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**Architectural Space and The  
Reproduction of Domestic Ideals:**  
*Negotiating Contemporary  
Domesticity in The Tyneside Flat*

**Heba M. S. Sarhan**

**PhD**

**2021**

# **Architectural Space and The Reproduction of Domestic Ideals: Negotiating Contemporary Domesticity in The Tyneside Flat**

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## **Abstract**

Potential mismatch between the domestic ideals embedded in the design of commonplace in domestic architecture and the reality of domestic practices has been widely acknowledged in research into housing. The problem is that evidence from social sciences research indicate a conflict between contemporary family domestic practices and the one shared space model developed during the second half of the twentieth century. This conflict is accompanied with limited knowledge about the dwelling that represents the contemporary family life. By questioning how contemporary domesticity negotiates commonplace domestic architecture, this thesis seeks to explore the contemporary dwelling model through idiosyncratic domestic practices. Relying on multimodal methods, experiences of six families living with their children in the Tyneside flats were explored and captured the physical and tangible dimensions of the spatiality of domestic practices. The findings reveal the spatial needs associated with the contemporary home life through the complexity of the shared family space and the variety of spatial relationships between the personal and the shared space. The boundaries of the family privacy were also revealed through the acceptance of the overlap between the private sphere and the surrounding semi-public space. The reproduction of domestic ideals in commonplace in this case was seen in relationship to aspects affecting the inhabitants' power in taking actions on space. The contribution to knowledge is depicting the dwelling model that represents the reality of contemporary home living in the UK. Such an alternative understanding of the dwelling model also contributes in filling the knowledge gap between commonplace as abstract representation of domestic ideals and the representation of the reality of contextual and cultural dimensions shaping domestic life. The proposed

contributions offer an approach for mitigating the tension between the designed space and reality of domestic life

*To Noor, Gameela and my beloved Parents*

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## Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by Northumbria University Ethics Committee in June 2018.

**I declare that the word count of the Thesis is 69,727 words.**

Name: Heba Sarhan

Signature:

Date: 21 March 2021

Chapter 1

**Introducing 'The Case of The Contemporary Family Dwelling'**

# Chapter 1: Introducing 'The Case of The Contemporary Family Dwelling'

## 1.1 Research background

### Personal motivations

This thesis addresses concerns about the appropriateness of dwellings for contemporary domesticity in the UK.

Here, I share thoughts about my own architectural practice in the field of domestic architecture. The experiences I describe reflect the roots of my motivation for this enquiry and the curiosity driving the questions that subsequently arise.

*During the early years of my architectural practice, back in the early years of this century, I was involved in the design of residential projects in a small architectural studio in Cairo. Our clients belonged to both upper- and upper-middle-class families of Cairo who either wanted us to design their homes from scratch or 'adjust' model dwellings they had bought in a private compound. After a year of starting the practice, new clients' reflections on our designs repeatedly commented that they found in our designs what they had aspired for in their homes. By that time, I noticed a conflict. On the one hand, the founder of the studio wanted to 'fit' a 'standard design' into the different dwelling plots by providing solutions that responded to the personal needs of each client and the spatial restrictions imposed by each plot. However, for me, a fresh grad, aiming for individuality and experimentation, I had expected that innovation would be the essence of the individual concept of home. However, the clients' comments about how our 'fitted', standardised proposals perfectly fit their lives intrigued me.*

*Why did these families share the same dream home despite the differences between them? What is the role of the designer in cases of this commonality of housing design? I even tried to classify aspects of differences but, by that time, I could not figure out the reason behind the patterns I found.*

My experience of family living in a Tyneside flat also influenced my position as a researcher during this study.

*Drawing on descriptions included in Rightmove, I had expected that a three-bedroom flat with proximity to amenities and good schools would be suitable for our temporary home during my PhD study. In contrast to these expectations, the lack of comfort we experienced in our home proved as important as the outlined features to the extent that we moved out after one year. As an architect and a researcher, this unexpected situation triggered my curiosity. What was missing there? The space felt restrictive, and the flat refused any negotiations!*

*These questions and observations were my companions throughout this research journey.*

## **1.2 Research rationale**

The field of Housing Studies has revealed the ways in which domestic architecture reflects the socio-cultural meanings and values of domestic life of a particular time and place. The literature review in this study is grounded in one of the most prominent research streams in this field points to a potential difference between the idealised domestic values embedded in the design of a dwelling and the domesticity practices of everyday life (see Sections 2.2.4, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 3.5.2, 3.5.3, 3.5.4, 3.5.5). Connections and disjunctions between the design of the dwelling and domesticity practices suggest that representation of domestic ideals through domestic architecture should not be considered as deterministic (Costa Santos et al., 2018). Idiosyncrasy is an intrinsic feature of domestic practices, whether this is reflective of the particular characteristics of each household or whether this is a response to changing life circumstances for households through time. When dwellings fail to enable idiosyncratic, changing socio-spatial practices, a so-called sense of 'homelessness' develops. Such an experience is identified by Somerville (1997, p. 534) as a sense of 'indifference' and by Dovey's (1985, p. 34) indication to standardising the qualities of the dwelling as 'process and conditions that can erode the experience of home and paralyse its emergence in the modern world'. The domestic ideals of a society also typically change through

time. Where commonplace types of domestic architecture endure, they can at once represent the domestic ideals of a bygone era, while offering a setting for contemporary homelife. Whether change is witnessed at the micro-level of household idiosyncrasy and changing life circumstance, or at the macro-level of a shifting domestic paradigm, the potential for a mismatch between the ideals embedded in the dwelling 'as-built' and the ideals as practiced by the household is clear. Yet, despite the endurance of much commonplace domestic architecture, relatively little is known about contemporary householder experiences and appropriations of its spaces. In other words, little is known about the ways in which the collective domestic ideals represented by the built form and spaces of these dwellings, meet the contemporary domestic ideals reflected in idiosyncratic homelife practices.

### **1.2.1 The addressed knowledge gap**

This thesis considers the impact of changes in domestic practices on the understanding of the contemporary family dwelling. The 'one shared space dwelling model'<sup>1</sup> (see Section 1.2.3) developed during the second half of the twentieth century represents home-centred family life practices that are rooted in the distinction between the public and private spheres (Crow, 1989; Allan, 1989; Devine, 1989) and the roles of men and women in the family (Blunt and Dowling, 2005, pp88-139; Valentine, 2001, pp.63-102) (more details in Section 3.2). Relying on this model for housing in the contemporary period is criticised by scholars such as Valentine (2001) for disregarding the changing ideals related to women's position in society that causes conflicts over the management of work and family duties. Other scholars, such as Brindley (2002) and Hardey (1989), have discussed how the change from the nuclear family to diverse household structures

---

<sup>1</sup> *The thesis specifically addresses the one shared space model through spatial solutions that emerged during the second half of the twentieth century such as the living room, the dinner/lounge and the open plan (more details in Section 1.2.2).*

affects social equality due to the representation of domestic life through the detached family house ideal. Studies by both Brindley (2002) and Hardey (1989) have amplified aspects of inequality when specifying the difficulties faced by lower socio-economic groups when housed in small dwellings and flats.

Alongside these social problems, there is also evidence from social sciences research that contemporary family domestic practices conflict with the one shared space model of the family dwelling. Contemporary domesticity, for example, includes the integration of work into domestic life and the significance of supporting parental supervision and children's wellbeing in domestic life (see Section 3.2). Alongside these aspects of disjunction, there has been an absence of housing guidance that relates the dwelling features to the reality of domestic practices since the Parker Morris Committee report in 1961. This represents a significant gap in knowledge about the contemporary family dwelling.

This theoretical background illuminates a gap between existing theoretical notions and the reality of the spatial needs associated with contemporary family domestic practices. The outlined evidence of this gap implies the need to reconstruct the collective conception of the family dwelling and the spatial qualities associated with contemporary socio-cultural domestic practices.

## **1.1 Research focus**

### **1.2.1 the research question**

According to the outlined gap and research rationale, the research question guiding this thesis is:

*'How does contemporary family domesticity negotiate commonplace domestic architecture?'*

To answer this question, the contemporary family dwelling is explored through the following sub questions:

*1-How is contemporary family domesticity practised in pre-existing space?*

*2-How is pre-existing space negotiated by inhabitants?*

*3-What do negotiations with architectural space reveal about the contemporary dwelling model?*

(See Section 4.2. for a further discussion of the research questions in relationship to the theoretical approach taken in this thesis.)

## **1.2.2 Fundamental concepts**

### ***Commonplace domestic architecture***

A focus in this thesis on both dualities of idiosyncrasy and collectiveness; and stability and change in domestic architecture (see details in Sections 2.2 and 2.3, respectively) makes commonplace domestic architecture a core concept for understanding how a dwelling represents the reality of domestic life in a society. Accordingly, key relevant concepts are explained here to clarify the perspective taken in this thesis to explore the contemporary dwelling.

#### a- Dwelling models

Dwelling models are widely addressed as models of spatial structure (Rapoport, 1969, 1990; Lawrence, 1982, 1990; Kent, 1990), spatial order (Gauvain et al., 1982; Lawrence, 1990), and symbolic representation (Lawrence, 1990) that represent collective conceptions about the dwelling within a certain society. The appropriateness of existing understanding of dwelling models when studying contemporary communities is questioned in this thesis owing to their indication of

the dominance of societal over individual conceptions of domesticity in the production of domestic architecture (see Section 2.2.3).

b- Model dwellings

Model dwellings represent an idealised form of the dwelling that embody pre-determined domestic ideals (see Section 2.2.4 for more details). These models are associated with the separation between the production of the dwelling and domestic practices in modern societies. There are views that point out that such an idealised form of the dwelling is a product of power distributions in aspects of society, such as class (Burnett, 1986; Daunton, 1983; Duncan, 1993), economic power (Dovey, 1992), and the designers' authority over the representation of the collective conception of domesticity (Attfield, 2000, 75). However, indications of Wright (1991) and Dovey (1992) about a mutual relationship between the collective societal and the individual inhabitants' conceptions of domesticity open the way to enquiring about the contemporary dwelling through the connections between these collective and idiosyncratic conceptions of domesticity (see Section 2.2.4 for more details).

***Home-centredness***

This domestic paradigm refers to the mid-twentieth century domestic ideal that represents the centrality of the private family sphere (Crow, 1989; Allan, 1989; Saunders and Williams, 1989; Dupuis and Thorns, 1998; Madigan and Munro, 2002; Brindley, 2002). A home-centred family life is also acknowledged by its association with the restricted connection between the domestic sphere and the community (Crow, 1989; Brindley, 2002; Ravtez and Turkington, 2006). Accordingly, the extended time spent by family members within the dwelling is associated with the significance of the duality of togetherness and individuality (Munro and Madigan, 1993; Madigan and Munro, 2002; Dowling, 2008; Dowling and Power, 2012). The family dwelling associated with mid-twentieth century

home-centred domesticity represents the nuclear family with two children (Crow, 1989; Brindley, 2002; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006). The spatial structure of this dwelling is designed according to a 'one shared space dwelling model' that represents the togetherness of the family (Attfield, 2002) and the significance of the personal space represented by the children's bedrooms (Munro and Madigan, 1993; Madigan and Munro, 2002). Home-centred domesticity is also associated with the back garden, which signifies space for family leisure time (Bhatti and Church, 2000, 2004; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006).

### ***The one shared space model***

This term is used in this thesis to describe the spatial structure identified through the presence of one shared space in the dwelling. This term specifies multiple solutions that appeared since the second half of the twentieth century. Multiple views that considered this spatial model include Rechavi (2009), who specified the living room as a manifestation of the intersection between the public and the private and the shared and individual events in the domestic life. Solutions of the one shared space model in the context of the restriction of the paucity of space, as the separate living room or dinner/lounge solution, were identified by Munro and Madigan (1993) for their implication for separating the kitchen from the family social life. Addressing similar constraints, Attfield (2002) also pointed to the failure of the open-plan solution in mitigating the restriction of the one shared space model in accommodating the complexity of domestic life needs.

### ***Contemporary domesticity***

Accepting the dynamic nature of culture in this thesis implies that defining contemporary domesticity could not be restricted within a certain temporal interval. Instead, the examined time period is defined by the relevant literature i.e. that which addresses aspects of socio-cultural change and indicates conflicts related

to experiences of the one shared space dwelling model of the mid-twentieth century (see Section 3.3). Additionally, the literature looking at the spatiality of contemporary domesticity within social sciences research highlights changing domestic practices that are not included within the existing knowledge about the mid-twentieth century dwelling ideal.

### **1.2.3 Contextual dimensions**

The early stage of this research into issues in UK housing was driven by the observation of the lack of distinction between problematic aspects related to the size of the family dwelling and the absence of spatial needs related to everyday contemporary domestic life. The priority given to the number of the rooms over their sizes, as indicated by developers (West and Emmit, 2004) and customers (Leishman et al., 2004) represents one facet of this problem. West and Emmit (2004) referred to the 'multicellular dwelling' that results in spatial qualities that cause the available housing stock to be inadequate in terms of fulfilling the needs of contemporary consumers. Similarly, Park (2017) described these dwellings as 'hobbit homes' (Op. cit., p. 74), where the paucity of space resulted in unusable spaces within the multicellular model. Another dimension of the problem was indicated by the Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE, 2009) when relating the inadequacy of the available housing stock for accommodating new social practices. Respondents in CABE's (2009) report specified the lack of space for storage, allowing convenience in food preparation, entertaining guests, relaxation and convenience in food preparation.

Relying on a quantitative approach followed in the UK to achieve the 'decent dwelling', as announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) is considered in this thesis as another facet of this problem. Attention is given towards the increase in the amount of space in newly built dwellings observed when comparing recently developed guidelines (Park, 2017),

such as the London Housing Standards announced by the Greater London Authority (GLA, 2010) and the Nationally Described Space Standard announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2015), with the previous statutory space standards in the UK proposed by the Parker Morris Committee (1961) (see Table 1.1). However, relying on such quantitative measures when addressing the quality of space in contemporary dwellings, as in reports provided by the HATC housing consultancy (2006) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (Roberts-Hughes, 2011), affirms the need for extra space without specifying how this space will fit in the design of the dwelling. Given critiques of the UK’s residential environments as in Park (2017), it appears unlikely that the quantitative governmental target of achieving ‘decent home’ standards (DCLG, 2006) would still satisfy the needs of contemporary domestic life.

	1 Storey			2 Storey			3 Storey		
	NDSS (2015)	GLA (2010)	Parker Morris (1961)	NDSS (2015)	GLA (2010)	Parker Morris (1961)	NDSS (2015)	GLA (2010)	Parker Morris (1961)
<b>3-4 persons dwelling</b>	61-70 m <sup>2</sup>	61-70 m <sup>2</sup>	57-70 m <sup>2</sup>	70-79 m <sup>2</sup>	74-83 m <sup>2</sup>	72 m <sup>2</sup>			
<b>4-9 persons dwelling</b>	74-95m <sup>2</sup>	74-95m <sup>2</sup>	79-86 m <sup>2</sup>	84-102 m <sup>2</sup>	87-105 m <sup>2</sup>	85-92 m <sup>2</sup>	90-108 m <sup>2</sup>	93-111 m <sup>2</sup>	94-98 m <sup>2</sup>

*Table 1. 1 Increase in recommended areas of more than two persons dwelling since Parker Morris Committee’s guidelines. Source: the author relying on comparison of recent space standards with Parker Morris in Park (2017).*

#### **1.2.4 Research design**

##### ***Researching the Tyneside flats***

Victorian Tyneside flats represent an example of commonplace domestic architecture in the North East of England. The thesis takes this dwelling type as a

case study for exploring families' practices of contemporary domesticity. These flats represent a distinct spatial solution for the Victorian family dwelling, prevalent in Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead (Daunton, 1983). Developed in the Victorian era under the constraints of limited space, the flats preserve the Victorian back-and-front duality while occupying one floor of a traditional two-storey Victorian terraced house, with each flat having its own entrance and backyard. Despite their original purpose as a dwelling for the Victorian working-class families (see Section 4.5), the Tyneside flats are not perceived as permanent residences for contemporary family domesticity (Lancaster, 1994; Wadsworth, 2011) which indicates constraints on achieving fundamental needs of contemporary families. Drawing upon Rapoport (1969), the participants' negotiations with such a constraint space offer potential to explore critical aspects of contemporary domesticity. Furthermore, such a family flat living situation represents an opportunity to re-examine the inhabitants' conceptions of the family dwelling.

c- Social inequality and access to appropriate dwellings

The choice of the Tyneside flats as the research case study draws on contextual dimensions associated with the experience of shortage of space in family housing in the UK. Associations between affordability and the shortage of space for meeting residents' needs have an impact on social inequality in terms of access to appropriate dwellings. Observation of the number of occupants per dwelling reflects a shortage of space experienced by families in lower socio-economic groups (CABE, 2009; Morgan and Cruickshank, 2014). Social inequality is related to the tendency to attempt to overcome the issue of inadequate space when having the affordability of choosing dwellings with additional rooms, leaving households living in fully occupied dwellings still experiencing a shortage of space (CABE, 2009; Roberts-Hughes, 2011). As discussed by Morgan and Cruickshank (2014),

this situation of inequality is amplified by the loss of housing benefits in the public housing system in the case of having a spare room in the dwelling. This link between financial constraints and the ability to avoid the potential consequences of a shortage of space – such as stress and limitations on children’s emotional development and family socialisation (ibid.) – touches fundamental aspects of social equality. Such impact on the society was even further exacerbated through experiences of lock down associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 (see Section 10.6).

The apparent magnitude of the UK housing problem – particularly in England – directed this study towards investigating the appropriateness of the dwelling under the constraint of limited space implied within the chosen research case study.

### **Methodological approach and research design**

The design of the methodology and the iterative process of carrying out the investigation in this thesis is derived from the interest in revealing the way individual practices of domesticity can change shared conceptions about the dwelling (see Figure 1.1). Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1977) views about connections between shared structures and individuals’ practices, domestic space is researched as fields of practice that are produced and negotiated by actors and contextual forces involved in different domestic practices. This interest directed the research to take a narrative approach to search for these connections within the inhabitants’ stories about their domestic lives. According to Whiles et al. (2005), narratives were taken as a medium for relating personal domestic practices to the broader socio-cultural and contextual issues. This intrinsic role of the individual in enacting change was further examined by using a participatory approach to extend the participants’ voices in the production of the knowledge uncovered in this research.

The centrality of the socialised form of space in the enquiry of this thesis formed another anchor of the methodology design. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991), the thesis considers space in its dynamic form, produced and reproduced through its immersion in ongoing social processes. Accordingly, the adopted methods aimed to capture practices, objects, subjects, and social and emotional aspects as representations of the lived space. This integrative form of space was researched using multimodal methods applied in a complementary way to combine verbal, visual and physical modes of spatial expression.

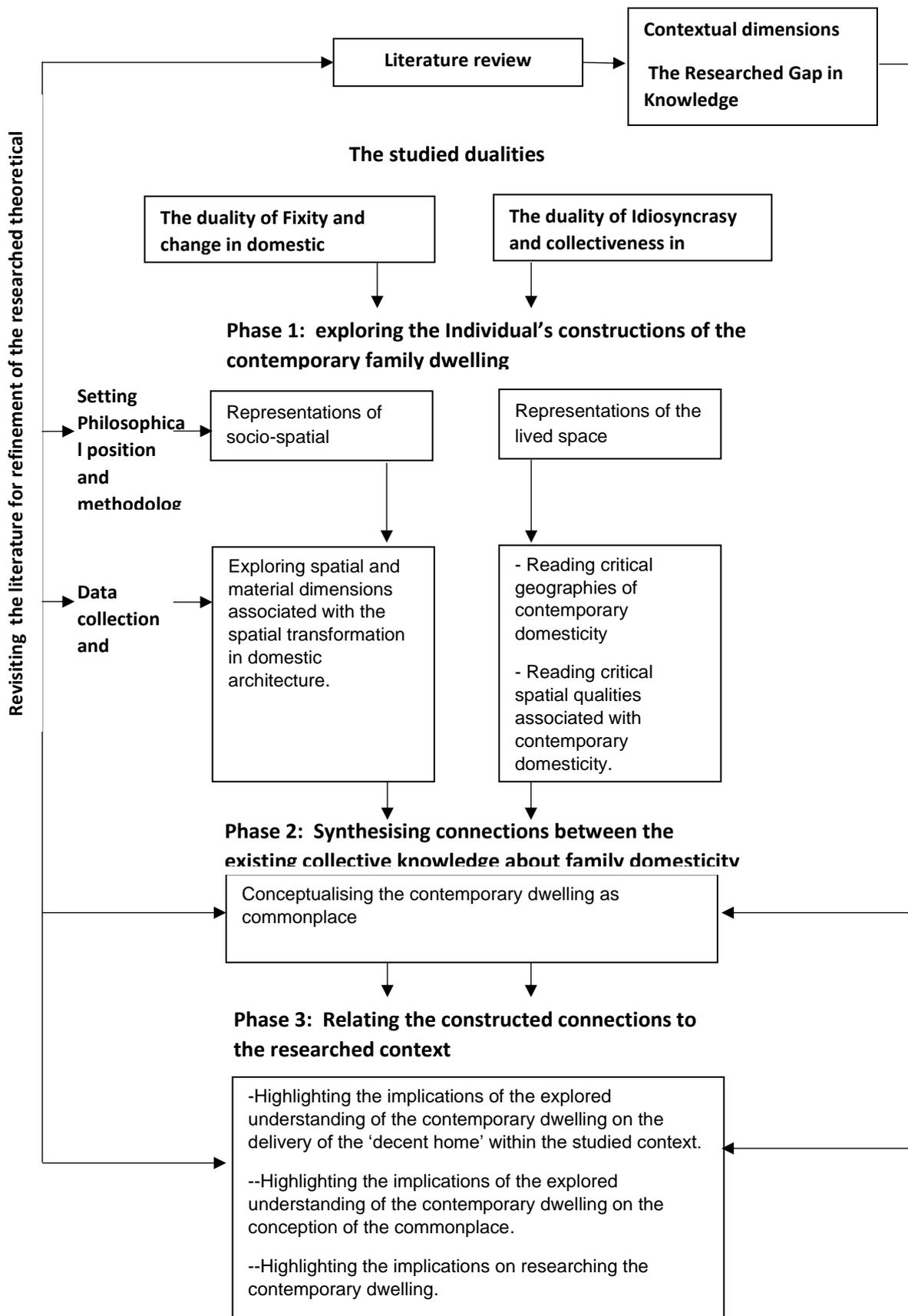


Figure 1.1 Research Phases and design

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

The study is structured around ten chapters. Following this introductory chapter, **Chapter 2** introduces the theoretical framework that formulates the philosophical positions and research questions guiding this investigation. A literature review discussed in this chapter commences with a criticism of applying existing conceptions of the dwelling as a constituent of culture in the context of contemporary domesticity. The review raises the need for integrating collective and individual conceptions when addressing contemporary domesticity. The chapter then moves on to highlight the process of homemaking as a representation of individuals' agency in the context of domesticity. Drawing on a limitation in understanding the role of the dwelling in supporting this socio-spatial process, the review highlights the approaches for considering indeterminacy in architectural design and relates them to specific aspects of the experience of domesticity.

**Chapter 3** provides an overview of the existing theories about contemporary domesticity. This chapter provides the guidance that leads the empirical work of this study. The review starts by justifying the need to explore the contemporary dwelling by indicating changes in home-centred domestic ideals. The chapter presents the need for extra space as a spatial conflict associated with the duality of individuality and togetherness in a home-centred life. Then, this requirement for extra space is reviewed in connection with the gaps in notions about the spatiality of different practices of contemporary domesticity.

**Chapter 4** provides a detailed account of the design of the methodology followed in this thesis. The chapter begins by discussing the philosophical underpinning of this thesis with reference to the exploratory research questions leading the research journey. Drawing on this clarification, the methodological approaches guiding the choice of the data collection methods are explained and justified. Then, the chapter demonstrates the taken data collection methods and the way they were

designed, applied and managed in reference to the anticipated data and my experience during the pilot investigation and data gathering. Finally, the design of the data analysis method and approach for establishing trustworthiness is explained in alignment with the explained philosophical position and followed approaches.

