THE HOME AND HEGEMONY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

by

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ABSTRACT

Research on the ideological and political significance of homeownership, sometimes called the "incorporation thesis," constitutes the main point of departure for this thesis. Focussing on the activities of the state, financial and allocative institutions, homeownership is held to sanction and sustain the existing social order because individuals develop stakes in its survival. Private property and high consumption, privatised lifestyles are emphasised and legitimised, facilitating social and economic stability. At its logical conclusion, this perspective posits homeownership as a functional necessity for capitalist societies.

The theory of ideology, implicitly drawn upon by this perspective, is criticised as being simplistic, overly instrumental and predicated upon an inadequate model of man and social reality. It connotes formal, articulated belief systems that express and justify the interests of the dominant class(es). It is tantamount to deception and indoctrination, lending support to conspiratorial accounts of social control. Those in positions of subordination appear to be the passive possessors of false consciousness.

The basis of a broader conception of ideology is outlined. It is thought to connote a level of signification or meaning creation, which, as a form of distorted consciousness, has the effect of sanctioning the existing social order. In addition to propositional beliefs, ideology is also seen to include less systematic, less easily articulated, everyday forms of consciousness. It has a material basis in daily social relations and does not originate primarily in "ruling class tricks" or a "non-social" consciousness. Those meanings and beliefs that are reified are particularly important. Loss of a sense of historicity and human creativity culminates in the naturalisation of aspects of a mutable social system.

Appreciation of the ideological significance of homeownership is seen to require more than an analysis of the state and housing-related institutions. Even when historically grounded, such research fails to tap the social roots of ideological beliefs. Attention must also be upon the ways in which expectations and experiences of home, and related spheres of daily life, crystalise, are understood and are made meaningful.

These propositions are operationalised through indepth interviews with 33 homeowners in Vancouver that explore the subjective meanings attached to home and to private space in general. The latter appear to be predicated upon an individualistic conception of self and social reality; however, this differs fundamentally from the "rugged individualism" usually held to characterise capitalist societies. Most significant was the denigration of ownership and material possessions as a basis for personal happiness and prestige. The meaning of home*ownership* centres on the pragmatic exigencies of "making good use of one's money." It is not intrinsically valued and, together with the related issue of investment, it is tempered and overridden by the more elusive and subtle meanings of *home*. Here, the individual, the family, self-fulfillment and self-actualisation, and the issues of privacy, freedom and control are paramount. Contrary to recent findings, these concerns are more dependent on housing form rather than tenure. Ownership enhanced but did not guarantee or necessarily facilitate their expectations of home.

Aspects of these subjective meanings are thought to reflect naturalised views of the "individual" and "individual needs" and are tentatively interpreted as being ideological. These are rarely, if ever, questioned and alternative ways of satisfying perceived, basic needs are not comprehended. The range of action thought possible, and actually taken is fundamentally circumscribed not only by institutional arrangements but also by reified constructions of self and social reality. The need for a more ethnographic methodology is suggested in order to appreciate the daily practices that combine to make this lived system of meaning, reciprocally confirming.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT ii

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF FIGURES ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT x

CHAPTER ONE: IDEOLOGY, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HOUSING 1

- 1.1 Introduction 1
- 1.2 The Political Economy of Homeownership: A Review 3
- 1.3 Homeownership, Ideology and Incorporation: A Critical Appraisal 7
- 1.4 Subjective and Objective Reality: Theoretical Orientations 13
- 1.5 Ideology and the Social Construction of Reality 15
- 1.6 Ideology: A Conceptual Synthesis 33
- 1.7 Recent Approaches to Research on Housing and Ideology 41
  - i. Rakoff - Ideology and Public Policy: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing 42
  - ii. Gray and Dickens - Ideology and the State: The Core of Local Authority Housing 52

Page

iii. Rose - The Political Significance of Homeownership in Britain 57
1.8 The Home and Hegemony in Everyday Life: Endnote 64
Footnotes 67

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY 76
2.1 Methodological Orientations 76
2.2 Interview Form and Content 78
2.3 Sample Characteristics 82
Footnotes 95

CHAPTER THREE: HOUSE AND HOME: SUBJECTIVE MEANINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE 96
3.1 Introduction 96
3.2 Homeownership: Some Contextual Comments 97
3.3 Subjective Meanings of the Home in Everyday Life 101
i. Ownership and Commonsense 101
ii. Ownership and Investment 108
iii. The Many Faces of Freedom 111
iv. The House as an Expressive Medium 120
v. Individuality and Attitudes Toward Children's Housing Needs 126
vi. Privacy and House Form 129
vii. Home and the Private Individual 131
viii. Status and Success: Some Dissenting Views 135
ix. The Quality and Meaning of Life Redefined 142

Page

x. Home-Centredness and Community Involvement 150
3.4 House, Home and Homeownership: Endnote 157
Footnotes 163
CHAPTER FOUR: THE HOME AND HEGEMONY IN EVERYDAY LIFE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 165
4.1 Contextual Comments 165
4.2 Ideology and the Construction of Self 168
4.3 Home and Hegemony: Endnote 184
Footnotes 188

APPENDIX A 190
BIBLIOGRAPHY 195

LIST OF TABLES

Page

TABLE 3.1 The Housing Requirements of Children 126

TABLE 3.2 Values Perceived to be Threatened by Zoning Changes 146

TABLE 3.3 Attitudes Toward Zoning Changes and Property Values 148

TABLE 3.4 Participation in Communal Activities 151

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
FIGURE 2.1	Vancouver Neighbourhoods in which Interviews took place by Household	87
FIGURE 2.2	Age distribution by age category	88
FIGURE 2.3	Number of children per household	89
FIGURE 2.4	Distribution of children's ages	89
FIGURE 2.5	Educational attainment	90
FIGURE 2.6	Geographical Mobility	91
FIGURE 2.7	Number of houses owned by household	92
FIGURE 2.8	Number of years in present house by household	92
FIGURE 2.9	Tenure of childhood homes	93
FIGURE 2.10	Household income by income category	94

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CHAPTER ONE

IDEOLOGY, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HOUSING

1.1 Introduction

In recent years the development and significance of different housing tenures has become a central theme for social scientists working from the perspective of Marxian political economy. The consideration of the privately owned home undertaken in this thesis was largely motivated by dissatisfaction with the particular form that this research has taken. Briefly, the latter reflects two basic influences, one thematic and one theoretical, which have also fundamentally affected the development of housing research in general.

Housing tenure research comprises one aspect of the attempt to develop a materialist analysis of housing provision under capitalism and to more generally theorise the relationship between the built environment and capitalist social formations. In part, this was a critical response to urban conflict and managerial approaches.[1] These, despite an emphasis on class, on constraint and power, and on the institutional control and allocation of scarce resources, were seen to remain narrowly empirical focussing on descriptions of 'how' rather than explanations of 'why'. These studies were seen to lack a theoretical base and to abstract managers, institutions and the urban system from social structure and history, thus ignoring and mystifying the underlying economic, political and ideological processes operative in capitalist society.

Secondly, this perspective reflects an exposure to Marxian urban sociology which seemed to address the shortcomings of urban conflict theory and managerialism and which, therefore, provided a major theoretical basis.[2] Consequently, most subsequent housing studies have been underlain by the premise that under capitalism housing occupies a contradictory position at the interface of the processes of production and reproduction. On the one hand, it is a commodity involved in the production of surplus value and capital accumulation while, on the other hand, it is also a basic, social necessity crucial to the reproduction of labour power and capitalist social relations. Thus, in addition to its economic role, housing is also of political and ideological importance. Subsequent empirical and theoretical work has aimed to historically ground the housing process in terms of these "levels" of the capitalist mode of production and the structure of social classes and class interests.

In this context, the main analytic approach to housing tenures has centred on questions of social reproduction. In particular, attention has focussed upon the contribution made by different tenures to the development and maintenance of the capitalist system and on the facilitatory role played by the state, financial and other allocative institutions.[3] The political and ideological significance of private homeownership has received most consideration and it is this set of postulated relationships, sometimes called the "incorporation thesis," that constitutes the main point of departure for this thesis.[4]

It will be suggested that this perspective on the privately owned home entails a simplistic, overly instrumental and largely untheorised concept of ideology which, in turn, reflects an inadequate model of man and social relations. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of this chapter comprise a review and critique of the "incorporation thesis." Sections 1.4 to 1.6 attempt to redress some of the deficiencies of this perspective by suggesting a basis for a broader, non-functionalist approach to the issues of homeownership, ideology and social reproduction. Section 1.6 reviews and appraises some recent research on these questions that is broadly sympathetic to the approach suggested here. This introductory, theoretical chapter forms a prelude to an empirical study of the subjective experiences and expectations of home and homeownership in everyday life which represents an attempt to operationalise the postulated concepts of ideology.

1.2 The Political Economy of Homeownership: A Review

In this literature it is possible to discern four, highly interrelated functions that homeownership is held to fulfil in capitalist societies. First, and most obviously, as private ownership of property, it is the ". . . ideal tenure from the point of view of the ruling elite in a capitalist economy" because it emphasises and legitimates the desirability of the institution and its associated entitlements.[5] The achievement of homeownerhip on a large scale is seen to create a group with a vested interest in maintaining this system of property relations and, in turn, this has important implications for social order.

Stability at the "economic level of the social formation" is thought to be enhanced because homeownership embodies a particular lifestyle--that of the individualistic consumer--which is based on "high consumption of energy, consumer durables and automotive products, supported by necessary, massive peripheral expenditure on physical and social infrastructure," all of which benefit the capitalist production process.[6] Additionally, the possibility of industrial unrest is neutralised because this lifestyle is highly privatised and reinforces the experience of home and work as separate, even opposed, realms, thus further mystifying their interrelatedness. Furthermore, this emphasis on home and leisure, in conjunction with steady employment as virtually a pre-requisite to ownership, "reinforces both economism and caution in struggles at the shop level, as well as impoverishing the whole sphere of work."[7] Struggles tend to become centred on issues of consumption with the worker more inclined to protect the system that has made him affluent.

These issues impinge on the third, and possibly most important, function--the promotion of social stability. Ideologically, homeownership is held to be an effective means of fragmenting class consciousness and diffusing social action thus strengthening the control of capitalist interests.[8] It is, to quote Harvey, a "glorious tool to divide and rule" and this occurs in several complementary ways.[9] First, the creation of tenure factions--owners and tenants--masks the commonality of their position as wage labour in conflict with capital. Second, this obfuscation is deepened by the failure of these "housing classes" to recognise that the problems they face as consumers of housing in a capitalist society have the same nature and sources. Instead, homeowners are placed on the "side of private property" and often actively oppose tenants in the course of protecting their interests and appropriating value.[10] Finally, the devisiveness of ownership is likened to that which ensues from the distinction between mental and manual labour--to the "classic division between craft and general worker, between the rough and the respectable."[11] Fletcher summarises the political significance of domestic property as being its "contribution to a false consciousness . . . that fails to recognise that those who are ensnared by the precariousness of their domestic security are really in a remarkably similar situation."[12] Ultimately, this mitigates against the building of alliances that might actively change the capitalist relations of domination and subordination.

The final line of reasoning has already been alluded to and pertains specifically to the beneficial effects of homeownership for the individual. It is seen to perpetuate bourgeois ideology through promotion of an ethic of 'possessive individualism' by placing a premium on self reliance and self help, on hard work and private gain, on delayed gratification and on privatism and thrift.[13] In conjunction with privatism and consumerism, this helps create a relatively passive workforce with a largely conservative outlook on life. Homeownership is seen to provide a meaningful incentive in life, a heightened sense of responsibility and involvement, and a material interest in creating and protecting a prosperous and stable society. The essence of this view is captured by Harvey who states that a "worker mortgaged up to the hilt is, for the most part, a pillar of social stability."[14]

Thus, social control and reproduction are seen to result from a form of ideological class 'incorporation' that expands the commitment of individuals to the social order through the development of personal stakes in its survival.[15] This is suggested to have been a primary motivation in the sponsorship of homeownership by the state and it has become common to interpret housing policy and legislation in terms of their service to the capitalist class and interests. Homeownership is held to be a powerful ideological level against socialist demands for public ownership.[16] Taking this line of argument to its logical conclusion, homeownership has also been characterised as a functional necessity for advanced capitalist societies in general.[17]

There is, of course, a ring of familiarity to most of these pronouncements which is not surprising considering the fact that they are very much part of our contemporary housing rhetoric. For example, in the 1979 Canadian federal election, the Progressive Conservative party described the social benefits of homeownership as follows:

> People who own homes feel a great stake in the community and the country in which they live.
>
> A society in which a major proportion of the population owns homes is likely to be a more stable, settled and productive society.
>
> People who own homes have a real incentive to ensure that they earn enough to pay for it - an incentive to work five days a week.18

Historically, similar sentiments have been expressed in Canada and many other countries by political parties, financial institutions, real estate, and the construction industry.[19] Moreover, there is also a ring of truth to those views since homeowners do appear to have been less politically militant than tenants, or so the negligible incidence of struggles over mortgage payments, etc., would suggest.

It may then seem strange to take issue with those views; however, as Barnett and Silverman have cautioned, we should be "critically alerted when our commonsense appears in tune with our analytic categories" since this apparent homology may simply result from a failure to be critical of our everyday categories and/or may involve their abstraction as fixed and ahistorical forms.[20] Bearing this in mind, it will be suggested that, as a theoretical perspective, the incorporation thesis may be criticised for its inadequate, and often implicit, conceptualisation of human agency, ideology and social reproduction.

1.3 Homeownership, Ideology and Incorporation: A Critical Appraisal

This literature can be seen, albeit to varying degrees, to adhere to a functionalist interpretation of social reproduction which Giddens sees as quite common where work has been influenced by Althusser.[22] [This is significant in view of the influence of European urban sociology, particularly the work of Castells, upon housing research.[23]] This interpretation often borders on being teleological in that the existence and persistence of both homeownership, and state intervention in its provision are theorised primarily in terms of their functionality for the continued existence of the capitalist system. This conflation of cause and effect erroneously presents descriptions of the functions a phenomenon has come to perform at a particular historical conjunction as also being the explanation of its genesis and duration. Such inference is unwarranted without empirical examination of the latter contentions and cannot automatically be used to generalise those functions as necessary or inevitable.

This conceptualisation poses the issue of social change as an immediately obvious problem. The empirical accuracy of these contentions can be seriously questioned and Kemeny, following a survey of several countries with advanced capitalist economies, concludes that homeownership may not be "an essential ingredient, let alone a basic prerequisite for the maintenance of capitalism."[23] For example, in contrast to the countries such as Britain in which this perspective has been developed, many others have equally highly developed capitalist economies but exhibit much less widespread homeownership as in the case of West Germany, Switzerland or Sweden. Echoing the previous argument, it has been suggested that the source of this inappropriate generalisation lies in the conflation of two different levels of analysis --the theoretical level which is concerned with structural relations between elements of a theory and the historical level which pertains to the actual historical development of particular phenomenon.[24] With reference to homeownership, documentation of the latter's functionality in a particular social system cannot be then used as grounds for suggesting universality. This ignores the historical specificity of the development and transformation of institutions and, to quote Rose, culminates in a tendency toward "tenure fetishism" through which homeownership is defined as a static and ahistorical category with an unchanging meaning.[25]

The implications of this perspective are then enormous for it effectively circumscribes the possibility of effective resistance to contemporary social forms and social change with respect to both individuals in their daily lives and to community activists intent on challenging bourgeois hegemony. As Leach notes, the analyst becomes capable of understanding "how the machine works," the ways in which it constrains and the injustices it perpetuates but only in a "way he can predict but not alter."[26] Together with several other theoretical problems, the latter can be seen to stem from the deterministic view of human subjectivity and agency that is largely implicit in this perspective.

The ideological and political significance of homeownership is theorised without recourse to the individuals who actually participate in this tenure form. Thus, largely by default, the homeowner appears to be the passive recipient of an ideology imposed entirely from above and who is also powerless to resist the 'logic of the system.' In essence, he has been bought off by a degree of affluence (or at least the illusion of the latter!). The idiom that "men live not by bread alone" does not seem to be relevant in that the major motivations in life appear to be materialistic, based on the simple calculus that deprivation results in unrest and reward results in social stability.[27] Perceptions of social reality also appear to be highly circumscribed since false consciousness renders the homeowner incapable of recognising the extent to which he is coerced and manipulated.

This depreciatory view of the homeowner's mentality stems not only from his exclusion as an object of analysis but also from the failure to theorise the ways in which the system and the individual interact. Social reproduction appears to occur unproblematically and inevitably, implying a simple homology between system needs and modes of realisation. This seems strangely divorced from the Marxian emphasis on the contradictions immanent in the inherently antagonistic class relations of capitalist society. Rather wage labour appears to respond simply and directly to external stimuli and even when attention is drawn to the possibility of resistance, successful outcomes appear to be illusory in that they can also be shown to be functional to the system.[28]

The concept of 'ideological incorproation' does represent an attempt to postulate a process of articulation between structure and consciousness. However, the nature of the latter, the concrete ways in which incorporation is actually achieved are not analysed so that individual consciousness can only be appreciated as being 'false.' The connections between structure and the individual are inferred rather than documented and the point can again be made that identification of functionality does not constitute an explanation of the processes through which this is achieved.

One tends to be led toward a conspiracy theory of social control and social reproduction in which the state and capitalist interests appear to be an "all knowing and smooth running nationwide organisation" that unproblematically coopts the worker by disseminating ruling class ideology "evenly through time and space."[29] In fact, the position of those in power is as unclear as that of those who are subordinated. The Machiavellian emphasis on deception and cooptation imputes an unrealistic degree of calculated deception and intentionality to the former so that they somehow appear to be outside the ideologically mystifying system they create. Their consciousness and that of housing consumers appears to be fundamentally different; however, their apparent autonomy is ultimately illusory for they too serve the long term interests of capitalism.

Furthermore, this perspective focusses on the notion of a dominant ideology that is the sole property of the ruling class(es) or groups. Giddens has observed that the tendency to exaggerate the impact of the former is not a coincidence in "forms of social theory that have made little or no conceptual space for agents understanding of themselves, and of their social contexts."[30] This view is particularly untenable for, as Saunders has suggested, these values and beliefs would "presumably be so transparently biased that no subordinate class would accept them as their own."[31] Rather, there must always be at least a degree of congruence between ideology and individual experience. The notion of a dominant ideology exaggerates the extent to which it pervades society. It obscures the fact that it may be differentially accepted by different social groups and ignores the complex processes of assimilation, transformation and rejection that eventual appropriation involves.[32]

The concept of ideology occupies a central position in this perspective and it is also one of its most problematic aspects. Unlike the issue of human agency which is essentially bypassed, ideology is a primary explanatory concept. However, despite the fact that it is commonly recognised as being one of the most elusive and ambiguous concepts in social science with manifold polemical and perjorative connotations in the latter and everyday life, it is rarely defined, let alone theorised.

The ideological, and hence political, significance of homeownership is asserted primarily because it engenders certain values and beliefs, such as private property and individualism, that can be directly tied into the dominant bourgeois ideology. This characterisation implicitly invokes the orthodox Marxian and, to a large extent, everyday notion of ideology as a formal and articulated belief system that can be readily abstracted and identified with particular social units, such as a class or occupational group. This type of emphasis constitutes a very limited and crude view of ideology that is increasingly being discredited. While such belief systems may accurately be described as "ideological" such a narrow focus leads to the tendency to conceive of ideology as pertaining only to "ideas" divorced from their basis in, and determination by, material social processes and relations. Consciousness also tends to be portrayed in an idealist and reductionist manner with a disturbingly close 'fit' being suggested between individual, or even group, consciousness and what amounts to political dogma and propaganda. This both reflects and reinforces a passive view of human nature.

Throughout this discussion, and particularly with regard to these comments on ideology, it is obvious that certain theoretical premises are being invoked in making these suggestions. Thus, before proposing any alternatives to the explanatory and theoretical impasses isolated here, I intend to make these premises explicit in the following sections. To a large extent, they also constitute the basis for an alternative conceptual framework for understanding the ideological significance of home ownership.

However, at this point a cautionary digression is warranted. In presenting the above critique it has not been my intention to undermine the achievements of this research and those comments were made in full recognition of the contribution the latter has made to our understanding of the housing process in capitalist society. In particular, it represents a much needed attempt to transcend static and ahistorical analyses of social and spatial forms and raises the fundamental political and intellectual problem of the ways in which different social orders are reproduced and maintained.

Instead, my aim has been to demonstrate the inadequacies of a functionalist interpretation of social reproduction and the limitations that it places on explanation. This exposition is important because the notion of "functionality" seems to have been adopted somewhat uncritically without adequate attention being paid to the logical consequences of such a position. If anything, this represents a lack of theoretical sophistication for it would be hard to imagine even the most cynical of analysts adhering to the deterministic model of human subjectivity and agency previously described, no matter how constraining the system appears to be.[33] This is particularly pertinent given the explicitly political intentions of many of these researchers. However, for the studies under consideration, this implicit reductionism seems hard to avoid. For example, Harvey intermittently alludes to the active consciousness of labour in that the latter is seen to define the quality of life in terms of use values and "appeal to some underlying and very fundamental conception of what it is to be human."[34] However, these ideas are not developed and the conclusion is reached that insofar as capitalism has survived, "capital dominates labour not only in the place of work but in the living space by defining the standard of living of labour and the quality of life in part through the creation of built environments that conform to the requirements of accumulation and commodity production."[35] While this may very well be a valid conclusion, it also implies that behaviour and practices are largely produced because no conceptual space has been made for the human subject.

1.4 Subjective and Objective Reality: Theoretical Orientations

The most basic premise of this critique is that the human subject and consciousness cannot be portrayed as being passive. Consequently, human activity cannot be theorised as being only 'produced' for, while social reality may appear to be an objective facticity, it is never-the less socially and historically constructed by active and creative human beings. The latter are not wholly free in that they are born into a pre existent social reality, but it is through their activity that they produce, reproduce and change the very system that constrains them. Thus, human behaviour is more appropriately theorised as being "constitutive."[36]

These statements clearly raise the issue of the nature of the relationship between man and society, between subject and object which is an ongoing source of both philosophical and theoretical debate. They also point to an adherence to a position that rejects the notion of a dualism between man and society in favour of a positon in which social reality is viewed as the historical and social product of human activity. In particular, this entails, as Giddens effectively states, an appreciation of social structure as "both the medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those social systems."[37]

This type of position is not incompatible with a Marxian perspective and is precisely the type of resolution Marx sought in considering the dualism between consciousness and reality.[38] However, as already suggested, this facet of Marxist thought tends to be lost in functionalist interpretations of social reproduction. Without recourse to purposive human behaviour, the latter fail to capture the complexity of the interplay between subject and object and thus constitute an incomplete theoretical framework.

At this point an exposition of Marx's philosophical-anthropoligical speculations on human nature and practice might be deemed appropriate and this has been a common approach amongst critics of functionalist positions.[39] However, partly to avoid repetition and partly because such exegesis have achieved little in practical terms, I intend to approach these issues from a different angle by discussing their treatment by a sociological tradition which, although it draws heavily on Marx for its anthropological suppositions, is generally characterised as phenomenological. In particular, I shall focus on the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann.[40]

The rationale for this approach lies in the fact that while sharing certain basic premises such as "process theory of the creation of man," the latter tradition has to some extent gone beyond Marx's philosopical speculations by attempting to specify the nature of the processes through which, for example, objective reality is created.[41] Additionally, the work of Berger and Luckmann has been utilised as the theoretical basis of one of the few studies that has analysed the ideology of homeownership in a manner similar to that suggested here.[42] Thus, an exposition of this perspective will also serve as a basis for critically assessing this research as well as raising ideas pertinent to conceptualising ideology.

1.5 Ideology and the Social Construction of Reality

In the Social Construction of Reality, Berger and Luckmann note the paradox that while society may be characterised as being built up by subjectively meaningful activity (Weber), it can also be seen to possess objective facticity (Durkheim). In response, they aim to address the question: "How is it possible that subjective meanings become an objective facticity?"[43] Drawing on a diverse set of theoretical positions, they suggest the need to understand the relationship between "man, the producer and the social world, his product" in terms of an "ongoing dialectical process composed of the three moments of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation." The "moments" are soon to occur simultaneously and not necessarily in a temporal sequence.[44] Each corresponds to an essential characterisation of the social world: "Society is a human product. Society is objective reality. Man is a social product."[45]

An additional set of concepts are proposed to explain the creation and transmission of a taken-for-granted-reality to future generations--habitualisation, institutionalisation and socialisation--and these are explicated through a hypothetical example of reality construction.[46] Proceeding from a largely Meadian conception of the creation of a social self and of social action, two individuals are seen to produce common routines that provide order in life and that become habitualised and taken for granted.[47] Institutionalisation is then held to occur and when passed on to their children or subsequent generations, these institutions acquire the quality of historicity and are "now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact."[48] Thus, the institution has become objectified and the extreme conclusion of this process is 'reification' whereby human phenomena are apprehended as 'things,' as non- or even supra-human. Ontological status is bestowed on the institutions independently of human activity and signification and the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature, becoming "necessary and fate." Nevertheless, the social world is still a human construction.

Moving away from this hypothetical example, Berger and Luckmann note that institutionalisation and internalisation cannot be assumed to occur unproblematically and that there is "no a priori reason for assuming that these processes will necessarily 'hang together' functionally, let alone as a logically consistent system."[49] However, empirical evidence suggests the contrary and while institutions may not, and need not, be integrated into one cohesive system, the "meanings" of segregated performances will tend toward at least "minimal consistency." These meanings in effect constitute the "logic" of the institutional order and derive from the way the latter is treated in reflection rather than residing in the institutions themselves.

The institutional logic is part of the social stock of knowledge available to, and taken-for-granted by the individual in everyday life and passed on to future generations. This stock of knowledge is defined as "semantic fields or zones of meaning" that are built up through language, structured in terms of "relevances" and encountered as socially distributed.[50] Thus, it is argued that the integration of an institutional order can be understood in terms of the knowledge its members have of it and that "language provides the fundamental superimposition of logic on the objectivated social world." Additionally, the edifice of legitimation, referred to below, is built upon language and uses the latter as its principal instrumentality.

Institutionalisation is also thought to be problematic with regard to the socialisation of future generations. For the latter, the original meaning of the institutions are no longer available through recollection and despite the fact that they appear to be external and coercive, they must be interpreted, explained and justified before compliance can be expected. Thus to the processes already suggested, the notion of various legitimating formulas must be added. The latter must be comprehensive and consistent and ultimately create plausibility, order and legitimation by telling the individual what he should do and why things are what they are.[51]

Legitimation is described as a multifaceted process that can, analytically, be divided into several, empirically overlapping levels.[52] Most basically, there is "incipient legitimation" that is present as soon as language is internalised and which encompasses all of the simple traditional affirmations to the extent that "this is how things are done." Next there are "rudimentary theoretical propositions" including proverbs, moral maxims and wise sayings, legends and folktales. Both levels are described as "pretheoretical but are the foundation of all self evident knowledge constituting primary knowledge about the institutional order upon which all subsequent theories must rest. The third level consists of "explicit theories" that function in terms of a differentiated body of knowledge that results from an increasingly complex division of labour and that are frequently entrusted to specialised personnel for transmission. Finally, there are "symbolic universes" which consist of "bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in its symbolic totality." This is the most comprehensive level that integrates all human experience and delineates the dimensions of social reality.

As in the case of institutions, symbolic universes do not attain ontological status and once objectivated they may also require legitimation if rendered problematic as is likely in a dynamic or pluralistic society where deviant or alternative universes can arise: "All social reality is precarious . . . constructed in the face of chaos."[53] Thus, "conceptual machineries for universe maintenance" are also postulated and those function to eliminate deviations and inconsistencies usually through redefining them in terms of the dominant symbolic universe or by neutralising them through assignment of inferior ontological status. The most conspicuous types of conceptual machinery are seen to be mythology, theology, philosophy and science, in increasing order of theoretical sophistication.[54]

Berger and Luckmann's conceptual schema represents an important attempt to generalise beyond, for example, micro-sociological conceptions of the social self as represented by symbolic interactionism. These accounts tend to be overly subjective and voluntaristic and by examining the social, cultural and institutional manifestations of subjectively meaningful, social activity they aim to move beyond the former. However, before relating their ideas to the issue of ideology and homeownership, a number of critical comments and suggestions for elaborations need to be made.[55]

Even in the preceding, highly simplified précis, the abstractness of their presentation is readily apparent and reflects their aim to shed light on the general ways in which the "taken for granted congeals for the man in the street."[56] The need for cultural and historical specificity is recognised; however, this is a largely programmatic statement and their analysis mostly pertains to, and is illustrated by, schematic conceptions of primitive societies in which a single symbolic tradition maintains the universe and where a group of experts have an effective monopoly over all definitions of reality.

An appreciation of different forms of social stratification and differentiation and their effect upon the social construction of reality is particularly lacking, reflecting their concern to develop a philosophical, rather than an historical treatise. Brief mention is made of the possibility of knowledge becoming socially distributed as the complexity of the division of labour increases and of specialised personnel taking charge of its transmission with the result that legitimation, definitions of reality and their enforcement may also become socially distributed.[57] However, these observations are not integral to their analysis. Likewise, the issue of power is also undertheorised. In considering the breakdown of monopolistic social structure, the possibility of social conflict and power struggles between "rival coteries of experts" and experts and practitioners is recognised in pluralistic societies.[58] The significance of power is also acknowledge in that the success of particular 'conceptual machineries for universe maintenance' is seen to be related to the power possessed by those who operate them but again these ideas are not developed to any extent.[59]

All social systems can be seen to embody some form of social stratification which in turn creates specific imbalances in the distribution of power and influence. As Williams has noted in relation to the concept of culture, "to say that 'men' define and shape their whole lives is only true in abstraction. In any actual society there are specific inequalities in the means and therefore in capacity to realise this process."[60] The absence of any substantive analysis of class and power creates the impression that the social construction of reality is essentially a "democratic process" taking place in a political vacuum, a wholly unrealistic view.[61] Furthermore, to talk of social maintenance and legitimation also entails the idea of sustaining those imbalances and inequities and raises the issues of domination, subordination and social control. Recognition of these factors is essential and the position of those in subordinate positions with respect to the social construction of reality requires careful explication in terms of historically specific social systems.

Throughout Berger and Luckmann's analysis emphasis is placed on viewing society as a human product despite the fact that the process of reification may obscure or negate cognition of this actuality. However, this formulation rests uneasily with their reliance on the processes of socialisation and internalisation to explain the third dialectical moment--"man is a social product." In the discussion of "society as subjective reality," it is apparent that they do not adhere to the traditional socialisation paradigm in which the individual is simply moulded by society. In contrast, they draw on the Meadian notion of the active, social subject and stress the dialectic between objectively assigned and subjectively appropriated identity.[62] However, in common with Mead and other symbolic interactionists, they share the problem of utilising this conceptualisation with respect to a wider societal framework. It is significant that society as subjective and as objective reality are discussed in separate chapters and the former propositions are not adequately integrated into the latter account.

Thus, statements regarding the processes through which social reality is, for example, "retrojected into consciousness" or through which the individual is "inducted into the objective world" give the impression that the more traditional notion of socialisation is being invoked.[63] This focus mainly refers to the "primary socialisation" of the child which gives too much significance to the externality and coerciveness of objective social reality. As Giddens has pointed out, socialisation takes place continuously throughout one's life cycle and affects all those who participate in the process: "Since the newborn infant is so helpless, and so dependent on others, normally its parents, it is easily forgotten that children 'create parents' as well as parents creating children."[64] The tendency to portray socialisation as a temporally discrete and unidirectional process results in an over-emphasis on social reality as an objective facticity despite their stress on its human production. They tend to lose sight of the dynamic, dialectical nature of social reality. This gives the impression of a social world that, once created, becomes static and passed on as is, rather than being continually reproduced and, most importantly, reconstituted in daily life.

A similar point is made by Litchman with regard to the discussion of language that is worth reiterating because of its relevance to the concept of ideology. For Beger and Luckmann, language is a "facticity external to myself" that has coercive effects upon the individual. However, objections are raised regarding this externality because language is also the:

> principal medium through which I formulate my very notions of 'self,' 'externality,' 'facticity' and consequently myself and my world. Language is not external to me because I am formed in the process of its utilisation. When I feel compelled by the patterns of language it can only be because I find a particular language foreign, or unsuitable to my needs. If prose confines me, poetry may suffice; awareness of its origins is not the measure of its efficacy. I can be its creator as well as its creature, and both possibilities are part of my subjective range of options in approaching the world.[65]

This is significant given the centrality of language in creating meaning and imposing "logic" on the institutional order.

