the 1960s: ‘we had to be married about eight months sooner than was anticipated so that we could move in married. One did not live together in the sixties. Oh, our families wouldn’t have let it anyway.’83 Throughout the 1970s, alongside an increased divorce rate, marriage rates fell and the number of co-habiting couples increased.84 This represents a significant shift in social attitudes towards marriage during the period. By the end of the twentieth century co-habitation was becoming more acceptable, though often as a precursor to marriage.85 After 1970 marriage...

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82 Marwick, ‘Social Trends’, p. 246
83 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
as a basis for parenthood also became less certain. Lewis argues that parenthood and marriage became separated as the number of children born outside marriage rose. In Scotland, illegitimacy fell during the two decades after the war reaching a low of 4.1 per cent in 1957 and 1958. Brown observes that the low illegitimacy rate during the 1950s indicates something of the moral climate at that time. By the mid 1970s, there was a sharp rise in the number of children being born outside marriage in Britain indicating a change in attitudes towards single parenting, notable the decline of the term ‘illegitimate’. Towards the end of the period of this study, it is clear that marriage and the family had undergone radical changes, altering people’s everyday experience as they began to live in increasingly complicated households and family compositions. Therefore, this study is grounded in a distinct period of marital stability, a time when there was a large number of young people experiencing marriage and starting a family, creating an interesting snap-shot of British life prior to the uncertain times of the 1970s.

**Household Consumption**

The suburban home was specifically associated with consumption. Peter Scott argues that in the suburbs there was form of competitive consumption between suburbanites. Mark Abrams in his depiction of the ‘Home-centred Society’ equated mass consumption of household goods like televisions and vacuum cleaners as part of the definition of the modern family home in the late 1950s. In the 1960s consumer expenditure in Scotland grew faster than in Great Britain as whole due to greater stability of prices in Scotland. Both in Scotland and Britain people were spending more on leisure items than on essentials such as food, fuel and light. There was a sharp increase in consumer spending on durable goods between 1964 and 1967, largely due to more money being spent on furniture and floor coverings, while spending on electrical goods from radios and television to household appliances grew at a steadier rate by comparison. By the mid 1970s, across all social classes, television ownership in Scotland was almost

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86 Lewis, *Women and Social Change*, p. 267
87 Brown, *Charting Everyday Experience*, p. 21
88 Ibid
89 Lewis, *Women and Social Change*, p. 267
90 Scott, *Making of the British Modern Home*, pp. 137-139
93 Begg et al., *Expenditure in Scotland*, p. 95
94 Begg et al., *Expenditure in Scotland*, Table 4, 'Consumer expenditure at constant 1963 prices'
universal at 96 per cent.\textsuperscript{95} In the study group all had a television by the early 1960s; a couple bought theirs second hand and one was rented.\textsuperscript{96}

Household appliances was where the home became a site of modernity. The influx of science and industry into the home meant that women had to become machine operators in their kitchens. At the close of the Second World War, an overwhelming 90 per cent of Scottish workers wanted a refrigerator in their home.\textsuperscript{97} This was largely realised by 1976 where 88 per cent had a refrigerator compared with only 71 per cent owning a washing machine.\textsuperscript{98} Owner occupiers had more consumer durables in their homes than those renting either from the local authority or a New Town by the end of our period. Refrigerators were present in 93 per cent of bought homes compared to 83 per cent of those who rented from local authority or a resident in a New Town and 79 per cent of other renters.\textsuperscript{99} In the sample group for this study, the most common experience was to buy a washing machine first and a refrigerator second but usually within a couple of years of each other. By the late 1960s, all except one recalled having both a refrigerator and washing machine.\textsuperscript{100} By 1976, nearly two thirds of unskilled manual workers had a washing machine in their home compared to just under three quarters of semi-skilled manual and personal service workers.\textsuperscript{101} Domestic appliances were making their way in increasing numbers into homes throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Suburban homes were often built with a garage or space for a driveway. This implies that this is a feature of suburban life. Car ownership rose significantly during this period with government investing in city by-passes and ring roads. Spending on cars in Scotland rose during the 1960s from £25 million in 1963 to peak at £66.3 million in 1967.\textsuperscript{102} The number of households with a car in Scotland was around half of all households by 1981.\textsuperscript{103} Car ownership in 1976 was higher among owner-occupiers at 55 per cent, whereas those who rented privately had a higher car ownership at 38 per cent.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{95}] General Household Survey, 1976, (London: HMSO, 1976), Table 5.36, p. 148
\item[\textsuperscript{96}] Second hand TVs were bought by Mr and Mrs O’Connell interviewed 19/03/2009 and Mrs and Mrs Webster, interviewed 08/11/2010; Mr and Mrs Travis rented their TV before eventually buying, interviewed 12/03/2009
\item[\textsuperscript{97}] Planning Our New Homes, Appendix 3, p. xxvi
\item[\textsuperscript{98}] General Household Survey, 1976, Table 5.36, p. 148
\item[\textsuperscript{99}] Ibid
\item[\textsuperscript{100}] Mr and Mrs Webster could not recall having one by the late 1960s. Mrs Webster habit of daily shopping meant they did not feel they needed one earlier. Interview with Mr and Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010
\item[\textsuperscript{101}] Ibid
\item[\textsuperscript{102}] Begg et al, Expenditure in Scotland, Table 4,
\item[\textsuperscript{103}] Figures calculated from Census for Scotland, 1971 and Census for Scotland, 1981
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
compared to 33 per cent who rented from a local authority or New Town.\textsuperscript{104} Among homeowners, car ownership markedly increased from 45.7 per cent in 1971 to 73.9 per cent by 1981 whereas access to a car actually fell among those renting in the public sector from 38.6 to 36.9 per cent.\textsuperscript{105} As homeownership only increased by 6.7 per cent during the same period, it was more likely other factors influenced this dramatic increase in car ownership among homeowners.\textsuperscript{106} In the 1971 Census, car ownership in the Renfrewshire County First District, which was largely made up of suburban enclaves, was 96.2 per cent. Amongst the suburbanites from this study, six of the thirteen homes had a car. Five had access to a car by 1960, apart from Mrs Connor who married in 1972.\textsuperscript{107} With good transport links into the city car ownership, while higher among homebuyers, was not always regarded as a necessity.

The relative stability of the 1950s and 1960s in marriage and the increase in material living standard created a distinct context for those setting up home. Consumerism was on the rise, despite economic concerns, as increasing numbers of small and large appliances found their way into British homes. Owner-occupiers were consuming more than their rental counterparts, which is particularly evident in the rise of car ownership in the suburbs. Clearly, there are differences between those who rent and those who buy in terms of spending power. The next section will present a case study of Glasgow’s suburban expansion to provide a location for this study.

**Glasgow’s Suburban Development**

The location of this study is suburban Glasgow in the mid twentieth century. Glasgow had a complex suburban landscape. The city is an interesting case study as the municipal government from 1919 until the mid 1970s pursued its own large-scale housing projects both within the inner city and up to the its boundaries. Surrounding the city there is a diverse collection of housing schemes and estates, from the municipal garden suburbs of Mosspark and Knightswood to the large-scale peripheral estates of Castlemilk, Easterhouse and Drumchapel. Private suburbs were relatively small in scale compared the city council’s activities and, more often than not, homebuyers found homes just beyond the

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\textsuperscript{104} Table 5.35, General Household Survey, 1976, p. 147
\textsuperscript{105} Figures calculated from Census for Scotland, 1971 and 1981
\textsuperscript{106} Figures from Census for Scotland, 1971 and 1981
\textsuperscript{107} Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
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city’s boundary. This section will examine what the suburb means in the context of this study and say something about who was buying homes in suburban Glasgow.

The twentieth century suburb has its ideological and physical roots in the urbanisation of the nineteenth century. In Glasgow, and throughout Britain, as the industrial age gathered pace, waves of people were drawn to the cities to take advantage of the booming economy. Over the nineteenth century, Glasgow’s population increased from 202,426 in 1811 to 784,496 by 1911.\(^{108}\) Between 1830 and 1912 the city altered its boundary eleven times increasing its acreage tenfold from 1,864 acres to 19,183 acres.\(^{109}\) Housing the influx of workers was difficult and creating a legacy that endured well into twentieth century. Glasgow became infamous as the slum of Europe, noted for its overcrowding, poverty, dirt and disease. Socialist Thomas Bell, who grew up in the East End of Glasgow in the late 1800s, observed that in all his travels he had seen ‘nothing… to compare with the slums of Glasgow.’\(^{110}\) Housing was central to the city’s problems and remained a critical issue into the twentieth century. David Stenhouse, the city’s Town Clerk, commented in 1931, and again in 1934, that housing of the population in this city is the paramount problem which faces the Town Council.\(^{111}\)

Glasgow was a compact city as it entered the nineteenth century contained within its ancient burgh boundary.\(^{112}\) As industry grew the experience of living in the medieval centre diminished due to the smoke and dirt. Glasgow’s middle class followed the residential pattern established in other major British cities and began to move west away from the pollution.\(^{113}\) These suburbs were dependent upon the city for economic and cultural sustenance. Burnett states that, ‘the growth of suburbs was the characteristic and inevitable form of urban development in the later half of the [nineteenth century], and produced what was perhaps the greatest single change in living habits of the English


\(^{110}\) Thomas Bell, *Pioneering Days*, (London, 1941), p. 18

\(^{111}\) David Stenhouse, *Glasgow: Its Municipal Undertakings and Enterprises*, (Glasgow: Corporation of Glasgow, 1931), p. 115; David Stenhouse restated this in his revised account of the municipality in 1934, David Stenhouse, *A Short Account of the Municipal Undertakings of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow: Corporation of Glasgow, 1934), p. 130

\(^{112}\) Michael Pacione, *Glasgow: the Socio-Spatial Development of the City*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), p. 189

people since the industrial revolution.’114 While this statement is about the English experience, middle-class Scots embraced the ‘flight to the suburbs’ just as eagerly as their southern counterparts. As the nineteenth century drew to close, a new residential pattern of living in suburbs was established.

The prosperous city continually caught up with its suburban escapees and residential settlement was pushed further and further west. Glasgow’s West End grew rapidly throughout the 1870s as tenements began to fill in the gaps between sporadic early developments.115 The separation of work and home was only possible due to improved communication links with the city, notably transportation. Great Western Road, started in 1836 and completed in 1841, late and over budget, was central to the growth of the Victorian suburbs to the West End of Glasgow, providing an important lifeline to the city.116 The cost of commuting during this period meant that only those who could afford the season ticket could reside in these new areas. In the south-side of Glasgow, Sir John Maxwell of Pollok, encouraged by the success of Victorian suburbs in the West End, laid out his land into two distinct residential areas. Pollokshields East was planned as tenements for the lower middle-classes while Pollokshields West was made up of large villas to house the upper classes.117 Many of the new suburban areas were not within the city boundary at this time. Glasgow pursued its suburban neighbours to join its jurisdiction. In the late nineteenth century, the Town Council was preoccupied with creating ‘Greater Glasgow’.118 City Chamberlain, James Nicol reflected this agenda in 1885 when he wrote, ‘[T]he limits of the city have for a quarter of a century, been totally inadequate to admit the development required, and demanded by a population more ordinarily rigorous and progressive.’119

The first major boundary expansion in 1846 included areas surrounding the inner city, such as the Barony of Gorbals and the weaver villages of Calton and Anderston.120

116 Gordon Urquhart’s illustrated work Along Great Western Road provides a good account of the development of the area surrounding the road and its significant in peripheral expansion. Gordon Urquhart, Along Great Western Road: an Illustrated History of Glasgow’s West End, Second Edition, (Ochiltree, Ayrshire: Stenlake, 2000)
117 Reed, ‘The Victorian Suburb’, p. 77
120 Pacione, Glasgow, pp. 191-192
Under the Police Burgh Act, first passed in 1833 and amended throughout the century, any burgh or populous area could by poll establish itself as a police burgh. Most of the nine Police Burghs enveloping the city were middle-class suburbs and were desirable to the city council as a source of tax revenue. Some Glaswegians resented the burghs using the city’s facilities, such as the West End Park, without paying for them. In 1890, an attempt to bring these areas into the city boundary failed due to local resistance but the following year successful integration was achieved with only Govan, Partick, Pollokshaws and Cathcart holding out until 1912. Glasgow’s problems with its wealthier middle-class suburbs persisted into the twentieth century when in 1975 Glasgow argued it had outgrown its parliamentary boundary and proposed the middle-class suburbs of Bearsden, Milngavie and Bishopbriggs to the north and Newton Mearns, Giffnock and Rutherglen to the south along with Clydebank on the river to the west be absorbed into the city. Local opposition was once again strong, resulting in only Rutherglen being annexed at that time.

Figure 2.1: Main Stages of the extension of Glasgow City Boundaries
Source: Pacione, Glasgow, p. 190

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121 3 & 4 William IV, c.77
122 Urquhart, Along Great Western Road, p. 40
123 Pacione, Glasgow, p. 191
124 Ibid, p. 192
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The story of the private sector is closely connected to the role of public housing in the creation of the urban and suburban landscape. The legacy of rapid urbanisation in the nineteenth century left British cities overcrowded, dirty and unhealthy, generally creating poor living conditions for urban dwellers.\footnote{For an account of Glasgow’s industrial growth see Richard Rodger, ‘The Labour Force’, in Irene Maver & Hamish Fraser, eds., 
*Glasgow Volume II, 1830-1912*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Pacione, Glasgow pp. 108-129} Density in Glasgow increased from 78 persons per acre in 1861 to 93 per acre in 1891.\footnote{Morgan, ‘Building the City’, p. 10} Glasgow’s growing international reputation as a slum city led the municipal council to intervene in urban planning.\footnote{For a detailed account of the council’s attempts to improve the slum conditions see Edward, ‘Glasgow Improvements, 1866-1901’ in Peter Reed, ed., *Glasgow: the Forming of the City*, Second Edition, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999)} The work of City Improvement Trust (1866) saw the inner city slums in the medieval centre of the city demolished but not rebuilt. Instead much of the cleared areas were claimed by the growing railway industry, in which numerous city councillors had financial interests.\footnote{Edward, ‘Glasgow Improvements’, pp. 94; 101} The Trust did not actually build houses at this time. Instead, its clearances compounded the city’s problems by dislocating around 50,000 people, only rehousing around 36 per cent.\footnote{Sidney Checkland, ‘The British Industrial City: The Glasgow case’, in *Urban Studies* 1 (1964), p. 46} The reconstruction of the Old Town for commerce and industry may have reflected the growing wealth of the modern city but neglected its workers.\footnote{Edward, ‘Glasgow Improvements’, pp. 85-86} The housing issues created at this point in Glasgow’s history left a legacy into the twentieth century that would shape the city’s fringes.

In the nineteenth century, private building in Glasgow was largely piecemeal. Private builders would feu parcels of land to build tenements for the rental market. This meant that the production of housing was dependent on speculation and the economic climate. According to Morgan, in the mid nineteenth century a builder could set up shop with as little as £70.\footnote{Morgan, ‘Building the City’, p. 27} The crash of the City of Glasgow bank in 1878 caused repercussions throughout the city. As a direct result, two-thirds of the city’s builders were sequestered and it was some time before property prices recovered.\footnote{Ibid} The end of the building boom forced the Improvement Trust to start building for itself in the 1880s, however this process was slow, limited in quantity and too high quality for the poor to

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 afford.\textsuperscript{133} The building trades ranks were further thinned when the 1909-1910 ‘People’s Budget’ introduced a 20 per cent tax on heritable property making holding land for speculation expensive.\textsuperscript{134}

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Glasgow was a city of renters; in 1911 only 1.8 per cent of the housing stock was owner occupied.\textsuperscript{135} In the Victorian suburbs the story was dramatically different, in Pollokshields and Langside in the south of the city nearly half of the homes were lived in by their owners.\textsuperscript{136} By the turn of the century, housing provision had declined and the problem of housing the people came under review. During World War One, rent control was introduced after the Rent Strikes and extended in 1919, limiting the profitability of the rental sector.\textsuperscript{137} In 1918, over two thirds of Glaswegians lived in houses with only one or two rooms.\textsuperscript{138} The Ballantyne Commission (1918), named after the committee’s chairperson Sir Henry Ballantyne, had gathered evidence on the state of Scotland’s housing and reported that a radical new approach was now needed.\textsuperscript{139} It concluded that the current system, based on private enterprise, was failing to provide homes for working Scots and therefore the municipality should step in to create affordable homes for rental.\textsuperscript{140} The traditional Scottish tenement, with its association with overcrowding and disease, was abandoned and new designs influenced by the English Garden City Movement were preferred. Garden City design stressed low density, cottage style housing arranged around open spaces with curved streets.\textsuperscript{141} Over the next two decades a series of housing acts subsidised municipal building and to some extent private sector housing.

After the First World War, the Housing and Town Planning, etc. (Scotland) Act (1919), known as the Addison Act, followed the recommendations of the Ballantyne Report by empowering councils to start building with the government subsidising the

\textsuperscript{133} Pacione, Glasgow, p. 129; Edward, ‘Glasgow Improvements’, p. 96
\textsuperscript{135} Morgan, ‘Building the City’, p. 37
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, p. 38
\textsuperscript{139} Report of the Royal Commission on the housing of the industrial population of Scotland, rural and urban (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1918)
\textsuperscript{140} Ballantyne Commission
\textsuperscript{141} Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 18
deficit. The Corporation of Glasgow laid out an ambitious plan to build 57,000 houses at a low density of twelve cottages per acre or twenty-four tenements. A three tier housing system was created in Glasgow using housing subsidies. The first stage was known as ‘ordinary’ housing. These estates were made up of low density, semi-detached houses designed along garden suburb lines and were populated by working class elites or lower middle-classes. In one estate, Mosspark, only 18 per cent of the first residents were manual workers. ‘Intermediate’ housing schemes were mostly houses but in lesser style and layout than the ordinary garden suburbs. The cheapest council schemes were known as ‘rehousing’ due to the fact they were for those dislocated under slum clearance around the inner city and were heavily criticised for being poor quality and unattractive. By 1939, the council had created 50,277 new homes, around seven thousand short of its target and one third of its citizens still lived in cramped conditions. Overcrowding was still prevalent due to the inadequate size of the new properties being built. This was evident in 1934 when Stenhouse noted that the ordinary housing schemes had no two apartment homes. In comparison in the rehousing areas 42 per cent were two-apartment, 52 per cent were three-apartment and only 6 per cent were four-apartment housing, albeit an improvement from 1931 when there were no four-apartments. For the whole of Scotland 73.7 per cent of homes built by local authorities from 1919-1939 were three-apartments or less, compared to only 19.7 per cent in England. The authors of the housing report Planning Our New Homes (1947) recognised the achievements of inter-war programmes in improving general living conditions but was critical of houses’ inadequate size.

Under the new housing acts of the inter-war period, while the councils were given the means to build, they did not have the infrastructure or expertise to embark on large-scale projects and had to rely upon private builders as contractors. Mactaggart & Company dominated municipal contracting in Glasgow and the West, undertaking the Corporation’s largest social housing project built under the 1919 Housing Act, Mosspark.

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142 Morgan, “‘£8 cottages’”, p. 125
144 Pacione, Glasgow, pp. 158-159
145 Morgan, “‘£8 cottages’”, p. 142
146 Ibid, p. 141
148 Stenhouse, Short Account of Glasgow, 1934, p. 140, Stenhouse, Glasgow, 1931, p. 124
149 Planning Our New Homes: a report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the design, planning and furnishing of new homes (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1948), pp. 18-19
150 Planning Our New Homes, p. 10
151 Morgan, ‘£8 cottages’, p. 132
The 1920s climate of housing subsidies created a complex building industry in Scotland. In response, house builder John Mactaggart dissolved his company into two specialised firms. The first, the Western Heritable Company focused on building four-in-a-block ‘cottage flats’ for private rental using the 1923 Housing Act subsidies, and the second, Mactaggart and Mickel Company was created to concentrate on the speculative market but also contracted for the Western Heritable until the end of state subsidies in 1934. Mactaggart and Mickel were able to use the 1920s housing subsidies to establish themselves as homebuilders enabling them to sell at competitive prices and secure capital. Large scale public sector activity meant that of Scotland’s total housing output during 1918-1939 only 32 per cent were being built for the private sector, compared to 72 per cent in England and Wales; Glasgow’s output was 27 per cent compared to Edinburgh at 66 per cent.

All these activities, both public and private, took place on the edges of the city. City boundary extension throughout the period 1926-1938 was focused on acquiring land.
for municipal projects. Most of the new land was undeveloped and skewed the density statistics for the city at this time.\textsuperscript{155} Private companies had to compete with the council to buy land and getting building consent was a difficult process, therefore, many looked outwith the city boundary to stake out their territory. During the inter-war period, Glasgow had the highest local rates in Scotland, making it cheaper to live outside the city boundary. In 1934, the owner of a home valued for rating at £35 p.a. would have paid an annual rate of £10 5s 10d in Glasgow compared to £5 2s 1d in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{156} In 1931/32, a homebuyer in Kelvinside, Glasgow could expect to pay yearly rates of £12 3s 4d, compared to £8 10s ½d for Netherlee Park in Renfrewshire.\textsuperscript{157} The new suburban estate were built exclusively for purchase. Mactaggart and Mickel were one of the most prolific builders of homes in the south west of the city. The English building society system enabled them to provide affordable homes through good loan rates and terms.\textsuperscript{158} Through the inter-war period, diverse housing estates, both private and municipal, began to emerge in and around the city’s boundary. Private suburbs were easily identifiable as semi-detached houses and bungalows began to colonise the countryside as those who could afford to moved out to new suburbs.

After the Second World War, the state continued to subsidise housing. Labour and building shortages in the aftermath of war meant that building was expensive. The 1946 Housing Act doubled existing subsidies to the public sector and, in 1947, there was a ban on building new houses until all existing ones were completed.\textsuperscript{159} In light of this, the private sector resumed contracting for the council.\textsuperscript{160} Adequate housing provision was still critical in Glasgow. In 1951, the city accounted for 21.4 per cent of Scotland’s population but only 0.2 per cent of her area.\textsuperscript{161} Pacione estimates that in the centre of the city 700,000 people lived on 1,800 acres.\textsuperscript{162} Despite the volume of building in the 1920s and 1930s, Glasgow Corporation had 90,000 families on their waiting list.\textsuperscript{163} Modernising Our New Homes, a report by the Scottish Housing Committee addressed the poor condition of

\textsuperscript{155} Pacione, Glasgow, p. 192
\textsuperscript{156} O’Carroll, ‘Local Authorities’, p. 63
\textsuperscript{157} Sales Department Memo Book, Mactaggart & Mickel Archive, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), MMX/1527
\textsuperscript{158} Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 62
\textsuperscript{160} Glendinning, ‘Prefabs’, p. 233
\textsuperscript{162} Pacione, Glasgow, p. 161
Scottish housing. The report advocated the improvement of existing housing stock for the rental of single and elderly persons in recognition of the large number of existing housing stock with only one or two rooms.\textsuperscript{164} Houses would be modernised to 'provide the amenities of a modern house' with 'amenities' defined as the 'sanitary and kitchen equipment and fittings, heating and lighting equipment which are labour saving, easily cleaned, are attractive in appearance and meet the requirements of a modern household', acknowledging that one third of Scottish housing was 'seriously deficient' in sanitary and modern conveniences.\textsuperscript{165} After the Second World War, the number of rooms per house in Scotland had increased from an average of 3.22 rooms in 1931 to 3.37 rooms in 1951. However, Glasgow’s housing stock remained inadequate, comprised of 45.2 per cent one-room houses and 29.5 per cent two rooms, making the average number of room 2.82 in the city.\textsuperscript{166} In contrast, Scotland’s other three major cities, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, combined had 16.1 per cent one room houses and 18.3 per cent two roomed houses.\textsuperscript{167} Access to amenities had improved in Glasgow with the majority having exclusive access to piped water, a cooking stove and a kitchen sink, though over one third shared a W.C. and around half had no access to a fixed bath.\textsuperscript{168} There was still a housing shortage and too many houses below acceptable modern living standards. Inter-war building accounted for over a quarter of Scotland’s 1.3 million housing stock in 1948, with only one hundred thousand of that number built by the private sector.\textsuperscript{169} The inter-war housing was too small and poorly equipped by the new modern standards set by the Planning Our New Homes report.\textsuperscript{170} New homes were needed in Scotland to replace 'unfit' housing and reduce overcrowding due to the inferior size of existing houses. The rush of marriages during the war meant that many new families were starting out living with their in-laws due to housing shortages.\textsuperscript{171} While the housing in the inter-war suburbs was to a good standard, the criticism about modernising this stock to meet changed notion of a modern home is something which homeowners were engaged in.

\textsuperscript{164} New house building activities would focus on larger three or four room houses for families as outlined in Planning Our New Homes housing report, Modernising Our Homes: Report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1947), p. 29
\textsuperscript{165} Modernising Our Homes, p. 11
\textsuperscript{166} Census for Scotland 1951, Vol. 2, p. liii
\textsuperscript{167} Census for Scotland, 1951, Vol. 2, pp. iii; li
\textsuperscript{168} Census for Scotland, 1951, Vol. 2, Table 58
\textsuperscript{169} Planning Our New Homes, p. 10
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid
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Glasgow city council after 1945 engaged in vigorous housing programmes. The council kept the land in the city for its own use as it built up an impressive portfolio of rental stock. The quantity of housing stock built up by the council during this period of Glasgow history is illustrated by the change in the rental market, where in the period between 1911-1971 the council rental stock increased from 8 per cent to 77 per cent whereas the private rental sector decreased from 83 per cent to 16 per cent. Consequently, housing initiatives by both central and local governments did improve the living conditions of all Scots throughout this period. By 1961, the number of one or two room houses in Scotland as a whole had fallen further to just under one-fifth while the number of three and four room houses had risen by a third. Housing density had decreased further to 0.93 person per room, though Glasgow was observed to have 22 per cent of its population continuing to live in overcrowded households, twice the incidence of each of the other three Scottish cities. The impact of local authority activity on the size of houses in Scotland is shown below in Table 2.2. In 1961, there was a lower level of one or two room houses being rented from the local authority compared with the private rental sector and those who bought their homes.

Table 2.2: Tenure and Dwelling Size, 1961

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dwelling Size no. of rooms</th>
<th>Owner Occupied</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Privately Rented</th>
<th>Other Tenures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
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<td>25.3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>6 and over</td>
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<td>Median Room Size</td>
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<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for Scotland, 1961, Vol. 4, p. xxiii

By 1971, access to amenities was better in local authority and New Town housing than in the private sector. Almost all local authority tenants had access to a fixed bath at 98 per

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172 Pacione, Glasgow, p. 166
174 Census for Scotland, 1961, Vol. 4, p. lxiii
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cent while 14 per cent of owner-occupiers did not.\textsuperscript{175} The impact of public sector housing during this period in Glasgow and Scotland was clear. Living conditions improved for many and Glasgow Corporation became the city’s biggest landlord creating an infrastructure to support it. Homeownership was consequently low. In 1991, only 37 per cent of Glaswegians owned their homes compared to 66 per cent in Edinburgh and 52 per cent of Scotland as whole.\textsuperscript{176} With restricted private sector activity during this period, buying houses not flats built after 1919 was confined to a small number of areas.

The Buyers' Market

During the period of this study, 1945-1975, the choice of where to buy a home was limited. As we have seen, there was minimal private sector building due to post-war restrictions and new local and central government projects. The sprawl of the city was checked by the greenbelt policy leaving little room for developments within a reasonable commutable distance to the city centre. Therefore, if purchasers wanted to buy a house during this period they were limited to the same stock as their inter-war predecessors. As discussed, the 1930s was a period of large-scale suburban expansion throughout Britain, leaving a strong and identifiable suburban landscape.

The Conservatives regained power with Winston Churchill once again elected as Prime Minister in October 1951 and remaining in power for over a decade until 1964. Churchill’s government promised 300,000 new homes to be built. With Harold Macmillan as Housing Secretary this was exceeded by 1953.\textsuperscript{177} Private builders began newspaper campaigns to ‘free the builder’ directed at the new Conservative government and by November 1951 the proportion of total output by speculative builders was raised to twenty per cent with maximum prices and sizes still fixed (though this was increased from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet).\textsuperscript{178} Architect Richard Betham described what the change in size meant to his housing design to \textit{Good Housekeeping} in 1952:

To take advantage of this change it was decided to enlarge the rectangular part of the house to give more room space, and to build the wing containing the fuel store, lavatory and lobby at the same time as the house instead of as an

\textsuperscript{175} \textit{Census for Scotland, 1971, Housing Report}, p. xviii
\textsuperscript{176} O’Carroll, ‘Local Authorities’, Table 1, p. 56
\textsuperscript{178} Glendinning & Watters, \textit{Home Builders}, p. 121
addition, as it was first intended. The floor area without the garage is now 1,415 sq. ft. 179

These changes in legislation were slow to filter down to local government level. Labour led councils were dependent upon the council tenant vote, therefore they used housing subsidies to keep rents low and fund their own building programmes, this practice was not successfully restricted by central government until 1971 under Edward Heath. 180 Glasgow Corporation was mostly led by the ‘socialist’ Labour Party and continued a policy of successfully restricting and blocking speculative builders to pursue their own municipal projects. The Progressive Party (Conservatives) briefly took control of Glasgow Corporation in 1949. In contrast to its socialist predecessor, the Progressives announced five hundred new private houses would be built in Glasgow. 181 With a Conservative government in Westminster promoting private building from 1951, house builders were feeling optimistic in the 1950s. While the promising start in Glasgow was hindered by the reassertion of control by the Labour Party, Glasgow Corporation did begin to grant private building licences in the south and the west of the city, though not on the scale of the 1930s suburban estates.

For Glasgow, the area surrounding its southwest boundary was mostly formed in the 1930s due the prolific work of builders such as Mactaggart and Mickel and John Lawrence. In the early 1960s, the large-scale growth of residential areas transformed the arable lands of the county of Renfrewshire. 182 Thain described the nature of the area in 1961: ‘It is now essentially a suburb of Glasgow, a pleasant place to live in, well served by transport and liable for inexpensive county rates and comparatively low assessments.’ 183 A phrase used to describe these areas during this period was ‘dormitory suburb’, implying that the areas were simply commuter bunks for those who worked in the city. 184 By 1962, areas of Netherlee, Stamperland and Clarkston were described as ‘entirely’ made up of private housing occupied by their owners. 185 The occupants of the parishes of Cathcart and Eastwood were observed to be ‘predominantly clerical, professional and commercial,

179 ‘A House to Build Today’, Good Housekeeping, April 1952, p. 82
180 Rao, ‘Local Government’, p. 204
181 Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 120
183 Thain, ‘Health and Housing’, p. 90
184 Thain, ‘Health and Housing’, p. 91; Mr Alex Aiken, ‘6. Post-war Giffnock- A Dormitory Suburb’, Giffnock Heritage Centre, (n.d)
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house owning and house-proud, with a large proportion of children and young people, who are well looked after materially, socially and educationally.\(^{186}\)

To evaluate suburban homeownership in the twentieth century it was decided that homes built since 1919 would be studied as this represents a watershed in housing in Scotland. The number of traditional style sandstone tenements being built was greatly reduced as both private and some public developments focused on low-density housing. For private suburbs, housing after 1919 represented a diversification in the character of housing but also in the socio-economic status of new suburban homeowners. Interviewees lived in twenty-eight houses between 1945-1975, with nineteen meeting the criteria for the study in terms of area and year built. The areas chosen to recruit the interview sample from were suburbs built after 1919 to the south of the city.

Table 2.3: Areas houses were located from the sample group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas (houses only)</th>
<th>No of Houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simshill</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkston</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's Park</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giffnock</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croftfoot</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muirend</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornliebank</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopbriggs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambuslang</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simshill and Clarkston were well represented due to recruitment from local groups in these areas, whereas the rest were through personal contacts. The map below shows the location of the sampled areas. Simshill, King’s Park, Muirend and Croftfoot are all at the edge of the city boundary with the remaining areas just on the periphery of the city in Renfrewshire. Only nine of the houses were not built by the house builder Mactaggart and Mickel. The Western Heritable, a branch of the Mactaggart family business, built subsidised rental properties during the inter-war period.\(^{187}\) Four houses were bought from the Western Heritable who amidst opposition from the council sold its vast rental stock.\(^{188}\)

\(^{186}\) Reston, ‘Eastwood and Cathcart’, p. 383
\(^{187}\) Glendinning & Watters, *Home Builders*, p. 23
\(^{188}\) Ibid, pp. 122-123
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Between 1927 and 1944 Mactaggart and Mickel contracted for the Western Heritable, building 6,042 houses under the 1924 Wheatley Act subsidies in Kelvinside to the West of the city of Glasgow and in the south Cardonald and the neighbouring estates of Croftfoot and King’s Park. These flatted houses were included not only due to their suburban location but also their entrance into the buyer’s market in 1953 created homes for purchase that simply were not being built at that time due to the Glasgow Corporation’s restrictive social housing policies and limited land availability. We will consider the two most represented areas in the interviews to present a short case study of Glasgow suburbs.

Figure 2.3: Map of Glasgow showing residential areas with study suburbs shaded
Source: Created from Ordinance Survey Map, 1961 by Yvonne McFadden

189 ibid, p. 50
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Clarkston

The area of Clarkston was mostly farmland until it was developed in the 1930s. Just outside the Glasgow boundary, it was organised around a central shopping precinct, known as the Clarkston Toll, it was well connected by rail, tram and then later bus links to city centre. Two builders developed the Carolside estate in the late 1930s. Building was stopped during the war and finished afterwards. Mactaggart and Mickel started building houses there in 1934 and, when completed in 1960, their section of the estate had 1,561 houses. In 1934, the company constructed two show homes inside Glasgow Central Station to emphasis the suburb’s connections to the city. Potential buyers could view the houses and then get the train out to visit the area. The quasi-rural location was used to appeal to young families.

Clarkston resident, Mrs Brown bought a newly built John Lawrence house in 1954 in the large Carolside estate and here explains differences between the housing:

The ones at the back there and the one next door, not through the wall but the next one, all these houses there were bigger. Their small room was bigger, the whole house overall was about two, two and half feet wider and deeper and they had bigger windows and bay. That was Mactaggart and Mickel bought them, eh sold those. The ones from the other side of the road all up, there’s only a short bit on the other side of the road and then a lot of the houses further up on this side, they were built by Lawrence and they were as I say the size this was. With a round window for the little room, the box room, just a round, like a porthole and their hall was different, the doors were different.

On first approach, the houses appear remarkably similar but from Mrs Brown’s testimony there were slight differences in size and detail to suit a variety of budgets. The advertisement for Carolside, Clarkston in Figure 2.4 (see below) shows a young, stylish mother with a fashionable dress and hairstyle sitting on her deckchair in an immaculate garden. Although surrounded by reading material, all of her attention is focused on her happy, healthy baby on the blanket in front of her. The text described the garden as a safe environment for the ‘kiddies’ and at the same costs as renting in the ‘smoky’ city mothers can afford the sunshine of the suburb for their children too. The countryside environment coupled with the close relationship to the city was crucial in defining the new housing estates as suburban during the inter-war period. The clean and fresh air provided a healthy environment to raise a family. Transport links were essential to support this lifestyle,

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190 Ibid, p. 69
191 Ibid
192 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
enabling the father to commute to his job in the city. Suburban developers were aware that new inhabitants were dependent on the city but wanted the healthy benefits of the countryside without the remoteness.

Figure 2.4: ‘Give your baby a place in the sun’,
Source: Sunday Mail, 13 March 1938, p. 15
Simshill: A New Suburban Estate

Of the five in the sample group who bought houses built after World War Two, three lived in one of the few new suburban estates within Glasgow’s boundary, Simshill. Located on the city boundary near the Corporation’s new peripheral estate of Castlemilk, Simshill began construction in 1953 and comprised of 856 houses and 12 low-rise flats by its completion in 1960.193 Mrs Muirhead, interviewed with her husband, described how they felt about their first home in Simshill in 1962, a three-apartment semi-detached house.

I mean we were very, very lucky to have a house like that really, you know then. I mean it was modern, you know. I’m trying to think how old this house would be then…

After a discussion about the age of the house, it was agreed it was probably built in the late fifties and would have only been few years old when they moved in. The idea that these houses were ‘modern’ seems to be due to their newness. The style and layout of these houses and other private sector developments immediately after the war was a continuation of inter-war suburban architecture. Another Simshill resident described her home as ‘modern’ as she felt there was no modernisation needed when she purchased in 1961.194 However, by the time Mrs Connor bought her house in 1971, she described the shocking state of the interior and did not consider it new or modern in the least.195 Mr and Mrs Muirhead’s second house was also in Simshill, a five-apartment detached bungalow built in the last phase of the estate and, by their estimations, it was around seven years old when they bought in 1969, though official dates suggest it would have been nine years old. A visible difference was the decline of the presence of the bungalow after the war. Simshill had only a couple of streets of bungalows and another small estate built in the early 1950s by the same developer had no bungalows.196 The most significant change in Simshill compared to pre-1945 estates was the erection of the smaller two bedroomeed homes with a large open living area. This represented a concession to Modernist architectural trends of open plan living.197 Though externally these houses resembled their inter-war counterparts.

Simshill had an interesting character due to it being one of the few estates built during this time within the city boundary. Simshill was popular with policemen, as they

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194 Interview with Mr & Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
195 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
196 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
198 The impact of open plan living in these homes will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.
had to live within the city boundary. Mr Muirhead, a policeman himself, explained why the area was popular and how policemen were helped to buy through special mortgages available from the Corporation, these were also available to teachers.

Mrs Muirhead: We had to stay within the city.
Mr Muirhead: You had to stay within the city boundary.
Mrs Muirhead: It was the city of Glasgow police then. You had to, even if you were renting or whatever, you had to stay in the boundary.
Mr Muirhead: You had to stay within the city boundary.
Mrs Muirhead: You couldn’t live without, outwith the boundary. A lot of rules and regulation then that I don’t think apply now. You had to live within the boundary so there wasn’t a lot of bought houses like these within the boundary, if you know what I mean. They were like tenements and what not, you could have a…
Mr Muirhead: Simshill and Kelvinside were the two. Simshill in the south and Braehead
Mrs Muirhead: and Braehead [same time] was about your last
Mr Muirhead: They called this place ‘Cophill’ cause there was that many policemen lived here, you know.
Mrs Muirhead: Because em, well, we called it the Corporation then but it was the city council, they called it Glasgow Corporation then, if you were in the police they gave you a hundred per cent mortgage so that was how we were able to
Mr Muirhead: That was how we managed to get a house cause we’d a mortgage right away, hundred per cent
Mrs Muirhead: And I think that’s how there was so many police because I think they were able to get a hundred per cent mortgage. 199

Of the four Simshill residents, two of the husbands were in the police. Mrs Burns’ husband was a policeman and she felt restricted by the residential requirement of his job. This coloured her recollections of Simshill, ‘I never ever liked Simshill’ and when asked why she explained it was simply because she would rather have lived in the area she grew up in near her family and friends, where she did eventually move to. 200 Simshill was popular with young families in the 1950s and 1960s. It was by all accounts a sociable estate and friendships often formed between neighbours both men and women. Mrs Barrett before her marriage had lived in a tenement in the East End of the Glasgow and fondly remembered her years in Simshill during the 1960s:

A lot of good times and I would say if anybody was needing help or anybody’s in trouble or anything, you wouldn’t have mattered which door in that road somebody would have been there to help. You know and I think we lost some of that here, you know when you moved. Simshill wasn’t a tenement but it had the ethos of the tenements. Of where people who lived in tenements would

199 Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012, 200 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
always of helped one another. They might not have liked one another but they would always have helped one another and I think that was very much, although it wasn’t a stair, you weren’t up and down stairs but you had all these little boxes if you like and everybody was very supportive. Well that’s how I remember I don’t know how anyone else remembers it.201

This sense of community she found in Simshill was evident in her reminiscences and she was not unique in remembering Simshill this way. The shared experience of raising young families with limited resources seemed to encourage sociability and was remarked upon by Mr and Mrs Muirhead. Even Mrs Burns, who disliked her time there, recalled the parties and social life she enjoyed in Simshill in the 1960s. Simshill was the only new estate sampled with the remainder being inter-war estates. Though two people lived in newly built houses in Clarkston, these were the final phase of the estate, incomplete due to the war.

The Suburban House in Glasgow

The suburbs to the south of Glasgow were mostly built between the wars. The implementation of greenbelts around British cities after the war combined with the Glasgow Corporation’s socialist Labour council using land for its own municipal schemes, meant that buying a newly built house in the 1950s and 1960s was difficult as they simply were not being constructed. Consequently, the design and internal layout of these homes were based on the ideals of the inter-war period when they were built. In 1933, a Mactaggart and Mickel advertisement titled, ‘The Day Before Yesterday’, looked like a newspaper article describing the poor conditions of previous housing, with no baths and bed recesses, which you could leave behind if you bought a new house with ‘airy rooms’ in the suburb.202 Marketed as ‘modern’ homes, these houses were compared to the old tenements and shown as bright, healthy alternatives with labour-saving features and small kitchenettes in a semi-rural location.

The widespread appearance of semi-detached villas and bungalows in Glasgow represented a radical departure from the city’s tradition of flat dwelling. The styles of housing in suburbs built between the wars had a distinct character that distinguished them from nineteenth century sandstone clad housing. Tenements were usually four storeys high.

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201 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
202 Advert ran in Daily Record and Evening Citizen newspapers, 6 May 1933, MMA, RCAHMS, MMX/2, Mactaggart and Mickel Advertising Book
with two or three ‘houses’ or flats on each floor.\textsuperscript{203} Living in a tenement was largely a communal affair.\textsuperscript{204} Shared access was through the close and stairwell and with shared backcourts and washhouses inhabitants interacted on a regular basis. In some tenements, there was a shared W.C. between landings for the use of between two or six households.\textsuperscript{205} Tenements were built for all classes of Glaswegians so their size greatly varied - from a single-end of one room to four rooms and kitchen. Space was measured not by the number of bedrooms but rather the number of rooms excluding the kitchen. It was common practice to sleep in small bed recesses off the front room and the kitchen. Figure 2.3 shows a two room and kitchen tenement with bed recessed off the front room and the kitchen. The front room of tenements often had a bay window to signify its status within the house. This was referred to in plans as the ‘parlour’ and was where the family’s picture and good items were kept, though these were usually small due to the limited space.\textsuperscript{206} The large tenement kitchen, with its focal point stove for heat and cooking, was the main everyday living room.

\textbf{Figure 2.5: Layout of a two room and kitchen tenement}

\textit{Source: Yvonne McFadden}


\textsuperscript{204} For reminiscences of living in a tenement in the Springburn area of Glasgow see Jean Faley, \textit{Up Oor Close: Memories of Domestic Life in Glasgow Tenements, 1910-1945}, (Oxon: White Cockade, 1990)

\textsuperscript{205} Reed, ‘The Tenement City’, p. 113

\textsuperscript{206} Faley, \textit{Up Oor Close}, pp. 35-36
The new housing styles that emerged in the inter-war era were low-density and transformed daily living patterns allowing for a greater level of privacy than communal tenement life. New internal arrangements defined spaces within the home. There were rooms designated solely for sleeping. Living and social interaction was relocated away from the kitchen to the living room. The kitchen was dramatically reduced in size to discourage its use as a living space; it was now solely for cooking and food preparation. Indoor plumbing meant that houses had bathrooms and private toilets. No longer should Scots have to use communal washhouses. Laundry could now be done in the privacy of your own home. Kitchens were equipped with two sinks and a mounting for a wringer. A new standard of living was to be built into all homes of the inter-war era in both social and private housing that increased family privacy. The impact of the inter-war housing was evident in Chapman’s wartime survey of working-class Scots (See Table 2.4). In a country of flat-dwellers, the survey’s surprising results showed that around two-thirds of married women and men wanted to live in self-contained houses. Located on edges of cities, the new houses that appeared around Glasgow between the wars, marked a distinct boundary in terms of architecture and lifestyle between the urban and suburban landscape.

Table 2.4: Preferred type of house of working-class men and women wishing to relocate in 1943 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of House</th>
<th>Married Women %</th>
<th>Married Men %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 storey self-contained</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatted</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Storey self-contained</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table created from statistics in *D. Chapman, Location of Dwellings*, 1943, pp. 29 & 43

Concrete was the visual language of the twentieth century and Glasgow’s suburbs both private and public took on a grey hue. In Glasgow, private house builders were at the forefront of pioneering new building techniques to make building houses cheaper and faster due to their contracting activities for the council in the immediate aftermath of both wars. Innovations, such as the gypsum product developed by John Lawrence or the replacement of bricks with concrete blocks during material shortages, had an impact on the
The finished appearance of homes in the inter-war period. The blonde and red tones of the tenement city were surrounded by the grey concrete and green gardens of inter-war suburbs. Roughcast, a cement rendered finished with small pebbles, was the most common exterior of interwar housing. A cheaper alternative to the traditional sandstone finish, the legacy of concrete for many homeowners was poor sustainability and expensive repairs. One solution for both public and private suburbs was to paint the exterior; the council estate of Mosspark and the private estate of King’s Park were once grey but now are mostly white. In the 1930s, a white rendered finish was being used in Mactaggart and Mickel’s ‘Colour Home’ villa, in the Carolside estate, Clarkston. In addition, purchasers at Carolside were offered a choice of finishing details to give the homes a feeling of exclusiveness from green slate roofs to red rendered trims. Details, such as the front bay window or little tiled canopies and porches, marked out the private estates from the plain and uniform appearance of council homes. Within private suburbs themselves, there was variety to cater to a range of budgets.