**Chapter 5** provides an overview of the circumstances associated with the social construction of the Tyneside flats. First, the chapter reads the original spatial features of the Tyneside flats in relationship to social and economic forces influencing its design during the Victorian time. Reading space in relationship to practices and objects associated with the development of its original design extends our understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the use of space in different social situations. Then, the chapter reviews the life of the participating families within their flats. This implies highlighting idiosyncratic social and spatial aspects associated with their domestic experiences and reconstructions of their flats through model making. This section aims to inform specific circumstances surrounding the domestic experiences included in the research findings. It also relates the Tyneside flats as part of the housing stock in Newcastle, UK, to the reality of circumstances associated with the contemporary family domesticity.

Subsequently, Chapters 6 to 8 demonstrate the research findings associated with the three exploratory questions set for this thesis. **Chapter 6, 'Reading the lived space through domestic practices'** presents the spatiality of the participants' socio-spatial practices through their narratives about their experiences of their flats. Guided by the first exploratory question, 'How is contemporary domesticity practised in commonplace architecture?', and a set of analytical questions, conflicts associated with multiple shared and solitary events narrated by the participants informed social geographies within the families' home-centred lives. The motivations and social geographies revealed in this chapter also provide a tool

for reading the participants' negotiations and reconstructions of their flats in the following findings chapters. Social geographies revealed in this chapter represent the first step for exploring the commonplace through connections between the individual and collective accounts of contemporary domesticity. **Chapter 7, 'Reading the dwelling through the lived space'**, provides depictions of the contemporary dwelling through the participants' reconstructions of their flats in their models. Guided by the third research question, 'What do negotiations with architectural space inform us about the contemporary dwelling?', the spatial features revealed in this chapter report habitation conditions associated with the spatial relations and architectural features constructed in the participants' models and described within their priority lists. In such light, the duality of individuality and togetherness is depicted through the conditions created within the living room, kitchen, backyard and personal space. The findings presented in this chapter provide evidence of change from the mid-twentieth century one shared space model to the contemporary dwelling as discussed in Chapter 9. **Chapter 8, 'Negotiating domestic architecture'**, informs the transformation of the pre-existing space by highlighting actions and tools associated with this socio-spatial process. Relying on actions taken associated with the participants' appropriations of their flats and changes conducted during the model making activity, this chapter reports the centrality of the body–space and object–space experiences when negotiating the available size as a salient challenge experienced by the participants in the Tyneside flats. Then, the chapter further informs aspects of indeterminacy of space by representing pre-existing and created opportunities and limitations associated with participants' negotiations with their flats during their everyday experiences and the model making task. Revealing aspects supporting and limiting the individuals' agency in this chapter contributes to the main research inquiry by depicting a realistic milieu of the production of the commonplace.

**Chapter 9** returns to the main research question to propose conceptions about commonplace domestic architecture by constructing connections between the individual and collective knowledge of the contemporary dwelling. First, aspects of cultural change are proposed by relating the individuals' constructions of the contemporary dwelling to the one shared space model. In addition, the chapter indicates the need to address the design aspects and contextual aspects influencing the individuals' actions on space. Drawing on the suggested approach, the chapter highlights the conception of the commonplace drawing on the explored features of the contemporary dwelling model.

**Chapter 10** provides a concluding discussion that recaps the issues raised in this thesis, suggests implications for future research and presents my personal reflection on the research journey. The chapter starts by returning to the three exploratory questions and reflecting on how they contribute to the existing knowledge in three dimensions related to contemporary domesticity: first, by illuminating new geographies in family domesticity; second, by proposing the relationship between individual agency and collective knowledge; and finally, by indicating the significance of the amount of space as an obstacle facing appropriate family dwelling provision. This recapitulation ends with the proposed contribution of this thesis, which is an articulation of the distinction between the commonplace and the dwelling as an idealised representation of domesticity. The chapter indicates implications for housing research by linking the research findings to questions proposed by surveys researching home experiences during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Design implications are also postulated by relating the research findings to design challenges related to the scarcity of space, diversity and sustainability of domestic architecture. A critical reflection on the epistemological approach followed in this investigation explains how exploring the dwelling through practised fields of domesticity supports concerns about the diversity of

contemporary domesticity. Finally, the dissertation ends with explanations of my personal views and the experiences that influenced my vision and decisions taken during this investigation.

## **1.4 Glossary**

### **1.4.1 Terms describing spatial qualities**

#### ***Spatial character***

According to Norberg-Schultz (1980), the spatial character represents the identity of space constructed according to the physical features independently from social, personal or historical references. This term is used in Sections 9.2.2 and 9.5 to refer to the distinctive identity of the personal space; in Sections 6.22 and 7.2 to describe boundaries of the living room; and in Section 9.4.1 to refer to architectural tools for enhancing indeterminacy.

#### ***Spatial conditions***

Spatial conditions are created through the interrelation of architectural physical features, such as proportion, height and openings; and sensual features, such as light, temperature and sound. This term is used by Herzberger (2008, 2014) to refer to aspects of indeterminacy of space. This term aligns with references to 'in-betweenness' when describing the totality of architectural space that includes sensual and physical features (Herzberger, 1991; Pallasma, 2014; McCarter, 2016). This term is used in Section 2.4 in relation to indeterminacy of space. Then, this term is repeatedly used in Chapter 9 as an intrinsic aspect of the participants' negotiations with their flats.

### ***Spatial atmosphere***

Spatial atmosphere refers to the qualities of experienced spaces as ‘felt bodily experiences’ (Böhme, 2017, p. 70). These qualities represent references to ‘spatial conditions’ – explained above – in relation to temporalities of the past or future events (Bille et al., 2014), such as describing a Victorian atmosphere; geographical contexts, such as referring to Romeness in a certain setting (Norberg-Schulz, 1980); or social or emotional situations, such as the pleasantness of home (Pennartz, 1986; Böhme, 2013; Bille et al., 2014). This term is used repeatedly in the thesis when reflecting the participants’ conceptions of spaces in their dwellings, such as when referring to the social atmosphere in the socialised kitchen in Section 6.3.3 in relation to social connectedness with children, objects related to socialisation, and the dining space. Similarly, the spatial atmosphere was used in Section 7.5.3 for describing the ‘bright atmosphere’ of the workspace that explains its uplifting mood in relation to the daylight flooding in and the connectedness to the outside through the big window.

#### **1.4.2 Terms describing individuals’ actions**

##### ***Individual agency***

Refers to ‘the ability of [an] individual to act independently from [the] constraining structure of society’ (Awan et al., 2011, p. 30). In this thesis, agency is considered when exploring connections between the individuals’ practices and actions they take on the spaces of their flats and collective notions about family domesticity (see Section 2.3.2). Accordingly, individual agency shaped the philosophical position that affected the design of the methodology, analysis and the discussion of the findings in this thesis.

Individual agency is also used in this thesis in relation to the indeterminacy of space, as an aspect that supports the users' power to take action on space in Sections 2.4 and 9.4.1; and their participation in architecture, referring to the power distribution within the production of the built environment in Section 10.2.

### ***Practices***

Drawing on Bourdieu (1977), the term practices are used in this thesis to describe domestic activities alongside the social interaction, body movement and emotional dimensions that shape the way practices are performed. This term is used in literature that relates the individuals' agency to a broader social context, such as Bourdieu (1977), Rendell (2011), Attfield (2000) and Pink (2004). This scholarly stream also acknowledges that the way these practices are performed implies the individuals' creativity and improvisations in reproducing collective notions. Rendell (2011) specifies the term 'critical spatial practices' to refer to the reflective and liberating activities that transgress collective notions within a certain socio-spatial field.

#### **1.4.3 Terms describing interrelations between space and objects in everyday practices**

### ***Spatiality***

Spatiality refers to abstract fields that represent lived spaces in association with performed domestic practices. Such fields are identified independently from the physical architectural boundaries (Lefebvre, 1991) (also see Section 4.2). The spatiality of an event is a heterogeneous field that is considered through the interrelation between objects, subjects and space (Dowling, 2008; Attfield, 2000, 2007; Luzia, 2011; Jacobs et al., 2012; Cieraad, 2013; Costa Santos et al., 2018).

Drawing on Rendell (2011), and despite the architecturally oriented inquiry of this research, the term 'spatial' is used to signify a more expanded field than the constrained 'architectural' physical form.

### ***Materiality***

Materiality describes matter, such as objects, surfaces and physical architectural components, as an integral element of the lived space. Drawing on Rendell (2011), objects and architecture – in its physical form – are considered in this thesis to possess an active role in the production of social space. The dynamic nature of materiality was indicated by Attfield (2002) when describing objects as 'vehicles of meaning' that represent material culture in everyday life (Attfield, 2002, p. 70).

#### **1.4.4 Terms describing outdoor spaces**

##### ***Private outdoor space***

Private outdoor space, indicated in Lawrence (1981) as a term that refers to any outdoor space included within the judicial boundaries of a dwelling. This term is utilised in the discussion and concluding chapters to relate the findings to outdoor spaces other than the backyard and back garden.

##### ***Backyard***

The backyard in this thesis refers to the Victorian private open space designed to accommodate housework, storage and waste (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006; Daunton, 2008) (see Figure 5.3).

## ***Back garden***

In this thesis, the back garden is the private open space included in the back of the mid-twentieth century family house in the UK (Bhatti and Church, 2000, 2004; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006). This space represents a space for family leisure and display (Bhatti and Church, 2000, 2004; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006) (see Figure 3.12).

### **1.4.5 The contemporary family**

The contemporary family is recognised in this thesis with respect to socio-cultural changes that deviate from the conception of the family dominating housing research since the second half of the twentieth century. As noted in section 3.3, constructs of contemporary domesticity are articulated according to emerging practices that evolve around the neutrality of the gender identity of familial roles (Valentine, 2001; Sullivan, 2004; Pink, 2004; Ferree, 2010; and Noelle, 2011). The increase of the men's presence in the home life and, conversely, the expansion of the women's engagement in paid work is a cultural construct associated with the reconstruction of femininity and masculinity in the contemporary family (see Section 3.3). Such destabilised boundaries in contemporary family life are also seen through the closeness between parents and their children; and the penetration of work into the home life (see Section 3.3). Due to the prevalent acknowledgement of home centeredness as a profound feature of the family domesticity (see Section 3.2), this thesis examines notions of the contemporary family through new structures shaping the duality of individuality and togetherness associated with the outlined changes.

In such light, this thesis will revisit the social construction of the family domesticity and its impact on time and space allocation in the family's domestic life. According to the literature review in sections 3.3 and 3.4, the spatial implications of the socio-

cultural dimensions outlined above prospect a change in the design of the family home that has been acknowledged since the second half of the twentieth century.

#### **1.4.6 Age groups**

##### ***Preschool children***

Preschool children are under the age of 4, so this term includes toddlers and babies.

##### ***Older children***

The term older children refers to primary school children of age 5 to 11. The participating parents sometimes refer to their older children's needs in association with future plans for preparing a suitable space for a teenager.

Chapter 2

**Theoretical Framework for Exploring the Spatiality  
of Contemporary Domesticity**

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework for Exploring the Spatiality of Contemporary Domesticity**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The main question leading this research is '*How does contemporary domesticity negotiate commonplace domestic architecture?*' This question will be developed and refined through a literature review, beginning in this chapter. Domestic architecture represents a distinctive context for exploring the relationship between the fixity of the built environment and cultural change. This conflict is amplified when addressing the dichotomy between the collective dimensions and idiosyncrasies of domesticity resulting in tension between the manifestations of each. In this light, exploring the socio-cultural dimensions behind the characteristics of domestic architecture in this research entails challenges in theorising the contemporary dwelling. Accordingly, the main focus of this chapter is to theorise the contemporary dwelling for the purposes of the study. The literature review commences with an overview of theoretical issues and challenges related to the representation of contemporary culture through domestic architecture. Then, as the dichotomy between the stability of domestic architecture and cultural change emerges as a core feature, literature about indeterminacy is visited and linked to the dynamic aspects of domesticity.

### **2.2 Contemporary dwelling and culture**

#### **2.2.1 Overview**

The following subsections highlight the way in which manifestations of the collectiveness of domestic architecture build our conception of commonplace domestic architecture. This review seeks these manifestations by looking at the dwelling models as manifestations of domestic ideals within a certain community.

Then, the review addresses designed model dwellings to highlight the separation between the ideology underlying domestic architecture in modern society and the reality of socio-cultural practices of domesticity.

### **2.2.2 On the dwelling model and culture**

Cultural theories that emerged during the first half of the twentieth century include a school of thought that conceptualises culture in its structural form (Keesing, 1974). Building upon this structural approach, domestic architecture has been studied during the second half of the twentieth century as a constituent of cultural systems, being identified variously as abstract models of spatial relations (Rapoport, 1969, 1990; Lawrence, 1982, 1990; Kent, 1990), spatial order (Gauvain et al., 1982; Lawrence, 1990), and symbolic representations (Lawrence, 1990). This thesis considers this research strand to be a starting point for exploring features of the domestic space as a manifestation of collective conceptions of domestic life.

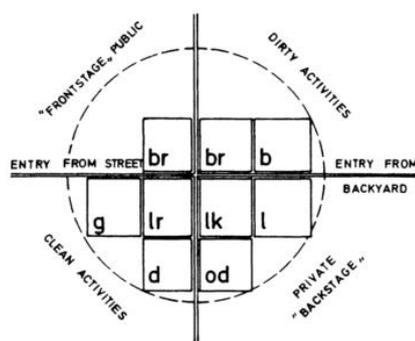
### **2.2.3 Dwelling models and collectiveness of domesticity**

#### *Dwelling models as manifestation of collective domestic ideals*

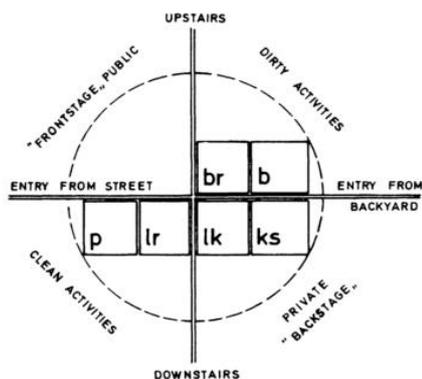
Drawing upon Rapoport (1969), this research considers models of the structural form of the dwelling as manifestations of collective patterns of socio-spatial practices and the meanings associated with these patterns. To identify these structures, it is necessary first to distinguish between the dwelling model and typological classifications that represent a response to contextual constraints and situations within a cultural context (ibid.). Accordingly, and drawing on Hillier et al. (1996, p.379), this thesis disregards the approach of typological classification of dwellings due to their representation of specific solutions to certain constraints rather than representing shared cultural aspects in a society (ibid.). In other words, this thesis considers that identifying the idealised dwelling in a specific socio-cultural context requires knowledge of the features of the governing spatial

structure. Taking the Victorian English dwelling model as an example, a structure that was built upon the meaning of the binary opposition between the back and the front of the house during that time unified the different typological variations that appeared in this era (Daunton, 1983).

The spatial structure of a dwelling model is addressed in housing research in a conceptual representational form. Researchers address the spatial structure of dwellings as representations of opposing meanings, such as public and private (Lawrence, 1982, 1990; Gauvain et al., 1982), back and front, day and night, clean and dirty, symbolic and utilitarian (see Figure 2.1). Another approach for addressing the structural form of the dwelling is concerned with the mutual relationship between form and behaviour, as proposed by Rapoport (1990) (see



The organisation of domestic space in Australia.



The organisation of domestic space in England.

br=bedroom, lr=living room, d=dining room, lk=dining/kitchen, b=bathroom, l=laundry, od=outdoor dining, g=garden, p=parlour, KS=Kitchen/scullery.

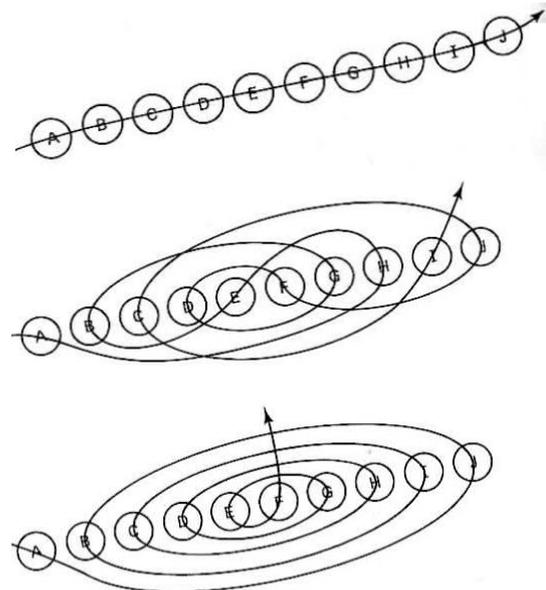


Figure 2.2 (Right) An abstract representation of a temporal sequence of settings associated with different socio-cultural norms in different cultural settings. Source: Rapoport, A. (1990) 'Systems of activities and activity systems', in Kent, S. (ed.) *Domestic architecture and the use of space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.14.

Figure 2.1 (Right) An abstract representation of a temporal sequence of settings associated with different socio-cultural norms in different cultural settings. Source: Rapoport, A. (1990) 'Systems of activities and activity systems', in Kent, S. (ed.) *Domestic architecture and the use of space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.14.

Figure 2.2). Through this approach, the complexity of the spatial structures is informed by considering the relationship between systems of activities in space and time; their temporalities and sequential order can therefore be identified by questioning actors and their attitudes.

#### *Dwelling models and social categorisation systems*

In her book *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, Kent (1990) provides multiple examples of how generalised models of spatial structures represent the alignment between social and ideational systems and domestic practices in traditional and indigenous communities. In accordance with the studies included in the book, this thesis considers the responsiveness of domestic architecture to such socio-cultural systems through the inner spatial organisation of the dwelling and the relationship between its inside and the outside. Also, according to her cross-cultural study included in the book, attention is drawn towards the impact of the complexity of the hierarchal order in a society on the complexity of the manifesting spatial structure in terms of the spatial relations and physical partitioning between spaces. From this perspective, this thesis also considers references to aspects such as gender and class differentiations in historical texts (Burnette, 1986; Davidoff & Hall, 1987) and feminist literature (Valentine, 2001) as influential social categorisation systems that impact on the spatial organisation in the dwelling.

Such culturally specific distinctions are evident when comparing the spatial manifestations of gender segregation in different cultures. According to Sobh and Belk (2011), for example, the association between gender differentiation and privacy in the contemporary Qatari home has been represented by the separation between men's and women's quarters. However, gender segregation within ancient Greek households is revealed in Jameson's (1990) anthropological study of the separation between men, with their social life outside the house, and women, whose social life was restricted to be within the dwelling. In this case, a court at the

front of the house represents the division between the male public realm and female life inside the dwelling.

Another variation appearing in the relationship between family life and the outside is related to class distinctions, as in Victorian domesticity. Scholars such as Burnette (1986) and Ravetz and Turkington (2006) demonstrate the demarcation between middle-class family life and the outside through the distancing of houses from the street using long front yards and high fences. This contrasts with the manifestation of the strong ties between working-class families and the surrounding community through the use of front yards and the street for social interactions (Burnette, 1986; Ravetz and Turkington 2006). A similar pattern of difference appeared in Hanson's (1998) comparison between the norms governing social interactions between the family and the community for working-class families and middle-class families who inhabited the same dwelling units consecutively. Her ethnographic review revealed a striking difference in the form of the relationship between the families and the surrounding community. On one hand, working-class families welcomed direct interaction with outsiders while concealing the family living space from view. On the other hand, middle-class families expressed their affluence through the living space window while limiting direct social interaction with the outside community.

#### 2.2.4 Model dwellings and the duality between the collective and individual conceptions of domesticity

The way domestic ideals are related to society, as discussed in the preceding section, has an impact on the approach taken in this study for identifying the manifestations of socio-cultural practices of domesticity. As demonstrated above, alignment between the represented ideals and everyday life is more likely where those who make the dwellings are also the inhabitants. However, alignment is less

likely in modern societies due to the separation between the inhabitants and the processes of housing production.

Such separation is evident within historical literature on housing, such as Ravetz and Turkington (2006), Burnett (1986), Daunton (1983) and Duncan (1993), which indicate the imposition of model dwellings (see distinction between model dwellings and dwelling models in Section 1.2.2) that aimed to serve predetermined political, economic or sociological agendas. We can see in detailed accounts by Daunton (1983) of the social construction of the Victorian model how a model may impose and control patterns of habitation within the dwelling. Similarly, we have seen the way the modern design discipline can become another form of surveillance in domestic architecture, as explained in Atfield's (2007) study of introducing 'classless' modern dwelling models to working-class residents in Harlow (see Figure 2.3). From a feminist point of view, Valentine (2001) envisions these pre-determined values through the representation of the suburban family house to the nuclear family household.



*Figure 2.3 Victorian exteriors and a chimney-dominated skyline along Northwood Road, London (left). Terraced houses on the Somerford Estate, Hackney, London, 1952 (right). Source: Turner and Partington (2015, pp. 2 and 14 respectively).*

Despite this dichotomy between the predetermined values underlying these models and the reality of domestic life, a mutual relationship between these aspects, as noted by Wright (1991) and Dovey (1992), directs the attention towards a transformative process associated with the inhabitation of the dwelling. Dovey (1992) states that *'housing industry studiously avoids the word 'house', it is always this complex package of socio-spatial meaning we call 'home. The 'Great Australian Dream' is popularly known as the desire to own a house that embodies such meanings...'* (Dovey, 1992, p.177). Such statement informs the way model dwellings form a rooted construct in the individual's conception of the home that shapes their aspirations as well as directs the market plan for housing delivery.

In alignment with this view, Chapman (2002a) depicts the impact of the pre-determined image of the home on the experience of home through a conversation broadcast in the BBC TV programme *Signs of the Times*. The conversation captured one couple's encounter with their show home dwelling that has been pre-decorated and furnished by a designer.

*Husband: It's a strange concept to move in and suddenly [there are] all these ornaments... I think it's the ornaments which generally are personal things that you go out and buy for a special occasion. And they are all here, and they haven't got any history attached to them. I mean, in the lounge there's a bust of Mozart. But I wouldn't have bought it... but having it here it seems right. I keep saying to Moira 'I didn't know we had this'...*

*Wife: The children do it all the time [they say] 'Is this ours, mummy, or the house's?' which I find astonishing. I say, 'it's all ours, Rachel, it's all ours.' There's a lot of dried flowers hung around the oak beams. That appeals because it feels very cottagey and country. And I would love to think I'm the sort of person who dried and hung those flowers myself. But I'm not and I'm glad someone else has because I think they look lovely.*

But did it make them happy?

*Wife: When we first came in, I felt the house was very, very flash. You just felt you were invading a very posh person's house... Our friends just think it's out of this world and they hate us, and we love it.*

*Husband: I'd say this is our dream home. We couldn't wish to achieve any more than we have here. It's arriving to me, arriving somewhere we've been travelling to for a long time.*

*Wife: I think it's mega. I think it's perfect.*

*Husband: Perfect for us.*

*Wife: For us.*

*(Signs of the Times, BBC TV, 1996, cited in Chapman, 2002a, p.56).*

*'But can contentment be guaranteed by turning the front door key of a dream home?' asks Chapman (2002a, p.56) turning attention towards the way the dwelling is related to practices of domesticity in reality. This dialogue illustrates the complex relationship between pre-existing space and the inhabitants' practices of domesticity.*

Introducing model dwellings to a society implies an experimental phase as seen studies such as Attfield's study of the families' encounter with the modern design (2007). The transformation of imposed ideals to a collective knowledge, as seen in such studies, depends on the acceptance and possibility of negotiation by the society. In the UK, this transformative phase is clarified when the Victorian terraced houses met the aspirations and provided improvement of living conditions for working class families in the second half of the nineteenth century (Daunton, 1983; Duncan, 1993; Roger, 1995). Similarly, better living conditions motivated working-

class families to leave their terraced houses and accept the suburban family house during the second half of the twentieth century (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006).