These comments also have implications for their discussion of reification. The attempt to incorporate this Marxian notion into a phenomenological analysis of social life is important because it goes some way toward transcending the often naive accounts of the social subject and neutral typifications by taking the issues of alienation and false consciousness into account. This permits acknowledgement of the fact that activity does not always have the character that it is understood to have and that there are often discrepancies between "objective existence" and the way a society is officially understood.[66]

However, reification is a problematic concept largely because it is often too closely identified with, and often portrayed as being identical to objectification. This is not an uncommon type of error that can be attributed to, for example, Lukacs.[67] Berger and Pollberg also note that Marx criticised Hegel in these terms, however, it also appears to be pertinent to their own conceptualisation.[68] For example, in acquiring the qualities of historicity and objectivity through transmission to future generations, institutions are "experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who 'happen to' embody them at the moment . . . as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact."[69] This view is very similar to the previous definition of reification as the apprehension of human phenomena as if they are "things." As Litchman notes, we have to question how different these processes are, for, "how would an institution experienced as 'over and above individuals' be apprehended if not 'as if' it were a thing?"[70]

Objectification is held to be an anthropological necessity. However, the position of reification is less clear and one has to turn to the earlier publication by Berger and Pullberg for clarification. In the latter, reification and objectification are more explicitly defined with the following distinctions being made: Objectivation is "that process whereby human subjectivity embodies itself in products that are available to one's self and one's fellowmen as elements of a common world" and objectification is the moment in this process in which "man establishes distance from his producing and his products, such that he can take cognizance of it and make it an object of his consciousness." Alienation is then described as the "process by which the unity of the producer and the product is broken" and reification is that moment when the "characteristic of thinghood becomes the standard of objective reality . . . (it) is objectification in an alienated mode."[71] In terms of necessity, objectification is seen as an a priori of human existence in that the latter could not be conceived without it. This status is denied for the latter two concepts, however, they go on to state that:

> . . . it is still the case that reification constitutes the de facto reality of most socio-historical situations . . . it would be a mistake to regard reification as a chronologically later perversion of some original state of non-reified existence (as in the pseudo-theological constructions of paradise, redemption and fall of vulgar marxism) or even as a rare phenomenon in specific socio-historical situations (as Marx himself at least tended to do in his conception of reification in terms of the specifically capitalist 'fetishism of commodities'). As we have tried to show, because of its social functionality, reification is a cross cultural and historically recurrent phenomenon.[72]

This conceptualisation is highly problematic because through the attribution of a degree of inevitability to reification, creativity and the possibility of change tend to be undermined echoing the conservativeness of overtly passive views of human nature.

As with the concept of socialisation, there is no analysis of how and why reification actually occurs or of what sort of practices are causal. It is not sufficient to characterise reification as the result of people "forgetting" that institutions, etc., are their own product and the question of why this occurs must also be raised. It is curious that they criticise Marx's historically specific analysis in favour of an abstract, transcultural and transhistorical view of the process for it is precisely this lack of specificity that curtails the explanatory usefulness of their analysis. Reification may very well occur in all historical periods and in all cultures, however, concrete analysis is ultimately necessary to confirm this proposition and to understand its generative conditions which intuitively seem likely to differ between, for example, primitive and modern capitalist societies.

Rather than being of the limited nature they suggest, Marx's analysis seems to be more appropriate. Reification is seen to result not primarily from the fact that human practice crystallises itself into objective social relations or from man's 'failure to recognise' the latter as his product but from the actual structure of social relations that characterise specific societies. In particular, the development of the division of labour and its separation of individuals into social classes, the fact of private property and the transformation of human labour and its products into commodities subordinated to the market, are highlighted with respect to capitalist society.[73]

At this point it is worth digressing briefly to consider the Marxian analysis of reification due to the implications this concept has for the discussion of ideology that will be taken up presently.

The term reification originates with Lukacs rather than Marx and is used by the former to characterise the main consequences of the 'fetishism of commodities,' an essential feature of capitalist society. Israel describes it as a "partial process in the general process of alienation" and suggests that it represents a transition in Marx's work from a speculative-philosophical discussion of human nature to an explicitly sociological concern with existing economic and social conditions and their effect upon man.[74]

The starting point for Marx's analysis is the value relation through which commodities are constituted as a result of objects being related to, and exchanged against, one another. This relationship is quantitatively expressed in the product's 'exchange value' which is distinct from, and is determined independently of its 'use value' by the market system. Both human labour and its products are susceptible to this transformation and under capitalism, this relationship is ultimately seen to dominate the whole of society with its development being linked to the factors mentioned above.

The effects of commodity fetishism are largely the same as those that Berger and Luckmann attribute to reification. Socially created properties of objects, such as their exchange value, acquire a non-social character and appear to be natural attributes on par with the object's physical characteristics. For example, capital is seen to be capable of "earning" a profit and landed property is invested with a natural ability to produce rent. The social relations of production which these properties manifest are also masked so that the latter appears to be a relationship among "things" that is governed by natural and eternal laws. In turn, society and history take on the character of alien, impersonal forces determining human behaviour rather than being the products of social activity.[75] Thus, unlike Berger and Luckman's analysis, the discussion of commodity fetishism begins to provide some understanding of the specific types of relationships and interactions that culminate in this distorted consciousness.

These reified entities and relationships are described, by Marx, as being "appearances" that conceal the real "essence" that is, for example, definite social relations among men. This is not meant to imply that the former experiences, and the way they are conceptualised, are illusory. On the contrary, "a real inversion [of social relations] at the level of the essence is responsible for the inversion produced at the level of appearances."[76] As will be noted below, this conception of a distorted or reified consciousness is closely related to Marx's conception of ideology.

Returning to Berger and Luckmann and the contention that their ideas of universe maintenance and legitimation must also be seen to involve sustaining systems of domination and subordination, it is further suggested that the process of reification makes a similar contribution. In particular, the latter can be related to the tendency of reification to "naturalise" historically specific social relations. Thus, this process would appear to be closely related to, and to entail a concept of ideology insofar as a contribution to the support and preservation of the social order is suggested as a minimum definition of the latter. As mentioned above, these ideas are integrally related in Marx's analysis of reification but are largely absent in the case of Berger and Luckmann.

Berger and Luckmann, briefly introduce the term ideology with that of power in their discussion of the "social organisation for universe maintenance" in which, as mentioned above, allowances are made for competing definitions of social reality in pluralistic societies.[78] In this context, they state that: "When a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to a concrete power interest it may be called an ideology." This idea is not elaborated beyond noting that the "distinctiveness of ideology is rather that the same overall universe is interpreted in different ways depending upon concrete vested interests within the society in question." The failure to elaborate this concept or to relate it to other aspects of their analysis seems to stem from their recognition of the problems that ensue from diverse and often inadequate conceptualisations of ideology which they feel ". . . might lead one to despair of using it in any precise manner at all. We have decided to retain it in a narrowly defined sense, because it is useful in the latter and preferable to a neologism."[79] The rationale for this decision is not elaborated or justified.

This retreat from developing a concept of ideology in union with their other processes for creating and maintaining social reality is unfortunate because their analysis clearly contains some of the essential elements of a nonevaluative conception of ideology that could usefully supplement their analysis and allow for a serious consideration of the effects of social stratification and power on reality construction. As Litchmann has suggested, the "model of objectivation is strongest, despite all its difficulties, in describing the apparent coherence and permanency of the social world. It is a model based on successful instances of ideological hegemony."[80] Keat and Urry also consider the notion of reification to be "one set of general types of ideological distortion."[81] In particular, Berger and Luckmann's emphasis on the importance of meaning, language and reflexivity, on pretheoretical as well as theoretical legitimating formulas, on a taken-for-granted social reality and stock of knowledge, on everyday life, and the 'naturalisation' of historically specific objectification via reification are all important constituents of an adequate conceptualisation of ideology as will be made clear in the following section.

Instead of developing such a view of ideology, they fall back on what amounts to the classic, orthodox Marxian concept of ideology not unlike that utilised in the 'incorporation thesis.' This conceptualisation derives from two interrelated themes that are discernible in the German Ideology--ideology as a system of illusory beliefs ("In all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura") and ideology as an expression or justification of the dominant class interests ("The ruling ideas are in every epoch the ideas of the ruling class").[82] There has been a tendency to abstract these ideas from their wider materialist context in which consciousness is seen as inseparable from conscious existence and, in turn, material social processes. This culminates in a rather clichéd view of ideology as deception and lends support to conspiratorial notions of the ruling class and social control. The latter tends to become the consequence of indoctrination, manipulation and coercion. In this respect it is interesting that Berger and Luckmann's discussion of power pertains mainly to military strength of direct coercion.[83]

As has already been suggested in considering "commodity fetishism," ideology does not arise as a pure invention of consciousness that distorts reality nor as the result of an objectively opaque reality which deceives a passive consciousness" or, it could be added, because of ruling class "tricks."[84] Rather, its source is seen to lie in the nature of the social relations in which all participate. Thus, while ideology may be seen to support the dominant class(es) and perpetuate existing patterns of domination and subordination, these functions do not solely, or even primarily, accrue because those in dominant positions promulgate these ideas. More fundamental is the fact that the conditions under which productive and reproductive practices are carried out in capitalist societies usually embody the rule of a definite class(es) which holds contradictory relations with other classes. Ideological consciousness, by remaining fixed at the level of "appearances," where these basic relations are distorted, will therefore tend to work in the interests of the dominant class(es).[85]

In this context, the process of reification can be seen to make an important contribution to ideological consciousness and the sanctioning of systems of domination and subordination. It is suggested here that Berger and Luckmann's analysis of the coherence and obduracy of the social world implicitly invokes these ideas. Furthermore, it would be greatly enhanced by explicitly including a consideration of social stratification, domination and power and by cultural and historical concreteness. In particular, a focus on class inequalities and ideology in conjunction with reflexive meaning, taken for granted reality, etc., leads to quite a different view of domination and social control to that deriving from "ruling class" paradigms.

These suggestions, to a large extent, reflect aspects of Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony.' His work can be seen as providing one of the most fruitful attempts to revive and develop Marx's ideas about ideology and consciousness and represents a reaction against both mechanistic and reductionist base-superstructure models and views of social control as the product of direct coercion and ruling class "tricks." Coercion is seen to be appropriate primarily in times of crisis when domination is expressed in directly political forms. Hegemony, however, is seen to characterise more normal situations in which a complex interlocking of social, political and cultural forces brings about social control and sustains domination as a result of "spontaneous consent."[86]

The essence of this concept is very effectively captured by Williams in the following:

> . . . it sees the relations of domination and subordination in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living - not only of political and economic activity, not only of manifest social activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political and cultural system seem to most of us to be the pressures and limits of simple experience and commonsense. . . It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values - constitutive and constituting - which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.87

The commonalities between this concept and Berger and Luckmann's ideas are readily apparent in this synopsis, particularly with respect to the stress on everyday life, meaning contexts and taken for granted reality.

Ideology or ideological consciousness is obviously an important aspect of this "lived process" but it is conceived in a manner quite different to the narrow version previously criticised. Rather than pertaining only to systematic ways of thinking and formally articulated belief systems, Gramsci also stresses the "lower levels" of thought which he describes as "commonsense." The latter comprises an accumulation of "popular knowledge" which provide a means for dealing with everyday life and which is disjointed, often internally contradictory and sometimes difficult to articulate.[88] Thus, as Williams points out, this view does not deny or exclude the type of belief system usually described as 'ideology' but it does not "equate those with consciousness or reduce consciousness to them."[89]

It is also apparent that reification is an important element of ideology and hegemony in that the existing social system gains a sense of the "natural." Again commonsense thought is held to play an important role because its lack of "conscious historicity," and therefore self knowledge, prohibits the questioning of popular beliefs effectively discounting the possibility of change and naturalising the social order. Furthermore, because it is not systematic, contradictory ideas can coexist or be combined.

Thus, ideology and social control are not seen to originate in, and reflect, imposition and indoctrination by the fuling class. Instead, they are viewed as being a "lived relation" between classes that is grounded in material social process and in social reality. Ideas and practice are, therefore, seen to be intimately related, reflecting Gramsci's adherence to Marx's more general views on consciousness and reality mentioned above.

In the following section I intend to briefly draw together the ideas introduced above that are suggested as important elements of a nonevaluative conception of ideology before going on to relate them to the specific issues of homeownership and reproduction.

1.6 Ideology: A Conceptual Synthesis

> The actual operation of ideology in contemporary society is better illustrated by the cacophony of signs and sounds of a big city street than by the text serenely communicating with a solitary reader, or the teacher or TV-personality addressing a quiet, domesticated audience.[90]

In light of the previous discussion, ideology may then be seen as an essentially critical concept that connotes a distorted understanding of social reality. However, this does not entail its common, simplistic association with error and false consciousness. Instead, it should be seen to denote a specific form of error and may be broadly defined as a form of distorted consciousness that has the effect of sanctioning and sustaining the existing social order and the inequalities and patterns of domination and subordination embodied in the latter. As will be discussed below, this does not imply that all consciousness or all types of error are ideology. The questions of truth and falsehood are less significant than that of the efficacy of ideology with respect to social reproduction and maintenance.[91]

More specifically, ideology is conceived too narrowly if it is equated only with formal and articulated belief systems. The latter comprise only a small part of the social stock of knowledge that is drawn upon in everyday life and, ultimately, may make a less decisive contribution to most hegemonic situations than the more subtle and less systematic sets of beliefs, meanings and values. It is the latter that most effectively structure everyday life and, as Barnett and Silverman suggest, these basic separations that people make, both conceptually and in practice, are an essential aspect of our ideology.[92] The latter should, therefore, be seen to encompass everyday thought and experiences as well as propositional beliefs. By concentrating on the relationship between ideas and the concrete ways in which daily life is organised, this view of ideology focuses attention directly on the relations involved in hegemony rather than on abstracted belief systems.

The restriction of ideology to institutionalised discourse is particularly problematic when attempts are made to relate the latter to actual consciousness. Ideology usually appears to be the property of one group that is imposed upon the consciousness of another and this tends toward a reductionist account of social control and stability. In particular, adherence to this point of view results in the tendency to lose sight of the material basis of ideology, and of thought in general and to conceive of the latter as pertaining only to "ideas."[93] However, ideas do not exist outside of, and are expressed in material reality. Consequently, ideology is more appropriately regarded as an "ongoing social process" rather than as a "possession" or, as Geertz has suggested, as a "ghostly happening in the head."[94]

More specifically, ideology as both formal and everyday thought, is more appropriately understood as being a level of signification--the active, social creation of meaning through formal signs which is structured in, and through language and is intrinsically involved in all other social, material activities.[95] Language, and hence signification are seen to comprise a practical, constitutive activity rather than something that is taken up and used for communication. Consequently, it is central to the creation and reproduction of social life, consciousness and the human self. Following Weber, Geertz stresses the requisite nature of the process and structures of signification by noting that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun."[96] It is in terms of these hierarchies of meaning structures that communication and interaction is made possible and that behaviour and social action are produced, interpreted and understood.

Williams states that an adequate conceptualisation of ideology requires some form of emphasis on the social, practical process of signification and this is precisely the approach adopted by Geertz in his discussion of Ideology as a Cultural System.[97] For the latter, human behaviour is symbolic action and thought is characterised as the construction and manipulation of symbol systems that make life meaningful and concurrently define consciousness itself. In this context, ideology is described as "systems of interacting symbols, as patterns of interworking meanings" that provide a "template," an extrinsic source of information in terms of which life is patterned and made meaningful. Ideology is seen to come most crucially into play when the information it contains is lacking when, for example, in situations of social change and upheaval, "general cultural" and/or "down to earth pragmatic" orientations no longer work. Stress is placed on the complexity of these symbol systems and they are seen to be more appropriately viewed as "metaphors" embracing stratified and often discordant, socially rooted meanings above and beyond those suggested by a literal reading.

The latter suggestions regarding the content of ideology are particularly important; however, this exposition stops short of being the radical reconceptualisation of ideology that an emphasis on signification suggests. This is largely a consequence of retention of the traditional association of ideology with a particular kind of symbol system; that is, with a formal belief system to be appropriated as needed rather than as intrinsically involved in social action itself. Geertz ranks ideology alongside religious, philosophical, aesthetic and scientific symbol systems but, to reiterate the point made previously, this conceptualisation is too narrow, both empirically and analytically, for, together with the cultural and pragmatic orientations noted above, these systems may all perform ideological functions. This point is reflected in Giddens' suggestion that the characteristics and functions Geertz attributes to ideology--"metaphor and metonymy, generating multivalent levels of meaning"--are in fact features of signification and symbol systems in general.[98] It would, thus seem to be more appropriate to reverse Geertz's formulation and to regard ideology as a level of meaning rather than as a particular symbol system. In this manner, commonsense thought and social practice can also be taken into account.

In contrast to Geertz, Therborn tends to carry this line of argument too far in the other direction by defining all consciousness as ideology. For example, the latter is defined as referring to "that aspect of the human condition under which human beings live their lives as conscious actors in a world that makes sense to them to varying degress."[99] Again the point can be made that ideology is primarily a level of meaning. Its identification with all processes of signification tends to reduce its critical connotations and loses sight of the fact that not all consciousness and thought is inevitably ideological and that there are forms of error which are not necessarily of this genre. For, as Giddens states: ". . . to treat a symbol system as ideology is to study it as ideological;" that is, to criticise it on the grounds of distortion and to suggest a relation between it and the preservation of the existing social order.[100]

Finally, the issues of the specific characteristics of ideology and the ways in which it operates to sustain particular social systems must be broached. Ultimately, the answer to these questions, and to the problem of how and why ideology occurs and is sustained, will depend on concrete and historically specific empirical analysis. However, some general suggestions can be made, in light of the previous theoretical discussion, that seem relevant for at least contemporary, western societies and which will, hopefully, receive further specification and clarification through the empirical analysis of homeownership presented in Chapter Two.

As an aspect of signification, ideology can be seen to be involved in the establishment of meaning structures that provide ways of dealing with basic existential dilemmas. It can be seen to be involved in our constructions of self and the domains in which we live our lives, in the ways in which social practices are structured, and in our ability to participate in the latter. Above all, however, it will refer to the particular ways in which these activities contribute to social reproduction. As suggested in the previous section, the process of reification is centrally involved in the latter and, as Barnett and Silverman suggest, it can be seen as one way of describing the issue of ideological signification.[101]

Thus, to reiterate, ideological consciousness can be seen to entail loss of a sense of human, social creativity in relation to the products of human activity, daily practices and spheres of living, and social relations in general. Discussions of reification have sometimes been overly influenced by the terminology used in Marx's consideration of commodity fetishism with the consequence that the process is often conceived too narrowly. For example, for Markovic, "to 'be' reified means to acquire or ascribe the characteristic of a thing."[102] Although this is certainly involved, this type of definition tends to detract from the more fundamental negation of human agency and naturalisation of its products.

Through naturalism, the existing social system, or at least aspects of it, tends to be apprehended as natural and eternal rather than as historically specific and mutable. In turn, the range of both thought and action tends to become restricted and the possibility of change may be discounted with attention focused on manipulating, or at best modifying, that which already exists. The ways in which life is structured may also gain a sense of the absolute so that, as in the case of commodity fetishism, the relationships between these spheres and their associated activities are masked. This process can also extend to definitions of the qualities comprising human nature so that they also acquire a sense of timelessness. Finally, the social world and social relations may appear as given and as governed by natural laws and/or the quirks of human nature that determine human behaviour. Reification may therefore be thought of as encompassing many of the general ways in which signification and the sanctioning of systems of domination and subordination are interrelated through ideological distortions. The essence of this interplay is captured in Williams' earlier cited comments on hegemony and ideology as the processes through which:

> . . . the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political and cultural system seem to most of us to be the pressures and limits of simple experience and commonsense.[103]

The consequences of reification have been presented somewhat tentatively, reflecting the previously noted need for empirical investigation. To do otherwise at this stage runs the risk of encountering the problems faced by Berger and Luckmann in generalising reification as a "de facto characteristic of the human condition," an account which Litchmann feels is "itself reified."[104] The crucial point to remember in both general and more concrete commentaries is that ideology and reification are above all lived experiences and processes that are produced and reproduced in daily practice and are integrally tied to the overall structure of social relations. From this point of view, social control and domination are not seen to result primarily from inculcation or manipulation. Rather, they should be understood in relation to a hegemonic set of meanings, beliefs and values to which ideological significations and practices contribute. These are rarely questioned by those in both dominant and subordinate positions and as guides for action they can be highly problematic as, for example, the recent study by Sennett and Cobb suggests.[105] These latter authors demonstrate the manner in which blue collar workers, attempting to live by the messages of individualism which they take for granted, are frustrated largely by the class nature of society. Their failures, however, are attributed to their own personal inadequacies. The appropriateness of such a view of ideology and social control is strongly suggested in the following excerpt from a newspaper article outlining one house buyer's critical self examination of the search process:

> . . . I realise it sounds rather strange, but the seemingly individual act of buying a home is connected to the gravest problems that affect the entire social fabric of this country. . . . Before looking for a house, I never gave serious consideration to school district lines. That naiveté did not last very long once the search began . . . before long and despite the fact that my wife and I have no children, I found myself going from door to door asking what schools served the neighbourhood. Whatever rationalisations I came up with, the ugly truth remained: I had become part of the web of institutional racism, pushed on by the gods of appreciation and resale value. I was too vulnerable to resist. Beyond race, I also found class distinctions entered into the equation of house buying. As with the question of race, the omnipresent figure of real estate value lurked constantly around the corner . . . class and race, race and class, these ideas swirled in my mind even as I examined energy efficient doors and measured wood-paneled family rooms. They seemed to be the constants in the fluid world of floor plans and square footage. They were enthroned and seemed unchallengable. Yet they existed not because of cabals and conspiracies but because of the scripts by which we live our lives. There were no villains, no seedy operators manipulating my emotions. The advice offered was honest, forthright and friendly. It made sense, like the suggestion to take aspirin for a cold. Everyone was concerned with my best interest and I appreciated the fact. But it was my best interests that rested at the heart of the problem. Unlike Adam Smith's dictum, this is no 'invisible hand' to insure that the pursuit of private self interest leads to the furtherance of the public interest of all of society. In gaining the benefits of property ownership for myself, I realised I was willing to sacrifice certain abstract social goals. That realisation has caused me anguish, for it has placed me on the horns of a true dilemma. I am certain that like so many others, I will soon rest my tired and guilty body into a 'proper' home. And I will be happy because my wife and I have certain material aspirations. Yet I cannot engage in self-delusion or convenient lapses in memory, and thus I know I have become part of the problem rather than the solution. I will make my decisions in house buying and they will be the wrong decisions made for all the 'right' reasons.[106]

Attention will now turn to some recent studies that have, to varying degrees, attempted to utilise aspects of the conceptual framework suggested here in relation to housing tenures, following which, suggestions will be made for investigating the relationship between ideology and homeownership.

1.7 Recent Approaches to Research on Housing and Ideology

Giddens has suggested that "many of those who have declared their opposition to functionalism in principle are themselves prone to employ functionalist arguments in practice."[107] This dictum may even be applicable to those espousing the 'incorporation thesis' as was previously suggested in relation to Harvey's attempt to allow for an active consciousness on behalf of labour. Thus, it would seem to be appropriate to consider the success of some recent attempts to transcend the theoretical and practical impasses previously isolated as deriving from functionalist interpretations of social reproduction and to take heed of the pitfalls they encounter.

Within the geographic literature, there has been surprisingly little published criticism of the 'incorporation' perspective although there is some evidence that it has been a "behind the scenes" topic of discussion. The latter usually manifests itself in a rider to the effect that preceding comments on the social reproduction functions of housing tenures are not intended to imply a functionalist interpretation. For example, most recently Bassett and Short state that:

> It is important not to see owner-occupation on a large scale as somehow necessary for the reproduction of certain social relations . . . It is also important to emphasise that whatever the ideological advantages of owner-occupation this does not mean that owner-occupied housing is automatically provided according to some functionalist perspective. The balance of tenures . . . is also the result of conflicts reflecting a changing balance of class forces. Such effects need to be drawn out and explained through historical analysis of housing policy in each country.[108]

The latter type of analysis is, however, most conspicuous in its absence.

Inclusion of this type of cautionary statement suggests that functionalist interpretations are still problematic and this is reinforced by Rose who feels that "despite the valuable radical work of recent years on the emergence of housing tenures and their significance at the so-called economic, political and ideological levels, our understanding is still inadequate." Again, the need for a "systematic and historically specific understanding of the material bases of, and the processes creating, tenure group fragmentation" is suggested.[109]

Thus, identification of the inadequacies of functionalist interpretations can be seen to be insufficient unless accompanied by some very basic theoretical and empirical reorientations. (This assertion is well illustrated by the work of Gray and Dickons discussed below.) To varying degrees, this point is reflected in each of the pieces of research considered in this section, the first by a political scientist and the remaining two by geographers.

i. Rakoff-Ideology and Public Policy: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing.[110]

The following appraisal of Rakoff's work will be limited to the issues of theory and methodology, particularly the conceptual framework utilised to analyse housing and ideology. Reference will be made to empirical content only insofar as it elucidates these issues.

Synopsis. Rakoff is primarily concerned with policy impact analysis, a field he holds to be fraught with philosophical and methodological problems that severely curtail its analytic capabilities and pragmatic utility. His critique is reminiscent of that made in geography in reference to the 'quantitative' tradition in that, through adherence to the "accepted canons of empirical research," a distorted picture of the social world is produced by focusing upon "arbitrarily isolated parts and ignoring the pre-existent subjective and intersubjective experience of wholeness and continuity."[111] In contrast, he argues for a perspective that would permit an understanding of policy impact within the "ongoing context of institutions and ways of thinking that people experience in everyday life" in order to get some sense of "how a social order is constructed and understood." A theoretical basis for this approach is seen to already exist in Husserlian phenomenology and particularly the work of Schutz and Berger and Luckmann. Together, they are seen to provide a means of understanding the "ongoing multilevel construction of reality" as a complex dialectic of individual, subjective meaning constitution and objective meaning contexts" that order and make everyday life coherent.[112]

This process is seen to be profoundly political and social control is thought to be inherent in that through it, all aspects of social reality are structured and allocated often under the rubric of policy making.[113] The implication of both a linear connection between government activity and structuring and conspiratorial paradigms of social control is denied. Instead, he suggests the importance of a shared and, to a large extent, commonly defined social reality that provides a guide for and controls action and in terms of which policy is made. Ideology is proposed as a sphere of mediation between policy processes and everyday life in that it provides the content and context of the former and structures the latter: "Ideology is thus part of the definition of social reality, contributing to the structuring of everyday experience and to the erection of higher order symbolic universes of legitimation and reality maintenance."[114] This conceptualisation closely follows that of both Geertz and Berger and Luckmann and will be considered in more detail below.

Rakoff concludes that "in order to understand the impact of an area of policy on the structure of everyday life, we must seek to reconstruct the subjective and objective 'knowledge' people have of that part of life." To tap these levels of experience, he opts for a methodology of in-depth, unstructured interviewing based on the Schutzian rationale that the availability of the intended meaning and subjective experience of others is maximised in "face to face" situations.[115]

Empirically, analysis consists of two parts. In Chapter Two, the socioeconomic context in which housing policy is made is mapped out and is reminiscent of the geographic, institutional analyses that focus on the actions of, for example, finance capital, developers, etc., in securing profit and fostering the circulation of capital.[116] This type of analysis is seen to be "anonymous in terms of knowledge and bloodless in terms of human apprehension and experience" and to broach these issues he turns to the second empirical thrust, an analysis of the subjective meaning of houses in everyday life as derived from his usntructured conversations."[117] In the final chapter, the existential roots of these subjective meanings are considered and are connected to wider structures of meaning and action such as liberal capitalist ideology and Locke's treatise on private property. They are also characterised as providing the content and context of policy and, finally, their effect on "public life" as an arena of fulfilment, etc., is noted.[118]

Appraisal. There are a number of interesting aspects to this study that this highly generalised synopsis blankets. For example, the suggestion that "Public and private policy makers operate within the context of these symbol systems, and their policies assume a social world in terms of those meaning systems and, consequently, aim to construct shelter and communities which make sense in these terms" represents a considerably more sensitive view than is usual. Similarly, the suggestion that the subjective meanings of houses are a means of dealing with existential problems created by the attempt to live according to individualistic premises is highly suggestive.[119]

However, when viewed as a whole, a number of conceptual problems become apparent that place limitations on the success of the substantive analysis. More specifically, in looking beyond the general programmatic statements, the manner in which some of the postulated processes are operationalised rests uneasily, and conflicts with the former. In part, this is a result of an uncritical adoption of the phenomenological theoretical orientations.

Rakoff's characterisation of ideology is especially problematic. Reflecting his debt to Geertz, ideology is described as a "symbolic template" that acts cognitively and normatively to provide schematic images of social order whose construction makes man a political animal. The following elaboration is provided:

> Ideology is more than opinion and less than world view. Opinions are formed within a pre existent context of meaning; ideology is part of that context. World view encompasses the entire phenomenal world as well as transcendental worlds; Ideology refers to a rather more delineated sphere of objects and actions . . . more specifically, the world which ideology structures is the political world where values are allocated and power is defined and used.120

The latter claim is justified by reference to Berger and Luckmann's equation of ideology and vested interests. Ideology is also seen to provide the content and context of policy primarily by "offering hierarchies of meaning and justifications for existing social arrangements." Empirically, the main example provided is that of 'liberal capitalist ideology.'[121]

The inadequacies of defining ideology only in terms of formal and articulated belief systems were discussed previously and can be seen to be particularly limiting in Rakoff's study given the emphasis he places on subjective meanings. The separation that is maintained between those levels of discourse creates a number of inconsistencies that pervade the analysis.

The most obvious problem is the tension that exists between the attempts to relate both ideology and subjective meanings to policy making. At various points in the study both symbol systems and are characterised as providing the context for, and conditioning the outputs of, the policy process suggesting that both are integral aspects of the "sphere of ideological mediation." However, rather than developing analysis in this direction, subjective meanings are portrayed as being "expression" of, and "reflections" of, formal ideologies which undermines the crucial contribution they make to a hegemonic social reality.[122] This also tends to conflict with Rakoff's contention that he is not positing a linear causal connection between housing policy and everyday life. The basis for this denial lies in the sharing of a commonly defined social reality. However, when subjective meanings are portrayed as reflections of ideology embodied in the policy process, an element of determinism can be inferred. There are, of course, continuities between formal belief systems and everyday meanings for as Lane notes: "Even the most abstract ideology, the most utopian scheme, has an empirical content that must be squared with the small world of experience of the individual faced with the problem of finding meaning in his world."[123] This degree of congruence, however, does not provide grounds for positing a simple homologous relationship between these levels. Subjective meanings cannot solely, or even primarily, be seen to reflect or fulfil the prescriptions of formal belief systems. This implies a reduction of consciousness to the latter and ignores the fact that less systematic meanings and beliefs can also be ideological.

Retention of this dichotomy also contributes to the tendency to rely on the notion of a dominant value system in order to account for social cohesion. As previously suggested, such a view tends to exaggerate the degree to which these values pervade society and the extent to which they are accepted by various social groups. Rakoff's use of "Liberal-capitalist ideology" as the wider meaning structure to which subjective meanings are related, suggests adherence to this point of view. Ultimately, this detracts from an understanding of the ideological aspects of hegemony and may reflect a basic conceptual confusion concerning the nature of the latter.

In a similar manner, the subjective meanings of the home that emerge from the interview data are presented as the cultural definition of the American home. Such a generalisation is unwarranted in view of his highly heterogenous sample of only 18 people. Furthermore, there is a disturbingly close fit between these findings and the classic stereotype of the American homeowner. That two radically different views of the home, one religious and one community oriented, emerge from such a small sample suggests that the former, somewhat extreme attitudes might be tempered in a larger group. Again, this indicates too great a reliance on easily isolated and generalisable sets of meanings and beliefs rather than probing those that are more subtle and less readily articulated. The latter are more characteristic of actual consciousness and everyday life. Both at the objective and subjective levels of society, formal systems of belief are portrayed as being too overarching and all encompassing.

When viewed in this manner, ideology appears to be an external and coercive force and this conflicts with Rakoff's basic belief that "ideologies and meanings do not just happen and are not just magically out there in the things we build and use." More specifically, he stresses the fact that "meanings are created by people daily in their working and acting, for pragmatic and other reasons, and in accordance with learned cultural dispositions." However, he is unable to extend this discussion to the origins of ideology and simply refers to the latter as colouring housing policies and thereby structuring the social and physical world.[124] The definition of ideology as a "template" makes it difficult to also appreciate its basis in, and determination by, material social processes and ultimately limits its utility in elucidating the relationship between ideas, and action and behaviour.