The house builder Mactaggart and Mickel designed smaller affordable homes to appeal to Glaswegians. There were a number of three-apartments as opposed to four or five-apartment houses normally associated with private sector estates in England. A three-bedroom house with a living room and kitchen in Scotland would be classed as a four apartment house, not counting the kitchen. This infers the size of the house rather than the function of it, similar to the census. A four-apartment house could also have two bedrooms, two reception rooms and a kitchen. Out of the nineteen houses in the oral history sample, seven were five-apartment, six were four-apartment and four were three-apartment. There was one unknown - Mrs Roberts was not forthcoming about her second house. The table below shows what types of houses building societies were lending mortgages on in 1969. Semi-detached houses and bungalows accounted for half of all mortgages lent in the table below. Within the sample group, the most common type of house was the semi-detached villa: six having lived in this style of house, followed by five in bungalows of which only two were detached. Chapman’s wartime survey of working-

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208 Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 71

209 This was a house that Mrs Roberts never really wanted to move to and was strongly associated with the passing of her husband. Understandable she was reluctant to talk about it in any great detail. Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
class Scots showed a trend towards single storey living, arguably demonstrating that Scots were not completely abandoning their tenement tradition. (See Table 2.4)

Table 2.5 Building Society Figures for the Types of houses being purchased in 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose built flat</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted Flat</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The top three preferences in Table 2.5 were all types of homes that gave occupants more privacy and fewer neighbours. Significantly, they also ensured access to a garden, albeit a shared one in the case of the flatted house. Chapman found that most working-class Scots wanted a garden, a similar result to the Mass Observation’s *People’s Homes* in England.210 As Scotland emerged from war, Chapman’s survey clearly indicated inter-war styles of housing were popular with the working people and the three most popular housing types were found in inter-war private suburban developments, the bungalow exclusively.

**The Bungalow**

The bungalow was the most popular type of housing in the Chapman’s wartime housing survey.211 This is interesting in the context of the survey as the participants were working-class families living in rented accommodation whereas the bungalow was only available through homeownership. It could imply either that the working people aspired to own their own house or that there was an unfulfilled demand for bungalows in the public sector, or both. This low form of architecture contrasted with the mostly two-storey social housing created after the First and Second World Wars. O’Carroll’s study of tenure change during the inter-war period in Edinburgh concludes that the choice to purchase rather than

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211 Chapman, *Location of Dwellings*, pp. 29,43
rent was influenced by access to a specific type of housing, the bungalow, rather than attainment of social status.\textsuperscript{212}

In comparison to England, with its tradition of two-storey terraced living, the scale and popularity of the bungalow in Scotland was distinct.\textsuperscript{213} In England, however, Mass Observation found that, despite the limited number of bungalows available, a small but significant number of those surveyed preferred this style of housing.\textsuperscript{214} The dominance of the bungalow in the Scottish suburban landscape was criticised by contemporaries, like the nationalist Saltire Society, for its break with the tenement tradition.\textsuperscript{215} However, contemporaries and historians credit the popularity of the bungalow as mostly due to its similarity to the traditional tenement flat.\textsuperscript{216} The postcard below of Stamperland, Clarkston illustrates the flattened landscape created in bungalow estates. Not only did the architectural community criticise this new invasion at the time, it has also come under fire from some housing historians, particularly for its design and form.\textsuperscript{217}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{213} Rodgers, ‘Urbanisation’, p. 141
\textsuperscript{214} MO, \textit{People’s Homes}, p. xxiii
\textsuperscript{215} Rodger, ‘Urbanisation’, 141
\textsuperscript{217} RIBA conference in Glasgow, 1934, criticised suburban sprawl and the forms of architecture emerging as breaking with Scottish tradition. McKean, \textit{Scottish Thirties}, pp. 139-140
\end{footnotes}
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Figure 2.6: General View of Stamperland, Clarkson, c. 1940
Source: Postcard published by Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd

\[\text{\footnotesize Giffnock Heritage Centre, Images collection, No. 91 C20A.1}\]
A report by the sub-committee of the Women’s Group on Public Welfare in 1951 interviewed housewives about the suitability of their prefabricated wartime bungalows in Britain with regards to their daily routine.\(^{219}\) It found the bungalow layout was very popular as the absence of the stairs meant less work. When the housewives were asked if they and their family were happy overall with their prefab bungalow, the answer was a decisive ‘yes’. Other elements did contribute to the positive reaction, such as prefabricated kitchen and bathroom units and the provision of a fridge, nevertheless the compact layout was rated as an important factor.\(^{220}\) ‘People’s Homes’ survey of working-class English men and women supported these findings. The compact and single storey living saved on housework and heating were highlighted as desirable by those questioned.\(^{221}\) Mactaggart and Mickel recognised the popularity of the bungalow with its buyers, with bungalow phases of King’s Park selling out fast.\(^{222}\) Their budget line small three-apartment semi-detached or terraced bungalow could be bought in 1929-1930 for as little as £500 with a £25 deposit.\(^{223}\)

\(^{220}\) ‘The effect of the Design of the Temporary Prefabricated Bungalow’, p. 15
\(^{221}\) MO, People’s Homes, pp. 220, xxiii
\(^{222}\) For a discussion of bungalows in the King’s Park estate see Glendinning & Watters, Homebuilders, pp. 52-56
\(^{223}\) Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 54
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Figure 2.7: Mactaggart and Mickel Semi-detached bungalow, Merryilee Park, Giffnock, Renfrewshire, built c. 1930s
Source: Yvonne McFadden, c. 2010

A detached bungalow offered a high level of privacy and a larger garden. Mactaggart and Mickel priced bungalows by their size rather than solely on the basis of being detached. In 1934 in Netherlee Park, a four-apartment detached bungalow sold for £675 with a £50 deposit, whereas in 1931 a five-apartment semi-detached bungalow in Merryilee Park, Giffnock was sold at £830 and £95 12s down. The bungalow emerged from the inter-war period as a preferred form of domestic housing, particularly in suburban Scotland.

The Two-Storey Houses

The 1920s estates built by Mactaggart and Mickel were dominated by two-storey terraced or semi-detached homes. The company took advantage in the boom of the bungalow in the 1930s but by the end of that decade had returned to mostly semi-detached two-storey homes in estates such as Orchard Park, Thornliebank, with bungalows becoming more exclusive. By the 1950s and 1960s, Mactaggart and Mickel’s new estates of Simshill and Braehead in the Cathcart area of the city were mainly made up of semi-detached two-storey housing. Despite being built after the war, the houses in these two estates were continuations of the company’s interwar designs with only a few concessions to modern design. The main innovation was the budget three-apartment house in Simshill with a large through and through (open plan) living-dining space, which will be discussed later in Chapter Four. So, despite the Scots preference for the bungalow, there was a large stock of semi-detached and terraced two-storey houses available for purchase. Detached houses were found in exclusive upper market estates such as Mactaggart and Mickel’s Broom Estate in Whitecraigs.

Semi-detached and terraced two storey homes of built between the wars emulated their Victorian and Edwardian middle-class predecessors. While significantly smaller and made from radically different materials, they shared some architectural features.

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224 Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 62
225 The estates of King’s Park and Kelvinside were mostly semi-detached and terraced homes until the 1930s. Glendinning & Watters, Homebuilders, p. 43
226 Glendinning & Watters, Homebuilders, p. 71
227 Ibid, pp. 85-97
Chapter 2: Finding a House in Post-War Suburban Glasgow

Figure 2.8: Edwardian suburban semi-detached villa, dressed in red sandstone, Lamington Road, Cardonald, Glasgow
Source: Yvonne McFadden, c.2010
The bay window was retained for the living room and first floor bedroom. Mr Scott recalled his childhood growing up in a Victorian suburban villa in Giffnock, just beyond the city boundary. Before World War One, the ground floor front room with the bay window was used as a dining room but after the war became ‘the lounge’.\textsuperscript{229} His family initially used the first floor bay windowed room as a drawing room for entertaining and displaying ornaments. Later, it became his parents’ bedroom.\textsuperscript{230} Mr Scott’s memories illustrate the shift in middle-class living patterns from the Victorian and Edwardian era to the inter-war era. The Victorian double villa was a model of suburban living that would have been familiar to aspiring homeowners in the south side of Glasgow, while in the West End and East End tenements dominated suburban growth.\textsuperscript{231} The expansion of the suburban railway southwards saw suburban houses both terrace, semi-detached and detached appear on the landscape. The continuation of the villa form with its associations with the Victorian and Edwardian suburban middle-class, meant that the design of new modern suburban homes of the inter-war period were associated with the meanings and culture of from that period. Although built of concrete with metal-framed windows, they were a modern, more affordable version of the old suburban dream. Unlike Modernist architecture that rejected the Victorian legacy with its associations with over ornate and fussy design, the suburban home reflected rather than rejected this legacy.\textsuperscript{232}

The two-storey house allowed the physical segregation of daily functions and living patterns. Living or social life was to be downstairs while resting and private life was upstairs. In England, Mass Observation’s \textit{An Enquiry into People’s Homes} published in 1943, found that the two-storey home was popular, especially semi-detached. The English working-classes were more familiar with two-storey living than the Scots due to their tradition of upstairs/downstairs terraced housing. Consequently, it was unsurprising that Mass Observation found English people preferred sleeping upstairs.\textsuperscript{233} In Chapman’s

\textsuperscript{229} Stanley B. Scott, ‘Growing Up in Glasgow’s Outer Suburbs, unpublished manuscript, Giffnock Heritage Centre, p. 6
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid
\textsuperscript{232} An interview with Sam Bunton who was involved in building the Red Road high flats in Glasgow, summarises this position in Miles Glendinning, ‘Sam Bunton and the Cult of Mass Housing’, in Miles Glendinning, ed., \textit{Rebuilding Scotland: The Post-War Vision, 1945-1975}, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 107
\textsuperscript{233} MO, \textit{People’s Homes}, p. 78
wartime survey of the Scottish working-class, see Table 2.4, the two-storey house’ populations was on par with the flatted house. In the government housing report, *Planning our New Homes* (1943), two-storey houses were described as unsuitable for public sector housing as they occupied too much valuable space.\(^{234}\) The staircase provided a significant physical and cultural boundary to the idea of sleeping in the living room, as it was downstairs away from the designated sleeping or resting area of the home.

Only one of the four-apartment houses was designed as a three-bedroom house, the rest were described in interviews as being two bedrooms and two public rooms. Just over half the houses were classed as two bedrooms when they were purchased. In Simshill no houses were built with more than three bedrooms, though they did vary in the number of public rooms available from a three bedroom with a living room and kitchen to a two bedroom with one large living-dining room and kitchen.\(^{235}\) There was a wide range to buy to suit people’s budgets. While the amount of downstairs living space confined family life within physical boundaries, the notion of private family life was influential on how people used their homes in suburban Glasgow. Visitors entering the home brought with them perceived expectations of housekeeping and display that was evident in the practice of keeping a ‘good’ room, even at the expense of family space.

*The Flatted House*

There was a large proportion of ‘flatted’ houses built in suburban Glasgow in the 1920s and 1930s, both by the council and the private sector. Initially built for the rental market, companies such as the Western Heritable Company were selling their stock throughout the 1950s up until the 1980s. In the private rental sector, these resembled a two-storey, semi-detached house from the exterior but contained a flat on each floor, often with one access door positioned off to the side to allow for stair access. Flatted houses were popular in Chapman’s survey; one-fifth of both married women and men preferred this type of home and for married women they were the second most popular type of home before a two-storey self-contained house.\(^{236}\) The flatted house was the continuation of the Scottish tradition of single level living. Some even had a bedroom off the living room.

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\(^{235}\) Ibid, pp. 132-134

\(^{236}\) See Table 2.4, in this chapter
echoing the bed recess of the tenement, but at a much lower density.\textsuperscript{237} This style was dominant in earlier phases of social housing schemes such as Pollok and Penilee.\textsuperscript{238} In \textit{Planning Our New Homes}, the flatted house was criticised for creating a ‘depressing uniformity’ with their four-in-a-block design and it was recommended that in future these should be made longer to break up the appearance of the street.\textsuperscript{239}

In Glasgow, the Western Heritable Company and others built large suburbs of flatted homes during the inter-war years for private rental using the 1924 Housing Act.\textsuperscript{240} Locally referred to as ‘cottage flats’, the Western Heritable homes were more ornate in design than their public sector counterparts with canopies above the doors and front bay windows with decorative tiles above them.

\textbf{Figure 2:10: Western Heritable Company cottage flat, Cardonald, Glasgow}

Source: Yvonne McFadden c.2010

In the 1950s, due to the limitations placed on the rental market, the Western Heritable controversially sold off these homes providing purchasers with an alternative to living in dense flats and more importantly gave them their own front door and garden access. The

\textsuperscript{237} Glendinning & Watters, \textit{Homebuilders}, p. 55
\textsuperscript{238} \textit{Planning Our New Homes}, p. 12
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid
\textsuperscript{240} John Mactaggart claims to have helped Labour MP, John Wheatley draft the 1924 Housing Act, Glendinning & Watters, \textit{Home Builders}, p. 33
concrete bricks of the Western Heritable cottage flats were left exposed and deteriorated in the Scottish weather. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Glasgow city council offered subsidies to homeowners for roughcasting to protect the degrading housing stock.\footnote{Author’s own experience}

Privacy was a problem in the flatted house. Mass Observation’s survey of \textit{People’s Homes} found that privacy was one of the ‘paramount factors’ that affected how satisfied people were with their home.\footnote{MO, \textit{People’s Homes}, p. xix, this was also highlighted in \textit{Planning Our New Homes}, p. 12} While having an independent entry, the flatted house shared street access through a gate and garden: the boundaries were not always clear.\footnote{Planning Our New Homes, p. 59} Mrs Parkinson’s experience in King’s Park during the 1960s illustrates the problems of shared space.

We were on the bottom and it was a falling out with neighbours really. I won’t go into all that but it was getting a case that it was just getting impossible to stay there and you were in such close proximity in the cottage flats. It’s very difficult to you know sort of shut everybody else out or shut a certain person, or family out when you’re using the same path and same drying green and things.\footnote{Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010}

Occupants had to negotiate the ‘social intricacies’ of sharing space.\footnote{Planning Our New Homes, p. 12} Privacy was also a problem within the home. A common complaint of people who lived this type of home was the poor soundproofing. In \textit{Planning Our New Homes} the soundproofing in inter-war properties was identified as inadequate and should be ‘absolutely essential’ in any future shared buildings.\footnote{Ibid, p. 52} Mrs Roberts grew up in a cottage flat in King’s Park in the 1940s:

You know, we had lovely neighbours but they were very noisy. And going back, I could hear [my neighbour] urinating in the bathroom. I mean the deafening was terrible. My mother liked it in the end because there was somebody there. They were neighbours all these years and never fell out but it was lovely. But no, I didn’t particularly want to do that. So that’s what we did.\footnote{Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010}

The lack of privacy in her parents’ cottage flat was evident. Her mother found it comforting as she grew older, however, Mrs Roberts wanted less awareness of her neighbour’s personal habits so rejected buying a cottage flat despite being ‘very happy’ in King’s Park. Despite their flaws, this was an affordable alternative to a multi-storey flat for...
young families. Located in well laid out suburban areas, such as King’s Park and Croftfoot, these homes were able to provide a suburban lifestyle at a reasonable price.

The three types of inter-war suburban houses around Glasgow offered a lifestyle that was far removed from the previous tenement living. They were on a smaller scale and more affordable to lower section of the middle-class and those better off working-class than houses in nineteenth century suburbs. The amount of space these houses provided varied from three-apartment to five-apartments and priced to suit a variety of budgets. These styles of houses gave the suburbs a clear identity on the landscape.

Conclusions

This chapter has laid out the historical background to this case-study and the explored suburban development both as a concept and as a built environment. The diversification of suburbs in the inter-war period meant the nineteenth century middle-class suburban environment was altered with the construction of municipal projects and the building of more affordable private suburbs through mass speculation. The inter-war housing stock available to buy in the private sector created a legacy of problems that will be addressed throughout this study. Built in an age when the modern family home was a relatively new concept, housing built between the wars reflected the ‘modern’ of their time. Purchasers in the decades after the Second World War had different standards of modern to aspire to. Therefore, homebuyers had to engage with ‘the modern’ through a process of modernisation from décor to installing a new kitchen. The following chapters will explore the impact of housing design and styles of living patterns in suburban Glasgow. These inter-war homes were the physical boundaries that families had to negotiate, adapt and overcome to meet their individual needs. How home was constructed by post-war couples in suburban Glasgow is the subject of the rest of this thesis.

The experience of Scotland was different from the rest of Britain with regards to economic growth and tenure development. Of significant importance to this study is the relative stability of marriage throughout the 1950s and 1960s. More Scots were marrying and they were getting married at a young age. This combined with the baby boom makes a unique time in history when large numbers of young people, like the oral history group, were experiencing marriage and parenthood at the same time. The next chapter explores
marriage in the suburb by considering how the companionate marriage was portrayed and worked in practice through the process of buying and setting up home together.
Chapter 3: Creating a Home Together

From where to live, to what colour to paint the living room, the creation of the home was achieved through a process of decision-making by the couple. In oral testimony it became increasingly evident that the home was shared both materially and emotionally with spouses and children, and occasionally extended family. Expressions of togetherness, represented in both individual and couple narratives, were pronounced. This chapter will explore this togetherness expressed by couples when buying a house in the suburbs. The process of decision-making about housing around the factors of décor and furniture can reveal the dynamics of a relationship and give insight into gendered divisions with regard to creating a home. After considering discourses about marriage during this time, the chapter will explore three main issues; gender relations within the process of buying a home, the nature of men and women’s contributions to housework and finally, representation of husbands and wives creating a modern home.

As previously discussed in Chapter One, married couples preferred to interview together rather than apart. Initially, this was contemplated as a disadvantage. How could the voice of the individual be preserved with the presence of another who knew them so intimately? After completing a few interviews, it became apparent that the idea of home as a shared experience was something to explore and embrace rather than purely problematize. Once I accepted this development, it began to have a profound impact on my approach to the project as a whole. By interviewing together, people were indicating that the topic of their home and home life was a shared experience. This was further evident in individual interviews, ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ dominated the language throughout and in some instances wives wished their husbands were present to help them remember, as ‘he would know’. Consequently, relationships emerged as central to a collaborative construction of home in this study.

This chapter will examine how the gendering of work (including unpaid domestic labour such as household chores, childcare, and do-it-yourself or DIY), both inside and outside the house, created a working relationship upon which the home was constructed. Historians have argued that in the post-war years the nature of the marriage relationship was changing into a partnership characterised by companionship and sharing. Finch and Summerfield, referring to the immediate post war years, observed that the ‘companionate
marriage… is the most distinct feature of domestic life during this period.”\(^1\) While not a new term, having been first used in the 1920s, it promoted marriage based on the idea of a partnership of equals that undermined the traditional patriarchal model of marriage and family. Expectations were raised within marriage as men were described by some social commentators, such as Mark Abrams, as becoming more involved in home affairs. Within marriage, husbands and wives had different but well-defined roles and together worked towards building a home and family.\(^2\) The following discussion will examine contemporary discourses about changes within the family and the home, before examining the interplay of gender relations within marriage through the process of buying a home in suburban Glasgow.

**The Privatised Family and Marriage**

The privatised family was identified by social studies in the 1950s and 1960s as a key feature of home life among all classes.\(^3\) The private family was associated with suburban living, as the house became the focus for family life.\(^4\) This section will discuss the emergence of the private at this time and the companionate marriage.

A rise in living standards during this period had an impact on family life. After the First World War, British working hours were reduced and weekends introduced for many, generally resulting in men spending less time in paid work. The growth of the average weekly wage outpaced inflation. From 1955-1960, retail prices rose 15 per cent while all weekly wage rates climbed by 25 per cent and by 1969, retail prices had increased 63 per cent and wage rates by 88 per cent.\(^5\) When overtime was taken into account, the average weekly earnings in Britain grew 130 per cent from 1955 to 1969.\(^6\) In real terms, Scottish expenditure grew faster than in the rest of the United Kingdom but followed similar spending trends. British people were spending more on leisure items and less on essentials.\(^7\) While food, clothing and housing grew in pace with population during the

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\(^2\) Finch & Summerfield, ‘Social Reconstruction’, p. 7


\(^6\) Marwick, *Britain since 1945*, p. 88

twentieth century, by the middle of century, the growth of consumer good and durables began to outstrip population, particularly the sale cars and carpets. For some, though not all, improved housing and increased household consumption saw the home become a more comfortable place to spend leisure time. Mark Abrams described the ‘Home-Centred Society’ in 1959 in his article in The Listener magazine. For Abrams, increased consumerism within the home by the working-classes had led to the ‘ironing’ out of class distinctions as the working-classes could materially attain the same level of comfort within the home as the middle-classes. He wrote:

More and more frequently in these surveys we find manual workers ready to describe themselves as middle-class because they already own or soon will own a car, a house with a garden, a refrigerator, a washing machine and, of course a television set.

There is a general agreement that consumption in the twentieth century did defuse some class tension, though at times it could reinforce class identity or cause class opposition. A man in Preston asserts his sense of identity that investing in middle-class ‘trappings’ did not necessarily change your class:

You know it’s hard to say, but you have everything that the middle-class had before you. Television, fridges, cars, holidays you know…We are still working-class but we are certainly better off working-class.

If we consider shopping, class difference could be maintained by where you shop, how you pay and what you actually bought. So while people of all classes were buying a washing machine, some bought theirs on hire purchase where others paid cash. Buying an automatic washing machine had more status than buying a twin tub. So social status could be maintained through consumer choices. An analysis of food expenditure revealed that the middle-class was a heterogeneous and hard to identify through their choices as a coherent social group with shared tastes. At the same time there was little difference found in spending patterns between the working-classes and middle-classes in 1968. Despite the rise of affluence, class differences could be maintained through consumer practices and choices. Zweiniger-Bargielowska cautions against seeing living standards in terms of solely economic growth and considers ‘quality of life’ as an important marker, meaning

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10 Ibid, p. 914
11 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, pp. 204-5
12 Lancaster, Mr R1P, p. 72 quoted in Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, pp. 253-254
13 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, p. 206
Chapter 3: Creating a Home Together

the acknowledgement of non-material factors in determining people’s happiness. During the decades after the war there was ‘the paradox of growing affluence and persistent inequality’, for Zweiniger-Bargielowska there were continuing gender differences in income and consumption. For many families throughout this period there was a real rise in material comfort within the home.

Family life was becoming home-centred and privatised; more insular and self-reliant. The focus was on the small nuclear family rather than extended family networks. The post-war period was when, according to Graham Crow, ‘the modern domestic ideal of the affluent nuclear family living in a home of their own and enjoying the benefits of a leisurely home life took shape, with the emphasis placed on the privacy of the individual household rather than the wider community.’ This model of family was a continuation of the Victorian ideal of the family as ‘a privatised and companionate unit focused on the nuclear unit of parents and children which was isolated from wider kin and the wider social world or community.’ Gordon has noted that the economic and social conditions in the second half of the twentieth century made this model more attainable for many.

The movement away from extended family networks and the nature of the private family was the subject of contemporary social studies during the 1950s and 1960s. The disruption to kinship networks caused by the migration of young inner city, working-class Londoners to new municipal suburbs was the subject Willmott and Young’s well-known study carried out in the 1950s. Moving away from their childhood areas, new residents of municipal suburbs saw the decline of family support with couples increasingly relying on each other. Similarly, in the mostly middle-class suburb of Woodford, Willmott and Young found the distance and exclusivity of the suburb also meant families had less regular contact with their extended family. Nevertheless, contact with extended family was important to Woodford residents though the middle-class residents had more resources to

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16 Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Living Standards and Consumption’, p. 226
21 Willmott & Young, Family and Kinship, pp. 134-5
overcome the difficulties of the location.\textsuperscript{22} There were still frequent interactions between families, particularly between mothers and daughters, though Willmott and Young concluded the middle-class mother-daughter relationship was less interdependent than those who lived in inner London.\textsuperscript{23} Hannah Gavron’s study of working-class and middle-class housewives in the 1960s challenged Willmott and Young’s perspective of class divisions with regards to kinship.\textsuperscript{24} In both classes, Gavron observed a high level of contact with couples and their families but found an increasing focus on the nuclear family for all.\textsuperscript{25} In her examination of family and marriage in the 1950s, Elizabeth Bott argued that the level of interaction with the extended family was closely related to the type of relationship experienced by the couple. The more shared interests and time spent together, the less likely the couple were to rely on those outside the home.\textsuperscript{26} The focus on the small, nuclear privatised family by contemporary researchers brought marriage and gender relations to the fore.

The ‘new man’ of the 1950s was portrayed as more intimately involved with the running of the home, doing more housework than his predecessor and spending more time with his children. Abrams asserted that ‘The good husband is now the domesticated husband.’\textsuperscript{27} The increasing participation of men in the home was one of the key changes ascribed to the assertion that marriage was becoming a partnership in Willmott and Young’s study of working-class homes.\textsuperscript{28} The old image of the working-class husband absent from the house at his social club or pub was being transformed.\textsuperscript{29} ‘So the new man stays at home’, wrote Abrams, ‘and he likely to find burdensome or repugnant any activities that force him to leave the family circle and to forgo part of his domestic privacy and comfort.’\textsuperscript{30} In Abrams’ analogy, improved living conditions and material comforts meant that working-class families were increasingly adopting middle-class models of domesticity.\textsuperscript{31} A middle-class housewife living in the suburb of Woodford in the 1950s agreed that gender roles were changing:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Class}, p. 73
\textsuperscript{23} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Class}, p. 70
\textsuperscript{24} Hannah Gavron, \textit{The Captive Wife: Conflict of Housebound Mothers}, (Harmond: Penguin, 1973; first published 1966)
\textsuperscript{25} Gavron, \textit{Captive Wife}, p. 96
\textsuperscript{26} Elizabeth Bott, \textit{Family and Social Network: roles, norms, and external relationship in ordinary urban families}, (London: Tavistock, 1957)
\textsuperscript{27} Abrams, ‘The Home-Centred Society’, p. 915
\textsuperscript{28} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Kinship}, pp. 26-30
\textsuperscript{29} Abrams, ‘The Home-Centred Society’; Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Kinship}, p. 24
\textsuperscript{30} Abrams, ‘The Home-Centred Society’, p. 915
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid
\end{flushright}
In the old days, the husband was the husband and the wife was the wife and they each had their own way of going on. Her job was to look after him. The wife wouldn’t stand for it nowadays. Husbands help with the children now. They stay in the home and have more interest in the home.\textsuperscript{32}

Gender relations were perceived by contemporaries to be changing; though to what extent has been debated. Haywood and Mac An Ghaill have suggested that the ‘new man’ was more of a cultural ideal rather than a lived reality.\textsuperscript{33} For Finch and Summerfield, the work of Willmott and Young was ‘optimistic’ in their observation about changing gender relations. Instead they posited that there was minimal change to the power balance between the genders within the home.\textsuperscript{34} Based on her interviews with working-class women and men in northern England during the post war period, Elizabeth Roberts went further in arguing that there was a loss of power for both men and women within this new model of marriage.\textsuperscript{35} These studies were based on observations about English homes, this thesis will examine how far these gender division were evident in the post-war Scottish suburban home.

The representation of marriage as a partnership brought women’s domestic roles to the fore. While men were observed to be participating more within the home, particularly in regards to housework and childcare, women’s roles were increasingly prescribed. In their examination of the companionate marriage in contemporary literature, Finch and Summerfield identified the increasing demands placed upon women that often conflicted with each other.\textsuperscript{36} In addition to being urged to become dutiful and good mothers, they were to become better wives both emotionally and physically and, once their children were older, mothers were encouraged to participate in the work force. While women’s roles were being closely defined, Finch and Summerfield found little evidence of men’s roles being so prescribed - other than to be more considerate. They concluded that, in reality, women’s experiences of this new form of domesticity brought limited benefit to their daily lives.\textsuperscript{37} Roberts’ work on the working-class domestic experience found it hard to identify the companionate marriage and argued that the blurring of gender roles in some cases, such as women’s diminishing control of household finances, led to a loss of power for women.
in particular. Historian Sue Bruely succinctly sums up the overstating of the companionate marriage during this period when she writes:

It appears that what we really mean by the companionate marriage is not a greater degree of equality in the home, but more consideration on the part of the husband towards the burdens of childcare and running a home.

The companionate marriage meant there was still a gendered division of labour but it did change the status of women’s roles as housewives and mothers as part of a team or, partnership upon which the family is constructed.

In her recent analysis of marriage guidance literature in the 1950s and 1960s, Ali Haggett, observed that it ‘embodied a notion of equality which arose as a result of contemporary anxieties about marriage and the family.’ For Haggett, a concern about the disintegration of the family, in response to wartime divorce rates, was a significant motivation in promoting marriage as a partnership of equals. Marcus Collins’ research on marriage breakdown in the mid-twentieth century highlights that although the companionate marriage model challenged traditional patriarchy, it also created new problems for couples. The equality of the companionate model was one of status rather than function, for Collins, a ‘revision’ rather than ‘abolition’ of traditional gender roles. The companionate marriage of the twentieth century stressed an equality within marriage that was hard to achieve as it did not address the underlying inequalities between men and women. In his advice to married couples in 1953, Alfred Brayshaw, the General Secretary of the National Marriage Guidance Council wrote:

While men and women are of equal value, they have essential differences of aptitude and function. Every modern marriage of thinking people presents husband and wife with the problem of reconciling equality with respect for difference.

For a wife to experience greater status within marriage depended upon her husband’s consent to the notion. Husbands still generally controlled access to money, the house was in their name and even in matters of avoiding pregnancy many still relied on male

38 Roberts, Women and Families, p. 96
40 Haggett, Desperate Housewives, p. 32
42 Collins, Modern Love, p. 94
43 Collins, Modern Love, p. 115
44 Alfred Brayshaw, The Stability of Marriage (1953) as quoted in Haggett, Desperate Housewives, p. 34
withdrawal.\textsuperscript{45} It is clear that this equality was based upon separate responsibilities. Within the companionate marriage, woman’s work as housewife and mother received more appreciation but this was still problematic in terms of power relations within marriage.

The companionate model was based on an ‘intimacy’ of shared interests, spending time together and the formation of friendship between couples.\textsuperscript{46} Heightened expectations over level of sharing and spending time together can be source of tension and be interpreted as one partner not loving the other if these are not met.\textsuperscript{47} Love and sex rather than duty were becoming the basis of marriage from the 1920s onwards. Claire Langhamer has highlighted this emotional change arguing it created an increasingly fragile foundation for relationships.\textsuperscript{48} In light of this, expectations within marriage were changing. In her evidence to the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce, Northern Irish birth control campaigner, Moya Woodside summed up changes within marriage:

Marriage and a home of one’s own are still the desired and predominant goals. But expectations are higher: the more thoughtful young men and women see marriage as a partnership and a sharing of aims and activities in every sphere of life. Their sex relationship is intended to be satisfying to both. They set an increased rating on the needs and welfare of children, and the small planned family is a general ideal. If they are disappointed, they are less willing to go on with a hopeless or even unsatisfactory mating than were their parents.\textsuperscript{49}

Underlying notions of ‘sharing’ were evident in testimony about setting up home in this study. Szreter and Fisher identified ‘sharing’ and ‘caring’ as key components of marriage in their work.\textsuperscript{50} However, the increased sharing of tasks and responsibilities could undermine gendered identities and create confusion and conflict for some couples.\textsuperscript{51} Elizabeth Roberts found that working-class wives in northern England during this period could be territorial about their domestic domain, while men often took on domestic tasks that did not undermine their masculinity.\textsuperscript{52} Marriage in the 1950s and 1960s was still based on a traditional model with husbands as breadwinners and wives as housewives and

\textsuperscript{45} Kate Fisher’s oral history on birth control found that wives still deferred to their husbands to take care of contraception
\textsuperscript{46} Collins, \textit{Modern Love}, pp. 93-94
\textsuperscript{47} Szreter & Fisher, ‘Love and Authority’, p. 137; also see Collins, \textit{Modern Love},
\textsuperscript{50} Simon Szreter & Kate Fisher, ‘Love and Authority in Mid-Twentieth Century Marriages: Sharing and Caring’, in Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin, Abigail Willis, eds., \textit{The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800}, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009), p. 134
\textsuperscript{51} Collins, \textit{Modern Love}, p. 121
\textsuperscript{52} Roberts, \textit{Women and Families}, pp. 39-40
mothers. In the oral history group for this study, participants accepted the sexual divisions of labour within the home and did not represent them as a source of tension, Haggett also remarked upon this attitude among her housewives.\textsuperscript{53} Expressions of ‘togetherness’ dominated narratives about setting up home. For Szreter and Fisher’s working-class respondents ‘sharing shopping and consumer choices and pleasures was considered an equally important, practical lotus for “emotional sharing”’.\textsuperscript{54} The process of buying a home requires the married couple to make numerous decisions from what type of house and where to buy, and then how to transform that house into a home. This chapter offers an examination of home buying and the ways in which this was a gendered experience in the context of post-war suburban Glasgow. How a house then became a home will be considered in light of the ideals of the companionate marriage as one of equality of status and sharing while maintaining sexual divisions of labour and ascribing to continuing notions of masculine and feminine.

\textbf{Buying a Suburban Home}

Buying a house was not the typical experience for the majority of Scots.\textsuperscript{55} Home ownership was more common in England and Wales, as was living in a house rather than a flat. Yet Chapman’s wartime survey of working-class Scots revealed that living in a self-contained house, not flat, was an aspiration of many.\textsuperscript{56} By 1970 just over half of the Scottish population lived in multiple dwellings – typically a flat in a tenement or multi-storey block - compared with only one-tenth in England and Wales.\textsuperscript{57} This thesis looked at a sample of the small but rising number of Scots who bought a house – in this case in the suburbs of Glasgow - to understand their relationship with their home and how they worked within the framework of home ownership to create a contemporary modern home. The influences and motivations of a couple buying their house are therefore important within this context of home ownership. While multiple factors contribute to the meaning of home, for many the physical space itself was central in their formation of home.

\textsuperscript{53} Haggett, \textit{Desperate Housewives}, p. 32
\textsuperscript{54} Szreter & Fisher, ‘Love and Authority’, p. 135
\textsuperscript{55} See Chapter 2
\textsuperscript{56} For Scottish housing preferences see Denis Chapman, \textit{The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities, made for the Department of Health for Scotland}, (London: s.n., 1943); p. 29; \textit{Planning Our New Homes a report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the design, planning and furnishing of new homes}, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1948), p. 12
Chapter 3: Creating a Home Together

The marriage boom of the 1950s and 1960s saw numerous young British couples set up their homes in challenging circumstances. During the war the home became an important symbol to the nation and after the war getting married and having your own home was an aspiration of many. Langhamer notes that home was an ‘essential component of married life’ in the mid-twentieth century.\(^{58}\) Housing was a key problem for couples starting out their married lives in the fifties and a contemporary sociological study observed that not having a house to begin married life was a source of distress with only a quarter of couples starting out married life in an independent home.\(^{59}\) Not only were there not enough houses to meet demand, but, as we have seen in chapter two, much of the existing housing stock was cramped and with poor amenities. The experience of buying or even renting, a home in an inter-war suburb with its low density, self-contained housing and modern amenities was unattainable for a significant proportion of the population. Those interviewed for this study lived in better conditions than many of their contemporaries. One listener to the BBC’s *Woman’s Hour* highlighted the disparity between the domestic lives discussed in the show and the lived reality of many:

> My greater criticism of *Woman’s Hour* is that it seems to be directed very much at the fortunate woman who has a house to herself and who enjoys an income which places her in the middle-class. How about we who married during the war and are making do in rooms with perhaps no sink and very little money – we are quite numerous and that little chat on how to take care of one’s curtains riled a little.\(^{60}\)

The divergence between domesticity portrayed in contemporary media and everyday lives was remarkable. When the popular show *Mrs Dale’s Diary* was conceived, the show’s creators wanted the family to be only slightly above the average working-class. According to the programme notes, Mr and Mrs Dale lived in an ageing fourteen to fifteen room property, an experience completely removed from those living in only two or three rooms in Glasgow. Maggie Andrews argues that ‘[b]roadcasting negotiated the diversity of domesticity and struggled to reproduce representations of domesticity that were credible to its consumers.’\(^{61}\) Middle-class domesticity was widely circulated and held up as an aspirational model through mediums like radio but also in women’s magazines and advertising and the housewife was central to these idealised versions of domesticity. Giles asserts that the decline of domestic service after the war and the consequent increase in

\(^{58}\) Langhamer, *English in Love*, p. 184  
\(^{60}\) Quoted in Maggie Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves: Broadcasting, Domesticity and Femininity*, (London: Continuum, 2012), 123  
\(^{61}\) Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves*, 117
domestic work for middle-class housewives led to the formulation of discourses about all women being weighed down by the burdens of domesticity, circulated later through the work of Betty Friedan and other. 62 Buying a house with a garden in the Glasgow suburbs allowed access to an idealised form of domesticity familiarised through the media. It must be noted that this was gendered. Access to housing for women was through marriage, therefore a woman’s choice of husband was important for their future security and stability. 63 Despite couple and individuals assertions that ‘we bought’ the fact remains that on paper wives’ access was unequal.

Buying a house was, and still is, perhaps the largest expenditure of a person’s life. Initially, it required the substantial financial resources (around a five per cent deposit) but also a long-term debt. McKibbin estimated that to purchase a house in the 1930s required minimum earnings of £250-400 per year. 64 In the inter-war period, a significant portion Glaswegians would have had the economic power to buy but largely chose not to. 65 Mrs Roberts remembers her parental home in the suburb of Croftfoot during the 1930s and 1940s:

It was always rented houses and in England they bought. You know these wee brick houses they get, they do that, but we didn’t, everybody rented. And my father would never do it and he could’ve… but he was worried about the depression and losing his job, so we rented. 66

A report produced for the Scottish Government, The Demand for Private Housing in Scotland (1972), found Scots preferred to rent due to the affordable rents and the sheer availability of housing in the public sector. 67 In Scotland only 6 per cent of completed houses were private sector in the early 1950s compared to 21 per cent in England and Wales. This increased to 20 per cent in Scotland during 1965-1969 but the public sector still accounted for the majority of completed homes. 68 The report calculated that in 1969 buying a house was around £60-£70 per annum more expensive than renting in Scotland compared with England and Wales. 69 Indeed, after the war, buying a house was becoming common for some working-class families in northern England according to Roberts’ oral

64 McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, p. 74
66 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
67 Johnston, Jackson et al, The Demand for Private Housing, pp. 40-41
68 Johnston, Jackson et al, The Demand for Private Housing, p. 14
69 Johnston, Jackson et al, The Demand for Private Housing, p. 62
testimonies. Motivations for purchasing ranged from a desire to increase their social status and independence from the landlord to a general change of attitude toward debt.\textsuperscript{70} In Scotland, on the other hand, given the vast quantity of rental stock, it was unsurprising that most interviewees’ parents had been renters. Mrs Burn lived in Orchard Park and her father was a contractor for Mactaggart and Mickel when her estate was built in the 1930s:

> And my mother and father never ever bought a house. Could have, could have afforded to have bought a house but they never ever did. I don’t know why my father had this kind of blank spot about buying houses. And he could have got one of these houses, I think they were, when these were built, these were three hundred and fifty pounds and the four-apartments were something like three hundred pounds. And my father said. ‘I wouldn’t buy them cause they’re a load of rubbish, a load of rubbish was put in.’ And here all these years later they’re still standing…\textsuperscript{71}

A previous government report in 1969 studied the *The Cost of Private Building in Scotland* and found the cost of buying a home in Scotland was an average of £5,218, around £717 more than in England and Wales.\textsuperscript{72} The price of houses in the group of interviewees was hard to compare given the span of time and inflation. Higher costs were attributed to four key factors: the higher standard of building regulations in Scotland; the continued use of traditional building methods; higher wages in the building industry; and finally, the Scottish climate which was often wet and meant limited daylight hours in winter thus extending construction time.\textsuperscript{73} One consequence was the low availability of private housing provision for those in the lower income groups. Sidwell, the report’s author, concluded that this was due to low demand and the report looking into the demand for private housing was a response to this.\textsuperscript{74}

Why people chose to buy over renting was not well articulated in oral testimony. The O’Connells bought a 1920s red sandstone, terraced house in Muirend in 1958. Mr O’Connell ran a small family business and they were at a loss to explain why they bought:

> Interviewer: Why did you decide to buy as opposed to renting?
> Mrs O’Connell: I dunno.
> Mr O’Connell: We never thought about renting, did we?
> Mrs O’Connell: No, we didn’t really think of renting.

\textsuperscript{70}\textsuperscript{71}\textsuperscript{72}\textsuperscript{73}\textsuperscript{74}
Mr O’Connell: I don’t think we could have rented a…could you? I suppose you could. Dunno, just one… Well we, pretty apparent, my business at that time was permanent and Mrs O’Connell here likes the area, and I liked the area and it was a very good place with lots of other children there, families. So, I don’t know if we knew that at the time, it was a suitable, never thought of renting. 75

From their response, it appears that they had never really thought about why they bought. Instead, Mr O’Connell, after attempting to compose an answer to the question, continued to explain that his job security and the area were their main considerations. When her husband got a job teaching in a school in Glasgow, Mrs McCabe moved from a council house in Ayrshire to the city. Her reply was the most detailed answer received:

I think we wanted to own our own house. And I don’t know if we’d have got a council house, neither of us had ever lived in a council house before and buying was what we thought you did and it was quite a struggle of course because I wasn’t working, my husband wasn’t promoted at that time. 76

Here renting was equated with council housing. Given the high volume of public sector housing in Scotland in the second half of the twentieth century, this was unsurprising. Mrs McCabe emphasised that they bought their own house even though it was financially difficult for them.

The struggle to own their own house was often expressed by a tale of how limited resources were for redecorating once they moved in. Only two couples rented before they bought and five bought flats first before moving up the property ladder to a house. A great deal of importance was placed on having the means to decorate their homes. Mrs Devlin, interviewed with her husband, here tells the story of how they bought their semi-detached bungalow in 1972:

We had two children and we wanted a house with a garden, so we looked around and looked around and everything was really expensive. So we could only go for something that needed a lot of work done on it. Mr Devlin is an electrician, so we knew he could do, you know, the bulk of the work. So we looked round the papers and everything and we saw this house advertised. It had been, a very old lady had been in it and then she died and another young girl took over but her marriage broke up so she was only in the house a year, so she hadn’t really done anything to it and this was her selling it. So it was, our budget was supposed to be five thousand, that was the limit, no this house was six thousand though so we thought about it and thought about it and there was a chance we could get it, we knew we might be able to get it. So we had to, we had a friend who was a lawyer, so we had to negotiate a bit and we went six

75 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
76 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
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thousand one hundred and fifty, which was in those days, that was us really skint but we got it. So we just, Mr Devlin worked in the garden for the first year cause it was just too expensive to buy anything to do it up.\(^{77}\)

The asking price and the stretching of their budget to afford the house is an essential part of Mrs Devlin’s story. Price was mentioned in narratives if it was perceived as relevant to the story of how and why they purchased that particular house. For Mrs McPherson, who still lived in her cottage flat she bought in 1961, the cost of the house crops up to emphasise that they wanted a house elsewhere but they could not afford it:

This house cost us, when we bought it, it cost us fourteen thousand pounds - fourteen thousand pounds - but we couldn’t afford to buy a house in Simshill because they were two thousand something, two thousand something and eh, we could have got the show house in Simshill but we couldn’t afford.\(^{78}\)

For others a friend’s recommendation to the area or the house becoming available at the right time were more significant reasons. Mrs Barrett claimed that her house found her. While they were engaged, she and her husband put their name on a waiting list to buy a new house in the east of the city. Her husband’s friend, who was returning to France having come over to build the Clyde Tunnel, offered them the chance to buy his house. This house was in a new estate on the south side of the city and the opportunity was too good to pass up so Mrs Barrett brought her wedding forward so they could move in, as living together unmarried was not socially acceptable to her or her family.\(^{79}\) Similarly, Mr and Mr Muirhead also married early when they bought their house sooner than anticipated.\(^{80}\) When people bought a house in their life cycle varied. In five cases the house was the couple’s first home as newlyweds. Whereas for the rest, the house was their second, third or, in one instance, their sixth home since getting married.