The acceptance of imposed models in different social and historical contexts is also associated with possibilities of negotiation of space during this transformative phase. Despite the underlying intention to separate public and domestic life through the introduction of working-class Victorian houses, families still used the streets and the back alleyways for socialisation with their neighbours (Daunton, 1983; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006). Another example of transformation from an imposed to a collective conception of domesticity lies in a study by Attfield (2007), appropriations of the design of the suburban family houses allowed working class families to include representations of the family identity in the living room or feminise the neutrality of the modern kitchens.

To summarise, this section has reviewed two key considerations influencing the approach taken to address the contemporary dwelling in this thesis. First, the socio-cultural perspective taken in this research mandates consideration of representations of the collectiveness of domesticity in a particular context. The literature also informs and directs this thesis to consider the structural form of the dwelling as a manifestation of patterns of collective socio-spatial practices as well as the meanings associated with these patterns. However, researchers such as Hanson (1998) criticise that:

*'Previous studies that have addressed the social significance of domestic space have tended to capture the salient features of the home in an 'ideal type' which summarises what is invariant in the houses of a particular culture... Yet, however important these distillations of social knowledge may be, ordinary people's homes tend to be much more varied and idiosyncratic than the ideal type admits'* (Hanson, 1998, p. 269)

The separation between model dwellings and practices of domesticity raises doubts about their authenticity in representing the reality of contemporary domesticity addressed in this thesis (c.f. Crow, 1989; Brindley, 2002). However, the review also outlines that the integration of model dwellings into the cultural system of a society implies a transformation phase where the individuals' domestic practices show a significant role in allowing the exchange between the imposed and the collective ideals. According to these considerations, theorising the contemporary dwelling model proceeds below by highlighting aspects of the mutual relationship between the individual and collective constructions of the dwelling.

## **2.3 Addressing the contemporary dwelling through homemaking**

### **2.3.1 Overview**

The previous section outlined the dwelling model as the spatial representations of culture did not include connections between the individuality and collectiveness of domesticity. Accordingly, this section introduces two aspects of the theoretical background that are associated with such connections. First, the approach for addressing cultural change is grounded in poststructuralist theories. This allows us to outline conception of commonplace that impacts of this approach on ontological and epistemological considerations directing this research. Second, manifestations of the process of homemaking that characterise individual agency in the context of domesticity are specified. A conclusion about the approach outlined in this section formulates the research questions guiding this research.

### **2.3.2 Individual agency**

Relating domestic architecture to individual agency in this research draws on the poststructuralist turn towards addressing connections between the collective and individual cultural accounts (see Table 2.1). This perspective is related to a

concern shared in different sociological studies, such as Miller (2001a), who built his approach for investigating material culture on the need to avoid the duality of individuality and collectiveness when addressing representations of culture. This perspective also implies cautiousness of researchers such as Attfield (2000) points to the individuals' agency through the authenticity of '*the commonplace*' in representing the '*everyday world*' (Attfield, p.89). This dialogue turns attention towards Bourdieu's (1977) philosophical contribution to the addressed connections, which he explains as:

*The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72).*

Drawing on Bourdieu's statement, dimensions related to the connection between identifying the dwelling as a constituent of culture on the individual and collective levels are framed for this research (see Table 2.1). This connection is acknowledged by Somerville (1997) as the 'heterophenomenological approach' that links the objective and subjective dimensions of the conception of home (Op. cit., p. 231). Avoiding the dualism between the 'individualism' and the 'consensus' as acknowledged by Attfield (2000, p.90) is essential when researching social change. Resonating with Bourdieu's explanation of the nature of individual agency, researchers such as Attfield (2000) point towards this mutual connection through the role of individual practices that are at some point shaped by the collective understanding of domesticity. Meanwhile, the representation of subjective interpretations of collective domestic ideals forms another facet of the meaning of individual accounts. Relying on conceptions about the individual's agency, this

thesis considers the complexity (Somerville, 1997, p. 231) and new trajectories (Duncan and Duncan, 2004, p.397) of the constructed socio-cultural dimensions. Relating them to their context, individual accounts are read from this perspective through their openness to social interpretations (Somerville, 1997, p. 231), framing their role as an interpretive tool in the process of the 'production of theory' (Attfield, 2000, p.91).

Level of studying the dwelling as manifestation of culture	Social manifestations addressed in literature	Physical manifestations indicated in association with social manifestations	Knowledge gap	Implications on the theoretical framework followed in this thesis.
<b>Collective constructions</b>	<p><b>Dwelling model as collective ideals of domesticity</b> (Rapoport, 1969, 1990; Gauvain et al. 1982; Lawrence, 1982; 1990; Kent, 1990)</p> <p><b>Model dwelling as Imposed ideals of domesticity</b> (Rapoport, 1969; Ravez, 2013; Burnett, 1978; Daunton, 1983; Chapman, 2002a; Attfield, 2000, 2002, 2007)</p>	<p>Collective dwelling models in a community.</p> <p>Designed model dwellings changing collective knowledge about domesticity.</p>	<p>Connections between the individual and the collective knowledge about contemporary domesticity</p>	<p>Identifying the dwelling model as a spatial manifestation of shared domestic ideals in a community.</p> <p>The duality between the collective and individual conceptions in a designed dwelling.</p>
<b>Individual constructions</b>	<p><b>Mutual connections between individual and collective accounts of domesticity</b>  (Somerville, 1997; Attfield, 2000, 2002, 2007; Blunt, 2005; Blunt and Dowling, 2005; Miller, 2001a, 2001b)</p> <p><b>Homemaking as social processes</b> (Affield, 2000, 2002, 2007; Garvey, 2001; Pink, 2004; Mackay and Perkins, 2019)</p> <p><b>Homemaking as a spatial process</b> (Lefebvre and Nicholson-</p>	<p>Transformational form of the dwelling through materialisation of home.</p> <p>Transformational form of the dwelling through change in spatial features.</p>	<p>Features of the dwelling model for supporting homemaking as a spatial process.</p>	<p>Identifying features of the dwelling model through connections between individual and collective accounts of domesticity.</p> <p>Identifying features of the dwelling model through integration between the physical and non-tangible aspects of domesticity.</p>

	Smith, 1991; Pink, 2004; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Olesen, 2010; Petit, 2015)			
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Table 2. 1 The individual and collective levels of addressing domesticity and their implication on shaping the theoretical approach followed in this thesis.

Drawing **on** this scholarly stream, this thesis sets a position to explore the dwelling in a dynamic form that responds to the changing domestic practices. According to Bourdieu (1977), it is important to consider cultural structures as dynamic forms when addressing connections between individual agency and collective knowledge. Thereby, improvised and spontaneous practices are considered in this thesis as a genuine outlook to explore transpositions and rearrangements of collective socio-cultural structures (ibid.). As Duncan and Duncan (2004) explain, closeness to individual practices allows exploration of situations of cultural change independently from static abstract representation. In such light, previous studies highlight the way individual agencies make individual imprints in manifestations of domestic social aspects, such as gender, class (Walker, 2002) and lifestyle. These individual imprints appear either as personal conceptions – as with some participants in Pink’s (2004) study – or through creative reproduction of the collective social ideals as argued by Miller (2001a) and Attfield (2000). This research acknowledges the dwelling as inseparable from the dynamics of the social processes of domesticity and the individuals’ conceptions, practices and materialisation of domesticity.

These theories also **set** the focus of this thesis to the search for the contemporary dwelling through the concept of commonplace that integrates collective and individual representations of domesticity – the former manifest in the physicality of the dwelling and its embedded meanings and the latter manifest in inhabitants’ social-spatial practices and their meanings.

### **2.3.3 Homemaking as a social process**

Individual agency, as indicated above, directs the approach for constructing the dwelling towards representations of homemaking in the dwelling. This dynamic constituent of the experience of domestic life is manifested through appropriations (Serfaty-Garzon, 1985) and social practices (Gregson and Lowe, 1995) that depict the integration of space in the individual's social processes (Serfaty-Garzon, 1985; Walker, 2002). This socio-spatial process is seen to mitigate the conflict between collective ideals represented through a dwelling and the inhabitants' idiosyncratic conceptions and aspirations for their home; as seen, for example, in studies of migrants' homes (Blunt 2005), generational differences (Petit, 2015) and changes in living circumstances (Berglund-Lake, 2008). This section describes characteristics of this social process that may impact our understanding of the dwelling through its integration with individuals' domesticity.

Attfeld notes that to avoid restoring 'the ordinary to banalisation' or transforming 'it to romantic interpretation' (Attfeld, 2000, p.95), it is necessary to differentiate between utilitarian and social aspects of homemaking requires consideration of the meanings behind the individual's actions on space. According to Serfaty-Garzon (1985, p.12), the sense of ownership associated with the appropriation of the dwelling link individual agency to meanings of home. The need for freedom is observed in Gravey's (2001) study through the act of rearranging furniture, which Gravey interpreted as highlighting the individuals' power to resist social control manifested through the dwelling. Additionally, the individualisation of the dwelling is seen as a transaction between an individual and the pre-existing space, as proposed by Serfaty-Garzon (1985) views about the dwelling and the experience of domesticity. Such differentiation also amplifies the distinction between homemaking and 'unmaking' (Baxter and Brickell, 2014) by relating the individual's actions and motivations to the surrounding social and practical forces. According

to Serfaty-Garzon (1985), identifying meaning requires consideration of changes in conceptions of home. This dimension is clarified through Serfaty-Garzon's example of practices of housewifery that had been considered satisfying for two centuries, though may now be seen as aspects of alienation or oppression in the home (Op. cit., p.13).

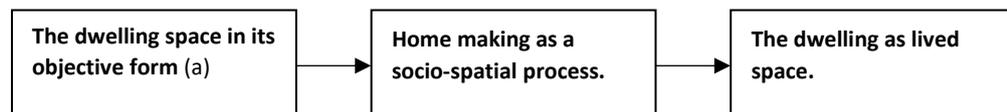
Imperfection represents another aspect of differentiation between the 'incomplete project' (Pink, 2004, p.57) of home and 'ephemeral' (Attfield, 2000, p.81) changes related to external influences. Such socio-spatial dynamics imply the need for open-endedness in the design of the dwelling that would allow the representation of ongoing changes in the outlined personal conceptions of home. These changes may be considered to be a result of the assimilation of the dynamic social and personal dimensions with everyday domestic practices (Mackay and Perkins, 2019) and reconstructions of self-identity (Serfaty-Garzon, 1985; Gravey, 2001).

Therefore, the outlined conditions of the progress of homemaking propose that the integration of the dwelling in the social processes of domesticity should not be taken for granted. Instead, the search for social constructions of the dwelling on the individual level should be approached with acknowledgement of both the spatial dynamics and the personal motivations underlying the homemaking process.

#### **2.3.4 Homemaking as a spatial process**

Explanations of the process of appropriation by Serfaty-Garzon (1985) retrieves Lefebvre's (1991) conceptions of social and spatial constructions of the lived space (see Figure 2.4). This perspective suggests the dynamic form of the dwelling that is considered through the transformation from what could be considered as the 'given' and the 'acted-on' spaces. In the context of domestic architecture in this thesis, the given space is the objective and designed dwelling that represents

collective conceptions about domesticity in a society. Contrastingly, the 'acted-on' space represents the lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) that is constructed by the emotional, social, and material dimensions associated with the home making process.



*Figure 2. 4 Phases of production of the dwelling through its integration in homemaking process suggesting the need for considering connections between the objective and subjective forms of space. Inspired by Lefebvre (1991).*

Understanding of how the design of the dwelling enhances the spatial processes associated with homemaking is limited due to the paucity in studies addressing the spatial aspects underlying this transformative process. Accordingly, a starting point for theorising features of the dwelling through its presence within this micro level of social processes is the consideration of emotional and body–space experiences relying on studies about the material culture of domestic life. From this perspective, the individuals' constructions of the dwelling are revealed in previous studies as manifestations of the desired home through a sense of place (Cooper, 1979), such as the 'sensual home' (Pink, 2004, p.61), the 'lived-in' home (Olesen, 2010, p.38), or a sense of 'informalization' (Petit, 2015, p.312) and representations of the self (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). The materialisation of home also highlights features of the spatial character of the dwelling<sup>2</sup>, as exemplified by the creation of a sense of comfort (Rybczynski, 1986) and freshness (Gravey, 2001, p. 54).

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<sup>2</sup> Drawing on Norberg-Schultz (1980), spatial character represents the identity of space that is related merely to its physical and spatial features. In contrast with atmosphere of space, spatial character is addressed in this thesis independently of associations with social and emotional constructions (see Section 1.4.1).

This dynamic process of transformation from the objective to subjective spaces suggests that individuals play an active role in the social construction of the dwelling (see Figure 2.4). This section therefore has explained the approach taken in this thesis to conceptualise cultural change in poststructuralist theories through connections between the individual and shared ideals of domesticity. Additionally, this review has considered the physical and non-tangible constituents of place when addressing the process of transformation of the dwelling that appeared in the literature from material cultural studies. However, despite the outlined integration of the dwelling in homemaking, the role of the dwelling in this dynamic process is still unidentified.

## **2.4 Indeterminacy for supporting homemaking**

Homemaking processes could not be enacted without facilitating 'the ability of individuals to act independently of constraining structure of society' (Awan et al. 2011, p.30). This perspective can be understood to rely on an assumption that the dwelling acts as an enabler of individuals' reproduction of domestic ideals, as proposed by Gregson and Lowe (1995), Walker (2002), Blunt (2005), Blunt and Dowling (2005), and Costa et al. (2018). Accordingly, the focus here is to theorise the approach in order to read and analyse spatial processes associated with homemaking. To do so, an approach for addressing the 'acted on' space is sought in this section relying on theories that address first, spatial qualities and second, indeterminacy in architectural space (see Table 2.2).

Approaches to address actions taken on space	Application in domestic architecture	Ontological implication	Epistemological considerations
<b>Spatial agency</b>	Sensitivity of exposure of perceptions on domestic environments (Lorne, 2017).	The dwelling as a spatial process supports social processes of domesticity. (Gregson and Lowe, 1995; Walker, 2002; Blunt, 2005; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Costa et al., 2018).  The relational nature of architectural features. (Moulaert et al., 2011).	Subjectivity of individual perceptions of spatial process.
<b>Indeterminacy of space</b>	Impact of the meanings associated with experiences of domesticity on the interpretations of possibilities of the use of space (Coolen, 2006).  Features of suggestive spaces (Hertzberger, 1991, 2008, 2014; Jilk, 2009; McCarter, 2016; Pallasma, 2014).  Indeterminate spatial structures (Habraken, 2000; Alexander, 2002; Hertzberger, 2014).	Spatial relations.  Variation of the features of the constituents of the spatial structure.  Constructions of spatial enclosures independent of physical boundaries.	Consideration of spatial features through the integration of the physical and non-physical.

Table 2. 2 Literature informing the approach for theorising indeterminacy of space in this thesis.

When researching domestic spatial agency, it is important to consider the sensitivity of the experience of domesticity to public exposure. Unlike studies of spatial practices in public space, the private nature of homemaking practices prevents direct observation, thereby forcing a reliance on mediated accounts by the inhabitants. As Lorne (2017) explains, the dwelling place represents the venture into the inner shell of the inhabitants' encounters with space. This implies the consideration of architecture through the encounter between the body and space and through the multivalent and multidimensional nature of the subjective perceptions of spatial experiences (ibid.). This perspective also implies the necessity to consider the relational nature of space (Moulaert et al., 2011) when looking at architecture through its integration into inhabitants' domestic

experiences. Theories that address spatial indeterminacy from a similar relational perspective therefore become relevant.

This fundamental role of the interrelation between the inhabitants' practices and space in the process of homemaking also directs the approach towards exploring the spatial qualities of the contemporary dwelling in this thesis. As Moulaert et al. (2011) state, exploring spatial qualities through the inhabitant's constructions implies broadening the conception of the spatial qualities from the quantitatively acknowledged features, such as thermal level, air flow and spatial area, by considering the multidimensionality of the 'impact of human practice on and in space' (Moulaert et al., 2011). This perspective extends the understanding of the spatial qualities associated with the inhabitants' practices in space by considering intersections between socio-cultural, experiential, and physical spatial variables.

From an experiential lens, spatial qualities associated with the inhabitants' encounter with space are seen through qualities of the interpretable '*in-between*' place<sup>3</sup> (Herzberger, 1991; Pallasma, 2014; McCarter, 2016) that defines spatial conditions associated with the users' inhabitation in the three-dimensional form independently from the physical boundaries of space. The individual's reception of the features of space from this perspective depends on the integration between the physical and sensual elements (Pallasma, 2014). Acknowledging the spatial qualities through this integration is also highlighted by Herzberger (2008) when describing '*spatial conditions*' designed within learning environments through the combination of a variety of features, such as spatial distinction, flow of space, light, sound, openings and proportions (see Section 1.4.1). However, Norberg-Schultz's (1980) explanation of the spatial qualities as the spatial character highlights the

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<sup>3</sup> *In-between space is a core concept in the literature that address atmospheric qualities of space. Scholars from this perspective, such as Böhme (1993, 2013), Anderson (2009), and Bille and Sorensen (2016), focus on the experiential dimensions of the in-between space that are shaped through sensual elements such as light, sound and air quality.*

objective nature of the spatial qualities by identifying spatial conditions in in relationship to collectively acknowledged social dimensions such as social or historical events associated with a certain place.

A design approach that is concerned with indeterminacy of space considers the spatial qualities in alignment with the approach considered in this section. The spatial dialogue between the pre-existing space and the individuals' reproduction of space is acknowledged from this perspective through contingencies for supporting unknown uses that, as Jilk (2009) explains, are manifested through the users' active role in creative place re-making (Jilk, 2009, cited in Parnell and Procter, 2011, p.78). Nevertheless, the concern about space from this architectural perspective emphasises that such creativity is partially reliant on individual interpretations of these possibilities. However, architects, such as Hertzberger (2008, 2014), propose that spatial qualities and form offer '*suggestive*' socio-cultural and experiential references that may be associated with different uses (see Figure 2.5). Furthermore, it could be considered that the individual's actions on the dwelling depend on suggestive '*spatial conditions*' (ibid.) created by the features of the pre-existing space.

Architectural research by Hertzberger (1991, 2014) and Habraken (2000) addressed the way the users' reproduction of space by relating the outlined spatial conditions to the structural form of space (see Table 2.3). Herzberger (2014) describes extended possibilities for uses of space through a hierarchy of scale and variation of proportions of the spatial elements constituting an indeterminant spatial structure (see Figure 2.5). Other architects such as Venturi (1965) advocate complexity of the spatial structure as means of extending possibilities of use of space. From a similar perspective, the indeterminacy of a spatial structure is pointed out by Habraken (2000) in relation to spatial fields associated with different social and emotional dimensions associated with domestic practices (see Section

4.2). Focusing on the role of boundaries in supporting change in these modes, Habraken relates the possibilities for change to the mobility and hierarchy of the boundaries, where physical boundaries are described as more restrictive than furniture and movable objects. It is worth noting here the experiential perspective taken by Alexander (2002) that depicts the structural form of lived spaces independently from the physical boundaries. The dynamics of the spatial structure in Alexander's explanation are associated with the interdependence between different events and the porosity spatial boundaries created between them.

The aspects of indeterminacy addressed	Hertzberger (1991, 2014)	Habraken (2000, 2009)	Alexander (2002)
Approach to addressing the interrelation between social and spatial processes	Supporting the users' creative reproduction of space.	Supporting changes in dwelling territories.	Supporting dynamics of living spatial structures.
Aspects of indeterminacy of spatial features	Suggested through variation in physical and sensual features of space.	Suggested through the features of spatial boundaries.	
Aspects supporting indeterminacy of spatial boundaries	Variation in forms of spatial relations.	Fixity vs mobility of boundaries.	Porosity of spatial boundaries.

Table 2. 3 The reviewed approaches for addressing indeterminacy through the structural features of space.

These features of indeterminant spatial structures imply supporting the individuals' reproduction of space through behavioural adaptations and appropriations on the material level. In contrast with this approach for extending the inhabitants' power and freedom of use of space. The former approach is linked to attempts that aim to extend the inhabitants' control over the spatial organisation and amount of available space, such as Habraken's (2009) proposition of 'systems support', Brand's (1994) explanation of layers of building change, and other technical attempts to control the physical boundaries of space reviewed by Schneider and

Till (2007). The research endeavour outlined here draw on evidence about how technicalities of construction systems extend the inhabitants' power to change and integrate new uses in space. However, this approach is criticised to have turned from 'means' to an 'end' target (Till and Schneider, 2005). The muted architectural character accompanying this technical approach is criticised by architects, such as Norberg-Schultz (1987) as 'emptiness' of reference to the reality of users' experiences and related meanings. As Venturi (1965) denotes, the intention to 'maximise the users' freedom', in fact, leaves users with limited possibilities of use of space. Instead, scholars like Norberg-Schultz support notions of possibilities of diverse uses through the recognition of features of spatial elements that stimulate their interaction with space (Hertzberger, 2014; McCarter, 2016) and provide the settings which support a range of habitation modes associated with different socio-spatial practices. This means that the functional neutrality associated with this technical approach leaves us with limited understanding of how such technical dimensions support social processes.

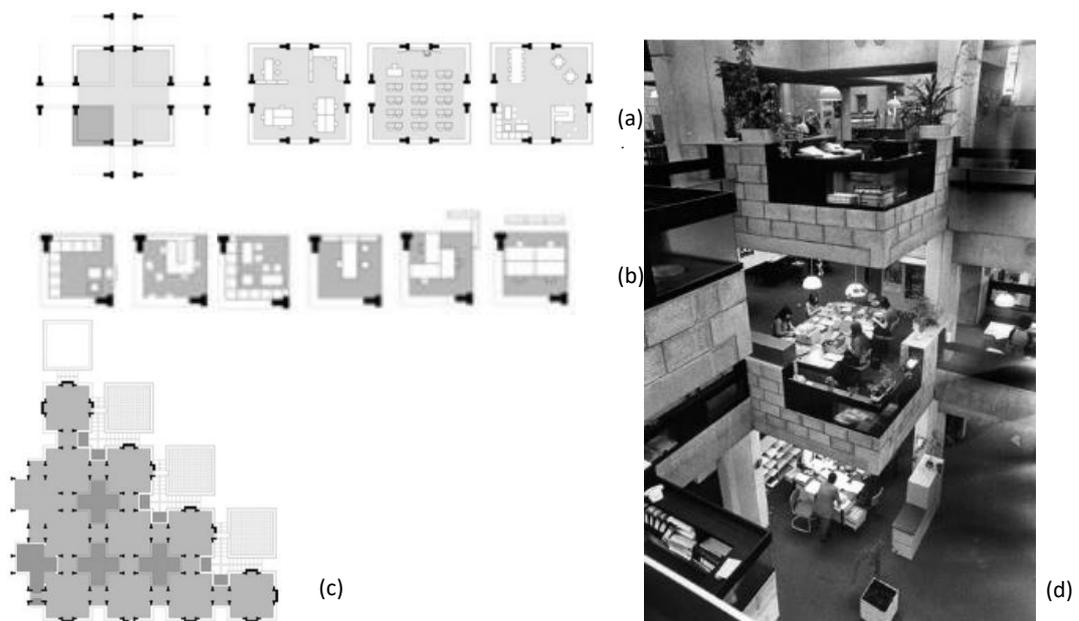


Figure 2.5 Hertzberger's approach for designing indeterminant spatial structures through the variation of scale and spatial relations in Centraal Beheer Office complex, Apeldoorn, Netherlands. Alternative uses enabled by the spatial geometry and spatial relations in the basic spatial unit (a) and quarter spatial unit (b). A spatial configuration constituted by a hierarchy of spatial elements (c). Variation of uses of spaces in different floors (d). Source: Hertzberger (2014, pp. 110, 111).