Development of the latter type of understanding is certainly intended in Rakoff's general conceptual statements but is prohibited by his uncritical acceptance of the view of ideology developed by Geertz and Berger and Luckmann. The housing policy process cannot be seen as primarily responsible for producing and reproducing an ideology and world view appropriate to capitalism. Everyday practices, including signification, also make a fundamental contribution. Similarly, the suggestion that the meanings of the home represent an attempt to deal with the existential dilemmas created by the attempt to live by individualistic premises loses its suggestiveness when these meanings are interpreted as being a "restatement" of liberal-capitalist ideology.

The failure to appreciate the ideological importance of subjective meanings and everyday practices results not only from this uncritical borrowing of concepts but also from an inadequate appreciation of the ways in which ideology actually works to justify existing social arrangements. Surprisingly, there is little consideration of the process of reification despite its centrality in Berger and Luckmann's analysis and this probably reflects the fact that the latter authors do not attempt a synthesis of this process with a concept of ideology. Passing mention is made of the interrelationships between these concepts when Rakoff notes that "ideology mediates between the political economy and the individual or family to make what is seem good."[125] However, this point is not developed and is not integral to his view of ideology or his final analysis.

This omission is unfortunate because an appreciation of reification might also allow for an understanding of the ideological contribution of everyday thought and practice. For example, most of the people interviewed are seen to perceive no alternative to the subjective meanings of the home outlined or to the individualistic premises in terms of which they act. This would seem to suggest that some very basic aspects of daily life have been reified but rather than considering why this perception exists, this sense of inevitability is seen to be the fulfilment of formal ideology. Rakoff is not critical of the categories people invoke to describe their experiences of private space and, for example, the equation of privacy and freedom is not really questioned. Yet, as Barrett and Silverman suggest, these categories and the very way in which we categorize, are central to an appreciation of ideology.[126] In this context, the sharing of a commonly defined social reality by all in society, including policy makers, can be seen to be important not only because people "act in terms of it and are equally controlled by it" but also because aspects of that reality are apprehended as given and inevitable.

As suggested above, the use of 'liberal capitalist ideology' as an explanatory tool is conceptually problematic, however, it can also be criticised on more substantive grounds. This belief system is fleshed out by reference to Locke's treatise on private property and the subjective meanings of the home are seen to echo these propositions.[127] However, this type of interpretation can be seen to involve an enormous intellectual leap. The subjective meanings identified are those of a very small, culturally specific group of people and their interpretation only in terms of a 200 year old treatise seems unwarranted. Above all, it ignores the fact that both capitalism and liberalism have drastically changed during this time. For example, we may still characterise contemporary society as pursuing an "individualistic" lifestyle but, as recent research has suggested, the latter has a fundamentally different character to the "rugged" individualism of the nineteenth century.[128] Locke's ideas may suggest the roots of modern beliefs but on their own the explanation they provide is rather empty. It is questionable as to how much understanding is gained by the demonstration that contemporary, subjective meanings of the home "reflect" these ideas on private property. The question of why still remains to be answered. Without such knowledge ideology appears to be too all embracing and it is difficult to see how, or on what grounds, it could be challenged.

Ideology is proposed as the sphere of mediation between policy processes and everyday life. However, the manner in which it is operationalised detracts from its explanatory potential. In concluding, it may be suggested that, in addition to the inconsistences noted above, the empirical approach Rakoff adopts also places limitations on the possibility of understanding the dialectic of objective and subjective reality. The subjective meaning contexts derived from a very specific group of people are essentially juxtaposed against a much more general consideration of the operation of institutions on a national level. Beyond demonstrating the fact that the latter are all geared toward the promotion of homeownership and that this is predicated upon the profitability of capital investment, it is difficult to appreciate the relevance of the latter for the subsequent analysis which revolves primarily around a consideration of the subjective meanings identifies. Ultimately, demonstration of the manner in which these two levels articulate remains an unresolved problem that perhaps requires a more subtle approach to that taken by Rakoff. What may be necessary is a vertical slice through time that encompasses both levels of reality in one concrete situation. For example, it may be more appropriate to examine a set of institutions, or a particular institution, in conjunction with an attempt to tap the subjective levels of meaning of those involved in the institutions and those experiencing their results in a specific location. In this manner it may be able to avoid portraying the institutional world in the anonymous manner utilised by Rakoff.

Thus, like Berger and Luckmann's analysis, Rakoff's study contains many of the requisite elements of a broad definition of ideology and an understanding of social reproduction in a non-functionalist manner. However, a somewhat uncritical adherence to the traditional view of ideology as a particular kind of symbol system tends to negate many of these potentialities and creates a number of tensions between his programmatic statements and his substantive analysis. The type of dialectical understanding that is espoused may be very difficult to operationalise but a broader, more carefully specified concept of ideology would seem likely to make a useful contribution.

ii. Gray and Dickens - Ideology and the State: the Case of Local Authority Housing.[129]

Synopsis. Gray and Dickens consider ideology and the state to be two of the most neglected concepts in recent radical work, largely as a result of the tendency toward economic determinism and functionalism. The latter is seen to reflect too close an adherence to a "neopolitan ice theory" of base and superstructure and too great a reliance on the economic aspects of Marxist thought. Both bring an "unwelcome degree of rigidity in thought and analysis," and a denial of the "true complexity of the interrelationships between the political, economic and ideological" levels, and the "paramount importance of understanding social and class relations."[130]

In light of this, they aim to use the work of Gramsci to consider the "nature of ideology and the state in Britain, as exemplified in the case of council housing." In particular, they focus on his concept of hegemony, the distinction drawn between the state and civil society, and the view that social control is more a product of "nebulous and subtle ideological moans" than direct coercion. Specifically, they draw on the following interpretation of Gramsci as derived from Boggs:

> [Hegemony] is the saturation of all society and its component social classes by a complete system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality and so on, to the extent that ideological hegemony becomes an 'organising principle' of society . . . in one way or other supportive of, and serving to perpetuate the interests of, the established order and class interests that dominate it. The means of disseminating this organising principle is through a variety of agencies, although state apparatus, such as the education system, the media, law and so on figure preeminently. The function of successful diffusion and operation of hegemony is to serve as a means of legitimation and socialisation, the consequences being social and political control of the population.[131]

Their theoretical discussion is conducted by drawing attention to the interrelationships between the categories we impose on society, such as the base-superstructure model and to their dynamic nature. Challenges to hegemony are also noted.[132]

Their empirical analysis is also largely derivative and focuses on two periods in the development of council housing--before and after World War I and the early 1920s.[133] Their consideration of the former period consists of the fairly standard picture of state intervention motivated by the failures of the private sector to provide low cost housing and the resultant health, crime, class conflict, and social unrest problems that were thought to ensue. Social control is seen as being direct and as representing an "extension of the process whereby the state, working principally on behalf of industrial and banking capital, buys off the working class in ways that remain broadly compatible with the established social order and dominant mode of production."

This period is also seen to have laid the seeds of the contradictions that now surround council housing, such as the overtness of control, and to have heralded the beginnings of "newer, somewhat more subtle forms of social control and ideological hegemony." The latter ideas comprise the most interesting part of their analysis and they point to the idealisation of owner-occupation, to the council housing waiting list as a self-policing instrument that "divided and ruled those waiting to enter the public sector and those within the public sector" and that discredited attempted direct action by squatters as impinging the rights of those on the list, and finally to the passing of the Squatters Bill that made the occupation of all property, including industrial, a criminal offence. The efficacy of these forms of control is seen to lie in their polarisation of housing and industrial struggles and fragmentation of class consciousness, both of which helped diffuse industrial unrest.

Appraisal. These latter points do represent a considerable advance over the more common notions of the working class being "bought off." However, as a study of hegemony, it is somewhat less successful and is ultimately an extension of the "incorporation thesis" criticised above. This can be seen to be the consequence of a fundamental misunderstanding of both hegemony and ideology.

Most basically hegemony is not seen as a lived relationship grounded in daily practices and material social process but as something imposed by a monolithic state, as is evident in their interpretation of Gramsci cited above. Social control is still seen to result from domination, albeit more subtle, rather than from "spontaneous consent." There is some recognition of the importance of reification in that the possibility that the dominant ideas about housing may be thought of as "normal reality" and tend to form the framework and limits within which subordinate classes challenge the system, is recognised.[134] However, there is no discussion of this effect upon those who comprise "the state."

The state still continues to be portrayed in conspiratorial and functionalist terms despite claims to be avoiding both interpretations. For example, they see themselves as avoiding a functionalist interpretation that might suggest "that apparent social stability has occurred because state housing and other concessions have now satisfied material demands. Rather, incorporation has tended to occur (subtly and gradually) in the realm of ideas."[135] However, this can also be seen as problematic because, apart from the brief reference to reification noted above, ideology continues to be "deceptive" and a tool of the state. Furthermore, to talk of incorporation as occurring in the realm of ideas gives the impression that consciousness and social practices and social relations can be radically separated. Ideas about housing emerge fundamentally in experiences of the latter and discussion of those issues requires a consideration of those seeking and occupying council housing. The validity of such an approach is suggested by the most interesting aspect of their empirical comments--the council housing waiting list as a self-policing instrument--which, to a degree, takes subjective meanings and perceptions into account.

As previously suggested, many of these problems stem from an inadequate understanding of Gramsci's ideas and, in turn, this can be seen to reflect their reliance on Boggs as their primary theoretical source. The latter describes hegemony in terms of the permeation of value systems that can be defined as an organising principle or world views diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialisation.[136] Hall et al. criticse this type of interpretation and suggest that it is an example of recent uses of the concept that have "tended to assimilate it to 'ideological domination' and to instrumentalise it by suggesting a simple mirror relation of domination and subordination."[137] This is held to be problematic because it results in a "Marcusean model of social control" and as a corrective to the conflation of hegemony and ideological domination they propose the following interpretation:

> Hegemony, for Gramsci, includes the ideological but it cannot be reduced to that level . . . it refers to the dialectical relation of class forces. Ideological dominance and subordination are not understood in isolation, but always as one, though crucially important, aspect of the relations of classes and class fractions at all levels - economic and political as well as cultural/ideological . . . It involves the organisation of spontaneous consent.[138]

Gray and Dickens clearly attempt to operationalise the former, partial definition of hegemony and this rests uneasily with their programmatic statements regarding the need to consider the fluctuating strengths of different classes, civil society, etc. These conceptual inadequacies tend to undermine their much needed attempt to transcend the problems encountered in functionalist approaches to housing and ideology.

iii. Rose - The Political Significance of Homeownership in Britain.[139]

Synopsis. Rose notes the 'seemingly irrefutable, commonsense appeal of the British Conservative Party's campaign for the sale of council houses prior to the 1979 general election and of the theoretical perspective that relates to this programme, namely, the 'incorporation thesis' previously described. Nevertheless, the latter is thought to be problematic from the point of view of both academics and community activists because if "housing tenure divisions are theorised only in terms of their 'functionality' for capitalism and/or are seen to be 'structurally' and inherently divisive, this implies a major limitation on the spaces available within everyday life for resistance to that logic."[140] This perspective is also held to make homeownership into a static and ahistorical category and elsewhere this has been related to the problems of functionalism and teleology.[141] Most basically, these deficiencies are seen to stem from a "widespread failure to consider tenure forms as historically created products, and ongoing sites, of concrete struggles" about both their physical existence and social meaning and from insufficient serious and theoretically-informed attention to the ways in which people try to resist or escape the logic of the system.

In order to redress this balance, it is suggested that:

> . . . rather than fitting our interpretations of owners' and tenants' behaviour into predefined categories, we need to ask: what are people struggling for, and against, when they struggle over housing . . . With respect to homeownership it seems imperative that our political strategies be informed by a deeper understanding of what people are trying to achieve by this way of occupying housing, as well as an appreciation of the constraints on their 'choices'.[142]

She emphasises the fact that neither aspirations nor structure should be considered in abstraction. Rather, an historical understanding of how the meanings and significance of home are related to, and structured by the dominant processes of capitalist society and the concomitant functional and geographical separation of home and work is required. To elucidate these issues some "historical notes" concerning the period from the late nineteenth century to the end of World War I are presented.[143] This period is seen to be usually neglected in favour of analysis of the extension of mortgage credit and state propaganda campaigns in the 1930s and is deemed important because at this time homeownership was actively sought and strived for within certain limiting conditions rather than solely reflecting state sponsorship or the imposition of middle class values.

Briefly, during this period the pressures for the rationalisation and mechanisation of the industrial labour processes increased mainly due to international competition for markets. In response, labour struggles were primarily oriented toward the stabilisation of wage levels and shorter hours, the latter reflecting increased commuting times due to suburbanisation as well as a desire for more leisure time. Outside the work place, working class political organisations were gaining an influence over local governments and semi public bodies that were increasingly providing services that materially affected standards of living and everyday life. A greater impact could often be made here rather than in the wage work place. Thus, there were strong tendencies for these spheres to separate both physically and in terms of the meaning and significance of 'separatedness' in response to structuring and shaping by the capitalist production process.

With respect to housing, these changes in the labour process tended to reduce skill differentials between workers which in some cases laid the basis for increased solidarity but which also placed many "skilled" workers in danger of sinking back into the "mire" as a result of job loss. Against this, and reflecting the nineteenth century equation of responsibility and thrift, better off sections of the working class may have sought homeownership so as to differentiate themselves by maintaining 'respectable' homes and to raise their children away from stigmatised slums. A secure and permanent home offered real material advantages and ownership primarily reflected a struggle to survive and keep up appearances than a goal of upward social mobility.

The emerging social meaning of the home and residential differentiation are further illustrated through reference to the preliminary findings of research concerning shoe workers in Northhampton in the 1880s to 1900s. Here, in addition to rapid expansion of the factory system and its concomitant loss of control and threats of unemployment, small workshop production also prevailed and was often facilitated by purchase of a house. However, the latter form of production could not take place in isolation from capitalist enterprise and control over how they worked and, more importantly, the purposes of work were increasingly lost despite ownership of their means of production. Homeownership can partly be seen as a form of self protection and avoidance of the factory system and increasingly those instances of loss of control provided a powerful motivation to:

> . . . maintain the home as a 'separate sphere' where time spent in capitalist production could be used to create a space for life-outside-capitalist-production - an explicitly non capitalist environment. . . . A sense of security, autonomy and control over life at home, in the family, in the community accompanied homeownership: given the limited options available it probably could not have been gained in any other way.144

These benefits were neither illusory nor inherently divisive and often created conditions suitable for collective action and resistance.

Another facet of the social meaning of residential property can be seen to be influenced by developments in the newer suburban communities where the new petty bourgeoisie (service workers, clerks and other employees in state and private bureaucracy) increasingly dominated community politics and cultural life as well as the trade union movement. Placement of the latter on the side of 'mental labour' in the developing division with manual labour led to an increasingly hierarchical ordering of the labour process and development of status divisions within the group and may also have contributed to the growth of forms of consciousness based on "social status" in the suburban communities. In turn, this can be seen to contribute to acceptance of housing and community services as issues of consumption to be fought over, perhaps, in a competitive, possessive individualist fashion, to the experience and understanding of home as a sphere separate from the capitalist production process, and to a narrowing of the range of issues over which organised labour would take collective action. The significance of this fragmentation is illustrated with reference to situations in which it did not occur, such as company towns where unrest was much more intense.

From these historical notes, it is concluded that these social definitions of housing tenure forms are neither historically universal nor theoretically and politically neutral. Nevertheless, homeownership for the nuclear family is viewed as a natural mode of life to which all have a right and has been naturalised so that it appears to be social policy. The effect of this mystification on women is noted because the role of the 'ideal wife' has been institutionalised as an essential aspect of the scenario of the 'ideal home'. Paradoxically, the same processes that effectively made homeownerhip a form of resistance to the total domination of life by capitalist process are also seen to reinforce the entrapment of women in the home.[145]

It is suggested that these "notes," while having no pretensions about providing answers, do shed light on the complex relationships between people's aspirations and the dominant processes of capitalist society unlike rigid, functional interpretations. The latter are seen to overlook a 'significant ambiguity' regarding the home and to have, therefore, obscured the progressive possibilities inherent in daily life:

> In a sense, the home, and residential environments, are 'separate spheres.' While they are structured and delimited in various and changing ways by the dominant processes of capitalist society, they are not in themselves fully capitalist. So while in a sense the formal freedoms and rights, such as those that have commonly come to be attached to the achievement of a 'home of your own,' are aspects of bourgeois ideology which conceal the real relationship of home and family life, there is another sense in which the 'cultural space' they provide is very real. Material improvements and increased security in the 'social relations of everyday life' can bring opportunities for the collective exploration of alternative ways of living and working.146

Appraisal. Rose's empirical findings have been cited at some length because they relate most directly to the problems encountered by the 'incorporation thesis' and are highly suggestive of the potentialities of combining an analysis of everyday life and actual human behaviour with a concern for institutional structure. Additionally, despite the tremendous data problems encountered in historically researching subjective meanings and experiences, this study provides considerably more insights regarding the articulation of structure and action than, for example, the work of Rakoff. This lends support to the previously suggested need for analysis of objective and subjective reality at a specific historical conjunction rather than juxtaposing two separate analyses.

The present study is particularly notable in its insistence on the "openness" of the processes documented. Their outcomes are neither inevitable nor predetermined and while they may be interpreted as being supportive of and functional to capitalism, this "effect" is the culmination of a complex set of interactions. As Rose stresses, the latter involve resistance as well as acquiescence and thus suggest the possibility of change. This type of analysis contributes to an understanding of capitalist hegemony as a lived process in which domination reflects the active contribution of these who are to all intents and purposes, subordinated as well as those in positions of power.

It would be inappropriate to be overly critical of work that is presented as being 'preliminary' or that is intended to be 'suggestive,' however, some comments can be made regarding some other processes occurring in the nineteenth century that might usefully inform the data presented above. Rose primarily considers the emerging signifiicance of the home and homeownership with reference to the effects of work experience and changes in the labour process. However, recent research points to other non-economic influences that were also crystallising during this period and that, while also related to the processes of capitalist production, refer more to issues of social psychology and may be pertinent to the changing meaning of the home.

Richard Sennett, for example, locates the source of the contemporary definition of self as unique and tending toward narcissism, as being sometime during the nineteenth century, and points to three, highly interrelated forces.[147] Firstly, he cites a process of privatism similar to that suggested by Rose which led to the glorification of the family and the home. Secondly, however, he points to material consequences of capitalist production,to commodities,and their mystification through mass production and mass merchandising, particularly advertising. The existence and expansion of a market for mass produced goods is seen to be made possible by the endowment of objects with human qualities and, in turn, this is related to his third condition, namely, the secularisation of thought. The latter entailed replacement of transcendental knowledge and a belief in the order of nature with a belief in immanence. This entailed the notion that all appearances, including those of inanimate objects, could be suggestive of, and reveal, human meaning and personality.

Obviously these ideas are highly speculative and require considerably more empirical and historical investigation. However, they would appear to suggest a basis for contemporary ideas about, for example, the house as a symbol of self.[148] They are suggestive of the nature of the changing social psychology that may have accompanied, and have been related to and shaped by the production and labour processes Rose details. Consideration of these issues would lead toward a more complete and multidimensional understanding of the home and homeownership. In addition to their work experiences of the capitalist production process, these people also experienced the products of the latter and, thus, it is important to question not only how goods were produced but also what was being produced and the manner of consumption.

1.8 Conclusion: The Home and Hegemony in Everyday Life: Endnote

In light of the foregoing presentation, the empirical focus of this thesis will consist of an attempt to operationalise the postulated concept of ideology with reference to homeownership and the everyday thought and practice of those who have actively sought and achieved entry into this tenure. It is suggested that this approach may shed light on the ideological significance of this tenure in North American society and may also contribute to an understanding of the role it plays in social reproduction. My aims are much more modest than those of, for example, Rakoff. While the subjective meanings gleaned from this study may be suggestive, no pretensions are held as to the possibility of definitively demonstrating the articulation of objective and subjective reality. The latter may be inferred but, as suggested, it ultimately requires concrete analysis of a different form to that focussing on everyday life and subjective meanings. Furthermore, as noted with respect to Rakoff's study, the issue of the meaning of the home and homeownership is still far from resolved and requires further empirical investigation so as to avoid perpetuating and falling back on stereotypical images of the average (American) homeowner.

The focus on everyday life reflects the belief that an understanding of ideology requires more than an assessment of the actions of the state and housing related institutions and their perpetuation of formal belief systems. Even when historically grounded this type of analysis remains partial because it provides little information regarding the social roots of ideological beliefs. Like Rose, I adhere to the view that the latter type of understanding requires consideration of the ways in which housing is experienced at specific historical conjunctions and an appreciation of what people are actually trying to achieve as well as an appreciation of constraints. As was suggested with respect to Gray and Dickens' analysis, recognition of the problems generated by functionalist interpretations and narrow definitions of ideology remain inadequate without a corresponding change in empirical focus.

It is also suggested that analysis of the home and homeownership requires an approach that is broad and that looks beyond these immediate issues. The ways in which the expectations and experiences of home crystallise, are understood and are made meaningful are related to other spheres of daily life and can be seen reciprocally to influence and shape one another. These interactions ultimately contribute to delimiting the forms of action that are felt possible and actually taken with regard to housing in daily life.[149] As Barnett and Silverman suggest, our construction of, and living within seemingly discrete, but inextricably related domains is an integral aspect of our ideology, not a reflection of the way things are in the world.[150] To consider only ideas and experiences of home and homeownership would ignore their wider social context by which they are fundamentally influenced.

In Chapter Two, the exact nature of the empirical study undertaken and the methodology employed will be detailed. This is followed, in Chapter Three, by an exposition and analysis of the results of the empirical study. Finally, in Chapter Four, tentative conclusions are drawn regarding the relationship between ideology and homeownership and a theoretical and methodological appraisal will be undertaken.

Footnotes

[1] For examples of the managerialist approach see: R.E. Pahl, Whose City (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975); J. Rex and R. Moore, Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrookedale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). For a critical response see M. Harloe, "Introduction" in Captive Cities (London: Wiley, 1977), pp. 1-47.

[2] French urban sociology was particularly influential, particularly the work of Manuel Castells, The Urban Question (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). He, in turn, draws heavily on structuralist Marxists such as Althusser. See Louis Althusser, For Marx (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965).

[3] For example see: Michael Ball, "Owner Occupation," in Housing and Class in Britain, Political Economy of Housing Workshop of the Conference of Socialist Economists (London: PEHW, 1976), pp. 24-9, hereafter cited as PEHW; Martin Boddy, "The Political Economy of Housing: Mortgage Financed Owner Occupation in Britain," Antipode, 8, No. 1 (1976), pp. 15-24; Castells, Urban Question; Simon Clarke and Norman Ginsburg, "The Political Economy of Housing," in Political Economy and the Housing Question, PEHW (London: PEHW, 1975), pp. 3-33; Community Development Project Information and Intelligence Unit, Profits Against Housing (London: CDP 1976a), hereafter cited as CDP; CDP, Whatever Happened to Council Housing (London: CDP 1976b); David Harvey, "Land, Labour and Class Struggle Around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies," Politics and Society, 6, No. 3 (1976), pp. 265-95; Daniel Luria, "Suburbanisation, Homeownership and Class Consciousness," Diss. University of Massachesetts, 1976; For a review of Australian research see Jim Kemeny, "A Political Sociology of Homeownership in Australia," Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 13, No. 1 (1977), pp. 47-52; For a review of French research see Chris Pickvance, "Housing, Reproduction of Labour Power: Some recent French work," Antipode, 8, No. 1 (1976), pp. 249-55.

[4] The ideological and political significance of public or council housing has also been considered, primarily in Britain and Europe. Like homeownership, this tenure is also seen to 'buy off the working class' although the possibility of class solidarity rather than class fragmentation is also considered. See CDP, Whatever Happened to Council Housing.

[5] Ball, p. 29; Fred Gray, "The Management of Local Authority Housing," in Housing and Class in Britain, PEHW (London: PEHW 1976); pp. 75-86.

[6] Boddy, p. 18; John A. Agnew, "Homeownership and Maintenance of the Capitalist Social Order," in Urbanisation and Urban Planning in Capitalist Societies, ed. Michael Dear and Allan J. Scott (New York: Methuen, 1981), pp. 60-97.

[7] Luria, p. 121.

[8] Clarke and Ginsburg, p. 5.

[9] Harvey, p. 273.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Clarke and Ginsburg, p. 5.

[12] Colin Fletcher, "The Relevance of Domestic Property to Sociological Understanding," Sociology, 10 (1976), p. 464.

[13] Castells, p. 182; CDP, Profits Against Housing, p. 4; CDP, Whatever Happened to Council Housing, pp. 41-42; Gray, p. 84.

[14] Harvey, p. 279.

[15] Agnew, p. 60.

[16] Castells, p. 61; Clarke and Ginsburg, p. 25; CDP, Whatever Happened to Council Housing, p. 29; Harvey, p. 272.

[17] Castells, Urban Question; Harvey, Land, Labour and Class Struggle.

[18] Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. "Homeowners (and Buyers) Deserve a Break," 1979.

[19] For Britain see Boddy, p. 33; For North America see Luria, p. 281 and Michael Stone, "The Housing Crisis, Mortgage Lending and Class Struggle," Antipode, 7, No. 2 (1975), pp. 22-37; For Australia see Kemeny, p. 48; For Canada, with an historical perspective, see Deryck Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver: Images of West Coast Urbanism," in The Canadian City, ed. G.A. Slelter and A.F.J. Artibuse (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 7.

[20] Steve Barnett and Martin G. Silverman, Ideology and Everyday Life: Anthropology, Neo Marxist Thought and the Social Whole (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), p. 25.

[21] Elements of this critique have also been expressed by Damairis Rose, "Toward a Critical Reappraisal of the Political Significance of Homeownership." Paper presented at the Special Session on Housing Research, Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Victoria, British Columbia (1979); Peter Saunders, Urban Politics: A Sociological Interpretation (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979); Kemeny, op. cit.

[22] Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory: Action Structure and Contradition in Social Analysis (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 111.

[23] Kemony, p. 49.

[24] Richard Harris, "Residential Segregation and Urbanisation Under Capitalism: Observations Concerning their Theoretical and Historical Interpretation." Paper presented at the Special Session on Housing Research, Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Victoria, British Columbia 1979. Damairis Rose applies these ideas to homeownership in Rose, "Toward A Critical Reappraisal."

[25] Rose, "Toward A Critical Reappraisal," p. 4.

[26] Bridgit Leach, "Geography, Behaviour and Marxist Philosophy," Antipode, 10, No. 2 (1978), pp. 33-7.

[27] For a discussion of these attitudes with respect to working class politics in the United States of America see Richard Sennett and Johnathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class, (New York: Vintage 1973), p. 5.

[28] CDP, Whatever Happened to Council Housing, p. 29.

[29] Fred Gray and Peter Dickens, "Ideology and the State: The Case of Local Authority Housing," Antipode, 10, No. 2 (1978), p. 43.

[30] Giddens, Central Problems, p. 72.

[31] Saunders, p. 55.

[32] It has been suggested that the dominant ideology of a society may function more to incorporate different factions of the ruling class than to incorporate subordinate classes. See Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan S. Turner, "The Dominant Ideology Thesis," British Journal of Sociology, 29, No. 2 (1978), pp. 149-169.

[33] Due to this relatively low degree of theoretical self-consciousness, I am hesitant to label these researchers as, for example, Structural Marxists.

[34] Harvey, p. 271.

[35] Harvey, p. 279.

[36] See Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 21-44.

[37] Giddens, Central Problems, p. 39.

[38] For discussion of this point see Joachim Israel, Alienation: From Marx to Modern Sociology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), pp. 30-96; Jorge Larrain, The Concept of Ideology (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1979), pp. 35-67; Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 73-227; Williams, pp. 55-71.

[39] See, for example, Leach, "Geography."

[40] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966).

[41] See Israel, p. 36, for comments on the parallels between the views of human nature espoused by George Herbert Mead and by Marx.

[42] Robert M. Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing." Diss., University of Washington, 1975. Robert M. Rakoff, "Ideology in Everyday Life: The Meaning of the House," Politics and Society, 7 (1977), pp. 85-104.

[43] Berger and Luckmann, p. 18.

[44] Berger and Luckmann, p. 129. In terms of their theoretical sources, they cite Marx for their anthropological presuppositions, Schutz for their views on the foundation of social reality in everyday life, Durkheim whose view of social reality they modify by the introduction of a dialectical perspective derived from Marx, and Mead for their social-psychological presuppositions. See Berger and Luckmann, p. 17.

[45] Berger and Luckmann, p. 61.

[46] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 54-67.

[47] For Mead, consciousness is profoundly social and, as such, cannot be conceived as being an abstract, psychic entity. Consciousness is seen to be composed of two elements - the "I" and the "Me." The latter can comprise a self that is largely the product of the attitudes and actions of others with whom the individual interacts.

[48] Berger and Luckmann, p. 58.

[49] Berger and Luckmann, p. 63.

[50] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 41-46.

[51] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 61-93.

[52] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 94-95. The concept of symbolic universe can be seen as being comparable with that of culture; that is, a system of socially constructed, shared public meanings.

[53] Berger and Luckmann, p. 103.

[54] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 104-116.

[55] These comments primarily pertain to their treatment of the issue of ideology. For a more complete critique see Richard Litchman, "Symbolic Interactionism and Social Reality: Some Marxist Queries," Berkley Journal of Sociology, 15 (1970), pp. 75-94.

[56] Berger and Luckmann, p. 3.

[57] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 116-123.

[58] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 118-119.

[59] Berger and Luckmann, p. 108.

[60] Williams, p. 108.

[61] Saunders, p. 51.

[62] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 129-132.

[63] Berger and Luckmann, p. 61; p. 130.

[64] Giddens, Central Problems, p. 130.

[65] Litchman, p. 89.

[66] Litchman, p. 79.

[67] See Roisín McDonough, "Ideology as False Consciousness: Lukács," in On the Concept of Ideology, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1978), p. 35.

[68] Peter L. Berger and Stanley Pullberg, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," History and Theory, 4 (1964-1965), p. 198.

[69] Berger and Luckmann, p. 58.

[70] Litchman, p. 91.

[71] Berger and Pullberg, pp. 199-200.

[72] Berger and Pullberg, p. 208.

[73] For discussion of this point see Israel, Alienation; Larrain, Ideology; Ollman, Alienation.

[74] Israel, p. 61; p. 91.

[75] Olman, pp. 196-7.

[76] Larrain, p. 57; Also see Russell Keat and John Urry, Social Theory as Science (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

[77] Larrain suggests that although Marx does not use the term ideology in his discussions of essence and appearance and of commodity fetishism, such a concept is still clearly being evoked. Reified consciousness that remains fixed at the level of appearances is precisely the type of distorted consciousness characterised as ideology in the German Ideology or the Theses on Feverbach. In both instances,

contradictory social relations contribute to distorted consciousness of those relations. See Larrain, p. 57.

[78] Berger and Luckmann, p. 123.

[79] Berger and Luckmann, p. 804ff.

[80] Litchman, p. 87.

[81] Keat and Urry, p. 177.

[82] Anthony Giddens, "Current Controversies in the Theory of Ideology," Opening Plenary Session, Current Controversies in the theory of Ideology: An International Symposium, Polytechnic of Central London, 29-31 May, 1981. Giddens points out that Marx's writings do not contain a systematic discussion of ideology, but notes that his critique of political economy is in essence a critique of ideology. Also see Keat and Urry, p. 177; Williams, pp. 55-71.

[83] Berger and Luckmann, pp. 108-9.

[84] Larrain, p. 46.

[85] Larrain, p. 61; Keat and Urry, p. 198.

[86] For summaries of Gramsci's thought see Carl Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism (London: Pluto Press, 1976); Stuart Hall, Bob Lumley and Gregor McLennan, "Politics and Ideology: Gramsci," in On Ideology, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1978), pp. 45-76; Williams, pp. 108-114.

[87] Williams, p. 110.

[88] Hall et al., pp. 48-49.

[89] Williams, p. 110.

[90] Goran Therborn, The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology (London: Verso, 1980), pp. vii-viii.

[91] This view of ideology follows closely that of Marx and Gramsci and has recently begun to be revived, for example, by Williams and Giddens. In large part it reflects the belief that a polarity between ideology and science or false and true consciousness is misguided in that science itself may be ideological if it fails to penetrate societies "phenomenal forms" or "appearances." Science is different from ideology but not its antithesis. The relation between ideological and non-ideological consciousness is not simply that of truth v. falsehood and other forms of erroneous consciousness can also be identified. For an extended discussion of these issues see Giddens, "Current Controversies;" Larrain, pp. 172-210.

[92] Barnett and Silverman, p. 20.