Each story was relatively individual to couples’ circumstances and preferences. Although house buyers were restricted by their budget and a limited private housing stock, there was a general feeling of choice when contemplating their options. Why people chose their house was complex but an emerging trend was the importance of location, regardless of other motivations. Buying a house was a way to access the suburban lifestyle of the self-contained house with a garden. Mr and Mrs Travis moved five times before they found an

\(^{77}\) Interview with Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
\(^{78}\) Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
\(^{79}\) Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
\(^{80}\) Interview with Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012

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area and house they liked. After starting out married life in a flat in Dennistoun, they bought a cottage flat in the suburb of Croftfoot in 1964 before moving again:

Well, we had the year we went to Bishopbriggs and the reason we went to Bishopbriggs because the rates were lower than they were in Glasgow and we thought that … We saw a house there we quite liked it, it was a semi-detached and we bought it. But it was too kind of far away from bus stops or anything, we didn’t have a car and em, uck, it wasn’t handy, you know so, we came back to Croftfoot ‘cause... We spent a lot of money on the house in Bishopbriggs, which we didn’t get back because we hadn’t had it long enough. So, we didn’t get it back. So we came back to Croftfoot and we stayed about three years, and then we decided no, we’d have to move but wanted to stay in the area so that’s how we came down here [King’s Park].

Despite living in a semi-detached house, the area was unsuitable for Mr and Mrs Travis so they moved back to the south side of the city and eventually bought a five-apartment terraced house in Croftfoot’s neighbouring suburb of King’s Park. Familial and social links to an area emerged as a significant pull factor. Mrs Burns confessed that she disliked her first neighbourhood and, when pressed, she simply stated that it was because she was attached to where she grew up:

I don’t know why I didn’t like it. I just, I’d always lived in Thornliebank and I just wanted to, I just wanted to live in Thornliebank. I never want to live anywhere else. And I would think that we, since we moved here, I would think we’ve looked at every house in Giffnock and the surrounding areas to move and when it came to the bit, we just didn’t do it. Because we just like where we are, and that, that’s the only reason. Just because I liked Thornliebank and I was born here and I’m quite happy to stay. And other than my oldest sister, the rest of the family all, my sisters and brother lived round about here.

This is similar to the findings of social studies in the 1950s and 1960s. The influence of the extended family in choosing where to live was to some extent anticipated given its importance in other studies. Willmott and Young found that the dependence upon close familial networks declined when couples moved away from Bethnal Green to new municipal suburban estate and that this contributed to housewives feeling increasingly isolated. However, once a member of the family had moved, they then acted as a ‘pathfinder’ for other members to move out to join them. Abrams and Fleming’s study of the Scottish New Town, East Kilbride, found a significant level of chain migration so any

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81 Interview with Mr And Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
82 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
83 Willmott & Young’s studies explore this aspect of working class family life, see Willmott & Young, Family and Kinship; Also see Bott’s study of marriage and kinship, Bott, Family and Social Network; Gavron, The Captive Wife
84 Willmott & Young, Family and Kinship, pp. 134-135
85 Ibid, p. 125
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initial isolation was often remedied by extended family moving to the area. For five homebuyers in this research their family lived in the same estate, even the same street in one case. Four had family in neighbouring south side estates, particularly Croftfoot and King’s Park. Other reasons for choosing the location were familiarity with the area, good schools, job restrictions and cheaper rates outside the city boundary. However, a couple still had to be able to afford a house in that locale. In Glasgow schools in the 1950s, young girls were educated on how to choose a house. Number one on the list was budget and area, followed by local amenities, the quality of the housing and health of previous tenant. While this was advice to potential renters, it is clear that finance and location were primary considerations. When buying a house, budget was significant in restricting where and what purchasers could afford to buy, as illustrated in Mrs McPherson’s story cited earlier about Simshill being too expensive.

Financing a house was through a loan from either a building society or a bank. Hoover’s Book of Home Management recommended buyers go to a building society. In the inter-war period the builder’s pool system mean that finance could be easily access through an pre-arranged agreement between the building society and the bank. In Sidwell’s housing report on the cost of buying in Scotland he used figures from building societies to calculate his figures. This indicates that building societies were a common way of funding a house. In order to buy their house in 1959, Mr O’Connell, a small business owner, explained with the help of his wife that the bank was not a straightforward option:

Mr O’Connell: It’s worth mentioning, maybe, maybe it’s not worth to you, but when we bought that, we agreed to buy it, I brought a knowledgeable man up to see it, to see if he thought it was quite well worth buying, ‘Oh’ he said, ‘yes’. Then I hadn’t enough money to buy the house, it was an outrageous amount of money then, it was two thousand five hundred pounds. Well I wanted to borrow a thousand. It was very difficult to borrow a thousand. There was no such thing as walking into Abbey National or any, just wouldn’t Mrs O’Connell: They weren’t there.
Mr O’Connell: They weren’t there. There was no, the only way you could borrow money was from a bank, no bank would take me on. But this man … who as I say was very knowledgeable, he was of some influence and he recommended me to a building society in Hope Street and it was called the Co-operative Building Society, nothing to do with the Co-operative, I think

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87 Corporation of Glasgow, Department of Education, Notes on Laundry Work, Housewifery and Mothercraft, (c.a. 1950), p. 23
88 Jane Harvey, Hoover Book of Home Management, (London: Hutchison, 1963), p. 21
89 See Sidwell, The Cost of Private House Building
they’ve amalgamated now long since with something else. I was able to borrow money there but it was very difficult, you couldn’t of shopped around, it was just exclusive, the way at the moment you can’t borrow money. But it was very difficult to borrow money and I was earning reasonable money at the time and could prove that, but I was lucky to borrow that.  

This story gives a detailed picture of how Mr O’Connor felt it was difficult to borrow money and he had to be introduced to the bank by a third party. In discussions about money Mr O’Connell was assertive and comfortable relating these circumstances in contrast to discussing other aspects of the home. Mrs McPherson had a similar, albeit less detailed, narrative about how she and her husband arranged their mortgage, her husband was not present at the time.

Well, we had saved up the four hundred pound deposit and eh, we had, we went to the [Glasgow] Corporation and actually our lawyer was a man called ____ and he, he got, he worked in the Corporation and he got us the loan from the Corporation.  

Another respondent received their mortgage from the Glasgow Corporation because her husband was a policeman. Others simply answered ‘the building society’. A contemporary household guide advised the building society was the best route to buying your own house.  

The majority of narratives represented buying their home as a joint enterprise: how ‘we found a house’ and how ‘we got a mortgage’. The story of how Mrs Brown, widowed at the time of interviewing, got her house was unusual in two ways: firstly, that she and her husband decided to delay buying to save up a substantial deposit for their house and, secondly, that her husband dominated the narrative she told. Mrs Brown married in 1952 and her husband was a returning serviceman. Her story was the only one amongst my respondents that reflected the impact of housing shortages after the war, possibly as she was one of the earlier marriages in the sample. When her husband came out the navy, he had nothing apart from his officer uniform and his demobilisation suit - his mother bought him a new suit to get married. He worked hard and went to night school to train to be a mining lift engineer. Mrs Brown managed to keep her job with the civil service after getting married, despite the marriage bar, due to the flexibility of her boss.

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90 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
91 Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
92 Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
93 Harvey, *Hoover Book of Home Management*, p. 21
I was a civil servant. And of course, if you, if you’ve had a professional job, they didn’t keep you on when you were married. So you were out the door but I was, I worked all over, different areas and I had been there quite a long time, straight from school after my exams, and I was lucky, the personnel manager for Scotland came to see me and she said, ‘What you going to do when you’re married?’ And I said, ‘I’m going to be looking for a job because I have another four years to work.’ We’d worked it out how much we would need to save to get a house. And she said, ‘Don’t take a job until I contact you.’ And she, although I had my same job I had to become temporary with a month’s notice instead of being permanent. But she kept me on, she moved me to Glasgow so that I didn’t have so much travelling to do. And I stayed on for my other four years.  

Once married, Mr and Mrs Brown lived in three sub-lets. After the war, many were able to travel again to visit their relatives who had emigrated to places like Canada and Australia. So Mr and Mrs Brown would sub-let while people were on extended trips abroad. This was an exceptional case, which Mrs Brown admits herself:

Interviewer: So was this common practice to do, the sub-let?
Mrs Brown: No, most people managed to get, either they were lucky and they got a, a rented place of their own, maybe a one apartment flat or something like that. Or else they just stayed with their parents.

Sub-letting allowed them to save up a large deposit to buy their first house on a new estate in Clarkston.

Another way in which Mrs Brown’s story was not typical was that her husband did all the house hunting.

Mrs Brown: Well he finished one of his exams on the Friday night at the college and he went straight into Lawrence’s [housing developers] Saturday morning and he didn’t get the house that we were looking for, next door to friends along the road. But they offered him this one, well they offered him a choice and he took this one because of the aspect and because of the bigger garden.
Interviewer: Had you been to look at them previously?
Mrs Brown: He had been to, I think they had one at Bearsden, a show house at Bearsden, and he had been there. He had also been all round looking at bungalows and all sorts of other things. But, I didn’t want a bungalow, I wanted to go upstairs at night and otherwise I had no idea what it was like and there was nothing here but an empty plot.

Mrs Brown was interviewed on her own, which may explain why her story highlighted her diminished role in buying their house. However, other individual interviews featured a
strong sense of togetherness and joint decision making. In Mrs Brown’s narrative about home buying, her husband is the dominant figure in the decision making process, though she emphasised that he respected her wishes and did not choose a bungalow. They bought the plot in February 1954 and had moved in by Christmas that year. Buying before the house was built allowed the Browns to make some alterations. They requested a sliding door between the two downstairs rooms thus changing the back room from a bedroom to a dining room, completely altering the builder’s design.

The Browns’ experience of buying a home was not typical in that couples tended to house hunt together and the majority moved into their own permanent home, usually a flat, when they got married. Only one person mentioned being on a waiting list for a new house, the rest of the respondents bought their house from a previous owner. The three who purchased in the newest estate in the study, Simshill, were second owners. Once the story of house purchase had been told, respondents constructed a narrative about creating a home, focusing on affording items to transform and maintain the home; from re-decorating to daily household expenses. The ways in which these were talked about were significant in relation to buying the house in the first place. The financial commitment of home ownership meant that money was limited, especially as all those interviewed were on a single wage for the early years of their married life. This has implications, not only for the family’s every day levels of comfort but also the ways in which wives’ relationship to housing was gendered.

**Household Finances**

Household finances were represented as a shared responsibility by most interviewees. In 1963, the *Hoover Book of Home Management*’s readers were advised that household finances when setting up a home should be a ‘mutual affair’.\(^97\) It cautioned against relying on the wife’s income, suggesting, ‘It’s a wise couple who, in the first years of their married life when they are both working, manage to live on his income and bank hers.’\(^98\) It was a common trend for British women to leave the job market upon having their children or marrying, to return later once children had grown up.\(^99\) This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The majority of families in this study lived mostly on one income during the period under investigation. Mr Devlin explains, ‘we always,
never any money really to go out and buy something new, cause we’re off of one wage, how many could buy a house off of one wage.’ Another lady explained to me that there was a strong sense of community between the women in her local estate as they were all young couples starting families on only one wage. The emphasis on ‘one wage’ in interviews was not represented as a source of tension between couples; rather it seemed to unite them in their shared hardship of trying to own their home and raise a family on limited means.

Control of the household budget can be used to illustrate power dynamics within the home between husbands and wives. A recent examination of marital conflict found that although couples had fewer arguments about money than say children or domestic chores, disputes over finances were longer lasting, negative, often unresolved and felt significant to their long-term relationship. The authors of the study concluded that this reflects that money conflicts impact upon broader issues of power, self-worth and self-esteem within the couples’ relationship. Roberts has posited that during the post-war period middle-class models of marriage, with husband as the protector, became increasingly adopted by the working-classes resulting in a decline in women’s power compared to her earlier study. Women’s position in the new Welfare State supports this assertion that women were becoming more dependent upon their husbands. The Beveridge Report published in 1942 became the foundation of the British Welfare State and viewed married women only in relation to their husbands. Housewives were defined as all married women of working age and were a separate social class in ‘recognition of the housewife as a distinct insurance class of occupied person with benefits adjusted to their special needs’, with their contributions made by their husbands on their behalf. Married woman’s experience of the state was a relational one dependent upon her husband rather than as an individual citizen. When the Family Endowment was proposed as legislation in 1945 its main proponent for twenty-five years, Eleanor Rathbone, threatened not to vote for it. As it

100 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
101 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
102 Lauren Papp, Mark E. Cummings & Marcie C. Goeke-Morey, ‘For Richer or Poorer: Money as a Topic of Marital Conflict in the Home’, *Family Relations*, 58:1, February 2009, pp. 91-103, p. 99
103 Papp, et al., ‘For Richer or Poorer’ p. 102
104 Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 86
stood the payment would have been made to the husband, undermining arguments of feminists, like Rathbone, that mothers should have some independence from their husbands to help alleviate child poverty and as a challenge the ‘family wage’. 108 In The Disinherited Family (1926), Rathbone argued the Family Endowment should be paid directly to mothers ‘placing the service of motherhood in the position of security it deserved.’109 This reinforced woman’s position within the state as mothers and dependents as the expense of their rights as workers. Underlying this debate was an awareness of women’s unequal position in terms of access to household finances.

Access to household finances illustrates a decline in women’s position as household managers. Employers began to pay working-class wages into bank accounts; previously this was only for those who were on higher monthly wages. Consequently, husbands often had sole access to their money, as joint accounts were uncommon in the post-war period.110 When I asked Mr and Mrs Webster who was responsible for the housework, Mr Webster replied his wife was and that his role was the maintenance and the bills, they were the only interviewees to mention having joint bank account from the start of their marriage in 1961.111 McKibbin argued that the payment of wages into a bank account was an indication of middle-class status.112 When Mr Travis was promoted, his wage was changed from weekly cash to a monthly salary paid directly into the bank. With Mrs Travis out of the room at this point, he recalled that they struggled to adapt to monthly budgeting and referred to his wife as ‘a good manager’. He gave the household money to his wife every month, Mrs Travis did not having direct access to her husband’s wages.113 In the middle-class group in Ann Oakley’s study of housewives in the late 1970s, she observed that many wives had no access or involvement in the financial matters; only two in her study felt they had control in this area.114 The working-class housewives of Bethnal Green rarely knew their husbands income but Willmott and Young, on a conciliatory note, observed that although husbands controlled their income they were now willing to contribute more to the household rather than the pub landlord.115 In Gavron’s group of

110 Roberts, Women and Families, p. 92
111 Interview with Mr and Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010
112 McKibbin, Cultures and Classes, p. 71
113 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
115 Willmott & Young, Family and Kinship, pp. 23-24
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1960s housewives, only three of the forty-eight working-class and one of middle-class sample did not know their husband wages. In the Glasgow homeowner sample, everyday finances were generally not openly discussed, but rather came to light through discussions about buying goods for the home.

Apart from Mr Travis, three women interviewed individually gave detailed answers about their household budget. Mrs Roberts’ husband gave her housekeeping money but other than that she admitted having no further handling of the finances. Mrs Brown, the only participant who clearly identified herself as middle-class, explained how her household finances were arranged:

I worked out what I needed for the housekeeping and I had a budget for my housekeeping and all the shops I had a monthly account with and they delivered everything. And so I had, I paid everything off at the end of the month, always. If I’d had any purchases, extra purchases, maybe furniture or furnishings or clothes or anything that all was paid off every month too. So, I knew exactly what I was going to spend and how much I had available. If there was any very large bills, like the car or something then that came out of the savings, we always had money available in the savings for that. Same as it is today. It’s the same, it’s all budgeted and saving for something, for a rainy day, you know if you needed it, a new car or anything. I don’t think we were like other people, because a lot of our friends moved in with little or no furniture and no savings and a big mortgage. So we were a bit atypical, really, I suppose.

Mrs Brown’s language shows that the household budget was her responsibility and she took pride her close management of the money. As we saw earlier, she and Mr Brown saved and sub-let before setting up a permanent home which placed them in a unique position financially. One argument for the husband’s control of family income was his status as breadwinner. Since the 1970s married women’s position within the labour market has improved and in recent years the number of wives earning more than their husbands has increased. Tichenor studied power dynamics within what she called ‘status-reversed’ couples, where the wife earned more than half her husband’s wage, and observed that these wives were uncomfortable with full control of their earnings or spend on themselves as opposed to conventional husbands.

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116 Gavron, The Captive Wife, pp. 90; 93
117 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
118 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010

116
continued to perform to gendered roles around money management. Wives distanced themselves from the masculine identity of ‘breadwinner’ or ‘provider’ and husband’s redefined these terms to include their increased domestic contribution.\textsuperscript{120}

It is clear that for Mrs Brown, and the rest of the respondents, larger household items were saved up for and this was a joint decision. Mr Travis explained to me how they arranged their household finances including the exceptional case of how they purchased a washing machine:

I used to give her, you know, the money, and she would … If we’d to buy major things, like fridge or furniture, we’d to get round a table and start to discuss it, how much it would… But we never took on, likes a lot of hire purchase, cause you just couldn’t afford the payments. And when we got the loan from the bank for the washing machine, I think it was, we got a loan of sixty pound and I think the washing machine was eighty pound and we put down twenty pound and I was working in the post office and the supervisor came to me and he says, ‘They want to see you in the establishment branch’, that’s what they called personnel. And he says, ‘What have you been up to?’ I says, ‘I don’t know anything about it’, so I went upstairs and the man says, ‘Sit down Mr Travis, I believe you are borrowing £60 from the bank, what is this for?’ I says, ‘We’re buying a washing machine.’ Well they didn’t like you getting a loan; it wasn’t a common thing in those days. Sooner than hire purchase we got the loan, we thought that would be. And he says, ‘Well we hope you’ll be able to repay the loan’, a big long face, a guy that had been there since Queen Victoria’s time. I was shaken a bit. ‘I hope you know what you’re doing. You’ll need to be careful.’\textsuperscript{121}

The language in his story illustrates that Mr Travis regarded the household finances as a shared responsibility, particularly in the case of buying the washing machine. Even in talking to his work colleague he stated, ‘We’re buying a washing machine.’ Gavron similarly found in the early 1960s that all her middle-class housewives agreed ‘important financial decisions’ were made jointly.\textsuperscript{122} Mr and Mrs Travis were unusual, however, as they took on debt to afford their washing machine. A general opinion emerged among interviewees that using credit, such as hire purchase, was not desirable and no one admitted to using it. Mrs Barrett who grew up in a tenement in the East End of Glasgow explained her attitude to hire purchase which she inherited from her parents:

Mrs Barrett: Oh, we saved up and bought it. Oh yes, we were both brought up, it was absolutely not allowed, I’ve forgotten what you called that now, to borrow…”

\textsuperscript{120} Tichenor, ‘Status and Income as Gendered Resources, n.p.
\textsuperscript{121} Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
\textsuperscript{122} Gavron, The Captive Wife, p. 90
Interviewer: Hire purchase.
Mrs Barrett: No, no hire purchase. It wasn’t allowed and if we wanted anything we had to save up and buy it and that was hard. 123

The unfavourable response of those asked directly about hire purchase would indicate this was not a preferred method of purchase among homeowners. Mr Travis’ reason for rejecting hire purchase was the most detailed one received: ‘But we never took on, likes a lot of hire purchase, cause you just couldn’t afford the payments.’ Hire purchase had a reputation for unfair contracts, higher mark ups and inflated interest and goods were swiftly removed if terms were even slightly broken. 124 In the New Town of East Kilbride, on the other hand, hire purchase was a common strategy to buy larger items. 125 Hire purchase was increasingly used by the better off working-class in the early twentieth century. 126 In 1938 three-quarters of all radio sets were sold on hire purchase. 127 There was evidence that attitudes to credit changed by the mid-twentieth century. In 1966 credit sales accounted for 10 per cent of all consumer expenditure in Britain. 128 Indeed, the Hoover Book of Home Management in 1963 recommended hire purchase to facilitate furnishing the house. 129

The main indication from cohort was that husbands and wives presented a united front about money using language such as ‘we couldn’t afford’, regardless of whether their partner was present in the interview. Of the seven individual interviews with women, three talked in depth about everyday budgeting whereas there was a generally tendency not to discuss this. Discussing money spent on one-off household items such as furniture or appliances were more forthcoming. The reluctance to talk about details of everyday money could reflect a cultural norm not to discuss intimate matters such as money with a stranger, or perhaps the emphasis on the house itself within the interview meant they felt everyday money was irrelevant. Overall, people wanted to discuss their finances as ‘we’ and given that the project was interested in how people compose their narratives rather than trying to uncover some sort of ‘truth’ about the home at this time, this was taken at face value. Money, then, was regarded as a shared responsibility, not out of line with the ideals of the companionate marriage, in that couples portrayed themselves as a financial partnership.

123 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
125 Abrams & Fleming, Long Term Experiences of Tenants, 23
126 Benson, The Rise of Consumer Society, p. 41
127 Bowden & Offer, ‘Household Appliances’, p. 742
128 Benson, The Rise of Consumer Society, p. 41
129 Harvey, Hoover Book of Home Management, p. 24
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Yet, all were living on a single wage for a significant duration of this study as the wives universally stopped full-time work once children were born. In conversations about leisure, spending money on a night out was only an occasional occurrence. If there was friction over money issues, it was not expressed during interviews. This does not mean that this did not happen but rather that couples and individuals wanted to represent their marriage as a strong union when it came to the issue of finances. Nor does this mean we should ignore the real power dynamics of the gendered nature household resources and spending.

Spending was gendered. Women were in charge of the household budget and family clothing whereas men tended to spend on traditional luxury items such as tobacco and alcohol. The shift in consumption patterns during the 1950s and 1960s towards leisure services, travel and recreation was dominated by men, while at the same time women were seeing a reduction in their control over the household budget. The power women gain as consumers is noted by Benson to be contradictory. Women’s role of household manager in a time of increased affluence gave women economic spending power, created new opportunities for social experiences like shopping, and did improve their social status. However, their access to increased spending power was largely through their husbands. As noted by Elizabeth Roberts, after 1945 husbands and even children took more interest in the home and domestic consumption combined with the a real rise in family incomes at this time meant that woman’s role as household manager was less important than in times of hardship. The increasing interest of husbands in home affairs meant wives also had less autonomy. Women had deciding power over every day household spending but when it came to larger items that increased social status of the family men were involved in these decisions. If Consumption can increase social status then woman’s role in family spending does seem significant, however Benson warns that other signifiers of status such as income and occupation have more power. Zweiniger-Bargielowska notes similarly that while living standards were improving during the post-war years, there was an underlying inequality between men and women due to women’s experiences of both paid and unpaid work. The general trend that the wives did not work

130 Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Living Standards and Consumption’, p. 231
131 Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Living Standards and Consumption’, p. 231
132 Benson, The Rise of Consumer Society, p. 183
133 Roberts, Women and Families, p. 92
134 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, p. 183
135 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, p. 198
136 Ibid
137 Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Living Standards and Consumption’, p. 233
when their children were small had a significant impact not only upon family finances, but also on the experiences of men and women within the home. By examining work both outside and inside the home, sexual divisions of labour can be explored further.

**Women’s Work Outside the Home**

As earlier noted in Chapter Two, a feature of the latter half of the twentieth century was the increasing number of married women working. In Scotland, as with the rest of Britain this shift was discernible after the Second World War. In 1931, 56,531 married women were economically active in Scotland; this had increased to 161,110 by 1951. Though this rise was related to a surge in wartime marriages, the proportions of married women working continued to rise until by 1981 just under half of all married women in Scotland were in employment. Married women had worked outside the home during the Second World War, even those with relatively small children, with little support from the government to help them manage their dual roles of worker and mother. Once Britain entered peacetime, women were encouraged to return home to become mothers while at the same time, in the face of a labour shortage, they were also urged to enter the labour market. Reflecting the pro-natalist climate at the time, the *Royal Commission on the Population* was set up in 1943 to address concerns about the declining birth rate before the war and to seek possible solutions. By the time its report was published in 1949 these concerns were no longer pressing, as there was in fact a baby boom. The Commission recognised the contradictory pressures in women’s lives:

> It is true that there is often a real conflict between motherhood and a Whole-Time ‘career’. Part of this conflict is inherent in the biological function of women but part of it is artificial… we think that deliberate effort should be made to devise adjustments that would render it easier for women to combine motherhood and the care of the home with outside activities.

Immediately after the war, the government continued to promote married women working part-time to as this allowed them to contribute to the labour force while maintaining their roles of housewife and mother. Declining family size, identified by the Commission,

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141 Lewis, *Women in Britain*, p. 71
142 See Chapter Two of this thesis
was a contributing factor in changing women’s lives. Having fewer children meant that a woman spent considerable less of her life physically tied to childrearing. Combined with the rise of domestic appliances within the home and increased life expectancy, women arguably now had more time and energy to participate in the workforce. In his essay on the ‘The Position of Women’, contemporary sociologist Richard Titmuss estimated that in 1890 a woman would have spent around fifteen years either pregnant or nursing, about one-third of her life whereas in the 1950s this accounted for only four years, about seven per cent of her life. Given the young age of marriage and childbearing in the 1950s, a woman potentially still had half her life to live once children were sufficiently independent.

Women in the immediate post war period received conflicting messages about their position in society: on the one hand they were encouraged to have more children and be better wives while on the other they were encouraged to work, particularly part-time. These contradictions were further complicated by social attitudes towards married women working, especially when their children were young. After the disruption of war, there was a focus on reconstructing the British family casting the mother as the primary figure for its success. The mother-child relationship was given special significance by contemporary psychologists at this time, which had an impact on the issue of married women and work. According to John Bowlby’s well-received report for the World Health Organisation, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (1965), the absence of a mother’s love from children’s lives in their early years was detrimental to their psychological well-being: known as ‘maternal deprivation’. The report focused on children in institutions completely removed from any parental care and although he admitted that there was limited evidence on the impact of short absences on young children, Bowlby implied there were detrimental effects to all children not receiving full time mothering. Despite contemporary studies which showed the link between juvenile delinquency and working mothers was not proven, the primacy of the mother-child relationship was popularised through the media through magazines, newspapers and radio, such as psychologist Donald Winnicott’s radio

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146 Titmuss, ‘The Position of Women’, p. 93
148 Bowlby, *Child Care*, p. 91
broadcasts. These discourses contributed to a negative public opinion about working mothers that made it increasingly difficult for women to engage in work. In sociologist Elizabeth Bott’s study into family and marriage carried out in the 1950s, she herself, as a researcher, found it hard to contain her disapproval when one of her interviewees told her she worked even though her children were small. Willmott and Young reflected this view in 1973 when they expressed concern for the future generation if mother’s paid work continued to grow. There was a prevailing social attitude that women should stay at home with their children whilst they were small and possibly until they left school.

Though married women were more active in the economy there was a distinct pattern emerging to their activity that indicates mothers shared or were aware of this attitude to working when their children were small. The substantial fall in married women’s employment between the ages of 25-29 in the Scottish economy in 1951 compared to 1931 was attributed to marriage and indicated women were leaving paid work in early marriage most likely due to starting their family. In 1961, the economic activity of married women in Scotland clearly fell in relation to the number of children they had.

Table 3.1: Economic Activity of Married Women by Number of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>% of Married Women in Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for Scotland, 1961, Vol.4, Part II, Table 41

Mydral and Klein in their important work, Two Roles of Women, describe women as workers, then mothers and then workers again. However, they did not advocate women working, even part-time, until children had left school. This bimodal pattern of work

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150 Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 212
151 Bott, Family and Social Network, p. 45
153 Census for Scotland, 1951, Vol. 2, p. x
154 Mydral & Klein, Women’s Two Roles
Chapter 3: Creating a Home Together

was to some extent adopted by married woman. The 1971 Scottish census reported that married women were more economically active during the early years of their marriage when they had no children and then re-entered the workforce after around fifteen years of marriage; this would allow for children to be finished or nearly finished school. Mrs Travis married in 1959 and stayed at home with her four boys until they were older:

Well we both worked initially until I became pregnant … which wasn’t very long after we were married. So we both worked and then… I only worked for six months and then I was pregnant and that was me finished working, until [her second eldest] was 17, so that was a long spell where I didn’t work. Three women in the oral history group did not return to work until their children were at secondary school. The remaining nine generally return to work once their youngest started school.

A study in the 1980s concluded that female work patterns could be more accurately determined by looking at the age of the youngest child rather than the number of children she had. The tendency of women to remain at home until their youngest child started school may have been the result of social attitudes that women should be full-time mothers, especially when their children were small. A 1965 opinion poll found that 80 per cent of the public felt that women with pre-school children should always stay at home, whereas less than one per cent felt she should do so if there were no children. When asked what age her children were when she began her part-time job in a department store, Mrs McPherson replied, ‘Well, the boys were, they were at school of course.’ Her assumption being that it was not acceptable to work when the children were pre-school age. However, seven of the twelve women with children worked part-time while their children were under five. In Gavron’s study a higher proportion of her middle-class group (37 per cent) worked before the children were school age than her working-class group (29 per cent). Balancing motherhood and work for the women was possible through part-time work.

155 Census for Scotland, 1971, Fertility Tables, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1976), Table 12
156 Interview with Mr &Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
157 Mrs Conor had no children until after the period of the study. So the focus of her interview was the buying and setting up of the house before her children were born,
158 Lewis, Women in Britain, p. 75
159 Wilson, ‘New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 210
160 Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
161 Gavron, The Captive Wife, pp. 114; 120
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The growth of part-time work opportunities outwith the home was significant for women’s economic activity. Between 1951 and 1981, the proportion of female jobs classified as part-time in Scotland rose from less than five per cent to forty-one per cent.\(^{162}\) Part-time jobs were mostly unskilled, low status work with limited career progression or benefits.\(^{163}\) In a climate of public hostility to working mothers, Wilson argues that the rise of part-time work in Britain, which was higher than other westernised countries, was due to it being seen as more acceptable as it allowed women to balance both their dual responsibilities.\(^{164}\) Jane Lewis claims that women were often seen to be ‘choosing’ part-time work.\(^{165}\) Amongst the Glasgow suburban wives, three of those who worked when their children were small were employed in early years education and could take their children with them. Teaching the infant class meant that Mrs Devlin, who married in 1967, could bring her three-year-old daughter into school with her. When her working conditions changed, she refused to commit to more hours work and prioritised her home life:

It’s a different life totally now. The way young people are all out, there’s a lot of pressure on you, there’s an awful lot of pressure on young people to work and have a family and how can you do that? … I went out a wee while when [my middle child] was, she was about three and I got an afternoon job down at [local primary] but I brought her with me and she stayed in the classroom cause I had infants. And then it changed that you could only get a full time job. So the boss said to me, ‘I’ve got a full time job for you’ and I said, ‘I don’t really want a full time job, cause [my oldest] is five and [my other child] is three and I would quite like another baby.’ And I always remember she said, ‘You can still have another baby and a job’ and I thought, ‘Oh, it’s too much.’ But when the girls were grown up I would go out and do supply [teaching].\(^{166}\)

Mrs Devlin’s refusal to work full-time would seem to support some assumptions about why married women worked part-time. Both childcare and housework were her responsibility and she felt more paid work would have increased her workload substantially. Her electrician husband often worked overtime and was unable to provide the extra support. Her comparison to present-day families highlights the impact of the passage of time on remembering the past but also that she feels women today are still largely responsible for children and domestic work.

\(^{163}\) Bruley, *Women in Britain*, p. 123
\(^{164}\) Wilson, ‘New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 223
\(^{165}\) Lewis, *Women in Britain*, p. 83
\(^{166}\) Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 08/03/2009
While taking on part-time jobs meant that women could work around family and home responsibilities, the type of work was generally unskilled for little money or status. Working-class wives in northern England did not expect to have a career but rather to find work that would fit around the demands of pregnancy and childbearing.\textsuperscript{167} In suburban Glasgow, houses were financed on a single wage. Building societies considered the wife’s income as unstable. The prevalence of the breadwinner model meant that women’s wages were lower than men in both part-time and full-time. The issue of equal pay was raised during the Second World War. A cross-party group of female MPs formed an Equal Pay Committee that successfully achieved equal pay for teachers in London.\textsuperscript{168} The wartime government successfully delayed a review of equal pay until after the war. Reconstruction after the war stressed the importance of the home and family. When the Report of the Royal Commission on Equal Pay was published in 1946 it concluded that men needed to support their family and while equal pay for ‘comparable’ work was identified, to implement it would be harmful to the economy.\textsuperscript{169} The issue of ‘comparable’ work raised by the report highlights the sexual segregation within the workplace that supports arguments of women’s work being less skilled than that done by men. Within the new affluent ‘service’ class, women has a difference experience from men to due to sexual segregation in the work place.\textsuperscript{170} Wiz posits that women in both at home and within the service class do the ‘subalter work’ that sustains service-class men’s work.\textsuperscript{171} Limited gains were made in 1955 when teachers, civil servants and local government workers successfully won the right to equal pay. Most women had to wait until the 1970 Equal Pay Act before this was address for all work.\textsuperscript{172} Women’s poor earnings potential was related to idea of the ‘family wage’ which still continued to impact on the status of their work.

The idea of working for ‘extras’ for the family was a characteristic of women’s work in the post-war period. Wives motivations were less due to financial necessity but rooted instead in a changing idea of ‘need’ due to increased living standards and expectations.\textsuperscript{173} This attitude marginalised women’s paid contribution to family income.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{167} Roberts, \textit{Women and Families}, p. 132
\textsuperscript{168} Sue Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain since 1900}, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 95
\textsuperscript{169} Thane, ‘Women since 1945’, pp. 397-398
\textsuperscript{171} Wiz, ‘Gender and Service-Class Formation’, p. 55
\textsuperscript{172} Pat Thane, What Difference Did the Vote Make? Women in Public and Private Life in Britain since 1918’, in \textit{Historical Research}, 76:2, May 2003, pp. 268-285, p. 277; Bruley, \textit{Women in Britain}, p.158
\textsuperscript{173} Roberts, \textit{Women and Families}, p.126
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid; Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 228
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Wilson posits that by aligning their work with the needs of the household and the family was one way married women workers responded to public hostility to working mothers.\textsuperscript{175} In the suburb of Clarkston, Mrs Brown taught evening classes to accommodate her family responsibilities with paid work. Her earnings went towards buying their washing machine.\textsuperscript{176} With regard to social mobility and the increasing middle-class status of those in this study, the return of wives to work significantly increased the family’s income and status. Considering married women’s paid contribution as unessential ‘extras’ overlooks its importance to affluence and social status of the household. According to Rosemary Crompton, class analysis needs to be more flexible to include the impact of women’s labour on family and individual social status.\textsuperscript{177} In this thesis women’s work is integral to the changing status of the family in the suburb. Their part-time work when the children were small bought many indicators of social class and once they return to work their income secures their status within the middle-classes, especially given that many were professional women. For Wilson more powerful discourses about women as consumers has ignored that fact that often it was women’s work paid for the washing machine, this was certainly the case in suburban Glasgow.\textsuperscript{178}

Married women worked outside the home for complex reasons. Hannah Gavron’s research in the south of England found that housewives of both classes rated a combination of financial pressures, the need for personal growth and emotional reasons for working.\textsuperscript{179} When Mrs Webster, who moved to a semi-detached bungalow in Giffnock in the 1966, was asked about her employment when her children were young. She found it hard to recall exact jobs or dates explaining that she worked, ‘On and off. Occasionally, I would think I must do something’, implying that she worked to keep herself occupied.\textsuperscript{180} In the Glasgow case-study, mothers with children under five were working. They took on hours in the local playgroup, worked in a primary school, taught night classes and worked shifts in shops. Apart from the two teachers doing part-time supply, these jobs were low paid, or perhaps unpaid, and not essential to household budgeting. In suburban Glasgow, women generally accepted children were their responsibility and chose to arrange their working

\addcontentsline{toc}{chapter}{References}
\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p.218
\item Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
\item Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 228
\item Gavron, The Captive Wife, p. 117; p. 125
\item Interview with Mr & Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010
\end{itemize}
life around their family. McIvor has observed that divisions of labour within the home in Scotland were still largely unchanged throughout the twentieth century.  

In the cohort, those who did return to work once their children started school had to balance their hours or rely on external help to accommodate school hours. Childcare was a significant obstacle to women’s engagement with the workforce. In the post-war period there was little formal childcare provision which meant women were restricted in their ‘choice’ to stay at home or go out to work. At the end of the Second World War, there were around 62,000 pre-school day care places in Britain; by 1955 this was reduced by half until by the mid 1960s there were only 22,000 places. The increase of women working part-time meant that employers did not have to address the childcare issue. In Gavron’s study of housewives the majority of both social groups said they would have liked to return to work due to increasing boredom and frustration within the home. The main reason given for not working was that mothers felt it was wrong to leave their children. In the middle-class sample, the second reason was inadequate childcare, in comparison to the working-class housewives where their husband’s disapproval was the second most common answer. Childcare was considered an issue among the middle-class housewives in Gavron’s study.

Given the rise in married women working, it is unsurprising that Glasgow suburban wives were interested in creating childcare arrangements. Five women interviewed worked in, or helped set up, a local playgroup in the 1960s. Playgroups were informally run by mothers, usually in the local church hall, and provided a space for children to socialise but also for mothers to have a short respite from childcare. It was not a long-term solution to allow women to work but rather it was a short-term respite so women could go shopping or to the doctor without their children in tow. Those involved categorised the hours spent in the playgroup as work, though this would have been unpaid in exchange for their child’s place. Mrs Barrett recalled going on training courses and eventually her involvement led to her career in the development of children’s play for the local authority. Mrs Roberts’ local playgroup met with opposition from the Elder of her church:

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181 McIvor, ‘Gender Apartheid?’, p. 194
182 Lewis, Women in Britain, pp. 71; 75
183 Wilson, ‘New Look at the Affluent Worker’, p. 224
184 Gavron, The Captive Wife, pp. 115; 121
185 Ibid
186 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2010
And I remember our Elder came round, he was totally against this, totally against women working and totally against everything like that. He said we were like the Nazis, putting her children out the camps. He saw us and then he went to my friend and he got it from her as well. So I really think, he was, a nice man but he was utterly blinkered.

This story reflects some of the public hostility towards working mothers that Wilson found in contemporary media. Mrs Barrett, a founding member of her local playgroup, explained that there was no pre-school education and that state nurseries prioritised teachers’ children. She described neighbours as a source of childcare on her estate for women who worked part-time. Working-class women in northern England after the war mostly used child-minders, usually a family member, to allow them to return to work when their children were young. This was less common than before 1940, as there was a trend towards fathers watching their children at night possible due to the introduction of the evening ‘mother’s’ shift in factories. Grandmothers or aunts as a source of childcare was not common in this the suburban sample. Women either took their children with them to school or playgroup, worked evenings or hired a child-minder.

Of the eight mothers in this study working part-time before their children were of school age, four changed to full-time employment once the youngest started school and another two stopped work until their children were older again. Mrs Parkinson was unusual as she decided to return to teaching when her youngest was around eighteen months:

I remember wanting to get back to work and I do remember going back eventually. I did go back to work, I forgot about that. I did go back to work when [my youngest child] was about eighteen, months I think and there was a lady, there was a… I suppose you’d call it a child-minder now but a lady who used to come to the house and pick her up in the morning and sometimes she would take her to her house, most of the time she took her to her house and looked after her while I was at school.

Mrs McCabe was university educated and her husband was a lecturer. She also hired a woman to cover childcare when she returned to work in the mid-1960s:

Interviewer: So did you work when the children were small?
Mrs McCabe: No
Interviewer: So what age where the children when you started work?

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187 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
188 See Wilson’s survey of contemporary magazines and newspapers criticising working mothers, in Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, pp. 212-214
189 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2010
190 Elizabeth Roberts, Women and Families, p. 135
191 Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010
Mrs McCabe: [Youngest child] was five, actually he was more than five. I, I went because obviously I had worked at the university before I got married and that wasn’t for very long, I decided, I obviously I had never been a teacher but they were short of teachers and I went for a year and trained as a teacher, in 1966 when [youngest] was five when he went to school. By this time my husband who was lecturing, so we’d more money. And I had a great woman… who came every afternoon, cleaned the house and was there when the boys came from school and the girls came, that kind of thing that’s how we worked it. And because he [her husband] was lecturing… sometimes he was home and sometimes, it varied.192

Mrs Devlin and Mrs Burns took jobs in schools to allow them to work around school hours. Women increasingly had to balance their domestic commitment with paid employment.

Mrs O’Connell’s story illustrates the problems of the lack of availability of pre-school education in terms of supporting women in the home. Mrs O’Connell’s husband worked long hours as a small businessman and they had no family nearby. So when asked if she did the housework, she instead explained that lack of nursery and her husband’s hours combined with six children meant she had little relief from childcare:

Interviewer: So did you do most of the housework? (to Mrs O’Connell)
Mrs O’Connell: Yeah.
Mr O’Connell: There was nobody that came in to help was there? Mrs O’Connell: For a while I had a lady who came in to, two hours a week and it was more to let me out and do some things because she could look after, we never sent the kids to nursery, there was no nursery available really and eh, so it was just, erm so I could go and do something because David worked every day, didn’t get home to usually after seven o’clock at night and worked Saturday a half day and that could be till two o’clock or something, so it was difficult to get out with the children to do things. I remember I had, there was two different ladies who came. There was a Mrs Andrews who came and Mr O’Connell: Oh yeah, I remember that. But that was a hangover from one of the children, when one of the children were born was it not? Mrs O’Connell: No, I don’t think so. When the babies were born you got a, home help then, a mother’s help.193

The O’Connells were in the fortunate position that they could hire someone to provide relief. The consideration to hire someone indicates that they were financially comfortable to be able to afford this and also reflects their middle-class status. Their dialogue also reflects the limitations of interviewing a couple together. Mrs O’Connell reminds Mr O’Connell about this aspect of their home life, but his interruption to her narrative from the

192 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
193 Interview with Mr & Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
beginning and then later at the end prompts her to start a new story about the help you received in the home after giving birth. If her husband had been absent, Mrs O’Connell may have gone into more detail regarding caring for six children with limited support from either her husband or their families. Though there was little provision for childcare for full-time mothers, there were avenues through which mothers could get some relief such as, playgroups, neighbours, friends or even hired help to take short-term breaks from their responsibilities. Before the arrival of children, a few women’s oral testimony indicated that the housework was equally shared between themselves and their husbands. This changed when women gave up work to have their first child.

Sexual Divisions of Labour within the Home

This section will look at work inside the home. The nature of husbands and wives domestic contributions to homemaking will be examined here. Men were observed to be starting to participate more at home in everyday domestic chores. Yet, feminists like Ann Oakley have challenged the extent of their involvement. Oral testimony oral history will be used to look at how couples perceived their own contributions to making the house into a home in a post-war suburb.

After the Second World War, the almost extinction of domestic service was a pressing concern for middle-class women and the Government. These concerns were voiced within a framework of middle-class domesticity that argued that middle-class housewives as mothers of future leaders needed help to run their homes to free them up for mothering. Violet Markham was a main proponent for improvements to the status and working conditions of the domestic service. Giles points out that her public life, as a reformer, was only made possible by the private practice of keeping servants to free her from her domestic responsibilities. Middle class femininity and the decline of domestic service had a significant impact on attitudes and understandings of gender and home. Between 1937-1961 middle-class women almost doubled the amount of time spent on housework than working class women, partly due to the decline in domestic service and laundry services. In 1961 women of both classes spent around 440 minutes on housework this declined in 1975 to 355 minutes, though middle-class women engage in

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195 Giles, ‘Help for Housewives’, pp. 317-318
196 Bowden & Offer, ‘Household Appliances’, p. 734
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370 minutes compared to working-class women who were spending 345 minutes.\textsuperscript{197} Male participation in housework between 1961 and 1972 actually declined from 19 minutes to 16 minutes, and although by 1983 it had risen to 42 minutes this still was only one-ninth of the time spent by women.\textsuperscript{198} So while there were class differences in the experience or attitude towards housework, men were only marginally increasing their domestic responsibilities compared to women.

Some argued that the growing involvement of men within the home was an important change in gender relations. Willmott and Young observed that working-class men were taking on more responsibilities within the home, particularly with regards to housework and childcare and that men’s and women’s work within the house was no longer as rigidly divided as it had been.\textsuperscript{199} Gavron found that working-class husbands were more likely to do any tasks around the house than their middle-class counterparts.\textsuperscript{200} In Oakley’s work on all classes of housewives, she found that while men were more involved with childcare, their increased participation in housework did not emerge.\textsuperscript{201} Men and women’s jobs within the home were still clearly defined. The main domestic responsibilities of childcare and housework still fell largely to women, with men often described as ‘helpers’. Like previous studies, such as those of Bourke and Oakley, this project found that men and women took responsibility for different areas of the home and family life. These roles were not highlighted in the interviews as sources of discontent or resentment; they were portrayed as simply the way it was.\textsuperscript{202} Joanna Bourke found that working-class women themselves were protective of their responsibilities for the home and their status as housewives.\textsuperscript{203} The decision of couples to be interviewed together shaped to some extent the ways in which individuals portrayed their daily lives and was a significant factor in the reinforcement of gender norms within the interview process.