To conclude, exploring the individuals' constructions of the spatiality of contemporary domesticity implied looking at theories that explain the way space supports the individuals' agency. The dialogue between the inhabitants' practices and the pre-existing spaces implies researching the spatial qualities of the dwelling through the intersections between the physical, social and experiential dimensions. Theories about the indeterminacy of the design informed the distinction between the features that would support the material and the physical appropriation of space. According to this distinction, exploring the inhabitants' negotiations with their dwelling requires the consideration of the limitations and possibilities associated with their actions on space. This distinction also suggests the need for identifying the nature of the social process associated with each of the outlined level of spatial appropriation.

## **2.5 Conclusion and formulation of the research questions**

This chapter theorises the approach for addressing commonplace through the duality of the collectiveness and individuality of contemporary domesticity. First, the literature informed the way the dwelling model represents collective socio-cultural domestic ideals in domestic architecture. The literature also informed the division between the abstract form of the representation of the collective conception of the domesticity and the reality domestic life practices through the conception of the dwelling models. The literature review also pointed to the mutual relationship between the idiosyncrasy and collectiveness as a distinctive feature of commonplace domestic architecture in modern societies. From this perspective the role of the individual agency in informing the spatial qualities of the contemporary dwelling was also set as a central aspect in this thesis. According to this duality, commonplace is set as a core conception for exploring the dwelling model as a constituent of culture. This concept is explored through the following

main research question as the dwelling model and domestic practices that manifest the individual and collective accounts of contemporary domesticity.

*'How does contemporary domesticity negotiate commonplace domestic architecture?'*

Second, to explore connection between both manifestations, this review set the homemaking process as the context for identifying socio-spatial dimensions associated with contemporary domesticity. By setting this experiential context, the approach for understanding the contemporary dwelling model is articulated in linkage to attributes of the lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) (see Figure 2.6). The review also notes the paucity of research into domestic lived space that addresses the physical architectural features of the dwelling. Then, the review discusses the way understanding the spatial qualities associated with the individuals' actions and indeterminacy of space enabling these actions form intrinsic aspects enabling the exploration of the inhabitants' constructions of their dwelling.

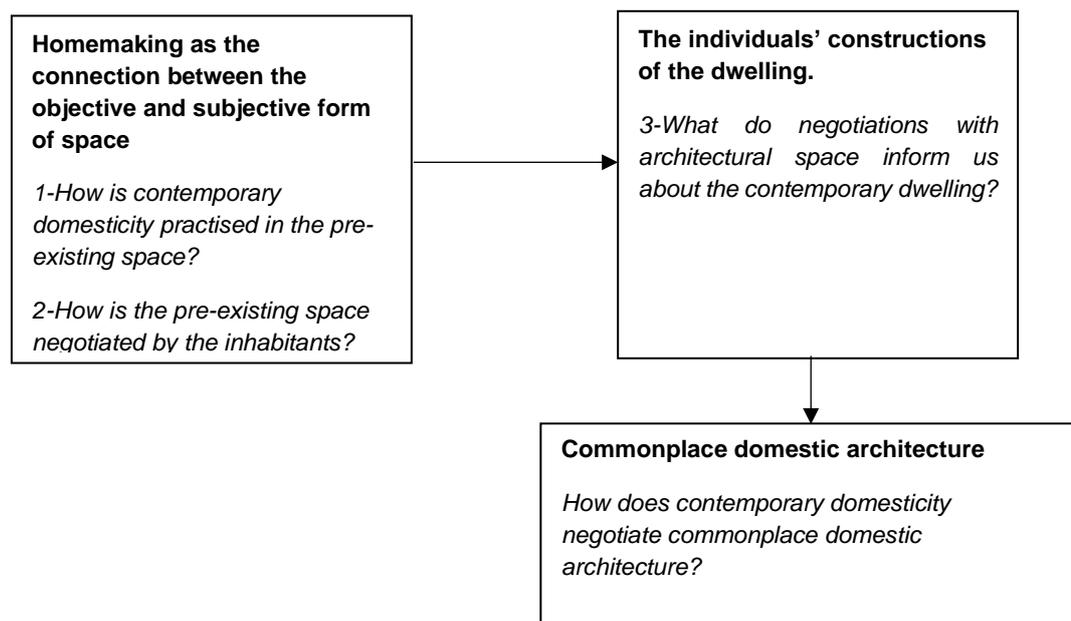


Figure 2. 6 Theoretical constructs relating the dwelling model to individuals' agency.

Drawing on the outlined approach for theorising commonplace, the following three sub-research questions are formulated in relation to contemporary domesticity as the sociocultural context of this investigation.

1-How is contemporary domesticity practised in the pre-existing space?

2-How is the pre-existing space negotiated by the inhabitants?

3-What do negotiations with architectural space reveal about the contemporary dwelling?

The next chapter continues to build the theoretical framework, with a focus on identifying constructions of contemporary domesticity in relevant literature.



Chapter 3

**Theories of Contemporary Domesticity**

## Chapter 3: Theories of Contemporary Domesticity

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter traces existing notions about the spatiality of contemporary domesticity with focus on its spatial structure. The chapter starts by introducing the home-centred domestic ideal and the socio-cultural aspects behind the argument of this thesis about the need to understand the spatial representations of the socio-spatial practices of contemporary family<sup>4</sup> domesticity. Then the chapter describes the features of the spatiality of contemporary family domestic Life. It is worth noting that the literature included in this review is studies conducted in the global north due to the focus on sources in English language.

### 3.2 Home-centredness

In the UK, a home centred lifestyle has been recognised since the second half of the twentieth century as a core cultural aspect associated with the nuclear family ideal (Crow, 1989; Allan, 1989; Saunders and Williams, 1989; Dupuis and Thorns, 1998; Munro and Madigan, 1993, 2006; Brindley, 2002; Dowling and Power, 2012). Since the nineteenth century, this lifestyle has been characterised by the demarcation between family privacy and the public (Burnette, 1991; Davidoff and Hall, 2002) (see Figure 3.1). However, new constructions of familial roles taken by the adults and the diversity of household structures articulate the emergent characteristics of the contemporary family (see section 1.2) and depicts the evolving identity of the contemporary family and suggest implications on our understanding of the home centred family life.

The change from the patterns of domesticity established in the mid-twentieth century to contemporary domestic living (see Section 1.2) directed this thesis towards comparing the emergent domestic practices and their spatiality with the mid-century modern domestic ideals. This thesis considers attributes of home-centred domestic life inseparably from the

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<sup>4</sup> *Statistics in English Housing Survey (DCLG, 20015) and housing research, such as Allan and Crow (1989) and Chapman and Hockey (2002), indicate the diversity of household structure characterising the contemporary community in the UK. Accordingly, this thesis acknowledges diverse forms of families which deviates from the exclusiveness of the mid-twentieth century conception of the family as nuclear family of a father, a mother and two children (Allan and Crow, 1989; Valentine 2001; Chapman and Hockey, 2002; Brindley, 2002).*

meanings that define family privacy, such as freedom, power (Saunders and Williams, 1989), permanence (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998) and intimacy (Rybczynski, 1988). Due to the extended time spent by members of the family within the family sphere, the review centres specifically on the private sphere in order to construct notions of the dwelling model that represents contemporary family home-centred life (Attfield, 1989, 2002; Dowling, 2008; Costa Santos and Bertolino, 2018).



*Figure 3.1 The outer context in a residential environment dominated by automated vehicles and driveways. Source: Oliver et al. (1981. P. 163).*

Drawing on the one shared space dwelling model depicted in the Parker Morris committee report (1961), the spatial representation of home-centred domesticity is considered in this thesis through the one shared space model. Spatial changes accompanying the emergence of the contemporary family are considered in this thesis through expectations stated by scholars such as Allan and Crow (1989), Valentine (2001), and Chapman and Hockey (2002) in relationship to the new constructions of familial roles taken by the adults and the diversity of household structures. These changes are further clarified when compared to the pattern of domestic practices within the former domestic ideal where the familial roles were distributed within a nuclear family according to gender distinctions, as indicated in Figure 3.2. Therefore, the thesis will revisit the social construction of family domesticity and its impact on time and space allocation in the family's domestic life

## Existing knowledge about home-centred domestic ideals

### Social constructs

#### Separation of the public and family spheres

Socially: Crow (1989), Allan (1989). In work: Devine (1989).

#### Distinction between gender roles in family life

Valentine (2001), Hall and Davidoff (2018).

#### Duality of individuality and togetherness

## Aspects underlying expected change to domestic ideals

### Social aspects

#### Change in familial roles

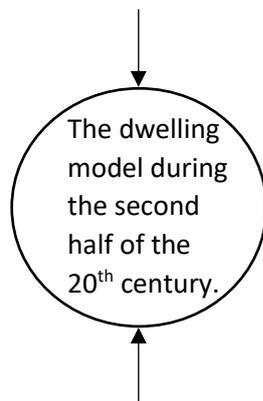
Allan and Crow (1989), Valentine (2001), Pink (2004), McDowell (2007), Ranson (2012), Craig (1989), Sullivan (2004), Ferree (2010), Delap (2011).

#### Penetration of work into family life

Tietze and Musson (2002), Kaufman-Scarborough (2006), Park et al. (2011), Spinney et al. (2012).

#### Parenting

Cieraad (2013), Luzia (2011), Dowling (2008), McIlvenny (2009), Aarsand and Aronsson (2009), Michelan and Correia (2014), Stevenson and Prout (2013).



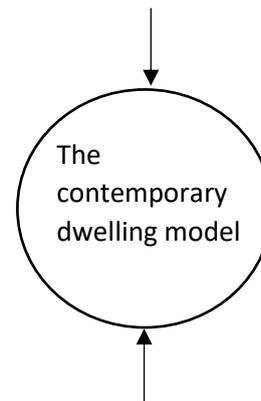
### Spatial constructs

#### Centrality of the living room

Devine (1989), Attfield (2002), Dowling (2008), Costa Santos and Bertolino (2018).

#### Polarity between the one shared space and individually used room

Munro and Madigan (1993), Madigan and Munro (2002), Hardey (1989).



### Conceptual aspects

#### New approach for addressing domestic space

#### Destabilizing polarities

Duncan (1996), Duncan and Duncan (2004), Duncan and Lambert (2004), Rendell (2011).

#### Integrative approach

Rendell (2011), Miller (2001b), Luzia (2011), Cieraad (2013).

Figure 3.2 Diagram summarising the literature about social and spatial constructs of home centredness and aspects behind anticipated changes in family domestic ideals.

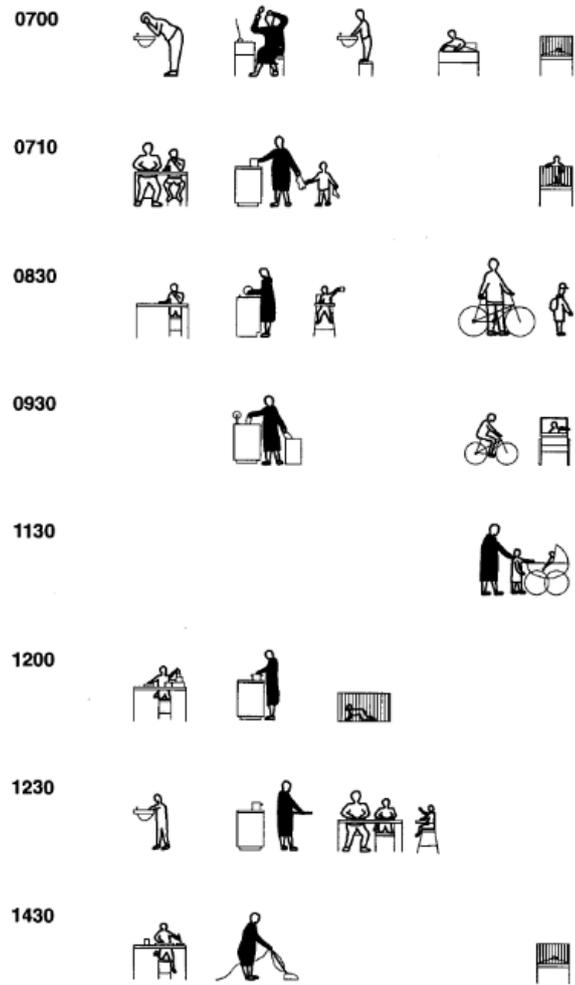


Figure 3.3 'Mr and Mrs Average': distinctions between familial roles taken by men and women as a norm constructing the dwelling model during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Source: Valentine 2001, p.68. Redrawn from Matrix (1984), Pluto Press, London.

**3.3 'The alternative social space'**

Identifying the features of the contemporary dwelling through negotiations for accommodating family domesticity within the one shared space model addresses the theoretical and practical levels of the problem discussed in this thesis (see Chapter 1). In such light, assumptions related to the need for 'an alternative social space' (Munro and Madigan, 1993, p.41) alongside the living room are postulated

as means of accommodating the multiplicity of domestic spheres implied in family life. Such assumption aligns with Ozaki's (2003) findings about the significance of the separate dining room in middle-class family houses in England. Additionally, the study of Dowling and Power (2012) proposes that the size of the dwelling 'is a spatial accommodation of the complexity of the middle-class life' (Dowling and Power, 2012, p.617). These notions are further clarified by considering the spatial restrictions imposed by the size of the dwelling on the parents' privacy, as described in Hardey's (1989) study of the access to housing of low-income lone parents.

The reviewed literature reveals associations between access to the indicated '*alternative social space*' (Madigan and Munro 1993, p.41) and family income, suggesting that the one shared space model is impacted by social inequality in accessibility to the proper dwelling (see section 1.2.4). However, this section proposes that the need for an alternative social space is not limited to the amount of space. Instead, the literature about practices of contemporary domesticity illuminates other social aspects that may suggest other reasons for conflicts between shared and individual uses of space.

New constructions of femininity and masculinity in twenty-first century domesticity are discussed in the literature by authors such as Valentine (2001), Sullivan (2004), Pink (2004), Ferree (2010), and Noelle (2011). Deviating from the conventional model of the differentiated familial roles, the neutrality of the socio-spatial practices performed in the dwelling could be inferred from new roles taken by 'working father[s]' (Ranson, 2012), who are committed to 'hands-on' childcare (ibid.), and women's extended engagement in paid employment (Delap, 2011) and the loss of their dominance over housework and childcare (Craig, 1989). Nonetheless, despite these indications of the gender neutrality of familial roles, another perspective is proposed by Sullivan (2004), who draws attention to the fact that the

quantification of time spent at home does not provide details about socio-spatial practices performed by the adults within the dwelling. These indications echo the proposition of Duncan and Lambert (2004) about the persistence of distinctions in men's and women's domestic practices, despite women's engagement in paid work. Accordingly, questioning the way time is spent in the dwelling is a fundamental consideration of this thesis when constructing notions of contemporary domesticity and implications about the identity and patterns of use of space in the dwelling.

Alongside gender-related constructions of space, complexity in the constructions of the individually used and shared spaces is also indicated through the boundaries between domestic spheres that have become blurred by the parenting style followed in contemporary families. This complexity is indicated in practices associated with contemporary parenting in which the living room is transformed from a space for family leisure to a space that facilitates parenting practices (McIlvenny 2009), connectedness between adults and children while playing (Leeuwen and Margetts, 2014), and the use of gaming devices (Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009; Michelan and Correia, 2013) (see Section 3.5.2). Furthermore, destabilised boundaries are also indicated by the relationship between individual and shared uses of space, such as relying on mobile technology to enable the integration of work into family life (Park et al., 2011; Spinney et al., 2012). This integration requires temporal and spatial negotiations between work and family life (see Section 3.5.5). It could be assumed that the outlined social aspects represent transformative social processes that suggest a tension between conventional home centredness and contemporary domesticity. Nevertheless, and particularly due to the focus on the spatial structure of the contemporary dwelling and the nature of the alternative social space, this transformation is mainly addressed in

this thesis by considering the social constructions of the duality of individuality and togetherness and their manifestations in the spatial features of the dwelling.

It is worth noting that attributes of contemporary domesticity have been accelerated by experiences of lockdown associated with the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred during the writing up of this thesis. Aspects of change pointed out in this review are indicated in recent scholarly discourse as the 'new normal' (Salama, 2020). Extended time spent in the dwelling in the contemporary time is associated with inquiries about the geographical (Salama, 2020; Rose-Redwood et al. 2020, Devine-Wright et al., 2020) boundaries of home. Additionally, suggestions about opportunities for decentralising places of work (Kaushik et al., 2020; Kramer and Kramer, 2020) and educational (Sukmawati et al. 2020) amplify the outlined need to explore personal privacy in domestic life in relationship with the spatiality of work and virtual education in the home.

### **3.4 Addressing the dwelling space**

The duality of individuality and togetherness is addressed in this thesis while considering the nature of individual practices of domesticity (see Section 2.3). This perspective leads to the consideration of the approaches taken in social sciences research towards destabilised polarities of domesticity when exploring the structure of domestic space. In this light, the spatial structure of the dwelling is addressed according to the propositions of Duncan (1996), Duncan and Lambert (2004) and Rendell (2011), who stated that polarities, such as those between public and private, or between genders, can be conceptualised in their integrative and dynamic forms. This implies considering interpersonal relationships through the impact of various states of privacy, as explained by Westin (1970) and Newell (1996), such as states of withdrawal, solitude, isolation, reserve, intimacy and secrecy.

Looking at the variation and dynamics of boundaries within the duality of individuality and togetherness in this thesis draws on Lefebvre (1991) in looking at fields of 'lived spaces' produced by practices of different social events. Rendell (2011) points out the way boundaries of these lived spaces are not seen in an absolute static form. Rather, boundaries of lived spaces are found in critical geographies associated with separations and overlaps between architectural spaces, subjects and matter. Such an integrative approach for constructing space is further articulated by the call (Miller, 2001b; Rendell, 2013) to take into account cultural practices while 'avoiding the duality between the animate and inanimate' (Miller, 2001b) by considering the interplay between subjects, objects and space. The application of this approach in housing studies revealed redefinitions of spaces of the dwelling such as the living room through the changing relationships between users, objects and space, as in Luzia (2011) and Cieraad (2013), and the kitchen, as in Hand, Shove and Southerton (2007), Meah and Jackson (2016), Supski (2017). This perspective also distinguishes between the social and material aspects of the use of space revealed by explorations of the multigenerational nature of the living room, as described in Dowling (2008), and Stevenson and Prout (2013) (see Section 3.5.2). Furthermore, the blurred boundaries between family and work lives are seen when comparing the patterns of use of space in relation to the use of objects, such as portable media technology (Spinney et al., 2012) and fixed devices (Church et al., 2010) (see Section 3.5.5).

To conclude, in the pursuit of identifying features of the spatiality of contemporary domesticity, this thesis builds on the constructs of home-centredness developed during the second half of the twentieth century. However, the gaps in knowledge about the spatiality of family domesticity directs a search for critical geographies that represent the transpositions of existing knowledge about the relationships between the different spheres of domesticity.

## **3.5 Constructions of the contemporary dwelling**

### **3.5.1 Overview**

This section focuses on the geographies associated with practices related to the living room, kitchen, the private open space – namely the back garden – and bedrooms to highlight gaps in the knowledge and spatial constructions that will be discussed in Chapter 9.

### **3.5.2 Unfolding the living room**

Discrepancies between the one shared space dwelling model and everyday uses of the living room appear in studies that compare contemporary domesticity with the modern notions of the family living space (see Figure 3.4). As Attfield (2002) advises, a failure to consider the complexity of domestic social geographies is indicated by the proposition of the open plan as a spatial solution for mitigating the impact of spatial limitations on accommodating the inclusiveness of the living room (Attfield, 2002; Dowling, 2008) (see Figures 3.5, 3.6, 3.7). Reference to the open plan here only amplifies the way continuity between shared space may fail to enhance freedom in socialisation within the family spheres. Such socio-spatial scenario intrigues the question about the experience of members of the family when having a separated living room.

Aesthetically, the one shared space model, as portrayed by Dowling (2008) through the spaciousness and aesthetic order of the modernist living room, appears to represent a neutral backdrop for different practices and modes of use. Such neutrality is also implied within an instrumental conception of the function of space, as described by Attfield (2002). Accordingly, and relying on Le Corbusier's famous quote 'the house is a machine for living in', (cited in Attfield, 2002, p. 253), the neutrality of a modernist open-plan living room is interpreted through the monotony of space where opportunities for representation and display of personal

and social aspects are eliminated. However, conflicts associated with negotiating multiple uses in a one shared space model, as indicated by Munro and Madigan (1993) and Madigan and Munro (2002), Hardey (1989), Costa Santos and Bertolino (2018) and Costa Santos et al. (2018), (also see Section 3.3), show that this manifestation of the living room lacks consideration of the complexity of the relationships between the multiple spheres accommodated within this space of the family dwelling.

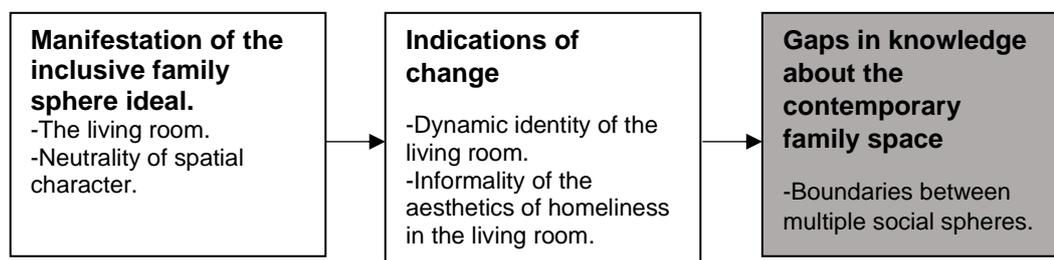


Figure 3.4 Indications of change from the modernists' manifestations of the inclusiveness of the family sphere.



Figure 3.5 Family gathering on the living room sofa watching television.

Source: Turner and Partington (2015, p. 27).



Figure 3.6 An example of an open plan solution introduced to flats built during the second half of the twentieth century.

Source: Turner and Partington (2015, p.19).

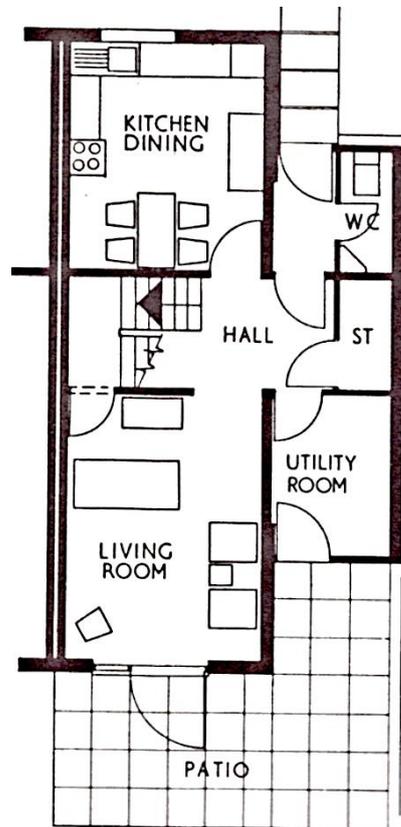


Figure 3.7 The ground floor in a one shared space design model in a five-person house design alternative in a housing scheme at Laindon, Basildon.

Source: Crawford (1975, p 117).

Studies about practices of contemporary domesticity indicate a relationship between the complexity and dynamic nature of the setting of the living room to the importance of closeness between the parents and children. The living room is seen through the multiple geographies that accompany childcare (Dowling, 2008; Luzia, 2011; Cieraad, 2013; Stevenson and Prout, 2013), social connectedness and play with older children (Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009; Leeuwen and Margetts, 2014; Michelan et al. 2013), and setting behavioural rules (McIlvenny 2009). However, blurred boundaries appear to characterise the relationship between parents' and children's use of the living room. According to the study of Maitland et al. (2014) involving 28 families in Australia, a dynamic form of space accompanying this relationship appears when families alter the spatial settings to support children's activities in the home. Such transformations in the setting of the living room are specifically mentioned in the study of Luzia (2011) of 'growing families' in Australia and the study of Cieraad (2013) in the Netherlands about the appropriations made to the living room to facilitate childcare and children's movement. These transformations include the change in the floor from being there to simply accommodate movement to being protective, comfortable and hygienic to accommodate children's activities (ibid.). For older children, Aarsand and Aronsson (2009) explored patterns of use of space when gaming gadgets were placed in the living room; their study reveals that ongoing transformations from 'a living room, a TV room or a gaming room may change depending on the ongoing activities, and who is present and when' (Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009, p. 514).