[93] This problem is discussed in the context of community studies by G Brock and Dan Finn, "Working Class Images of Society and Community Studies," in *On Ideology*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1978), pp. 125-143.

[94] Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 61; Therborn, p. 77.

[95] Giddens, *Current Controversies*; Williams, pp. 21-44.

[96] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture" in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 5.

[97] Geertz, "Ideology," pp. 47-76.

[98] Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 192.

[99] Therborn, p. 2.

[100] Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 188.

[101] Barnett and Silverman, p. 29.

[102] Mihailo Markovic, "The Problem of Reification and the Verstehen-Erklaren Controversy," *Acta Sociologiea*, 15 (1972), p. 29.

[103] Williams, p. 110.

[104] Litchman, p. 92.

[105] Richard Sennett and Johnathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*,

[106] Norman Provizer, "Hi House; Goodbye Ideals," New York Times, 21 June, 1978,

[107] Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 7.

[108] Keith Bassett and John Short, *Housing and Residential Structure* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 211.

[109] Damaris Rose, "Toward A Re-Evaluation of the Political Significance of Homeownership in Britain, "Paper presented at the Housing Workshop of the Conference of Socialist Economists," 3 Feb. 1979, Manchester, p. 1

[110] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy,".

[111] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 8-9.

[112] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 10-11.

[113] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 16.

[114] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 18-20.

[115] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 24-28.

[116] See, for example, Peter Ambrose and Bob Colenutt, *The Property Machine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975); Donald Gutstein, *Vancouver Ltd.* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1975).

[117] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 75; pp. 84-131.

[118] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 141-159.

[119] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 23; p. 148.

[120] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 20.

[121] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 22; pp. 143-154.

[122] For example, see Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 141.

[123] Robert Lane, *Political Ideology* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 429.

[124] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 156.

[125] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 142.

[126] Barnett and Silverman, p. 36.

[127] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," pp. 141-154.

[128] See, for example, Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New: Vitage, 1978).

[129] Gray and Dickens, "Ideology."

[130] Gray and Dickens, pp. 38-39.

[131] Gray and Dickens, p. 39.

[132] Gray and Dickens, pp. 40-41.

[133] Gray and Dickens, pp. 41-43.

[134] Gray and Dickens, p. 40.

[135] Gray and Dickens, p. 43.

[136] Carl Boggs, Gramsci, cited in Hall et al., p. 73.

[137] Hall, et al., p. 48.

[138] Hall, et al., pp. 48-49.

[139] Damaris Rose,"Toward a Re-Evaluation of the Political Significance of Homeownership in Britain," in Housing, Construction and the State, PEHW (London: PEHW, 1980), pp. 71-76. Hereafter cited as Toward a Re-Evaluation (b).

[140] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," p. 71.

[141] Rose, "Toward a Critical Reappraisal."

[142] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," p. 72.

[143] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," pp. 72-74.

[144] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," p. 73.

[145] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," p. 75.

[146] Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation (b)," p. 75.

[147] Sennett, pp. 16-24.

[148] See, for example, Claire Cooper, "The House As Symbol of Self," in Designing for Human Behaviour, eds. J. Lang et al. (Stroudsberg, Penn: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1974), pp. 130-45; James S. Duncan and Nancy G. Duncan, "Housing as a Presentation of Self and the Structure of Social Networks," in Environmental Knowing, ed. Reginald G. Golledge and Gary T. Moore (Stroudsberg: Penn: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1976), pp. 247-57.

[149] Paul Corrigan and Norman Ginsberg, "Tenants Struggles and Class Struggle," in Political Economy and the Housing Question, PEHW (London: PEHW; 1975), p. 140. The importance of this type of understanding is suggested by these authors with regard to tenants.

[150] Barnett and Silverman, p. 20.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodological Orientations

The strategy adopted to examine the issues of ideology and the meaning of homeownership in everyday life was greatly influenced by (1) the manner in which consciousness was conceptualised in the theoretical work of, for example, Giddens and Williams, and (2) the more substantive work of Sennett and Cobb, Lane and, to a lesser extent, Rakoff.[1]

In his discussion of the consequences of reducing consciousness to formal ideologies (noted in Chapter One), Williams describes the consciousness of "actual men" as being "relatively mixed, confused, incomplete and inarticulate" and as being overridden when equated with formal belief systems.[2] Similarly, Giddens has raised the idea of a distinction between what he terms "practical" and "discursive" consciousness. The former pertains to tacit knowledge embodied in "what actors know how to do" but of which they may only be able to give imperfect or fragmentary accounts, while the latter is knowledge that can be articulated discursively.[3] These contentions appear to find empirical support in the work of each of three additional authors cited above, although this was not their explicit purpose. For example, Rakoff suggests that the meaning contexts created and drawn upon by the homeowner are rife with areas of ambivalence, contradiction and contingency and a similar view is taken by Sennett and Cobb in their discussion of the subtlety of their respondents' thoughts.[4] Lane has also indicated that many of the ultimately important themes are latent, but may emerge from discussion.[5]

In light of this, Sennett and Cobb, Lane and Rakoff all espoused the belief that a different methodological approach to the traditional attitude survey is required in order to penetrate subjective levels of meaning. Most basically this latter form of interviewing becomes problematic because the important issues and questions tend to be largely predefined. When this occurs, empirical research largely entails obtaining "accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories to be used in description or verification" rather than facilitating the exploration of and discovery of theoretical concepts.[6] In view of the somewhat stereotypical images conjured up by the ideology of homeowner and evidence that the commonly evoked meanings and values are less than universal, it seemed essential to undertake a study that was exploratory and to avoid a methodology that might perpetuate these images.[7] Additionally, the postulated nature of consciousness and the empirical findings cited above, both suggested the inapplicability of an approach requiring direct, codifiable responses to discrete questions, in which the range of possible answers had to a large extent been anticipated. These authors all opted for a considerably less structured methodology and more precisely for variants of indepth, relatively unstructured interviewing. This is basically the approach adopted here. As such, it is viewed as being largely inductive and as aiming to "discover" rather than "test" the nature of the meaning contexts evoked by homeowners.

2.2 Interview Form and Content

While a standardised questionnaire was not utilised, the limited scope of the study and the limited time and resources available made completely unstructured interviewing or an ethnographic approach unfeasible. Instead, a partly structured interviewing methodology was adopted. This was guided by a series of topics that at least initially seemed to be important, and by a set of general, very flexible questions that were intended to initiate and promote discussion where necessary. The topics thought to be significant were largely suggested by a quite heterogenous literature encompassing somewhat reflective speculations regarding the psychological meaning of home, more empirical studies yielding concepts such as the "home as refuge," studies pertaining to the nature of home, family or private life in general, and finally popular images drawn from, for example, the contemporary media and political propaganda.[8] These issues were broached from a variety of different angles and levels of specificity and while some questions, such as those regarding individual housing history, were quite specific, the majority were very general and open ended and aimed at initiating discussion. The interview guide that was loosely followed can be found in Appendix A. It was compiled in a sequence that seemed to facilitate a degree of continuity, given the diversity of the topics considered, in case it was necessary to conduct a relatively formal interview. However, with the exception of the opening questions on housing history, this structure was not adhered to in a rigid manner and issues were taken up spontaneously as they arose in the course of discussion. Throughout, emphasis was placed upon allowing the respondents to express and explain their opinions and beliefs, following which, the latter could then be pursued, probed and clarified.

Of course, even a relatively unstructured form of interviewing is an artificial intrusion into people's lives and may result in the researcher imposing his own preconceptions upon his respondents. This pitfall would seem to be minimised, however, where questions are genuinely open ended so that the respondent may "speak for himself" and where the researcher self-consciously identifies personal biases. This rationale seems to be reasonable in retrospect for throughout the interviews it was readily apparent when an idea or suggestion was inapplicable. Typically, a response such as, "Well, I think a lot of people feel that, but for myself I . . ." would be elicited. Both the topics raised and the lead-in questions appear to have been sufficiently open to allow the respondents to express freely their opinions.

The group of people interviewed was assembled through a system of contacts and referrals, initially from friends who knew homeowners and subsequently from the respondents themselves. Whilst obviously lacking the rigour and potential for generalisation yielded by, for example, random sampling, this method was thought to be most appropriate given the aims and form of the interviews to be undertaken. Essentially, this involved a trade off between the former qualities and a desire for depth of information and discovery. A minimum interview length of one hour to one hour and thirty minutes seemed probable following a dry run among fellow graduate students. It seemed unlikely that many positive responses would ensue from either telephone or doorstep requests for an appointment. It also became apparent quite early on that this length could be greatly exceeded by a responsive person. Furthermore, there was the possibility that some of the issues raised might have been perceived as being too personal to discuss with a stranger. To an extent, those intuitions were validated by the manner in which contacts were made. In the majority of cases, potential respondents were first contacted by their friend, often on the latter's suggestion, to ascertain their willingness to participate. Only then would the names be passed on to me. The only refusal encountered did not follow this pattern in that the "friend" was reluctant to do more than give me a name because she felt she would be "imposing too much" on the friendship. Thus, a degree of sanction seemed to be necessary to facilitate credibility and legitimacy.

All the interviews were taped with the prior consent of the respondents who seemed to find it neither an unusual nor unpleasant request. One woman was slightly irritated at the idea because she didn't like the sound of her voice on tape; however, she told me to "go ahead anyway" because she realised she would not have to listen to it! I chose to record the interviews for several reasons. Pragmatically, because I anticipated lengthy discussions, I was dubious as to the extent to which I could trust my memory and was uncertain whether efforts to take notes would disrupt the flow of discussion. In one instance, where a technical breakdown occurred, the latter did seem to be the case and it was more difficult to follow up interesting points. Furthermore, note taking also seemed likely to introduce an unwelcomed degree of selectivity that might undermine the essentially exploratory aims of the study. It seemed likely that at least some of the significant themes and ideas would only appear to be so in retrospect and might be passed over during the early stages of the study. Similarly, I felt that the choice of words, phrasing, hesitation and other aspects of the style of discourse might be important and that these nuances might be lost through translation into my own terminology and shorthand.

Both men and women were interviewed and while the majority were couples, discussions always took place separately because it was felt that they might restrict one another. A fellow graduate student conducting a similar form of interviewing had noted that the entrance of another family member during the interview often caused the respondent to become less vocal. In my own case, early in the study I made the mistake of conducting a joint interview when scheduling plans broke down and I found myself seated at the family dinner table with the assurance that I should "just go right ahead and ask my questions." The results were disastrous and inevitably one person tended to monopolise the discussion so that eventually the other ceased to participate in more than a minimal manner. I chose not to utilise this interview and proceeded on the basis of my initial intuitions regarding multiple interviews. All interviews took place in the respondents' homes, as much by their assumption as by my request. This was felt to be important in order to maximise their sense of ease and control.

In asking for contacts, my only stipulations were that they should be homeowners and that they should have white collar occupations so that, loosely defined, I was broadly aiming for a middle class sample. There were several motivations to this focus. The ideology of homeownership entails ideas about embourgeoisment and the inculcation of what is essentially thought to be a middle class lifestyle. Achievement of a single family, middle class home and lifestyle is portrayed as a universal desire, at least in North America. This is also the group of people most likely to be involved in the institutional structure influencing housing production and allocation, so it seemed important to understand the meaning contexts they may bring to bear upon policy-making. Finally, research amongst this social group has indicated that their meanings of the home may vary significantly, suggesting the need to penetrate and move beyond the stereotypical images of middle class homeowners.[9]

The choice regarding the exact number of interviews to be conducted was problematic. While not aiming for a random sample and having no predefined threshold of significance, I also felt that Rakoff's sample of 18 (jointly conducted interviews) was too small particularly when two couples were excluded from the main discussion because of their fundamentally divergent attitudes.[10] Ultimately, I chose to follow the suggestions of Glaser and Strauss with regard to the distinction they draw between theoretical and statistical sampling. The former aims to discover significant theoretical categories and their properties from the data and is guided by a concept of "saturation" rather than a pre-established, representative sample population. Saturation can be seen to be achieved when "no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop the properties of the category."[11] Given the exploratory aims of the present study, this seemed to be an appropriate strategy and culminated in the group to be described in the following section.

2.3 Sample Characteristics

All those interviewed were residents of Vancouver, British Columbia: a west coast Canadian city with a 1976 population of 410,000 and forming part of a metropolitan area with a population of 1.2 million

(1976). Notable characteristics are:[12]

1. An above average share of white collar occupations which comprised 70% of the city's jobs in 1971.
2. Selective migration patterns have resulted in a loss of conventional, single wage earner households with children and their replacement by one or two person adult households without children. There are more, and smaller, households.
3. High disposable incomes. The 1976 mean household income was estimated as being $14,600 in 1976 but about a quarter of households earned in excess of $20,000.
4. In terms of housing, 47% were owner-occupied while the remaining 53% were rented in 1976 and 50% are single family dwellings.
5. The dominant ethnic group (by ethnic origin) is the British Isles - 53% in 1971.
6. It is generally considered to be a high amenity city in view of the quality and diversity of its physical setting.

When requesting contacts no specific areas of the city were specified, however, all but two couples were located on the west side of the city in southern West Point Grey and Kitsilano, Dunbar and the northern fringes of Kerrisdale (see Figure 2.1). Those living outside these neighbourhoods were recent first time buyers who had been forced further east by the rapid escalation in house prices and interest rates in 1980 and whose preferred location was in these western neighbourhoods. This locational clustering is not surprising given the manner in which the sample was assembled.

The group considered in the next chapter consists of a total of 33 persons, 15 men and 18 women. The numerical discrepancy between sexes reflects one single woman and two women whose husbands were persistently unavailable during the interview period. In terms of households, there were 14 married couples, one cohabiting couple, one single person and one divorced person, plus the two married women whose husbands were not interviewed. Thus, there were 19 individual households. Their social characteristics are as follows:

1. Their ages ranged from late 20s to early 60s with the majority (44%) being in their 30s. (See Figure 2.2.)
2. Fourteen of the 19 households had families, mostly consisting of two children under the age of five, or of grown children. (See Figures 2.3 and 2.4.)
3. All those in employment (20) had white collar jobs and the former occupations of the remaining women were also of this type. Fourteen of the women described themselves as homemakers and only three were involved in part time jobs, again white collar.
4. The majority had received post-secondary education, although three did not complete their degrees. Sixty-seven percent received some form of post secondary education. (See Figure 2.5.)
5. Over a third (36%) can be thought of as being socially mobile in that their father's occupation was in a blue collar job.
6. Geographical mobility is also quite high with only 30% born in Vancouver/ British Columbia. The remainder originate either in other parts of Canada or from other countries, most notably Britain (67%). (See Figure 2.6.)

7. All but two couples were paying off mortgages and those that owned outright had previously financed their housing in this manner.
8. Sixty-three percent were in their first homes and over 70% had owned for less than five years. For all but five, length of current house ownership mirrors length of neighbourhood residence. (See Figures 2.7 and 2.8.)
9. With two exceptions, all had lived in a variety of rental accommodation prior to their purchase of a home.
10. In their childhood almost all had lived in owned homes (91%). For the remainder, one had always lived in rented accommodation while two had lived in houses that came with their fathers' jobs. The majority were single family dwellings.
11. All incomes exceeded $15,000 per household per year, with the majority falling in the $25-34,000 and $35-44,000 categories. Those in the $45-54,000 category represent households with two wage earners as did two instances in the preceding ($35-44,000) category. Four of the latter also specified their incomes as being exactly $35,000 so that the majority of households can be seen to earn between $25-35,000 per year. (See Figure 2.10.)

These characteristics have been presented in very general terms and, for example, mention has not been made of specific types of jobs. This reflects the promise of anonymity made prior to conducting each interview.

In the following chapter the subjective meanings of the home and homeownership articulated by this group are presented. In order to further respect this promise of anonymity, I intend to, similarly, make no reference to specific characteristics or life circumstances of the individuals cited. Additionally, my aim was to isolate general meanings and themes and these seem to be more appropriately substantiated by extensive verbatim quotations rather than by the construction of elaborate vignettes with fictious names and personal details. Emphasis lies with the broad themes rather than particular instances of the latter.

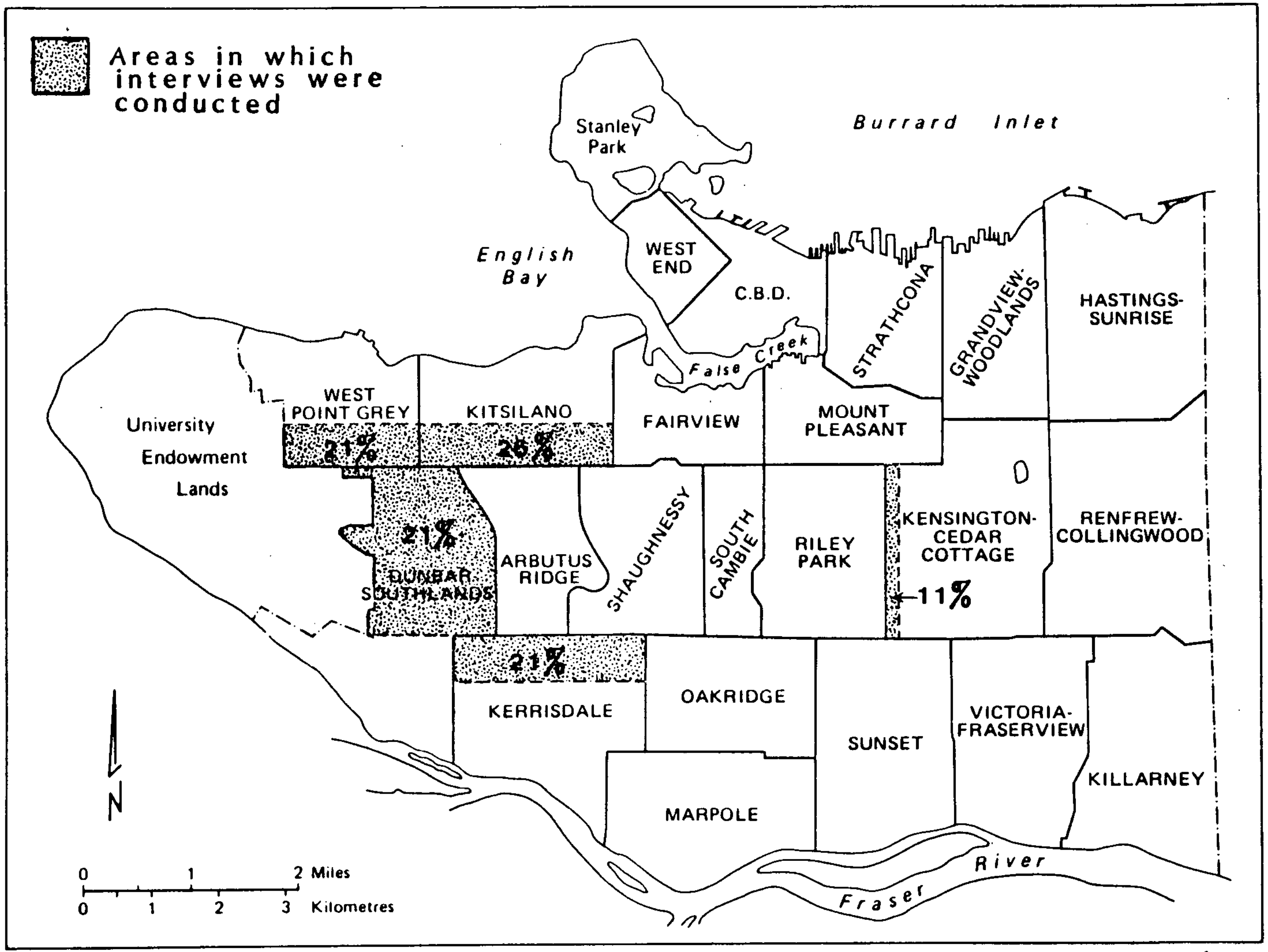
▨ Areas in which interviews were conducted
Stanley Park
Burrard Inlet
English Bay
WEST END
C.B.D.
False Creek
STRATHCONA
GRANDVIEW-WOODLANDS
HASTINGS-SUNRISE
University Endowment Lands
WEST POINT GREY
21%
KITSILANO
26%
FAIRVIEW
MOUNT PLEASANT
21%
DUNBAR-SOUTHLANDS
ARBUTUS RIDGE
SHAUGHNESSY
SOUTH CAMBIE
RILEY PARK
KENSINGTON-CEDAR COTTAGE
11%
RENFREW-COLLINGWOOD
21%
KERRISDALE
OAKRIDGE
SUNSET
VICTORIA-FRASERVIEW
KILLARNEY
MARPOLE
Fraser River
N
0 1 2 Miles
0 1 2 3 Kilometres

Figure 2.1 - Distribution of Interviews in Vancouver Neighbourhoods by Household.

Source - Adapted from Jance, personal communication, 1981.

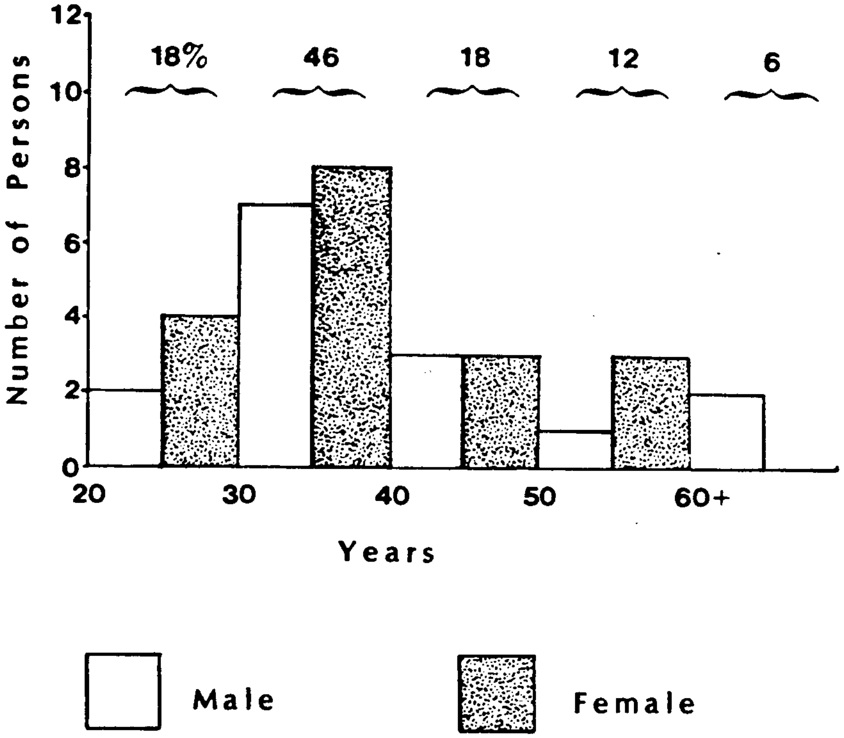

Figure 2.2 - Age Distribution by Age Category.

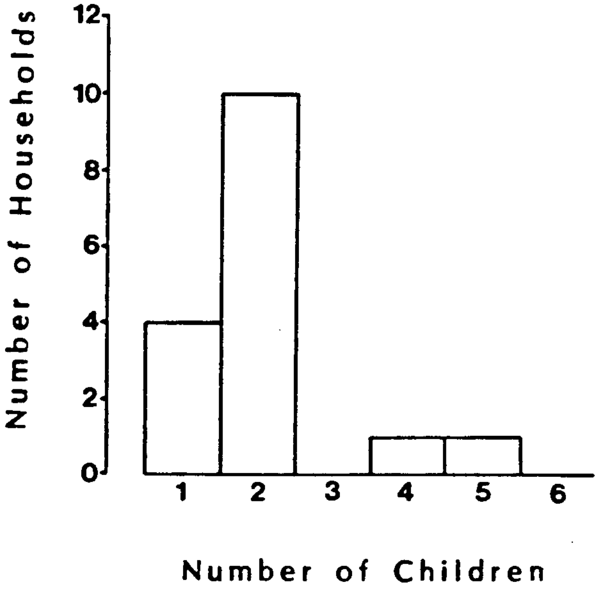

Figure 2.3 - Number of Children per Household.

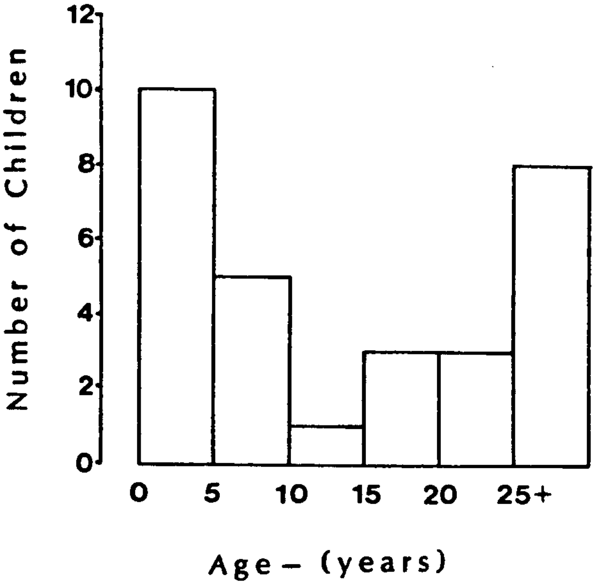

Figure 2.4 - Distribution of Children by Age Category.

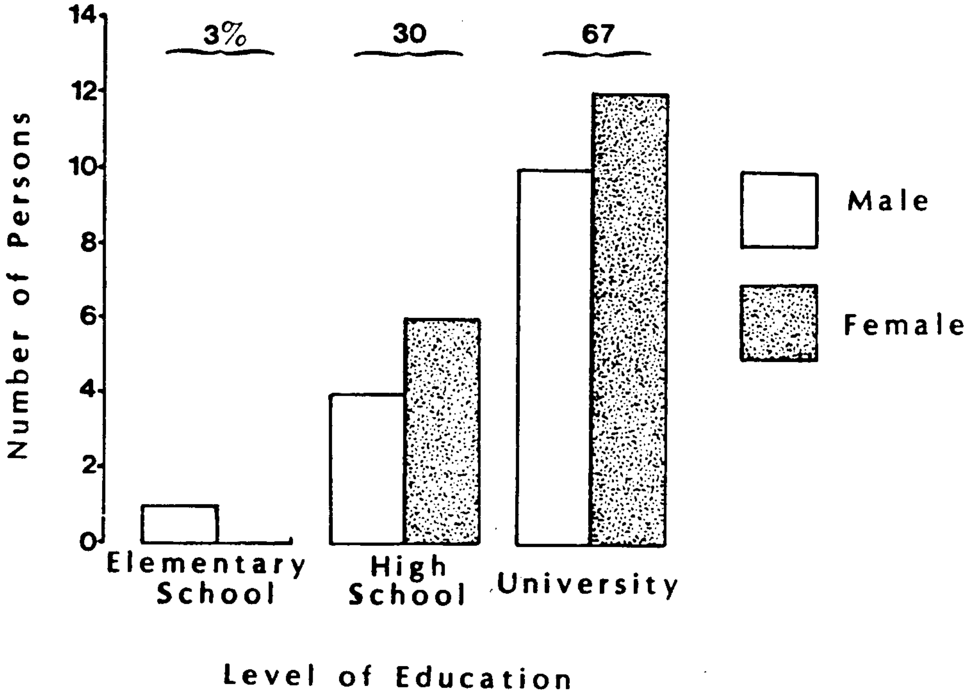

Figure 2.5 - Educational Attainment.

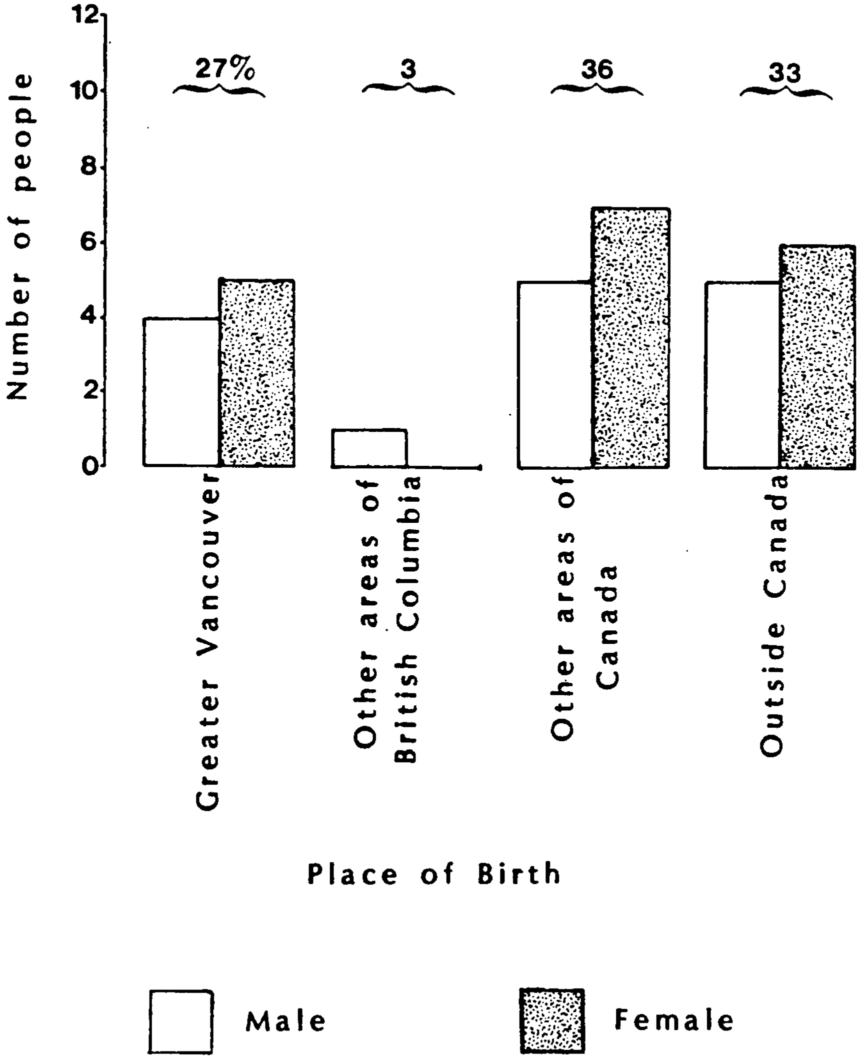

Figure 2.6 - Geographical Mobility.

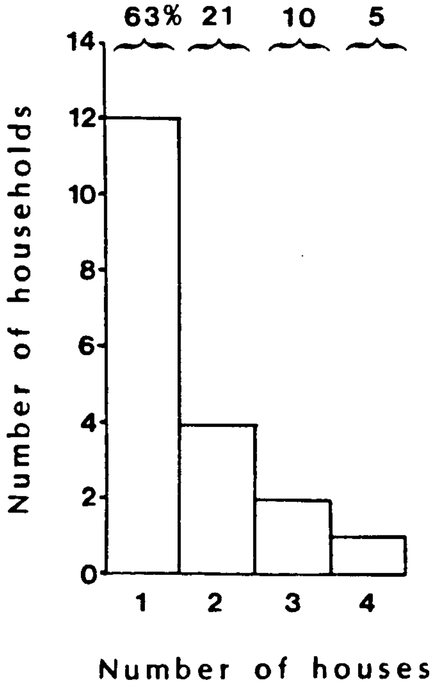

Figure 2.7 - Number of Houses Owned by Household.

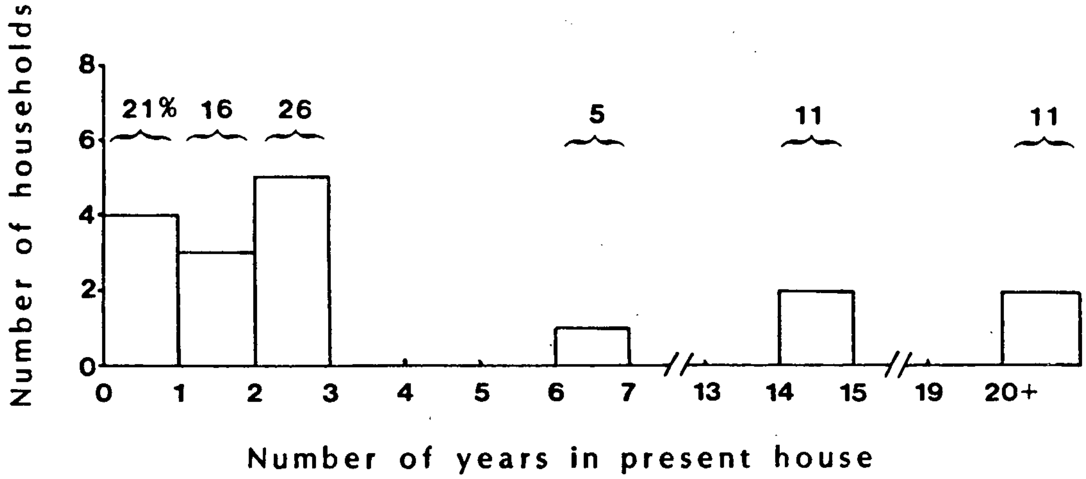

Figure 2.8 - Number of Years in Present House by Household.