The vision of marriage as a partnership and team was both a hope and a claimed reality. In their evidence to the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce (1952), the Married Women’s Association hoped for more recognition of women’s legal position in

\textsuperscript{197} Pat Thane, ‘Women Since 1945’, p. 401
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid, p. 400
\textsuperscript{199} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Kinship}, p. 27
\textsuperscript{200} Gavron, \textit{The Captive Wife}, p. 91; p. 93
\textsuperscript{201} Oakley, \textit{Sociology of Housework}, p. 135
\textsuperscript{202} Ali Hagget also found this in her study, Haggett, \textit{Desperate Housewives}, p. 32
their own right rather than as a dependent of their husband. The Married Women’s Association (1938-1988) was a non-partisan organisation that promoted the equal the rights of housewives and mothers on a range of issues such as the financial rights of wives, equal custody of children and the extension of women’s access to National Insurance on the same conditions as men. Under the heading ‘Joint Partnership’ their representative, Helena Normanton stated that:

The Married Women’s Association maintain the principle that marriage is a partnership and that the contributions of husband and wife, whether by earnings outside the home or services within it, are complementary and equally essential to one another and the family.

This sentiment of the Association given in 1952 anticipated future feminist concerns that women’s work within the home was undervalued and overlooked. Housework was problematic for the feminists in the 1970s. Within a society based upon capital labour, housework was unproductive, therefore how to create a framework that raised its status that did not define or constrict woman as a housewife, while at the same time acknowledging that it is largely undervalued work carried out by women. The evidence given by Normanton caused a rift within the Association; other members felt her statements to the Commission benefitted privileged wives as opposed to the mass of ordinary women. The companionate marriage was an model of marriage based on a partnership that recognised the value of men and women’s different contributions through either paid or unpaid labour. Roberts and Oakley both questioned the extent to which this marriage model incorporated transformed gender roles. In their and Summerfield and Finch’s view, men had gained more from this new model of marriage. For Oakley, the optimistic perception of more equality within the home, led to an overestimation of women’s status within the domestic environment:

In the present study, only a minority of husbands participate domestically at the level implied by the term ‘equality’, and the lack of congruence between the patterning of the division of labour and other areas of marriage suggests that a

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205 Married Women’s Association, RCMD, p. 930
206 See Oakley, Sociology of Housework
207 For an indepth discussion of this issue see Eva Kaluzynska, ‘Wiping the Floor with Theory – a Survey of Writings on Housework’, in Feminist Review, Jan 1980, pp. 27-54
208 Administrative History’ for the Records of the Married Women’s Association, The National Archives. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/rd/9d19c2e7-12c7-44ab-b73a-abfd80593390>
209 Finch & Summerfield, ‘Social Reconstruction’, p. 25
large pocket of domestic ‘oppression’ may be concealed in what could otherwise be described as ‘egalitarian’ marriages.\textsuperscript{210}

With this in mind, the low status of housework and the fact that this is usually allotted to women does undermine the idea that marriage is a partnership of equals. However, this is not what the new model of marriage emphasised. Marriage was to be a partnership with each person having his or her distinctive roles and responsibilities that contribute to the formation of the family and the home.

The increasing participation of men within the home was observed in social studies from this period. Willmott and Young in their study of East Londoners found that men were taking on more responsibility within the home, citing that just under two-thirds of men had done the washing-up more than once in the week prior to being interviewed.\textsuperscript{211} Nevertheless, Oakley found in her study that what men said they would do when asked and what they actually did was not the same.\textsuperscript{212} Similarly, in northern England after the war, working-class women were still responsible for most of the household chores and childcare with occasional help from their husbands.\textsuperscript{213} The housework was a woman’s work, especially if she was at home with the children. Men were often seen as not ‘good’ at housework, somehow lacking the skills to manage the domestic household. This sexual division of labour within the home meant that men and women contributed to homemaking through their distinct roles. In the post war period, the rise of a home-centred society did see men spending more time within the home and with their family. It also saw the emergence of new domestic roles for men that allowed them to contribute to homemaking. Bourke noted that in working-class suburbs the husbands invested more time in their home through home improvement and gardening.\textsuperscript{214} In Willmott and Young’s middle-class suburb of Woodford, these jobs meant that for men ‘their houses provide almost endless opportunities for work.’\textsuperscript{215} Nevertheless, women were still responsible for the daily running of the home and the care of children whereas men were still the providers, or breadwinners, through their financial contribution.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{210} Oakley, \textit{Sociology of Housework}, p. 148
\item \textsuperscript{211} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Kinship}, p. 27
\item \textsuperscript{212} Oakley, \textit{Sociology of Housework}, p. 148
\item \textsuperscript{213} Roberts, \textit{Women and Families}, p. 22
\item \textsuperscript{214} Bourke, \textit{Working-Class Cultures}, p. 83; Giles also found this in the inter-war municipal suburbs she studied in Judy Giles, \textit{Women, Identity and Private Life}, p. 76
\item \textsuperscript{215} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Class}, p. 31
\end{itemize}
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An argument for the housewife taking the primary responsibility for the home often rests on men’s status as the breadwinner. In the decades after the war, married women were engaging in work outside the home in increasing numbers though this was a relatively new trend and issues like equal pay were not being fully addressed. Despite a decrease in time spent within the home, women still remained mostly responsible for the housework and childcare at this time. The low earning power of women’s work has given women less power in negotiations about who should do the housework, further exacerbated by adoption of part-time work by women.\textsuperscript{216} When a couple have a child sexual divisions of labour may become more pronounce especially when the woman leaves employment for a time.\textsuperscript{217} In the same respect, men did participate more in domestic work when their wife undertook paid work. In the latter half of the twentieth century, as women’s position in the labour market has increased, more wives began earning more than their husbands. This has not translated into a lessening of sexual divisions of labour within the home. In 2015, Lyonette and Crompton found that although men have increased their contributions to housework, for women no matter the number of hours worked outside the home or the amount they contribute to the household income, the majority of domestic duties fell on their shoulders.\textsuperscript{218} Women undertaking responsibility for the home and childcare is even now ‘constitutive of a deeply embedded set of cultural assumptions’ rather than based in simple economics.\textsuperscript{219} Husbands and wives performed traditional gendered roles that were rooted in notions of masculinity and femininity, sometime referred to as ‘doing gender’.\textsuperscript{220} In later years, when wives earned more than husbands they actually took on more responsibility for the home not less.\textsuperscript{221}

In suburban homes in mid-twentieth century Glasgow, the gendered divisions of labour were in most cases markedly clear; only in a few did they seem more egalitarian. Generally, the women were responsible for the home and the children. Mrs Brown was very clear about her role as keeper of the home and her husband’s role as provider:

\textsuperscript{217} See Fiona Devine’s study of working-class couples living in Luton in the late 1980s, Fiona Devine, ‘Privatised Families and their Homes’, in Graham Allan & Graham Crow, eds., Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 91; Also for recent couples see Lyonette & Crompton, ‘Sharing the Load?’, p. 7
\textsuperscript{218} Lyonette & Crompton, ‘Sharing the Load?’, p. 15
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid, p. 3
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid, p.2
\textsuperscript{221} Tichenor, ‘Status and Income as Gendered Resources’, n.p.
Well I don’t know about working-class people, you know, what they did. But in our, in all our relations and everything was to the man, the woman didn’t work because you didn’t work after you were married and your husband provided for you and the family, and that was expected.  

To her mind, gender roles were clearly defined and she noticeably ascribed this to her status as middle-class. Interestingly, Mrs Brown did paid work after she was married to assist in the execution of her husband’s carefully thought out four-year plan to buy their house. She only stopped working once she became pregnant three years into their marriage. In her marriage, her husband made all the decisions, from where they would live to what furniture they bought. Mr and Mrs Travis also arranged their life around clearly defined roles, with Mr Travis being primarily the breadwinner and Mrs Travis the housewife. Their story told together placed an emphasis on Mr Travis’ role with the children and as a support to his wife. This was not evident in Mrs Brown’s story.

The following interaction between Mr and Mrs Travis highlights the advantages of interviewing a couple together in the way they prompted each other’s memories and portray their shared life together:

Interviewer: What about you, Mr Travis? Where would you have spent most of your time in the house, after work, when you came home?
Mr Travis: Well I had to do a lot of overtime with the four boys, eh…
Mrs Travis: and also Mr Travis worked shifts, so he wasn’t, he was here at different times which was quite good when I went out to work as a lot of the time Mr Travis’s here but eh, it was good when the kids were growing up cause he used to take the pram away and let me get on, you know, things like that, you just work, and things but we always managed fine
Mr Travis: I keep thinking back to those days
Mrs Travis: aye, they were good days […] I always say the pram days, pram days were good you know, you get out walking with the pram and
Mr Travis: So Mrs Travis wouldn’t settle down until about seven o’clock, or eight o’clock at night and then it was the knitting needles were out
Mrs Travis: Oh god aye, I knitted for hours. I knitted more (indistinguishable). Them were the days.

The exchange reveals Mr Travis’ role at home. While he places emphasis on his role as provider by starting to talk about his overtime, Mrs Travis interrupts to remind him of the importance of him being around the house to help with the children, allowing her to ‘get on’ with what she needed to do. The shared emotion expressed when remembering ‘pram days’ was enjoyable to listen to and for them to reminisce about. Mr Travis then moves on

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222 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
223 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
to remind Mrs Travis about her knitting in the evening and the length of her working day, which was not over as she would then knit once the children were in bed. However, this appears to be something she enjoyed and did not see as a chore. The level of nostalgia and reinforcement evident in their telling of the story illustrates the ways in which couples can enhance each other’s stories and construct an image of their life together.

The exchange also reflects previous studies into traditional gendered roles in regards to the home. Mr Travis saw himself primarily as the breadwinner and his contribution to childcare was to give his wife a break or to allow her to tackle other duties around the home. Oakley found that while men took on more of an active role in childcare during this period this was mostly as ‘helping out’ with the main responsibility falling to the wife. Mr Travis told me that he did not cook but he made toast for the children’s supper if need be. In Roberts and Oakley’s work, they found that men played with the children or took them out on trips whereas women dealt with the practical matters such as nappies. While the new man of Willmott and Young’s research group could be seen out pushing the pram this was not an indication of a radical change in gender relations regarding the care of children. In contrast, Joanna Bourke’s study of working class cultures noted that to be seen pushing a pram was regarded as ‘humiliating’ to their sense of masculinity.

Oral evidence of Scottish fathers studied by Lynn Abrams found that working-class fathers were involved with their children spending time with them, particularly giving baths. Reminiscences revealed that although fathers did not handle the day-to-day childcare, they were engaged and had significant meaning in the lives of children. In this sample, as with others studies of this period, found that it was accepted that women would take on childcare and the housework while men would work outwith the home and provide for the family. It is clear that men were involved with their children and would help their wives out in some cases but this division of labour was still distinct with regard to who had primary responsibility for which areas of home life. Men and women continued to perform their gendered roles ascribing to work within the home that would not undermine shared ideals of ‘doing gender’. This is similar to Lisa Taylor’s research on gardening in the late twentieth century, where men and women chose to act out the gendered nature of leisure within the home is discussed in Chapter Four

224 Oakley, *Sociology of Housework*, p. 135
226 Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p. 95
227 Lynn Abrams, “‘There was Nobody Like My Daddy’: Fathers, the Family and the Marginalisation of Men in Modern Scotland”, *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 206:2, October, 1999, pp. 219-242, p. 231

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traditional gendered roles, whether being interviewed together or as individuals. To continue this discussion of sexual divisions of labour through the process of homemaking, the next section will examine representations of homemaking to explore the ways in which these gendered norms were circulated within society.

Representing Homemaking

Men and women had distinct duties in creating a modern home rooted in femininity and masculinity. The new role for men of DIY within the home highlights the gendered nature of work within the home and how different responsibilities had different status. Home improvements were significant in modernising home and left a lasting imprint with regard to turning a house into a modern home. Women’s contribution to homemaking was harder to identify, as it was more in the way of daily upkeep and presentation. In spring 1954, Woman’s Own featured an article entitled ‘4 Page Guide to Modern Living’. The article reflected the service nature of women’s magazines during this period, when they saw their role as helping women to navigate their everyday lives. Magazines addressed women as wives and mothers, therefore articles and fiction focused on these aspects of women’s lives. The ‘4 Page Guide’ was created for young couples who had never decorated their own homes before and was structured around letters from two readers asking for help to create their home. The ‘Modern Living’ tagline implied this guide would be contemporary and up-to-date. ‘Modern’ in this context refers to a particular style of interior decorating such as bright colour schemes, using new materials and patterns for décor and floor coverings. New furniture was presented alongside DIY creations such as a ‘mock fireplace’ and room divider. The couple was at the centre of this article. The creation of this new home was a collaborative affair where the wife and the husband had specific roles to play.

For both couples featured in the magazine article, it was noted that the husbands ‘tackled all the decorating most successfully.’ Among the Glasgow homeowners, all except three husbands, did the decorating themselves. Mrs Barrett was one of two women who decorated alongside her husband. Her parents insisted that, as a newly married couple, they

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both had to learn how to paper and paint. No wives decorated by themselves. Mrs McCabe tried her hand at decorating and was banned from future forays by her husband:

I thought I would do some while he was away and he just took one look at it, he was a perfectionist, he said, look just let me do it, so I never did, so I never learned how to paint and decorate.

Interestingly, her husband did a good proportion of the housework as he liked everything to be neat and tidy. Perhaps this says something more about individual personalities rather than gender dynamics within marriage. In the Woman’s Own article, gender roles when creating a modern home were clearly demarcated and reflected contemporary ideals about masculinity and femininity. Husbands were the creators, the builders, the doers, whereas wives were to maintain the domestic environment created by their husbands. Gillian and Tony, one of the couples in the article, are photographed enjoying their new home they have created. Gillian made the curtains and the divan cover and Tony has built a wooden partition to divide the dining area from the rest of the room. Four women out of the thirteen interviewed talked about making fabrics like curtain for their home, almost all knitted or made clothing for their children.

In the ‘4 Page Guide’ in Woman’s Own, the photographs accompanying the texts reveal more about shared meanings of men and women’s roles. The bottom photograph, in Figure 3.1, shows the completed ‘mock fireplace’ and features Mary cleaning the new fireplace her husband, John, has built for their home. John is missing from the image but his role in creating the home has been fulfilled and is present in the photograph in the object of fireplace itself. It is now Mary’s job to clean and maintain the home John has created. The caption alongside emphasises how easy and practical the mock fireplace is for the housewife as she is able to pull it out from the wall to give it a good clean, much less dirty than a real fireplace. Clean, uncluttered spaces with clever storage solutions were features of modern living at this time. The contributions of men in moulding the physical house into a home were more evident due to their efforts being more visible and lasting: painting, fitting kitchens or building furniture.

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231 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
232 See top photograph in Figure 3.1
Figure 3.1: Woman's Own, 11th March 1954, p.32
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The above image highlights the problem of identifying women’s practical role in creating home interiors. Men’s roles in homemaking were readily identified and revealed quickly in interviews such as ‘he built this’ or ‘he decorated that’, whereas women’s roles were more hidden. In the oral testimony, two of the husbands did in fact build fireplaces for their homes, not out of hardboard and plywood with painted bricks but with real bricks and electric fire inserts. Mrs McCabe, interviewed on her own, recounted her husband’s DIY feats with pleasure:

My husband built, along, along the whole length of one wall and we set in a coal effect fire, we were very proud of this, he polished all the wood and all this kind of thing. He’s very handy with his hands.233

Hunt argues that while men at this time were becoming increasingly active participants in the home through activities like DIY, their work was one-off or even leisure based in contrast to women’s role that was a daily and on-going responsibility to the home.234 In her study of working class families Roberts similarly found that men’s ‘housework’ was often regarded more as a hobby.235 Similarly, Bourke classifies men’s work in the home as leisure.236 Women’s contribution to making a house a home was harder to uncover, as it could be seen as mundane and less dramatic than creating a fireplace or fitting a kitchen. Their role of daily maintenance and constant homemaking was seen as ordinary and unremarkable and it was difficult to get women to talk about their work; it was in a sense taken for granted.

Female interviewees found it hard to articulate their relationship to housework as they viewed it as part of their day and something that simply had to be done. When asked how they spent their day most did not tell me about their housework routine but rather talked about their children or their social commitments. Mrs Devlin told me:

I was never a desperately house-proud person, do you know what I mean. I never ran about scouring and cleaning and do all, I just did what you had to do and enjoyed my children you see. So for me that was the main thing.237

Mrs McCabe, who admitted the presentation of her home was important, echoed Mrs Devlin’s sentiment when she described her day: ‘Well quite busy. Cleaning and washing, and looking after toddlers. You know, I used to take them out every day and play with

233 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
235 Roberts, Women and Families, 40
236 Bourke, Working Class Cultures, 89
237 Interview with Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
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them and talk to them and that kind of thing - feed them." Spending time caring for and interacting with their children was a high priority. The middle-class housewives in Gavron’s sample ‘centred around their children and their home’ and took their role as mothers very seriously. Undertaking the burdens of housework can give women a positive power through the idea of ‘caring’. Szreter and Fishers observe that, ‘loving as “caring” done for husbands and children is not just drudgery for women but also constitutes their proud identity and, with it, their primary claims to power and authority, not just in practical matters in the home but much more widely.’ Mrs Burnett and Mrs Parkinson mentioned disliking housework and only Mrs McPherson said she enjoyed it. Mrs Parkinson’s husband was unemployed for a spell, so he took over responsibility for the house and children while she worked. When asked whether the housework was generally shared, she replied:

If he had to do it, he could do it, you know, or if, and if it was up to him it probably would have been done better than it was by me because it never appealed to me housework. He would have been more house-proud than I was probably, if it had been up to him, but if I were ill, not able to do it for some reason. He didn’t bother about doing that kind of thing. He could do it but, yes, he was very practical.

As soon as the crisis was over for the Parkinson’s, the sexual divisions of labour were re-established. The difficulty in articulating their relationship with housework illustrates the low status given to it by women themselves. In contrast, men’s work around the house was given a higher status due to the fact that it was often one-off or remarkable projects, hence easier to remember and talk about. Blee’s study of white supremacists in the US, found that when they remembered their lives, people recalled the extraordinary as opposed to the everyday activities of attending meetings, working and spending time with family. It is the everyday, repetitive cycle of habit such as cleaning, eating, sleeping that help us make sense of the world and form our identity.

Within the home through the everyday divisions of labour gender is reinforced and maintained. Housework was talked about in

238 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
239 Gavron, The Captive Wife, 79
240 Szreter & Fisher, ‘Love and Authority’, p. 143
241 Interviews with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010; Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010; Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
242 Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010
244 Rita Felski, ‘The Invention of Everyday Life’, in New Formations, 39, pp.15-31, p. 28
245 Rita Felski, ‘The Invention of Everyday Life’, p. 27
greater detail when discussing the purchase of a new appliance. This again was a notable event compared to the daily grind of tidying the living room.246

Joint decision making when it came to matters about home décor was often represented in interviews. As with buying their house, when asked about decoration both couples and individuals asserted that ‘we got this’ or ‘we did that’. In the case of Mary and John in the Woman’s Own ‘4 Page Guide’, Mary was given the role of the decision maker in the article with regards to décor choices such colour schemes and furniture. In Mark Abrams’ ‘Home-centred Society’, the wife gains power in her role of consumer:

If the home has now become the centre of activity, and if most of his earnings are spend on his home or in his home, his wife becomes the chooser and the spender, and gains a new status and control – her taste forms his life.247

Yet, in the Woman’s Own article, the expensive purchase of the carpet is a decision they make together, implying Mary needed help with this choice due to the level of money that was involved. As we have seen, women had deciding power over every day household spending but when it came to larger items that increased social status of the family men were more involved in these decisions.248 Jen Browne’s work on DIY magazines found that the advertising during the post war period portrayed women as the decision makers and consequently targeted women, urging them to use their power of persuasion to influence their husband’s purchases.249 Similarly, the magazine article about the two couples gives instructions to ‘you’ to make items for your home. Given that this was a women’s magazine, it does question who the ‘you’ was that the writer is addressing. Throughout the article, it was clear that men were the ones intended to build and carry out decoration of the home, yet they were not the intended audience. Wives were to show their husbands the article. Another article in Woman’s Own featured DIY jobs around the house for the couple to do together (See Figure 3.2). Again, despite being in a women’s magazine, the article is designed for a wife to share with her husband. It states, ‘There are dozens of home repair jobs that home-makers can do together.’250

246 This shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 5
248 Benson, Rise of Consumer Society, p. 198
250 Woman’s Own Guide to Home Repairs’, Woman’s Own, 22nd March 1956, pp. 19-21
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Figure 3.2: Woman’s Own, 22nd March 1956, p.19

Bad Floors

Replacing floorboards are generally better or honestly nailed down. To ensure that they are nailed firmly to the joists, go over the offending boards, hammering all nails below the surface with a punch. If the nails drive in easily each.

Gaps between floorboards and skirting board can be filled by nailing a strip of quarter round moulding to the boards. Gaps between the floorboards can be filled with one of the new sealing compounds sold in tubes fitted with a nozzle.

Small cracks can be filled with plastic, wood, or your own filler paste can be made by mixing sawdust and glue.

Before varnishing old floorboards rub them over with a pad of steel wool moistened in turpentine, to remove scratches and scum.

Before fitting doors and windows in splashes when painting the edges.

Badly worn floorboards can be covered with strips of hardboard to form an attractive surround for a carpet or rug.

Glue the undersides and side with panel pins, then apply varnish or paint.

If the extra thickness helps the doors, for using bolt hinges which lift the door as it opens.

Fitting new doors can be treated by applying the floor with a thick coat of varnish, watered down so that its parts were and calking up with a brush.

Three instructions should be given with a day between each one.

Line paint or concrete doors keep them dry and in both attractive and water-proof.

BADLY FITTING DOORS AND WINDOWS

Doors and windows need a tight fit. With no such opening and shutting, sound and dust are less likely to appear from time to time. Most of these are easier to remedy than most people realize, and don’t require expensive tools.

Here are ways of dealing with the most common troubles.

Hamming doors: these are usually caused by some dead tongue. If doors jam, check all hinge screws for tightness. Place a wooden plug, lath or fitted wooden plugs merged with glue, cut the plug flush, then drill new holes.

If hinges plates are not set flush with the door or door frames, remove the plate, deepen the slots with a chisel and re-fit.

If the joint in a door frame are gaping, close them by hammering the edge of the door, using a protruding block of wood between the hardest and door edge. Then secure the joints with panel pins.

Window repairs to replace a broken pane, clear out all old putty from the groove in the outside. With an old knife, pick out all broken glass and remove any panel pins, then brush thoroughly. Paint the groove with lead paint and fill with soft putty or sealing compound.

Using wenngren’s and thumbs, place the new pane head in the putty; then gently press it home.

Now and in painted glass to support it and putty round the groove, working off with a plastic. Remove excess putty from the inside and smooth off all paint when putty is hard.

Draughts: simplest and cheapest cure for ill fitting doors and windows is a sticky-wood plastic blown weather strip, price 1d. etc. 2d. My boy enough for an average door. This is fixed to the part of the frame against which the door or window closes.

Close frame surface thoroughly and be sure it is dry. Then remove the protective covering and press the strip firmly in place. Wait a little while to ensure firmting. This strip will not deal with a gap under the door.

Household stores sell a device for this purpose which, when the door is closed and rises to clear the carpet when it is opened.
The images alongside the article again show clear division of labour with men doing the hard work tasks such as planning the door or rewiring and women doing light tasks such as oiling the door hinges or handing her husband the light bulb. I posit that in these portrayals women are the ‘deciders’- the directors, the choosers, the consumers- and men are the ‘doers’, there to carry out the practical steps that turn a house into a home from the papering and painting to building furniture.

With regard to the perceived gender roles in homemaking this portrayal of women’s as decision makers is problematic when looking at women’s role in creating a home. Giles identified the consumer housewife in contemporary literature and notes the ways in which this role was created for women during the first half of the twentieth century. Shopping is associated with women and can be portrayed as a pleasure or indulgence, often consumption is seen as ‘hedonistic’. This overlooks the everyday nature of shopping in women’s lives. It was a routine activity to acquire basic household items – the weekly shop. The idea of shopping as a ‘treat’ or pleasure only accounts for a small proportion of actual shopping. As the ‘deciders’, housewives were placed in a position of power yet they were still dependent on their husband to carry out the work and by the limitations of available finances, to which they often had no direct access. The portrayal in the magazine was out of alignment with the experiences of women from the interview group. Three women felt they made the decisions about décor. Mrs Parkinson said, ‘He just let me have what I wanted probably, more or less.’ Mrs Roberts’ husband let her decide most things, but she does recall him putting up resistance over a red carpet to match their mint green living suite:

Mr Roberts said, ‘That’s terrible. That’s awful.’ And we had a fight over that. And when we went up, we were going up to […] pick the carpet. What do you think he said? He said, ‘That colour is absolutely perfect.’ So, because the man said it we got the carpet.

In two cases the husband made all the decisions regarding decorating the house. Mrs Burns’ husband decided the décor for their house. As she felt he had good taste, she was happy to agree:

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252 Miller, ‘Consumption and Its Consequences’, p. 45
253 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
Well funny enough, we would both go right and he’d look at wallpaper. And I would say, ‘I quite like this one’ and he would say, ‘Oh, I quite like that one’ and I then I said, ‘I quite like this one’, but I usually give in because, at the end of the day I think, ‘He’s right.’ I don’t ever say, ‘Oh I wish I hadn’t gone with what you said.’ Usually he’s quite good, and it suits, you know whatever we decide and it’s usually his choice and I find it suits me.  

This could have more to do with their desire to portray their marriage as a partnership rather than the reality of decision-making. Even when one or the other partner was dominant in the decision-making, the language used still indicated there was some consensus between couples.

*Figure 3.3: Wylie & Lochhead Department store, Furniture Catalogue (c.a. 1960)*
Source: Frasers Business Archive, Glasgow University Archives, 272/38

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255 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
Mr and Mrs Brown bought their furniture from the high street department store, Wylie and Lochhead, Glasgow which catered to a middle-class market. In Figure 3.3, the front page of one of their furniture brochures shows a colour illustration of a well-dressed young couple browsing in their showroom. Other couples of different ages can be seen in the background and the title for the brochure is ‘Together we choose…’. Wylie and Lochhead understood their target market of the time as this is the sentiment echoed throughout this study of suburban homeowners. In the interviews, and in the above brochure image, the portrayal of marriage as a partnership with shared decision-making was evident regardless of the realities of decision-making. Nevertheless, if women are not the ‘deciders’, as represented in the magazine article or DIY adverts, then their status and role in homemaking in this context of transforming the home becomes harder to identify. In contrast, male roles in regard to the home clearly corresponded to the magazines and adverts’ portrayals as the ‘doer’.

In the context of talking about the house and home for this research project, décor and decorating plays a significant role in how a house was transformed into a home that reflected its occupants. Hugh Mackay argues that consumers are ‘active’ in that they appropriate goods and services in their everyday lives to make sense and meaning of the world around them and their place within it.256 There is a creativity in consumption that while bound within certain constraints can allow individuals, couples and families to express themselves and their place in the world. Simply living in a house was not enough to make it a home, occupiers worked to achieve this over time, Daniel Miller uses the term ‘to appropriate’ to describe this process.257 People acquire goods and then use them and embody them with meanings to construct their own identity both as an individual and as a household. Homeowners work within their boundaries to change the space they inhabit through decorative touches and furniture.258 While financial limitations restricted when and to what extent the home could be physically altered, the impact of those alterations were long lasting. A tour of Mrs Brown’s house illustrated the longevity of DIY endeavours. The décor of her home had been largely unaltered since her husband had decorated it over the years. Defining women’s contribution to making a house a home is hidden and unseen, but would be noticeable if it was missing. Judy Attfield notes that nobody notices if the

257 Miller, ‘Consumption and Its Consequences’, p. 14
258 Ibid, p. 14
polishing is done but rather when it is not done.\textsuperscript{259} From keeping the house tidy to washing the dishes, the everyday nature of women’s homemaking can lead to it being overlooked, even by women themselves.

The process of homemaking as represented in the magazine article has highlighted one way in which the creation of a modern home was gendered with roles being clearly defined through images and text. Men’s work as represented in DIY creations was easy to identify and corresponded generally with discussions about DIY in interviews. Husbands were either fully responsible or in charge of carrying out any decoration within the house, sometimes with their wives’ help. In the article the wives were in charge of picking the colours and soft furnishings, however in the interviews most women did not assume this role, most asserted that ‘we chose it together’. As with buying a home and household finances, the use of ‘we’ was dominant in terms of choices about home décor but not in regard to the practicality of carrying out such tasks, their husbands generally did this. While a few women helped with the decorating, when asked directly, ‘Who did the DIY?’; the most common response was ‘my husband’. When asked ‘Who decided on the décor?’, the reply was generally ‘we chose it together’. This distinction is important as it contradicts cultural representations of women as the decision makers in the magazine article. Jen Browne’s work on DIY advertising was accompanied by four interviews through which she also saw a trend towards togetherness that was out of alignment with the discourse in the advertisement.\textsuperscript{260} Sexual divisions of labour within the home at this period saw the creation of new ‘hobby’ jobs for men such as DIY and gardening. These new ‘hobby’ jobs can be classed as work but, as they were largely one-off and leisure based in comparison to women’s daily and constant work within the home, there remains a division as to the level of participation of men within the home.

\textbf{Conclusions}

By examining the process of how a couple bought a house and began to transform it into a home, it is evident that this was a collaborative effort in two distinct ways. Primarily, couples described shared decision-making and secondly, by the practical but separate contributions of wives and husbands. The home in this context was bought, decorated and maintained through the combined efforts of the couple. This would seem to


\textsuperscript{260} Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY’
correlate to the ideals of the companionate marriage at this time, which saw marriage as changing from a patriarchal model into a new more egalitarian model that valued the contributions of both partners to the construction of the family and the home. Though marriage was changing, the degree to which this brought equality in marriage has been debated, if we look at the relative contributions of men and women within the home.

The emerging ‘new man’ identified in Willmott and Young’s study was an ‘optimistic’ ideal about changing gender relations. Other studies of this period, such as those of Oakley and Roberts, call into question the participation of men within the home on issues of housework and childcare. Both men and women in their studies had preconceived notions about masculinity and femininity with regard to the home, which were accepted and even reinforced from within by participants.\(^{261}\) This study found the ‘new man’ within the home difficult to identify. The father/breadwinner and mother/housewife model dominated this study. The single wage was a significant factor in stories about home ownership and often led to a representation of home ownership as a struggle. The responsibility for housework and childcare fell to, and was accepted by, the wives in the study due to their staying home with small children for a large portion of this time. In the oral testimony three quarters did some form of work before their children started school. Once mothers returned to work, the responsibility for housework was not mentioned, rather the practicalities of balancing childcare and paid work were a more pressing concern. Comparing representations of labour within the house has shown the problems of identifying women’s role in the context of creating a modern home together. In the magazine article, men and women’s roles were clearly identified. However, in interviews, women did not cast themselves as ‘deciders’ asserting that décor and furniture purchases were joint decisions. In this context, it became problematic to then decipher women’s contribution to homemaking, as it was a hidden practice carried out daily and without much recognition.

Underlying all these aspects of making a home together was the importance of representing a united front about decision making: ‘we bought’; ‘we couldn’t afford’, ‘we chose…’. In practice, although the decision was jointly made, the actual implementation of these choices was usually reliant on the husband. The husband, as the main wage earner, generally controlled access to finances; he applied to the building society; he paid for the


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furniture; he bought the paint and he allocated the money for housekeeping. While the power in this sense rested with the husband, it did not mean that women felt they had no control in these matters. Their language in interviews indicated that they felt part of the process even if they did not carry out the practicalities. Haggett observed that women in her study felt ‘part of a team effort’. The representations of togetherness throughout the both couple and individual interviews were striking. Whether this was a lived reality or not, is, in some ways, insignificant as people compose their narratives aware of the intended audience. Therefore, it must be accepted that this is how they wanted to represent their home life and their marriage.

In this chapter, we have looked at how couples purchased a house and some of the ways in which they worked together to start creating a home. Both men and women contributed to making that house their home through their different roles: either providing the money to purchase the house or bearing children to make a house into a family home. Through the example of DIY it has been shown that men appear to play a more significant role in modernising the house to meet the couple’s needs from redecoration to the building of fireplaces. For women, the problem in articulating their relationship to housework was notable and the focus on their children was a common trend in narratives about home. The next step after buying a house was to start living daily life within its walls. The next chapter will look at housing design and living spaces. It will consider how shared meanings about room use can translate into housing design and everyday life. How space was used to create the public/private life of the family and individuals will be demonstrated in regards to social life within the home.

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262 Haggett, *Desperate Housewives*, p. 59
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Once living in their home, people then had to negotiate the space with their everyday lives and social habits. This chapter will begin by discussing shared social norms within inter-war housing design to see if these continued in the post-war period. When two ‘public’ rooms were available downstairs, this offered flexibility for people to arrange their everyday life. Secondly, it will be shown that discourses about the presentation of the home and privacy of the family influenced how people used their spaces. Thirdly, the social life of home in the suburb will be examined in relation to space. Fourthly, this chapter will look at the new design of the open-plan living area to see its impact upon privacy and housework, and finally, how respondents remoulded their home to meet the needs of growing children.

The homes focused on for this study were largely built between the wars and were a significant departure from the Scottish tenement tradition, not only in external appearance but also in terms of internal layout and design. In Scotland, the adoption of the English Garden Suburb Model home between the wars introduced a new form of domestic architecture and, through its internal arrangements, new ways of conducting everyday life, which will be discussed later. In the private suburban home, Ravetz argues, rooms were designated using established social codes such as upstairs/downstairs and rear/front living. The large-scale building of new ‘modern’ homes by the Corporation of Glasgow in the 1950s and 1960s meant the existing private stock was old and out-dated in comparison. Social housing architects and planners saw themselves as reformers and, influenced by European Modernist architecture, they experimented with familiar housing layouts, introducing concepts such as ‘open-plan living’ or the ‘upside-down house’. Council tenants had to negotiate unfamiliar living spaces imposed upon them by planners. Post-war architecture, for Modernist architect Charles Robertson, was a time of ‘high idealism’ that tried to modernise how people lived in their homes. By contrast, private housing stock was increasingly traditional in its design and layout with only the occasional concession to Modernist principles.

2 Ravetz & Turkington, *Place of Home*, p. 149
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It will be shown that the privacy afforded by segregating family and social life was important in the construction of the private family by homeowners in Glasgow. In Dennis Chapman’s study of Liverpool in 1950, the rooms where regular family activities occurred, like eating meals, were analysed to highlight class difference between different types of housing. The extent to which patterns of living in semi-detached homes in Liverpool shared characteristics with Glasgow suburban homes will be explored through examining room use in the oral history sample. The importance of social interactions among extended family and friends was evident in suburban Glasgow. Willmott and Young were surprised at the high level of sociability in the middle-class suburb of Woodford compared to the municipal suburb of ‘Greenleigh’. Entertaining within the home was common in the oral history group, both on a formal and informal level with extended family and friends. The location of these social interactions can indicate the level of intimacy in social relationships. The tensions between maintaining an acceptable level of housekeeping for visitors and the ability to relax and live everyday life was highlighted in Munro and Madigan’s study of homeowners living in post-war homes in 1990s Glasgow. This study of homeowners living in inter-war housing in Glasgow between 1945-1975 will engage with Munro and Madigan’s findings to see if this pre-occupation with the public façade of the home was significant in mid-twentieth century homeowners daily lives.

The Family House

Houses in the suburb have a strong association with family, dating back to the nineteenth century ideals of separating family and work life through spatial relocation away from urban centres in suburbs. The houses bought in the study were all of inter-war design, apart from three on the new estate of Simshill. The architects built meanings into the fabric of these houses. The suburban semi-detached house was designed with the nuclear family in mind: a living room and small kitchen down stairs and a bathroom and three bedrooms upstairs, allowing children of different sexes to have separate rooms. Social studies during the 1950s and 1960s, as we have seen in the previous chapter, identified the emergence of the small-privatised family which was home-centred.

References:

7 Moira Munro & Ruth Madigan, ‘Privacy in the Private Sphere’, in Housing Studies, 8:1, pp. 29-45
8 Munro & Madigan, ‘Privacy in the Private Sphere’, p. 31
working-class families were seen to be adopting middle-class domesticity through improved housing and increased consumerism.

At the start of twentieth century, women in Scotland had an average of six children; by 1951 this had declined to just under three. Family size was shrinking. In working-class suburbs in England between the wars, smaller families were equated with respectability whilst those with numerous children were seen as ‘rough’, lacking in self-control. Rowntree’s social investigation of York in 1936 identified family limitation as a strategy by suburban homeowners to cope with the financial pressures of buying and maintaining a house. In the 1940s, the expected material life style associated with ownership was blamed for families having fewer children. This shift in family size was mirrored by the design of houses in the inter war decades. When Mactaggart and Mickel built its suburban estates, in which the majority of the oral history group lived, they envisioned a small, young family as living in their homes. In Figure 4.1, an advertisement for Carolside in Clarkston in 1938 contains many markers of respectability. The house is well maintained, the garden tidy and the family well dressed. Father is shown returning home from a respectable white-collar profession, indicated by his suit, to his wife and daughter. The suburb in this advertisement promotes a family-centred lifestyle but emphasises the affordability of homeownership. Consequently, these houses were designed around the nuclear, private family on a modest income. New homeowners were expected to be socially mobile, part of the new affluent service class who could not buy a house for their family. The ideal family in the 1950s and 1960s was still the nuclear family but there were anxieties and tensions about the family during this time, underpinned by the rising divorce rate and increased illegitimacy. This chapter will explore housing design and its impact on family living patterns.

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12 Scott, *Making of the Modern British Home*, pp. 146-147
14 See Chapter Two of this thesis
Figure 4.1: ‘This man once paid rent...just as you do!’, Sunday Mail, 13 February 1938
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The centrality of family in the mid-twentieth century was apparent in *Good Housekeeping’s* sixteen-page supplement in October 1954: ‘A Home for the Family’. Notably, the complexities of family composition and lifecycle were represented in the article. It featured six ‘middle-price’ houses designing to meet the needs of each individual family: from a home for a couple with a young baby to one for a family of four with an elderly parent in residence. Speculative house builders, as we have seen, designed houses with the small nuclear in family in mind. The family home, the article argued, needed both social and private spaces, so members could pursue their individual activities.

It is generally recognized that although different parts of the house may be the peculiar provinces of individual members of the family – the wife rules the kitchen, the husband is the king of the garage-workshop, the eldest boy has bagged the loft for a dark-room and so on – yet the house as a whole is the setting of the life of the family as a whole. This sentiment was echoed in the British government housing report, *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* (1961), also known as the Parker Morris Report after its main author. Unlike its predecessor the Dudley Report (1944), which focused on the needs of women as housewives and primary occupiers of the home, Parker Morris emphasised the whole family and its needs. Future British housing designers were encouraged to consider family living patterns and life cycles rather than simply counting heads when determining the size and layout of houses. An ‘adaptable house’ that had flexible spaces for multiple uses by family members and which would adapt to the different stages of the family lifecycle, was advocated in the Parker Morris report. The adoption of Parker Morris’ recommendations by public sector housing throughout Britain led to social housing having more space and being of a better standard than private housing. Access to new housing for purchase was not attainable in the immediate areas surrounding Glasgow at this time. The discussions about children’s privacy and open-plan living in the report reflected changing attitudes toward the family and privacy and, interestingly, recognised the changing role of married women within the home. Since the Dudley report at the end of the war, increasing numbers of married women were now engaged in labour market. This

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16 ‘A Home for the Family’, p. 105
18 Dudley, *Design of Dwellings*, (London: HMSO. 1944)
19 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 4
20 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 9
21 Deyan Sudjic & Tulga Beyerle, *Home: The Twentieth Century House*, (Glasgow: Lawrence King. 1999), p. 70
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chapter will examine family living patterns and how both individual and family activities were incorporated within the living spaces available.

A ‘Good’ Room

The provision of two reception rooms in suburban housing design had a significant impact upon daily life. These ‘reception’ rooms were not designated bedrooms but rather as rooms for family living or public life. Activities and interactions were influenced by the availability and arrangement of space. The combining of the kitchen and scullery into the kitchenette in the inter-war suburban house meant the two reception rooms were defined by furniture and possessions rather than the presence of the stove. As will be seen in this section, keeping one of these two rooms ‘for best’ or as a ‘good’ room was the continuation of established practice in British homes. In the oral history sample, all of those with two reception rooms to varying degrees divided their everyday life between the front and rear of the house.

The front room was referred to by numerous names by respondents. The most common term was the ‘sitting room’. Ravetz attributed the rise of the term ‘sitting room’ among the English middle-classes at the turn of the century to its increasingly regular use, which due to the cost of fuel indicated a level of status.22 Occupiers of detached housing in Liverpool were found by Chapman to use the term ‘sitting room’ as opposed to ‘parlour’ to describe their front rooms, though ‘parlour’ was still in use in semi-detached homes.23 Mass Observation’s People’s Homes (1943) also noted the increased use of the ‘sitting room’ rather than ‘parlour’ among its working-class respondents.24 ‘Living room’ was only used in the oral history group by two interviewees who had their back room as a dining room. Three other homeowners referred to the room as ‘good’ or ‘best’ room. Except those with living rooms, all kept their sitting room to a higher standard than the rest of the house. It was a ‘tidy’ room with the best furniture and was only used infrequently for visitors, special occasions and sometimes as a quiet room away from other household members. In People’s Homes, a second living room was desirable as ‘people want a room for the best’, referring to their possessions.25 For the remainder of this section, I will refer to the front room as the ‘good’ as I feel this description sums up the value placed on this

22 Ravetz, Place of Home, p. 158
23 Chapman, Family, Home and Social Status, p. 59
25 MO, People’s Homes, p. 21

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room within the house. It was a model of how a room should be kept, an image of good housekeeping and standard of living. A room performing this function is not new to suburban homes built in the inter-war period. It is the continuation of the ‘parlour’ tradition commonly practiced in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The ‘parlour’ described the front rooms of some nineteenth century houses. It was a room infrequently used by the household and was preserved for special visitors or occasions, such as family gatherings. Chapman argued that the ‘parlour’, as he referred to it, was a room ‘difficult to use for the ordinary activities of the family.’26 The presence of a second living room in social housing design was a preoccupation of social surveys and government reports in first half of the twentieth century. In England, the ‘parlour’ debate was a key issue in the inter-war planning process. The government housing report, known as the Tudor-Walters Report (1919) written by Raymond Unwin, reflected on whether the working-class family needed a parlour and implied that perhaps they would not use it appropriately.27 Concerns about ‘the danger of improper use of rooms’ were highlighted, particularly if people were given a kitchen large enough to eat in.28 Unwin was personally against parlours for working-class housing but conceded that planners should provide one as most people wanted it.29 The Minister of Reconstruction formed the Women’s Housing Sub-Committee in 1918 to present a housewife’s point of view on future working-class housing under review by the Tudor Walters Committee.30 The committee wanted the inclusion of a parlour working-class people’s housing. One of the central reasons it stated was for women’s personal use as a quiet space to engage in intellectual pursuits or have political meetings.31 This emphasises the feminist perspective of the committee that a more efficient, labour saving home would not simply serve women as housewives but leave them time to engage with greater public discourses. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee were not implemented in preference to the Tudor Walters Report.32

26 Chapman, Family, Home and Social Status, p. 21
27 Parliamentary Papers, 1918, Cd 9191, vii, Report of the Committee appointed by the President of the Local Government Board and the Secretary for Scotland to consider questions of building construction in connection with the provision of dwellings for the working classes in England and Wales, and Scotland, and report upon methods of securing economy and dispatch in the provision of such dwelling, commonly known as the Tudor-Walters Report
30 See for a recent discussion of the committee’s work by Krista Cowan, “‘From the Housewife’s Point of View’": Female Citizenship and the Gendered Domestic Interior in Post-First World War Britain, 1918-1928”, in English Historical Review, 130:543, (2015), pp. 352-383
31 Cowan, “‘From the Housewife’s Point of View’”, p. 372
32 Cowan, “‘From the Housewife’s Point of View’”, p. 379
standards raised in the Tudor Walters Report were not successfully followed through as local authorities largely built two bedroom houses with no indoor toilets and few had parlours.\footnote{Ravetz, ‘A View from the Interior’, p. 198}

Later in the Scottish post-war housing re-evaluation, Planning Our Homes (1948), the committee rejected the inter-war assumption that Scottish homes did not want or need a parlour and argued for its inclusion into future housing design. Citing the English example of the ‘parlour house’ design during the inter-war period, the report stated, ‘we see no reason why Scottish standards of accommodation should fall short of standards which have been deemed practical and desirable in England.’\footnote{Planning Our New Homes: report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the Design, Planning and Furnishing of New Homes, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1948), p. 22} The improper practice of sleeping in the living room due to limited space or to ensure children of different sexes were separated was addressed in Planning Our New Homes. It concluded that this was due to the inadequate calculating of space per person in Scotland, a practice they recommended must come to an end. In new housing standards, the living room and kitchen were no longer to be included when counting rooms per person; only bedrooms.\footnote{Planning Our New Homes, p. 21} Although this housing report, and the English Dudley report, was discussing social housing, it does indicate a dialogue about designing rooms around function and preserving proper use of rooms.