In contrast to the valued closeness to children on the social level, as outlined above, studies also indicate spatial distinctions between children's and adults' uses seem to be associated with the expansion in the consumption of play and childcare related objects. This distinction is manifested in the routines of ordering space over the course of the day to create a setting for adults' relaxation (Dowling, 2008; Costa

Santos and Bertolino, 2018; Costa Santos et al., 2018) or engagement in personal interests or work (Hardey, 1989) or sociability with friends (Munro and Madigan, 1993, 2002; Costa Santos and Bertolino, 2018; Costa Santos et al., 2018). Furthermore, this need for the distinction is amplified in the study of Stevenson and Prout (2013) in which the participants reacted to the limitation of space in the living room by dedicating a 'toy room' for storing objects associated with children. This form of spatial distinction highlights the necessity to distinguish between social and material layers of the spatiality of social events. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that experiences of the one shared space model in Costa Santos and Bertolino (2018) and Costa Santos et al. (2018) hint at the priority given to using the living room for sharing time with children over creating a space for adults' relaxation.

Another aspect of deviation between the modernists' conceptions and the reality of the living room is suggested in the literature through analogies of the living room as home. Spatially, scholars, such as Cieraad (2002), Dowling (2008) and Rechavie (2009), link this analogy to the sense of informality and inclusiveness that is achieved through the flow between the kitchen and the living room. Furthermore, the sense of comfort formed another construct of the feeling of homeliness in the living room. Such a link is indicated in Rybczynski (1986) in relation to the order of the setting, type of furniture and tactility of objects. A broader perspective for understanding the sense of homeliness from this perspective is also inferred through the conception of comfort proposed by Shove (2003) as an aspect of the state of the body and its relationship to food, furniture, clothing and thermal comfort. Shove's conception of comfort also allows the construction of the image of the contemporary living room in relation to representations of informal behaviour, as seen in the type of clothing and furniture chosen, and the relationship between food consumption and family gatherings. Such details inform a deviation from the aesthetic neutrality of the modernists' living room.

The living room, according to this review, seems to maintain the inclusiveness of family life as proposed by the modernist conceptions. However, supported by the materiality of everyday use, furniture and decoration, the living room gains a dynamic nature that is constructed through the variations of the performed practices and the changes in familial stages that take place over time. Consequently, the neutrality of the modernists' living room leaves us with a gap in knowledge about the implications of these dynamic spatial constructions on the boundaries between different spheres accommodated in the living room.

### **3.5.3 The liveability of the contemporary kitchen**

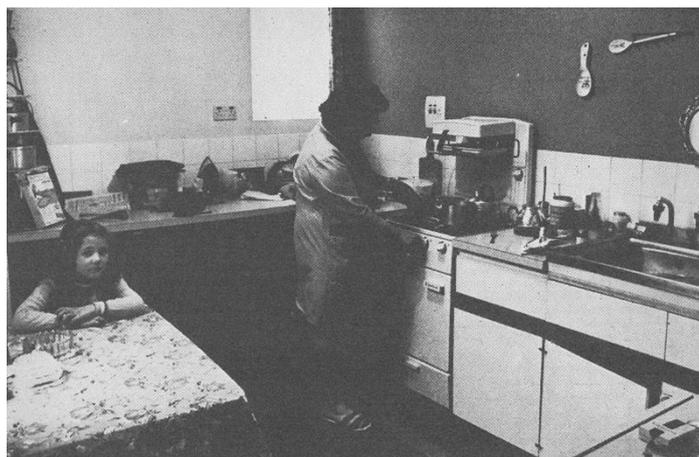
Conceptions of the modernists' socialised kitchen still play a pivotal role in constructing the contemporary kitchen through the faded association between the kitchen and gender-specific familial roles, as described in historical reviews, such as those of Cieraad (2002), Jerram (2006) and Meah (2016) (see Figure 3.8). Scholars who address the material culture of the dwelling highlight indicators of this neutrality through the design of household appliances, as demonstrated in Forty (1986), and the style of communication with users, as indicated by Silva (2010) through the demoted female identity within details of cooking instructions. Alongside the neutrality of the gender identity of the kitchen, populating the kitchen relied on the integration of time and space for social connectedness alongside cooking, which impacts the qualities of the cooking space. Convenience,<sup>5</sup> facilitated by technological advances, enhanced the possibility for engagement in other activities and social engagement alongside the process of cooking, as indicated in Hand and Shove (2004). Alongside gender neutrality, including dining spaces into the kitchen aimed to support the liberation of women from the commitment to housework by creating the socialised kitchen space (Cieraad, 2002;

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<sup>5</sup> Drawing on Shove (2003), convenience is considered in this review as 'arrangements, devices, or services that helped save or shift time' (Shove, 2003, p. 410).

Hand and Shove, 2004; Meah, 2016a). Such socialisation of the kitchen relied on including dining spaces (Cieraad, 2002; Attfield, 2007).

Nonetheless, evidence of the women's reception of the modernists' kitchen implies that this neutrality was only partially accepted in reality, as indicated in the study of the appropriation of standardised kitchen spaces in North London in Miller (1988); and in the reception by the families of the modern kitchen design in Harlow, as described by Attfield (2007, pp.148–171). On the one hand, the appreciation of the socialised kitchen is related to refusing the supremacy of functionality as the aesthetic identity of the kitchen, which women referred to in Supski (2017) when reflecting that the feeling of 'all things functional would be beautiful. However, it was not home' (Supski, 2017, p. 232). On the other hand, and building on the critique of this situation by Chapman (2002b), a shared conception of the neutrality of the kitchen during the early years of the second half of the twentieth century appears to be in a transition phase where spatial practices of housework depend on the personal conception of the distribution of familial roles in domestic life.



*Figure 3.8 The mother accompanied by her child in the kitchen in a flat that is part of the housing scheme at Burghley Road, London. Source: Crawford (1975, p. 223).*

In contrast with the neutrality of the modern kitchen, the identity of this socialised space is further articulated when looking at the liveability of the kitchen that is fundamental to supporting ‘the meaning of contemporary “kitchen life”’ (Meah, 2016a, p. 49) (see Figure 3.9). From this perspective, a change in the aesthetics of the kitchen, as Hand and Shove (2004) suggest, is developed by transforming the conception of the modern kitchen from the convenience to comfort associated with the way of use of appliances, and from the standardisation of design to differentiation through stylistic differences. Further, the liveability of the kitchen, as reflected by the Supski (2017) and Costa Santos and Bertolino (2018) and Costa Santos et al. (2018), is suggested to represent the ‘informal domestic centre’ (Costa Santos and Bertolino, 2018, p. 11) in the contemporary family dwelling. This form of liveability has been associated with the need for expansion of the size of the functional kitchen and has been primarily associated, as mentioned above, with allowing space for dining (Cieraad, 2002; Attfield, 2007). Home extensions in Hand and Shove (2007) also indicate the multiplicity of appliances used in the kitchen as another reason for the need for extending the kitchen space. However, the need for creating a space for comfort is revealed when intending to separate between ‘utility’ and the space for socialisation in the kitchen either by spatial separation or covering up appliances.

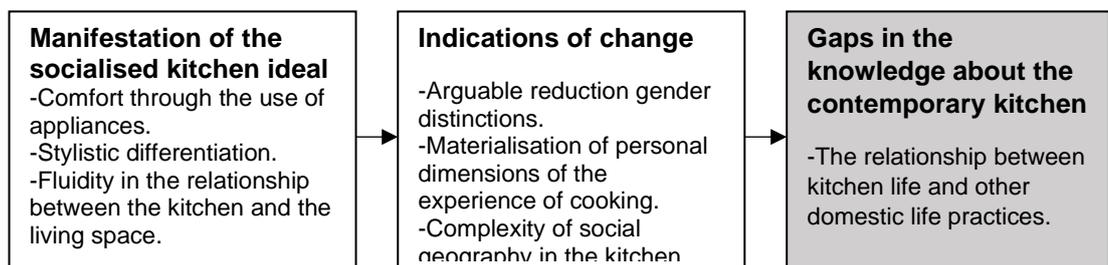


Figure 3.9 Indications of change from the modernists’ conceptions of the socialised kitchen.

It can be inferred that manifesting the liveable kitchen, as part of the larger family space, must consider that, 'creating a space in which "you want to live your life" is far from a straightforward process' (Meah, 2016a, p. 65). From this perspective, multiple functions underlying the spatiality of the socialised kitchen is indicated through investigations about contemporary kitchen life. A personal dimension is indicated through the materialisation of memories and family life (Meah and Jackson, 2016; 2016b), the sense of enjoyment and accomplishment related to demonstrating cooking skills (Cieraad, 2002) and expressions of hospitality (Meah, 2016a). Alongside the individuality of such emotional dimensions, a fluidity of social relationships that include communication between parents, children, siblings, partners and pets is indicated through depictions of the contemporary 'kitchen life' in Meah (2016a). Socialisation and movement associated with this multi-layered social context are manifested through Supski's 'extension of the "sociable kitchen"' (Supski, 2017, p. 236). As indicated in her self-reflections on the renewal of her formerly professional kitchen, the integration between leisure and labour in family life motivated her decision to create the spatial flow between the kitchen and each of the living room and the garden (Supski, 2017).

From this perspective, a question is suggested about the impact of the reviewed emotional aspects on materialising the duality of individuality and togetherness within the kitchen of the contemporary family dwelling. A further question is also proposed about the nature of the boundaries associated with the liveability of the contemporary kitchen.

### 3.5.4 Family privacy in the back garden

The role of the garden in domestic life has an impact on architectural and urban considerations when designing the family dwelling (see Figure 3.10). Associating this role with aesthetic and emotional dimensions, studies such as Blomley's (2005) survey about dwelling ownership in Vancouver, indicate an ideal image of the back garden as inseparable from owning the 'proper garden' (Blomely, 2005, p.625). Aesthetically, the back garden is associated with attributes of a 'beautiful home' (ibid.). Also, Bhatti and Church (2000), Blomley (2005), Freeman et al. (2012) relate that a sense of autonomy is gained through the possibility of self-expression facilitated by gardening practices and the intersection between the family sphere and the public in the garden (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12). Gardening is also associated with a sense of power in domestic life through the ability to transform nature from its 'raw' state (Alexander, 2002, p.861) to 'a human/cultural construction' (Power, 2010, p.41).

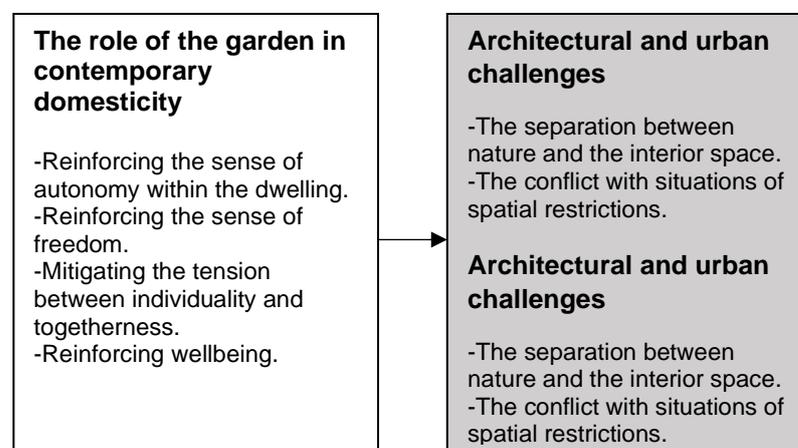
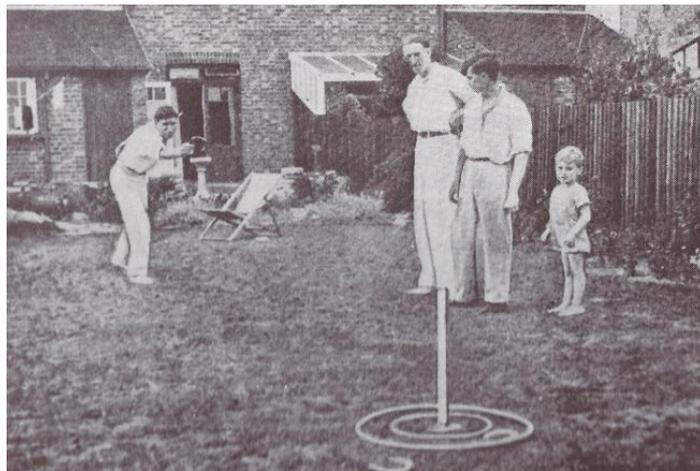


Figure 3.10 Implications of the significance of the back garden in contemporary domesticity.

An emotionally rewarding sense of creation and ownership associated with gardening<sup>6</sup> has been observed in psychology and wellbeing research (Freeman, et al. 2012; Cervinka, et al. 2016). Such emotional aspects appear to provide a space for fascination within the domestic private sphere (Alexander, 2002; Bhatti et al., 2014). Furthermore, as Craig (1989) and Bhatti and Church (2000, 2004) highlight, back gardens provide an opportunity for an ‘escape’ for mitigating the tension between alone and shared time in the one shared space model. Such restorative function is further clarified through the sense of care (Power, 2010) and wellness (Cervinka et al., 2016) provided by the interaction between individuals and nature during gardening.



*Figure 3.11 Leisure at the back garden. Source: Oliver et al. (1981, p. 141).*

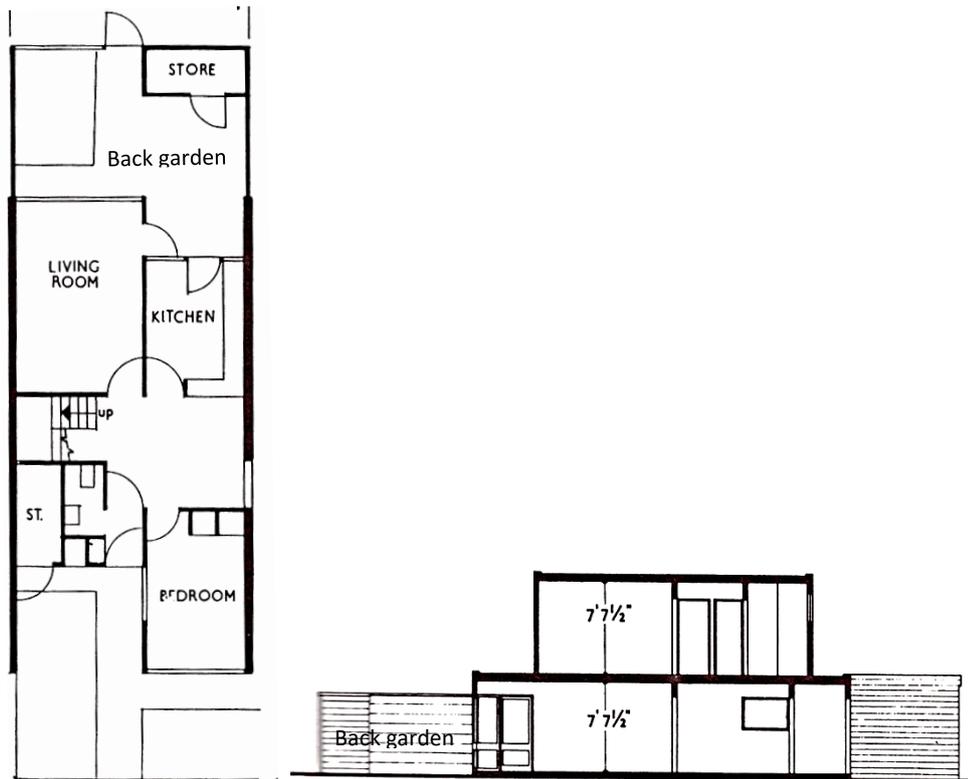


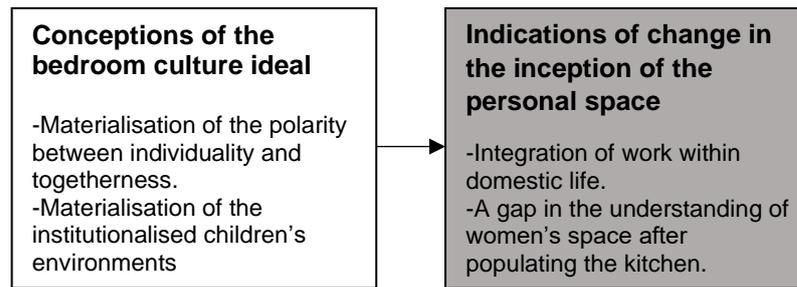
Figure 3.12 The living room and kitchen overlooking the back garden in a housing scheme designed in the 60s at Ravenscroft Road, West Ham.

Back gardens contribute to the spatiality of contemporary domestic life by reinforcing back and front order in the dwelling (Alexander, 2002). In this respect, Bhatti and Church (2014) explain the contribution of the back garden to the private sphere of domestic life as offering the opportunities for openness and immersion in nature while being 'hidden' from exposure to the public. However, the conceptions of the garden as the embodiment of distinction between culture and nature, and public and private (Alexander, 2002), are challenged by connectivity between the interior space and the back garden, as argued by Alexander (2002) and Chevalier (1997). According to Chevalier's (1997) study, exploring the connectedness between the living space and the garden in dwellings near London, inhabitants may intend to blur the spatial boundaries between living spaces and gardens. Accordingly, the participants in her study relied on the arrangement of

furniture to create visual continuity between the internal living space and the garden to provide the feeling of 'being in the garden within the house'. Furthermore, aspects of connectivity are also indicated by integration between leisure activities and labour in domestic life. According to Alexander (2002), this duality is associated with a complexity in the spatial order of the back garden that is constructed through the distinction between the space for leisure, such as play and gathering (Bhatti and Church, 2000; Alexander, 2002), and labour during gardening (Bhatti and Church, 2000; Blomley, 2005; Power, 2010) and the diffusion of housework, such as laundry, into the back garden (Bhatti and Church, 2000, 2004; Alexander, 2002).

### **3.5.5 Personal space in the family dwelling**

Alongside the shared spaces reviewed in the preceding sections, the literature discussed in this section also indicate that the bedroom culture represents the polarity between togetherness and individuality that may require redefinition when considering socio-cultural aspects of contemporary domesticity (see Figure 3.13). This supremacy of the bedroom as a representation of personal privacy is associated with the faded role taken by the kitchen in providing mothers with their personal space in their family sphere, and the association between the fathers' sphere and public life (Munro and Madigan, 1993; Chapman, 2002b). Accordingly, the study of private sphere in the family dwelling by Munro and Madigan (1993) indicated that the bedroom is the salient manifestation of the duality of individuality and togetherness in their investigated cases. Similarly, when Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (1999) investigated adolescents' perceptions of the ideal home, bedrooms were identified as part of the adolescents' materialisation of the distinction between the public and private world. Nonetheless, the position of children in contemporary culture in general – and in family life in particular – imply an impact on the role of the children's rooms and their spatial features.



*Figure 3.13 Indications of change from the conception of the bedroom culture as the manifestation of personal space in the dwelling.*

Bedrooms are also associated with consequences of what Ilze refers to as 'institutionalisation' of children's environments, that scholars such as Wilson et al. (2012) and Ilze (2014) describe as controlled spaces which are aimed to provide the children safety away from the adults' world. This perspective is also associated with the parents' interest in providing children with a 'controlled' outlet for exercising power to take actions (Ilze, 2014). Within this controlled realm, studies showed that children's appropriations of their rooms were informed by their conceptions and needs associated with their personal space in the dwelling. This point of view is inferred from the study of Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2009) into adolescents' favourite spaces, in which the participants associate their bedrooms with their 'private places of withdrawal... the need for time out from people' (Abbott-Chapman and Robertson, 2009, p. 432). Aligned with this reflection, the children's materialisation of the boundary between public and private through their bedroom is inferred from the children's reflections in Palludan and Winther (2017) on the accessibility of others or sharing their bedrooms with their siblings. The sense of power to control one's own world – as reflected by the children – appears to be manifested spatially in Wilson et al. (2012) through the children's appropriation of sensual and aesthetic aspects to separate themselves from undesirable conditions in the outside world. Similarly, the freedom around media consumption in the bedroom is indicated in Steele and Brown (1995) as the

children's tool to create an environment that would enhance their personal development.

Alongside widely accepted notions about the significance of the children's bedrooms as the representation of personal space in family domesticity, the integration between domestic life and work indicates the need to redefine the constructions of the personal space in the family dwelling (Tietze and Musson, 2002; Jarvis, and Pratt, 2006; Kaufman-Scarborough, 2006; Park et al., 2011; Spinney et al., 2012). According to this integration, boundaries of the adults' personal spaces are seen to be dependent on the nature and pattern of time consumed by engagement in working from home, as indicated in the study of patterns of managing working from home by Tietze and Musson (2002). However, besides managing the temporal boundaries, the study of experiences of working from home by Kaufman-Scarborough (2006) point to the need for considering the integration between work and family life through negotiations of boundaries on the social, material and spatial levels. It is inevitable in this context of the review to include the impact of the diversity of modes of use of media technology on the spatial and temporal boundaries between work and domestic life. This is informed from studies about technology in the home, such as that of Frohlich and Kraut (2003), who indicated that fixed technologies are associated with the need for a demarcation of temporal and spatial boundaries between work and domestic life. These negotiations are further clarified from studies that address the link between domestic practices and portability of media technologies, as in the work of Church et al. (2010) and Spinney, et al. (2012), which examine the impact of the mobility of media devices on allowing a variety of forms of intersections between space, time and the type of the performed task – including work. Using fixed devices from this perspective is associated with the distinction of work from other family life practices (Frohlich and Kraut, 2003). However, flexibility in the use of space for work

is noted by Church et al. (2010) as being due to the way the mobility of devices enables the creation of private space through time scheduling.

Despite the lack of research into gender distinctions when outlining views about the spatiality of personal space in relation to work, the literature includes a discourse about the distinction between genders in terms of patterns of use of personal space for personal emotional and recreational needs. On the one hand, there is a masculine identity associated with segregated spaces in the dwellings, as indicated in Chapman's (2002a) study of model homes' showrooms, where developers include a study room rendered with masculine decorative themes within their model homes in the UK. Further, men's use of the garage in contemporary Australian families, as revealed in Browitt (2017), as a personal space was associated with the fulfilment of needs for ownership of such segregated spaces and freedom to socialise, perform hobbies and reflect their own identity. On the other hand, women appear to have less opportunity to spend time in and use space of their own (Ahrentzen et al., 1989; Munro and Madigan, 1993). As Ahrentzen et al. (1989) note, the women's need for personal time is indicated within family domesticity in association with the need for refuge from housework and for communication with others. However, and in contrary to indications about men's spaces, the spatiality of women's free time is reflected in some studies independently from the sense of ownership or the fixity of space, as indicated by Craik (1989) where women reported their refuge was in shared spaces characterised by detachment, such as the basement or the back garden. Nonetheless, the dwelling is still associated with women's sense of ownership, as indicated in Chapman (2002b) and Munro and Madigan (1993). However, the need for ownership of personal space has been indicated in studies where women engage in work and study, such as the experiences of single mothers' domesticity described by Craig (1989). However, considering the overall limitation in the

knowledge about gender distinctions associated with the adults' personal spaces, it can be considered that such inconsistency in the literature may indicate a lack of shared conception of the identity of the personal space in the family dwelling.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter offers an overview of the spatiality of contemporary domesticity that is traced through theories about practices of contemporary domesticity. The focus on the duality of individuality and togetherness informed social geographies such as the children and individually used spaces created in the living room. In other stances, this duality was associated with new conceptions and practices such as uses of the liveable kitchen and the impact of technology on the personal space. Comparisons between the mid-twentieth century family dwelling and the contemporary one suggests a progressive change in domestic ideals. Connections were apparent through the centrality of the family sphere in domestic life which is associated with the significance of the duality of individuality and togetherness. However, emergent distinctions are evidenced through the relationship between adults and children; work and home; and the indoor and the outdoor spaces.