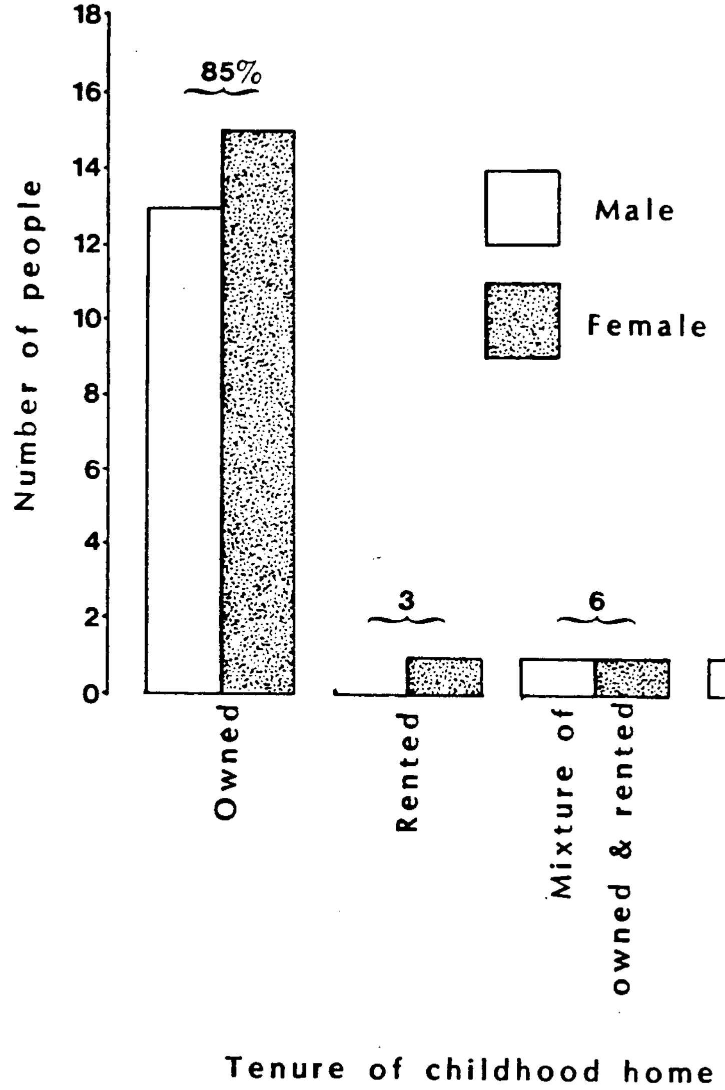

Figure 2.9 - Tenure of Childhood Home.

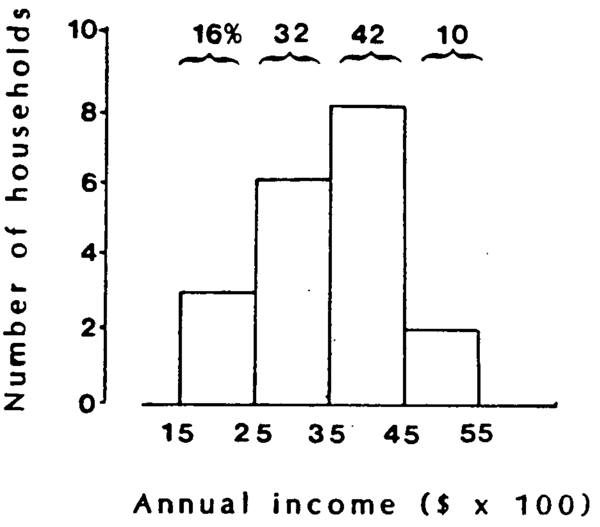

Figure 2.10 - Household Income

Footnotes

[1] Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); Robert Lane, Political Ideology (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962); Robert Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing," Diss. University of Washington, 1975; Richard Sennett and Johnathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (New York: Vintage, 1973); Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[2] Williams, p. 109.

[3] Giddens, p. 73.

[4] Rakoff, Chapter 3.

[5] Lane, p. 5.

[6] Barney Glaser and Anselm Straus, The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

[7] For example, see the findings of M. Cooper and T. Brindley, "Housing Classes and Housing Values," Sociological Review, 23 (1975), pp. 563-76.

[8] Examples of this literature include Val Ross, "Squeezing the Middle Class," Macleans, March 10th, 1980, pp. 48-53; Lee Rainwater, "Fear and the House-as-Haven in the Lower Middle Class," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 32, No. 1 (1960), pp. 23-31; Yi Fu Tuan, Topophilia, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1974; Eli Zarevsky, Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life (London: Harper and Row, 1976).

[9] For a review see John A. Agnew, "Homeownership and Identity in Capitalist Societies," in Housing and Identity, ed. James S. Duncan (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 60-97.

[10] Rakoff, "Ideology."

[11] Glaser and Strauss, p. 62.

[12] These statistics were drawn from David Ley, "Liberal Ideology and the Postindustrial City," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 70, No. 2 (1980), pp. 238-258; Chuck Davis (ed.), The Vancouver Book (Vancouver: Evergreen Press Ltd., 1976); Vancouver City Planning Department, Understanding Vancouver 2 (Vancouver: City Planning Department, 1977).

CHAPTER THREE

HOUSE AND HOME: SUBJECTIVE MEANINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

3.1 Introduction

> The house is an institution, not just a structure, created for a complex set of purposes. . . . Very early in recorded time the house became more than shelter for primitive man, and almost from the beginning 'function' was much more than a physical or utilitarian concept . . . If provision of shelter is the passive function of the house, then its positive purpose is the creation of an environment best suited to the way of life of a people - in other words, a social unit of space.[1]

These prefactory comments, taken from Amos Rapoport's book, House Form and Culture, underscore a form of thinking about houses that has become quite widespread in the social sciences, particularly in recent years. As is suggested, the house is regarded as more than a form of shelter that satisfies essentially physiological needs and as more than a commodity to be exchanged in the market. While these aspects are recognised as important functions, primary emphasis tends to be placed upon the cultural or symbolic significance of houses. The latter are characterised as expressing externalised, subjective meanings and experiences and, to quote Marcus, as more broadly expressing " . . . a good deal of how (men) relate themselves - or how they are related to - the world in which they live."[2] In this context, the house has variously been characterised as a psychological, cosmological, sociological or environmental concept, or as being some combination of the former, although substantively, analysis has tended to be somewhat particularistic as the wide variety of aphorisms suggests. For example, the house has been characterised as being a "territorial cove," a "haven" or "refuge," an "ordering principal in space," a "symbol of self," a "status object" and so on, and, as Hayward notes, there tends to be little consensus in the literature regarding the genrality of these meanings or their significance in a person's life.[3]

Broadly, and in light of the significance accorded to signification in Chapter One, this type of perspective on the house also informs the present discussion. However, the latter aims to be considerably more holistic in that emphasis is on the variety and different levels of meaning that are brought to bear on the home and related spheres of daily life rather than on particular meaning contexts.

3.2 House Ownership: Some Contextual Comments

Prior to discussing and interpreting the levels of subjective meaning that emerged from the present empirical study, it seems useful to "set the scene" by briefly considering one of the most common and consistently articulated themes regarding the attainment of, or striving for, a privately owned, suburban home.

Commentators, both within social science and within more popular thought and literature, have stressed the intrinsic importance of ownership per se; that is, its significance as an act of appropriation or possession so that the actual fact of ownership appears to be at least as important as that which is owned. This type of focus has also tended to entail statements regarding the ability of this act to confer or allocate status. Thus, for example, in terms of popular sociology, Packard demonstrates at length in the Status Seekers the manner in which the house has overtaken the car as the major status symbol since the 1950s.[4] In their more academic study of the fictitious Canadian suburb, Crestwood Heights, Seeley, Sim and Loosley describe the meanings of the home evoked by their respondents as being centred on the concepts of the "House as Property" and the "House as a Stage":

> Property is an essential component of status in Crestwood Heights. The Crestwooder who owns an adequate house has become a substantial member of the community and, as such, is respected and admired by his peers. The house and its furnishings; the street and the street number; the location in Crestwood - all are items which make up the total property complex of the house.[5]
>
> This backdrop of the house is, in the minds of all those who are intimate with or know its owners, as permanent a symbol of status as is the husband's income or position or the wife's beauty, accent and clothing. Thus, the central theme of all the dramas the house supports becomes competition for social status . . . [6]

More recently, an attempt has been made by Agnew to provide a theoretical basis for these ideas by relating them to the Marxian concepts of exchange-value and use-value. Briefly, drawing upon Marx's analysis in Grundrisse, he argues that an essential feature of capitalist societies lies in the fact that activities and products are of no value to the individual unless they can be used in exchange for other activities and products. This is seen to arise because the division of labour engenders "interpersonal separation and indifference" despite impersonal dependence and in turn this necessitates the "creation of an objective and quantifiable measure of value - the exchange-value." Ultimately, the transformation of all activities and products into exchange - values is seen to lead to a neglect of human, social relations with significant effects upon man's self-image and self-evaluation, the latter being viewed as one of man's basic needs that is mediated by the evaluations of others. In view of the basic reification of social relations, however, there tends to be little real basis for this to take place so that:

> As a consequence, people turn to the things they own or use as a means of self-evaluation. When these things are relatively scarce and appreciated by others, and one can tell by looking around, status is endowed and the basic need of self-evaluation is satisfied. However, the objects which endow status have a certain exchange-value. They acquire use-value as a status object through their exchange-value. In other words, one needs to command exchange-value to obtain objects with status-value. In everyday life, therefore, individuals evaluate themselves and are evaluated by others through objects which have a certain exchange-value and status-value. The quest for financial self sufficiency in order to own objects and the expression of self through objects are, then, marks of identity in capitalist society.[7]

This possessive individualism is described as often appearing to be pervasive in capitalist societies although he also goes on to consider a varied selection of literature that suggests that commitment to this ethic appears to be far from complete and that other meanings of the home are significant.

As indicated above, this emphasis on status and ownership is only one, albeit a major theme in the literature of the home and even the authors cited here can be seen to have isolated other meaning contexts. For example, Seeley et al. also comment on the home as a refuge in a hostile world although this is somewhat secondary to the generalisations noted earlier.[8] Thus, there appears to be a tendency, even where disparate and often conflicting meanings have been isolated, to emphasise the intrinsic significance of ownership and particularly its role in allocating status. For example, Rakoff's commentary on the variety and ambiguity of the possible meanings of the home in the U.S.A. points to, for instance, the tensions created by the fact that the "house simultaneously symbolises both permanence in an uncertain world and mobility in a success oriented society."[9] Nevertheless, in the final analysis, recourse is made to the inherent centrality of ownership:

> There has been an unmentioned, underlying theme running throughout these various meanings of the home; indeed, in a sense, I have taken these meanings out of their unifying context in order to illuminate the separate levels of thought and symbol involved in people's experience of housing . . . there is a common, central phenomenon running all through these interrelated levels of meaning and providing both a synthetic focus and a motivational determinant. That phenomenon is ownership.[10]

He draws the conclusion that "ownership seems to represent or make possible some of the most important characteristics of homes."[11] Thus, there appears to be a fairly high degree of consensus regarding the values inherent in ownership per se.

Turning now to the present study, the most striking and initially most confusing theme that emerged was precisely the absence of this perspective amongst the people I talked to. It became quite clear during attempts to make sense of the first five or six interviews that this was to an extent a presupposition that I also held and it was only when I moved away from this notion of the intrinsic value of ownership in my interpretation of the data that the latter began to make some sense. Thus, while remaining an interesting focal point for discussion, analytically it appeared to have less importance.

The meaning and importance of "home" and of "homeownership" did not appear to be synonymous. Neither were they necessarily or inherently dependent upon one another. This finding was not immediately apparent or readily articulated. It became obvious only when the discussions were finally broken down into the themes outlined in the remainder of this chapter. These themes are highly contingent upon one another with regard to their specific content. They are the product of a rather circuitous reasoning process by the respondents in which the ideas and opinions articulated continually contextualise and temper one another. In this manner, seemingly contradictory of ambivalent statements tended to be reconciled. Thus, the themes finally isolated do not represent a clearly formulated, readily articulated set of discrete responses to the issues I raised. This assertion perhaps requires some exemplification. However, its intent will hopefully become clear in the discussion that follows and, at this point, I prefer to avoid pre-empting the content of the latter.

3.3 Subjective Meanings of the Home in Everyday Life

i. Ownership and Commonsense

The first and most readily articulated attitude regarding the importance of, or reasons for, owning one's home were always eminently sensible and practical. Moreover, they could hardly be disputed given the state of the rental market in Vancouver in 1980. Most patently, there were no "pride of ownership" sentiments or regard for similar clichés that abound in the media or political propaganda. For example, shortly before I commenced interviewing, Macleans magazine ran an article on the problems created by escalating mortgage interest rates. This was used to initiate discussion and the respondents were asked for their reaction to the following statement made by an Ontario homeowner: "We've been taught in this country that owning a home is next to Godliness."[12] Not surprisingly, to many people this evoked images of the "American Dream," "motherhood and apple pie." However, while the sentiments were readily recognisable, only nine percent felt owning a home had been a major goal in their lives and even their reasoning was tempered in a manner similar to that of the rest of the group. For most (91%), ownership was important but "not that important" and was commonly described as being "not the be all and end all":

> Well, godliness doesn't rank very highly on my scale of values . . . it's irrelevant really. (pause) I think that there are things far more important than owning a home but I think that probably (those things) . . . are enhanced by owning a home and that's sort of family life and . . . marriage and things like that . . . I find it to be important but . . . if there were a law suddenly passed decreeing that no one could own their own home I wouldn't go jump off a bridge.

Their feelings tended to crystallise into two major attitudes, the first of which is reflected in the words of the person cited above and concerns the relatively greater importance of other aspects of life (24%). The second group tended to stress precisely which aspects of ownership were important and primarily referred to issues of financial security (56%) as is obvious in the following:

> No, it's definitely not that important . . . I prefer owning a home to renting because of what I can do with the home . . . the repairs I can make and not feel that I'm wasting my money doing it. (pause) What owning a home also does is give me somehow the security to know that the rent isn't going to keep going up . . . that in fact the cost of the home is going to go down all the time that I own it because . . . every year as other things rise the percentage of my paycheque going to the mortgage is going to be less. Even though it's the same amount of dollars, it's going to be less for the indefinite future. Things may change, however, I think they won't for a long while . . . whereas if you're

> renting every year it goes up - to at least the same degree as the . . . paycheque does. So in that sense at least it's more secure but it's really not . . . it's not my castle!

Thus, to accord major importance to ownership itself was variously seen to be a bit excessive and out of proportion, as amusing, as rather old fashioned, and as applicable more to their parents' or even grandparents' generation. Instead, the common sense of owning was stressed.

To some extent, this lack of enthusiasm for ownership is understandable given their backgrounds. The majority (91%), including those from blue collar backgrounds, had grown up in owned homes and for most (82%), the tenure of those homes was not something they had even really been aware of. It was very much something that they had "never questioned" or "thought about," that had been "taken for granted" or thought of as "normal and unexceptional" so that the typical response to my inquiry as to whether the tenure of the homes they were describing had meant anything to them, usually took the following form:

> It certainly didn't when we were renting (pause). At five years I was obviously not aware of it . . . but later (pause) I'm sure it had subtle effects on the whole family atmosphere but I can't remember ever really being terribly cognizant of any difference . . . I wasn't all that sure what the hell homeownership meant . . . the difference between mortgage payments and rent and things like that just didn't . . . I wasn't really interested . . . No, I don't really recall anything about that at all.

The remaining 18% also felt that it had been an unimportant or insignificant topic personally but could remember the opinions of other family members:

> Did your parents own or rent these houses that you lived in?
>
> They owned them . . . always.

> At the time did that mean anything to you . . . did you think anything about it?
>
> No . . . I never did (pause) although I can remember early on the question of whether people should rent or buy and my dad was emphatic that you buy . . . you never rented a house . . . the money you put out was just lost money so he always bought. It was economics but also he was an immigrant to Canada and in his day owning your house was very much a big thing, culturally. So I was aware of this but it wasn't . . . well, it was talked about but I don't really think that it meant much to me. I didn't think about it really at all.

Generally, the merits of, or fact of ownership were not topics of family discussion and very few could remember any particular ideas that their parents had about houses or homes, so for 76%: ". . . they never discussed things like that. I don't remember them talking about - about money - everything was paid for so that we never sort of discussed it. We never discussed these ideas." Those with recollections either mentioned specific factors - "I guess they liked to live in the country" or "My mother wanted a patio" - or, alternatively, felt that their parents had demonstrated what was important by the way in which they lived:

> I think that they had pretty much what they wanted to have for themselves . . . They wanted a lot of space inside and outside the house. They had what they wanted and I never heard them express any views really . . . or desires. I suppose you could just see what they liked.

Homeownership seems to be very much something they have carried forward into their adult lives more as an assumption, as an aspect of settling down rather than as a sought after, or motivating goal. While most felt they had intended to buy a home one day, 64% were quite equivocal as to when they'd made, or become aware of, such a decision:

> I think probably I always thought that someday I would . . . own a house but I had no idea where . . where or where . . . I don't remember feeling badly that I wasn't in an owned house. It was something that I thought probably we would (pause) but I was not "looking forward" to it.

Generally, it was not perceived as being an issue that generated interest or concern, especially when they were single. As one woman summarised particularly succinctly, there was a sense that one reached a stage where it became appropriate:

> You know, you sort of reach that stage - I mean, it's financial of course but also . . . you have to come to a point when you're ready to take the plunge. I was married and had been married for . . . a while. I think you're going through prescribed hoops maybe a little bit. You sort of think, 'Well, I've been married this long' and you start thinking of yourself as a young settled couple and you think of getting a house for one thing . . . It's a stage of readiness as much as anything.

These feelings were particularly acute amongst the men, who often associated buying a house with being married and settled and/or raising a family (40% as opposed to 27% of the women):

> Well, at university I very much took renting for granted so there wasn't much to like or dislike. Following that . . . again I took it for granted because I knew there was no way I could think of buying a place or even know that I would have the stability . . . live in one place for six months. So . . . it was a way of life and I think I accepted it such that I didn't even think about the fact of renting until well . . . I suppose ever since I got married and started thinking about a family.

For several of the recent buyers (36%), the contemporary escalation in housing costs also seems to have been a strong incentive to make the move:

> I had never made up my mind about owning because . . . it was always a situation where . . . it was temporary but I began to see that . . . as it mulled over in my mind . . . I realised that somehow this money could be going toward buying a home and there was no reason why some other person should have the benefits of my money.

Finally, ownership seems to be relatively easily available to them and 76% described the securing of finances as something they didn't particularly think or worry about:

> I pretty well took it for granted that we'd be able to get a mortgage . . . I didn't worry about it . . . it's just like paying out rent, you have to put this certain amount aside each month. It's just something that has to be done.

In general, ownership seemed to be something they expect in all areas of their lives. However, very few anticipate eventual, outright ownership of their houses with any particular feelings. The debt was viewed as being long term and, probably reflecting North American attitudes toward credit, as being quite an acceptable situation to be in. This is of course understandable among recent buyers facing exceptionally high interest rates, however, it was very much a pervasive attitude irrespective of length of ownership. Only nine percent mentioned outright ownership as a "goal" or an "ideal" and even they are not particularly optimistic about this eventuality:

> I guess that would be something that we'd . . . aspire to . . . I guess you sort of feel you'll never own because you feel you'll always have a mortgage. Ideally, say if we had a lottery fund we won, we'd probably pump it into the mortgage . . . Maybe I'm being misleading by saying we're aspiring to it . . . It's probably something that will never happen but if there was some way it could . . . well, it would be nice.

For most it seemed to, as suggested by the previously cited person, be "just like renting" but without the concomitant insecurities of tenure and finances. This attitude even seemed to prevail amongst the two couples who had paid off their mortgages and only one person mentioned being relieved at not to have to face mortgage payments today.

Thus, as has undoubtedly become apparent in the preceding discussion, primary emphasis was always placed upon the "commonsense" of owning. It was a good use of one's money because "it's going toward something." It's "working for your benefit and nto the landlord's." As one woman put it:

> . . . it doesn't really mean anything . . . It certainly doesn't make you a special or . . . a better person. I don't understand why people think you have to own a home in order to be someone. I just don't really understand that. It makes more sense to own rather than rent one. It's like owning your own car instead of renting or . . . owning your own shoes!

Overwhelming, this assessment rested upon the financial benefits that ensued and this was the most commonly mentioned factor in explanations of what was important about owning a home (67%). Over and over again phrases such as "you can't get away from the fact that you have an equity," "it's always beaten inflation," "you don't keep falling farther and farther behind," "you get a return on your money," accompanied their rationales and explanations. Renting was seen to be wasted money and this applied to both the actual contract rent paid and to money that might be spent on upkeep and maintenance as the following assessment of the importance of owning suggests:

> It's simply financial (pause), well, no, I shouldn't say that but it is important . . . one is financial, that house prices have gone up so fast that we just had to jump in to get a house before the rents increased out of our range and the housing prices increased out of our range . . . And the second thing is the places we were renting . . . The place we rented before we came here was an old place that the landlord just didn't fix up. And I was willing to do lots of work to fix it up and I did but without any recognition from the landlord and it was that feeling of frustration . . . of wanting to get the work done and wanting to fix the roof and the drains and do everything else but it being a waste of money, and a waste of time and everything else (pause) I guess money and the knowledge that if I fix something up, it stays fixed up and it's for us and it's not for the landlord . . . it's not money poured down the drain.

ii. Ownership and Investment

This pragmatic orientation requires, however, some qualification because it did not, as might be expected, also entail a commitment to the "house as an investment" or commodity point of view. They were all very much aware of the investment potential of their homes and, indeed, could hardly have failed to be given the massive escalation of house prices in Vancouver in the fall of 1980 and the attendant publicity. It became apparent that "investment" was quite an ambiguous term and that while it might be offered almost unthinkingly as a motive for ownership, its meaning was varied and was far from being a model for action. Basically, there seemed to be two main connotations to the term:

1. A house can be an investment because you are putting your money toward something, building up an equity and keeping ahead of inflation - the house as security.
2. A house can be an investment if it "makes your money work for you." This seemed to entail buying a house, renovating it and turning it over at a profit within a few years and often repeating the procedure with the next house - the house as a money maker.

As may be obvious now, the former definition is most applicable here so that while all were cognizant of the latter it was considered unimportant or at best a secondary consideration in their own decisions to buy. Thus, 82% commented on this potential but inevitably qualified themselves in a manner similar to:

> Well, a lot of people buy homes for this reason . . . I have an . . . acquaintance and they move almost twice a year . . . and this is how he makes his money. So a home for them is just something that you (pause).. The investment occurred to us but it wasn't a "let's fix it up and sell it" decision.
>
> No, I don't think so. I think homeownership (pause) I think I fully realised that it was those things but . . . an apartment's not a place I'd want to raise a family and rents are now (pause) mortgage payments are about what our rent payments were several years ago. So I think I saw the economics of it. It seemed the right thing to do for a number of reasons.

Many noted that it was very much something they had become aware of, or had begun to appreciate with hindsight (36%): "When we bought it I don't think I did. I was just so thrilled to have a place that was bigger than the place we were moving out of but now I certainly do." "Prices have risen so much in the last few years so it's definitely important now." In a sense, it is one of those "extras" one attains but doesn't necessarily seek in deciding to buy. In addition, some also seemed to be quite skeptical about the possibility of realising one's investment (18%) and added qualifications to their initial statements regarding the elusiveness of profit:

> . . . Only insofar as it was money out that was going toward something, not really 'heck, if we buy now, you know, this house is going to be worth . . .' (pause) don't know what the house is worth now but it doesn't mean anything because we're still living in it and most people

> when they sell they're looking for something better anyway so it really doesn't . . . the investment doesn't mean anything unless you sort of go back to living in a tent or something, you know! . . . It sort of implies that you cash it in later on, so for us I don't see it as an investment at all because if you cash it in and you want to stay in the same area you'd simply have to pay out more . . . We didn't buy it because we thought it was going to be a money maker in the long run. It was just . . . well, it was a place to live and it was . . . the money that goes out was at least going into something. It was not going to someone else.

These rationales appeared to rest not only upon a set of priorities regarding their expectations of the home but also on a perceived tension or conflict between these two connotations of investment. This was most keenly apparent in the case of a young couple who had bought very recently with the realisation that they would "never be able to own if we didn't do it now." Here the investment perspective was espoused to a greater extent than in any of the other discussions by the wife, although as is apparent she is far from comfortable with the idea:

> Yes, it is an investment. You can't buy your dream home right away so a house can either be an investment or a place to live forever. Obviously you have to get to your end goal somehow and on the way the houses you live in tend to be investments. Hopefully, they'll appreciate so you can keep turning them over and reach your final goal eventually, whereas you probably never would if you just rented. But, you know, I've become attached to this house although we thought of it as investment to begin with . . . it has character and you get attached to it and enjoy living in it. So it's not solely an investment I suppose (pause) I wouldn't want to see the place I was going to live in in those terms. It's just too hard to keep selling the house you live in. You know, you end up having to treat it like a commodity and then you can't really love that house because if you did you'd never sell it. I don't know, you sort of end up being a house pimp and it all gets so *cutthroat*!

Here the notion of a "starter home" tends to be evoked and this issue again illustrates the secondary importance of investment for the remainder of the group in that 67% felt that they had not viewed their first homes in these terms. Typically, the latter were described as being "just our first house," as suiting "our needs at the time," or as being "something we liked"; in other words, as always being more than a means of getting into the market. For 70% neither these first homes nor their present homes are held to be their dream homes and 64% anticipate a move in the future but in all cases this is characterised as occurring in order to "suit our needs" - 14% are thought to be perhaps job related and 68% are size related with 42% requiring something larger and 26% requiring or anticipating something smaller - rather than to realise a financial gain.[13]

Thus, most basically, their houses appear to be places to live in and enjoy and not commodities to make money and adherence to one attitude apparently precludes the other: "If we'd been willing to - or if we'd had the energy to put the time and money into it, we could have sold at a good profit, but we weren't really interested."

iii. The Many Faces of Freedom

Had these pragmatic concerns comprised the whole picture there might perhaps have been little basis for prolonging these discussions for it would be hard to quibble with the view that in contemporary society owning makes better sense than renting. However, as is apparent, these practical virtues were accompanied by, and contextualised by several other ideas that ultimately provided clues to a deeper, more elusive, and less readily articulated set of concerns that were far from being "sensible."

Firstly, as noted above, apartments were universally seen to be unsuitable for raising children. The majority (85%) felt that their housing choice had been affected, at least to a degree, by having a family - 58% felt this had definitely been the case, while 27% felt it was partially valid. In some cases, the prospect of raising a family had provided the final impetus for them to buy:

> We got married after living together for a while and we lived in an apartment and then my wife got pregnant and I . . . or rather, we decided to buy a house. An apartment wasn't suitable.
>
> Renting was always something temporary. By the time we had our son . . . we were in a really small suite and . . . he slept in the dinette so that . . . we definitely needed a house.

The most problematic aspects of rental accommodation were the lack of interior and exterior space (61%) and proximity to other tenants (40%). Both were seen to place extra and undue restrictions upon the child, particularly in the latter case where the noise created by the child was likely to create conflicts. As one woman put it: "People expect so much more of children in apartments and it can be really hard for them and for you."

These considerations all pertain to the form of the rented dwelling rather than its actual tenure and this distinction became very important in understanding the importance of ownership when discussion moved from apartments to the necessity of raising children in an owned home. While many initially responded affirmatively to this notion it became apparent as the conversation continued, that their point of reference was a rented house rather than an apartment:

> No . . . it's not vital. The only possible connection (pause) It would be individual things like if the parents felt any sort of burden or worry because they were renting and that's reflected into the home. That's the only relationship I can see. It's just like when I was little I never even thought about it. I don't know, maybe I knew but . . . I never worried. I don't think my parents really discussed finances or showed any sort of concerns . . . Maybe I'm unique but I just knew that meals appeared on the table.
>
> So you'd feel okay about raising your kids in an apartment?
>
> Oh, okay, sorry. I made an assumption . . . I was thinking of either a rented house or an owned house. I wasn't thinking of . . . an apartment versus a house. Sure, I think there would be more reasons there. I personally wouldn't want to bring my kids up in an apartment because I think you'd have to be always conscious about the noise. There might be extra restrictions placed on them . . . no yard. Probably space. I guess those would be the main things . . . plus the fact that there's so many people around . . . I was definitely thinking of a rented house at first.

Thus, while all were unanimous as to the unsuitability of apartments of either tenure, 88% felt that the actual ownership of a house was unimportant or non-essential from the child's point of view unless either their physical security and stability were endangered (30%) or they were unnecessarily constrained by space or other people (45%).[14] As indicated in the above quotation, the effect on the parents was thought to be more significant particularly when their feelings regarding the foolishness of renting are taken into account. While children could quite adequately be raised in a rented house, this was not a valued or practical alternative for, to a large extent, this option maximises all the disadvantages of renting (except those pertaining to propinquity) and consequently undermines the positive aspects of a house.

This is not simply a question of supply either for 70% felt they could have obtained accommodation equivalent to their present choice in the rental market. However, half felt that it would be more expensive than paying a mortgage and, again, the financial arguments detailed in the previous section were raised:

> Recently I've met quite a few families who have got somewhere to rent that's comparable . . . the rents are fantastic. They're far more than mortgage payments would be. So it just depends on whether . . . on how much you're prepared to pay. You can find something.

Thus, as a result of their perceptions of what constitutes a suitable dwelling for raising children and of financial viability, they rather circuitously arrive at a position where an owned home becomes important and valued.

These comments regarding the housing requirements of children also point to the second set of ideas that accompanied their pragmatic statements about ownership. These ideas centre on a multifaceted notion of security. The latter includes the financial aspects of security already documented, however, only 18% cited this as being their sole expectation. Many also referred to psychic and physical notions of security which derive largely from security of tenure and the perceived, and desired, permanence and stability it affords (49%). In turn, these ideas introduce and are related to the more prevalent concerns for independence and control (82%) of which the following statement is typical:

> Knowing that you won't have to move is one point. Knowing that you can do what you want to the space without having any hassles. It's a much more independent feeling. You can just do something when it's needed and you don't have to care what other people think or what your landlord thinks.

As the quotation suggests, these ideas tended to be highly interrelated and somewhat contingent. Similarly, they, in turn, point to, and are aspects of, a largely latent theme that underlies the vast majority of the meanings of the home they evoked but which emerged most poignantly in the course of eliciting their personal definitions of privacy. To say that privacy is freedom would not be an overstatement (although, as will be discussed below, this is not unproblemmatic). This appears to be the connecting and most basic thread underlying the meaning contexts they articulate. As will become apparent, it is a multifaceted notion with both positive and negative connotations, closely intertwined so that they often appear to be two sides of the same coin. For example, the positive freedom of "doing what one wants," entails, and is partly the consequence of the more negative freedom of "not having to be involved with other people." In general, the concept tended to have more negative connotations - 73% cited this aspect as opposed to 58% who mentioned positive factors - so that it was primarily freedom "from" something and its essence is effectively captured in the following:

> . . . it all gets back to freedom. It's the ability to shut out the rest of the world and just be alone . . . To be able to do what you want without feeling that society or part of society is looking over you, watching your moves . . . criticising, judging . . . or questioning what you do.

However, it would be misleading to maintain any rigid dichotomy between these connotations since, to a large extent, they tended to be articulated in tandem, defining and qualifying one another in the process.

In terms of the specific content of their definitions of privacy, 18% felt it was a "state of mind" and was largely unrelated to place or other people. One could have privacy in a very public place so long as "nobody was trying to get into your head." However, only two people saw privacy as solely entailing this idea and the remainder also espoused the ideas common to the rest of the group. These fell into two categories, the first of which was more general and nebulous and centred on the notion of the freedom of the individual or for individuality:

> It means a place where (pause) I get to make the decisions (pause). It's a place where I decide what happens and where I can do just as I like, you know, be sad if that's how I feel or just . . . just be any way I want.

In private space one can basically do whatever, and be whatever one wants whenever one wants to and these actions are possible because they do not affect other people in this space. These freedoms covered a wide spectrum from concrete activities, like making noise or changes, to more elusive, psychological concerns, such as establishing identity or self actualisation.