The front room is often referred to as a ‘second’ reception room, indicating the primacy of the living room in family life. The second reception room was a space where the ‘good’ furniture could be displayed isolated from the clutter of daily living. As will be shown later in this chapter, for women, a separate sitting room or parlour could ease the domestic pressure in regards to balancing family life with expected standards of cleanliness and display. In the working-class mill town of Lancaster, a housewife described her mother’s reaction to her father turning her parlour into his workshop, ‘She went mad about that…One day she pulled it all out [his equipment] when we were at work.’ When asked what their mother used the parlour for she replied, ‘You lived in the kitchen and then you went in the parlour for your best room…It was dusted and kept nice and never sat on. It was only used for special occasions…[for] visitors, weddings, funerals, and birthdays.’\footnote{Quoted in Elizabeth Roberts, A Woman’s Place: An Oral History of Working Class Women, 1890-1940, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 129} Her mother saw the parlour as an essential space in her daily life, even if
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it was used occasionally. As discussed in the previous chapter, women in post-war Britain assumed primary responsibility for housework. It is in this context that the front room plays significant in women’s everyday lives. Having a front room can allow for some relaxation for the housewife with regards to the messy and dirty work of the everyday to know that there is a room that is always tidy and presentable. The front room was also a space for display and wider social use; it was an intermediate space for outsiders to enter the home. It performed an important social and cultural function within the home. The front room was kept as a ‘good’ or ‘best’ room by interviewees and emerged as a key living pattern amongst the respondents. The best furniture, ornaments and family pictures were kept in the front room to keep them free from the wear and tear of daily life. The front room was arguably a space that seemed disconnected with everyday family life.

Keeping a ‘good’ room was preserved even when there was limited space. In Mrs McCabe’s three-apartment bungalow in Cambuslang in the late 1950s, the family lived their everyday life in the kitchen and she kept her front room as for ‘good’. When asked how she used her front room she replied, ‘Oh, it was the good room in those days, it was only if people came or something like that’, although she admitted that she seldom had visitors apart from her mother.37 In Mrs McCabe’s situation where space was limited, the family would have benefitted from using the front room as an everyday room. However, the need to have a room that was uncluttered, clean and acceptably presented for occasional visitors was placed above their needs as family. Living life in the kitchen was a characteristic of Scottish tenement living. The front room of the tenement, sometimes with bay window, was where the best furniture and ornaments were kept. Hannah Fletcher, who lived in a room and kitchen in the working-class area of Springburn, Glasgow, recalled her father making special furniture for their ‘room’: ‘I remember him making a lovely table, a mahogany table. And he made a chair a big wooden chair.’38 Even when space was restricted, social conventions preserved the ‘parlour’ as a room for the best furniture and family possessions. In the context of post-war suburban Glasgow, Mrs McCabe’s preference to live in her kitchen was a continuation of existing cultural uses of space with the homes. Mrs O’Connell’s sister stayed for a time in their three-bedroom terraced house and had a room to herself. Mr and Mrs O’Connor moved out of the big bedroom upstairs at the front and all six children slept there until they could afford to expand into the attic.

37 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
38 Hannah Fletcher quoted in Jean Faley, Up Oor Close: Memories of Domestic Life in Glasgow Tenements, 1910-1945, (Oxon: White Cockade, 1990), p. 35
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O’Connell’s had two rooms downstairs and ate in their kitchen. Despite having nine people living in their home, they chose to separate their living into upstairs/downstairs and to keep their front room for the best of their furniture. Mrs O’Connell described her front room:

The sitting room was kept for better visitors and such like, special occasions… in the sitting room we had a three-piece suite and some chairs, table. I remember we had a long, which I liked, a long coffee table, which had a black glass top, which I liked. 39

So even when space was limited or there were more people than rooms available, maintaining the front room for ‘best’ or as ‘good’ was still preserved, indicating its importance to the household but also people’s preference for, and the continuation of, traditional living patterns.

The second reception room was a space that could potentially reduce the pressures of housework on housewives. Goffman describes the divisions of the self into ‘front’ and ‘back regions’. ‘The performance of the individual in a front region’, he writes, ‘may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that his activity in the region maintained and embodies certain standards.’ 40 These standards engage with an audience not only in dialogue but also through a ‘visual and aural’ range that Goffman calls decorum. 41 The front room as front region is a part of a performance of self through décor, possessions and standards of cleanliness. Drawing on evidence gathered from Scottish housewives and women’s organisations, Planning Our Homes argued that housewives needed a parlour as a space that could be kept tidy for visitors and entertaining. 42 A Mass Observation investigation described the tension experienced by a housewife who did not have a separate parlour downstairs:

She really feels bitterly the necessity of having to use it everyday as a living room, and being unable to show it off to visitors as something special. This contradiction between her wishes and the facts gives her a lot of extra work, because she has a room crammed with her best furniture and all sorts of ornament and oddments, in the true parlour fashion, and at the same time has to keep it going as a living room – dusting all these multifarious objects everyday and sweeping the overcrowded floor. 43

The front room could be kept uncluttered and easily cleaned as it was not regularly used so did not accumulate the debris of family life such as toys and newspapers. Mr and Mrs

39 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
41 Goffman, Presentation of Self, p. 67
42 Planning Our New Homes, p. 23
43 MO, People’s Homes, p. 105
Devlin in their four-apartment bungalow kept a good room in the 1970s. Mrs Devlin explained her relationship to that space and housework:

Mrs Devlin: Well, we tried to keep one room
Mr Devlin: Tidy
Mrs Devlin: Well, a wee bit tidy cause if somebody came in and we were all together in the back room
Mr Devlin: With the toys all lying over the floor, you know…
Mrs Devlin: I was never a desperately house-proud person, do you know what I mean. I never ran about scouring and cleaning and do all… I just did what you had to do and enjoyed my children you see. So, for me that was the main thing. Uck, we laughed a lot didn’t we? (Mr Devlin agrees) We did, we really did, we laughed a lot. So, that to me was really important. My friends used to come sometimes, they just come in anytime and that, and they took me as they found me really you know.  

Here we see the how Mrs Devlin constructs her story and, even with Mr Devlin’s additions interrupting her narrative, she still manages to finish. Housework was not a priority to Mrs Devlin, she wanted to invest her time and energy in her family. Yet, the practice of keeping a good room indicates that she was aware of others perceptions of her home. The ‘somebody’ of Mrs Devlin’s story was a stranger or acquaintance with whom she was not intimate, as they were invited into the front room. Her close friends were taken into the back room, the private family space. She felt an acceptance from her friends, messy toys and all. Mrs Devlin’s good room enabled her to not worry about the appearance of her home. The space available in her four-apartment semi-detached bungalow allowed her to adopt this housekeeping practice. Mr Devlin described their house, ‘So you say, two bedrooms, lounge and dining room’ but upon further discussion it became evident the back room was only occasionally used as a dining room. Apart from a brief spell as a bedroom, though this was stressed as only temporary indicating conformity to social norms of the space, they described their back room in the following way:

Mrs Devlin: It was a sitting room, a wee living sitting room. We had the couch up against the back wall and two fireside chairs, and the table, we must have had the gate leg table there too.
Mr Devlin: Aye, the gate leg table sometimes was in there. We’d a gate leg table, fold out, we ate on when we’ve got visitor. We can also eat in the kitchen.  

Mr and Mrs Webster lived in the same type of house on the estate and Mrs Webster explained that, with three boys, she had to keep a ‘tidy room’. The good room allows family space to be free from the performance of keeping house.

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44 Interview with Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
45 Interview Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
If we look at the example of how two families used the same living space, we can examine the ways in which cultural conventions of space were balanced against the needs of the family. Built for the rental market in the 1920s by the Western Heritable Company, the flats were financed through government subsidies. By the 1950s, the company began to sell off these flats which provided a cheap entry level suburban family home for many.

These houses had an unusual layout that could be used in a variety of combinations, shown in Figure 4.2 below. To the front, there was a bedroom and a large room with a traditional bay window, adding to its external appearance of a semi-detached house. A living room with the kitchenette off it and another small narrow room off it again was to the rear of the house. This small room could be used as a bedroom or a dining room. The front room with the bay was either used as a bedroom or as a ‘good’ room. It was designed as a three-bedroom house but it was up to individual couples which room to use as a bedroom.

![Figure 4.2: Layout of a Western Heritable Ground Floor Cottage Flat](image)

Source: Yvonne McFadden

46 Interview with Mr and Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010

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Mrs Parkinson described how her family fitted into their cottage flat before she moved to a three-bedroom semi-detached villa in Clarkston.

We used that [the small room off the living room] as a dining room and we had, we were to the back, our living room was to the back of the house so we had the living room and the dining room to the back and we had the big bedroom at the front, it had the bay windows like, bay window because it was, and the other room became the children’s room.\[47\]

She chose to keep the small room as a dining room and used the larger room with the bay window to the front as her bedroom. Like the Devlins, she chose to keep family living to the rear of the house and continued this in her semi-detached house in Clarkston both then and at the time of the interview. When two rooms were available, this was a common living pattern in the oral history group. The McPherson family kept their house as two bedrooms and two public rooms as well but used the space differently. Here Mrs McPherson, who still lived in her house at the time of the interview, talks about her rooms in the cottage flat:

We used this room for [front room], it was always a lounge, this was always, always has been the lounge. And the two boys used to stay, sleep in there [bedroom at the front] and eh, and we, [my husband] and I slept in the small room. We found that better because we used to have that room as a dining room and then eh, and I found that I was just, when anytime I had anyone up to visit, you know or anything, I had to clean that whole room out because we just used to put stuff in it all the time, you know and it was too easy to put things in it, you know, other than using it as a bedroom. So anyway, Mr McPherson and I decided to, we would sleep in that small room and put the boys in next door.\[48\]

It is interesting that, rather than turn the lounge into a bedroom, she and her husband chose to sleep in the very small room off the living room. The language in both women’s narration implies that decisions about rooms use were undertaken as a couple. Mrs McPherson specifically states, ‘Mr McPherson and I decided.’ The dining room was an unofficial storage room, which she found a burden: ‘I had to clean the whole room.’ It is clear that the housework was her responsibility whereas decisions about the use of rooms were jointly made. The dining room and the lounge were occasional spaces within the home. However, the lounge’s purpose as a ready room for visitors meant that accumulation of ‘stuff’ here was not an option. Of her living arrangements with the two boys, she said ‘I could work fine with that’ and later noted that ‘You can bring up a family in these houses

\[47\] Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010
\[48\] Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
This statement reflects that the unusual layout needed to be worked with and the space had to be thoughtfully arranged to suit the needs of the family. The living spaces available, while physically static, were dynamic in their uses and definitions. Social traditions of space were influential on how people used their rooms as shown by the preference of keeping a front room as a ‘good’ room at the expense of bedroom space.

The conventions governing the use of space within the home were a continuation of existing practices within both working-class and middle-class homes in the nineteenth century. Within the tenement house, the bed recesses separated sleeping from living to an extent. Therefore, some tenants in a room and kitchen could keep the front room as a best or good room. Keeping a good room in the context of this study connects to the notion of ‘respectability’ found in studies of inter-war working-class suburbanites. Rooted in middle-class values, this new respectability among working-class homeowners was summed up by Peter Scott as ‘aspirational rather than conservative and privately rather than socially orientated’. Part of this respectability was to maintain to a high level of domestic standards in terms of cleanliness and hygiene but also to have the correct possessions and furniture such as matching sets or bookcases in the front room. Giles, discussing the description of working-class family’s house in 1941 classed as ‘respectable’ by Rowntrees’s social investigators in York, observes, ‘The signifiers of respectability invoked here include the parlour, the leather-covered and oak furniture, carpets rather than rugs, the sewing machine, the bookcase: all of these connote order, solidity and comfort, and of course all were maintained by women.’ A well-kept room gave the impression of a well-ordered respectable family. The good room, as I have called it, was a façade of respectable domesticity presented to outsiders. It was how people wanted to live as opposed to how they actually lived. The front room allowed this image to prevail when visitors entered the room. For women, it provided a resolution to the tensions between everyday life and keeping a well presented home as we saw in the case of Mrs Devlin. In the oral history group, nine still kept good rooms. This indicates that this practice was desirable and essential to how they lived in their homes throughout their lives.

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49 Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
50 Giles, Women, Identity and Private Life, p. 72; Scott, Making of Modern British Home, p. 137
51 Scott, Making of the Modern British Home, p. 137
52 Giles, Women, Identity and Private Life, p. 72
53 Giles, Women Identity and Private Life, p. 72
Social Life within the Home

Willmott and Young posited that social life in the post-war decades was becoming increasingly privatised and ‘house-centred’.\(^5^5\) Graham Allan concedes that while people may have become more focused on the home and went out to socialise less, this does not necessarily equate to external social relationships no longer being an important part of their lives. Instead, Allan suggests that these too have been brought within the home.\(^5^6\) This thesis has focused on the interior, away from the tennis clubs and gardening clubs previously examined when considering suburban social life. By emphasising what goes on behind closed doors, or rather in this case, what happens when people open those doors, a remarkable level of sociability was discovered within the homes of suburban Glasgow.

Willmott and Young’s *Family and Kinship*, focused on the poor provision of public spaces in the new social housing suburbs. Traditionally, those spaces like the pub, were frequented by men; therefore I suggest that Willmott and Young’s study overlooks the centrality of female social life within the home. In the oral history sample, social life was heavily gendered. Women were in charge of socialising within the home not simply as part of their remit as household manage but also for the period being looked at they had the time and the opportunity to form friendships with neighbours and visit family regularly. Weekend socialising that included their husbands strengthened these interactions. When two rooms were available, the front room was used for occasions like having people round on a Saturday night.

Wider sociability between families and the communities they lived in was the topic of a number of studies into both working-class and middle-class living in suburbs in England.\(^5^7\) When inner city Londoners were relocated to the municipal suburb of ‘Greenleigh’, Willmott and Young in *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) argued that the bonds of kinship and community had diminished replaced by the creation of isolated home-centred families. They stated, ‘This change from people-centred to a house-centred existence is one of the fundamental changes resulting from the migration’.\(^5^8\) The municipal suburb of ‘Greenleigh’ was found to be less friendly and neighbourly than inner

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\(^5^8\) Willmott &Young, *Family and Kinship*, p. 127
Chapter 4: Privacy and Space in Family Homes

city Bethnal Green.\textsuperscript{59} The suburban location in this context resulted in reduced sociability. However, in their study of the middle-class suburb of Woodford in \textit{Family and Class in a London Suburb} (1960) in 1959, the found there was a higher level of sociability than in Greenleigh albeit more formal than Bethnal Green. Expecting to find the same unfriendliness in the middle-class suburb of Woodford, Willmott and Young were ‘surprised’ to discover: ‘People in the suburb are on the whole friendly, neighbourly and helpful to each other.’\textsuperscript{60} This was an interesting comparison, which they attributed to class. They posited that middle-class men and women were adept at forming friendships and had confidence in their interactions. In contrast, Willmott and Young argued that working-class migrants to municipal suburbs were raised in an environment where all their social connections were on their doorstep and ready-made due to the close proximity of extended family.\textsuperscript{61} A central finding in Gavron’s study was that the working-class housewives had fewer friends and less contact with their neighbours than the middle-class cohort.\textsuperscript{62} A feature of middle-class suburbs was organised social interaction outside the house through joining associations based on shared interests and hobbies, such as garden clubs or badminton clubs.\textsuperscript{63} McKibbin has argued there was less ‘casual’ sociability in suburbs, such as popping into each other homes for a chat or tea, compared to traditional working-class areas like Bethnal Green.\textsuperscript{64} The formality of social interaction increased further up the social scale in Chapman’s 1950 study. In the lower end in small-by-law houses, people were dropping in and out each other’s homes while in the semi-detached and detached houses fewer neighbours called in unexpectedly and there were increased formalised and elaborate form of socialising such as special meals.\textsuperscript{65} Clapson observes that in suburban England, of all classes, social life was formed around a mixture of these formal and informal associations.\textsuperscript{66} This mixed pattern was also found in the Glasgow case study.

Some women talked about having coffee mornings in their homes. This was a formal arrangement where women would take turns to host coffee and cake with a wider social group attending, not necessarily people they would have known very well. Mrs

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p. 147
\textsuperscript{60} Willmott & Young, \textit{Family and Class}, p. 112
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid
\textsuperscript{62} Gavron, \textit{The Captive Wife}, pp. 98-99
\textsuperscript{63} McKibbin, \textit{Classes and Cultures}, pp. 93-95
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p. 87
\textsuperscript{65} Chapman, \textit{Family, Home and Social Status}, pp. 69-70
Devlin who moved into a semi-detached bungalow in 1972 felt that the women who attended the coffee mornings, her neighbours, were different from her.

I didn’t do the coffee scene where you would go round and into, cause at one point I noticed, I was kinda nervous thinking, you know, everybody was awfully dressed when they went to these coffee morning things. I mean one woman had a string of pearls on and everything and I thought this isn’t really my scene you know. And looking round your house to see what you’ve got and what you don’t have. Well, I thought, well that’s not really for me and my friends weren’t really like that, just, a couple of the neighbours, that was just the way they were but I was a wee bit kind of, I don’t know, a wee bit uncomfortable with that. I just like people just to come in and have a cup of coffee and just sit and blether and, push things out the road.  

Mrs Devlin was ‘uncomfortable’ and ‘nervous’ having this group in her house as she felt those who were attending were judging her by the material goods she had or did not have on display within her home. She observes the effort these women made to dress for these events, particularly the ‘string of pearls’ which in Mrs Devlin’s mind was overdressed for coffee. Though she had bought her home and was middle-class in that respect, her husband was an electrician, a skilled labourer and therefore perhaps she felt self-conscious of a class difference that her neighbours’ dress and expected standards of material wealth implied. Mrs Devlin’s story indicates that formal socialisation was in this instance felt to be class based and she was uncomfortable with the transition into this social group that buying had given her access to. Re-enforced by Mr Devlin’s assertion immediately afterwards that socialising by special arrangement was not something they did. Mrs Devlin preferred to socialise with ‘friends’ with whom she felt comfortable to just be herself, people she could allow into her back room and not feel they were making judgments about her if they had to move the washing to sit down. Her story is revealing in that she perceived a difference between herself and her neighbours. Mrs Brown attended coffee mornings but these were in a public venue, like a church hall. When she had her friends visit, she used the front room, as it was more suitable for sitting in as she only had two easy chairs in the back room, as it was only her and her children that were in the back room during the day.  

Having people round to the house at the weekend was the most common way couples socialised together with their friends. Each couple would take turns to host. Mrs Barrett explained how their evening worked:

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67 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
68 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
The only formal side of that [having people into the house] would be on a Saturday night you would maybe have friends round and then it was the three tier cake stand that would come out and you did all your own baking and you make a tea not so much a dinner. You with cold meat and chips or I can’t remember maybe salmon, not fresh salmon it’d be tinned salmon, things like that. But you would have done all your baking, you would never have people in and you hadn’t done your baking. You had to have your baking. It was a special occasion. The cake stand came out to display the hard work of the housewife in preparation for this event - her baking. Mrs Barrett often emphasised throughout her interview that she and her neighbours, who attended these social nights, were not well off. She asserts that this was not a ‘dinner’ party but rather a ‘tea’. The salmon was tinned not fresh and the baking was done by herself representing a symbol of the special effort she had gone to for his guests. It was not socially acceptable to have people round if ‘you hadn’t done your own baking’. Others did not mention the ritual of baking but friends came over by arrangement for dinner or drinks. It would appear that this kind of socialising was done as a couple with the woman being the first contact. Only Mrs Burns’ social life was arranged by her husband’s social group due to his work. As a couple and a family, they would have parties and dinners with fellow police officers. Having given up full-time work to raise their children these women were at a unique stage of their lives. As we have seen, both the lack of childcare and prevailing social norms about women staying at home to raise children in the 1950s and 1960s meant there was a significant number of wives at home during the day. As a consequence, they had a separate social life that husbands were not part of, though these were the wives of the couples who came round at the weekend.

Close friends and family of women often popped in during the day for a quick visit and a ‘blether’. When Mrs Barrett described the casual interactions between herself and her neighbours, she stressed the informality and that it was a simple cup of tea.

Interviewer: Would you have had people round for tea and coffee or would your neighbours pop in and out.
Mrs Barrett: You wouldn’t have said ‘round’; the word ‘pop in’ was more likely to be used and it was only tea, coffee was never really talked about or had. I don’t quite understand when you’re asking me that, why! But we never had coffee, it was always tea and there was never an arrangement during the day. I mean you might end up with three friends in and six kids or two friends
in or if it was a wet day and some, they would be upstairs playing and you might have a cup of tea and blether.\textsuperscript{70} This informal socialising among women was also found in Roberts’ study of working class families, where women relied on neighbours and kin for their social leisure activities.\textsuperscript{71} In Willmott and Young’s middle-class study of Woodford, Mrs Mathews’ diary revealed her daily social interactions. On the way home from dropping her daughter at school she calls on a sick neighbour, then later that morning her friend Joyce’s visited:

My friend Joyce called. She wanted to know if I would go over to her house for tea that afternoon, instead of the next day, as previously arranged. I agreed. We started a discussion about washing machines.\textsuperscript{72} While Mrs Mathews’ day did have an element of ‘popping in’, her friend called to rearrange a formal visit later in the day. McKibbin suggests that this represented the lack of spontaneity in middle-class interactions compare to working-class lives.\textsuperscript{73} From Mrs Barrett’s description above, there does seem to be unannounced ‘popping in’ on neighbours, this perhaps reflects the lower middle-class status of the residents in the sample.

Men and women, especially when the children were young, had different living patterns. Willmott and Young used a suburban middle-class couple’s day to show that couples separate lives can leave little time for shared experiences within this context as opposed to a couple who ran a farm together.\textsuperscript{74} Men were generally physically absent from the house during the day. In the case-study, men did not generally socialise with their friends in the house. Mr Travis met his friends for a meal in town if he wanted to socialise and Mrs Robert’s husband was often absent in the evening at his gardening club.\textsuperscript{75} Though men tended to socialise outside the home, couples did share friends in the local area that they would socialise with as a group. Gender was an influence on social life. For all except Mrs Connor, the wives were at home with their children during the day and most working part-time if at all when the children were small. This created a large group of women sharing the experience of child rearing and homemaking at the same time. There is a body

\textsuperscript{70} Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
\textsuperscript{71} Roberts, Women and Families, p. 99
\textsuperscript{72} Willmott & Young, Family and Class, p. 27
\textsuperscript{73} McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, p. 86
\textsuperscript{74} Willmott & Young, Family and Class, pp. 26-27
\textsuperscript{75} Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009; Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
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of literature about women’s isolation within the home in the suburb.76 ‘Suburban Neurosis’ as defined by Dr Stephen Taylor in the 1930s, though later debunked by him, was a portrayal of the bored and frustrated housewife unsatisfied in the suburban domestic environment.77 Hannah Gavron engaged with this and found there was a level of frustration among middle-class housewives within the home.78 Working-class wives were observed to have less social contact than middle-class women. Gavron observed that ‘a picture here emerges of a rather isolated, extremely family-centred existence.’79 Whilst this was some women’s experience, feelings of isolation within the home were not part of women’s narratives in the oral testimony, the fact that many of them worked part-time may have contributed to this. However, it does imply that they felt connected to the areas they lived in and were reasonably content with their lives.

Neighbourliness played a considerable role in wives’ everyday interactions. An essentially informal relationship, it was described as both social and supportive, from chatting over the washing line to watching each other’s children or helping lay a new path. In the suburb, the home itself became an expression for neighbourliness. There emerged the sharing of material goods to ‘help’ each other out. Mrs Brown and her neighbour were good friends. Their relationship implies daily interactions and support both materially and emotionally.

Mrs Brown: The fridge would be when my second daughter was born; when she was quite small we bought a fridge. Before that, before that the next door neighbour used to, used to spin my washing if it was a wet day and she may be kept my milk cool or else I just put, you dipped a cloth in water and put it over the top of the milk and that evaporates and keeps the milk cool.
Interviewer: So was your neighbour was quite good then?
Mrs Brown: Oh we were, we were like a big family. Kids with two mums and two dads, we all covered for each other.
Interviewer: So, was it a nice kind of community here then?
Mrs Brown: Well, we moved in at the same time you see and I knew her before hand, we had worked in the same office. Unfortunately, they immigrated to Cape Town, so I lost her. Had to buy my washing machine and everything.80

78 Gavron, The Captive Wife, p. 142
79 Ibid, p. 100
80 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
Here, neighbourliness had transformed from borrowing the odd cup of sugar to sharing domestic goods. The intimacy of Mrs Brown and her neighbour highlights that daily social relationships were an important part of life in the suburbs. Annemarie Hughes similarly found a mutually supportive network of women in the inter-war communities in Scotland.\textsuperscript{81} A common narrative was the shared financial burden of initially affording a home and this could form a bond between neighbours. Mrs Muirhead explains how they became friends with the young couple two doors down:

\begin{quote}
Mrs Muirhead: But you, I mean you got to know everybody and there was another couple two doors up, they got married in March so they moved in and all we had was a three piece suite and two odd carpets and all they had was, they had a dining room suite but they didn’t have a three piece suite. So they would come in to us to get a seat (laughs)... And if we were having a meal round the table. But you didnae really bother, you were just so glad you had the house you just, it was amazing how quickly you were able to furnish it and do it up.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

The Muirheads and their neighbours while expressing some hardship at their lack of furniture acknowledge their good fortune at being able to buy their house. Also that their lack of material goods was temporary as they settled into their home and began to make it their own.

The Glasgow case-study has highlighted that kinship and community was an integral part of everyday life in the suburb. The people in the study group bought their homes with a single wage which created narratives of financial burdens but more significantly the women’s presence in the home and the suburb during this time. Women bonded over shared experiences that were unique to that time in their lives; making a home and raising young children. Therefore, sociability was largely context and location specific in this context. As their lives changed and family grew up women most entered full time work but many retained the friendships and bonds they had established through the continuation of weekend socialisation as a couple. The role of family was still significant, albeit not every day, it was regular visits. The move to the suburb did mean that family were often not in close proximity so the role of community and neighbourliness was important. In the homes of suburban Glasgow, there was a level of sociability, both formal and informal, within the home. Patterns of socialisation could be indicative of the class of

\textsuperscript{82} Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
these homebuyers. I would say that there was mixture of both formal and informal associations with neither appearing to dominate. I think Mrs Devlin’s story was quite poignant in how class is constructed by the individual based on shared meanings. She attributed certain markers as material indicators of class such as the pearl necklace and the feeling of being judged by what she did or did not have. Both her husband and herself rejected formal socialisation, as part of their identity recognising this as something middle-class people would do. This suggests that formal socialisation can be an indicator of social class and many participants in this study were keen to emphasise the informality of their interactions. I think even in retrospect some participants in the study saw themselves as not quite middle-class and were in touch with their working-class roots. The dominance of the narrative that they financially struggle to buy a house supports this. If we return to Mrs Barrett, despite her emphasis on having a ‘tea’ not a dinner the fact remained you still had to have your baking done.

Two Rooms and Everyday Family Life

The front and back of the house can signify personal relationships between household members and visitors. If we return to Goffman’s division of the performance of self into front/back regions, then the back room could be seen as the ‘back region’ where the performance can be relaxed, free from intrusions of the audience. The back room allowed family life to be conducted in privacy away from the eyes of the street. Therefore, the room a visitor was received in indicated the level of intimacy between the visitor and the family. One Auntie, for example, may be shown to the family living room at the rear of the house while another Auntie may be taken into the ‘good’ room. Mr Webster summed up where visitors would have gone in his house: ‘It depends what the pecking order of the visitors is. I mean, if you and the minister are in the same pecking order you come in here [front room] and if it’s any of my buddies I wouldn’t have them in here, I’d have them in the back room.’ The interview with the Websters was in the front room or ‘good’ room therefore I was in the same order as the minister, perhaps due to my status as both a stranger and a university researcher. Of the nine who still kept a good room, only two did not conduct the interview there. Graham Allan discusses the complexities of boundaries within the home between what he calls ‘Insiders and Outsiders’. He argues that defining the home as simply private is problematic as it overlooks areas of the house that are public,
or semi public, accessible to a wide variety of visitors in different social situations. Nor does the term ‘private’ account for the tensions between household members over privacy from one another. Allan explores the different levels of access people, such as close relative and neighbours, have to the home through their social relationship to ‘insiders’. Some examples of these relationships were evident within the oral history particularly in the use of the two public rooms and visitors.

Mrs Burns described the function of her front room for both her family and visitors in Thornliebank in the 1960s:

We didn’t use it every day. The kids always came in here to do their homework, that was kind of, obviously it was what we’d call your ‘best’ room, so if you had visitors in here because although we used that as a living room, it was also your dining room. So, if you were having visitors your table was set in there and they could be in here and then through for their meal and then back here again. We used this room [front room] quite a lot in fact.

Here, she discusses visitors to the house and how the front room was used primarily for socialising. If they were having people round for a meal, they would eat in the dining room, which was also their everyday living room. Mrs Burns had no problem merging her visitors with her everyday life for eating but, in general, visitors and special occasions were confined to the front room; ‘your “best” room’. Although not used daily, she remarks, ‘we used it quite a lot in fact’ referring to how regularly she socialised rather than its use by the family.

A pattern of daily living begins to emerge that revolved around the front and back of the house. In Liverpool, Chapman described public rooms used as either, a ‘parlour’ for occasional use with a living room for everyday life, or an everyday ‘sitting’ room with a dining room for eating meals. In five-apartment homes the most common designation of rooms was to have a dining room and ‘living room’, yet only in two of these was the dining room exclusively for eating. The furniture in each room helped define its function. Often where the back room was described as a ‘dining room’, the presence of easy chairs as well as a dining room suite indicated that some degree of family life took place in there. If the back room was described as a ‘sitting room’ then a gate-leg table was often part of

85 Allan, ‘Insiders and Outsiders’
86 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
87 Interview the Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
88 Chapman, Family, Home and Social Status, 54
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The arrangement but the settee was the main feature. Mrs and Mrs Travis described their back room: ‘We used it as a living room… and we’ve always used it as a dining room. We always had a table and used it as a dining room as well… gated legged, you know where you can fold it down.’ The appropriation of furniture to define the function of a room was one way in which consumers could actively and creatively organise space to suit their needs sometimes in contradiction to the intentions of the housing designers. The space to have a room for everyday that was not open to public scrutiny meant that family life could to some extent be more relaxed and informal. It must be cautioned that this was not an equal experience between family members. The house as a workplace for women meant their relaxation was often combined with or punctuated by the needs of domestic work and childcare.

Dividing life neatly into front and back living does not account for the complexity of daily household routines. Mrs Brown and her husband bought their house from the developer before it was completed. They paid extra to make changes to the layout of the house. In addition to ornate fireplaces, they also had a sliding door placed between the kitchen and the back room to change it from a bedroom to a dining room, the interview was conducted in her back room.

Mrs Brown: We originally should have a had door there, where the chair is, from
Interviewer: To connect the two rooms?
Mrs Brown: Instead of through to this, which was supposed to be the bedroom you see. So, we had the sliding door put in, so we could get in and out from the kitchen and made it our dining room.
Interviewer: So, this was originally supposed to be a bedroom?
Mrs Brown: It was built as a three bedroom with a box room, with a living room, kitchen and bathroom.
Interview: But you used this as a dining room
Mrs Brown: We always had our dining suite in here.
Interviewer: And did you find you used the dining room much?
Mrs Brown: I had two… I had the sideboard, sideboard would be there, the dining room table and I had two small chairs at the window that I sat because we get the sun on this side of the house. When the children were wee, or when they were little, I moved the table back and put a square playpen in the middle of the floor and they played in the playpen.

[...]

89 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travers
90 For examples of how consumers can appropriate goods to create their own meaning and form identities both individual and local see Daniel Miller, ‘Consumption and Its Consequences’, in Hugh Mackay, ed., Consumptions and Everyday Life, (London: Sage, 1997)
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Interviewer: So where did you spend most, when you had the children, when they were wee, where did you spend most of your day?
Mrs Brown: Well, when they were in the playpen I spent my day in here [back room] and in the kitchen and you spent the rest of your day in the evening and everything in the living room, the sitting room now. And you spent a lot of time outside, the children playing in the garden and doing my gardening.  

Although the back room was her dining room, Mrs Brown spent a portion of her day in it with the children so along with her dining suite she added two chairs for her to sit comfortably. The way she moved around the house throughout the day highlights the problems of labelling rooms for specific functions. Mrs Brown often said ‘I had’ or ‘I spent’ in her narrative. The ‘we’ is conspicuously absent from her narrative compared to other people’s stories, highlighting that the story of ‘us’ did not encompass all of the interviews. Mrs Roberts, also interviewed on her own, used her back room as a dining room but explained that it was used often as they had, or ‘we had’, a lot of family round.

Interviewer: So what would you have used the front room for?
Mrs Roberts: Oh, that was our living room, with the television in it and we had our things; that was it. The other room was the dining room which we actually did use quite a lot and when we were married at first, when I think on it, we’d all the old aunties and everybody over and it was used quite a lot. And even when the family came, it was used. So, it was only used for eating but it was used quite a lot.

She repeatedly asserts that her dining room was ‘used quite a lot’ especially as she had her extended family round often. The unspoken assumptions are that dining rooms were infrequently used and only for eating meals. Mrs Roberts also mentioned watching television. The placement of the television could indicate where the family spend most of their time together, however families were made up on individuals who had their own needs that had to be accommodated within the home.

The availability of a second living room has been focused on as a space for the occasional or extraordinary interactions between the family and their visitors, yet these two ‘public’ rooms also had an everyday function for household members. The home as ‘private’ is problematic when you consider the intrusion of ‘outsiders’ but tension can exist over privacy and space between ‘insiders’. Time and space agreements can be made between family members to reduce tensions and conflicts. Scholars have been interested in

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91 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
92 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
93 Earlier Mrs McPherson described her dining room being used for storage in her cottage flat. Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
privacy and space in twenty-first century home life. Arnold and Graesch mapped how spaces were used by American middle-class families throughout the day, and in respect of other household members and visitors. They noted that the use of space and possessions was influenced by the housing design of shared spaces, highlighting some of the conflicting demands over spaces and what times they could be used. Their approach was similar to Hannah Avis’ recent study of couples sharing two room and kitchen tenements in Scotland, where she found that space and time was negotiated to allow the couple to pursue their individual interests. These two studies, while about present day homes, highlight the idea of privacy from other family members. It was interesting to see if this was a problem in post-war family life and whether having two reception rooms defused these tensions.

Family members could pursue different activities away from the main family living room. In response to being asked about having a space that she felt was her own, Mrs Parkinson responded that she did not but ‘having the two rooms separate meant you could use, you know say one person could, you could have a bit of your own space to a certain extent.’ The Parker Morris report, *Homes for Today*, in 1961 advocated open-plan living for families of less than four persons but acknowledged that in larger households a separate room for quiet activities should be included in future housing design. This indicated a change in attitude towards the individual rather than the family that was a feature of the Parker Morris report. Both Mass Observation’s *People’s Homes* and the *Good Housekeeping* supplement, ‘A Home for the Family’ promoted the importance of having a quiet space where children could do their homework. In the interview sample, the front room was used for children’s homework as it was removed from the distraction of daily life; like the television. Mrs Parkinson’s husband liked listening to music and his hi-fi was kept in the back dining room where he could listen with headphones so he did not disturb the rest of the household. Mrs Roberts found having family life solely in one room was

96 Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010
97 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 9
98 MO, *People’s Homes*, p. 105; A Home for the Family’, *Good Housekeeping*, 1954 p. 103
99 Interview with Mrs Parkinson, 04/11/2010

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not an issue and could not find a use for her dining room in everyday life, yet earlier when
talking about socialising she said that it was used ‘quite a lot’:

Interviewer: What kind of things would you do in the front room?
Mrs Roberts: We mainly, we watched our television. My husband listened to
his music. We, friends came, when the children arrived we all played. That was
really the family living room that most things went on. We didn’t use the
dining room an awful lot and we couldn’t use the kitchen cause it was so
narrow, so the living room was really for family living. 100

Family living and individual living was not represented as being in conflict, though few
interviewed felt they had a space in the home that was their own.

People found it difficult to articulate their relationship to personal privacy in this
project. In the early 1990s Munro and Madigan interviewed people who lived in some of
the types of suburban housing in this case study. 101 Munro and Madigan felt there was a
reluctance to talk about private space within the family home and suggested that the idea of
individual privacy undermined ‘dominant ideas about family togetherness and the shared
companionate marriage.’ 102 In this study, when asked ‘Did you have any private space?’
most simply answered ‘no’ or mistook the question to refer to family privacy within the
home from the outside world. Mrs McCabe responded quickly to the question: ‘No. I never
really thought I wanted that, you know.’ 103 Her response implies that at that time she was
unaware that she may have needed privacy and talked about how much she loved having
her babies who occupied her time. Couples interviewed together generally agreed that
individual space or time was not available or a priority. Though Mr and Mrs O’Connell felt
their bedroom was somewhere private, albeit still shared. 104 In this context, the demands of
family life and the relationship of the couple had more of an impact upon finding
individual privacy rather than the spaces available.

Mrs Burns’ description of family life was typical. Like others in the study, she
worked part-time outside the home and had to balance paid work with her domestic
responsibilities. ‘Well, if you’ve got a young family, as you will discover,’ she told a very
pregnant interviewer, ‘you don’t have a lot of time to sit and I went back to work, I worked
part time, I worked three mornings a week. So, by the time you did that and came home

100 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
101 Madigan & Munro, ‘‘The More We Are Together”’, p. 65
102 Ibid
103 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
104 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
and do the things you had to do when you had a family.105 Mrs Roberts and Mrs Brown’s husbands were often out in the evenings so they felt they had plenty of time to themselves. 106 Whereas, Mr and Mrs Travis felt their four boys took up all their time though they did spend evenings together in the back room once the boys were asleep.107 Descriptions of evenings listening together to the radio, watching television and reading were the most common leisure pursuits; perhaps one night a week one spouse might go out to a society or club.108 So, the living patterns of homeowners emerged that revolved around the duties and responsibilities of having a family.

Mark Abrams, in his ‘Home-centred Society’, associated the rise of television ownership with the increasing privatisation of the family within the home.109 Sudjic observes that the television gradually replaced the fireside as the focus for the family.110 After the suspension of broadcasting during the war, television service expanded throughout Britain in the 1950s. The adoption of the television was boosted by the first televised event, the Queen’s Coronation in 1953 when three million set were sold.111 The television was a family leisure activity with thirteen million television licences in Britain by the mid-1960s.112 The television was a symbol of a modern home as technology transformed how people spent their time. In 1957, the Council for Industrial Design held an exhibit to aid people in correctly viewing their televisions called ‘Design for Viewing’.113 Displays illustrated to the public where to place their television and acknowledged the television’s new function as the focal point of the living room. The following year, the Woman’s Journal advised against position the television where it could dominate the room; it was shown hidden behind a chair.114 In Scotland, 96 per cent of people owned a television set by 1976.115 Of those interviewed who had two rooms, half kept their television in the back room, one put it in the front room and the remaining three did not mention where they kept it. There was a correlation between where the family spent their leisure time and location of the television.

105 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
106 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010; Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
107 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travars
108 McKibbin describes the role of associations in middle class sociability, McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, 87
109 Abrams, ‘Home-Centred Society’, p. 918
110 Sudjic & Beyerle, Home, p. 79
114 Jeremiah, Architecture and Design for the Family, p. 170
115 General Household Survey, Scotland 1976, (London: HMSO, 1976), Table 5.35
Chapter 4: Privacy and Space in Family Homes

New leisure technologies were consumed within the home and therefore it is important to study not just how individual’s use them but also the social relations involved in their use. In a study of television in the mid 1980s, David Morely asserts that by studying how people watch television as opposed to what they watch exemplifies the social nature of television viewing. The home as the location of this practice means that more often than not viewing is within the family. Consequently, the daily habit of watching television can reveal family dynamics and more specifically power and gender relations.

Mr O’Connell felt the television was not a focus for his family, ‘It wasn’t terribly important the television, not when you’ve got the weans.’ Mr O’Connell’s described one of their neighbour as ‘better off’ than them but strictly religious so had no television:

They did not allow television so they had no television, they were much, they were more better off than we were, they had nice cars and things but, they’d nice houses and everything, but they’d definitely no television. It wasn’t allowed. So they kids would come down to watch our programmes, and they knew the programmes better than our kids.

This story reveals that Mr O’Connell was aware of the status of his neighbours through consumerism. Yet, he felt these children were culturally poorer for not having access to a television. Andrews suggests that the acquisition of a television was more than the next step in consumerism. It was also connected to the aspiration to have a home and lounge in which to put a television in. Television was a central focus for home-centred society and was bound up in meanings of home during the post-war period. In the oral testimony, television was an integral part of leisure time yet it did not emerge strongly in the testimony. It was often referred to as a background to other regular practices. All in the interview sample had televisions by the 1960s. They regularly watched it in the evening and so did their children but I would suggest that what they watched had less meaning than the simple ritual of relaxing in front of the television. It is its everyday and ordinary nature that leads to it being regarded as insignificant. Tim O’Sullivan observes that ‘once domesticated, the actual appearance of the household television set tends to merge into familiar “invisibility”, part of the taken for granted background of everyday life and the

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118 Morely Family Television, p. 14
119 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
120 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
121 Andrews, Domesticating the Airwaves, p. 134
recurrent practices of what Scanell (1996) has called “dailiness”.

Married couples in Glasgow described watching television together in the evening once the children were asleep.

The practice of television viewing was gendered. The problem of women’s ability to construct leisure time or space due to the constant demands of household chores and childcare contributes towards a gendered experience of leisure and consequently, leisured activities like watching the television. The improved living conditions and comfort within the home in the mid to late twentieth century were not enjoyed equally by men and women, the house as site of women’s work meant they had less leisure. Women as housewives have little or no time off, they never fully stop working, and unlike paid work they cannot leave the office when finished, nor can they have complete control over when or how work is done; it is subject to the demands and rhythms of daily family life. So called ‘free time’ was often spent on household tasks. Where men were often at liberty to engage with their television programme as their work for the day was finished, women were often distracted supervising children or engaged in work such as ironing. Wives in suburban Glasgow frequently combined television watching with housework such as knitting or ironing. Interestingly, despite a significant decrease in the time women spent doing housework between 1965 and 1975, television watching amongst women not in paid work remained static. The image below accompanied Abrams’ article in The Listener and showed a smartly dressed family watching television. Note the father sitting apart from his family in the prime seat, indicating his elevated status. With the evolution of the technology and the introduction of the remote later years, male primacy over the television became more apparent in who controls the remote and therefore family viewing choices.

126 Morely, Family Television, p. 150
128 Morely, Family Television, p. 148
When the new commercial station Independent Television (ITV) began broadcasting in 1955 it was in a context of concern over the growth of television and its influence on British culture. Thumim argues that part of this ‘unease’ over television’s influence was rooted in the ‘perception that women were crucially important in the formation of this audience.’\(^{129}\) The television was watched in the domestic environment where women were seen to crucial in deciding how and when TV viewing would fit into domestic routines and also their role as purchaser for the household meant they were targeted by advertisers on the new station.\(^{130}\) Mrs Barrett described how the television fitted into her family life:

The Children’s Hour bit you would watch that during the day with the children, instead of ‘Listening with Mother’ [popular radio show], you watched with Andy Pandy or whatever was on. And that was our, one on either side, on the chair.\(^{131}\)

Broadcasting services were aware of and responded to women’s daily routine. In the 1950s mass broadcasting of television was consumed within the home and simultaneously by the


\(^{130}\) Thumim ‘Women at Work’, p. 207

\(^{131}\) Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
audience but it also became integrated into everyday life and the mundane.\textsuperscript{132} Its acceptance into the home used the same tactics as the radio to appeal to housewives. Technological advancements transformed the radio from a piece of equipment that men tinkered with on their headphones to furniture that was used by women in their everyday life. Key to the success of the radio was not only evolution of the technology, such as the addition of the loudspeaker but also the arrangement of the schedule around domestic routines.\textsuperscript{133} Mackay posits that new technologies did not enter the home with their meanings fixed, consumers often rejected or modified them from their designers intent purposes.\textsuperscript{134} They had to win a place within the home and fit into domestic routines. Similarly, television respected the rhythms of daily family life. Women’s programming was in the afternoon, children’s shows at tea time and for a while there was even the ‘Toddlers Truce’ when programming stopped between six and seven pm to allow parents, most likely mothers, to get the children into bed before the adult programming began at seven pm.\textsuperscript{135} Once this practice ended, this slot was important as viewership increased at this time, TV shows were usually family shows where that showed social relations that all could relate to.