The 'alternative social space' extended its original conception as an extra needed space within the dwelling (see Section 3.3). The literature indicates that the home-centred lifestyle remains associated with a multiplicity of shared and personal spaces. However, practices of contemporary domesticity are apparent in the review of emerging new spaces, such as the personal space for adults. In addition, prospects of new spatial relationships are indicated through the boundaries between the back garden and each of the living room and kitchen, and children and adults' spaces. Accordingly, the outlined new practices and spatial boundaries confirm the need to extend the search to qualitative resolutions alongside

quantitative notions of providing extra space. The review provides indications about the need to redefine the spatiality of family domesticity.

Chapter 4

**Methodology: Researching Contemporary  
Domesticity**

## **Chapter 4: Methodology: Researching Contemporary Domesticity**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology followed for exploring the contemporary dwelling model through the individuals' experiences. This chapter explains the philosophical position taken for addressing space through its interrelation with the individuals' experiences. According to this position, the design of the methodology according to the narrative and the participatory approaches followed in this study is justified. Then, the multimodal methods taken for applying these approaches are explained by elaborating the tactics applied for expanding the participants' active role in developing the knowledge proposed through this study. Explanation of the methods also highlights how the integration of these methods was applied to capture the multidimensionality of space. Then, the chapter moves to explain the journey of the development of the knowledge proposed in this research by demonstrating the way procedures taken for recruitment and sampling, carrying out the pilot study and the analysis process were guided by the interest in constructing the spatial qualities that represent the reality of contemporary family domesticity.

### **4.2 Philosophical positions and methodology design**

Methodological choices (see Figure 4.2) were made to sustain alignment between the philosophical position (see Chapter 2) and research purpose (see Chapter 1) (Spencer et al., 2003). In order to address the main research question, '*How does contemporary domesticity negotiate commonplace domestic architecture?*', the dwelling – framed as a constituent of culture – is considered in this thesis in three forms that connect collective cultural constructs (Rapoport, 1969) and the

individuals' subjective socio-spatial practices. From this perspective, the dwelling is also acknowledged as the dynamic field of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) that is negotiated, produced and reproduced through improvisations and transpositions accompanying the individuals' practices of domesticity (see Figure 4.1).

Space in terms of objective structures	Space as part of individual actions	Space as a field of actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstract ideals</li> <li>• Spatial structures</li> <li>• Symbolic representations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivations</li> <li>• Existing cultural context</li> <li>• Practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations</li> <li>• Habitation conditions</li> <li>• Symbolic representations</li> </ul>

Figure 4.1 Modes of addressing the dwelling that guide the methodological approach, drawing on Bourdieu (1977).

Conceptualising the dwelling from this perspective generated the research sub-questions that directed the methodological approaches and methods:

*Q1-How is contemporary domesticity practised in the pre-existing space?*

*Q2-How is the pre-existing space negotiated by the inhabitants?*

*Q3-What do negotiations with architectural space reveal about the contemporary dwelling model?*

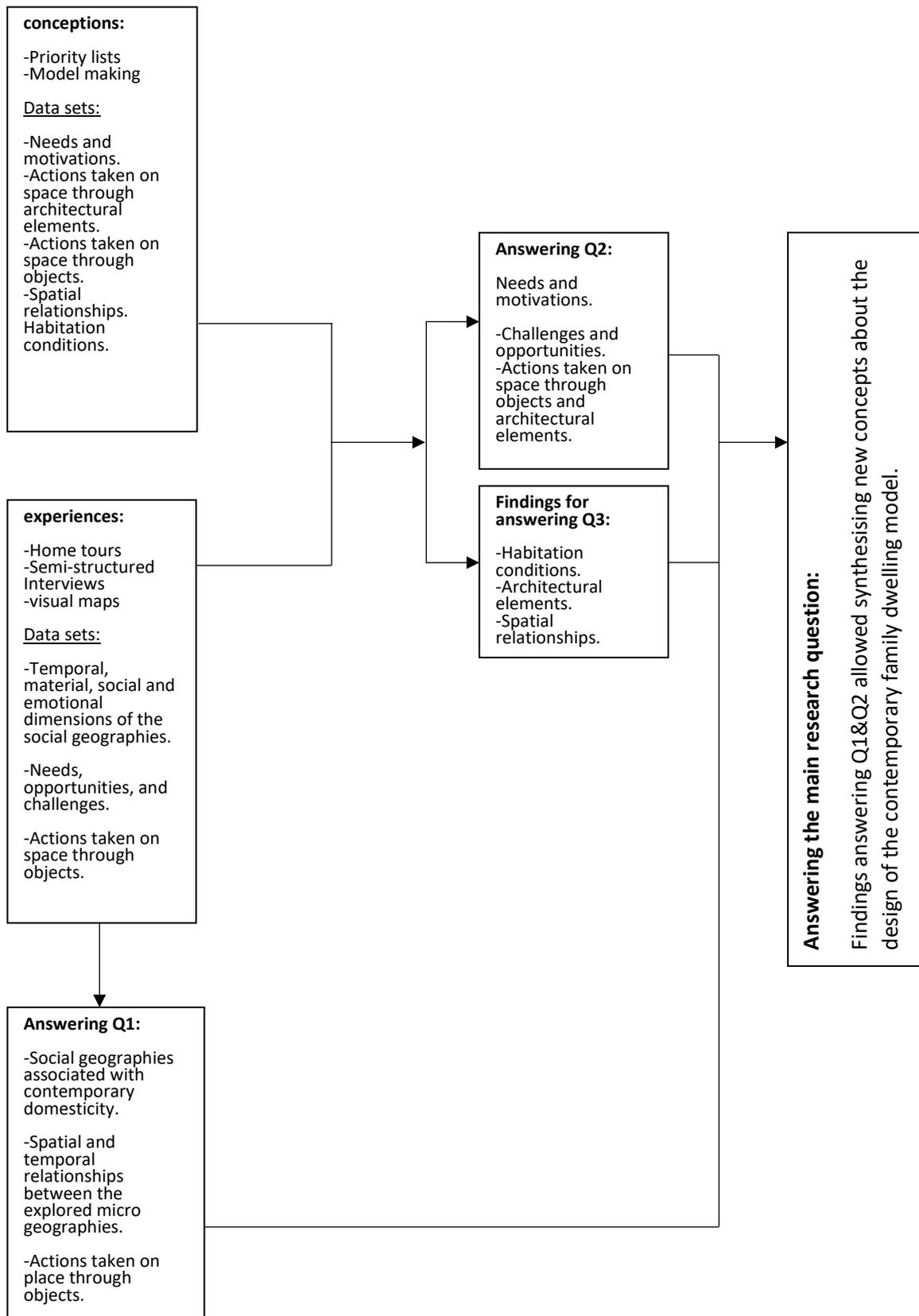


Figure 4.2 The methodology design for answering the research questions.

The importance of the socialised form of space invited Lefebvre's (1991) notions about the social production of space, suggesting particular aspects to be investigated (see Figure 4.3). Following Lefebvre's theory, the methodology used in this thesis considered the dwelling through representations of dynamic, abstract fields of lived spaces independently from the physical construction. This means that the methodology was designed to capture practices, actors, social and spatial connections, emotions and perceptions associated with the investigated space. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991), revealing issues related to the active role of space in enabling these spatial fields (see Section 2.2) required acknowledging these lived fields alongside the socio-spatial processes that enabled their negotiation and production within the pre-existing space. This led to the design of a methodology that would allow the finding of the negotiations, motivations, possibilities and limitations embedded in the dynamic process of the production of the lived space.

Representations of socio-spatial processes	Representations of the lived space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivations</li> <li>• Appropriations</li> <li>• Practices</li> <li>• Possibilities</li> <li>• Limitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actors</li> <li>• Habitation conditions</li> <li>• Symbolic representations</li> <li>• Practices</li> </ul>

*Figure 4.3 Representations of the socialised space guiding the selection of the methods, drawing on Lefebvre (1991).*

Drawing on Spencer et al. (2003) and Squire et al. (2014), dealing with personal accounts entails acknowledging the dwelling through multiplicity, relativity, and subjectivity of the truth about the socially constructed space. Considering Bourdieu (1977), the methodology envisages the partial understanding of domestic space that results from the impact of contextual forces in real life. Accordingly, the design

of the methodology sought to complement social practices that are hindered due to external influences with conceptions about the dwelling and domestic practices that may be embedded in the individuals' imagination. This nature of the inquired truth directed the design of the methodology towards considering of approaches and tools that would enhance freedom of expression and creativity in relation to the representation of space.

According to the ontological position clarified in this section, the methodology followed in this thesis is inspired by previous research that studied the dwelling as a field of practice in which domestic ideals are reproduced, such as that of Gregson and Lowe (1995), Gravey (2001), Attfield (2000, 2002, 2007), Walker (2002), Dowling and Blunt (2005), Dowling (2008) and Costa Santos et al. (2018). According to Rendell (2011), these fields' criticality is identified through the reflectivity and improvised performative form where boundaries, from this perspective, are identified through 'relations and interdependencies' that may accompany tensions and conflicts (Valentine, 2001). As Valentine (2001) notes, researching such spatial fields requires accepting their complexity, ambiguity and multidimensionality. In other words, researching spatial fields of practice does not reveal space in its objective and fixed form. Rather, the aim here is to capture intersections between social processes, time and space (ibid.).

Looking at architecture through its integration in spatial practices has an impact on the epistemological position taken in this thesis. According to Rendell (2011), the fluidity of performed space implies the consideration of matter as an integral element of the lived space. Such a conception of materiality implied considering the active role of architecture and objects in the construction of the studied critical spatial fields. This means that researching and representing architecture in this

thesis emphasised the 'embodiment, narrative and voice' (Rendell, 2011, p.39) and 'intersecting epistemologies and ontologies' (ibid.).

The destabilised boundary between the social and material dimensions was addressed through the multimodality of methods applied in this thesis. Drawing on Mason (2006), integrating multimodal methods in this thesis also allowed the capture of the multidimensionality of the emotional, social, temporal and spatial dimensions of the investigated domestic experiences. Combinations of different methods allowed the projection of new dimensions that were not expected (ibid.) such as depicting habitation conditions associated with events that were not indicated in the literature, addressing domestic space in its abstract form. The multidimensionality of the revealed data also extended the possibility of capturing the social processes on the macro level, such as gender roles and parenting style, and the micro-level, such as emotional and experiential dimensions.

Drawing on a feminist research position, the design of the methodology accepts the integration of my voice as a researcher and the impact of my critical eye on the analysis and representation of findings (see Section 4.14). My voice was explicated by distinguishing between the participants' photos and those taken by myself when representing the data findings. The subjectivity of my voice was also expressed through representations of my imagination of the events narrated by the participants through sketches (see Section 4.12.2). Verbally, when representing my own process of synthesising the collected data as in section 7.2.1 when stating my confusion about contradicting data and seeking logic behind the given data through conversations with my supervisor.

Such philosophical positions also justify excluding other methodological approaches that have been followed in previous research conducted in the field of

housing and culture. The interest in the connections between individual agency and collective domestic ideals explains the avoidance of the determinism of collective social structures when following a structuralist approach, such as in Rapoport (1969, 1990), Gauvain et al. (1982), Lawrence (1982, 1990), Kent (1990), Donley-Reid (1990), and the 'unstrained freedom of the individual' (Webster, 2011, p.6) when following a phenomenological approach, as in Korosec-Serfaty (1984), Serfaty-Garzon (1985), Pennartz (1986), Ozaki (2006) and Alhuzail (2017). Furthermore, and despite acknowledging the heterogeneity of actors involved in the production of space in the Latourian network theory (Latour, 2005), the focus on relational connections between actors, as described in in Silva (2003), Hitchings (2003), Aarsand and Aronsson (2009) and Jacobs et al. (2012), was found not to correspond to the research interest in exploring domestic praxis.

#### **4.3 Narrative approach**

The narrative approach was followed in this thesis due to its adequacy in exploring connections between the social and spatial domestic processes on the micro and macro levels. Scholars, such as Wiles et al. (2005), have demonstrated the success of narratives in revealing connections between the 'intimate details of experiences, attitudes and reflections' on the personal level 'to the broader social and spatial relations' (Wiles et al., 2005, p. 98). The narrative approach also contributes to this research by revealing various attitudes towards unknown constructs of the dwelling model's collectiveness. As previous studies in sociology indicate, such attitudes could be captured through the individuals' reproductions (Squires, et al., 2014, p. 61) and convergences and divergences (Leiblich et al., 1998) that may be revealed when describing personal experiences of a shared social phenomenon. In housing studies, the narrative approach has been shown to be an effective method for exploring individuals' conceptions about the dwelling

in relation to contextual forces (Shin, 2014), changing conceptions about home (Alhuzail, 2017) and representations of changing life circumstances (Kellet, 2011).

As Tamboukou, et al. (2008) noted, narratives provide a view of unconscious realities through the '*co-presence of futurity and past in the present, the construction of the past by new "presents", and the projection of the present into future imaginings, in ways that do not give an implicit priority to the personally experienced time.*' (Tamboukou et al., 2008, p.11). Therefore, our notions of spatial connections can be extended by including a temporal dimension to the spatial structure of the dwelling. Furthermore, the commonality of temporality in narratives allows the exploration of personal conceptions of a social situation through reflections on imaginary futures, or even hypothetical situations (Reissman, 1993).

According to Squires et al. (2014), small scale narratives of everyday domestic events in this thesis focus on details of the social, spatial and material aspects of the individuals' domestic practices. Furthermore, following the classification of narratives by Leiblich et al. (1998), the narratives were categorised into specific themes in which domesticity was prioritised over the holistic form of the stories told. This approach was complemented by the consideration of temporality to clarify structural aspects of the revealed meanings rather than the holistic form of the story.

With regards to the participatory methods adopted (see Section 4.4), this thesis follows Tamboukou's (2008, p. 104) claim that power in the context of research does not identify dominant forces; in fact, it is the force behind the production of the truth determined in the research. Accordingly, this research expanded on the verbal life stories by including visual and physical modelling tools for materialising intangible spatial features such as emotions and symbolic associations with place

and the performed practices. Engagement in these modes of expression of space allowed the participants to actively and critically reflect the lived experiences of their dwellings and domestic lives.

#### **4.4 Participatory research approach**

This research adopted a participatory method for bridging the inhabitants' 'tacit knowledge' (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 165) and my abstract theoretical understanding of the contemporary dwelling. According to Spinuzzi's (2005) description of the users' knowledge, such collaboration reinforces practical and contextual dimensions that shape the knowledge developed about the contemporary dwelling. Research in children's collaboration, such as Birch et al. (2017), also highlights the way that voices from outside the academic discourse support transgressing and challenging existing knowledge. On the broader level, taking the participatory approach in this thesis was also motivated by the societal purpose of including voices that have rarely been heard in previous studies into the developed knowledge in housing research domain, mainly by including cases where negotiating the dwelling place is obscured by external restrictions such as type of tenure or financial plans.

Collaboration in this thesis deviates from conventionally acknowledged action-oriented participatory research. Here, I draw on the explanations of Spinuzzi (2005) and Bergold and Thomas (2012) to highlight that the nature of collaboration in this theoretical inquiry lies in the participants' awareness and active role in the development of knowledge. Accordingly, applying this approach in this thesis took Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation (see Table 4.1) only as a guide for defining the participants' power in the development of knowledge. Aligned with the consideration of power pointed out above enhancing the participants' influence in initiating and directing the knowledge in this thesis was fundamental to designing

the data collection and interpretation approach. In this case, I aimed to transgress the participants' roles of reporters or informants by requesting their critical views on their accounts. Taking the role of a facilitator, I aimed to create the 'third space' where the participants could practise their power in representing their critical views and creating alternative scenarios and solutions that directed the path of the research (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). In consideration of the views of Howard and Sommerville (2014) on the authenticity of participation in action research, the participants' active role in directing this investigation was inseparable from their awareness of the impact of their knowledge and actions on the research activities. This implied explaining to the participants how their knowledge would support improving their living conditions and the effects it may have on the broader societal level (Spinuzzi, 2005). When conducting the research, I was keen to raise the participants' awareness of their role in the exploratory nature of the research where their critical voices contributed to directing the research in unplanned directions.

Form of participation	Level of participation
Control	Degrees of citizen power
Power	
Partnership	
Placation	Degrees of tokenism
Consultation	
Informing	
Therapy	Non-participation
Manipulation	

*Table 4. 1 Forms of the participants' involvement in participatory research based on the ladder of participation in Arnstein (1969). The figure shows the participants' influential roles supported in this research through their power in expressing their critical views.*

Indeed, in the light of the scarcity of space experienced by the participants, they influenced the turns taken by this research in two situations (see Section 4.13.2). First, there was a focus on family domesticity because the duality of togetherness and individuality in family households amplified the shortage of space, especially when comparing the young couple and one adult households. Second, the focus on indeterminacy of domestic space arose due to the mismatch between the participants' flats and the negotiated spaces that they were representing through the data construction process. However, possibilities for extending the participants' influential role through their reflections on the research outcomes (Spinuzzi, 2005; Bergold and Thomas, 2012; Howard and Somerville, 2014) were limited in this research. The time taken for data analysis caused the loss of contact with some participants due to significant changes in their circumstances or their loss of interest in participation. Reflexivity on the participatory process was also considered through plans for sharing the research outcomes and reflections of wider society (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). Nonetheless, as the data analysis was being completed during the situation of Covid-19, it was not possible to arrange interactive public events.

A design-oriented approach associated with exploring the contemporary dwelling impacts the way the participatory approach is applied in this thesis. Accordingly, creating physical products was significant in materialising the imagined and experienced architectural features of the dwellings (Spinuzzi, 2005; Clark, 2007). Drawing on Spinuzzi (2005), the practical form of the participants' knowledge has also been enhanced by employing interactive methods, such as taking photos of the dwelling, making visual maps and model making (see Sections 4.7 and 4.8). Representing the dwelling through these methods aimed to materialise struggles and possibilities intertwined with the everyday experience of the dwelling. Providing an environment that supported the participants' creativity allowed the

participants to transgress reality through criticism and even to simulate imagined spatial features that were not possible to implement in reality (Sanoff, 2006). Providing this environment required building familiarity between the participants and myself by considering organising the fieldwork in a sequence from the reporting of information to criticising and taking actions on space creatively. As Lee (2008) explained, enhancing creativity during a participatory process requires flexible research methods that would extend the impulsive and improvised form of the participants' knowledge. In this respect, the methods were designed to support such freedom through the open-endedness of interview questions, the taking of photos that would reflect participants' experiences of their dwelling and the variety of materials provided for model making.

The design of the methodology following this approach draws upon Sanoff's (2006) suggested constructs of a participatory research project such as: "*Who is participating? What are the activities that would enable participation? Where should the participation lead? How would the participants be involved?*" (Sanoff, 2006, p. 136). Answering these questions relied on a pilot study where the sample frame, the refinement of the methodology and the type of data obtained were determined independently from pre-determined assumptions.

As discussed above, the pivotal reason for asking the participants to materialise their knowledge through the activities undertaken in this research was to bridge between their knowledge and my own. The multidimensionality of the investigated lived space required a methodology that considered multiple forms of representation of the participants' experiences. The methodology involved three stages of fieldwork (see Figure 4.4).

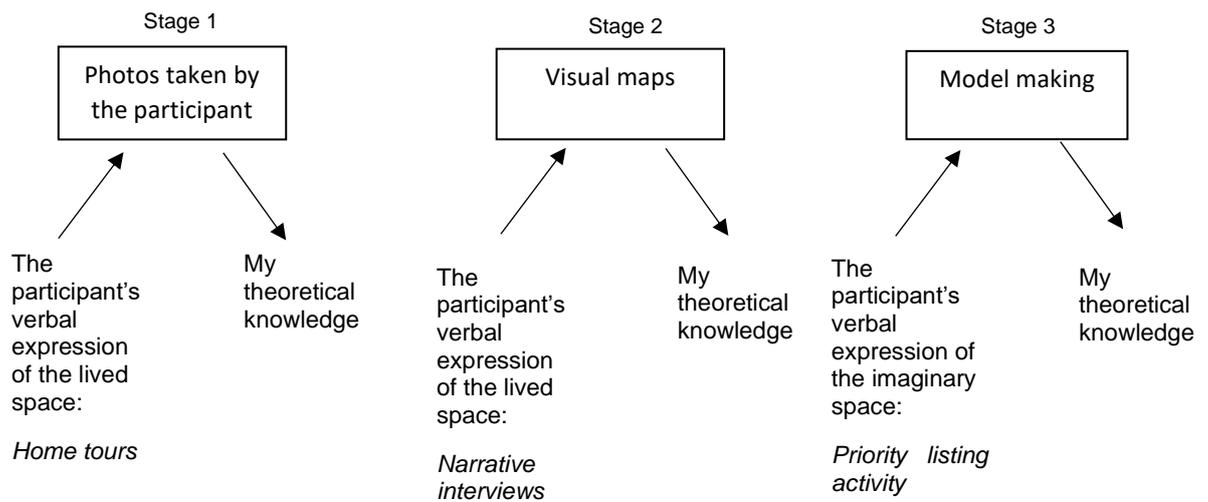


Figure 4.4 Connections between the participants' and the researcher's knowledge over different stages of the research.

#### 4.5 Case study strategy

A case study was used in this research to explore the spatiality of contemporary domesticity as performed and negotiated during everyday life. To amplify intangible aspects underlying the investigated lived spaces, this thesis drew on Seawright and Gerring (2008) and Yin (2009) by taking a single case study in which domestic life experiences take place in dwellings that represent different domestic paradigms. This approach aimed to explore the spatiality of contemporary domestic practices through critical spatial fields associated with the inhabitants' negotiations with the pre-existing space as investigated in Attfield (2007), Berglund-Lake (2008), Cruz-Petit (2015) and Costa Santos et al. (2018).

In such light, Tyneside flats, a distinct spatial solution for the Victorian family dwelling prevalent in Newcastle, UK (see Figure 4.5), were chosen for addressing the enquiry of this thesis. Developed in the Victorian era under the constraints of limited space, the flats preserve the Victorian back-and-front duality (see Section 5.2) while occupying one floor of a traditional two-storey Victorian terraced house, with each flat having its own entrance and backyard (see Figure 4.6). However, despite the popularity of Victorian terraced houses as family residences, Tyneside flats are not perceived as permanent residences for contemporary families (Lancaster, 1994; Wadsworth, 2011), indicating spatial constraints on accommodating contemporary domesticity. Further details about the social construction and the spatial features of the Tyneside flats are included in Chapter 5. Thus, drawing upon Rapoport (1969), such constraints provide the opportunity to identify critical aspects of contemporary home life.