These freedoms were also made possible because one was also unaffected by the actions of others and exemption from involvement with others comprised the second category of meaning. Again, there was a wide range of concerns with differing degrees of specificity and at the most substantial level issues such as landlord-tenant interaction were cited, while at the other extreme, more vague concerns were expressed regarding the perceived restrictiveness of mere propinquity:

> I guess it's a bit of isolation so that you don't have to worry about the other people if you're doing something. First of all, it's a positive thing. It makes you feel free. It makes you feel you're able to do things. Now the ultimate privacy is almost visual isolation from people so that you could do anything. I wouldn't even have to put my bathrobe on to walk outside. In a really private place you could just walk outside. There's other levels too . . . where you could . . . turn the radio or the stereo on as loud as you want and nobody bothers you and vice versa . . . you can't hear the people near you. I guess it's just sort of freedom to have . . . not to have peace of mind shattered by having somebody else intrude.

This quotation effectively illustrates the manner in which the positive and negative aspects of freedom are closely interrelated in an individual's perceived need for privacy so that isolating either often becomes largely a matter of emphasis.

These statements of privacy appear to lend support to the literature mentioned earlier that characterises the home as a refuge or haven. However, this did not seem to be entirely appropriate. When asked whether they regarded their homes as places that were open or closed to the world, the majority emphasised that it was a mixture of both (55%) and only 15% described it as being closed:

> I guess there's a time for both, yeah, both. . . I really like to come home . . . I'm looking forward to being alone and it is my favourite place to be alone and to lounge around. I know it's a sort of refuge for me when I am home but at the same time I really enjoy people . . . having people drop by. I always like to say, 'just come over, you don't have to phone, just come,' and I like it when people come over . . . well, most of the time . . . I wouldn't want people dropping in all the time (pause) yes, it's really a bit of both.

Thus, most felt that their homes were, or tended to be, open for, as one man put it, "you simply can't shut the rest of life out that easily. It doesn't go away just because I've shut my front door." However, as the quotation suggests, these statements require some qualification and only 18% were unequivocal about this openness. It became apparent, in discussing their entertainment patterns, that their homes were only open within definite limits. The latter pertain to both those admitted, and to the frequency of visits

The patterns I intend to describe are presented somewhat tentatively because in utilising an open ended question to tap this issue, several fuzzy areas remained after analysing the responses. For example, it is clear that there tends to be an "open door policy for neighbourhood kids" and that a good deal of spontaneous "coffee visits" take place between the women during the day although not in the form of a "kaffee klatsch" or similar organised patterns that some authors have identified. This form of socialising was less easily articulated or quantified so that while a statement such as "and 'so and so' sometimes drops by in the afternoons" were common, only nine percent (three women) specified this as being a regular occurrence. Thus, I make no claim to have obtained a precise idea of the nature of their socialising patterns. Nevertheless, it was quite clear that their own lives tended to be home-centred, as will be discussed below, and that while they saw their homes as open, this invitation was applicable to a fairly small circle of intimates composed largely of close friends and family. Sixty-seven percent described themselves as entertaining a "couple of times a month" or "once every couple of weeks" while 12% mentioned once a month and 21% cited three or more times a month.[15] All cited close friends as being their main guests and 31.6% also mentioned family. Business related entertaining was mentioned only on three occasions (nine percent) and not as a regular occurrence so that entertaining was overwhelmingly informal. Finally, most estimated that, when socialising with friends, 70% to 80% of the time was spent in each other's homes with the remainder taking place in public places such as restaurants. Only one person mentioned a private club. Thus, whilst their homes were not bastions against society, they were only open with certain limits and to certain people, and transcendance of either seemed likely to result in a disturbing loss of control that would compromise one's ability to enjoy home and privacy.

One of my initial, "ice breaking" questions raised the issue of "what sort of attributes a place would have to have for you to feel it was home"; in other words, how did they define "home." The issues of privacy and freedom discussed thus far were central characteristics and were a major facilitator of the primary attribute of home, namely, that it should be a place where one feels "comfortable." There seemed to be two aspects to the latter, one physical and, more importantly, one psychological. Most people (84%) evoked adjectives such as cosy, casual and comfortable and/or described "home" as being a "place to feel relaxed," "that one is familiar with," "that suits me," "that fits with my lifestyle," and so on. Basically "home" was a place moulded to one's individual personality and this was facilitated partly by the personal possessions one gathers together and partly by decoration:

> Well, I must have the sense that it's mine. That I have some control over it. That I'm comfortable in it. (pause) I think feeling at home is . . . the sense of relaxation as much as anything. Feeling like the surroundings . . . suit me. It's always sort of flattering to tell someone else that you feel at home in their home because you feel comfortable and it seems like a place you'd be comfortable living.
>
> I suppose it's basically being surrounded by one's possessions and family. A certain amount of furnishing and trappings that are my own. I suppose pictures, books, rugs . . . things that I like around me (pause). Somewhere you can come back to. 'Home is where the family is.' You know, the people in it are part of what the home is.

As the latter suggests, the people sharing the home, typically one's spouse and/or children, comprised another major dimension of "home." The tremendous importance placed upon interpersonal relations has already been discussed and this also became apparent in considering whether or not a house afforded emotional support. Their descriptions of "home" clearly indicate that it has much significance with regard to mental health; however, when confronted directly, this idea tended to be played down. Most felt that one's home enhanced but did not provide this type of support and the dominant feeling seemed to be that the latter derived from "people not structures" (49%):

> Yeah, there's the sort of 'nice to come home to' feeling. I've had that but emotional support . . . I wouldn't say so. It comes from feeling comfortable. You draw your strength from other things, from other people and yourself - not from a house. It's just that feeling of comfort.

Again this underlines the fact that their houses are not the "be all and end all" in their lives.

iv. The House as an Expressive Medium

That the house is expressive of self or of identity is a common, and recently popular, theme in the social sciences and in advertising and popular magazines.[16] This concern did seem to be validated here. Only two people, both men, felt that it was inapplicable while 67% unequivocally supported the idea. The remaining 27% were in agreement but uncertain to a degree. While the latter commonly made statements such as ". . . maybe in . . . I suppose, its the furniture we've chosen and maybe in the decorating," the following is typical of the majority:

> Sure, that's true . . . because where you live you like to extend your self. How you manage your life is how you manage your house really . . . how your thoughts are (pause) If your thoughts are all untidy and you never get going anywhere or never accomplish anything, well, your house is surely going to reflect that. So, I just like it open and not too much junk and my husband is the same. So I guess that reflects me. I don't like to have my mind cluttered.

For most it was the way in which a person decorated and "fixed a place" up that gave a house this quality and while five people mentioned a sort of vague feeling of being able to walk into a house and "know that it's right for you," the house as a structure was not seen to be expressive. All would agree that there were certain types of housing they liked, but this feeling was not usually associated with expressiveness:

> Well, I think there's also something in the basic structure . . . it's the idea that you can go into a place and just know that you're going to be comfortable there. Even if you're looking at other places and looking at places that other people are living in right now . . . you have . . . a sense that there's something about the space and the shape, that it's just you. I came into this place and immediately had a sense that this was a place where I'd be comfortable. It felt right.

Generally speaking, there is little that is inherently expressive in a house, as might be expected in a market of largely mass produced dwellings, and to achieve this quality one has to "do things" to the house:

> If it's an extention of us, it's because we've made it so. We didn't buy it because it was an extension . . . It's what we've added . . . or neglected.

This activity encompassed most usually decorating but some also saw the need to renovate and redesign and to make structural changes in order to personalise a house:

> No, I don't think so . . . I'd have to confess that this house is still very much the previous owner's house in the sense that . . . we haven't changed it a lot and we've always been . . . too busy doing all sorts of other things to bother to do much. It was adequate for our purpose and remained adequate for our purposes and we haven't altered it to conform with any great design.

To a degree, the stress placed upon having to make changes is indicative of a tension that emerged when discussion turned to the nature of that which houses express. While generally, or very impersonally, the term "self" could be, or was evoked, there was considerable confusion over exactly what houses could reveal and this led one woman to question my use of the latter word: "Not revealing - that's quite a strong word. Maybe it can tell you a few little things but not reveal." This uncertainty is illustrated by the distinction that some drew between one's personality and one's tastes, between "what I am" and "what I like" and while intuitively they can be thought of as being interrelated, the latter appeared to somehow be more objectively available for expression:

> Well, the structure, no, I don't think it expresses anything at all, and the way it's set up . . . I really don't think so. I think it's the people and their tastes and likes and dislikes, so . . . whether it's expressive of me as a . . . of whether I'm an aggressive or passive sort of person (pause) I'm quite aggressive and I don't have bright glaring colours all over the wall . . . so, in that case, I suppose . . . no, I don't think it really expresses my character.
>
> Superficially . . . I suppose in small ways there are things that I like . . . that reflect what I like. I don't think it reflects what I am.

There seemed to be several possible sources to this confusion. Partly it reflects the fact that while they are relatively affluent, the goods they have access to are highly standardised. This applies to both houses and personal possessions and neither could be viewed as truly individual statements. Access to the latter type of goods seemed to be largely limited by finances:

> I find that a difficult question. I don't know if I have anything to say. You know, your choice of a house is limited by so many things besides what you would like to buy. I mean it's limited by what you can afford and it's limited by your own prejudices which are . . . governed by so many things, like the fact that we'd lived in this area before, that we liked the area, that this house happened to come on the market at the right time . . . There are so many imponderables.

In addition, the perceived need to make some sort of changes was also compromised by lack of funds and by lack of expertise (42%) as is reflected in statements such as:

> I agree with the idea but depending on the finances available. I don't think in my situation it could become an extension of my personality . . . For one, I couldn't afford it and, two, the children have to be considered. It has to be right for them, too.
>
> I've begun to think about that a lot . . . I used to think decorating was just a function of your personality . . . You could just go to it but there's an awful lot more to it than that. There's . . . money for starters. You can't express yourself without some money. You can in sort of small ways but if you really want to do it up right it takes a lot of money to do it.
>
> Well . . . I guess . . . you do what you can to make it as comfortable as you can . . . to suit your needs and your family's needs and you want it to be pleasant (pause) But I'm not . . . I often know what I want but I'm not sure how to get it. I'm not an artistic person. I'm really not, but I do like to have nice things if I can afford them. So you just do the best you can with what you have and you do it to suit you and not to suit anyone else . . . If I had a lot of money I'd do it a little differently.

While 42% described decorating as an enjoyable or pleasurable activity, the remainder undertook it but were only really interested in the end result and 36% of both groups stated that it was not something they were "very good at."

A further set of tensions seems to stem from the equation of the self with a unique personality and individual expression was thought likely to, or seen as unfeasible because of conflict with those who shared the home, especially the needs of one's children. There were intermittent comments regarding the requirement that the home be functional or workable for the "kids" and as suiting their needs. Commonality with one's own needs was not something that could be automatically assumed. This is particularly poignantly illustrated by the dilemma faced by one couple who had recently bought their first home as articulated by the husband regarding his needs for self expression:

> It's a place where I gather all the things that are important to me around me . . . I really feel very strongly that the physical and sensual things of life . . . and the things you gather around you . . . like the colour of your rugs, the colour of your walls, the texture of your sofas and the tapestries you have . . . those are really important things. My home is a place where I can go and feel . . . and feel like I'm in some kind of womb or something like that. I don't have that feeling right now.
>
> Is that because you've only just moved in?
>
> I don't think it's that because I've moved into places before and . . . had six months to nest build and had better results. I think it's more a product of the life space that the woman I live with now and I are creating. She's tidier than I am and . . . She likes a more sterile environment than I'd like to live in. Really it's a conflict that hasn't been resolved . . . I'm fairly pessimistic. It's really hard.

While this may well be a rather extreme illustration, the need for compromise, and the problems thought likely to ensue, were alluded to by 30% of the group. The perhaps more "normal" situation with regard to these issues is a particularly well captured statement regarding the house and self expression:

> Well . . . that's hard to say because ideally I suppose it should be but one makes pragmatic decisions really based on . . . how much money is available to put into these things . . . on how much consultation has to be gone into in doing it and how 'with it' everyone who's consulted is at any given time. So that any large purchase could just as easily be a disaster as be an extension of the way you really feel about things. So, some things come off okay and some don't. They just don't work and eventually you get used to that. So, I guess, I tend more to feel that's inevitably what happens. There are very pragmatic decisions involved and the test of it tends to be luck pretty well. I think maybe if one were more flexible financially . . . but most people aren't. They don't have that flexibility to pick and choose. Like we don't . . . how many people have the flexibility to go to West Vancouver and buy a house for $500,000 and tear it down to build a new one. You know, you just don't have that . . . well, I guess some do, but not generally.

Finally, there was an issue raised by one person but which seems worth mentioning given the contemporary description ofthe 1970s and 1980s as being the time of the "me generation." Rather than a lack of monetary resources or particular skills, this person focussed on an inner uncertainty:

> I've been to other people's homes and I've realised that . . . 'Yes, this is an expression of their personality.' Things are set up in a certain way that does that. I don't . . . you know . . . the big philosophical thing . . . 'I don't know what I'm about' . . . so I . . . personally, I don't know who I am. You know, the old . . .'Go out and find yourself' . . . cliché. So I can't say that . . . 'Yes, this is an extension of me' . . . because I don't feel confident actually saying who or what I am. So I presume someone who knows me could walk in here and feel quite comfortable in here because it's an expression of me but to ask me . . . I couldn't possibly say what it is.

Thus, they clearly understand and espouse the idea that objects provide a mirror for, and definition of, one's unique self and that they mediate the evaluations of self made by others. However, their personal experiences and those of friends and the very real personal, familial and financial constraints they face generated understandable confusion and scepticism.

v. Individuality and Attitudes Toward Children's Housing Needs

These definitions of, and expectations of private space resurfaced most starkly in discussing the housing requirements of children and to a large degree the latter constitute a microcosm of their own perceived needs. The responses to this enquiry are summarised below:

Table 3.1 The Housing Requirements of Children

Housing Requirements	% (n = 33)
Their own room/space	85
Proximity to Schools	76
Access to open space - yard - 30% - parks, woods - 46%	76
A "good, quiet, safe neighbourhood"	46
Away from traffic	39
Proximity to other children	36
Proximity to services	30

Source: The author.

As is apparent, the major requirement of the house itself was some form of non-adult space--either their own bedroom or a playroom--where they were free to do what they want to without feeling restricted by either the parents or the parents' environment:

> Did having a family affect the sort of decisions you made?
>
> Yes, definitely. This is the area we wanted to stay in . . . in and around Lord Byng and Queen Elizabeth . . . We definitely wanted a house with a back yard . . . a southern back yard so that there's lots of sun and space for the kids to play. We definitely wanted a basement for the kids to ride around in when it's raining. These kinds of things were on my mind when I was renting and thinking that we really should buy because prices were just going to keep going higher. It was basically, for the kids . . . the yard, proximity to schools around here . . . the house itself . . . as long as there were enough rooms (pause) I guess, also having some other kids of the same age within the block area. When the children are between the ages of four to ten I think it's important to have kids, within the block anyway, in the same age group . . . I definitely think trees to climb. . . . We liked this neighbourhood because the Endowment Lands were so close. We didn't want to live with the kids in apartments where . . . they can't simply walk out and be outside . . . We definitely did not want to be where there weren't trees or fairly quick access to swimming pools, playgrounds, a beach area. That's really why we stayed here.
>
> What about the house itself?
>
> For children? . . . I guess, space again . . . especially outside for them to run around in. I'd choose not to be on a busy street so that they can play on the sidewalk . . . so they can have a bit more room to play around in. . . . An area they can call their own. A bedroom or a playroom where they can be a little creative and won't have to worry about keeping it clean all the time. They can have some little area that is theirs as opposed to someone else's.

For children, and by extension, the individual, private space should afford the opportunity to be alone, feel relaxed and unrestrained, to be imaginative and creative and to develop their characters and talents. It should be a place for which they have some sense of possession so that they will also feel "responsible" for it as well as feeling free to be "wild within limits":

> A place where kids can be kids. I think there's got to be a place in the home where kids can know that it's their space but that they have to care . . . that there are certain expectations of that space. It's theirs but it still has to be . . . it's part of the home so it's kept up. They

> can't destroy it but it's theirs and it's sort of like their private space where they can do what they want to do. It's not a space where you have to worry all the time. You know, make it so that they can do things until they're old enough to respect their space.
>
> Each child should have their own room if it's at all possible so they have somewhere to go and do whatever they want. Where they have a sort of relaxed feeling and . . . not feel that they can't touch anything because it's mum and dad's furniture or whatever . . . an area where they can sit and study and eventually have friends over and know that it's not the sort of place where you have to ask permission to have them over . . . you don't have to be scared if you run your bike into the walls. A sort of feeling that they can grow up in a relaxed atmosphere.

Interestingly, one of the most commonly remembered features of the parents' childhood homes was whether or not they had had their own room (55%).

Throughout the discussions of child rearing only 24% mentioned the primacy or importance of the family itself as opposed to the physical environment of the home. Nine percent felt that the latter was unimportant or insignficant and that the atmosphere of the family was all that mattered but the remainder tended to view it as another factor ranked along with the locational and space requirements.

These definitions of, and expectations of privacy suggest that it is a relatively solitary or "individual" phenomenon and this appears to exacerbate the tension discussed above, between the needs of the individual and their fulfilment in a space that also provides a base for the family. The child's need for private space was sometimes discussed in terms of providing an "escape" and this not only entailed the possibility that the child could get away from the parents but also the reverse (27%):

> I think that in a house the parents must have somewhere to escape . . . from their children. Sometimes children escape from their parents, too! But it's definitely a good idea to have escape routes for all the family in a house.
>
> I think that for everybody's mental health you need a place for the kids to be alone, . . . for each of them to be able to go into their own space and shut the door behind them when they're angry or when they want to be alone . . . a place to play that's apart from the normal living area.

vi. Privacy and House Form

The expectations of privacy that pertained at a larger scale regarding the relationship of the home unit to the rest of the neighbourhood or community also tend to be applied within the home. Only six percent also expressed the view that a home should also provide adequate communal space for the family:

> It's effected mostly . . . that there's enough space for everyone . . . both private space and communal space. That's surprisingly critical. When I look around at these new places it always amazes me that they can put so many bedrooms and not a common space, really.
>
> A room for them to be by themselves. Everyone should have their own room. That was important to me. A place where they can entertain their own friends, be it a playroom or . . . but not vastly removed from the rest of the house . . . so it's really like two homes with great playrooms and whatnots downstairs so kids come in and go down stairs and that's all the parents see of them. It shouldn't be so separated or removed.

Furthermore, several people, especially women, saw the ultimate privacy as being a room of their own within the home in which they could be alone or arrange in their own way (36%). However, their houses were usually too small to permit this and few were able to point to rooms or parts of the house that they really identified with - 64% responded negatively to this idea.

The relationship between ownership and these various meanings of the home are complex and, as suggested in discussing the importance of an owned home for children, they cannot be automatically equated in any direct, causal manner. While some aspects of privacy are obviously predicated upon ownership, such as security of tenure, there are many that do not have this dependence. Seventy-nine percent felt that ownership was not essential to the satisfaction of the majority of the issues discussed in this section. In other words, renting an apartment or a house was not objectionable until the issues of raising a family and using one's money sensibly are taken into account.

As noted earlier, their decision making is as much a preference for a particular type of dwelling unit - the detached house - as for a particular tenure form and here a firmer link can be made with such issues as privacy and freedom that are currently being considered. In some respects this is reflected in their discussion of their ideal or dream homes. This type of image was not held by all and only 70% felt they had at least some partial mental picture. Of those who responded negatively (30%), 70% fell into the oldest age groups (40 to 60) and felt that while they probably did have an ideal home at one time, they had ceased to dream and were now largely content with what they had. Those who outlined the images they had held did so in terms largely compatible with the remainder of the group for whom the most consistent desire was for a larger property; for some bigger than their present situation. There were two elements to this expectation.[17] Firstly, a larger house was desired (48%) and this was usually with respect to their present home, although in some cases they simply wanted something "big". In either event, spaciousness, big rooms, lots of windows and the possibility of having rooms for specific functions such as a den, a work room, etc., were mentioned. Secondly, and more commonly, a larger property was desired (87%) either in terms of a larger lot with figures of 60 to 70 feet of frontage being mentioned, implying an urban location or, alternatively, a less urban location with a "nice piece of land, out of the city but not too far away." Interestingly, one woman who had already owned a huge seven bedroom home, felt that she had already had her dream home and that she wouldn't want it again. This property seems to be along the lines of those described by the remainder of the group but this woman pointed out the problems of upkeep and the size of family one would need to make the place feel lived in and basically felt she "couldn't cope with it again." For the majority, however, these issues do not appear to be as pertinent as, for example, maximising one's privacy and freedom. As one woman put it: "If I decided to move from here now it would only be to get more privacy - to somewhere more remote." As will be discussed below in greater detail, these ideals or dreams do not provide a model for action since only 39% of those expressing these ideas felt that they were aspiring to own such a property.

vii. Home and the Private Individual

At this point it seems useful to digress briefly in order to make some preliminary interpretive comments in light of the foregoing summary. These may also usefully serve to contextualise the remainder of this exposition.

The expectations of private space documented thus far may seem uncontentious and unexceptional, however, as a considerable body of sociological and anthropological work has demonstrated, they should be understood as being both a culturally and historically specific juxtaposition. In discussing house forms, Rapoport points out that while privacy is viewed as a basic human need in our culture, it is nevertheless a complex social phenomenon that may vary cross culturally with, for example, "feelings of personal worth" and attitudes regarding the "place of the individual."[18] Furthermore, Brittan also notes that the notion of "self" implied by these latter factors is also a "social invention; that is, a social construction which appears only in certain historical and cultural contexts."[19] This notion of self is, in addition, not a static category and, even in its most egoistic form, it is a social process that expresses, and has implications, for interpersonal relations at an intimate and societal level.

These ideas would seem to usefully inform the present discussion, and the expectations of private space outlined can be seen to point to an individualistic conception of self and social reality reminiscent of the classic liberal view. Brittan cites, as a recurrent theme, the uniqueness and privacy of the self and describes the concept of privacy as being intimately connected to the conception of the individual in western thought and especially to the bourgeois individual and his property rights.[20] More specifically, he states that in this view:

> . . . the private individual is a person who can only fully realise himself if he is not fettered by the constraints of the 'public sphere,' that is, he is free to accumulate property without too much state interference. Privacy, in this context, relates not only to the individual person, but also to the exclusive rights of property. To respect a person's privacy, therefore, entails respecting his right to property. What I own and what I lay claim to limits the extent of my privacy. Hence, as an individual, I demonstrate my autonomy to the extent that my ownership of property allows me to pursue my own interests.[21]

The latter sentence particularly appears to have implications for the beliefs expressed in the previous summary. Additionally, Lukes also notes the close interrelationships between autonomy, privacy and self development and describes them as the "three faces" of freedom which, together with the belief in the inherent dignity of man, constitute the basic elements of individualism.[22]

To a large extent this is the line of reasoning followed by Rakoff in his study of the meaning of the home and ideology in everyday life. The former are characterised as being part of our "culture's recipe for dealing with the recurrent personal tensions created by an individualistic view of social reality" and both are held to be an expression of and fulfillment of liberal capitalist ideology. In drawing these conclusions, Rakoff turns to John Locke's statements regarding man's natural right to personal appropriation of, and self extension in, one's property and sees this as remaining a powerful attraction today. Locke's formula is seen to "continue to motivate us in our treatment of ownership" which, for the majority in contemporary times, is seen to mean homeownership. Given the limitation of property to personal possessions and a house for most people, Rakoff feels that it "makes perfect sense that the house (and perhaps the car, also) takes on the full range of characteristics that classical liberalism ascribed to landed property."[23]

Whilst there may well be some justification to delimiting such interconnections, particularly from an etymological point of view in that the above may constitute the roots of contemporary beliefs, this argument is highly problematic. Not only does it continue to interpret the modern meaning of the home in functionalist terms, but it also ignores the manner in which society has changed since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when these pronouncements were made. Like the society in which they arose and in which they retain meaning, categories such as the individual and private property are not static and unchanging and have been gradually and subtly transformed so that they correspond only superficially to their antecedents. The recent proliferation of literature concerning the postulated transformation of the western notion of self is illustrative of this point. As Lasch notes with reference to the contemporary individual, the conception of self may still be described as individualistic but it bears only a "superficial resemblance, in his self absorption and delusions of grandeur, to the 'imperial self' so often celebrated in nineteenth century American literature."[24] Similar arguments could be made with regard to the development of corporate and shareholder property ownership and the pervasiveness of the modern credit system which is particularly, and increasingly, significant with regard to domestic property ownership.

Thus, while Rakoff's line of argument initially appears to be evocative, it nevertheless involves a tremendous, and mystificatory leap in logic that appears difficult to support empirically and historically. In terms of the present discussion, while an individualistic view of self suggests itself as integral to the multivalent meanings of the home, something different to the usual connotations of this characterisation also appears to be taking place. The latter is suggested most notably by the denigration of the intrinsic importance of property and property appropriation. It also emerged forcibly in discussion of those spheres of life closely related to, and bounding the home and its meaning and to which attention will presently be turned.

viii. Status and Success: Some Dissenting Views

The traditional emphasis on the relationship between property and the allocation of social status was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and, as might be anticipated, the latter element of this relationship was also consistently downplayed. This denigration pertained to both personal success and achievement (with their implications for identity) and to the more crude conspicuous consumption. It was an attitude that prevailed despite the fact that in the eyes of the rest of the city, they reside in relatively prestigious areas. I was aware, before commencing interviewing, that this might prove a difficult topic to probe in view of its popular negative association with snobbishness and pretention and, of course, I cannot say definitively that the responses I received did not reflect this attitude. Nevertheless, there was great consistency in their disavowal of this motivation that ran through all the direct and indirect ways I attempted to broach this topic.[25] Furthermore, as will be discussed in the following subsections, their attitudes in other areas of discussion also lend support to this viewpoint. Thus, in the exposition that follows, I intend to trust these intiutions and take their opinions at face value in the hope, and belief, that the extracts from the conversations substantiate the generalisations I draw.

Most generally, the following statement seems to capture the essence of their repudiation of the ability of, and importance of, property in conferring status:

> No, I don't feel special because we've got it . . . I guess, at times I feel lucky(pause) but I don't feel better than anyone else or anything like that . . . just fortunate, I guess.

There seem to be several, interrelated sources to this attitude.

In part, it may reflect the tendency, noted among Canadians, to adhere to a belief in an essentially classless society:

> When Canadians are asked to which class they belong, they are inclined to answer either that there are no classes in Canada, or to identify with the middle class. The great middle, in their opinion, encompasses almost everybody, and the lower and upper - which must exist if there is a middle - can only be defined in terms of relative wealth. A few may be rich, a few may be poor but most people, according to this belief, are somewhere between these small groups. This classless society is a pervasive belief and one renewed with the daily reading of the newspaper, the viewing of television, the study of literature, or history, or social science.[26]

Certainly their own lives did not appear to be exceptional in any way to them and when status was discussed it did tend to be in terms of wealth. In discussing the house as an expressive medium only 24% spontaneously raised the topic of social status. This was the sole emphasis for only nine percent and the majority (91%) talked of houses revealing specific interests or tastes, e.g., "If a house is full of books . . .," "If it's a really modern house . . ." or as revealing the degree to which a person is interested in their house, e.g., "If the house is really well kept up . . .". Status was usually mentioned as part of the latter emphasis in that a person who was really interested in their home might also be described as being interested in "appearances" or "show." However, this was subordinate to the main view that you could simply see how much time or care a person devoted to the house.

In specifically discussing status, reference was commonly made to the elite areas of the city or to large and/or unusual houses and their connotations of wealth so that, for example, one woman's response to my inquiry as to what house revealed consisted of: "Well, a big house is associated with wealth usually. I suppose it's a fact of life." In order for many to make this sort of connection it was necessary to make the assumption that status was a question of finances (55%), a view they did not seem to espouse although it was perceived as an option. Again, a typical response to the above question was:

> . . . I think that the people who live in Shaughnessy have a certain, different status than the people who live on this block and the people that live on this block have a different status to people who live in Surrey . . . I don't know how you define status but if it's in terms of the 'almighty dollar' . . . well, then it costs more to live here than somewhere else. There's more doctors and lawyers in Shaughnessy but if you live here then there's more bankers and accountants living here. So it can be a clue to financial status and it's sort of unfortunate that that's often thought of as social status too.

Thus, while the possibility of houses revealing status and success was recognised, it was an issue that was seen to depend very much upon the individual (52%). It was repeatedly stated that use of one's house, or perception and appraisal of others in this manner, was a matter of personal choice. This was not the route they had chosen with respect to their homes or interpersonal relations. One older woman did mention that the issue had been important when she was younger but that it was no longer something she worried about and, like the rest, she espoused the attitude that she hoped that if she moved it would be for "a better reason than just what people thought about me."

Both the house and the neighbourhood as objective indicators of status were also devalued because they were held to be often misleading. As discussed earlier, there is a fundamental ambivalence as to the degree to which their own houses are self expressive, particularly with regard to the physical structure. In addition, many also pointed to particular instances in which such a judgement would have been inappropriate. These indicators were seen to be both potentially over- and understatements of status or personal worth depending upon the individual so that judgement should be reserved to personal acquaintance with the latter:

> You know for some people it's an anti-statement . . . some people try to express themselves by buying the biggest and the best house with the most rooms and the most chandeliers and the view and so on and that's an expression of his power, whereas some people do the complete opposite. They'll choose a very modest place, in fact, even run down to go the opposite way. To just sort of shun those types of trappings. I know people who are like that. It's just that other things are important to them. Their houses just aren't central . . . but to some people it is.
>
> . . . I don't really think so as a general rule that you can say that . . . the value of property just changes so drastically from area to area that somebody may . . . be going through a bad financial five years and may be in an area that really doesn't express themselves but they really cannot put themselves anywhere else because of bad fortune or some other sort of disaster. So I don't really think there's very much in it. I mean there are stereotypes but they don't mean much when it comes down to it.

Houses were not necessarily seen to express "who" the person "really was" and there was no necessary, perceived correspondence between status defined in these terms and being a "nice person":

> I suppose a house in Kerrisdale implies a lot of different things to houses in Richmond although, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth for some of the people who live around here. Some of them are real idiots.

People who attempted to demonstrate status in this manner were variously characterised as being "pretentious," "ostentatious," "false" and as interested in "show" or "appearances." Such adjectives were evoked by 52% and all carry the implication of lack of authenticity that could be readily discerned:

> Sure . . . I guess someone who's very keen on material possessions would reflect that in their house. I think if someone . . . I guess it's a question of security and insecurity . . . the more people are ostentatious about their houses the less . . . secure they are in themselves. They can't just let people take them as they find them.

Presumably if one is secure in one's self knowledge, this will be reflected in more genuine ways. Finally, there was also the implication that status defined in terms of objective criteria entailed conformity to a normative standard and this was perceived as possibly compromising their appraisal of both themselves and others as unique individuals.

These ideas are reflected in the belief by 58% that their interaction with a person would be unaffected by the type of house the latter owned and by 42%, that this might initially be the case but that it would soon pass:

> No, well, maybe a little bit. If it was a really . . . a big house in Shaughnessy I might feel a little out of my league initially, but only a little bit. It's not going to affect my interaction with a person that much. I might be aware that the trappings of their lifestyle are around me but it's not going to affect the way I think about the person or the way I feel about a person . . . once I got talking to them. No.

Only nine percent felt that their interaction would definitely be affected and all provided rationales that pertained to the negative effects of somewhere "dirty" rather than a feeling of intimidation due to wealth more commonly evoked. For most, the basis for interaction was seen to lie in "who I am, not what I have" and the uneasiness created by a person's possessions was not seen to present an impenetrable barrier. As one person noted regarding possessions: "I don't believe that's what makes a person and if people don't like what I've got - then I'm sorry. But if they want to come and see me for me then I'm glad to see them." Many also noted that they tended to know people and to establish friendships prior to knowing where a person lived. In view of the intimate nature of the entertainment patterns described earlier, it seems unlikely that acquaintances are brought to the home. Hence superficial judgements of character, lifestyle or taste are also unlikely to be necessary or important.

The combined effect of these opinions is, therefore, an extreme hesitance to make generalisations about others without prior knowledge of the person. Interestingly, this attitude seems to conflict with their assessment of those attempting to demonstrate status through their houses as in some way false; however, many do seem to have some basis for this opinion in their personal experiences with friends, neighbours or acquaintances so that, for example, one person noted that: "You know I have friends that live in the British Properties and they're no more 'British Property' types than I am."