There was a tension within representations of the home as leisure as it was still women’s workplace. During 1955-1960, the increase of workplace dramas on television has been described by Janet Thumim as the ‘working through’ of social changes at the time, especially women going to work outside the house.\textsuperscript{136} In her observations about the popular U.S. TV show ‘I Love Lucy’, Thumin states that: ‘the series knowing play with ideas of work and non-work inside and outside the domestic space and to suggest that it is precisely this play which constituted the comedy’s striking appeal.’\textsuperscript{137} The domestic interiors portrayed in TV shows were an idealised reflection of its viewers.\textsuperscript{138} ‘The absorbing feature of much late 1950s British popular television drama’, according to Thumim, ‘lie precisely in its invitation to a nationwide renegotiation of the boundary between work and home, between public and private’. The first British soap opera ‘The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[133] Shaun Moores, “‘The Box on the Dresser”: Memories of Early Radio and Everyday Life', in Media Culture and Society, 10, 1988, pp. 23-40, p. 34-35
\item[135] Thumim, ‘Women at Work’, p. 210
\item[136] Ibid, p. 214
\item[137] Ibid, p. 216
\item[138] Thumim, ‘Introduction’, p. 3
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Chapter 4: Privacy and Space in Family Homes

Grove Family’ (1954-7), portrayed the ‘ordinary’ lower middle class family in the suburb. The BBC expected the actors to be ambassadors for the show with their own personal lives and identity downplayed in interviews with cast. Thumin notes that women’s workplace was the home yet it was addressed by television shows as if it was a site of leisure for all.

Reading and radio listening were talked about in more detail in interviews. The radio was the soundtrack to many people’s lives. Mrs Brown described the kind of programmes she would listen to on the radio, ‘We also listened to The Archers; and the children’s things, of course; and the women’s programme, housewife programme that sort of thing.’ Mrs Burns listened to Radio Luxemburg on a Saturday night. This dialogue between the O’Connell’s revealed radio listening was considered a leisure time activity by Mr O’Connell:

Mrs O’Connell: I used to listen to the radio. *Mrs Dale’s Diary* and things like that.
Mr O’Connell: Is that what you did when I was out working, I never knew about that.

Mr O’Connell said this remark in a humorous manner but it was clear he felt she was enjoying herself while he was working. Bearing in mind Mrs O’Connell had six children, her day would have certainly been hard work. Radio emerged as more significant in daily lives than television by the way people enthused and talked in detail about their listening habits. The television was not broadcast all day in the earlier years, which could account for why many did not attribute it with as much significance as the radio. However, the television had become a part of people’s evening routine in suburban Glasgow, to the extent it was taken for granted or overlooked.

The individual leisure activities of men and women were different within the home. In the evening women often knitted while listening to the radio, or made clothes on sewing machines, and one woman ironed in the evenings, as this was safer without the children underfoot. While this time was described as leisure, for many women it was spent doing domestic work. A thirty-four year old woman’s response to the Mass Observation directive

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140 Thumin, ‘Women at Work’, p. 215
141 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
142 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
143 Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
‘Housework’ remarked: ‘A man goes out to work and returns at fixed hours, but a woman begins first and ends last – the work is never-ending and even much of the so-called leisure had to be devoted to household tasks like mending.’ \(^{144}\) Langhamer identified a trend in advertisements in the 1940s to persuade women that jobs like cooking were part of their leisure. \(^{145}\) *Woman’s Own* every week featured knitting patterns, five women described knitting in the evening, two particularly enjoyed cooking and two had sewing machines. All these were presented as how women spent their time to themselves, away from the children. One popular leisure activity was reading. Reading was the most popular leisure time activity after watching television and radio listening. Mrs Roberts stated: I always went to the library that was a big thing in my life, going to the library. My husband didn’t read. He liked his music and he liked his, to read novels to him was a waste of time, you see but, och, that was my recreation. \(^{146}\) The importance of reading to Mrs Roberts was that it was her time to herself, her time to relax. Reading was a leisure pursuit that was not linked to the home it was purely for personal enjoyment and satisfaction. A study of reading romance fiction in the late twentieth century stresses the importance of reading to women as a means to create leisure within the home. \(^{147}\) Mrs Roberts’ husband was unsupportive of her reading but she was unrepentant as that was her ‘thing’. Women’s leisure time was still tied to the internal spaces of the home and directly related to everyday family life such as making clothes for the children, whereas men’s domestic work was not within the house itself and when it was it was often of an infrequent or occasional nature, though many did grow vegetables for family consumption. Roberts observes that men to an extent had their own spaces within the home to carry out these ‘hobby’ jobs. \(^{148}\)

Men could also be working in the evenings doing DIY projects or gardening. Bourke notes that men’s domestic work was classified as leisure. \(^{149}\) Willmott and Young observed in their London middle-class suburb of Woodford an increasing amount of leisure time was spent doing ‘work’ to the house, this was in reference to men and DIY. \(^{150}\) Home ownership, unlike council tenancy allowed men to alter and improve their houses.

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\(^{145}\) Langhamer, *Women’s Leisure in England*, p. 34  
\(^{146}\) Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010  
\(^{148}\) Roberts, *Women and Families*, 1p. 03  
\(^{150}\) Willmott & Young, *Family and Class*, p. 33
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Willmott and Young found it hard to interview three men at weekends because they were so busy with home improvements. They observed: ‘their houses provide the almost endless opportunities for work’ but categorised this work as leisure, stating that despite working all day, ‘the work of the night or weekend may be becoming psychologically more and more rewarding as it gets more generalized, more skilled and more creative.’

Mr Devlin described how he spent his time in his four-apartment semi-detached bungalow: ‘I was out in the garden... Or decorating, or out earning money. That was it, you know.’ He also liked to read when he finally sat down and that would have been in the back living room. Often men spent time outside the house itself in the garden or shed. Willmott and Young were surprised to find couples planting together in the gardens of Woodford.

Gardening is gendered both in the spaces it creates but also in the work involved can inform notions of masculinity and femininity. In Lisa Taylor’s interviews with couples and individuals about gardening in the late twentieth century, she found discussions about divisions of labour were expressed as the sharing of work. However, when probed further it became evident that men were responsible for the heavy jobs while women did the planting and pruning. In the suburbs of Glasgow, the garden was mostly the domain of the husband. When I asked Mrs Barrett if she looked after their vegetable garden, she replied: ‘Oh no! Oh no! Oh no! I picked. No my husband done it all. He did all the gardening but most of the people did all that, we weren’t necessarily alone.’

Women had no space like the garden that was exclusively for their enjoyment, all rooms within the home were shared with the exception of the kitchen, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

While women spent their time in the house this was not usually alone; they were caring for their children. The constant nature of women’s work within the home meant that it spilled over into their personal leisure time. To have space or time to oneself was not expected or expressed as a desire in the testimony. In the evening once the children were in bed, couples did choose to spend time together in the living room, often at the back of the house. Leisure time was gender highlighted in the practices of watching television which for women was often distracted due to their household commitments. The house was the focus of new leisure activities for male homeowners, as ownership meant they could

151 Ibid, pp. 31-32
152 Ibid, p. 29
154 Taylor, A Taste for Gardening, p. 138
155 Ibid, p. 139
156 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
mould and improve their houses to create their family home. Between couples no underlying tensions were revealed about using space within the house in the oral history. This may reflect a desire to present a united image of their home life at this time. The fact that their children were small during the period being looked at also may account for the lack of conflict over space within the house. As the children grew this may have changed.

Open-Plan in the Suburbs

Those who purchased small three-apartment houses as newlywed couples starting their families found that they outgrew these houses as their families grew. These homes were built after the war and were an unfamiliar way of living for a culture used to having two public rooms. As we have seen, tenement living had an element of the ‘good’ room with everyday life conducted in the large kitchens. The removal of the division between the front and back rooms after the Second World War in open plan housing meant that family living was no longer hidden away and instead couples had to re-negotiate their social and familial relationships.

The influence of the Modernist Movement on the post-war architectural community meant that some new social housing was designed and built to incorporate open plan living. In the English New Town of Harlow, Judy Attfield explored the impact of the new internal layout on the people who lived in these new houses.157 The Modernist ideal to ‘[b]anish the cold formality of front parlours that attempt to impress callers’ and ‘dissolve the divisions that separate life into compartments’ appeared to be in conflict with the needs of Harlow residents.158 The combining of the two reception rooms into open-plan living, in social housing and New Towns at this time, was a significantly change how people lived and used their internal space. Attfield posits that there was confusion as to how to live in these new spaces particularly when people were used to the traditional living pattern of conducting everyday life in the privacy of the back of the house.159 The removal of the wall between the front and back living areas created a tension for residents of Harlow that some resolved by making net curtains to allow more privacy - much to exasperation of the architect who complained to the local newspaper.160 The Harlow residents were concerned about people looking in and seeing the workings of everyday life

157 See Attfield, ‘Inside Pram Town’
159 Attfield; ‘Inside Pram Town’, p. 218
160 ibid, p. 219
that would normally have been hidden in the rear of the house, either in the kitchen or the back living room. Open-plan living also had implications for the privacy of residents of the house itself.

*Good Housekeeping* magazine was concerned with privacy in regard to open-plan living not only for the housewife entertaining her guests but privacy between household members. In a sixteen-page supplement entitled, ‘A Home for the Family’ looked at the varied activities of household members. The open-plan living described in the article was a living-kitchen-dining room. With a middle class readership, it is unsurprising that *Good Housekeeping* took a conservative approach in an article about planning homes. In light of the easing of planning restrictions under the guidance of a Conservative led government, ‘A Home for the Family’ suggested that there should once again be more room to accommodate the different interests of family members. It advised that perhaps the old arrangement of two reception rooms and a small scullery may in fact be best suited to family life. The article was written in October 1954 and argued that housing design should consider its occupants and their daily lives and needs as both individuals and as a group. This was echoed by the Parker Morris housing report, *Homes for Today*. Parker Morris stated that while open-plan living was unpopular in public housing due to the noise and lack of privacy, it was favourably received in the private sector due to its spaciousness. In privately owned houses in Glasgow in the 1960s, homeowners were positive in their reminiscences about their large dining-living room compared to the experience of those in Attfield’s New Town Study. Attfield argues that the absence of a ‘good’ room or parlour changed occupants’ relationship to the public spaces in their homes and meant they had to negotiate ways to make this fit in with how they wanted to display their homes to visitors. However, Abrams and Fleming’s recent work in the New Town of East Kilbride, just south of Glasgow, found that people remembered their open-plan living rooms with ‘fondness’, especially with regards to light and space. In the West of Scotland, these new houses were a ‘step up’ or a vast improvement in their living conditions. In Glasgow in 1951, 37.6 per cent of people still did not have access to their own private W.C., therefore these new homes with improved internal facilities and layouts

161 ‘A Home for the Family’, Good Housekeeping, pp. 99-114
162 ‘A Home for the Family’, Good Housekeeping, p. 103
163 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*
164 Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 9
were a vast improvement to previous living conditions. Many who rented or were allocated new social housing after the war were introduced to open-plan living and had to adapt their daily lives to this new space. Homebuyers to a certain extent had more choice in the type of house they would like to buy, however this was limited by their financial situations and what types of housing were available to purchase at this time.

Of the four homeowners in Simshill, three bought three-apartment houses, which had two bedrooms and bathroom upstairs with open plan, ‘through and through’ living-dining rooms and kitchen downstairs. Simshill was the largest of Mactaggart and Mickel’s 1950s estates, the result of the deregulation and promotion of private house building by the conservative government. Mactaggart and Mickel wanted to design a house that would be affordable and appeal to young couples so they created their three-apartment villa, which was either semi-detached or terraced.

Figure 4.4: Downstairs Plan of Three-Apartment terrace house in Braehead, Glasgow
Source: Mitchell Library, Glasgow

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Company manager Frank Mickel explained, ‘we have cut down on extravagances to make the price of the house reasonable... we wanted to give a popular price.’ These new homes cost around £1545 in 1954 compared to Mrs Brown’s five-apartment semi-detached villa in Clarkson, which she bought for £2010 from John Lawrence Company the same year. The new open-plan ‘budget lines’ were described as having a ‘simple, un-fussy plan’ that gave ‘a sense of space and graciousness.’ This style of house was popular with those who bought them and no discussion was forthcoming about missing a front room.

The absence of a front room was asked about directly in interviews. Mrs Connor bought her three-apartment end terrace in 1971, later than others in the study, and consequently, did not think of Simshill as a new estate. Also, by this time she noted that her sister-in-law had bought a similarly laid out brand new house in Newton Mearns, a suburb further out from the city. When asked how she felt about only having one large public room, she described the different aspects of having that large room that she enjoyed and interestingly does not refer to it as ‘open-plan’ as the kitchen was still separate.

We quite liked the fact that it was just nice; it was big. And I quite liked the idea that when you were sitting at table, well you could get things sorted on the table with everybody there and the wee hatch [from the kitchen] was very handy. Cause you just popped it through and, for setting the table, which was great. You just stack it all there. We actually put Perspex instead of a wooden door there. So, you could actually see when I was in the kitchen, if you had visitors. It was the next best thing to an open plan. You could still, it could be open or you could see through anyway, you know, I could always catch Mr Connor’s eye if I needed something through without interrupting a conversation or whatever. No, it was good and there was plenty of room when both my family and Mr Connor’s family were both there at the same time perhaps, which was good. But eh, so... It was funny that Bob’s sister’s house, it was a similar ilk, they had three bedrooms but they were a through and through in the new modern house too, funnily enough. The John Warner’s type out in Mearns, they were the same but they were a semi-villa but because we were an end terrace we had the best of both worlds with it being the end. It was more like a semi because you weren’t having to go right through, you know, to get to your back garden, you could go round and use the back door.

The serving hatch meant that Mrs Connor did not feel isolated from the social life in the living room when she was working in the kitchen. Comparing her house to her sister-in-

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168 Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 130
169 Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, p. 130; Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
170 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
law’s new build in Newton Mearns, she observes that apart from it having one bedroom more, the houses were similar. This was ‘funny’ to Mrs Connor, as she did not feel her house was ‘modern’ or ‘new’ although it was only around ten years older than her sister-in-law. Yet, in noting their similar layouts, she drew attention to the modern internal design of her ‘older’ house. The through-and-through living room was not discussed in any of the immediate post-war housing reports, as they were not a regular feature of housing in the inter-war period. As we have seen, reports, like Planning Our New Homes, focused on the preference of two rooms to suit family living patterns. When asked about the upkeep of the through and through room none felt it was a burden or interfered with the workings of family life as found with Attfield’s Harlow residents.

Furniture arrangement in the open-plan space was essential for dividing the room into multipurpose space. Mrs Muirhead describes her furniture arrangement: ‘Aye, we just put our settee half way across and that divided it and you just put your table and chairs behind that. Well that’s what most people did.’\(^{171}\) All three who bought the open plan houses had a dining area at the rear end of the room as two had access to the kitchen from there and the third had a hatch. Advertising for Simshill suggested that the ‘back part of the room which, although not separate from the lounge, has the air of a real dining room.’\(^{172}\) Mrs Barrett did not use her sofa to divide the room but still had her display areas at the front and her dining room at the back.

It’s what you called a kind of through-and-through at that time. You would have your, as you came in the door I had a display cabinet under the window and there was an alcove, which was quite a feature in your house and a cupboard under that and then at either side, against one wall, over there you would say, would be your settee and two chairs and then you had a dining room table and sideboard and a lamp.\(^{173}\)

When asked what kinds of objects she had in her display cabinet, she replied mainly wedding china, as it was common to receive tea sets and half tea sets. This large space was enough to accommodate the everyday, display and the occasional. Mrs Connor described how these rooms were great for parties. Mrs Barrett’s dining room table was not only for eating but also the children would paint and glue on it and she used her sewing machine there in the evenings. So, the space was flexible enough to suit her needs when her family

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\(^{171}\) Interview with Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
\(^{172}\) Quoted in Glendinning & Watters, Home Builders, 130
\(^{173}\) Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
were younger. However, when asked how the space suited everyday life she answered instead by describing the extension they added in the early seventies.

Interviewer: I was just wondering how did you find having the one big living space to manage, to upkeep on a daily basis?
Mrs Barrett: Well, eventually we didn’t. We boarded up the door in our living room from out the kitchen into the living room that was all boarded up and we put the door in the hall, which gave us a bigger work surface and kitchen area.174

This response implies that, while she was positive about her large living-dining space, she felt it was a problem. She and her husband altered the room to achieve more space in the kitchen and added another bedroom and shower room. Eventually she added a second extension to create a separate dining room. All those living in the three-apartment houses were newlywed couples just starting their family but as the family started to grow their houses had to grow with them.

**Alterations and the Family Life Cycle**

The modifications of space to meet the family’s needs in this study reflected the family lifecycle. All extensions were either towards the end of the period being talked about or after. Most were just starting their family during the period 1945-1975 and therefore did not feel the lack of space that a family with teenagers may have felt. Also financially, any extensions would have been more affordable later in life with both partners working and possibly earning higher wages due to their career progression.

The couples’ stage of life reflected their various living arrangements as well as what they could afford at the time. Seven of the thirteen interviewees had lived in their house for around forty years. Only Mrs Brown had never moved but stayed in the same house that she and her husband bought in 1952. Nine out of the thirteen altered at least one of their homes to meet the needs of their growing family. Housing needs for this group revolved around a number of factors but primarily it was to do with their needs as a couple and their family and the space they occupied but also it had to do with money. When the Devlins saved up enough to decorate their living room they knew that eventually they wanted to extend into the roof but did not have the means at that time, Mr Devlin built a staircase in anticipation:

174 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
Mr Devlin: We put the stairway in earlier, because I wasn’t going to decorate and then put the st… and then tear it back out again, so the stairway went nowhere for years just had a board across it/
Mrs Devlin: Our friends used to say ‘when you going to get the upstairs done’, cause well Mr Devlin had made, built the whole stairway you see, ‘when you going to get the whole stairway done’ and, but we just had to wait, you see
Mr Devlin & Mrs Devlin: (at the same time) We’d only one wage.  
The Devlins planned to create more space in the future and had to wait. Clearly, the staircase to nowhere was a talking point with their friends and they took some joking over it but they just had to wait until circumstances allowed them to extend. Homes were rearranged and modified to make more room for the growing family from loft conversion to extensions and even basement conversion.

Mr Webster and Mrs Webster described the common practice of altering house to suite the family:

Mrs Webster: Well, it was a four-apartment when it was built, but we’ve got two rooms upstairs
Mr Webster: You’ve got two bedrooms. Two bedrooms and
Mrs Webster: and an extended
Mr Webster: a living room, a kitchen and what did we call it, a dining room at the back. We’ve erm
Mrs Webster: We’ve changed it around so much so it’s not
Mr Webster: changed it around, everybody does
Mrs Webster: Everybody round here has changed something
Mr Webster: The family, as your family grows up. It was cheaper. Some people went through the road of selling the house and move to a bigger house and then when they family grew up, sold the bigger house and then moved back down again, but I’m too lazy to do that. So what we did was, as time moved on we did different extensions
Mrs Webster: And now we don’t need it (laughs)
Mr Webster: You can make it bigger but you can’t easy make it smaller.  
In 1971, Mrs Brown added a full side extension to accommodate her mother-in-law coming to live them. This gave her a new kitchen and separate dining area so she turned the back room into another designated sitting room. The impact of extended family, particularly dependents such as elderly parents, was not unusual in the study. Mrs Roberts moved from a three-bedroom semi-detached villa to a detached bungalow to allow her ailing mother-in-law to live with them. Unfortunately, her mother-in-law died before this could happen. Mrs Roberts said she was happy in the bungalow but talked about feeling isolated and missing her neighbours in her old street although the two houses were in close

175 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
176 Interview with Mr and Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010
proximity. She was not forthcoming when talking about the bungalow but perhaps this was due to her husband’s final illness being associated with the house and the forced move. Mrs Roberts was happy to leave it behind once she became a widow.\textsuperscript{177}

It is unsurprising given the title of the Parker Morris Report, \textit{Homes for Today and Tomorrow}, that there was an emphasis on the longevity of housing design to account for the lifecycle of the family. Parker Morris envisioned the ‘adaptable’ house, an idea that seems to contrasts with the seemingly prescriptive inter-war family home.\textsuperscript{178} As we have seen earlier, interwar suburban estates saw buyers as young couples just starting their families while Parker Morris envisioned a house for the growing family. The Parker Morris report reflected changing attitude towards considering the needs of all family members, particularly growing children. For homeowners in this study whose homes were built before Parker Morris they had to find ways to make their homes accommodate their children as they entered their teenage years. Housing design during the inter-war period appeared to be influenced by a preoccupation with young families, particularly in the allocation of bedrooms. The size and number of bedrooms was often inadequate to cope with growing families. Homes were designed on the assumption of small family size of two to three children. However, the needs of children changed as they grew and needed more privacy, especially as the demands of schoolwork increased. These houses were planned and designed for the short term. Mactaggart and Mickel’s advertising during the interwar period illustrated this focus on the small nuclear family, indicating that the developer designed the home for this family, see Figure 4.5 below. For the lifecycle of the family, these homes were largely inadequate. While in most cases extensions or alterations to the home were beyond the period of this study it was a topic many were keen to discuss and reflect feelings about the suitability of the original design.

\textsuperscript{177} Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
\textsuperscript{178} Parker Morris, \textit{Home for Today}, p. 9
Mr and Mrs Travis had four boys and in their three-bedroom house the small ‘box’ room was shared by two growing boys. It was fitted out with bunk beds and a joiner was employed to create a workspace for the two boys to study as they advanced in their
Despite their initial reason for moving being wanting more space, as their boys grew, Mr and Mrs Travis’ house became too small for two adults and four teenagers. Their house was built by Mactaggart and Mickel, the illustration below shows the size of bedrooms in a similar five-apartment semi-detached house built just after the war. The small bedroom is 8’6” by 8’ 6” compared to the front bedroom, which is 14’ long by 9’11” wide.

What emerged from the inter-war period was a stock of housing that may have been described as three bedroomed houses but with a small third bedroom. The third bedroom was introduced as standard in English terraced housing due to the tension over the problem of girls and boys sharing rooms. The small third bedroom was complained about in the Mass Observation’s People’s Homes, by ten per cent of respondents with the main reason

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179 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
given as concern about children reaching puberty.\textsuperscript{180} Planning Our New Homes highlighted this concern:

The ‘English model’ of the single bedroom, while useful for infants, should be abandoned so that once children were older gender separation could be achieved without having to use the living room as a bedroom.\textsuperscript{181}

Elizabeth Denby, a well-known social housing reformer, wrote a letter to The Times in 1943 commenting that:

The third bedroom, even in the parlour-type, is in fact so small it is difficult to see how furniture as well as a bed can be inserted into it. This seems unfortunate at a time when larger families are needed and may even be encourage by the grant of family allowances.\textsuperscript{182}

Mrs Barrett extended her two-bedroom house with a grant in 1973:

‘[T]he local authority, and [my son] would be about nine, were giving grants to people in houses who had two children of mixed sex to put on another room, so that the children could have room of their own. So we got the grant and we were the first people in Simshill to put on an extension because my mother listened to the radio and phoned me up and said I think you should do this.’\textsuperscript{183}

The Parker Morris report went further and advocated that regardless of gender, adolescent children should have separate rooms for privacy and study.\textsuperscript{184} Mr and Mrs Muirhead moved to a large detached five-apartment bungalow in 1969, which was technically a villa as it was built with two completed rooms in the attic, which their girls occupied: one for sleeping and one for playing. Once their son came along and the girls grew older, the Muirheads renovated their basement space into almost a self-contained flat with its own external access so the teenagers did not disturb the household with their late night coming and goings; they often described their girls as ‘wild’. Girls and boys sharing rooms was a source of anxiety addressed in the housing design both in the inter-war and post-war environment. The third bedroom solved this but was regarded as too small.

Early in a couple’s life the small sized bedroom may not be as important as the family perhaps only had one child. Mrs Burns found a novel use for her small box room - she used it as the dining room. Her four-apartment house had a living room and kitchen downstairs so for dinner parties she would use the box room as her dining room. She

\textsuperscript{180} MO, People’s Homes, 74
\textsuperscript{181} Planning Our New Homes, 22
\textsuperscript{182} Elizabeth Denby letter in The Times, 19 March 1943, p. 5
\textsuperscript{183} Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
\textsuperscript{184} Parker Morris, Homes for Today, pp. 10-11
described how this worked when entertaining, ‘we actually had the three bedrooms up the stair. So, we only had [my daughter] at the time, so, it sounds daft but I always liked to entertain, so we had one of the, the wee back room we had it as a dining room. So we had visitors, you were trailing the food up, trailing the food up and down the stairs.’ Mrs Burns enjoyed cooking and cooking for people was something she found pleasure in. As long it did not conflict with the needs of her family, she only had one child, finding the space for a dining room upstairs allowed her to entertain as she preferred. Mrs Burns accommodated the everyday with the occasional through a novel arrangement of the rooms of her house. This is a good example of how homeowners can appropriate space and give it their own meanings and functions to suit how they want to live their lives. The issue of accommodating older children was after the period of this study but it was clear, by the extensions and alterations carried out, the houses were felt in some way inadequate to meet the growing needs of the family amidst increased expectations of privacy.

**Conclusions**

Families had a wide variety of needs that housing design could to some extent accommodate. The families in this study adapted both their house and themselves to create daily living patterns within the space available. The importance of the ‘good’ room, even at the expense of family space, is significant in indicating how people wanted to arrange their family life. A room that is kept special for infrequent visitors may seem an irrational use of space if you compare it to the amount of space the family actually lived in. The fact that people were willing to sleep in smaller bedrooms or conduct everyday life in their dining room rather than sacrifice the front room indicates that it was integral to how they wanted to live their lives. The benefits of the ‘good’ room as a space that can be held in readiness for visitors clear from the debris of family life meant that families could relax and live daily life without the imposition of ‘outsiders’ within their sanctuary. Housework was not a topic that resulted in stories about the drudgery or the joy of keeping a well presented home. Attfield argues that ‘there is no product in housework: it only ’shows’ when it is not done.’ Housework is so ordinary and assumed that it is in a sense too obvious to talk about. I suggest that the keeping of a ‘good’ room in itself indicates that housework and presentation were prominent in the lives of women in the suburbs. The presence of a room that was ‘tidy’ and well presented for unexpected visitors allowed

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185 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
186 Attfield, ‘Inside Pram Town’, p. 234
women to live their everyday life apart from the high standards of housekeeping expected. However, when the possibility of keeping a good room was removed, like in the open plan through and through houses, homeowners accepted it and were happy with a larger living area. As the family grew couples had to either move or extend. Many extensions were motivated by the need for children to have more space and privacy, particularly for children of the opposite sex. The importance of having time to play with children was prioritised above housework. Motherhood was a more significant role than housewife to women in suburban Glasgow.

The tradition of keeping the work of the house hidden in the rear of the house was achieved due to the spaces available within the design of the house. Two living rooms offered the most flexibility for people to arrange their lives to suit their needs. ‘Outsiders’ coming into the home were shown to either the front or the back depending on their relationship with those living there. The home is not a completely ‘private’ space as it had people intruding from the outside but also individual household members had to negotiate the use of space to find privacy from each other to pursue their own interests. For women the house as their workplace meant that leisure was experienced differently from men. Where husbands could come home from and watch television or listen to the radio as a sole occupation, wives often combined such activities with housework. Therefore, it was harder for women to truly experience leisure and relaxation within the home. Many did read books which I would argue was a way for them to tune out their responsibilities as reading demanded all their attention both mentally and physically. The next chapter will bring together the issues we have discussed so far in this thesis. It will look at the kitchen as centre of women’s workplace within the home. It will consider the impact of housing design on women’s everyday lives, examine the ways in which homeowners consumed and appropriated goods to modernise their home, and explore gendered contributions of labour within the kitchen.
As discussed in previous chapters, gendered divisions of labour meant that housework and the everyday daily maintenance involved in servicing the family home largely fell to the wife while the husband provided the economic stability on which the material needs of the family were met. The room in the house that was most synonymous with housework was the kitchen. The kitchen was occupied primarily by the housewife and was central to her daily routine. When asked where she spent her time in the house Mrs Travis replied: ‘in the kitchen, as you can imagine, I had loads of washing and I had a lot of cooking to do, of course.’\(^1\) Washing and cooking were the main tasks performed in the kitchen, though it was often a base station for cleaning the house. In 1960 the weekly women’s magazine, *Woman’s Own* urged readers to ‘[b]e bold with colour and make the room you spend so much time in a gay, cheerful place where even your husband will enjoy washing up.’\(^2\) The kitchen was the domain of women, where husbands entered to take on ‘helping’ roles such as the washing up or perhaps like Mr Travis, making toast for the children’s supper.\(^3\) Throughout the Scottish’s government’s *Planning Our New Homes (1948)*, the needs and preferences of the housewives were referred and deferred to as the report recognised that the home was where ‘the housewife spent most of her working day’ with the kitchen as ‘the workroom of the house’.\(^4\)

The design and location of the kitchen within the house has a significant impact on how women can use and work in their kitchen. Assumptions about sexual divisions of labour within the home and the casting of women as the housewife in the kitchen were not only evident in the design of the one-person small kitchen or kitchenette of the interwar suburban family house but also in women’s magazines, government reports and social surveys of the early to mid-twentieth century. As the previous chapter argued, suburban house buyers were limited in their choice of housing and were buying houses built and designed in the inter-war period. Therefore, early twentieth century kitchen design and underlying influences continued in the very fabric of the houses people bought. The post-war period saw the rise of the fitted kitchen and the ways in which people achieved this

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1. Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
2. ‘Kitchens Transformed’, *Woman’s Own*, 9 January 1960, p. 110
modernisation in their small inter-war kitchenettes reveals the interplay of old and new, traditional and modern.

The rationalisation of household management became influential in the early twentieth century. Women were to be trained to become better housewives and mothers. These ideas were disseminated into culture in the 1920s through school programmes, women’s magazines, home exhibitions and department stores to name a few. In addition to educating women about health and hygiene in the home, theories about household management were influential in transforming the size, layout and the equipping of kitchens to create efficient and modern workspaces for the housewife. Consequently, the kitchen was a domestic setting constructed to define, but also aid, the role of woman as housewife. The continuation of early twentieth century theories of scientific management of the home was evident in post-war conceptions of the ‘modern’ kitchen. The impact of these older and new theories was felt by women in their everyday life and will be explored throughout this chapter.

The drive for modernity in the domestic environment is apparent in the transformation of the kitchen during this period. Space had to be found for new technologies and machinery that were becoming accessible through mass production. The rise of the fitted kitchen in Britain in the 1960s with its bright colours marked these kitchens as modern. What in the 1930s a ‘modern, labour-saving’ kitchen in the suburban home was considered old-fashioned and impractical by young couples in the 1960s, who wanted domestic appliances and uninterrupted Formica worktops, rather than double sinks and a single fitted unit. How the post-war kitchen was modernised to combine old design and new design and technology will be examined in this chapter. To what extent design had an impact upon women’s everyday experience of using their kitchen in suburban houses in Glasgow will be a central approach in this chapter. As we have seen throughout this thesis, women’s work within the house was constant and everyday, so this chapter will explore whether updating to a new ‘modern’ kitchen alleviated women’s daily routine.

While the kitchen has been described as women’s ‘workroom’, husbands were involved in its creation though not its daily maintenance. The sexual divisions of labour highlighted throughout this thesis are at play within the kitchen. Once again, the husband’s

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extraordinary contribution to the home through DIY projects is evident as men changed and improved the physical environment of the home. In some cases in the sample group, husbands were the modernisers, the creators of this up-to-date space that allowed their wives to work in their kitchens with shiny new worktops, built-in cupboards, and seating areas created for their use. Exciting stories about modernising the kitchen came to the fore and often inadvertently revealed the everyday, through comparing the old and the new ways of living that women experienced. Narratives about the daily toil of wives were often lost in a sea of Formica and washing machines.

This chapter approaches the kitchen as the women’s workroom and investigates a number of issues that influenced their daily usage of that room. Firstly, the design of the suburban inter-war kitchen will be examined as this was the style of house for sale in Glasgow’s suburbs. This earlier form of kitchen reflected women’s needs and experiences but at the same time, design could restrict women’s use of the kitchen. Secondly, notions of ‘modern’ kitchens in the post-war period through design and décor will demonstrate how home owners engaged with a process of modernisation in their dated homes. Once again, we will see joint decision-making and individual contributions to home making come to the fore. And lastly, the example of acquiring a washing machine will continue to explore the issues of women’s work within the home raised in previous chapters.

**Whose Kitchen?**

Generally, in interviews, the wife assumed the ownership of the kitchen. When talking about the kitchen ‘we’ often became ‘I’ in women’s narratives. Mrs Devlin explained that, ‘I’ve never had a new kitchen as yet, we got units from a friend and we just did them up, eventually, a couple of times.’ The implication here is that the kitchen is Mrs Devlin’s space. The new kitchen would be for her but doing it up was a joint endeavour as Mr Devlin played a significant role in refitting the kitchen. Mrs McCabe also assumes ownership of her kitchen when she says, ‘It was one of the best kitchens I’ve ever had that one.’ Women’s narratives about their kitchen refer to the space as a workspace so while ‘we’ picked the cabinets or ‘we’ bought a washing machine, women asserted ownership over the space unlike other spaces in the house. Mrs Brown discussed her galley kitchen in Clarkston in the 1950s:

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6 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
7 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

Interviewer: And did you find you had enough worktop space to actually cook?
Mrs Brown: Yes, yes. I had a bit, as I say next to the cooker and a bit at the other end, workspace, and we, eh, wooden bits to fit over the big sink. So, I just had the one sink and the cooker top that weren’t covered. At the back of the sliding door, on the kitchen side, my husband put in a narrow shelf and you could, two stools and you could use that as a breakfast bar or when I was feeding the children when they were very small, used that for serving. That was extra space too for if you had people in.  

Mrs Brown switches pronouns to indicate when her husband was involved with the kitchen. When describing the wooden workspace over the sink she says ‘we’, meaning her husband but then says ‘I had’ when talking about what space was available to her for her daily work. The shelf her husband put in was used by everyone as a breakfast bar but then indicates that feeding the children was something she did herself by switching back to ‘I’. The language in stories about kitchen often alternated between the ‘we’ and ‘I’ indicating that this was a space that women felt belonged to them as the main occupant. Whereas other spaces, such as the dining room or the living room, were shared and used by other family members.

When both husband and wife were present during the interview, it was apparent that the wife was the one who used the kitchen most. While husbands could describe the kitchen, usually the wife recalled more detail. Mr and Mrs Muirhead were in not in agreement about the worktop space in the kitchen:

Interviewer: Did you have a lot of workspace?
Mr Muirhead: Aye, it was not bad
Mrs Muirhead: Well, no really, no. A wee bit…

Mrs Muirhead then assumed control of the narrative to go on to describe what she had in her kitchen. In one interview, the wife had trouble articulating her narrative throughout and the husband dominated the whole process. As a result, discussions about the kitchen were lacking in detail. Mr Webster did not spend much time in the kitchen as Mrs Webster did most of the housework. To encourage her to discuss the kitchen I asked about the staircase in their kitchen:

Interviewer: So did the stair in the kitchen, then obviously get in the way of how you would have used your kitchen?
Mrs Webster: Not, no but we did erm, it was more convenient not to have it through the kitchen.

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8 Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010
9 Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

Mr Webster: Aye, the staircase yep, yep. The kitchen, it had the usual things in it in this house. It had the sink
Mrs Webster: cooker
Mr Webster: And a cooker and the cupboard, there was a food storage cupboard
Mrs Webster: I can hardly remember it now because we did it, you know, we’ve been here a long time
Mr Webster: Built into the corner. On the outside of that backing onto the cupboard was a coal store, for coal fires, not very big but it was enough, it satisfied the, it was regulation size in those days. This is built in ’32 this house. The kitchen space was enough for a house like this.10

Mr Webster had the last word on the kitchen stating it was ‘enough’. Aside from highlighting the problems of interviewing a couple where one person is more dominant, their narrative about the kitchen, while descriptive, was lacking in details about the function and experience of the kitchen, reflecting Mr Webster’s absence from the kitchen itself. Later when asked again about the kitchen Mrs Webster replied, ‘It was adequate for what we were, it was a bigger kitchen than what we were used to.’ The Websters’ story illustrates the importance of women in the kitchen and the relationship of men to that room. The next section discusses what that space was and how it came into being.

The Shrinking Kitchen: the Kitchenette

In Glasgow, the tenement tradition of eating and living in your kitchen, and also sleeping, was simply not possible in new houses built during the 1920s and 1930s as the newer kitchen was designed as work space for one occupant. These kitchens were not sociable spaces; life could not be lived around the warmth of the kitchen stove. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the housing for sale in the suburbs of Glasgow during the post-war period was largely inter-war built and design. The small, galley-style kitchen or kitchenette feature of inter-war suburban homes combined the functions of the old scullery and the kitchen.11 Previously homes in England had a scullery, a small narrow room where the dirty work of the house could be carried out hidden from the rest of the house; primarily the washing of clothes but sometimes the cooking was also done here.12 The kitchen in nineteenth century houses was generally a good-sized room with space to eat and sit in. The stove was the heart of the kitchen where meals could be cooked, tea brewed

10 Interview with Mr and Mrs Webster, 08/11/2010
and warmth shared, similar to the Glasgow tenement. In early twentieth century England, kitchen living was associated with working-class living patterns. The Tudor-Walters housing report in England and Wales, published in 1919, reflected a middle-class concern with where the working-class ate their meals. In future social housing, smaller kitchens were proposed to dissuade this pattern of kitchen living. Consequentely, previous patterns of family living and sociability were impossible as there was simply not enough space in new kitchens. The Scottish government’s Modernising Our New Homes (1947) redefined the kitchen as a space not for everyday living, moving away from the traditional Scottish ‘kitchen-living’ room. Mass Observation’s survey into People’s Homes (1947) noted some confusion over what the kitchen was and settled for defining it as the place where cooking was done. Ideas about the scientific management of the home were influential on kitchen design during this period and the subsequent interwar social and public housing had small kitchens to help the housewife in her daily routine to keep the family fed, clean and healthy.

Kitchens became smaller in the early twentieth century as ideas about scientific management and household efficiency became increasingly widespread. The concept of smaller efficient kitchen is evident as early as the nineteenth century in Catharine Beecher’s The American Woman’s Home (1869). Beecher’s book was an instructional tract with a religious tone that argued for the professionalisation of women’s work within the home through training women in effective organisation and household management. The two story double-fronted ‘Christian house’ had a small kitchen at the rear, behind the stairwell on the ground floor, with a laundry space in the basement. In a larger house, with a larger kitchen, the distances between cooking materials and the sink were in Beecher’s opinion so far apart ‘that half the time and strength is employed in walking back and forth to collect and return the articles used.’ She advocated a small kitchen area, likening it to a ship’s galley where equipment was well ordered and near relevant working areas. To achieve this detailed instructions are given on how to fit out the kitchen with adequate shelving and storage. In addition, Beecher argued that the work-surfaces and sinks should

be of uniform height and depth to create a level workspace for the housewife. The streamlining and standardisation of kitchens to create better workspace was a prominent idea in the ‘modern’ fitted kitchen of the mid to late twentieth century. This suggests that the ideas behind the ‘modern’ kitchen may not be so modern after all. Kitchens were changing and influenced by what had gone before, therefore how new or modern the kitchen in the post-war was had evolved from previous ideas. Beecher’s approach in promoting science and rational design to create an efficient home was detailed, educational and innovative.

Catharine Beecher’s ideas about the kitchen becoming an efficient workspace were taken further in the early twentieth century when the home was approached as a workplace. Applying the principles of scientific management, another American, Christine Frederick, in 1923 elevated the status of homework and promoted it as on par with other workplaces. ‘I want you to feel that when you discover new methods of housework and better ways of management,’ Frederick addressed her reader, ‘that you can receive the same recognition that a scientist or a business investigator receives.’ Her ‘Household Engineering’ or ‘New Housekeeping’ aimed to make the housewife more efficient to take some of the ‘drudgery’ from housework. The ‘Labor-Saving Kitchen’ was to be well thought out and rationally organised by thoroughly considering what tasks were performed in the kitchen. Breaking down tasks such as cooking a meal, the kitchen should then be arranged into working areas where all equipment would be to hand. Vernon observed that the Daily Mail’s ‘Ideal Home’ Exhibitions in the 1920s promoted the application of science and technology in the home, particularly in the kitchen, raising middle-class housewives’ awareness of health and hygiene alongside new appliances and ideas of efficiency. In 1932, the National Council of Women formed the Council for Scientific Management in the Home, through a series of leaflets and exhibitions, it endeavoured to educate the public on how to make their homes more efficient to save time and energy. The council was chaired by Caroline Haslett, who embraced the ideas of Christine Frederick and others, and invited Frederick to Britain to give a series of the lectures to the Electrical Women’s Association in 1927. Frederick and Haslett were among the numerous domestic scientists who studied the

20 Frederick, *Household Engineering*, p. 21
22 Vernon, *Hunger*, p. 220
number of steps the house worker has to take between kitchen equipment and working areas, referred to as motion studies. These motion studies led to the promotion of reduced kitchen sizes, like Beecher’s ‘galley’ kitchen in the nineteenth century, to save unnecessary time and labour going between work areas. The principles of Beecher and Frederick were evident in the inter-war kitchenette.

Both in the private and public sectors inter-war suburban homes in Britain, were built with small kitchens reflecting the mainstream adoption of ideas about labour-saving kitchen design. Builders Mactaggart and Mickel, who built four substantial suburban estates in and around Glasgow between the wars, identified the ‘Three Wishes’ of potential buyers in advertising for new homes in Clarkston in the 1930s. The first wish was ‘a neat labour-saving kitchenette’, followed by a tiled bathroom and a suburban environment.\(^\text{23}\)

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Extract from the ‘Three Wishes’ advertisement for Mactaggart and Mickel’s housing in Clarkston. Source: Daily Record, 24/11/1934}
\end{figure}

\(^{23}\) ‘Three Wishes’, Daily Record, 24/11/1934
The illustration accompanying the advertisement shows a typical 1930s suburban kitchenette at this time with sink, top loader washing machine on one side with a fitted cabinet on the other wall. Its reduced size saved building costs but also meant that there was more space on the ground floor for two reception rooms. In Mactaggart and Mickel’s Braehead estate, built after the war, the kitchen size remained small.

![Diagram of a ground floor of a five-apartment house in Braehead Estate, c.1954](image)

*Figure 5.2: Ground floor of a five-apartment house in Braehead Estate, c.1954*

Source: Yvonne McFadden

Five-apartment houses had two reception rooms and a kitchen that was 9ft long by 7ft 6 wide. The plan illustrates that the kitchen was not quite as long as the typical British galley kitchen at that time, as was recalled by Mrs Burnett about her five-apartment in Thornliebank. Their reluctance to change design may be a reflection on their caution in a post-war climate of material shortages and restrictions upon private builders.

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24 Ravetz, *The Place of Home*, p. 157
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

In their survey *People’s Homes*, Mass Observation in 1943 argued that ‘convenient, compact labour-saving kitchens are in constant demand.’ Yet, the survey also found people found the size of their kitchen frustrating with one in five complaining their kitchen was too small and lacked space to eat in. Despite living in a post-war two-bedroomed house with large modern through and through living room, Mrs Connor said:

I would have liked the kitchen to have been bigger. Because I, I quite enjoy, I don’t cook nearly as much now as I did but I was quite happy, I was a very keen and enthusiastic cook. I was desperate to get my own house so I could just have it the way I wanted it, you know sort of experiment in the kitchen shall we say, I enjoyed and I enjoyed, you know, cooking for people as well.