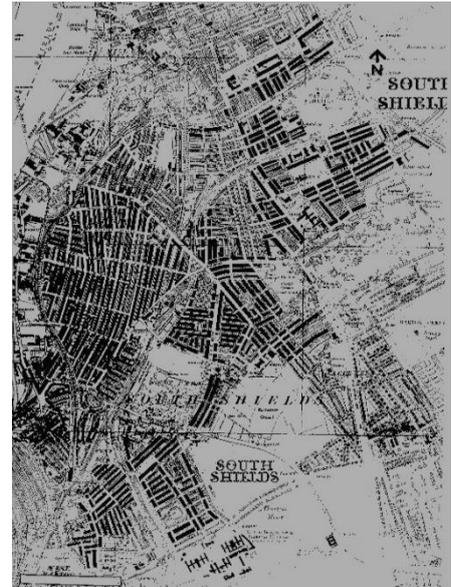
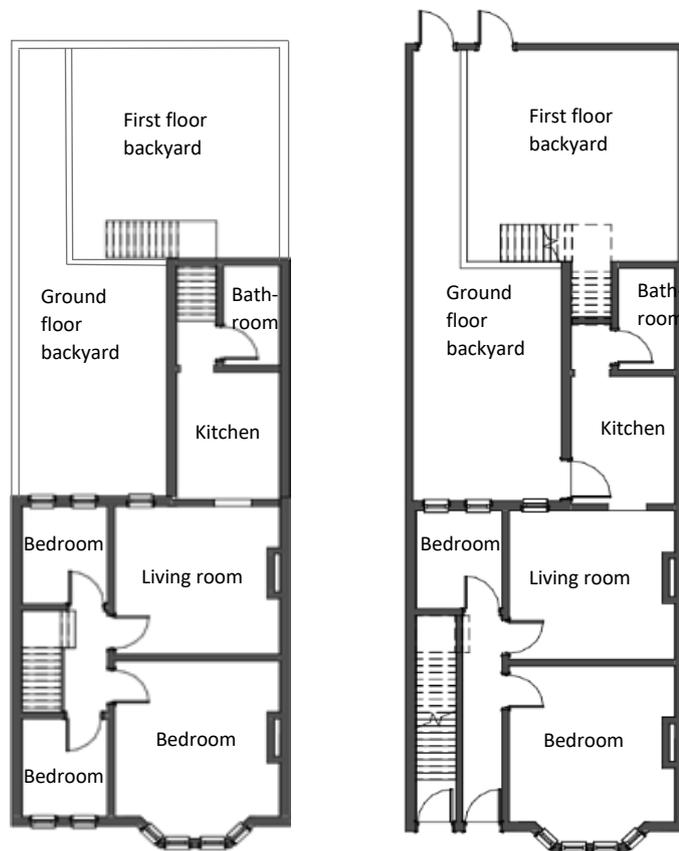


Figure 4.5 Marked in black – The Tyneside flats in Heaton (top left), South Shields (top right), Wallsend (bottom left), and Gateshead (bottom right). Source: Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities report (1979, pp. 12–15).

From a practical perspective, the significance of these flats to the housing stock of Newcastle upon Tyne and the good structural condition (Northern Consortium for Housing Authorities, 1979), encourages the enquiry about how these flats accommodate contemporary domestic life. Drawing on Keith (2007), who studied cultural dimensions behind the ‘obsolescence’ of old housing stock, avoiding ‘the loss of value or utility of an object or product over time’ (Keith, 2007, p. 322)

requires the search for a new social construction of the possibilities of living in old housing. This enquiry becomes persistent when considering the various approaches for dealing with these flats in the last decade either by demolition, as reported by Gerry Jackson (BBC News, 2014) or by replicating their design as in The Malings project by Ash Sakula Architects ([www.ashsak.com/projects/malings](http://www.ashsak.com/projects/malings)). Accordingly, investigating the Tyneside flats in this thesis implies an intention to provide evidence-based knowledge about conflicts and possibilities that should be considered when regenerating these flats.



*Figure 4.6 An exemplar plan sketch of the Tyneside flats, first floor (left) and ground floor (right).  
Source: The author based on F6's flat and upon reference to models in the Northern Housing Consortium report (1979, pp. 21-39).*

One interesting fact about these flats is the similarity between their size and the contemporary housing standards for a two-bedroom dwelling. Nonetheless, the reported failure of these flats to accommodate family living places the quantified measures in the housing standards guidance under dispute. Accordingly, conflicts related to contemporary family living in these flats implied potential to explore qualitative criteria to enhance contemporary family living.

Finally, the choice of this case study was also driven by a personal motivation related to my experience of a one-year tenancy with my family (two adults and two children) in a Tyneside flat. Despite our anticipation that a three-bedroom flat would be suitable for us, the difficulties experienced in accommodating our life in this flat triggered my curiosity as a researcher to investigate this case at a deeper level. However, I excluded my participation as an informant in this thesis due to the considerations required when applying and analysing the autoethnographic method (Holt, 2003; Anderson, 2006).

#### **4.6 Recruiting participants**

As anticipated at the outset of the research, reaching participants who were willing to share details and show their dwellings to a stranger was far from straightforward. This difficulty was exacerbated by a lack of familiarity with the research methods and the length of time required from the participants for data collection. Some potential participants were willing to take part in the research under the understanding that data collection would be through interviews and surveys but were either reluctant to proceed after the interview or withdrew from participation once the full methodology had been explained to them. Notably, participants who continued were motivated by personal considerations. Some were interested in contributing to knowledge and seeing the application of new research methods that

included creativity and were aimed at addressing a research problem that was interesting to them. Others were motivated by our social connection and their desire to support their friend. In most cases, the participants who took part in the fieldwork were familiar with me and my research field.

At the outset of the fieldwork, I relied on flyers calling for those interested in taking part in research exploring the spatial features of the contemporary family dwelling (see Figure 4.7). These flyers were distributed around the Northumbria University campus and by email through different institutions. This method was unsuccessful as it failed to highlight the practical problems that might have captured personal interest in addressing real-life issues and could have motivated readers to participate. Accordingly, I engaged directly by explaining to friends and colleagues the nature of my fieldwork and called for participation. Thus, a snowball recruitment and sampling procedure had more success in motivating people to participate (see Figure 4.8).

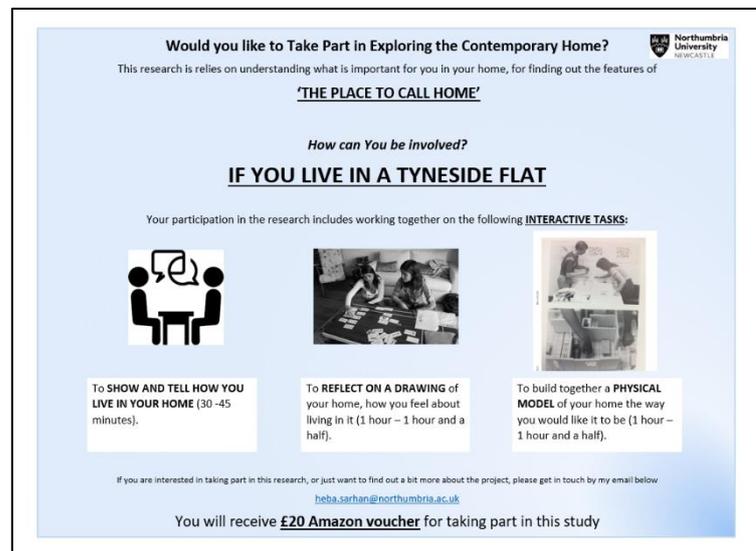
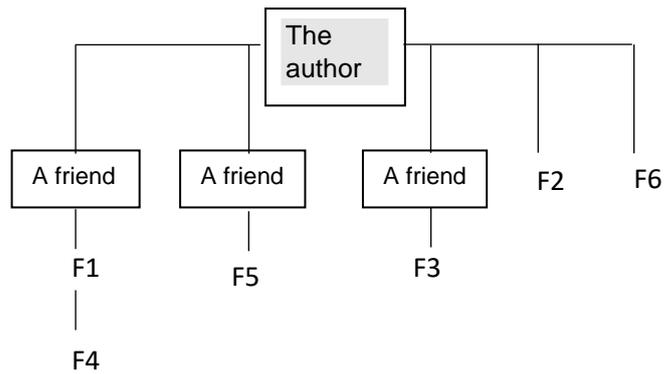


Figure 4.7 Participation invitation flyer. Source: The author.



*Figure 4.8 Mapping the snowball recruiting procedure followed for reaching the participants.*

### ***The sampling procedure***

The sampling procedure followed in this qualitative research was concerned with the definition of the 'relationship of the sample to the wider universe' (Mason, 2002, p. 123) – the 'wider universe' here being family housing. In alignment with the progressive and iterative nature of the research process (see Section 4.2), decisions about the sampling were taken during the process (Silverman, 2013, p.69). This sampling strategy was guided by a combined empirical and theoretical logic' (Mason, 2002, p.124). At the first stage, changes in the sampling procedure took place in parallel to a change on the broader population's boundaries from diverse households to families with children (see Table 4.3 for details on narrowing down the sample). According to Mason (2002), this sampling strategy was guided by a combined empirical and theoretical logic' (Mason, 2002, p.124).

On the theoretical level, the sample was narrowed down according to the development of the research inquiry during different stages of the analysis and review of the literature. On the practical level, the sample frame was developed according to the access to potential participants and the adequacy of the initial emergent themes to respond to the central research enquiry.

Initially, the research addressed the broader population of UK residents through three cases of that indicated potential to raise differentiated facets of contemporary domesticity in the UK:

1-The Tyneside flats indicated the potential to raise issues related to the regeneration of existing housing precedence.

2-The Malings project, where exploring experiences of domesticity within a reiteration of the local Tyneside flats suggested possibilities to raise issues related to the designers' reinterpretation of the Tyneside flats and reality of contemporary domesticity.

3-The Boklok residential project, led by Ikea, that represents a global approach for contemporary dwelling design. Experiences of the Boklok were considered upon the expectation of the potential of bringing up issues related to the relationship between the global and local conceptions of contemporary domesticity.

Drawing on the pilot study (see Section 4.10), narrowing down the sample frame to focus on the residents of the Tyneside flats was in part due to difficulty in reaching participants in the other projects as well as being due to the adequacy of findings to the research enquiry (see Section 4.13.2). At a later stage of the study, the sample frame was narrowed down to focus on families who live with children in the Tyneside flats. This decision was taken due to the multiplicity of the spatial and social boundaries revealed through their experiences of domesticity in these flats. The sample also restricted a length of tenure no less than a year to eliminate the impact of relocation (Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Shin, 2014) on disrupting the participants' life pattern.

Following this recruitment and sampling procedure, the experiences of six families with children living in Tyneside flats were investigated for this study (see Table 5.1 for details about the participants). Due to the qualitative nature of the enquiry of

this thesis, the size of the sample was a decision that relied on the saturation of the concepts emerging from the data analysis (Morse, 2000; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2003; Mason, 2010). As Morse (2000) explanation of the research variables that influence the size of the sample, the complexity of the methodology design of this thesis had an impact on the decision of the size of the researched sample. Such sample allowed managing the quality of the obtained data during the data collection and analysis with respect to the resources of this project and my skills as a novice researcher. The saturation of the emerging concepts formed an intrinsic aspect underlying the decision on the sample size (Morse, 2000; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2003). The idiosyncratic nature of the explored domestic practices in this thesis emphasised the experience of every new participant is expected to raise new dimensions to the addressed research enquiry. This means that 'redundancy' (Guba, 1985, p. 202, cited in Patton, 2002, p.246) as a criterion of saturation could not be applicable in this thesis as matter of repetition of data. Rather, saturation was considered according to the cohesion of the emerging themes and their plausibility in addressing the research question. As Mason (2010) explains, in this case, new dimensions obtained from a bigger sample may not extend the understanding proposed by the finding.

The diversity of the cultural background of these families and varying ages of their children broadened the explored dimensions of the duality between the idiosyncrasy of domestic praxis and the fixity of domestic architecture. To minimise disruption of the participants' home lives, the adults participated according to their availability during the time set for the data collection session for each household. In some cases, participation was during the afternoon family time in the participants' flats. Children were sometimes around and were permitted by their parents to reflect their views. In other cases, participation was during participants'

breaks at Northumbria University (see Section 5.3 for details about the participants).

Prior to data collection, I took the opportunity to explain the information and consent sheets for starting a short informal conversation. This opportunity was aimed at familiarising the participants with their role in the research and my position as an outsider entering a private domestic world that I am not familiar with.

## **4.7 Listening to stories**

### **4.7.1 Home tours**

Listening to the participants' stories started with an informal tour. This phase of the fieldwork represented an introduction to the dwelling as 'living geographies' (Fuller et al. 2008, p. 80) where socio-spatial practices are performed, negotiated and presented through the interrelation between people, objects and space. In this case, I considered my position to be an outsider to the families. Thus, the choice of whether to show 'others' (Goffman, 1971) the informality of their everyday life or to keep the place in a self-representational form was left to the participants. Drawing on Allan (1989), positioning the outsider in the family sphere was in itself the first socio-cultural construct that I captured during my fieldwork (see Figure 4.9). Indeed, this sensitivity was notable when F5 was open to showing me all

details of their flat as used in their everyday life but were uncomfortable with making this image public through photos.



*Figure 4.9 Different attitudes towards showing the dwelling place to outsiders. F3's living room with no trace of everyday related objects (top). F2's living room with the child's toys spread out all over the place (bottom).*

During the tour, the participants were asked to show their home and talk about their everyday life in it (Ross et al., 2012). In similarity to Woodward (2003), this tour was carried out as an informal conversation about how the participants lived and used the spaces in their flats. As Jacobs et al. (2012) noted, conducting the interview while moving within the participants' dwelling eliminates participants'

consciousness of the interview's formality. Even considering the different degrees of formality as a reaction to my presence – as an outsider – I still had the chance to observe aspects of 'normality' (Pinder, 2005) of domestic life through the participants' unconsciousness of their body–space interaction (Seamon, 1980; Seamon, 2018) and the immersion of their descriptions of the different spaces and objects in their flats in their everyday practices and emotions. Such foregroundedness in the experience of space was also noticed through the behaviour of other family members and their spontaneous comments – even if they were not fully involved in the home tour – on their experience of space.

For this reason, I chose not to video record the tours to allow the opportunity to observe participants' natural attitudes in place. Instead, I relied on their choices of what to record about their flats either through photos they took themselves or through them pointing out what they would like me to photograph. I also included my reflections on what I saw by taking notes and taking photos with their consent. For reference during the analysis process, the tours were audio recorded with the participants' consent.

Giving the participants the control to choose what and how to show their flats enabled their active role in constructing the knowledge in this thesis. Their critical voices were captured during the tours by asking why and how their socio-spatial practices were practised and negotiated. Additionally, choosing what to record through the photos and explaining the reason behind their choices reflected critical aspects of what they valued or struggled with during their experience of domesticity in their flats. Planning the home tour this way helped me immerse my perception of the reality of contemporary family living in the Tyneside flats while giving the participants the control to direct the constructs of this image.

#### **4.7.2 Narrative Interview**

Discovering details of issues addressed in the thesis relied on employing in-depth semi-structured interviews (Seamon, 2000; Smith and Osborn, 2008, p. 57; Creswell and Poth, 2013, p. 131; Dowling, 2008). In addition to the narrative approach taken in this thesis (see Section 4.x), in order to explore specific themes about the spatiality of the participants' domestic practices the design of the methodology relied on the life story interview technique described by McAdam (1985, 1993, cited in Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 25). Following this approach, the participants divided their everyday experiences into a series of events and narrated each of them separately.

The interview process was divided into three stages. At the outset, I employed the opening question technique prescribed by Wengraf (2001) and King and Horrocks (2010, p. 223) to inquire about general issues related to their experiences of their flats, such as when they started to live there and how they generally found their experience. Such a general enquiry prepared the participants for the main focus of the interview. The participants were then asked to consider parts of their domestic lives as 'book chapters', and they narrated frequent, seasonal or occasional events taking place in their domestic lives. At this point of the interview, the participants were asked to take a few minutes to think of these events and write about them. The second stage formed the main part of the interview in which the participants narrated their listed events. In this stage, interview questions were guided by themes related to research objectives (Smith and Osborn, 2008, p. 58; Shin, 2014). Applying this structured approach, I followed the interviewing technique in Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and Shin (2014), in which participants were led through three sets of questions about their experiences of their flats. The first set focused on events that were practised; the second set focused on details related to temporal and spatial practices; and the third set

focused on exploring the process of negotiating the pre-existing space through perceptions, motivations and actions taken on space. However, these questions were also left open to provide participants with the freedom to reflect on their experiences and encourage them to tell their own stories (see the interview schedule in Appendix 1). The final stage of the interview included questions that considered three aspects. First, the participants were asked about their feelings about their experiences in their flats. Second, the participants were prepared for the next step of data collection – listing their priorities about their needs that would improve their experiences of their flats. Finally, the participants were given the space to contribute to the research inquiry development by adding aspects that had not been covered during the interview that they may have found of value in their lives in their flats.

Two aspects were taken into consideration when questions were scheduled. First, they would start with general descriptions of the listed events, then gradually inquiries would encourage participants to express their feelings and describe concepts associated with their experience of space during these events (see Table 4.2). Second, and drawing on Pennartz (1986), difficulties the participants may face when relating their experiences were considered. Therefore, reflections on place were indirectly inquired about through how they mediated space with situations, practices, feelings and conceptions.

Interview stage	Focal aspects related to the first research question:  <i>How is contemporary domesticity practised in the pre-existing space?</i>
Stage 1	Event content
Stage 2	Temporal and spatial practices
Interview stage	Focal aspects related to the second research question:  <i>How is the pre-existing space negotiated by the inhabitants?</i>
Stage 3	Perceptions and feelings during the event
Stage 4	Perceptions and conceptions about space

Table 4. 2 Focal aspects of each interview stage.

Further, the pivotal role of the body–space relationship in this inquiry directed the design of the verbal questioning tools used during the interview to include terms that would reflect what they sensed in space (Pallasma, 2017). Prompts about such experiential aspects were included, as outlined in Table 4.3.

Experiential dimensions	Verbal prompts
Attributes of the experience of home (Sixsmith, 1986).	Happiness, belonging, responsibility, self-expression, permanence, privacy.
Attributes of experiencing pleasantness in the home (Pennartz, 1986).	Communication with one another, accessibility to one another, relaxation, freedom, being occupied.
Experiential modes of privacy (Newell, 1996).	Solitude, isolation, reserve, secrecy, fantasy. (The exact meaning of each prompt in this category was explained during the interview session).
Perception of space in relation to subjects and matter (Thiis-Evensen, 1987)	Aspects describing the sense of motion in space: dynamic, static, central, calm, cosy. Aspects describing spatial character: spacious, compact, tight, bright, dark. Aspects describing the materiality in space: warm, cold, soft, comfortable, hard, rough, fine.

Table 4. 3 Verbal prompts used during the interview.

Receiving information from the participants was an interactive process in which I attended the interview with an analytical 'eye' and 'ear' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 8). This included making observations and notes about aspects of significance to the research, or particular to the participants. This reflexive interviewing approach was enhanced by using probing techniques to obtain further details when information seemed to have further dimensions related to the research interest (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

According to Elwood and Martin (2000), using the dwelling as the interview site formed a sensitive aspect of this research. On the one hand, this was due to sensitivity to the privacy of domestic life. On the other hand, the familiarity of the interviewing venue provided the opportunity to observe the participants' behaviour and to picture events and socio-spatial practices while the participants narrated them. Therefore, to avoid the inconvenience may be caused when conducting fieldwork in the participants' flats, they were given a choice between their flats and a public venue (collaboration rooms at Northumbria University Library) as sites for interviewing and model making.

#### **4.7.3 Visual mapping**

Integrating visual methods with interviews is a methodological approach that is commonly applied for extending the details implied within the collected data. Researchers, such as Yang (2015) and Warner et al. (2016), prescribe visual depiction of experiences as a tool for expanding on aspects that may have remained unspoken during interviews. To extend beyond the representational form of the visual methods, visual mapping was used to explore the lived space to depict the variation in actions, spatial fields and objects associated with different domestic practices (Gibson, et al., 2013; Dowling et al. 2015). Drawing on researchers, such as Woodward (2015), who advocated the integration between interviewing and

visual methods, reflection on visual maps during the interview in this thesis revealed multiple facets of space. In particular, connections could be established between the intangible social and sensual aspects from one side and the material and spatial aspects from the other. According to these considerations, I integrated visual mapping with the narrative interview in a complementary way. The participants were asked to depict their socio-spatial practices, objects, emotions and perceptions of space on the maps while telling their stories. Visual mapping was applied using a kit that included an A3 sheet of paper with a plan of a participant's flat, and a number of transparent film sheets to reflect each aspect separately in a different colour (see Figure 4.10). This tool kit allowed me to examine spatial relationships between each aspect during the data analysis phase. Additionally, a set of verbal prompts included in the interview tool kit provided suggestions of meanings the participants would like to associate with the experience of each event (see Table 4.2).

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in two phases. The first phase relied on Descript transcription software. Then, I revised the transcript in reference to the audio recordings and field notes taken by myself. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase prepared me for the analysis process by building familiarity and taking initial analytical notes.

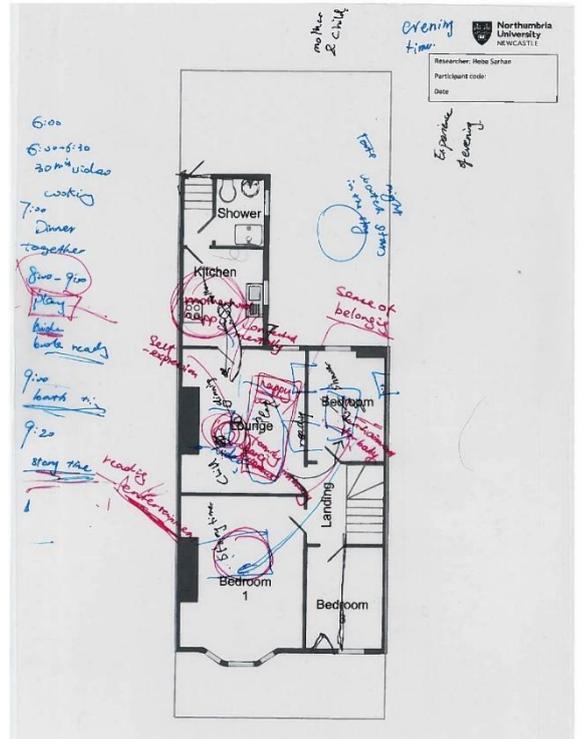
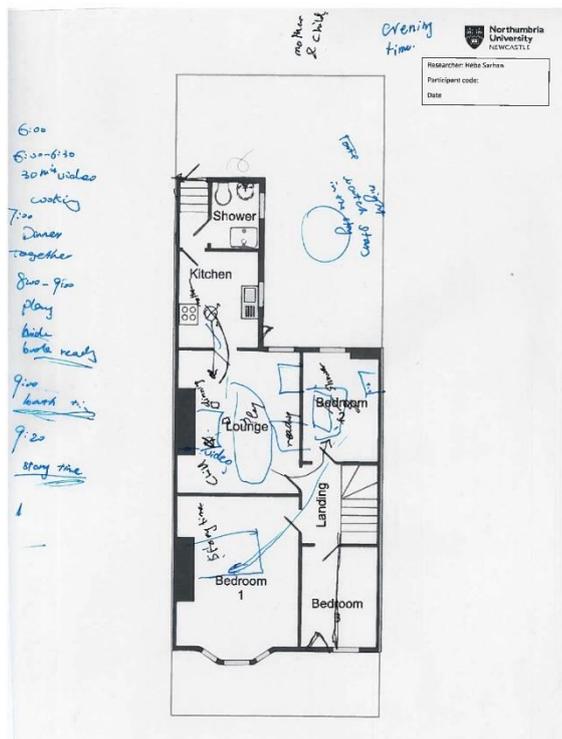
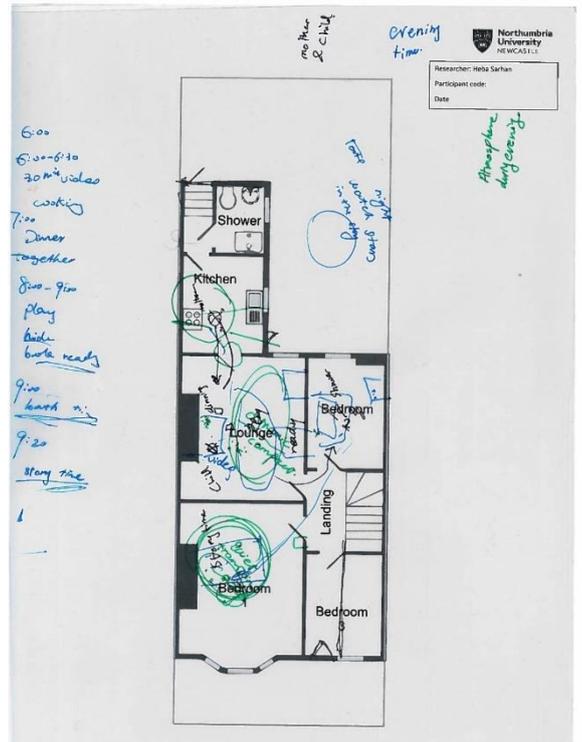
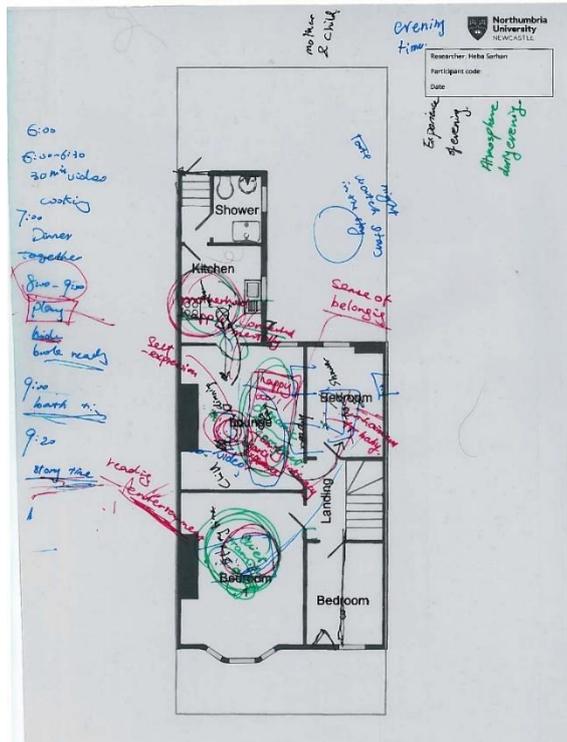


Figure 4.10 Showing different layers used for visual mapping. Blue: socio-spatial practices; Green: perceptions of space; red: emotional aspects. Source: The author.