A further dimension to the attitudes toward status and success pertains to their expectations of private space. As described earlier their homes are valued as places to relax and be oneself and actively seeking status through the house would allow for the intrusion of many of the pressures they hope to exclude, at least to a degree. Most seem to "feel sorry for people caught up in all that" in that it involves "too much pressure" and feel glad to have avoided it. For example, in discussing the North American tendency to upgrade every few years, the following type of response was common:

> Hopefully, I don't feel pressured into that. Hopefully I'd look for better reasons for doing it like getting a more comfortable place or better amenities. Somewhere more attractive and comfortable rather than just because I felt some social pressure.

Almost all seem to have encountered no difficulty in pursuing and practising this belief thus far, however, the implication that it is still a relevent attitude in society and the potential for personal conflict this engenders are suggested by one man who had recently received promotion:

> I guess in some respects I feel some pressures from work to sort of upgrade . . . There are . . . pressures that are put on me . . . I guess I'm reasonably successful in my field . . . I can see in a very few years time I'm going to have to do a fair amount of entertaining of senior people and this isn't the house to do it in. It's a bit crazy in a way. I shouldn't respond like I am . . . I'm pretty mixed up as to whether I should respond but there's no doubt about it that I do feel some pressure in the work situation. I don't like it. I think that . . . it's getting less strong but I still think there is a pressure. It's certainly never spoken (pause) although I don't know, it is occasionally. I have friends of mine who after I took this position I was offered . . . we had some friends around and they said they assumed I'd need to move into a bigger house. So it is there. It's just a question of how much attention you pay to it. I don't want to be continually moving. If we can get one good sized house then, as far as I'm concerned, it's pointless to be continually going on, you know, higher and higher.

A similar type of reasoning also seems to apply to the potential of, and treatment of the house as an investment in that the commitment of time and energy required to make renovations, etc., and to keep turning properties over is also perceived as entailing too much pressure and as detracting from their other, more valued aspects of home.

ix. The Quality and Meaning of Life Redefined

These attitudes regarding status are underlain by, and entail a particular conception of the "purpose of life" and throughout these conversations stress was placed on the importance of "quality" rather than the more traditional economic advancement or material accumulation. As already noted, emphasis was placed upon the importance of marriage and family over material possessions and the latter were not necessarily held to define standard of living. Most felt that they had, to an extent, been raised to expect a rising standard of living, marriage and a family, however, 58% felt that these expectations had changed to a considerable degree:

> It certainly was the . . . well, I'm no different from lots of others and that was the . . . lifestyle that was preached. That's too strong a word but it's certainly part of my upbringing. The old Protestant heritage and all that stuff, you know, W.A.S.P. and so on (pause) I'm not saying that I agree with it anymore but it was there.
>
> That was the North American Dream, you know, bigger and better. A bigger and larger car and all the stuff that went with it but that's really changed. You know, people just aren't prepared to sacrifice any more.
>
> It isn't such a high priority. People are changing their approach to life . . . to what they want out of life.

Life seemed to be perceived as being too short to submit to the pressures generated by the type of striving that was thought to be necessary to attain these traditional values. This was seen to compromise, and to an extent to be contrary to the enjoyment of life so that consumption tended to be devalued as a basis for both personal happiness or success. It was merely seen to enhance the other things that are important in life and was a feeling, as summed up in the following quotation, that you get to a certain level where you're comfortable and then you sit back and enjoy it:

> I think I'd fight pretty hard to . . . not fall into that syndrome. Because I think that no matter what category you get yourself into there is always going to be someone that's got more and that's a real danger, you know, always trying to keep up. It's a real rat race if you try to. No, I think there's definitely a point where you're just content to be where you are. You know . . . sort of quality of life - just sort of being there and so what if everyone else is in a great big home. You know, so what, just enjoy life.

These opinions help make explicable the fact that while 70% held some sort of image of an ideal or dream home, this did not provide a model for action in most cases. Of this group, 61% felt that it was not an ideal they were really aspiring to in the future. As mentioned previously, they tended to envisage large, expensive properties, with values of about half a million dollars being occasionally specified. In general, these are thought to be largely pipe dreams realisable only through winning a lottery or through some similar windfall. They are not thought to be feasible in terms of one's personal efforts and they are generally not prepared to make the sacrifices this would entail:

> I never have had a dream home . . . I have seen homes and gone by homes and sometimes toured around homes or seen pictures . . . and said, 'Oh my goodness isn't that fantastic' but I don't think that I consciously yearn or have any great pipedreams about ever . . . I don't have any illusions about the thing. Maybe if I won a lottery or something. That would be the sort of money I'd be trying to spend . . . my money on. . .if I did win a lottery.

For most, the following statement made with regard to the investment potential of houses seems to capture the essence of their beliefs and expectations:

> We thought about our objectives in life and we felt our priorities were to find a nice place, to enjoy life and be happy. Appreciation is nice and we've made a bit but it's not our prime objective.

This type of belief set was also identified by Ley in his consideration of the development of a new urban reform party and new liberal ideology of urban development in Vancouver during the early 1970s. A challenge to the traditional commitment to an ideology of growth, boosterism and efficient city management was identified in the election of TEAM - The Electors Action Movement - candidates to city council who espoused the liberal notion of the "liveable city." Central concerns tended to be with the quality of life and experience, with aesthetics and with creating a "landscape in harmony with human sensibility." The style of urban government and development is described as being "recognised less by its production schedules than by its consumption styles." In essence, TEAM promised that "consumption should henceforth follow the canons of good taste" and this dictum has considerable relevance for the attitudes regarding the purpose of life outlined above.[27]

The primacy accorded to an "aesthetic" lifestyle emerged particularly in discussions about neighbourhood and zoning change and development. Amenity was highly valued in neighbourhood choice, as noted above, for their own and their children's benefit and was commonly perceived as the main motivating concern that might produce some sort of community activism. Attitudes toward development and/or zoning changes were very flexible and moderate with 84% expressing the view that their reaction would depend very much upon the type of project proposed. Only nine percent were unequivocal in their likely opposition to change. In addition, distance to self was a critical factor and many felt that there were certain types of development that would only be objectionable if "right next door." There appeared to be little concern for their neighbourhood as a whole and attention was focussed largely on events in their immediate vicinity.

In general, there was a feeling that development or increased densities could occur in a non-disruptive manner so long as they remained consistent with the character of the area. Many also recognised that change was necessary or inevitable given the contemporary pressures on urban land and the shortages of urban housing (33%).[28] The types of development that were consistently suggested as provoking a negative response were those involving some sort of commercial facility (27%), such as a 7-11 Store, or those consisting of single or multiple high rise blocks (58%). In such instances, the values they thought might be threatened crystallised into two interrelated themes that together represented a concern that the "character of the area" should not change. These values are summarised in Table 3.2. The first theme is explicitly aesthetic and concerns issues such as a loss of one's view, of open space or the presence of ugly buildings that might become an "eyesore" (36% of the 55 issues raised). The second theme focusses more on the consequences of increased density which included problems of increased noise, traffic or of loss of privacy or stability (64% of the 55 issues raised). Interestingly, the issue of house and/or property values was mentioned spontaneously only three times and this reflects their relegation of investment to a secondary concern. In the remainder of the conversations I had to initiate this as a topic for discussion and even then most were quite equivocal about the topic. Typically they commented that "probably," or at least they "supposed" it would be a concern (see Table 3.3). The following exchange of ideas is typical of the attitudes expressed regarding development:

Table 3.2 Values Perceived to be Threatened by Zoning Changes

Values	Percentage of group raising each issue (n = 33)	Percentage of total number of concerns raised (n = 55)
A. Aesthetic		
Buildings out of character with the area	27	16
Loss of open space	12	7
General changes in character or atmosphere of the area	9	5
Loss of view	6	4
Loss of sunlight	6	4
		36
B. Density		
General desire to avoid increased density	36	22
Increased traffic and/or parking problems	21	13
Noise increase	18	11
Loss of privacy	15	9
Loss of stability in the area	15	9
		64

Source: The author.

> Well it would really depend. I think that . . . a highrise would bother me, very high density . . . If it was right next door and it was very high density it would bother me but I wouldn't . . . knowing how difficult it is for people to get into housing, I wouldn't automatically object. I'd sacrifice a certain amount of my feelings about density for "the needs of mankind" you might say! I mean there are people out there now that are finding it a lot harder than we did to get into housing. So if there were a project that was . . . you know, I agree with False Creek. It's an excellent idea. It's "moderate density."
>
> What sort of things would you be bothered by if it was something right next door?
>
> Oh, noise, the stresses and strains it puts on one when there's a lot of people too close by. Loss of my view, you know.
>
> Would you be worried about your property values?
>
> (pause) I don't . . . well, I suppose I would. You know seeing as your house is an investment. If it was going to devalue the house then . . . More than likely it wouldn't unless it was something terribly commercial like a gas station right next door.

Interestingly, of the 61% who made some degree of affirmative response to the question of property values being affected, just over half (55%) felt that they'd probably go up while only one person felt they'd go down:

> If they could put up one then they could easily put up another so property values would probably go through the roof and then you'd probably be able to move somewhere else.

A further aspect of this orientation concerns the emphasis placed upon the realm of meaning and experience or, to quote Ley, upon "man's emotional, spiritual and aesthetic nature." The designation of "home" as an arena in which self-fulfillment and self actualisation takes place, discussed earlier, lends some support to the suggestion that these concerns are an element of this group's "purpose of life."

Table 3.3 Attitudes Toward Zoning Changes and Property Values

	%	
Manner in which topic was raised (n = 33)		
By the interviewer to initiate discussion	91	
Spontaneously by the respondent	9	
	100	
Degree of concern for property values (n = 33)		
"Yes, I would be concerned."	15	61
"I suppose I probably would be concerned."	46	
"No, I wouldn't worry about that."	27	
"I don't really know if I would be concerned."	12	
	100	
Direction of change anticipated in property values by those expressing concern (n = 20)		
"They would most likely increase."	55	
"They would most likely decrease."	3	
"I don't know what would happen."	42	
	100	

Source: The author.

In addition, Ley notes that attitudes toward work tend to be transformed so that, for example, self fulfillment may be ranked above conventional forms of job satisfaction as a major employment goal. In British Columbia, a survey in which "more than 60% of residents placed lifestyle satisfaction in first place, while less than 25% gave primacy to economic success" is cited.[29]

Some tentative support for these contentions can be inferred from the interviews under consideration. However, the issue of work and the manner in which it might be related to home life was an extremely difficult topic to probe. I was sometimes asked what discussing their jobs had to do with housing or homeownership which, in some ways, is surprising considering their willingness to divulge some quite personal information with respect to other issues. This would seem to lend support to the thesis that stresses the pervasiveness of the contemporary fragmentation of home and work life both objectively and subjectively.[30] The most conclusive theme that did emerge from this area of discussion was that they did not view themselves as working "just for the paycheque." Home did not appear to be being utilised as a compensation for work and the adjectives used, by the 61% in employment, to describe the latter were usually satisfying (45%), challenging (25%) or fulfilling (25%):

> I certainly don't like to work but I don't just work to live. I get some satisfaction out of my job. It's not drudgery going in, there's challenges there.

Those who expressed dissatisfaction (9%) also did so in these terms and mentioned, for example, lack of responsibility and room to use one's initiative and there seemed to be no fear of changing jobs in mid-career. Furthermore, few seemed willing to go the route of the typical North American executive and the only person in the group who appeared to have been in this type of job, had refused another transfer in favour of "settling down" in one place with his family in full recognition of the potential detriment it may do his career.

x. Home-centredness and Community Involvement

The devaluation of material possessions as regards personal motivation and happiness and the stress placed upon interpersonal relations could possibly constitute an indication of a move away from the highly privatised, high consumption lifestyle usually thought to be associated with homeownership. However, the pursuit of quality still appears to entail a fairly high level of consumption and, more saliently, their lifestyles do not appear to be less privatised. Only six percent felt that their lives were not home-centred and nine percent felt that they were more of a mixture. Thus, 85% felt that their lives were best described as home-centred:

> Yeah, I guess so. We're not active in any clubs or anything like that and I've got no great burning desire to be involved in that. We use the beaches and we get away a fair amount but basically we are . . . we are home centred. You know, we visit friends and they visit us so we're not totally homebodies but, in general, yes.

As mentioned previously, their social networks appear to be highly fragmented and centred on a few close, intimate friends and/or family. These constitute their main companions when socialising and the latter largely occurs in each others,' homes.

Their involvement in specific community activities is tabulated in table 3.4 and, as is readily apparent, participation is quite low. The expense of joining clubs was occasionally mentioned (12%) and some also saw them as restrictive either because they "put you in a mold" or because regular meeting times were a hassle (9%), however, for the majority disinterest seemed to be the primary factor. Of those citing a religious affiliation, half saw themselves as "fringe Christians" attending church only for some special purpose such as Christmas or

Table 3.4 Participation in Communal Activities

Activity	% (n = 33)
Cultural Activities - very much involved	21
- Involved but only to a degree	58
	79
Club Membership - athletic	18
- Hobby	6
- University Womens Club	3
	27
Voluntary work	21
Church and Church Organisations - attend regularly	9
- "fringe Christians"	9
	18
Informal, cooperative activities - child related	12
- other	6
	18
Professional Associations	15

Source: The author.

Easter. The cooperative activities cited all involved the women and focussed on child care, such as a baby sitting pool or a play school. This was sometimes also cited as being voluntary work (9%). Other involvements were in specific organizations, such as the Junior League or the B.C. Association for the Mentally Retarded, or in specific projects, such as the U.B.C. hospital heart drive. When discussing participation in the cultural life of the city such as the theatre, galleries, etc., only 21% were unequivocally affirmative, while a further 21% felt that it was not applicable to them. The remainder (58%) felt that, to a degree, they were involved and might "go to the theatre a couple of times a year" or the "art gallery once in a while" and most seemed to concur with the following assessment: "Yes, but guardedly. It tends to be more in theory than practice."

Some interesting distortions took place in this discussion regarding the nature of the activities comprising each category of community involvement. These questions were posed almost as a check list and it is possible that some of the following instances may reflect an attempt to make some response, although I have no grounds upon which to make such a judgement. In either event, they do seem to be suggestive of interesting definitional distortions. Going out to dinner was sometimes suggested as an indication that people's lives were perhaps less home-centred (12%) even though in their own cases this takes place among intimate friends or family and merely provides an alternative, and infrequent location to their own homes. The inquiry about voluntary work sometimes resulted in mention of a neighbourhood drop in centre (9%) for women with small children that provided an opportunity for play and conversation. While this is a cooperative activity it does not have quite the usual connotations of the word "volunteer" in that its endeavours are self-help rather than charitable and philanthropic; that is, the benefits accrue to those using the centre rather than the pursuit of some wider social goal.

Similarly, with reference to informal cooperative activities one woman qualified her involvement in a baby sitting pool by adding that it wasn't "really a community thing, it's just among friends." Membership in a local community centre or the Vancouver Aquarium were sometimes offered as instances of club membership (12%) and again participation tends to be individualised and an end in itself, requiring little, if any, commitment to a particular group. Whatever the status of these comments, they do seem to usefully relate to the previous discussions of the "home as refuge" in which most tended to view their homes as "open" although it later became clear that this was likely to be in a highly circumscribed manner.

For most people, non-intimate, social involvement seems to occur through their children so that, for example, while disliking public events themselves because "of the crowds," they will often go to the Pacific National Exhibition or the Sea Festival because they "take the kids." This orientation is readily apparent in the following statement by one of the people who definitively felt their life was not home-centred:

> No, not with the people we know or ourselves. We do spend a lot of time in each others' homes entertaining but I think that I seem more involved in the community, at least for ourselves and the people we know, than withdrawn from it. Many more people that we know are getting more involved with soccer and with community centre activities . . . with cubs and all the other kinds of things for children. Maybe that's because of the group we're in with young families. Because . . . ,yes, the majority are young families. I see more and more of our friends getting more involved than when they were single or without children. I think we had more party life in the home or in the apartments then than we do now. Much more is geared towards playschool or school or so many other community things.

Many noted this effect that children had on their activities. The particular age of the family also seemed to have a significant effect in that those with very small children felt more tied to the home because, for example, parks lacked facilities for a six month old baby, and those with grown families noted that they had been more involved when their children were smaller. The implications of these factors for community involvement and, indeed, any sense of community is very effectively captured in the following response to my inquiry as to whether people in the area felt any sort of shared sense of commitment to it:

> Yes, very much so. They have a feeling of . . . keeping it up but as far as a feeling of community, no. And that's . . . it's kind of hard to really reconcile those two things but everybody keeps up appearance, you know, looks after their gardens and . . . well, they do whatever they do but as far as actually being part of a community (pause) it does vary a little bit because if you have young . . . or younger children then you tend to be more active in . . . soccer or with the children in one way or another. I think that's the key to it . . . as to what age the children are as to how much you get involved (pause) you can go for weeks and . . . well the story that I tell and I'm not especially proud of it because you always end up saying, well, I could have . . . There are two people who've died along here . . . and nobody knew. To me it's terribly sad because they were both long term things and the fact that they . . . the parents weren't getting any strength or comfort from anybody much . . . I think that's really sad because it wasn't as if you didn't talk . . . you know you might see them but they never shared it. I felt really badly (pause) So, no, there's no real sense of community. I don't have that feeling. It is sad. Now, I may be . . . I may be wrong. Maybe other people wouldn't see it that way but . . . the only time people are roused is if somebody wants to redevelop something but mostly . . . you see people jogging or going for a walk. Everyone has cars and I suppose that's isolating for a start. It's not like the suburban community I lived in where . . . well, we had to build fences so we had to work together and there were no . . . boy scouts or whatever, so you had to start them and people did that together. There was, you know, the kaffee klatsch and, much as it was absurd, it did get you together. Yeah, there people seemed to be more oriented toward doing things.

This characterisation relates back to the earlier consideration of their attitudes toward redevelopment and their lack of concern for occurrences beyond their immediate vicinity. Only nine percent of people were aware of the existence of some sort of property owners' association in their area and any sort of activism was perceived as being issue oriented. This is also reflected in their reactions to activism in face of rising interest rates. I raised the possibility of a homeonwers' strike against high interest rates should the latter reach what, at the time, seemed like an unprecedented high level - 20% or 25%. While many thought this was an interesting idea, only 33% saw it as a likely possibility. Of the remainder, 27% thought that "perhaps" it would be the type of action taken while 39% could not see such an event occurring. The prevailing attitude seemed to rest upon two assumptions regarding human nature and problems of mobilisation. In terms of the former there was a general feeling that people would tend to "cope" or get by (64%):

> No, I don't think so. People accept things and learn to get by. I mean, look at the ridiculous situation in Britain.
>
> Well, it's one alternative they'd have and there'd be a huge outcry but, you know, people are very malleable and if they think that's the way it has to be, they won't fight.
>
> I can't really see that happening. I don't know how people would get by but life does seem to go on in spite of inflation and nobody seems to be going without.

In terms of mobilisation, a strike focussing on mortgages was perceived as being difficult to organise because people's loans came due at different times and because of a lack of any sort of legal rights (55%):

> I don't think that would ever happen. It's set up so that everybody's mortgages come due at different times and stuff like that, so you'd have a hard time mobilising people. Your interest rate only goes up when your loan comes up. You'd have a hard time mobilising more than a small percentage of homeowners and you'd really need a lot for it to have any effect.

> No, I can't see that happening because you'd lose your home. There's no legal way you could keep it. The mortgage companies, credit unions or whoever could simply take your house and there's no way you could fight that at all. Probably the only think that you could do is put pressure on your elected officials to bring in stabilisation of the interest rates or special help for homeowners but you couldn't fight the banks.

Twenty-seven percent suggested some sort of pressure group to lobby the government as a more viable alternative, however, as mentioned, most saw people as taking no action. Nobody suggested that they personally would want to initiate or be involved in such an activity.

In summary, the members of this group tend to lead rather insular lives so that, while not entirely "homebodies," their focus is primarily upon the family and a small network of friends. Involvement in activities outside the home tends to be relatively low and occurs in the course of personal recreation and/or activities related to their children rather than as a form of collective activity. Furthermore, when participation occurs it does not usually involve interaction with non intimates. For example, club membership was usually a means of gaining access to particular athletic facilities to be utilised with friends rather than a vehicle for meeting people and socialising. Disinterest in both their local community and city wide activities is quite high and where participation does take place, it tends to be in only one or two activities. Only four people seemed to have multiple involvement in the activities outlined in table 3.4. In many ways, their lives seem to be more privatised than the lives of those indicated in the popular stereotype of the materialistic, middle class, status seeking homeowner in that the latter retain a degree of concern for the opinions and judgements of the community in which they live. The group considered here appear to be unconcerned about such judgements as became evident in the previous discussion of their attitudes about status.

3.4 House, Home and Homeownership: Endnote

In this chapter, the main themes of meaning running through the attitudes and beliefs of a group of middle class homeowners have been documented. I have avoided the usual tendency to break them down into summary catch phrases - "the home as . . . ." - because it seemed impossible to devise any categories that remained meaningful and that captured the complexity and contingency of their thinking.

To recapitulate briefly, homeownership is essentially a pragmatic issue and concern. It is not thought of as being an exception or an inherently "special" undertaking but rather as being something that "makes good sense." However, the money making ability of the house is a secondary concern. Ownership also afforded a sense of security and control which, when combined with a detached dwelling, make an important contribution to "home." Ownership enhances but does not define or determine the latter. Their houses should provide an appropriate environment for raising children with regard to proximity to parks, schools, etc. Primarily, however, it was private space that could be moulded to the unique needs and desires of both parents and children. In this manner, "home" becomes a place to feel at ease, relaxed and unrestrained, to be alone and to pursue interests and express themselves.

Their lives and consciousness are highly home centred and somewhat insular with only infrequent and fragmentary participation in the community or city life. Attention is primarily directed toward one's family and a small group of intimates with whom the home and community activities are shared.

In essence, these beliefs about home and homeownership coalesce to produce an empirical instance of the contemporary phenomenon Brittan describes as "privatisation." The latter reflects the fragmentation of consciousness and reality into "relatively autonomous compartments" and is described in the following terms:

> Privatisation involves intense emotional involvement in the family, in one's friends, in one's hobbies, etc., etc. More importantly, the world of work is believed to be completely insulated from private life, leading to a split between the private and public self. Hence the private self becomes the focus of gratification.31

The correspondence between this definition and the view of home life summarised above is quite stiking particularly with reference to the "world of work."

The relationship of these subjective meanings to ideology will be considered in the subsequent, concluding chapter. Two issues, however, still remain to be discussed. The first concerns the effect of age and gender upon the themes discussed in this chapter. I had anticipated that both factors might create significant variations in meaning but this does not appear to have been a valid assumption. The consistency with which these attitudes were held, across the group, was most striking and the differences that did emerge were either obvious or relatively trivial. In the former instance, for example, those in the older age groups were less inclined to have an image of a dream home and justified this in terms of now being contented with what they had. The manner in which they discussed the ideas they used to hold, however, was largely the same as that characterising the remainder of the group. In terms of the latter issue, men and women tended to emphasise different aspects of the home when talking about the places they had lived in as children. The men were more likely to describe areas of open space or the yard than the house itself; however, this seemed to have little significance for the remainder of the opinions they expressed. The relative unimportance of these factors was particularly notable in discussing the traditional association of the home with "female space." Only 21% felt this was a valid generalisation in their own situation:

> Yeah, I think in fact it is. I'm away for at least eight house a day and she isn't. So the investment of time by her is much greater. She's much more conscious of colour and furniture, and so on, than I am. I'm just not thinking about those sort of things (pause) personality-wise, those sort of things just don't concern me whereas they do her.

A further 18% felt that the men were "perhaps a bit less interested" again mentioning the time spent in the home by the woman:

> I suppose . . . as a generalisation, that's true but I don't think I'm that less involved. I'm not as involved as . . . perhaps 60/40 because she spends all day here but I'm definitely not divorced from it.

Thus, 61% felt that in their own situation the generalisation was inapplicable and that the mate was equally as interested in the home. In two cases, the suggestion was made that the male was perhaps more interested than the female:

> No, most of the men I know are quite into their homes . . . making their mark. I think that's a generalisation that probably is applicable to a lot of men . . . you know, 20

> years ago . . . like my parents . . . my mother would always decorate and my father would deal with the physical aspects of the place. I can't imagine him trying to . . . choose wallpaper or decide what the girls' bedroom . . . how it was going to be done up. But that's something that's really changed. I think as men gain their independence too, they want to express themselves. It can be a struggle . . . You know, how do we combine? (pause) Where can we express ourselves and how? Is one of us going to take over the other or is he going to be too strong or me too strong? It was quite complex at first.

Similarly the interview lengths did not vary significantly between men and women and, in fact, one of the longest interviews (four hours) was with a man. Thus, the traditional dichotomy between male and female attitudes to the home would appear to be breaking down from the evidence presented by this sample.

Finally, there is also the question of how typical this group of men and women is with respect to Vancouver itself and to Canadian or North American society in general. It is difficult to respond to these issues in more than a highly tentative manner. As stated in Chapter Two, an inductive methodology was adopted with the aim of exploring subjective meanings rather than the deductive testing of hypotheses. The sampling procedure adopted was deliberately non-random in order to pursue a methodology of indepth interviewing and, as such, it provides no grounds for generalising the results of these interviews. Strictly speaking, the latter are quite specific to the 34 respondents in this group and are not necessarily representative of any larger group. Further research is ultimately required to shed light on these issues.

In spite of these caveats, however, some tentative comments can be made with regard to Vancouver. A study of the home and home decoration amongst upper income female homeowners, undertaken by Gerry Pratt, isolated two distinctive social worlds - one associated with "traditionalism" and the other with a more "modern" orientation.[32] The latter bears a number of similarities to the group considered in this chapter. It is characterised by diffuse, fragmented social networks in which each woman's collection of friends tends to be unique to herself. Their lives are quite insular and they are generally involved in few activities outside the home. Involvements tends to be for private gain rather than philanthropic reasons. They tend not to have an active commitment to an immediately involving social group with each tending to "stand as an individual in relation to others." Their homes bear few similarities to those of friends and their houses are thought of as being symbols of their own unique personality and individual creativity.

This social network and community orientation is similar to that described above as are the statements regarding their houses, individuality and self expression. These latter attitudes are, however, more extreme than those of the present group and exhibit none of their uncertainties as to exactly what it is that their homes express. In many ways, the group identified by Pratt seems to comprise an ideal type of the manner in which the members of the present group might view their homes if familial and/or financial constraints were removed. These comments are speculative but are suggestive of the applicability of these attitudes to a larger grouping than that considered here.

In terms of Canadian or North American society in general, it is more difficult to draw conclusions. The stereotype of the materialistic, status seeking, middle class homeowner derives primarily from an American literature. The data presented here is considerably less exotic than that usually found in studies of the meaning of the home or homeownership. The question of whether these dissimilarities actually reflect differences in the world views of the two societies is important but unanswerable within the context of the present study.

In the final chapter, the tentative interpretive comments made in Section 3.3 vii above will be considered further as will the relationship between those subjective meanings of the home and ideology.

Footnotes

[1] Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 46.

[2] Steven Marcus, "Reading the Illegible," in The Victorian City, ed. J. Oyos and M. Wolff (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 264.

[3] For examples of these aphorisms see Dennis Chapman, The Home and Social Status (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955); Claire Cooper, "The House as Symbol of Self" in Designing for Human Behaviour, ed. J. Lang (Stroudsbery, Penn.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1974), pp. 130-45; Kim Dovey, "Home: An Ordering Principle in Space," Landscape 22, No. 2 (1978), pp. 27-30; J. Douglas Porteous, "Home the Territorial Core," The Geographical Review, 66, No. 4 (1976), pp. 383-90; Lee Rainwater, "Fear and the House as Haven in the Lower Middle Class," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 32, No. 1 (1960), pp. 23-31. For an overview see Geoffrey O. Hayward, "Home as an Environmental and Psychological Concept," Landscape, 20, No. 1 (1975), pp. 3-9.

[4] Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (Montreal: Cardinal, 1959).

[5] J.R. Seeley et al., Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life (New York: Wiley, 1963), p. 46.

[6] Seeley, p. 52.

[7] John A. Agnew, "Housing and Identity in Capitalist Societies," in Housing and Identity, ed. James S. Duncan (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 61-62.

[8] Seeley et al., pp. 384-94.

[9] Robert M. Rakoff, "Ideology in Everyday Life: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing," Diss. University of Washington, 1975, p. 146.

[10] Rakoff, pp. 117-118.

[11] Rakoff, p. 120.

[12] Val Ross, "Squeezing the Middle Class," Macleans, March 10th, 1980, pp. 48-53.

[13] Here the percentages pertain to the 64% of the group who anticipate a move in the near future. To a large extent, these size requirements reflect the age distribution of the group.

[14] These percentages refer to responses to a question about the importance of ownership itself and, therefore, differ slightly from the responses noted above to a question about renting.

[15] The figures cited here refer to percentage of households, i.e., n = 19.

[16] Agnew, "Homeownership"; Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Culture in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); William Leiss, The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

[17] The figures cited here refer to those respondents with some sort of image of an ideal home, i.e., n = 23 or 70%.

[18] Rapoport, p. 66.

[19] Arthur Brittan, The Privatised World (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 48.

[20] Brittan, pp. 47-48.

[21] Brittan, p. 50.

[22] Steven Lukes, Individualism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973).

[23] Rakoff, pp. 143-145.

[24] Lasch, p. 35. Also see Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post Industrial Society (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

[25] In addition to being asked to comment directly upon the relationship between housing and status, this topic also arose in generally considering the house as an expressive medium, in discussing attitudes toward mobility, in discussing the association of particular types of housing with different stages of the life cycle, and in commenting generally upon the importance of ownership. In all cases the need to demonstrate status was denigrated.

[26] Patricia Marchak, Ideological Perspectives on Canada (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1975), pp. 14-15.

[27] David Ley, "Liberal Ideology and the Post Industrial City," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 70, No. 2 (1980) p. 239.

[28] In Vancouver, house prices rapidly escalated in 1980 from an average of around $70,000 to $140,000 plus in the fall the rental vacancy rate was consistently less than 0.1%.

[29] Ley, p. 242.

[30] See Brittan, Privatised World.

[31] Brittan, p. 40

[32] Geraldine Pratt, "Home Decoration and the Expression of Identity," Diss. University of British Columbia, 1980, pp. 127-133.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HOME AND HEGEMONY IN EVERYDAY LIFE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Contextual Comments

In the previous chapter, the range of subjective meanings of the home and homeownership articulated by a group of middle income homeowners were described. These were tentatively interpreted as reflecting and reinforcing an individualistic conception of self and social reality so that consciousness of these latter phenomena is both highly privatised and fragmented. However, as will be discussed below, there are significant departurnes from the "rugged individualism" of nineteenth century capitalism.

These contentions appear to be justified particularly in view of their attitudes regarding the nature of, and participation in, spheres of daily life other than the home. Indeed, consideration of the latter seems to have been essential and the specific meaning of the home does not appear to be fully comprehensible when isolated from these attitudes and beliefs. As Lane suggests: "An opinion or belief is best understood in the context of other opinions, beliefs and attitudes, for they illuminate its meaning, make its boundaries, modify and qualify its force."[11] This statement applies equally to the subjects to whom these opinions or beliefs pertain.

In the previous chapter, it was readily apparent that the nature, and significance of the various themes of subjective meaning only really became clear when considered in relation to ideas about 'non-home.' Thus, while social reality may be perceived, and understood as being comprised of discrete spheres of activity, the latter are nevertheless highly interrelated, at least at a conceptual level. Similarly, the concept of self is not a discrete entity. Rather, it reflects the manner in which one relates to others at an intimate and societal level which, in turn, has implications for, and reflects the basic separations made in daily life. In other words, understanding of one sphere of life requires an understanding of the construction of the relation of self to the social whole and of the specific spheres of daily living.[2]

Before commencing a discussion of ideology, a comment regarding the form of the latter is warranted. The subjective meanings isolated in the present study are historically and culturally specific and are, to a large extent, historically explicable. Indeed, a common interpretive strategy has been to document the historical processes that have combined to create the contemporary emphasis on the privately owned, detached home.[3] Reference is usually made to the economic, social, and political changes brought about by the growth of industrial capitalism and its resultant "shattering of the old feudal hegemony in which all spheres occupied a fixed position within a given set of production relations."[4] Stress tends to be placed upon removal of economic production from the home and household group, on the growing separation of home and work, on the changing functions and form of the family, and on the attempt to create a refuge from alienating work conditions and increasingly impersonal bureaucracy through which the home and family become the focus of personalised and privatised life.[5] Other factors, such as the development of the ideology of private property and individualism, technological developments in transportation and house building techniques, the growing degree of state intervention in housing provision and legislation, the development of housing related institutions, mass merchandising and consumption, are also cited in a less holistic manner, as being causal influences upon contemporary housing forms and tenure.[6]

This form of analysis does have considerable validity. However, it is not the method adopted here. In light of the type of empirical study undertaken, attribution of causality to these processes without concretely demonstrating the nature of the interconnections would bring about many of the problems Rakoff was seen to face in Chapter One in explaining contemporary subjective meanings as 'reflections' of liberal capitalist ideology. Most basically, analysis would tend to remain equally as functional as that of the "incorporation thesis" in that causality is attributed to impersonal, determinate historical forces such as industrialisation. These processes can be suggestive of causality and can serve to contextualise and ground contemporary phenomena but, in order to demonstrate these relationships, concrete, historical studies, such as the one undertaken by Rose, are necessary.[7] Furthermore, the empirical accuracy of these ideas may be questioned in light of the recent suggestions by, for example, MacFarlane, that the origins of English individualism can be traced back as far as the thirteenth century rather than the commonly cited eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[8]

Thus, while fully recognising the significance of these processes and the specificity of the subjective meanings under consideration, the interpretive strategy adopted here reflects the overall aim of the present study to understand ideology as a level of signification in everyday thought and practice rather than solely as a set of formal, propositional beliefs. Attention is, therefore, focussed upon the material bases of the ideas of home and the manner in which they may, or may not, be thought of as being ideological.