The kitchen was an important space for Mrs Connor and her kitchen was a room that she and Mr Connor took time and consideration over when refitting. Mr and Mrs Travis emphasised how small they found their kitchen in their interwar five-apartment terraced house in King’s Park. The kitchen was inadequate to accommodate their washing machine and refrigerator, so the washing machine was housed in a small porch extension to the rear. Despite having previously lived in a cottage flat, which had an even smaller kitchen, when asked what she would change about her house Mrs Travis replied, the size of the kitchen:

Well the kitchen, I would like a bigger kitchen. Although it doesn’t bother me so much now but, I mean at one time, although I mean, the two of us in the kitchen keep hitting off one another, but eh, you know when the family were all at home that was six of us and you’re trying to cook and dish up and erm, you would definitely do with a bigger kitchen, I wouldn’t bother now. And I’m not a great one, great modernisations as long as it’s comfortable, to me that’s the main thing. Keep it in good nick, I mean, keep it well decorated and that’s …

The small kitchen was designed for one occupant, as Mrs Travis observed. Mass Observation noted that the room that the housewife spent most of her day was the smallest room in the house. The size of the kitchen limited who could use it but also what happened in it.

In the oral testimony, two women particularly liked their kitchens as they were larger than normal by comparison to the trend towards kitchenettes. Mrs McCabe was happy with her kitchen’s size in her three-apartment bungalow.

25 MO, *People’s Homes*, p. xii
26 MO, *People’s Homes*, p. 93
27 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
28 See Cottage Flat Plan, Chapter 4, Figure 4.6
29 Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
30 MO, *People’s Homes*, p. 103 208
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

Oh yes, it was a very square room and the kitchen bit of it had a big table in the middle and cupboards and work surfaces all round. It was one of the best kitchens I’ve ever had that one, when I think about it now, yes uh huh. ‘Cause it was big. ‘Cause it was really a kitchen-come-living room, and then on the other side of the big table we had, as I say, we’d easy chairs and fire and mantle piece and maybe another cupboard or something like that.31

This kitchen was a larger kitchen-living room, more in keeping with earlier patterns of living unavailable in houses with kitchenettes. Mrs Burns moved into her four-apartment house in Simshill in 1961, built in the late 1950s, it had a kitchen, bathroom and living room downstairs. The kitchen was a feature that she felt made the house modern as it was newly-built:

Well we had, you had a lovely big kitchen which a lot of houses didn’t have, you know. Even like some of the, like say, the ones on Rouken Glen Road… [more expensive housing] We had, they just have a sort of like, a kind of galley kitchen, whereas we had lovely, we had a lovely square kitchen. We could eat, and we could eat in the kitchen, you know we had a table: we could eat in there.32

Later in the interview, she again referred to her ‘nice, bright kitchen’ as part of what made the house ‘modern’. Mrs Burns’ idea of a modern kitchen centred on its being larger than a galley style kitchen, which she equates with being old fashioned or out-dated. Like Mrs McCabe, she also mentioned that they could eat in the kitchen unlike the smaller kitchens.

Family Life with an Inter-war Kitchenette

The Parker Morris report, Homes for Today and Tomorrow (1961), found that two-thirds of those surveyed indicated they would like to eat in their kitchen; attributing the inadequate size of current kitchens to previous government housing reports’ ‘misconceived’ attitudes towards eating in kitchens.33 This implies the kitchenette as envisioned by planner and designer in the 1920s and 1930s was considered out of date by the 1960s, as people would prefer a larger eating kitchen. I would suggest that the preference for eating in the kitchen was a continuation of a traditional living pattern. The design of the kitchenette by proponents of the scientific management of the home, while rational in regards to cooking, tried to impose a new pattern of living that people rejected. There was a shift in attitude towards eating in the kitchen in the 1950s among the middle-classes which Jeremiah argues led to the enlargement of the kitchen in housing design, as it

31 Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
32 Interview with Mrs Burns, 12/07/2010
once again in began to be the centre of family life.\textsuperscript{34} So, by the 1960s, there was a change in what was perceived should happen in the kitchen.

The desire to eat in the kitchen was a strong trend that emerged in the oral testimony. Even though most had a small kitchen or kitchenette built in the inter-war period, many tried to fit in some kind of eating area. Mrs Brown had a shelf breakfast bar, as did Mr and Mrs Devlin. Mrs Connor described their innovative eating area:

We had put a sort of table and it was hinged with a piano hinge so you could lift it up that we could sit and eat at it but it was down flush against the wall when you were in the kitchen not eating so you still had space, you know because it wasn’t a huge kitchen.\textsuperscript{35}

The size of the kitchen restricted its use. The 1971 General Household Survey found when a kitchen was less than six feet square, only three per cent used it for eating or sitting compared to fifty-three per cent when the kitchen was larger.\textsuperscript{36} This indicates that given the space many would have chosen to use the kitchen for more than just cooking and washing. In suburban Glasgow, it was hard to find a house to buy that would have had a bigger kitchen. Mr and Mrs O’Connell had eight of them eating in their kitchen:

Mr O’Connell: One thing I think is good to mention. It was a small kitchen but we had a very firm table in the middle. And the six children, at least one of them in the high chair, maybe two of them in the high chair, but we all, were all round the table in the small kitchen, in that small kitchen and it was very good because nobody could move, also Mrs O’Connell could deal with any misbehaving…it worked out well
Mrs O’Connell: Well most of the time, we worked, we had the table pushed against the wall and we had two long stools for the seating, so it was handy you could go to the cooker and…
Mr O’Connell: (at the same time) And if you wanted more tea or anything you just reached back and do it. It was quite, although it was very small, we all, the eight of us were usually round it for main meals
Mrs O’Connell: Well when they were all younger anyway
Mr O’Connell: and you learned a lot from your children while you were round that table.\textsuperscript{37}

The importance of this time around the table with the children was also emphasised by another father, Mr Devlin: ‘We always talked together when I came in from work, we’d eat dinner together and it was the Inquisition, they’d say, “What you going to ask me now,

\textsuperscript{34} David Jeremiah, \textit{Architecture and Design for the Family in Britain, 1900-1970}, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 172-173
\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Mrs Conn, 05/11/2012
\textsuperscript{37} Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

Daddy?” “What were you up to today, what did you do, da da da”. Cause it’s the only way you get to talk to them, after that they disappeared.\(^{38}\) Being absent from the house at work all day meant that fathers may not have interacted with their children as much as perhaps mothers who were often the primary carer or worked more family friendly hours. The kitchen table was the focus of family social life in both these men’s narratives. Parker Morris recommended future housing should have a larger working kitchen with either an eating area incorporated or with direct access between the eating area and the working area.\(^{39}\) Previous housing design between the wars overlooked family social life within the kitchen due to middle-class preoccupations with efficiency and hygiene. While it may take fewer steps in a small kitchen to walk between the sink and the cooker, it also held fewer people to chat to, or in the case of children, oversee as you went about your daily tasks.

Ravetz observes that the small kitchenette was strategically placed to survey all the coming and goings in the home as it commonly had a door to the hall and a rear door to the garden area.\(^{40}\) In the case of very small children or babies, this was still impractical as they would have needed constant supervision and the kitchenette too small for this purpose. A number of women in the interview group mentioned using a playpen to keep children safe while they worked. Mrs Barrett had strong feelings against the playpen and described how she managed childcare with kitchen chores:

It [the kitchen] wasn’t all that big. Your children were just in the kitchen. You either put them in a, you knelt them up and gave them a bowl if you were baking. And they were just there and you had to be very careful obviously but there was not safeguards and no plug things and all of that. You had to be very vigilant when they were wee. No, no, nothing like that. And I never found it any, when I see what my daughter and son-in-law, you know I think, ‘Crikey, when ours were wee. You still survived.’ So yes, oh no we’re were just very vigilant and we didn’t have a gate that they couldn’t get into the kitchen, we didn’t some people do that, we didn’t have anything like that. We didn’t have a guard on the cooker; you didn’t have guards on your plugs. You just taught your children that you don’t do these things. They helped you filled the machines or whatever. They were just included I would say probably, included in what was happening in the kitchen as long as it obviously wasn’t dangerous. You give them something to cut up with a knife. You get these wee, I can’t quite remember but there was a kind of involvement with them I would say. Or you did something while they were having their nap. You might of said, ‘Right. Well, that’s a bit dodgy so I’ll make sure I do whatever.’ You had to plan your day so that if they were sleeping you might do something that was a

\(^{38}\) Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009  
\(^{39}\) Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 10  
\(^{40}\) Ravetz, *Place of Home*, p. 158
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wee bit dangerous. I mean outside in the garden, I remember somebody gave
me a playpen. I just thought, ‘That’s terrible, that’s terrible.’ A playpen! Why
would you want a playpen? You’d not sort of, put a dog in it. You didn’t do
these, you just went out… you just had to fit it in.  

Aware that child-rearing practices have changed to emphasise dangers within the home
and the introduction of safety equipment, Mrs Barrett asserted that her children were never
at risk while she did her chores. Later she explained that she considered ironing in
particular to be a ‘wee bit dangerous’ and so did this in the evening. The kitchenette was
only designed for one occupant and therefore there was no space to have children draw at
the table while the laundry was being rinsed for example. Until children were at school,
women had to balance their roles of mother and house-worker to ensure children were
supervised but that they still had dinner to eat and clean nappies to wear.

Small kitchens were continued after the war in public sector housing. There was a
change towards bigger kitchens in new private sector housing in the 1950s but this was not
emulated in the public sector. In the New Town of East Kilbride, to the south of
Glasgow, some residents disliked the size of their kitchens but also, in some cases, its
location. Elizabeth Denby was a passionate advocate of social housing reform in the
1920s and follower of the modernist ideas in design and architecture. In 1941 Denby, in
an article in Picture Post, argued for the kitchen to be at the front rather than the back of
modern homes for working-classes so housewives would not be sequestered away from the
world. This idea was implemented in some New Towns throughout Britain. In Harlow,
for instance, the front-facing kitchen was a source of isolation as women were looking out
at a world they were not part of. Abrams and Fleming’s work on East Kilbride found the
location of the kitchen was a source of complaint; not necessarily due to its front-facing
aspect but rather its inconvenient positioning in relation to other rooms, such as access to it
being from the living room. While the small size and location were not favourable with
some residents of East Kilbride, many residents enjoyed having a new modern fitted

41 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
42 Jeremiah, Architecture and Design for the Family, p. 172
43 Abrams & Fleming, Long Term Experiences of Tenants in Social Housing in East Kilbride: An Oral
44 Elizabeth Denby, Europe Rehoused, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936)
Judy Attfield & Pat Kirkham, eds., A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design, (The Women’s Press:
46 Attfield, ‘Inside Pram Town’, p. 218
47 Abrams & Fleming, Long Term Experiences, p. 25
The standard of equipment in new public sector housing was up-to-date. In comparison, home owners were faced with interwar design and equipment that they had to modernise to meet contemporary standards of what was ‘modern’ in the post-war era. The next section will explore what a kitchen in the 1950s and 1960s looked like and how homeowners engaged with re-fitting the space available to them.

**Fitting a Modern Kitchen**

The kitchen is an area of the home where modernity is identifiable and redefined. One of the ways this can be defined in the post-war period was through the influence of technology in the home. The kitchen is where machinery had the greatest impact upon daily life. From large appliances, like refrigerators, to smaller electric mixers, the kitchen exemplified the intrusion of industry and science into the ‘haven’ of the home. What was modern and labour-saving in the 1930s was considered out of date by the 1960s as standards of living increased and expectations were raised. Kitchens by the 1970s had to accommodate numerous domestic appliances and incorporate contemporary ideas of what was a modern fitted kitchen. Nevertheless, these ideas had a history and were an evolution of existing notions of efficiency and rationalisation within the home from as far back as Catharine Beecher in the nineteenth century. The suburban kitchens of the interwar period, in addition to becoming smaller, also saw the introduction of space saving innovations such as the pull-down ironing board or the work surface contained within a fitted cupboard. By the 1970s, these fitted cupboards were being replaced by low-level base units linked by continuous runs of work surface paired with wall cupboards that gave housewives modern storage and work spaces. This section will focus on the transition from an old to a new kitchen, examining how the couple created a modern kitchen that reflected contemporary notions of design and efficiency and the sexual division of labour within this process. Husbands played an important role in creating and moulding the space; either by building new flat pack kitchen units or modifying existing kitchens with the latest materials. The fitted kitchen emerges as a space created, both financially and physically, by the husband for the housewife’s daily work of maintaining the family home.

Interviewees were asked to describe their original kitchen when they first bought their homes. Mrs Barrett bought her post-war house in 1962 and found her new kitchen

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48 Ibid, p. 22
like ‘heaven’ compared to the wee scullery in her mother’s tenement house in the East End of Glasgow.

Well we had a cooker. As you walked through the door the cooker was there and then you had your two deep sinks, which my husband very carefully put blue Formica on it to make it look nice because that was the, Formica was the thing of the day. And if you turned round, the back door would be there and you had a cupboard behind the back door and you had, you see them on television, it’s the stand cupboard. You open the top of the cupboard, it was glass at the top, you opened that up there was two drawers underneath it and then you pull the top down and it became a kind of sitting, a workplace, you could work with and underneath was were your pots were, and then there was the door into the living room.  

In the 1930s, the small kitchenette features such as pull-down ironing boards or work surfaces were compact designs to preserve space but also meet the housewife’s needs. Mr and Mrs Devlin’s interwar bungalow kitchen was still largely untouched when they bought it in the early 1970s:

Mrs Devlin: What it was like, it had the white sink, we called it a white walley sink. Now what kind of was it, stone  
Mr Devlin: It’s a, a walley sink it’s china, they call them now French style sinks, double sink, two big doubles  
Mrs Devlin: (at the same time) But it was old, old, it was really old. And we had, what like was the, there was a cupboard. What Mr Devlin did was…  
Mr Devlin: Before that, when we moved in, the cupboard was, it had an ironing board that folded down from it, it was 1932 these houses were built, so they built it, they tried to make it quite, what they called modern in 1932, the ironing board folded into this double cupboard. Erm, and the gas boiler which wasn’t there when we moved in but there used to be a gas boiler for boiling your clothes in the one corner, but the point was away but there was a vent for it, and a gas cooker. That was it - that was the kitchen.

In the 1920s and 1930s large cupboards, called ‘commodious cupboards’ in the United States, were referred to as fitted cupboards and became standard in many interwar suburban homes. Detailed descriptions of the fitted cabinet were frequently given when talking about the original kitchen. Mrs Muirhead explained how she used the cabinet in her first house before refitting her kitchen:

There was a built in cupboard with two wee doors and then there was draw down, you know you pulled it down and it gave you a worktop. You could still store your cups and everything, crockery and then this pulled down and gave you a wee worktop and then when you werenae using it you could put it back

49 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012  
50 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009  
51 Freeman, *The Making of the Modern Kitchen*, p. 42
up again. So that was sort of built in, you’d two doors, you’d this in the middle then down below was another two doors.\textsuperscript{52}

If we look again at the ‘Three Wishes’ advertisement for Clarkson, the kitchen shows the cupboard on the right hand side.\textsuperscript{53} A redefinition of what is ‘fitted’ occurs during the 1950s and 1960s. The introduction of low-level uniform base units with a continuous run of work surface meant that women had more space to prepare and serve food. Mrs Connor described her kitchen in Simshill in 1971:

Like a, it was actually quite I would say maybe fifties, sixties style. There was a pantry unit in it. Like you know, one of the old cabinets with the pull down, I don’t know what you’d call it, almost like a worktop space but there was still storage in the back, two cupboards at the top pulled open and two cupboards at the bottom and there was the sink unit and just an ordinary freestanding cooker. There was, no there was no, there was a freestanding cooker, that was all there was no washing machine or anything like that but you know we took it out anyway.\textsuperscript{54}

Mrs Connor’s description highlights that by the 1970s ideas of what constituted a modern fitted kitchen had changed. For Mrs Connor the kitchen cabinet was old, there were no appliances and ‘there was no’ much of anything, so they took it all out and put in a new fitted kitchen. Perspectives on what was a modern and well equipped kitchen were evident in the shift towards the fitted kitchen in Britain during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{55}

The story of how Mr and Mrs Connor refitted their kitchen, as a newlywed couple in 1971, illustrates how industry ideas about planning or designing the kitchen had filtered down to the market place. As a young couple setting up their first home, Mrs and Mrs Connor were the target audience for magazine and home guides that offered advice on how to navigate the dynamic world of modern housekeeping. The \textit{Hoover Book of Home Management} advised that the work of the kitchen, defined as the planning and storing of food, would ‘go far more smoothly if your kitchen is easy to work in and keep clean; if units and equipment are placed in the best possible positions to save unnecessary walking; if the room is cosy, well lighted and ventilated; and if it is decorated in a pleasing colour scheme.’\textsuperscript{56} Mrs Connor described how together they planned out their new kitchen, referring to design ideas such as the ‘working triangle’ to ensure her kitchen was as efficient as it could be:

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{52} Interview with Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
\bibitem{53} See Figure 5.1 ‘Three Wishes’
\bibitem{54} Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
\bibitem{55} Freeman, \textit{The Making of the Modern Kitchen}, p. 26
\end{thebibliography}
Well, yes. You know. What we did was, Mr Connor’s, again, quite uptight, but it made sense, we took the dimensions of the kitchen and we actually cut up wee bits of paper the size of different things and moved them round where we were going to get the best storage as well as the best sort of positioning for working, you know what was going to be. So, it was the typical triangle that we sort of planned it round, you know with the cooker and the fridge and everything was within the triangle to the sink. You know your working area.

How the Connors planned their kitchen reflected ideas dating from Christine Frederick who, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, recommended organising the kitchen into areas based on what work would be done there. Work in the Home, in 1968, outlined scientific approaches to the home based on numerous studies to show the human cost of household work and suggested ways to effectively arrange and equip the home to minimise its impact. The chapter about the kitchen, entitled the ‘The Workplace’, acknowledges the significance of this room to the daily work of maintaining the home. A detailed section suggests how to arrange the kitchen into ‘centres’, comparable to the ideas of Frederick. This was based on a motion study by Cornell University in 1962, which systematically counted the number of trips the housewife had to make between key apparatuses such as the sink and the cooker as she prepared a meal. Similarly, the suggested kitchen layouts in the Horlicks Home Book, an encyclopaedic guide to the home, were designed to ‘try to arrange the sink, cooker and the main working surface reasonably close together, so that the work is concentrated and steps are saved. The accompanying illustrations showed readers layouts considered to be the most well thought out and rational in kitchen design commonly referred to as the straight (a); L-shaped (b) and U shaped (c) kitchen arrangements with image (c) being a variation of the straight kitchen. The Parker Morris report advocated the use of these arrangements in future kitchens based on findings from the Building Research Station, observing that a quarter of kitchens had no attempt at any sequence. Mr Connor took the lead role in designing their kitchen and his attention to detail resulted in a space that Mrs Connor found to easy to work in.

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57 Interview Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
58 Frederick, Household Engineering, p. 22
60 Steidl & Bratton, Work in the Home, pp. 312-320
61 Horlicks Home Book produced by Good Housekeeping for Horlicks, (Glasgow: Blackie, 1964), p. 158
62 Parker Morris, Homes for Today, pp. 19-20
Kitchen planning was something that a couple could do on their own with the help of guidelines and advice from a variety of mediums such as magazines, department stores and home exhibitions. This echoes the earlier sentiments we have seen about creating homes being a joint process, especially in regard to decision-making. Good thoughtful planning was essential to create an efficient working kitchen. In September 1968, *Woman’s Own* offered advice to readers on re-planning their kitchens.63 Stressing the importance of the housewife in designing her own kitchen based on how she works in it, the article assumed that the budget was limited and that the readers themselves would carry out the work. *Woman’s Own* offered four rules for planning the kitchen. The first being that, like Mrs and Mrs Connor, readers should draw up a detailed scaled plan of their kitchen and, second, to be realistic about what they can change on a budget. The third rule

63 ‘How do I set about re-planning my kitchen?’, *Woman’s Own*, 7 September 1968, p. 50
was to arrange the kitchen into work points as the Connors did: storage, preparation and cooking, and laundry. Again, the influence of motion studies was evident; the reader is informed that, ‘the aim in re-planning your kitchen is to arrange these work points so that you move from one to the other round the room without constantly crossing from side to side.’ Mrs Connor was unique in her detailed narrative in how she and husband designed and planned their new kitchen. It was clear from her story that her husband was the main force behind their modern kitchen and that as a couple they were well aware of design ideas such as designing your kitchen around what you do in it. Mrs Connor felt they were successful, she exclaimed, ‘So, obviously, they’re smaller kitchens but it was, but it so, it paid dividend and it was, it was quite a good kitchen to work in and everything was to hand.’ Mrs Connor was the primary user of the kitchen despite Mr Connor’s heavy involvement in planning and fitting out the kitchen.

In creating a kitchen for his wife, Mr Connor was expressing his care and love for her. ‘The health of a loving marriage’, according to Szreter and Fisher’s findings, ‘was perceive by respondents as intimately related to the balance and ecology of reciprocal roles.’ DIY and gardening are both ‘sublets’ of housework where men can contribute to the home without undermine women’s authority. In the case of gardening, Lisa Taylor found that couples performed their traditional gender roles aware that there were social and personal rewards. While husbands may not have used the kitchen daily, the kitchen was in some cases the product of their housework. The work of DIY or gardening is often assigned to men’s leisure as often is provided a create outlet for men. In Chapter Four we considered the nature of women’s work and leisure and the ways in which the boundaries are blurred. Men’s relationship to the kitchen was not one of everyday interaction but rather a one-off or occasional incursion. As previously discussed, women were considered the primary occupant of the kitchen and this was evident in the way ownership was assumed in interviews. Planning Our New Homes assumed women’s position as housewife and mother and wanted to accommodate her needs in the design and equipment within the

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64 ‘Re-planning my kitchen’, p. 50
65 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
home, though in reality little of this was implemented. Therefore, it could be said that the husband’s role was to create spaces within the home, such as the kitchen, that made the everyday working experience of women more pleasant and perhaps easier through the creation of breakfast bars or additional worktops. In his study into the transformation of kitchen by tenants in council property in London in the 1980s, Miller notes that these rested upon the sexual divisions of labour. The kitchen was the domain of women and they expressed an interest in the aesthetics of the home while men provided the manual labour, often as a ‘gift’ for their wife or mother; ‘the transformation of the kitchen depended upon the exchange between the two [men and women]. Changing the kitchen was an act of consumption as a social activity with social relations at the heart of it. Gender relations were reinforced through the process with men asserting their masculinity through DIY and women their femininity as the arbiters of taste and design.

Fitting a kitchen was not an easy task as Good Housekeeping’s 1969 kitchen supplement, ‘Kitchens Today’ pointed out. The do-it-yourself kitchen was for those ‘initiated’ into DIY: ‘Don’t be fooled, do-it-yourself is a very specialized occupation.’ Mrs Connor described how her husband and his father built her kitchen:

[T]hey built the kitchen, they actually built the kitchen themselves. The cupboards on the wall were just framed and it was Louvre doors bought to size and they were fitted on and the same down below. They framed it all and put supports obviously for the worktops and everything that was going in and again doors that just fitted into the spaces that they had created and the same with the sink. Because it was… on the right hand side of the kitchen, it was quite an awkward size because it wasn’t the depth of a unit, if you bought the unit, it was a good bit, you would have had to take a right chunk off the back of them, so that’s what really made them stop and think about what they were going to do. So, that’s what they did and they fitted in the cooker and just made a cupboard underneath that was actually on rollers and it was the big pan drawer underneath which they fitted themselves. And I now have one of them, forty years later, you can now buy them, you couldn’t buy them at that point, so my husband was quite innovative shall we say.

Mrs Barrett’s husband made her kitchen from scratch but she confessed that ‘It’s not something he’s very, he’s good with his hands but he’s not very handy but [a neighbour] who lived two doors up, he was a carpenter, nope, you can’t call him a joiner, he was more

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69 Planning Our New Homes
71 Miller, ‘Consumption and Its Consequences’, p. 24
73 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
skilled than that. So he gave ideas and that’s what the men did.74 Mrs Barrett’s narrative often focused on their lack of money so despite her husband’s perceived lack of skill, he had to make their kitchen, as they could not afford to pay someone or buy a flat pack kitchen. Flat-pack kitchens offered those who were less skilled a way to create and install a kitchen. Good Housekeeping’s ‘budget kitchen’ was a green kitchen with cream Hygena units. ‘Hygena’ was a leading brand in kitchen design by the 1970s.75 Good Housekeeping claimed Hygena was, in 1970, ‘an ideal choice for a young couple because they are well designed, easy to put together and, best of all, you can buy them in a box compact enough to fit into the car.’76 The article put together a small kitchen that was low cost and for the reader to build themselves but this was not an ‘endless’ DIY project: ‘[i]his is a kitchen for busy people to build.’77 As with other DIY projects in women’s magazines the photographs showed a man, presumably the husband, building up units and laying tiles. So despite the female readership, this article was to be used by the newly married couple as a guide to planning and building their first kitchen, stating that ‘it makes sense to start married life with a well planned kitchen.’78

Large department stores sold and displayed the latest kitchen for the public to browse and purchase. The photograph below shows Wylie and Lochhead’s display kitchen in the 1950s with light coloured units and a dark worktop and with a fashionable rounded open end shelving unit, a decorative and undefined feature in kitchens.

74 Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
75 Freeman, Making of the Modern Kitchen, p. 47
76 ‘Good Housekeeping Institute Builds a Budget Kitchen’, in Good Housekeeping, March 1970, p. 62
77 ‘GHI Budget Kitchen’, p. 62
78 Emphasis original, Ibid
Mrs Roberts describes how she and her husband picked their kitchen and her novel use for the end cupboard.

I think we would go to somewhere like one of the big stores and they would have things. I think Lewis’ or something like that, was quite good and then somebody would come out and measure and say, you’ll get them in here. And it eventually was, when you went in, eventually when you left, cause this is what I have in my mind, was that the cupboards and at the end there was the rounded bit, I used to keep their potty on it and wheel it away if folk where there. That’s was that, that was there.  

The story is told as the couple going together to purchase their kitchen. This is consistent with other stories about large purchases throughout this sample group. Emerging from the small study is a story of consumerism that challenges the gendered nature of consumption. As discussed in Chapter Three, in the context of the home women were often portrayed or cast in the role of the consumer or the ‘decider’, whereas men were the ‘doers’ or the makers. Continually when talking about large purchases for the home both individuals

79 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
80 Jen Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY: Women, Home Improvements and Advertising in Postwar Britain’, in Maggie Andrews & Mary Talbot, eds., All the World and Her Husband, (London: Cassell, 2000); June Freeman discusses the
and couples represent togetherness in decision-making. Jen Browne has also commented on the ‘togetherness’ of the couple was a distinct feature of DIY advertising in the 1950s. In the same way as the Connors planned and designed their kitchen as a couple, the Roberts shopped for their kitchen together.

**Bright Modern Kitchens**

The change and continuity of what is modern as a style of aesthetic was apparent in the kitchen. Post-war kitchens with fitted cupboards were only part of the story, the colours and materials that were used were described as modern. Advice for couples renovating and modernising their kitchen not only focused on layout and units but also promoted decorating in bold and bright colours using the newest materials. Ann Lennox writing for *Woman’s Own* recommended the use of bright colours and ‘assemble-it-yourself’ kitchen units. Two brightly coloured fitted kitchens were featured in ‘Kitchens Transformed’.

*Figure 5.5: ‘The original scullery for the Blue kitchen in ‘Kitchens Transformed’, Woman’s Own, 9 January 1960*

The first kitchen was transformed from a ‘very cramped’ scullery into a bright blue kitchen with an emphasis on space saving. The original scullery was shown in a small, stark, black and white photograph, empty apart from the sink and worktop with some text and occupied a quarter of the magazine page (Figure 5.5). In contrast, the new Blue kitchen costing £36 17s 0d was almost a full page colour image complete with rugs, bread bins and the all important young housewife dressed in a complementary bright yellow

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role of women as consumers with regard to purchasing a new kitchen in the twenty-first century, Freeman, *The Making of the Modern Kitchen*

81 Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY’, p. 134
outfit. Despite the limited space, one wall was not fitted out but left free to house a small table, even the fridge was hung on the wall to save floor space. The table was being used as a baking station with the scales, mixing bowl and flour shaker set upon it, justifying its place as extra workspace. The kitchen was transformed with white units with blue handles, blue worktop and blue patterned wallpaper and accented with bright yellow accessories.

Figure 5.6: The Blue Kitchen, ‘Kitchen’s Transformed’, Woman’s Own, 9 January 1960
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

The second kitchen was designed for the upper middle class market, indicated by certain good that signify class status. There is an Agathermic stove and oven against the chimneybreast of a much larger sized room. At £47 9s 6d, excluding appliances, this was a more expensive kitchen and was decorated in shades of yellow, peach and orange with no patterns except the classic black and white tiled floor and the curtains. The warm yellow of the wooden units and the bright yellow work surface meant this kitchen was still bright. The housewife is shown wearing a smart pale pink blouse, white skirt and high heels with an apron to protect her clothes. The table is set for dinner and she is reaching for a pot to begin cooking. This kitchen has a special place for a dinner trolley with hot plate ‘for quick living-room meals’ implying that this house has only a living room and kitchen on the ground floor. Both these kitchens were created from flat pack units and the article claimed: ‘A week-end’s work makes a new kitchen – on a budget!’ These examples illustrated to readers how through consumption they as individuals can express themselves through décor, colour, accessories to make constrained space, the small scullery, into one that reflect a modern, youthful and personal space. The space and good present in the second kitchen indicates that while all can have a new kitchen class distinctions can be maintained by what you buy.

The Women’s Own article was in line with some experiences of the interview group. Often kitchens were designed and built by husbands, the creation of worktops using new materials such as Formica to go over double sinks and washing machines but also the use of bright colours to create a look that was popular at this time. Homeowners used bold colours in their homes. Mrs McPherson’s house was all red when she moved in, including her kitchen:

Well, décor wise, everything was red. This girl had a, the girl that was in this house had a thing about red and the wall paper and everything was, more or less red but a pattern on it. Red and grey it was, and eh, we had to live with that for a year because we couldn’t afford to get it changed, to change it because, because we lived with that for a whole year and the kitchenette was all red Formica (laughs), terrible but eh, anyway we lived with it. Because we couldn’t do anything else, we didn’t have the money at that time. Mrs Burns recalls her kitchen in her second house being decorated a royal blue, which again she had to ‘live with’ for five or six years until they could afford to change it. The

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82 Miller, ‘Consumption and Its Consequences’, pp. 16-17
83 Interview with Mrs McPherson, 17/03/2010
burden of having to live with other people’s decorating choices comes up continually in interviews. The fashion for bright colourful choices such as reds, blues, yellows and even blacks, meant living with someone else’s taste could have been frustrating. *Woman’s Own* in January 1956 recommended that readers brighten their homes that winter with reds, pinks, coppers and yellows.\(^{84}\) The author of the article, Ann Lennox, who wrote ‘Kitchens Transformed’, urged readers to use bright and cheery colours within their home.\(^{85}\) The kitchen was yellow to create a ‘gay kitchen’ stating that ‘this is the room in the house where you spend the greater part of your days, yet so many kitchens, especially those with a northerly aspect, are dark and depressing.’\(^{86}\) The kitchen was shown with yellow units with a shiny red worktop and yellow and grey checked floor, see Figure 5.7. The young housewife, casually dressed in red clothing with a pale pink pinafore style apron, was shown getting breakfast ready for herself and her husband. Rather than have additional base units, this small kitchen had a table under some yellow wall units to allow the young couple to eat in the kitchen. There are no appliances shown in this kitchen it is purely designed to show off how bright and colourful a kitchen could be. The patterned wallpaper in the eating area adds ‘extra glamour’ while the black curtains with ‘luscious fruit’ is to accent with the reds and yellows in the room. Later in September 1969 issue of *Good Housekeeping*, bright colours were still favoured. In their kitchen supplement, ‘Kitchens Today’ they advised using ‘Spanish Orange’ or ‘Chinese Yellow’ to add some brightness to the room.\(^{87}\) While no interviewee mentioned orange, when the colour of kitchens was discussed bright yellow units or blue Formica worktops were described. Formica was a new product in the 1950s that came in a variety of colours which allowed people to brighten up their existing kitchens or furniture to look more contemporary as well as being seen as a more practical surface for kitchens.

\(^{84}\) ‘Warm and Glowing’, *Woman’s Own*, 12 January 1956, pp. 10-11

\(^{85}\) See Figure 5.6

\(^{86}\) ‘Warm and Glowing’, p. 11

\(^{87}\) ‘Kitchens Today’, *Good Housekeeping*, September 1969
In the 1950s, *Good Housekeeping* produced a booklet, in association with Formica’s inventors, called ‘Furnishing with Formica’ that explained this new modern product to its readership and showed examples of some uses around the house.\footnote{‘Furnishing with Formica’, *Good Housekeeping* in association with Thomas de la Rue & Co., date not given, estimated by National Library of Scotland to be 195?} Formica was made from multiple layers of paper soaked in a plastic resin that was then thermoset. It was described as ‘a smooth board or veneer combining a decorative appearance with a
particularly hardwearing surface’ that was glued onto a smooth and rigid surface.\(^89\) Browne’s interviewees from her project on DIY all thought Formica was ‘wonderful’ and used it liberally throughout the homes.\(^90\) While the booklet advised using Formica all round the house, it declared that it was ‘Good Everywhere - Best of all For Kitchens’.\(^91\) An easy DIY project and a common use for Formica was to box in or add more work surfaces to existing kitchens. ‘Furnishing with Formica’ featured a step-by-step photographic guide showing a young woman applying Formica, implying this was a light DIY project.\(^92\) Mrs Muirhead describes how they used Formica to modernise their kitchen in the 1960s:

Mrs Muirhead: Then eventually, everything was kind of open but then we got them boxed in, you know some, a joiner came in and kind of boxed in the sink so that it kind of hide everything. The sinks were just open, if you know what I mean but eh, we got them boxed in
Mr Muirhead: Formica, Formica on them, ah that’s it
Mrs Muirhead: We got this, I don’t know if you’ve heard of Formica? That was a good material, very, very hard wearing. When I worked in, I worked in the sawmills which was all wood but that had one wee department, which they called the plastics and this, the only plastic you got was this Formica, there wasnae any what you get now. I mean everything was wood or Formica was a new material and that got, you’d this glue called Evostik and you Evostiked your Formica onto your wood, okay to make a worktop. Your worktops now are all, I don’t know how they how they must heat that stuff and put it on, your worktops now but then it was a sheet of Formica that was just glued on just with this Evostik.\(^93\)

Formica was a new technology that people could introduce into their kitchen that would make it modern, clean and easier use. The Muirheads paid a joiner to come in and box the kitchen as this was a skilled job working around existing units and appliances. Mrs Muirhead’s description highlights that this new plastic replaced wood in the kitchen and acknowledges that technology has moved on again to new heat laminated worktops. This description illustrates the role that the evolution of technology and industry played in defining what was modern within the home.

Mr and Mrs Muirhead attempted to describe their second kitchen but some confusion took place creating a disjointed narrative. Remembering the past can be difficult and the presence of another can help prompt memories but it also can interrupt an

\(^89\) ‘Furnishing with Formica, p. 3
\(^90\) Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY’, p. 142
\(^91\) ‘Furnishing with DIY, p. 142
\(^92\) ‘Ibid, p. 6
\(^93\) Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
individual’s narrative. When Mrs Muirhead started describing her kitchen in their second house, Mr Muirhead tried to remember throughout her telling, which makes a complicated reminiscence:

Mrs Muirhead: I mean the kitchen, there wasnae much of a kitchen again, you know. There was just this unit I was telling you about that was in Sween, it was the same one as one in there as well, with the pull down bit, uh huh, but we managed to put a kitchen in pretty quick. We watch that programme Homes Under the Hammer, I don’t know if you’ve seen it? So you see all these all kitchens and of course, you got God…

Mr Muirhead: That’s what we had (Both laugh)

Interviewer: What kind of kitchen did you put in?

Mrs Muirhead: We put in this ‘Hygena’ one, all Hygena units. Oh, it was lovely, oh beaut…. (Laughs)

[…]

Interviewer: What colour was it?

Mr Muirhead: Yellow

Mrs Muirhead: Well it was, no it was kind of creamy with a wee wooden bit along the top of the door. I mean it was…

Mr Muirhead: Oh, that’s right

Mrs Muirhead: Even today it would still be alright, you know. It was just plain cream with a wee wooden bit and…

Mr Muirhead: The Formica one was the yellow one, eh? Was that yellow?

Mrs Muirhead: Aye, I think that was, aye.

Mr Muirhead: That was Sween […]

Mrs Muirhead: Well, I had an uncle that was a plumber and he actually got it. I mean it wasnae widespread that you got these units, you didn’t get much of a choice you know but he was a plumber and he managed to get these units, ‘Hygena’ that was the name of them, and he plumbed it in and what not.94

The discussion is hard to read and unpick but at the same time, it shows the interaction between the couple. The colour of their kitchen in their second home was unclear to Mr Muirhead as he mixed up the two houses. However, he described the colour of their kitchen - yellow Formica- which was not mentioned when Mrs Muirhead talked about it previously. At points in the interview, Mr Muirhead led the way in remembering the fires or the living room but the kitchen was a space where Mrs Muirhead took a decisive lead. Her uncle managed to get fashionable Hygena units for them in the early 1970s, a brand synonymous with quality; she felt that the units would not look out of place today. Their reference to the television show Homes under the Hammer, a programme where houses for auction are transformed into modern twenty-first century homes, indicates that they felt the original kitchen in their bungalow was old fashioned in contrast to the new kitchen they put in. They have since replaced that kitchen and it now is in the garage as storage units.

94 Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

The Muirhead’s story shows an awareness of time and changing tastes with regard to kitchen design. The dynamic between them when talking about the kitchen saw Mr Muirhead appear flustered and unsure reflecting his distant relationship to that room compared to others within the house.

Whether totally refurbishing with new units or boxing in existing equipment, creating a modern kitchen was an undertaking that required money, thought and labour. The planning and fitting often was undertaken by the couple themselves. Magazines offered helpful advice and step-by-step guides on how to achieve the latest modern bright kitchen. While a nice bright space with storage and workspace made a difference, new technology changed women’s daily routines and manual labour. Though Planning Our New Homes acknowledged that domestic appliances were non-essential, it observed that ‘they are, of all items in the modern home, those which are likely to produce the greatest improvement in standards of amenity, comfort and convenience to the housewife.’

The housewife’s daily work was transformed by the introduction of washing machines and refrigerators.

The Weekly Wash: Technology in the Kitchen

The following section will examine how new technology in the kitchen transformed women’s daily routines by looking at a detailed example from interviews. Stories about buying washing machines were prominent in narratives and revealing about the nature of housework within the kitchen. While direct questions about housework did not elicit detailed responses, discussions about washing machines in particular revealed the physical labour and time spent on the weekly wash and how this was drastically changed once a washing machine was purchased. This section will examine housework routines before buying a washing machine, then discuss the impact upon women’s lives by its arrival in their kitchens.

The influx of modern domestic appliances into the home did improve many women’s daily lives. Though appliances were labour saving they were not necessarily time saving. Higher standards of housekeeping consuming housewives time as floors were to washing more frequently, clothes had to appear cleaner and the each room deep cleaned.

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95 Planning Our New Homes, p. 74
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

once a week.\textsuperscript{96} Household management guides offered routines and checklists to help the housewife to maintain a clean and tidy home. A Glasgow school textbook instructed schoolgirls in the 1950s, listing daily and weekly household chores for household maintenance. Aimed at working-class girls who would rent their homes, it offered guidance on many topics from finding healthy accommodation to a step-by-step list of chores around the house.\textsuperscript{97} Future working-class housewives were advised to keep their kitchen clean every day by removing all food; wash dishes immediately after use; scrub surfaces, taps and sink; and sweep out the fireplace. On a weekly basis all kitchen cupboards should be cleaned and tidied, the cooker or stove cleaned, windows washed and everything scrubbed and polished.\textsuperscript{98} The \textit{Hoover Book of Home Management}, in a less authoritarian but still instructional tone, advised middle-class housewives on much of the same advice in maintaining the kitchen: from the daily cleaning, putting away and wiping down to the weekly task of cleaning and tidying kitchen cupboards.\textsuperscript{99} Both the textbook and the commercial book on home management offered an in-depth room-by-room guide, outlining shared expected standards of housekeeping. To maintain a home along these lines was a full-time job and would easily have filled the housewife’s day if these were actually adhered to. From the oral testimony, it was clear that women placed their role as mother above that of keeping their home to the high standard of cleanliness and tidiness suggested in the contemporary literature. One household task that was essential and could not be skipped like dusting ceiling or cleaning under the three-piece suite every week was the weekly wash.

The kitchen as the workroom of the house was a central hub for cooking, cleaning, serving and, in most cases, the family laundry. The weekly wash was a time consuming and labour intensive chore but essential to rising standards of cleanliness. The right equipment could vastly alleviate the level of work involved. Where the laundry should be done was unclear. Contemporary literature recommended that washing should be done in a utility room away from food preparation.\textsuperscript{100} Mrs McCabe was the only participant in the interviews with a separate utility room:

\begin{flushright}
\textit{A Home for the Family}, Good Housekeeping, October 1954; Harvey, \textit{Hoover Book of Home Management}, p. 89; MO, \textit{People’s Homes}, p. 102
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{97} Corporation of Glasgow, \textit{Department of Education, Notes on Laundry Work, Housewifery and Mothercraft}, (c.a. 1950)
\textsuperscript{98} Corporation of Glasgow, \textit{Notes on Laundry Work}, p. 42
\textsuperscript{99} Harvey, \textit{Hoover Book of Home Management}, p. 30
\textsuperscript{100} MO, \textit{People’s Homes}, p. 102
\end{flushright}
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

A double sink for washing, when we went there first I didn’t have a washing machine or anything but eventually I had a washing machine. I had a kind of boiler that you boiled up nappies and stuff in. When I could afford a washing machine that was where it went out there. And the big double white sinks.\(^\text{101}\)

A utility room was the old scullery that was used for keeping dirty work, such as washing, out of the kitchen area; as many homes in the past would have a kitchen/living room like Mrs McCabe. The Parker Morris report in 1961 claimed that in Britain there was no demand for utility rooms when just over a decade earlier Scotland’s *Planning Our New Homes* recommended including one in new housing.\(^\text{102}\) The copper boiler was common equipment in homes by the mid-twentieth century. The copper allowed clothes, particularly whites, to be boil washed before being scrubbed by hand on a washboard, then rinsed and put through a hand-operated mangle or wringer. Coppers heated the water using coal, gas or electricity. Washing machines had been available before the the Second World War but they were expensive and required electricity to run them. The rise of electricity into people’s homes in the period between the two wars meant that labour saving domestic appliances could be introduced into the home. The General Electrical Company showcased their ‘All Electric House’ in 1920 as the future family home with labour saving electrical appliances such as the washing machine, a sewing machine and a dishwasher.\(^\text{103}\) In Glasgow in 1934, the Town Clerk, David Stenhouse, described council houses as ‘all electric’ indicating that this was a minimal standard at this time.\(^\text{104}\) After recovery from World War Two, producing domestic appliances became affordable due to mass production. Consequently, washing machines and refrigerators became attainable for large numbers of the population, particularly as shops began to offer hire purchase to allow working people to purchase these items and pay them up over time. Hire purchase was unpopular with the oral history group, as we saw in Chapter Three, as homeowners tended to save up for important purchases. *Planning Our New Homes* recommended that a copper or a washing machine was essential in every home.\(^\text{105}\) The report found that respondents were ‘strongly in favour’ of power-driven washing machines and recommended new homes should leave space for a washing machine in the kitchen.\(^\text{106}\) The washing machine was slow to infiltrate British homes and it was not until the 1970s did they become

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\(^{101}\) Interview with Mrs McCabe, 28/05/2009
\(^{102}\) Parker Morris, *Homes for Today*, p. 20; *Planning Our New Homes*, p. 36
\(^{103}\) Jeremiah, *Architecture and Design for the Family*, p. 66
\(^{104}\) David Stenhouse, *Glasgow: a short account of the municipal undertakings of the Corporation of Glasgow* (Glasgow: Corporation of the City of Glasgow, 1934), p. 92
\(^{105}\) *Planning Our New Homes*, p. 41
\(^{106}\) *Planning Our New Homes*, p. 42
widespread.\textsuperscript{107} Getting a washing machine was a notable events in the lives of this group and offered insight into the daily routine of the women.

As previously discussed in other chapters, articulating details about housework and daily routines was not forthcoming. I have suggested that this is due to the everyday, mundane and very ordinary nature of housework that made it difficult to talk about but also something easily dismissed or overlooked. Discussions about the kitchen and the nature of that space in the house meant that women were easily able to talk about housework as their relationship to that room was a working one. If simply asked ‘What housework did you do,’ the response was as vague as the question. Yet, if asked to describe their kitchen and their kitchen equipment, stories were easier to tell as they were focused on objects that not only reminded them of their working lives but also was a catalyst for change in their daily routine.

In the 1950s standard equipment for doing the laundry in the home was two sinks, a washboard and a wringer. Here is Mrs Muirhead’s description of doing her laundry in her first kitchen:

Well there was two sinks. There was like a shallower sink, like a normal sink and then there was a big deep sink because you didn’t have a washing machine or anything. Well I didn’t anyhow. Not a lot of people had a washing machine. You had the big deep sink, which you could sort of steep all your clothes before you hand washed them and then I did get a wringer, an ‘Acme’ wringer, once you washed them you could put them through the wringer and these wringers were great they were just as good as spinning nowadays, you could tighten and tighten them and once you put your clothes through these wringers, they were quite, they were dry but they were good you know. And then eventually I did get a washing machine with a wee wringer on it.\textsuperscript{108}

Mrs Barrett had similar equipment: ‘Two deep sinks. One, an enamel sink and a deep sink and a wringer but I had something better than that - my mother-in-law used to take my washing away.’\textsuperscript{109} Due to the time consuming nature of the family wash, it was referred to as the weekly wash. Young girls in Glasgow were instructed to choose a day early in the week perhaps a Monday or a Tuesday, as were middle-class housewives by \textit{Good Housekeeping}, and getting an early start to make the most of drying time was important.\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{thebibliography}{110}
\bibitem{Bowden1955} Bowden & Offer, ‘Household Appliances’, p. 731
\bibitem{Muirhead2012} Interview with Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
\bibitem{Barrett2012} Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
\end{thebibliography}
Chapter 5: The Kitchen: A Workroom

The Glasgow Corporation and the *Good Housekeeping* guides to laundry offered almost identical advice on everything from stain removal to the treatment of different fabrics. *Good Housekeeping*’s photographic guide was colourful and appealing compared to the simple numbered rules of the educational booklet.

Mr and Mrs Devlin’s story about washing nappies by hand revealed her dated equipment and the all-consuming nature of the work:

Mrs Devlin: That was all that was in it. And I had, I had, [her daughter] was quite a new baby at the time, and we’d these special wee nappies to stop them getting a sore bottom. It was called Marathon nappy, wee fine sort of lining for the inside of your nappy and I was so busy talking to my friend one night, she had come to see me, that it went down the sink.  
Mr Devlin: there was no strainer in the sink  
Mrs Devlin: Blocked the sink, so JD had to come in and unblock. Now, it had never been unblocked, we think from 1932, phew, it was just appalling, so that was a load of work he had to do in that.  
Mr Devlin: And then the following day she done it again!  
Mrs Devlin: Cause there was no strainer in the middle of it, and I was frightened to tell him, I remember too clearly, I thought how can I tell him I’ve done it again but eventually we got a sink unit in…

In this narrative, Mrs Devlin’s work continued into the evening and she even socialises with her friend whilst working. With a baby, the weekly wash was clearly the daily wash. Mr Devlin’s role was to rescue the nappy from the sink and when it happened again, she was ‘frightened’ to tell him, given the work involved the first time. Her reluctance to involve her husband again may be due to her perceived failure in carrying out her work carefully, yet it overlooks the dirtiness of her own work cleaning nappies and its time-consuming nature. Mrs Devlin was working at night and having to incorporate her social life into her work. Yet, she feels bad her husband has to come to her aid again by performing this, judging by the state of the sink, clearly a one-off, or in this case, a twice-off job. Mr Devlin worked long hours, including overtime, so his contribution to the house was traditional in providing economic stability. In addition, he did all the heavy construction jobs around the house from new electrical wiring and staircases to unblocking the sink. The Devlins’ story illustrates that, within the home, Mrs Devlin was expected to work while Mr Devlin’s work was external. He only makes a guest appearance in her work to do this one-off task while she possibly has to wash nappies every night in addition to caring for a small baby. This illustrates the nature of women’s domestic work as constant.

111 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
and difficult to really get away from, as we saw in Chapter Four’s discussion of gender and leisure.

A washing machine was often seen as a necessity once a couple had a baby. *Good Housekeeping* explained to young brides ‘once you reach the stage of having nappies and baby things to wash you’ll find a washing machine an absolute must.’\(^{112}\) Often when talking about the past people remember when things occurred in relation to life events rather than dates. Getting a washing machine was usually related to the birth of children, if not the first child then the second. Mr and Mrs O’Connell’s reconstruction of buying their washing machine centred upon their children:

Mrs O’Connell: And er, didn’t have a washing machine for the first two, when we had the first two children, cause when we used to wash the nappies by hand and I think we got a washing machine, and then it was twin-tub. That maybe about 19…
Mr O’Connell: the second child was born
Mrs O’Connell: 62,63 maybe
Mr O’Connell: [My son] was born 1961, so it might have been any time after that
Mrs O’Connell: 1962 we’ll say.\(^{113}\)

Washing machines were usually purchased in the sample group within the first one to three years of marriage. Mrs Travis’ main reason for buying a washing machine was the number of nappies she had to wash. In Chapter Three, I recounted the story of Mr Travis taking out a loan out to buy their washing machine. Mrs Travis’ version of that same event shows the priorities placed on durable goods:

Sixty pounds - a loan of sixty pounds to buy this washing machine. We didn’t have a fridge for quite a wee while. We were all excited when we got a fridge. I mean you didn’t get things then until you could more or less afford to buy them.\(^{114}\)

Although they took on a debt to buy their washing machine, she then states that a fridge was something you did not buy until you could afford one. She emphasises that it was unusual to get a loan for these purchases. The fact that they were willing to take on debt to purchase her washing machine reveals something about the value of the washing machine to her everyday life compared to the refrigerator. When Mrs Burnett left her job with the railway she was four or five months pregnant and used her superannuation to buy her

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\(^{112}\) ‘Good Housekeeping Institute Equips Its Budget Kitchen’, *Good Housekeeping*, March 1970

\(^{113}\) Interview with Mr and Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009

\(^{114}\) Interview with Mr and Mrs Travis, 12/03/2009
washing machine. The daily chore of keeping on top of nappies was frequently mentioned in interviews. Even with a washing machine, there was an investment of time and labour on the part of the housewife, when doing the weekly wash. Not all machines heated the water so the hot water heater had to go on before you started the wash. Planning and time were significant factors in getting through the wash, as evident in Mrs Barrett’s description:

You had to put that on for your washing machine. You know you had to fill it from the, from your hose or some of them had a heater. I don’t think mine had a heater, my twin tub. So, it was a footer and particularly when you had nappies. You know you didn’t have any disposable nappies then, so it was quite, quite a footer. You had your bucket for steeping your nappies in prior to and then you had to rinse them out and then you would wash them.¹¹⁵

Washing machines on the market during the 1950s and 1960s, while greatly reducing manual labour, still required the housewife’s full attention.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Mrs Barrett, 30/10/2012
During this period, there were three types of washing machines commonly available to purchase.\(^{116}\) Firstly, there was the single tub which washed and rinsed clothes in one drum then required the operator to put them through a mangle or wringer; sometimes these had electric wringers attached to them. Mrs Brown saved money from her job teaching evening classes to buy her washing machine. She bought a single tub and described how she did her washing:

Mrs Brown: One tub that boiled and the wee hand wring on it and you could pump, you could fill the water from the tap into it and then there was another house you could put over into the sink to pump out the water again afterwards. But there was, there was only one tub and what I did is, I washed in the tub in the washing machine and then I rinsed in the sink and put it through the wringer - it was the wee hand wringer.

Interviewer: So still quite labour intensive then?

Mrs Brown: Very, very labour intensive.

Interviewer: So then eventually did you buy an automatic one?

Mrs Brown: Oh, it was a good while later. We bought a small spin dryer.

Interviewer: The twin tub?

Mrs Brown: No. A spin dryer.

Interviewer: Oh, spin dryer.

Mrs Brown: When they became available that was years afterwards though, and they, you could put it from your washing machine, sink, spin dryer, spun it out and then it was ready to hang out. Before that, I didn’t have anything else.\(^{117}\)

Mrs Brown eventually purchased an automatic, along with a tumble drier, when her eldest child was five.\(^{118}\) The twin-tub washing machine was less labour intensive and was the most popular washing machine from its introduction in 1957 with sales peaking in 1965 before being replaced by the fully automatic washing machine.\(^{119}\) Mrs O’Connell description of using her twin-tub illustrates that while this was vastly better than scrubbing by hand, the machine still required the operator to supervise it:

It was a twin-tub, you had to fill, you had to fill it with a hose, filled it from the sink with a hose it wasn’t an automatic thing. So I remember having to pull it, there was a space in the kitchen for it, pushed into this, but when I was using it I had to pull out and then fill it from the sink.\(^{120}\)


\(^{117}\) Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010

\(^{118}\) Interview with Mrs Brown, 22/11/2010

\(^{119}\) Mills, *Washing Wisdom*, p. 90

\(^{120}\) Interview with Mrs O’Connell, 19/03/2009
From Mrs O’Connell’s description, the twin-tub machine required her to manually pull it out from under the counter and fill it up. The machine had two tubs: one in which the clothes were washed and the other spun the clothes for you. The twin-tub, while reducing labour, still required the housewife to be present. The level of supervision is clear in Mrs Muirhead explanation of her experiences of both single tub and twin-tub washing machines:

Single tub and it just washed and then had to rinse them in this deep sink and they had a wee electric wringer on the washing machine. Then that fell off and we kept getting second-hand washing machines, like a twin-tub, have you heard of a twin-tub? So that washed and they came out the washer into the spinner and rinsed them with a hose and then spun them with a, these spinner were good but the machine jumped all over the floor. Oh aye, with the vibration. You had to hold it down. You couldnae go away and leave your washing machine or anything, you know. I mean when you were washing, you were washing.121

Mrs Connor agreed that the twin-tub was time consuming and impractical and found an automatic more suitable when she started working:

So you had to have a day or an evening that would have been a night where the washing was done. That was the first thing on the list when I went back out to work, an automatic washing machine. So that I would then, that was something that would save a bit of time.122

An automatic washing machine both washed and spun clothes using pre-set wash cycles and could be left alone to wash clothes, freeing up the housewife’s time to engage in other activities like paid work.

In March 1968, the Good Housekeeping Institute espoused to its readers the benefits of the automatic washing machine.123 The Good Housekeeping Institute was a section of the magazine that prided itself on thoroughly examining new products for the home and recommending the most reliable, from beds to washing machines. The article was set out like a sales catalogue, showing four washing machines photographed with their price, dimensions, capacity and water supply listed with a review alongside. The concerns of many housewives were reflected when they noted that the results of the wash were that ‘even our daughters’ nappies are whiter than white.’ This statement was mirrored in the interviews as nappies were a clear motivator in buying a washing machine. In addition,

121 Interview with Mr and Mrs Muirhead, 02/11/2012
122 Interview with Mrs Connor, 05/11/2012
123 ‘GHI: Let the Washer do the work’, Good Housekeeping, March 1968
there was awareness of a contemporary suspicion over the washing machines effectiveness when washing very dirty items like nappies.\textsuperscript{124} The benefits of an automatic washing machine were that it required ‘little or no supervision or manual work’ and that it was plumbed in and therefore freed up the sink - no more lugging it out from under the counter as Mrs O’Connell had to do. Though it had a larger tub and better rinsing, \textit{Good Housekeeping} acknowledged that it was not as good at spinning as the twin-tub.\textsuperscript{125} The date of the article in the late 1960s, when ownership of automatics was low, was significant as the following decade saw the rise of the automatic washing machine. In 1969, a total of 64 per cent of households in Britain had washing machines but only 5 per cent were automatics despite the fact automatics had been around for more than 30 years.\textsuperscript{126} In 1975, automatic washing machines accounted for 21 per cent of the 71 per cent of households who had washing machines and by 1981 this had risen to 40 per cent of the 80 per cent of households with washing machines.\textsuperscript{127} It would appear that \textit{Good Housekeeping} was ahead of the trend with its article on automatic washing machines and was raising awareness of them as a consumer product. Only one in the interview group had an automatic during the period of the study and that was second-hand in payment for a job. The introduction of machinery into the kitchen reduced the amount of physical labour involved in the weekly wash or the nightly cleaning of nappies but did not necessarily free up the housewife’s time; they still had to remain close at hand to rinse or change the tub. Women were still tied to the kitchen but in the role of supervisor rather than labourer until the automatic washing machine ownership began to grow throughout the 1970s.

\textbf{Conclusions}

The suburban kitchen has been explored as a space within the house that was designed for and occupied by women. Other rooms in the house were considered as shared but the kitchen was where women took ownership both through the language they used and the stories they told. Inter-war suburban homes in Glasgow were products of ideas which focused on improving women’s roles as housewives within the home. The single person kitchenette of new homes was radically different from the kitchen-living space that dominated tenement living patterns in Glasgow. The influence of scientific management of

\textsuperscript{125} ‘GHI: Let the Washer do the work’,
\textsuperscript{126} Zmroczek, ‘Dirty Linen’ p. 173
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid

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the home with regards to the kitchen was reflected in its shrinking size. The new modern labour-saving kitchenette was compact and well organised to save the housewife energy and time, enabling her to fulfil her role more effectively. However, this gave little consideration to her other role of mother due to the lack of space to supervise children properly whilst working in the kitchen. The small interwar kitchen overlooked other aspects of family life such as the desire to eat in the kitchen or caring for children. Mass Observation found that working people would prefer to eat in the kitchen. Some in the oral history group continued to eat small meals, such as breakfast, in the kitchen by creating innovative eating arrangements. The continuation of eating in the kitchen illustrates the ways in which people overcome physical restrictions to live their lives as they preferred. This chapter has shown that there was a strong relationship between the literature and lived experience. The reception of ideas about designing a kitchen or choosing the correct washing machine emerged clearly in this section. Suburban housewives were engaged with the culture around them but also they actively chose what to consume or whether to rearrange their eating habits.

Gender roles within the kitchen were similar to other areas of the home but perhaps more pronounced. Women were largely responsible for the housework and the kitchen, in many ways, was their command centre. Husbands were involved with and, in Mr Connor’s case, were instrumental in modernising and transforming old labour-saving kitchens into bright, modern fitted kitchens. This thesis has argued that the gendered division of labour within the home can be further classified as the everyday and extraordinary. Men in the kitchen built units, made worktops and put up shelves in one-off but remarkable jobs, as appears to be the nature of men’s work within the home. Where advertisements and magazines placed women as consumers in regards to decisions about the home, the togetherness represented in the oral history was evident within narratives of creating a kitchen as ‘I’ once more became ‘we’.128 As with other aspects of creating a modern house, the couple has appeared to be allied in their construction of the modern kitchen.

The rise of fitted kitchens in British homes during the 1960s transformed how kitchens looked, but the ideas underpinning them can be dated back to early household management texts, such as Catharine Beecher in the nineteenth century. This does question what was modern about the fitted kitchen. I suggest it is an aesthetic. A modern

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128 Also see Browne, ‘Decisions in DIY’; Freeman, Making of the Modern Kitchen
contemporary kitchen looked simple, streamlined and was decorated in fashionably bright colours, such as yellow and blue. The modernity of the post-war kitchen was expressed in the inclusion of domestic appliances into more and more homes. The example of the washing machine has shown that, in the 1950s and 1960s, technology reduced physical labour and transformed the housewife from labourer to operator. Her time was still occupied in domestic work and the weekly wash still required the housewife's supervision. It was not until the widespread introduction of the automatic washing machine in the decade after this study that women could be reasonably freed from the weekly wash.

A third of my interview group extended their houses to add a larger kitchen after 1975. A common sight in many suburban estates around Glasgow is the small rear extension, not a conservatory, to enlarge the kitchen space. The small kitchenette was too small to accommodate the growing number of appliances people were starting to accumulate and the preference for eating in the kitchen. As an example, we can return to the Connors’ well planned and designed kitchen: despite having a kitchen that was built from scratch by Mr Connor and a new eye-level oven, when asked what she would have change about her house, Mrs Connor replied she would have liked a larger kitchen.
Chapter 6: From Modern House to Family House

This thesis has presented a social history of home life as it was represented, designed and lived in suburban Glasgow between 1945-1975. This study has been a snapshot into life at this time in Glasgow and it must be noted for the post-war period there is still much work to be done into the meanings of home, suburban lives and the middle-classes. What has emerged through the case-study is the gendered nature of home. As we have followed the story of buying and living in a house in suburban Glasgow the ‘companionate marriage’ was evident in the process of homemaking. Couples worked within a reciprocal relationship based on gendered norms constituted in notions of caring and responsibility to create a modern home. Throughout we have compared the experiences of home for individuals and couples with wider cultural discourse about home, marriage and family at this time.

Togetherness

Expressions of togetherness were explicit in both testimony and contemporary literature. From buying a home to planning a kitchen, couples were represented and represented themselves, as a team working together to create their modern family home. Husbands and wives contributed through the continuation of traditional gender roles in line with the contemporary ideal of the companionate marriage. In comparison with the patriarchal model, within the companionate model the contribution of the wife as as housewife and mother was given more value and importance. This was not an egalitarian relationship as women’s status in wider society had a significant impact on their marital relations. By examining work both inside and outside the home it has become clear that woman’s work in both areas was often still considered low status. The difficulties in articulating housework within the oral testimony reflects that it was something taken for granted or overlooked. The increasing number of married women in the workforce did not translate into a redistribution of work within the home. The growth of part-time employment among wives allowed women to achieve a greater balance between their domestic and paid work, while at the same time reinforcing the home as the primary arena for women. Within the labour market woman’s position was underpinned by ideas about motherhood and the physical practicalities of childrearing. Upon the arrival of children, it was expected that wives would leave paid work to return once their children were older. Therefore, woman’s work outside the home was perceived as temporary, low status and subsequently poorly paid. In the context of buying a home this had consequences of
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dynamics of power and experiences of leisure and work. So despite married women engaging with labour market on a scale never seen, or documented before, their primary association was still with the home.

Judy Giles observes that ‘in the first half of this century women’s access to improved houses was via marriage and their husband’s income.’¹ Women in the private suburb had access to better housing than many of their contemporaries but this was still through their marriage. When arranging a mortgage building societies only considered the husband’s earnings. This suggests a power dynamic in the process of buying a home. Initially, due to the demands of child rearing and social attitudes towards working mothers, couples set up home at a point in their lives when they could least afford it; when they had only one income. In finances, as with other matters regarding the home, there was a portrayal of joint decision making throughout the interviews, only two respondents stated that their husbands exclusively managed the money. As we have seen women’s control of the household budget is in decline during this period, partly due to the increased interest of men in household matters, creating a loss of power for women within the home.² Women managed the everyday budget for food, clothes and small household goods but when it came to large decisions such as buying a car or television men became involved. Joint decision-making should be viewed in this context. On the surface it seems a symbol of togetherness but there were underlying dynamics of power between husbands and wives. Women’s relationship to consumption was unclear in the Glasgow case-study. Mark Abrams’ image of the wife in his home-centred society was closely allied with her power as a consumer.³ Advertising and magazines increasingly cast the housewife as the decision maker. Women’s special role in deciding what colour to paint the room or what washing machine should be bought did not emerge from the interviews. These decisions were once again portrayed as jointly taken. The housewife consumer did not emerge as a strong narrative, therefore the assumption that women were in charge of household consumption is difficult to support in this context. That is not to say women did not dominate these choices but rather that the home was represented as a shared space where two people had to negotiate and compromise on taste to create a home they could both enjoy.

¹ Judy Giles, Women, Identity and Private Life, p. 69  
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Women’s Lives: Men’s Lives

Homemaking was gendered and this impacted upon men and women’s experiences of home. A key difference was in the value attributed to their contributions. Men refitted kitchens and built fireplaces while women tended to the everyday task of keeping the family fed and clean. In testimony, these divisions of labour within the home were not portrayed as oppressive or unequal in interviews.4 Within the home, men ‘helped’ with the childcare and the occasional household chores, often the washing up and vacuuming. Their leisure time was often spent improving the home and larger maintenance jobs. However, whether to paint the room or make a stone fireplace was not essential to the maintenance of the family. These tasks were optional and leisure based. Men’s essential contribution to home was still their work outside the home. Gordon argues that the value of the breadwinner’s contribution to home has been overlooked.5 While I agree, I think also the fact that men are absent from the house can equally lead to the assumption that their relationship to home was less significant. Husbands have been crucial to the making of home throughout this study. Their work created a long-lasting contribution to the family home that was memorable and permanent.

Women’s efforts were understated and perhaps undervalued. The family home was a site of labour for women. Leisure activities were often domestic in nature. In the example of television watching the nature of women’s work as constant came to the fore in the way they combined watching with other regular household jobs. Discussions about housework were not forthcoming and were easily dismissed to focus on more memorable events like redecorating the living room or getting a washing machine. Conscious of not wanting to lead the interview I was hesitant to suggest how they spent their day. Conversations often revolved around the extraordinary rather than the ordinary. The buying of significant and expensive items such as the washing machine or fridge, the decorating of rooms and the alterations to the home were all readily talked about. Whereas who tidied the rooms and polished the furniture on a daily basis and how they felt about that was often hard to articulate. This may have been due to the interviewee assuming that I would understand, as woman myself, the ins and outs of keeping a home. There was also an underlying view that

despite its essential nature, this ‘work’ was not important enough to talk about. Consequently, women’s contributions to homemaking did not emerge from the interviews as I had hoped. During her interview Mrs Roberts showed me slides of her family. Wallpapers, furniture and carpets were the backdrop to special birthdays, christenings and Christmases. We tend to photograph the extraordinary events of life while the everyday is in the background. Talking about home and the spaces where everyday life was played out can gravitate towards the extraordinary. Blee argues that for feminist historians to access the everyday and mundane they need to consider being more direct to ensure that these stories can come to the foreground.\(^6\) I would agree and next time consider being more assertive in the interview to ensure that the everyday comes to the fore. The result of this narrative being missing from the interview has meant that men’s achievement in homemaking seemed more significant and grander simply because they were extraordinary and easier to identify and talk about. Women’s magazine articles focused on men’s role in homemaking as the ‘doers’; the ones who will transform the home. Advice on general cleaning and daily maintenance receive much less attention, reflecting this idea that the extraordinary was more noteworthy. Husbands’ level of involvement in the home was significantly less than their wives. The home as women’s domain was not apparent in the context of creating a suburban home in post-war Glasgow.

Wives were the main occupier of the home for a time during their lives. The expectation that women would leave work to raise their children meant that in the suburbs there was a considerable number of women in the same place at the same time. A strong sense of community and support among women was a central finding in this study. This homosocial network was maintained through regular interactions among family and neighbours. Where other works have observed a decline in kinship and community relations in the post-war suburb, this sample found it was an integral feature of everyday life. I would suggest it is the focus of social life inside the house as opposed to amenities and opportunities outside the house that has uncovered this community. Wives were regularly visited by, and went to visit, their mothers, sisters and cousins, who lived in the immediate area and beyond. Often their neighbours were like themselves: buying a house and raising a young family on a reasonable but limited budget. Women popped in and out of each other’s houses regularly for a tea and a blether. They formed playgroups together,

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held coffee mornings and watched each other’s children. At this time in their lives, they had the time and opportunity to engage with each other. This, however, was temporary. As children began to grow women were increasingly expected to leave the home and participate in the labour market. Social life continued at the weekends with more formal social nights involving husbands. I would argue that women’s lives at this time created a community of women based on shared life experience and location within the suburbs of Glasgow that does not exist today due to women’s increased rights at work, particularly maternity leave.

Homeownership, Status and the Family Lifecycle

This thesis has examined homeowners and homemaking as opposed to renters. The most common experience for Scots by the 1970s was to live in a council house, unlike England, where home ownership was growing. The twentieth century suburbs of Glasgow were not privately own enclaves but included large post-war municipal housing schemes, inter-war municipal garden suburbs, and private rental suburban cottage flats. Being able to buy your house meant, in theory, you had more freedom to construct a space that was your own. In practice, this was limited by availability and affordability of housing. Homeowners engaged in a process of modernising their homes. A council tenant moving into a new house in Castlemilk had a certain amount of modernity built into their building which they then had to negotiate within the imposed restrictions of their landlord. Whereas homeowners moving into housing that was an inter-war design and style with dated amenities, old kitchens and in one case in this study unsafe wiring. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s expansion of social housing that material living conditions improved for many Scots. Therefore, being able to buy or rent in a suburb gave you access to a high standard of housing unattainable for many. The existing houses in suburban Glasgow during this period had been built between the wars. Therefore, the modern home, in this context, was not a house designed and built after 1945 but rather an older house adapted and remodelled to meet contemporary expectations of what was ‘modern’. In this study, ‘modern’ was examined in two ways. Firstly, as a modern aesthetic that people papered, painted and built into their homes with magazines and furniture stores providing models and advice on how to achieve this, and secondly, it was the acquisition of the latest domestic technology to improve the family’s daily life. Broadly speaking, a modern house in suburban Glasgow had a three-piece suite to sit and watch television, brightly coloured and patterned décor, and a sleek Formica fitted kitchen with a washing machine,
refrigerator and numerous small appliances. These standards were not necessarily met, or were even achievable, but it was an ideal of home at this time that the couples strived to achieve through their individual and joint contributions to create their version of a modern home which served their modern lives.

Buying a house indicates a desire for social mobility. Mass speculation meant that lower middle-class and some skilled working class could now access the suburban lifestyle. The expensive nature of home buying, particularly in Scotland, meant buyers were willing to make some sacrifices to buy their own home. Within the family lifecycle, homeownership was often undertaken whilst women were not contributing to the household income. The inability to decorate their homes due to limited resources was a strong narrative in the oral testimony. These homeowners were in a secure enough position to obtain a mortgage so the ‘hardship’ in these stories was based in aspirations to attain certain lifestyle. I suggest there is a psychological element of making the house their own, which was important in reaffirming and cementing their ownership of the house. Through homemaking as a process of consumption, homeowners have been shown to engage with, appropriate and alter their material worlds to create a sense of identity both at a personal level and also as part of wider lifestyles associated with status and belonging.

Significantly, formulations of social class have been based on households and have ignored the contribution of wives’ work.\(^7\) The growth of married women’s work was essential for raising the status of the family in terms of the accumulation of signifiers of affluence. Mothers in the suburbs of Glasgow were working part time before their children started school, often funding the washing machine or television. Once children were older, married women in suburban Glasgow returned to full time work securing the family’s status among the middle-classes, especially given that many were professional women. Throughout the period under consideration the lifecycle of the family and wider cultural changes were had significant impact upon the ability of the couple to increase their position.

Through considering housing design and everyday use we saw that debates surrounding eating in kitchens and the uses of parlours, these preoccupations were often class constructed. The Glasgow suburbs case-study of upper-working to lower middle-

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class homeowners, in conjunction with other source material, has shown that there was an overlap of class based living patterns such as eating in the kitchen or keeping a ‘respectable’ parlour in the house. There was an interchange of ideas between middle-class and working-class cultures. Indicators throughout this study have aligned the oral history group with the middle-class: they had stable jobs with a regular salary, enjoyed meeting people through associations and hobby clubs, and last but by no means least; they owned their own home. The location of this study in Glasgow provides a contrast between new social housing and the suburban inter-war houses that were dated and poorly equipped by post-war standards. Double sinks were to become washing machines, coal fires became gas, the large kitchen cupboard became the fitted kitchen and in the 1970s central heating was installed by a number of homeowners. If more room was needed for growing children, then parents either extended their homes or moved. Glasgow was a city with a strong working-class identity. Respondents distanced themselves from patterns of socialisation based on formal arrangements as this was associated with higher levels of society. Mr Devlin said: ‘No formal invitations and come at six and go at seven. Come as you find us and take us as you leave us, you know, that’s it.’ Even in retrospect some, participants in the study saw themselves as not quite middle-class and were in touch with their working-class roots. The dominance of the narrative that they financially struggle to buy a house supports this. The use of rooms within the house also reflected the social mobility of the participants of the study.

The focus on the interior of the suburban home indicated the continuation of class-based practices in the division of living spaces into the ‘front’ and ‘back regions’. Those with two reception rooms kept a ‘good’ or ‘best’ room for occasional use. Primarily, it was a space that demonstrated best practice of housekeeping and material consumption. As seen in the testimony of Mrs Devlin, she stated she was not ‘house-proud’ and yet she kept a tidy room for when visitors called. I have suggested that the presence of a good room in the house showed self-consciousness about how their homes may be judged by others. In Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self* (1959), the front regions are where activity was ‘maintained and embodies certain standards.’ These standards in working-class homes were connected to the middle-class application of ‘respectability’ in the late nineteenth to

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9 Interview with Mr and Mrs Devlin, 06/03/2009
early twentieth century. There were visual markers within the home, such as having a ‘parlour’ or good room and maintaining this room to a high standard of domestic hygiene and displaying any material wealth through objects such as matching furniture. This thesis has demonstrated that respectability was expressed in Glasgow suburbs through the continued practice of keeping a good room. The upper working to lower-middle class oral history sample preferred this pattern of living. Even when space was limited, this room was seen as essential to the housewife. Family life was confined to the ‘back region’ where housewives could relax their performance and focus on what was important to them: their family.

A Home in Post-War Glasgow

The inter-war ideals about the home-centred life and modern domesticity were evident throughout this thesis, despite its post-war context. Claire Langhamer has observed the post-war British home as based on a continuation of ideal from the inter-war period. The houses available to buy in the suburbs of Glasgow were built and designed between the wars. Although a concession to Modernist architectural features was found in the open-plan living-dining room in Simshill, the housing built after the war were in both style and design a continuation of inter-war suburban architecture. However, I would go further than Langhamer to argue that living in a suburban home in the 1950s or 1960s was in many ways the realisation of an aspiration about the family and home that was begun in the nineteenth century. Eleanor Gordon has argued that the concept of the breadwinner family of the nineteenth century could become a lived reality for some due to economic and social climate of the decades after World War Two. The modern kitchen was shown to have its roots in the nineteenth century designs such as Beecher. However, it was the popular adoption of scientific management of the home in the 1920s and 1930s, disseminated through home exhibitions and women magazines that created the ‘modern’ fitted kitchen. So, while the word ‘modern’ was used in magazines and in housing reports of the day, it does question whether these were truly new and a break with past or an evolution of ideals the emerged in the nineteenth century.

13 Gordon, ‘The Family’, p. 78
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Through the kitchen, the relationship between design and everyday experience was examined. The kitchenette was designed to help the housewife in her housework. But now the tradition of eating and to some extent family living in the kitchen was difficult due to its reduced size. Design failed to take into account the social interactions that underpin family life and make space for these. The continued preference for eating, in some form, in the kitchen illustrates the agency people have despite being faced with a physical boundary. Overall, the literature and experiences of the kitchen in suburban homes showed a remarkable degree of consensus. This emphasises the importance of oral history in exposing the reception of discourses within people’s lives. As always the burning question is, does the literature reflect lives from the bottom up or from the top down? I would argue that is it both. Women did contribute and participate in designing the inter-war kitchen, like Christine Frederick and Elizabeth Denby.14 Housing reports, social surveys and women’s magazines all conceived of women’s special relationship to the home as housewives. While they certainly did assume main responsibility for domestic concerns, their role within the family as mother was an identity that was given more emphasis in oral testimony.

The Creation of a Family Home

Throughout this thesis the family, or more specifically children have has been an influential force within the suburban home. Recollections were constructed around when children were born. The rooms of the house rearranged, or even added, to accommodate their changing needs of the family lifecycle. Overall, the private suburban home was space where a couple grew into a family. The oral testimony asked homeowners about their family home and unsurprisingly their narratives revolved around the family.15 Looking backwards and forwards, the personal narrative is both in the past and the present. For some interviews I was heavily pregnant, a poignant symbol of the respondents’ past as a young couple with small children but also as a working expectant mother I was a reminder of the changes experienced by women since 1975. To return to Mrs Roberts quoted on the first page of this thesis, she offered me some retrospection and advice:

I just feel, that looking back I realise how women have changed and how it has changed. But basically, I feel and I hope this applies to you, that the family is

15 Except for Mrs Connor who as the youngest in the cohort had her children later.
The important thing in life and children are important and enjoy them when they’re there. Enjoy it when they’re there.16

The narrative in these stories revolved around motherhood. Once children came along, women in particular ordered their lives to accommodate children’s needs as they embraced their new role of mother. Mothers stopped working to care for their babies and then organised their work outside the home around their childcare responsibilities through part-time positions. They worked in the evenings knitting them clothes, ironing clothes and washing nappies. Much work has been done around the identity of ‘housewife’, I would say women in this sample rejected this identity as temporary and owing to their being at home with raising their children. Their role as ‘Mother’ was intrinsic to their everyday lives, their femininity, their marriage and their work. In retrospect, designing a study to focus more explicitly on motherhood would have been beneficial.

This study found that narratives constructed in a variety of cultural productions were echoed in local oral testimony, which made points of disjunction more glaring, such as women not emerging as consumers. Previous histories about the home have focused primarily on women.17 What emerged from the method of this thesis was the centrality of the couple. The idea of home as a shared space was brought to the fore in both the contemporary literature and the lived testimony in this study. The emphasis on the couple, then in turn illuminated men’s relationship to the home, often overlooked or perhaps discounted. This is an area for more research. The couples of the post-war suburb did experience home through their gender but there was a marked degree of consensus about what the home would need to make it modern. While women’s position in society undermines notions of true equality within marriage, in the testimony the home as shared and collaborative space based on mutual respect and the sharing of power was an important and significant narrative. This indicates that gendered practices were not seen as problematic or restrictive in the suburban context and as other studies have shown in face of economic equality or gardening choices there is a high personal and social return for adhered to traditional models of femininity and masculinity.18

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16 Interview with Mrs Roberts, 25/10/2010
Finally, home was liberally referred to as ‘modern’ in magazines, advertisement, oral testimony, housing reports and social surveys. So this was given significance in the approach to this thesis. The modern home revealed itself to be a continuation of earlier imaginings of home. It was not a radical or revolutionary change but rather it was evolutional; the expansion of earlier technologies, tastes and ideas, some dating back to the nineteenth century. Traditional living patterns were maintained, Catharine Beecher’s galley kitchen was realised and after being pushed out the kitchen, people pushed back into it to stretch the small space to its limits. The modern suburban home of the post-war period emerges from this study as a product of both change and continuity and perhaps more accurately as a family home. If we refer back to Mrs Roberts from the beginning of this thesis, home was more than a place; it was the people who made it, and make it they did.
Appendix 1: Interview Biographies

Individuals

Mrs Barret interviewed 30 October 2012
Mrs Barrett was born in 1942 and married her husband, an engineer, in 1962 when she was 22. She grew up in a room and kitchen tenement in the East End of the city. Before she had children, she had a clerical job, which she left when she had the first of her two children. Mrs Barrett worked part-time in the local playgroup, which she helped set up, until her youngest started school. When she returned to work she trained to become a social worker. The Barrett’s bought their two bed-room, semi-detached in 1962 in the new Simshill development where they lived until they moved to a red sandstone bungalow in the neighbouring area of Cathcart in 1974. They extended their house twice in the early 1970s, the first time they added a downstairs bedroom and the second time a toilet, shower and dining room.

Mrs Brown interviewed 22nd November 2010
Mrs Brown was born in 1930 and married in 1952 when she was 22. She was a civil servant before she married. Her husband was a life engineer and at one point taught metallurgy at a college. They sub-let before buying a five-apartment house in Clarkston in 1954, which she still lived in. They had extended the house in 1971 to the side to include a dining room, a new kitchen and downstairs W.C. Later her husband’s mother lived with them. She had two children and did not return to full time work until they were older. She taught night classes when her children were small.

Mrs Burns interviewed 12 July 2010
Mrs Burns was born in 1934 and married in 1958 when she was 24. Her husband was a policeman. They bought a tenement flat then a terraced four-apartment house in Simshill in 1961. She moved to a five-apartment semi-detached house in Thornliebank in 1967 and was still living there at the time of the interview. Mrs Burns did not mention her work before marriage only that she stopped once she had her two children. After her children were grown up she worked as a school secretary. Mrs Burns’ friend was present for some of the interview.

Mrs Connor interviewed 5 November 2012
Mrs Connor was the youngest of the interviewees, born in 1951, she married in 1971 and they bought their first house in Simshill as newlyweds. They did up the whole house before moving in, as it needed a lot of work. Mr Connor was a fireman and she was a teacher. She stopped worked for a time when she had her two children but as she did not have the children until later we talked mostly about the modernisation of her house. Much later in the 1983 they extended the house to add a dining room, W.C and a utility room. They also converted the attic as an extra bedroom. Eventually in the early 1990s they moved to a red sandstone bungalow at the bottom of their street.
Appendix 1: Interview Biographies

Mrs McCabe interviewed 28 May 2009
Mrs McCabe married in 1953 when she and her husband finished university when she was around 21 years old. They both came from the countryside. Both herself and her husband studied in Glasgow so moved there when he was offered a job as a lecturer in a college after living in Ayrshire for a time. Mrs McCabe was a teacher and gave up work to have her four children. When her youngest started school, she returned to teaching. They lived in a semi-detached three-apartment bungalow for around three years, this was the house we talked about. In 1960/1, the Mrs McCabe moved to a pre 1914 sandstone which she classed as her main house. She no longer lived there at the time of the interview.

Mrs McPherson interviewed 17 March 2010
Mrs McPherson was the oldest participant born in 1925 and married in 1951 when she was 26. Her husband was a telecommunications engineer. They lived in three houses, finally buying a cottage flat in Croftfoot in 1961 which she lived in at the time of the interview. Mrs McPherson worked in department stores both throughout her life. She had three children. Mrs McPherson is now deceased.

Mrs Parkinson interviewed 4 November 2010
Mrs Parkinson was born in 1937 and married in 1963 when she was 26. She had two children. She was a teacher and worked full time when her daughter was 18 months. Her husband was a machine setter but lost his job his new job as a junior clerical manager. They bought their first house, a cottage flat in King’s Park in 1963 and moved to a five-apartment semi-detached house in Clarkston in 1970, where she still lived at the time of the interview.

Mrs Roberts interviewed 25 October 2010
Mrs Roberts was born in 1932 and married in 1958 when she was 24. She had two children. Mrs Roberts was a teacher, which she returned to when her youngest started school. Her husband was a metal engineer and also taught at college. They bought a ‘four/five’ apartment in Clarkston in 1958 and moved to a detached bungalow in the same area in 1970. She no longer lived there.

Couples
Mr Devlin and Mrs Devlin interviewed 6 April 2009
Mrs Devlin was born in 1941 and married in 1967 at 26. Mr Devlin was an electrician. They bought a flat until then a four-apartment bungalow in Giffnock in 1972, where they still lived. Mr Devlin was present during the interview but I was expecting to interview Mrs Devlin herself. Mrs Devlin was a teacher and worked part-time when her middle child was three, however she found it too much and did not return to work until they were older. Later Mrs Devlin’s mother came to live with them after she had a stroke.

Mr Muirhead and Mrs Muirhead interviewed 2 November 2012
Mrs Muirhead was born in 1942 and married in 1962 when she was 20 and had three children. Mrs Muirhead was a computer operator before having her three
children and was paid more than her husband. She stopped working but worked in the local playgroup when her youngest was around two. Mr Muirhead was born in 1940 and married when he was 22. He was a policeman. He was present when I came to interview Mrs Muirhead so participated as well. They bought their house a three-apartment, two bedroom house in Simshill in 1962 as newlyweds. They moved house in 1969 to a five-apartment detached bungalow, called a villa as it had bedrooms upstairs, in the same estate and were still living in this house.

Mr and Mrs O’Connell interviewed 19 March 2009
Mrs O’Connell was born in 1930 and married in 1959 when she was 29. Before having her six children, she was a midwife. She did not work when her children until her children were older. She returned to work as a Health Visitor. Mr O’Connell was born in 1926 and married when he was 33. He ran a small family business. Both were Irish descent. They bought a five-apartment, 1920s red sandstone terraced house in Muirend. At one point, her deaf brother lived with the family.

Mr and Mrs Travis interviewed 12 March 2009
Mrs Travis was born in 1930 and married in 1959 when she was 28. She had four children and did not work until they were older. She worked for the Civil Service when she returned to work. Mr Travis was born in 1959 and married when he was 28. He worked for the Post Office. They bought their first tenement flat in Denistoun, and then moved to their cottage flat in Croftfoot in 1964/65. In 1967/8 they moved to a semi-detached villa in Bishopbriggs for a year then returned to a cottage flat in Croftfoot. They bought their five-apartment terraced house in King’s Park in 1972 and Mr Travis still lives there. Mrs Travis is now deceased.

Mr and Mrs Webster interviewed 8 November 2010
Mrs Webster was born in 1935 and married in 1961 when she was 26. She had three children and worked on and off throughout the period doing public sector clerical work. Mr Webster was born in 1932 and was 29 when he married. He worked in the shipping offices. They bought a tenement flat, then lived in a terrace pre-1914 house in the Shawlands area then moved to a four-apartment semi-detached bungalow in 1966 in Merrylee Park, Giffnock. They still lived in this house at the time of the interview.
Department of History

Information Sheet

1. My name is Yvonne McFadden and I am a History PhD student at the University of Glasgow.

2. I am researching the experience of home in Glasgow during the period c.1950-c.1970

3. The purpose of the study is to inform my research on how men and women lived in their homes.

4. The study will interview people who bought their own house between 1945-1970 on the outskirts of Glasgow

5. Participation would involve one to two interviews, which will be recorded and then typed up.

6. The interviews will focus on the home.

7. Questions will be about how you, and those you lived with, used the rooms of your house, how you spent your time and how your home met your needs as an individual and as a family.

8. You can refuse to answer any question and can withdraw at anytime before, during or after the interview.

9. The interview can take place somewhere that suits you, within reason.

10. The information given in the interviews will be used to inform my PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow.
Appendix 2

11. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council

12. Confidentiality will be respected at all times. You will be offered the right to anonymity in any work that uses the material you have provided.

13. Afterwards you will receive copies of your interviews.

14. The work may be published and made available to the public.

15. The interviews will be anonymised and then deposited in a data archive to allow other researchers use of the material.

If you have any further questions please contact me at:

Department History
2 University Gardens
University of Glasgow
G12 8QQ

Telephone: 07739691450/ 0141 576 4280
Email: y.mcfadden.1@research.gla.ac.uk
Consent Form

Title of Project
Gender and the Home in Suburban Glasgow, c.1950-c.1970

Name of Researcher
Yvonne McFadden

1. I confirm that I have understood that this study is intended to study the experience of living in a suburban home in Glasgow.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand the information sheet provided and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

4. I consent to my interviews being recorded and transcribed.

5. I understand that I will receive a transcript or copy of my interviews.

6. I agree to the content of my interviews being used for research purposes.

7. May the stated recording and any summaries of transcriptions of it be made available for the use of authorised researchers and other interested parties?
   Yes/No

8. May a copy of the stated recording/ transcripion/ papers made available to be used in the Department for authorised research or consultation?
   Yes/No

9. May the stated material be used for educational purposes, educational publications, talks or broadcasts?
   Yes/ No
10. May the stated material be used for broadcasting or publication?  
   Yes/No

11. May your name be used?  
    Yes/No

12. Do you wish to add any restrictions?  
    You may limit access to your material/contribution for a period of year (up to a maximum of 30 years)  
    Yes/No

________________________  ___________  _________________________  
Participant  Date  Signature

________________________  ___________  _________________________  
Researcher  Date  Signature
Appendix 4: Interview Guide

General
- Date of Birth?
- What kind of house did you grow up in?
- Parents jobs?
- When did you marry?
- When move into your house?
- How long stay in the house?
- How many children did you have
- Did you have any children:
  - Before moved there
- Did you work?
  - When
  - Where
  - If female – Full time or Part time

The House
- What type of house was it?
  - Layout
  - Style
- Was this your first home?
- Why did choose it?
- Why did you decide to buy?
- Why did you choose that area?
- Do you remember any advertising
- What attracted you to the house?

Use of Space
- Can you describe your front room:
  - Use
  - Furniture
  - Décor
- If had a back room
  - Use
  - Furniture
  - Décor
- Tell me about the kitchen.
- Washing machine? – when get one?
- Fridge?
- Was the kitchen adequate for your needs?
- How did the layout of the house suit your lifestyle?
  - As a couple (no children)
  - When you had your children

Maintaining the home & Decorating
- Who did the housework?
- Was the presentation of your home important to you?
- Who decided how to decorate the house?
- Who did the work?
- Did you alter you home in any way? (such as garage, porch, extension)
Privacy
- Where did you spend most of time in the house?
  - Individual
  - Family
  - Couple
- Was privacy important to you?
- If had children
  - Where did they play?
  - Were the rooms adequate for them?

Leisure
- How did you spend your time?
  - Individual
  - Family
  - Couple
- When did you get a television?
- Media
  - TV shows
  - Radio shows
  - Did you read magazines?
  - Did you buy a household newspaper?
- Who visited your home?
  - Where did you spend time when you had a visitor?
- How did you socialise:
  - Individual
  - Family
  - Couple

Garden
- Was it important?
- How did you use it?
- Who was responsible for it?

Outwith the Home
- How did you get on with your neighbours?
- Where there local shops?
- Did you feel your area was convenient?
- Did you consider it a suburb?
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