4.2 Ideology and the Construction of Self

The importance of the definition of, and construction of self was alluded to throughout Chapter Three and also in the present discussion. The nature of this definition and construction is suggested as being crucial to understanding both the meaning of the home and its ideological content. Briefly, the nature of the conception of self for the group presently under consideration will be outlined.

The consciousness of home and the social world in general is quite clearly predicated upon an individualistic conception of self and social reality. However, as suggested previously, it can be seen to differ quite substantially from the "rugged" individualism usually held to characterise capitalism and also invoked by Rakoff. Recently, several commentaries have been made regarding changes in the contemporary, western notion of self and Daniel Bell states that: "Western society is in the midst of a vast historical change in which old social relations (properly bound), existing power structure (centred on notions of restraint and delayed gratification) are being rapidly eroded."[9] In a similar but more socio-psychological manner, Richard Sennett and Christopher Lasch have, respectively, commented upon these trends and draw conclusions along the lines suggested in the following statement by Lasch:

> Much could be written about the signs of new life in the United States. This book, however, describes a way of life that is dying - the culture of competitive individualism, which in its decadence has carried the logic of individualism to the extreme of a war of all against all, the pursuit of happiness to the dead end of a narcissistic preoccupation with self. Strategies of narcissistic survival now present themselves as emancipation from the represive conditions of the past, thus giving rise to a "cultural revolution" that reproduces the worst fears of the collapsing civilisation it claims to criticise.10

As this quotation indicates, both are concerned to understand the contemporary character disorder termed narcissism. The latter is held to be the most common form of psychic distress dealt with by therapists and is seen to have replaced the type of obsessional neurosis documented by Freud. Sennett provides the following definition of narcissism as a character disorder:

> Narcissism in the clinical sense diverges from the popular idea of love of one's own beauty; more strictly, and as a character disorder, it is self absorption which prevents one from understanding what belongs within the domain of self and self gratification and what belongs outside it.11

Bell provides a more sociological or cultural characterisation in his discussion of the "antinomian attitude." Generally, both concepts comprise aspects of a concern to understand the nature and origins of historical changes in the notion of self.

The form taken by the arguments these authors present is particularly well illustrated in Lasch's discussion of "Changing Modes of Making It: From Horatio Alger to the Happy Hooker" and their substantive content has relevance to the meanings of the home presently being considered:

> Until recently, the Protestant work ethic stood as one of the most important underpinnings of American culture. According to the myth of capitalist enterprise, thrift and industry held the key to material success and spiritual fulfillment. America's reputation as a land of opportunity rested on its claim that the destruction of hereditary obstacles to advancement created conditions in which social mobility depended on individual initiative alone. The self made man, archetypical embodiment of the American dream, owed his advancement to habits of industry, sobriety, moderation, self discipline and avoidance of debt. He lived for the future, shunning self indulgence in favour of patient, painstaking accumulation; and as long as the collective prospect looked on the whole so bright, he found in the deferral of gratification not only his principal gratification but an abundant source of profits. . . . In an age of diminishing expectations, the Protestant virtues no longer excite enthusiasm. Inflation erodes investments and savings. Advertising undermines the horror of indebtedness, exhortint the consumer to buy now and pay later. As the future becomes more menacing and uncertain, only fools put off until tomorrow the fun they can have today. A profound shift in our sense of time has transformed work habits, values and the definition of success. Self-preservation has replaced self improvement as the goal of earthly existence. . . . If Robinson Crusoe embodied the ideal type of economic man, the hero bourgeois society in its ascendancy, the spirit of Moll Flanders presides over its dotage.[12]

Thus, in contemporary society, emphasis is held to be placed upon personal feelings and inner needs, upon intimate social relations and on the search for self definition and self actualisation rather than upon beliefs in thrift, delayed gratification or avoidance of debt. The family and, by extension, the home, whilst already being privatised, have come to be seen as the main institutions in which the enhancement of self can, and should, take place. As Sennett notes: "We have tried to make the fact of being in private, alone with ourselves and with family and intimate friends, an end in itself."[13] In essence, the processes of privatisation and fragmentation have become heightened in the course of historical development with particularly profound consequences for collective activity so that, for example:

> As concern for questions of selfhood has grown greater, participation with strangers for social ends has diminished - or that participation is perverted by the psychological question. In community groups, for instance, people feel the need to get to know each other as persons in order to act together; they then get caught up in mobilising processes of revealing themselves to each other as persons, and gradually lose the desire to act together.[14]

Furthermore, these trends are described as being a logical consequence of the manner in which capitalism has developed. Lasch notes that: "Economic man himself has given way to the psychological man of our times - the final product of bourgeois individualism."[15] Both Bell and Sennett cite the importance of mass production and mass consumption in undermining the traditional value system though the zealous promotion of a hedonistic way of life. The latter also comments on the effects of privatisation and on the development of a secular, immanant, as opposed to a transcendent code of meaning.[16]

The relevance of this characterisation to the subjective meanings of home considered here is readily apparent and there are several obvious parallels that can be drawn. For example, the emphasis placed upon "quality of experience," on amenity and aesthetics, on intimate and familial relations, on self expression and the uniqueness of the individual. The denigration of the value of accumulation, economic advancement and commitment to a form of "public life" seem to be more indicative of an "antinomian attitude" than the characteristics traditionally associated with "rugged" or "possessive" individualism.

However, while parallels of this nature can be discerned, the present study should not be seen to empirically demonstrate the existence of a narcissistic or antinomian character structure per se. Research was not undertaken with this aim in mind but, more importantly, some elements of this thesis also appear to be missing. Most obvious are the extreme character traits associated with pathological narcissism: ". . . dependence on vicarious warmth provided by others combined with a fear of dependence, a sense of inner emptiness, boundless inner rage and unsatisfied oral cravings."[17] The absence of these traits is probably to be expected given the present focus on everyday life rather than clinical case studies. More salient exceptions pertain, for example, to the emphasis placed upon objects in this new perspective. Bell notes that:

> By the middle of the twentieth century, capitalism sought to justify itself not by work or property, but by the badges of status of material possessions and by the promotion of pleasure. The rising standard of living and the relaxation of morals became ends in themselves as the definition of personal freedom.[18]

Additionally, Lasch sees the world as comprising a "mirror" for the narcissist.[19] However, in terms of the present study, the importance of possessions and objects was consistently downplayed. It is difficult to estimate the significance of this attitude for it may reflect a tempering of the ethic of self-gratification as a result of the pragmatic exigencies of daily life. The conception of self under consideration is most appropriately viewed as tending toward a form of narcissistic or antinomian individualism.

As stated above, the main question to be considered here concerns the nature of, and the basis of ideology in everyday life. In addition to the ideal about homeownership that comprises the "incorporation thesis," this tenure has also been described as being ideological because it has become reified as the "right and natural" manner in which to occupy housing.[20] For the group under consideration, however, this generalisation is too superficial because all were cognizant of alternative possibilities and of the experiences of other, European countries in which rates of homeownership are relatively low. Rather, it is the institutional arrangements regarding housing costs and finances and the premises upon which they attempt to live their lvies that together undermine the saliency of these alternatives. The data presented in the present study are most illustrative of the latter aspects of this calculus reflecting the relatively narrow scope of the project.

In this context, it is suggested that rather than focussing upon the issue of the home per se, attention needs to be directed to the basis of attitudes toward the latter and this can be seen to lie in an individualistic conception of self and social reality which structures and informs experiences of everyday life. As noted earlier, the construction of self and the separations made in daily living are cited, by Barnett and Silverman, as being crucial to the understanding of ideology in that they are often accorded the qualities of boundedness and concreteness when such a strategy is unjustified.[21] These suggestions can be seen to be applicable to the subjective meanings of the home considered here and it will be suggested that they are premised on certain taken for granted, naturalised ideas about the nature of the "individual" and of human needs and the manner in which they can be satisfied.

The concept of the "individual" that emerges from the conversations with this group of homeowners, is characterised by uniqueness, autonomy and self determination. As suggested in Chapter Three, privacy and freedom tend to be equated and their images of freedom centre on the belief that the latter should be largely without limitations. The individual should be unconstrained by neighbours and, to a lesser extent, family, in order to relax, feel in control and pursue one's interests and capabilities. This set of needs was most starkly articulated in their attitudes toward children and housing. Most basically, the individual is seen to require the freedom to go his/her own way and private space is seen to be the arena that best facilitates this need, particularly in the relatively insular detached dwelling. These needs, and their dependency upon relative isolation, are issues that are never questioned and that tend to be thought of as being facts about human nature. The possibility that self-fulfillment might be pursued and achieved in a more collective situation is not something that is devalued but rather is an issue that is never considered due to the equation of privacy, isolation and freedom. The reification of the individual and his needs effectively circumscribe the range of action thought to be possible and as well as that actually undertaken. Unlike most of the functions of ownership, those afforded by private space are not perceived to be one choice among a possible set of options.

The endowment of private space with qualities not thought to be available in other spheres of daily life also has implications for the manner in which these separations are perceived. This was most obvious with regard to work experiences which were held to have little or no relationship to home life. This separation tends to be taken for granted and naturalised. Similar, although less obvious, conclusions can be drawn regarding the "public" arena. While community and cooperative involvement did occur, it was of such a limited and indirect nature that the terms collective activity or participation did not really apply. This type of activity was overwhelming interest based in that personal gain or protection was the prime motivator. In many ways this situation can be likened to the more basic separation between the "political" and the "economic" and the ascription of a limited range of activities and issues to the former.

The persuasiveness of the reification of the "individual" is illustrated in an interesting manner by Barnett and Silverman in their consideration of an alternative socialist vision to the capitalist social order. They note both Marx's "wistful" comments on the possibility of "free substitution of tasks" and Lenin's state of "unthinkable flux" and summarise them in the following manner:

> The formulation goes something like this: in a communist society, each person can choose temporary reifications, or states of being. While moving freely among various options. (The brutalised reifications needed to reproduce capitalist society would slowly fade away as their necessity faded.) The relations between such states of being are not perceived on the model of relations between things.22

In appraising this formulation, they conclude that while the nature of the system producing the present reifications has to be changed "something also remains the same," namely, the basic structure of bounded domains with the person as the agent of choice. They feel that constructions of the "communist" individual tend to retain too much of the content of the Enlightenment concept of the individual and this is seen to obscure the possibilities of recognising the "dialectic creativity of future social formations." Contemporary socialist critiques are seen to be insufficiently radical.

The work of Sennett and Cobb illustrates a further sense in which the concept of the self-determining individual may be considered to be ideological.[23] In the Hidden Injuries of Class, they document the manner in which blue collar workers grapple with and attempt to live by the messages of individualism, such as the need to strive and work hard, to be treated with equality and to take responsibility for one's own actions. Their attempts to actualise these virtues are seen to be continually frustrated by the class society in which they live. However, rather than attributing failure, at least partly, to socio-structural causes, they perceive it to be their own fault. Hence the "hidden injuries" of class. Rather than seeking social change, their efforts, and understanding are turned inwards.

For the group under consideration here, some of the messages are different in that emphasis is placed upon the enjoyment of life rather than on economic advancement. However, the individual is still the agent of causality. The issues of success or failure are still likely to be interpreted as being individual or personal issues so that attention is directed away from wider societal constraints. This type of emphasis was apparent in the discussion of status in Chapter Three and is also suggested by Sennett in his later discussion of the Fall of Public Man:

> The obsession with persons at the expense of more impersonal social relations is like a filter which discolours our rational understanding of society; it obscures the continuing importance of class in advanced industrial society.24

The difficulties in achieving this more hedonistic lifestyle were noted in Chapter Three with reference to the familial and financial constraints faced by many of the group. Speculatively, it is possible that "hidden injuries" likely to accrue from frustration of this ideal will be as great, and perhaps greater than those documented by Sennett and Cobb. While some optimism could be retained regarding the possibility of traditional social mobility, the contemporary goals of self gratification are held to be self-defeating:

> This absorption in self, oddly enough, prevents gratification of self needs; it makes the person at the moment of attaining an end or connecting with another person feel that "this isn't what I wanted." Narcissism thus has the double quality of being a voracious absorption in self needs and the block to their fulfillment.25

It is in this manner that narcissistic character disorders can develop. The definition of the individual as autonomous and self determining can be seen to be profoundly ideological in that it obfuscates the whole issue of societal constrictions.

In light of these comments, the range of action of the homeowners considered here can be seen to be constrained by both the existing institutional arrangements (which combined to make ownership the only viable option available) and, more fundamentally, by their conceptions of self and others. Together these can be seen to preclude alternative ways of thinking about human needs and their satisfaction and about private space in general. Whilst private space is endowed with, and is seen to provide qualities not available elsewhere, the experiences of these homeowners will be reciprocally confirming. Thus, to quote Barnett and Silverman, the construction of the relation of the individual to the social whole and the separations made and experienced in daily life are fundamental aspects of our ideology which contribute to social reproduction:

> . . . through restricting and bounding the range of thinkable and actable possibilities, creating a sense of inevitability, and by uniquely situating the present as the setting of apparent choice.26

These comments regarding the conceptions of self and social reality seem to usefully suggest at least some of the ways in which the meaning of the home can be thought of as ideological. However, to draw conclusions in this manner still largely begs the question of the material bases of ideology in daily thought and practice. The methodology adopted to empirically consider the latter, whilst superior to that of the attitude survey, only really yielded a partial view of these issues. In a sense it is still one stage removed from the suggested source of ideological beliefs, namely, daily thought and practice. Whilst, from the interviews, conclusions can be drawn regarding the manner in which meaning contexts may be ideological, the origins, or at least reconstitution and persistence of these reifications remains unclear. These latter issues may be so much a part of our "recipe knowledge," that is, so closely tied to mundane daily activities, that they remain tacit and difficult to articulate. Ultimately, a more ethnographic or participant observation methodology may be required to fully comprehend the nature of the events that combined to give the self, and other aspects of daily life, the qualities of inevitability and naturalness. Through a methodology consisting only of interviewing, these latter facts can be discerned and described but the question of "why" cannot really be broached other than in a partial and preliminary manner.

Both the conception of self discussed here and the separations made in daily life are constructions rather than concrete entities.

Furthermore, these constructions and the subjective meanings of home they inform, are not inevitable either historically or cross culturally. Neither are they universal or inevitable in terms of contemporary North American society. The importance attached to the construction of self in interpreting the meaning of home can be at least partially validated, and further illustrated through comparison with the work of Rakoff.[27] For his main group, six basic dimensions were discerned which can be summarised as follows: The house was seen to be -

1. a commodity or investment opportunity, something to be bought and sold with an eye to profit as well as use. This is seen to be of secondary importance in the larger meaning system.
2. the place where child rearing occurs. The presence of children and the activities of family life are seen to make a house a home.
3. an indicator of personal success and status. This was partly a variant on conventional status-seeking and conspicuous consumption in which concern was for the judgements others would make on the basis of their residence. More often, emphasis was on self judgement in which evidence of their own success or failure in life lay in the nature/quality of their housing and their ability to improve the latter, or in the mere fact of owning.
4. a provider of a sense of permanence and security. The owner-occupied house was a powerful symbol of order, continuity, physical safety, and a sense of place.
5. a refuge from the outside world or even a bastion against that world.

6. ownership was necessary to actualise any or all these meanings. This centrality of ownership was usually expressed in terms of freedom.[28]

There are obvious similarities between these subjective meanings and those discussed in the previous chapter. However, there are also substantial and important differences. Most notable are the issues of status and success and also the greater centrality afforded to ownership, investment and the creation of an "escape" from daily life. Concomitantly, the basic and pervasive tension between the home as a symbol of both social mobility and permanence was lacking (although, as will be discussed below, this is not to suggest that the present views are unproblematic):

> If each of us is taught to be self reliant and to carry the full weight of responsibility for his lot in life even when control over that fate is outside or diffuse, then, somewhere, there has to be a place where such self judgement ceases. As we have seen, the house does signify just such an escape from the daily pressures of proving yourself. But this aspect of the house's meaning conflicts with the equally important sense of success and responsibility that people who own attach to their houses. This conflict appears to be a serious double bind for many people. On the one hand, the house is a safe refuge where one can be emotional and irrational and sharing. But, on the other hand, the house is also the scene of self or fulfilment, of exerting control, and of self judgement.29

The subjective meanings articulated by Rakoff's group and those discussed in Chapter Three can be seen to tend toward the two character structures and views of self described above by Lasch - the rugged individualist and the narcissist. This suggests that whilst the latter may be increasingly evident, it is not totally pervasive. A variety of forms of individualism may be said to coexist. A similar point is made by Pratt who identifies two differing social worlds among elite groups in Vancouver based in one case upon a psychological bond and, in the other case, upon a social or group oriented bond. The existence of the latter leads her to suggest that industrialisation and generalised market exchange may not inevitably lead to an "ideology linked with the antinomian attitude." She points to the importance of the differential role of the family, involvement in a social group and group values and active participation in community affairs and their effect upon the definition and express of self.[30]

This more socially oriented group contrasts to both the previously considered groups and has parallels with the two couples identified by Rakoff as having radically divergent views to his main materialistically oriented group:

> All spoke in typical fashion of the benefits of owning, mentioning the pride and responsibility of fixing up your own house, the sense of security that comes with owning, and the freedom from landlords. But they also spoke in very different terms when they were explaining the relation of home life to their personal strivings and non home role.31

Both are seen to draw on less common aspects of the American cultural tradition. The lives of one couple are seen to revolve around the church and their homes are described as making sense within the "structure of a deep fundamentalist faith." Their home life is seen in the context of their Christian mission and the church community and, rather than shutting themselves off from the world, their house is open to all who share with them - "their private times are understood as being provided by the Lord to enhance their services to others."[32] The second couple live in a disorderly, heterogenous urban neighbourhood and, rather than being a refuge from others, their home is open to all the neighbours of this racially integrated community. Child rearing does not take place in protected, private space but, rather, is viewed as a responsibility shared amongst the neighbourhood - "they find self-fulfillment not alone, inside their four walls, but out among the conflict-ridden groups of the neighbourhood. . . ."[33]

Thus, neither couple are seen to act out the usual dramas of possession and fulfillment and this is attributed to a shift in their thinking about the purpose and meaning of home life and the relation of the latter to their personal strivings and non-home roles. It is suggested that whilst this contention is accurate, analysis needs to penetrate further to consider the variable nature of the construction of the relation of self to the social world. This idea can in fact be seen to be implicit but undeveloped in these statements by Rakoff. The nature of self can be seen to be basic to these dissenting views of the meaning of home and the possibility of the inclusion of the latter in a wider, shared framework of action and meaning. Whilst the self and social life are constructed on individualistic, taken-for-granted premises, home and community life are unlikely to be perceived as being continuous. This suggestion is reflected in the assessment Rakoff makes of the availability of these alternatives to the wider population:

> To a "heathen" like me, the Kleins, while gracious, seemed alien and unapproachable. And to the anti-social Thoreau in me, the Harveys' life seemed all too chaotic and uncontrolled.34

Of course, at this point the questions of the nature of the bases for these alternative views and their ideological potential arise but are beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, in both instances, it can be suggested that the definition of the "individual" and individual "needs" (and their means of satisfaction) that tend to be espoused in North American society have not been taken for granted. Thus, daily life is understood and experienced in a manner quite different from both the main groups considered by the present study and by Rakoff. At times during the interviews undertaken in the present study, the stress placed upon the importance of other people and the rejection of materialistic values seemed to suggest the potential for less privation, more genuinely social lives. However, in aggregate, this potential did not come to fruition largely, it is suggested, because self and social life are still understood in individualistic terms. While others, beyond a small circle of intimates, are seen to constrain and to compromise personal freedom, the alternative meanings of the home as noted, for example, by Pratt and Rakoff, are likely to become unavailable. The present group may have even turned further inward in their rejection of status seeking and materialism.

As mentioned earlier, the views on home life articulated here are not unproblematic. Rakoff, following Sennett and Cobb, saw the meanings expressed by his group as reflecting an attempt to cope with the recurrent personal tensions created by an individualistic view of social reality and this contention is thought to also be applicable here.[35] The nature of the tension differs, however, and, rather than centering on the issues of mobility and permanence, concerns for privacy, self expression and self fulfillment seem to conflict with the desired intimacy of the family. The needs of each member of the family are defined individualistically so that the necessity for isolation, lack of restraint and personal freedom are emphasised and their satisfaction within the single arena of shared private space can be problematic.

Furthermore, the pursuit of quality, enjoyment and self-expression may be compromised by the unavailability of the standard or level of consumption required to meet these ends. As Lasch notes, the contemporary narcissist hopes "not so much to prosper as simply to survive although survival increasingly demands a large income." It seems that the removal of one source of tension, namely, that brought about by materialistic striving, has led to, or made way for another one which, if Sennett and Lasch are correct, may prove to be even more intractable. Whilst these tensions were neither acute nor universal amongst those interviewed in the present study, problems did seem to be of this nature.

4.3 Home and Hegemony: Endnote

As stressed in Chapter Two, the aims of this study were exploratory. As such it holds no pretentions as to having answered, or even asked, all the pertinent questions regarding the ideological significance of the home in everyday life and its contribution to social reproduction. The inappropriateness of the present methodology to really penetrate these issues has already been mentioned and this is perhaps the main lesson of the empirical portion of this thesis. If ideology is to be appropriately understood as being a level of signification that is inextricably part of material, social activities, then analysis must also focus upon the latter. In this manner it may be possible to move beyond cataloguing which meanings are ideological and which meanings are not and to begin to answer the question why and how these reifications take place. The latter issues can only be partially broached through a methodology comprised only of interviewing, albeit interviewing that is in-depth.

Within the scope of the present study, the issues of the meaning of the home and, to a lesser extent, of ownership can be seen to have ideological significance although not in the usual manner. Rather than only reflecting embourgeoisment/indoctrination, the meanings and expectations of home also reflect the manner in which this group constructs the relation of self to the social whole and the separations made in daily life. Deep-rooted aspects of both appear to be reified so that they seem to be reflections of "the way things are" rather than historical and culturally specific constructions. In essence, they acquire characteristics Barnett and Silverman describe as the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness"; that is, social categories, including the "individual" are characterised by boundedness and autonomy rather than being understood as being inextricably interrelated and mutable. This situation can be seen to be fundamentally ideological particularly because the relations that are obscured are fundamentally relations of domination and subordination.

The latter comment is somewhat speculative in that it does not derive directly from the data present in Chapter Three. However, specifically in terms of the privately owned home, the suggestions regarding reification are thought to be valid. What is interesting is the fact that the tenure appears to be less important than the expectations of private space itself. Their ideal is the detached dwelling and, while ownership is preferable given pragmatic exigencies, their requirements of private space are not entirely dependent upon tenure. For example, ownership may be valued because it affords control in terms of excluding others, making changes and generally doing what one wants. However, in most rental situations this is not thought to be lacking unless one's landlord and/or neighbours are particularly obnoxious. Privacy tends to be respected whatever the tenure of the home and few people felt that privacy and renting were mutually incompatible. In certain instances, whether contemporary or historical, ownership may well have engendered conservative attitudes, but for the group considered here, this is not a significant factor. Their lives as tenants did not appear to be more social or more oriented toward collective participation or action. It is suggested that their inactivity is predicated, more fundamentally, upon an individualistic conception of self and social reality than on the fact of owning a home so that whatever their living situation, public or political activity seems likely to be limited to largely personal, temporally specific issues.

In concluding, the levels of subjective meanings considered here seem to be more appropriately thought of as contributing to an ideology of home or private space rather than homeownership. The essence of these meanings is well captured by the following comments regarding the importance of owning a home:

> Well, it's security in that you've got this - you know, you've got a roof over your head and you're not going to be pushed out . . . other than that sort of thing - it - I don't know, you know sometimes I think it's very - it's very important and at other times I think it's a pain in the backside - you know, it ties you down and eats up all your money and it eats up all your time. So it goes - but so can renting - so it goes either way. If you're bringing up a family it's nice to bring them up in a home that's owned rather than - well, just because it becomes maybe a more permanent place of residence than if you rented and you can . . . let your ideas and your imagination spread a lot more - easily. It's a pain sometimes but - it generally makes better sense.

Finally, to reiterate the suggestions of Barnett and Silverman that have informed much of the discussion thus far, both the categories we invoke in daily life and the manner in which we categorise can be aspects of ideology and will take on this quality unless recognised and understood as being social constructions. This is also equally applicable to analytic social thought.

Footnotes

[1] Robert Lane, *Political Ideology* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 9.

[2] Steve Barnett and Martin G. Silverman, *Ideology and Everyday Life: Anthropology, NeoMarxist Thought and the Problem of Ideology and the Social Whole* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), p. 3.

[3] See, for example, Bonnie Lloyd, "The Social Necessity of Housework: Women, Home and Status," Paper presented at the Special Session - Social Identity and Residential Landscape, Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, April 1981, Los Angeles; David Handlin, "The Detached House in the Age of Object and Beyond," *EDRA*, 3 (1972), pp. 21-27.

[4] Arthur Brittan, *The Privatised World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 55.

[5] For example see Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life* (London: Harper and Row, 1976).

[6] For example, see Community Development Project Intelligence and Information unit, *Whatever Happened to Council Housing?* (London: CDP, 1976); Handlin, *Detached House*; Robert M. Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy: A Phenomenological Analysis of American Housing," Diss. University of Washington, 1975.

[7] Damaris Rose, "Toward a Re-Evaluation of the Political Significance of Home-Ownership in Britain," in *Housing, Construction and the State*, Political Economy of Housing Workshop of the Conference of Socialist Economists (London: PEHW, 1981).

[8] Allan MacFarlane, "The Origins of English Individualism: Some Surprises," *History and Theory*, 6 (1978), pp. 255-77; A similar criticism is made by Nancy G. Duncan, "Homeownership and Social Theory," in Housing and Identity, ed. James S. Duncan (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 98-134.

[9] Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 37.

[10] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p. 21.

[11] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 8.

[12] Lasch, p. 106.

[13] Sennett, p. 9.

[14] Sennett, p. 11.

[15] Lasch, p. 22.

[16] Bell, p. 477; Sennett, pp. 20-21.

[17] Lasch, p. 74.

[18] Bell, p. 477.

[19] Lasch, p. 38.

[20] See Rose, "Toward A Re-Evaluation."

[21] Barnett and Silverman, pp. 1-38.

[22] Barnett and Silverman, p. 30.

[23] Richard Sennett and Johnathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[24] Sennett, p. 4.

[25] Sennett, p. 5.

[26] Barnett and Silverman, pp. 20-21.

[27] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy"; Robert M. Rakoff, "Ideology in Everyday Life: The Meaning of the House," Politics and Society, 7 (1977), pp. 85-104.

[28] Rakoff, "Ideology in Everyday Life," pp. 93-94.

[29] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 146.

[30] Geraldine Pratt, "Home Decoration and the Expression of Identity," Diss. University of British Columbia, 1980.

[31] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 151.

[32] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 152.

[33] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 153.

[34] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 154.

[35] Rakoff, "Ideology and Public Policy," p. 145.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following is a summary of the topics and typical lead-in questions utilised in initiating discussions on the subjective meanings of home, private space and related spheres of daily life.

Topic - Housing History

Do you own this house outright or are you paying off a mortgage?

How many houses have you owned?

How long have you lived in this house and neighbourhood?

Do you have a family? How many children, and how old?

Are you married?

Topic - General Views of "Home"

What sort of attributes must a place have for you to call it "home"?

What does the phrase "feeling at home" mean to you?

Topic - Childhood Homes

Did you spend your childhood in one home or several?

What do you particularly recall about (it)/(them)?

Did your parents usually rent or own? What did you feel about that?

Topic - Accommodation Between Childhood and First Owned Home

What sort of places did you live in after leaving home?

What were your main reasons for renting?

How did you feel about renting?

Topic - Ideal Home

Do you have an image of an ideal or dream home?

Is this something you're aiming for here or later on?

What would your ideal home be like?

Topic - Ownership (general)

What is it about owning that's important to you?

When, and why, did you decide to buy?

Has owning lived up to your expectations?

Topic - Investment

Do you look on your house as a form of investment?

Was that an important consideration when you decided to buy?

Topic - House and Family

Has having a family affected the housing choices you've made?

What sorts of things should a house and neighbourhood provide for children?

Is it important for children to be brought up in a home that's owned?

Topic - The House as Haven

Do you see your house as a place that's generally open or closed to others? To the rest of the world?

How would you define privacy for yourself?

Topic - Mobility

Are you likely to move from here? Why?

Will you eventually settle in one place?

People often associated different types of housing with different stages of their lives; do you see that happening in your own life?

Did you see your first home as a starter home?

In North America, people seem to believe that a successful person moves up to a better house or neighbourhood every few years; do you believe in that?

Topic - First Home

How did you feel about buying your first home?

How did you feel about the houses you later bought?

How did you feel about securing finances to buy your first home?

Topic - Self Expression

Would you say your house was expressive of yourself, or your family or anything in particular? What?

Do you think houses generally reveal things about their owner? What?

Would your interaction with a person be affected by the type of house a person owns?

Do you feel your house is important to you emotionally or psychologically?

Do you enjoy decorating and fixing your house up? Who usually does it?

Topic - Gender

The home is often thought to be female space. Would you agree with that idea?

Are there particular parts of the house or rooms you really identify with?

Topic - Renting

Could you find a place comparable with the one you bought in the rental market?

Would you feel differently about renting a house as opposed to an apartment?

Is renting a future option?

Topic - Influences on Housing Choices

What do you think have been the main influences on the ideas you have about housing?

Do you remember any ideas your parents had?

Have there been similarities in the places you've lived in as an adult? Were they similar to your childhood home(s) or to your friends' homes?

Topic - Neighbourhood

How important is the neighbourhood relative to the house itself?

How would you react to a plan to change the zoning in this area?

What procedures would you follow in order to object to such a plan?

Topic - Community Involvement

How often do you entertain?

What type of people do you usually socialise with?

What sort of places do you tend to use when socialising?

Would you describe your lives as being home or community oriented?

Are you involved in any of these activities? :

- Clubs
- Professional associations
- Sporting clubs
- Other
- Church and church organisations
- Use of neighbourhood facilities
- Involvement with neighbours in informal cooperative activities
- Volunteer work
- How active are you politically?
- Cultural events

Do you feel that people in this neighbourhood have a shared sense of commitment to it?

Topic - Work

What is your occupation?

How do you feel about your job?

How would you describe the relationship between your job and your home life?

How do you feel about being a housewife/homemaker?

Topic - Ideology

What's your reaction to this quote - "We've been taught in this country that owning a home is next to Godliness. . . ."?

If interest rates continue to escalate, could you see homeowners refusing to pay, like a rent strike?

Did you like Joe Clark's policy of tax credits for homeowners?

What do you think of these statements about homeownership?

- People who own homes feel a greater stake in the community and the country in which they live.
- A society in which a major proportion of the population owns homes is likely to be a more stable, settled and productive society.
- People who own homes have a real incentive to ensure that they earn enough to pay for it - an incentive to work five days a week.

Did you grow up to expect the typical middle class lifestyle of marriage, house, family, rising living standards?

Topic - Background Information

How far did you go in school?

Were you born in Canada?

Where were your parents and grandparents born?

What was your father's occupation?

What is your spouse's occupation?

Which age category would you place yourself in?

20s
30s
40s
50s
60s
70s

Which income category would you place your family in?

Less than $15,000 p.a.
$15 - 24,000 p.a.
$25 - 34,000 p.a.
$35 - 44,000 p.a.
$45 - 54,000 p.a.
more than $55,000 p.a.

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