## 4.8 Seeing dreams

After exploring realities of everyday experiences, physical models were employed to explore the spatial structure associated with the participants' conceptions and imagination of how their dwellings should be. In seeking a collaborative process for constructing knowledge about the contemporary family dwelling, this study used model making to empower the participants to restructure their flats according to their needs and uses of spaces that they could not accommodate in reality. This method has been applied in collaborative housing research, such as Lawrence (1987, p. 218). The redesign of housing plans in Canada<sup>7</sup> relied on participants' models that represented their redefinition of existing dwelling designs according to their conceptions of domestic life needs. A similar application was employed by Faqih (2005), who explored changes to the spatial structure of the Madurese house based on the participants' models of their 'dream house'.

Exploring spatial features through physical models aimed to provide the participants with a tool that allowed them to examine spatial features that they aspired to have in their flats. Accordingly, I did not expect the reproduced flats to provide realistic architectural solutions. Rather, as Birch et al. (2017, p. 230) explained, I considered the models to be representations of abstract spatial structures that allowed the participants to materialise 'the real thing' (Birch et al., 2017, p. 230) about the socio-spatial practices and conceptions about their dwellings. The use of model making in this thesis has even exceeded its role as a thinking tool. This method seemed to enhance the participants' awareness of the spatial features that they created, as had occurred in the study of Faqih (2005) when the participants implemented the spatial structure of the constructed model from memory. Similarly, the participants in this research linked the spatial features

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<sup>7</sup> This model making activity was undertaken as part the Cooperative Housing Action Program in Canada founded in the Province of Alberta in 1976 (Lawrence, 1987, p. 217).

of their reconstructed flats to their plans for their future homes. Most of them took photos of the models to return to these features when they came to design their future homes, and even reported back to me how the model making allowed them to think about spatial solutions that they carried out by rearranging the setting in their flats according to their models.

Extending forms of thinking and expression during the participants' engagement by combining the model making process with other research methods enriched the data obtained using these methods. Following this approach, Faqih (2005) explored the Madurese 'dream house' by integrating the modelling method in a multidisciplinary methodology that included interviews and observations as ethnographic methods, as well as employing sketching as an architectural method. This technique was applied during model making in this thesis through unstructured conversations between the participants and myself. Such 'informal conversations' (Woodward, 2015, p. 367) helped bridge between my knowledge about the spatial features from an academic perspective and the participants' subjective perceptions of the spatial features they were creating. Accordingly, these conversations were audio recorded, and notes were taken by me for reference during the analysis process.

### ***The design of the model making tool kit***

Features of the model appear to have an impact on the nature of information mediated through the spatial characteristics of the created models. In general, Schilling (2007) explained in his book about physical modelling that deciding on the scale of a physical model depends on both the desired level of detail or abstraction, and the perception of the entirety of the concept represented by the model. In such light, models scaled 1:50 and 1:20 have been successful in showing spatial relationships and including details such as furniture and decorative objects

in housing studies, such as those of Faqih (2005) and Lawrence (1987), respectively. After examining both sizes (see Figure 4.11), it was found that a scale of 1:20 showed adequate levels of detail of spatial relations while allowing both the perception of the whole of the model and the addition of details inside the modelled spaces.

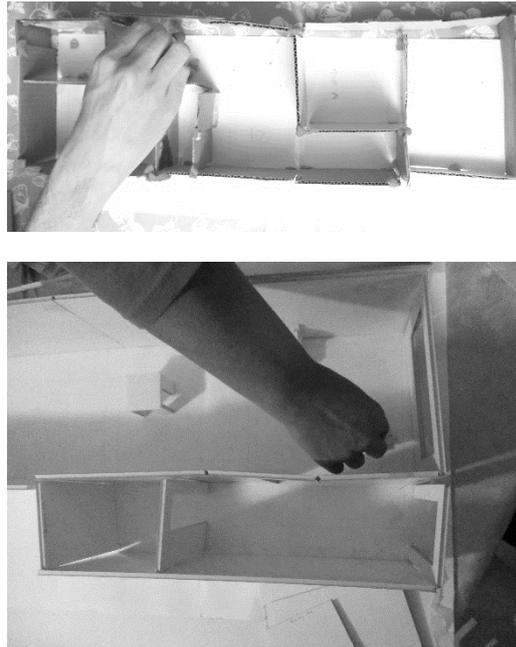


Figure 4.11 Comparing models scaled 1:50 (top) to that scaled 1:20 (bottom) showed that the latter provided a tool that was easier to handle while including details inside the constructed spaces.

Source: The author.

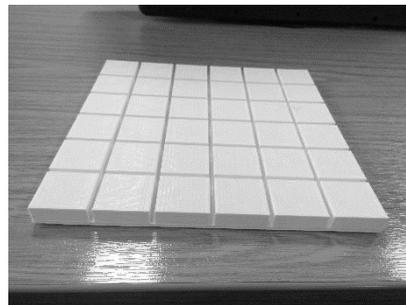
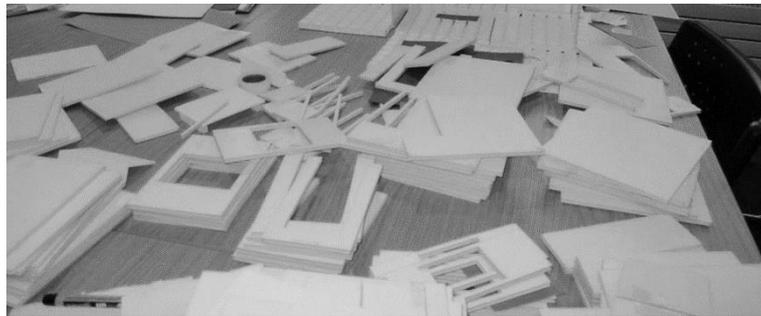
An exploratory model making activity for this thesis required the design of a tool kit that would enhance the manipulation of the physical constituents of space such as the walls, partitions and furniture. For this purpose, a ‘Segal method’ self-build designer kit prepared to ‘transfer abstract design knowledge’ (Lee, 2006, p. 12) (see Figure 4.12) was provided as a starting point for a suitable modelling kit that would enhance the participants’ freedom to experiment with spatial relationships and proportions of architectural space (see Figure 4.13). Lawrence (1987) showed

that combining this array of panels and modular boards with scaled furniture enhanced the participants' sense of the size of the spaces that they created.



*Figure 4.12 'Segal method' – a modelling kit that includes panels of similar sizes and a modular board.*

*Source: Lee, 2006, p.12.*



*Figure 4.13 The model making tool kit designed for this thesis included foam board panels of different shapes and sizes (Top) and a modular base board (Bottom) Source: The author.*

The flexibility of the tools was further enhanced through the abstraction and multiplicity of alternatives provided to the participants. Here, I follow die Baupiloten's (Hofmann, 2019) view of the participatory approach as an excursion for constructing spaces that materialise the 'story or fiction' (Op. Cit., p. 36) in the

participants' lives. According to the perspective taken for applying the participatory approach in this study (see Section 4.4), these spaces are constructed as a 'result of an intensive exchange of ideas of the atmospheric qualities of spaces and structures between user and architect (Op. Cit.). Facilitating the creative expression of the imagined space was also inspired by die Baupiloten's approach in allowing the freedom of moving between the two and three-dimensional modes of spatial expression for facilitating the children participation (Op. Cit. p72-75).

In such light, I encouraged the participants to draw while constructing and talking about the way they wanted to redesign their flats. Further, to avoid providing components that would represent pre-determined functions (see Figure 4.14), such as furniture or architectural elements, the design of the tool kit included foam boards of a variety of shapes and sizes, and materials of different textures and colours. This flexibility enabled the participants to creatively represent their conceptions of their dwellings by making personalised objects and constructions (see Figure 4.15).

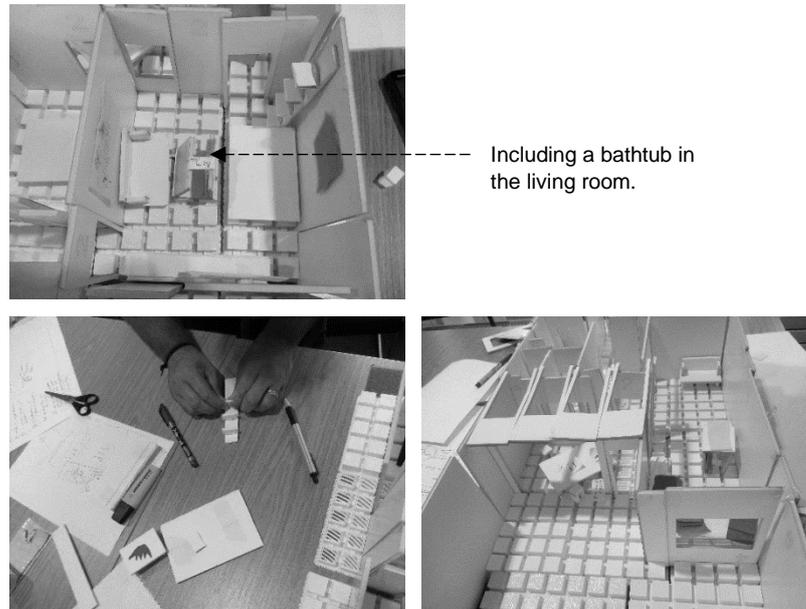


Figure 4.14 Abstract tool kit elements for physical modelling with children.

Top left: <https://www.baupiloten.com/workshops/learn-move-play-ground/>

Top right: <https://www.baupiloten.com/workshops/le-buffet-kinderrestaurant-koeln/>

Bottom left: Hofmann, 2019, p.75.



*Figure 4.15 The participants' creative use of the materials provided to represent their personal conceptions and dreams for their dwelling places.*  
 Source: The author.

In order to focus the activity on the critical socio-spatial aspects that the participants needed in their lives, spatial restrictions were imposed by asking the participants to keep their reconstructions within the limits of the plot size. This means that the participants were able to extend their flats through light structures within the backyards or vertical extensions. Surprisingly, the participants – except F6 – were interested in exploring solutions for flat living for families. A sense of responsibility towards supporting social equality in the community motivated the mother in F1 to participate in providing a comfortable and affordable alternative for families in low-income social groups. Furthermore, each of F2 and F5 valued the practicality of managing family duties when living in a flat – particularly when having two working adults. From this point of view, the reconstructions proposed by both the mother in F2 and the father in F5 were motivated by their interest in improving the experience of family life in the Tyneside flat.

At the outset, I expected that I would be collaborating with the participants in making the models. However, I was surprised with the way the participants took over the task with clear visions about what they wanted to do and how. Accordingly, my role changed in this case from that of a collaborator to a facilitator of the task by helping with the technical aspects of constructing the model and by asking questions to clarify the motivations behind their decisions. These informal conversations were audio recorded for my reference during the analysis. Additionally, the open-endedness of these conversations enhanced the participants' freedom for creativity and self-expression. I also took notes to reflect my own observations about the process and distinctive features of the models.

#### **4.9 The transition from the verbal to the physical expression of space**

A priority listing activity was planned to prepare the participants for the move from the verbal to the physical mode of expressing space. This activity also represented a move from the immersion in reality towards retrieving abstract concepts that the participants may have for their dwellings in their imagination. Accordingly, this activity was carried out either at the end of the interview session or at the beginning of the model making activity.

To prepare the participants for a physical representation of space, they were instructed to list the activities they would like to include in their domestic life in three forms to represent the experience of space they would like to have in their dwelling (see Appendix 2). First, they listed activities that they would like to include in their life. Then, they expressed and sketched the spatial relations between this activity and other activities they would like to include in their dwelling. Spatial relations were expressed at this stage in a relative form (Norberg-Schulz, 1980), such as nearby, away from or in the same place. Finally, to depict a holistic image about the spaces that they listed, using visual mapping prompts the participants

described the character of the space that they would like to experience during the listed activity. Relationships between motivations and spatial features created through these phases provided me with an analytical tool for reading the spatial features of the models while adhering to the participants' views about the dwelling place.

It is worth noting that the participants hesitated when asked to list needs that were critical in their domestic lives as this verbal mode of expressing the imagined space lacked the sense of the spatial restrictions that would justify these priorities. Accordingly, when difficulty in expressing their concepts was found, I simplified the task by asking them to list the activities that they would *wish* to accommodate in their flats. Then, the process of prioritising these wishes took place implicitly when dealing with the given spatial constraints during model making.

#### **4.10 Preparing for fieldwork**

A pilot study was carried out in order to examine the application of the methods to be employed in the context of the research. It also aimed to inspect the reliability of the data collection methods, sample frame and the potential case studies in providing data that would be adequate to answer the research sub-questions:

*1- How is contemporary domesticity practised in the pre-existing space?*

*2- How is the pre-existing space negotiated by the inhabitants?*

*3- What do negotiations with architectural space inform us about the contemporary dwelling?*

#### **4.10.1 The sample**

At the outset, the sample designed for the pilot study was intended to explore the domesticity of diverse residents who experience their domestic lives in dwellings designed under the constraints of space scarcity in urban contexts. In such light, Tyneside flats, Boklok and The Malings were initially assigned as three potential case studies. At this stage of the project, it was decided that a single case study research strategy was to be followed due to difficulties in reaching participants who live either in the Boklok or The Malings projects.

A convenience sampling procedure conducted during the pilot study did not include restrictions on age to allow the consideration of two aspects. First, this would enable an examination of the differences between adults and children in their perceptions of their flats and conceptions of the dwelling places when engaged in the assigned research activities. Second, this would allow an examination of the adequacy of the designed activities for the adults and children. The sample also included diverse household structures as family life, assigned as the researched socio-cultural aspect of domesticity, had not been decided at this stage of the research project.

Accordingly, the pilot study included seven households living in first floor Tyneside flats. F6, a couple who lived with their 6 and 10 year old children and were planning to move out of the flat shortly. H1, a single adult sharing a Tyneside flat with flatmates, with no access to the backyard and who was planning to stay in the flat for at least another year. H2, a father and his 14 and 8 year old girls (C1 and C2, respectively), who moved out of their flats ten months before participation. All the participants had lived in the UK for at least one year, and the adults occupied academic positions.

#### **4.10.2 Methodological outcomes**

Examining the preliminary design of the methodology informed the following aspects that were considered to refine the methodology and methods used in the fieldwork. This phase also helped me become familiar with both the sensitivity of the privacy of the dwelling and the nature of the dwelling as a field site.

##### ***The home tours***

Despite the acknowledgement of walk-along interviews as a tool for building rapport between the researcher and participants (Jacobs et al., 2012), the need to move within the rooms of the dwelling during this research activity brought forth the need to consider the sensitivity of exposing the dwelling to an outsider – myself. After examining different sequences of the interviews and home tours, I realised that holding an informal conversation with the participants prior to conducting fieldwork helped me prepare them for the research activities. Including these conversations in my fieldwork plan also helped me gain familiarity with the dwelling as a field site and direct my thoughts towards prominent issues that I should be attentive to during the home tours.

##### ***Conducting the narrative interviews***

Drawing on the interview methods reviewed in section 4.7.2, the pilot study was intended to compare between each of the opening questions in two interviewing approaches: the biographic narrative interpretive method (Wengraf, 2001; King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 223) and the life story interview method (McAdam 1985, 1993, cited in Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 25). The former relied on initiating the interview with an open question about the residents' home life pattern, while the latter requested the participant to divide their home life according to themes that represented their perception of each section. This comparison revealed the efficiency of the latter approach in addressing the research enquiry due to the

focused issues raised when asking the participants to divide their domestic life into book chapters according to the themes of each event at the outset of the interview.

The interview protocol also examined the sequence for combining visual methods with the interviews. This examination showed that reflecting the narrated events on the map during the interview helped avoid redundancy in data and the lengthy data collection process that appeared when conducting each activity separately.

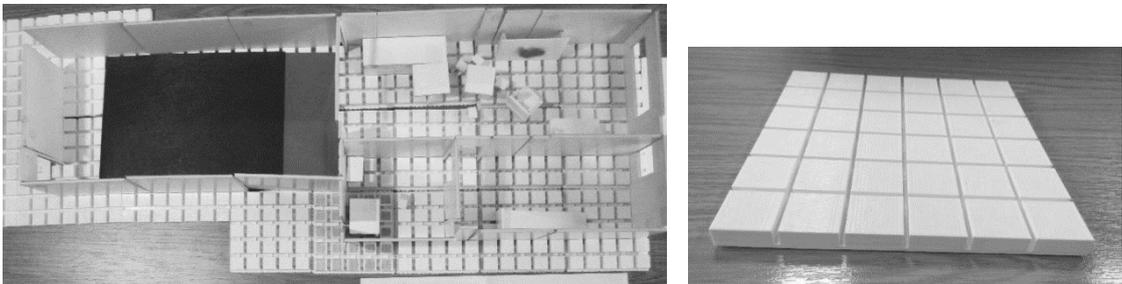
### ***Model making***

The model tool kit was developed during the pilot study over three stages. First, a 1:50 scale model was constructed on a cardboard base using cardboard panels and plasticine to hold the panels together (see Figure 4.16). The model was used to test the efficiency of the method in obtaining information about the participants' conceptions of how their flats could be more suitable for their lives. Then, a 1:20 scale model was constructed using foam panels on a foam board and sticking tape to fix the panels together (see Figure 4.16). Participants were provided with panels that varied in size and with different shaped openings to allow them to change the nature of the spatial relations between the spaces they were creating. Despite the efficiency shown when handling the 1:20 scale and the provided materials, neither the sticking tape nor the foam board provided the flexibility needed to enhance the exploratory modelling task. The participants also commented that using panels of smaller dimensions would increase the alternative solutions they could make during the activity. Finally, a panelled board was developed as a base for the model (see Figure 4.17). This board consisted of modular cubes of 30x30 mm with a spacing of 5 mm (created using a 3D printer at Northumbria University workshop) in order to hold the panels steady during the model making. Despite the efficiency

of this final form, difficulty in constructing multiple levels still formed a limitation imposed by this modelling tool kit.



*Figure 4.16 First stage of model kit development (left) and second stage of model development (right). Source: The author.*



*Figure 4.17 The final stage of the modelling kit (left) including the modular board (right). Source: The author.*

#### **4.10.3 Potential findings**

The pilot study informed the plausibility of potential findings for addressing the research enquiries. These initial findings were based on my fieldwork notes and initial interpretations of the photos. Drawing on these initial findings, a decision was made to focus the study on family households due to inconsistencies in the findings of socio-spatial practices of cooking, gathering and personal time between family and non-family households. This initial analysis also informed a mismatch between the back and front duality of the Victorian family dwelling and the participants' domestic practices. Such conflict augmented needs related to contemporary family practices of the home-centred lifestyle.

#### **4.11 Data management and organisation**

This research included multiple forms of raw data that were stored according to the following considerations:

- 1- A folder password will be applied for storing audio recorded Interviews and digital transcriptions.
- 2- Hard copies, handwritten observation notes and transcriptions will be stored in a locked cabinet which is only accessible by the researcher.
- 3- Backed-up data on removable devices (e.g. CDs, DVDs., clouds or USBs) will be encrypted.

After the completion of the research project, audio recordings of interviews will be archived in arrangement with the faculty and will be retained for 5 years unless otherwise requested by Northumbria University (research sponsor).

The files were coded with pseudonyms chosen by the research participants to replace their real names and a data sheet was created to record details about data storage, reception of gift vouchers. Confidentiality was covered in the informed consent form as well as contact details for support and response to any enquiries.

#### **4.12 Ethical considerations:**

Each participant signed the ethical consent form and was given an information sheet before engagement in the research activities. None of the participants required assistance or further enquiry post their engagement in any of the research activities. As explained in section 4.7.2, the participants were given the freedom to choose between their flats and A venue at Northumbria University at their convenience. Participation took place over 3 sessions that varied in their duration according to the conducted activity (30 minutes for the home tour, 30-60 minutes for the interview and 60-90 minutes for model making).

The consent form included detailed sections that allowed the participants to choose the activity and form of data collection they would approve. For example, the consent form's home tour section included options for approval on audio recording, taking photos and notes, and drawing sketches. During the fieldwork, these options were reiterated before engagement in each activity to extend the participants' opportunity. Indeed, the participants' preferences varied, and I adhered to their boundaries of privacy. After data analysis, returning to the participants after data was motivated by the interest in maintaining the participants' reflexivity of the knowledge developed in this research. Nonetheless, due to the impact of my subjective voice on the verbal and visual presentation of the participants' lives (Rendell, 2011) (also see Section 4.13), I also sent the findings to the participants who I still had contact with to make sure they were comfortable with the way their domestic life is presented in the thesis.

For maintaining the confidentiality of the participants', pseudonyms that they chose for themselves were used for data management and during data analysis. Some of these names implied references to ethnic backgrounds that may influence the readers' perception of the presented data. Accordingly, codes were used to refer to each household while writing up the thesis to maintain the readers' focus on the socio-spatial dimensions revealed through the analysis.

#### **4.12 Trust worthiness:**

Establishing criteria of trustworthiness in this thesis was applied with consideration of the definition of rigour in qualitative research (Patton, 2002; Spencer et al., 2003). From this perspective, considering the multiplicity and complexity of truth provided the point of departure when planning tools and aspects of trustworthiness in this thesis. For ensuring the quality of knowledge developed in this thesis, a

framework was followed to establish trustworthiness through the consideration of credibility, dependability, and transferability while communicating different phases of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Spencer et al., 2003; Nowell et al., 2017). Following this framework implies that the quality of the developed knowledge is evaluated according to its plausibility and credibility (Spencer et al. 2003) which have been ensured all through an iterative researching process. Drawing on Nowell et al. (2017), this framework for establishing trustworthiness was applied at different stages of the research according to the following criteria.

#### **4.12.1 Credibility**

Dealing with the relativity and multidimensionality of the knowledge developed through the qualitative discipline of this research implied ensuring the credibility of this knowledge by explicating the way the findings represent the actual data (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Silverman, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017). This approach relied on communicating aspects of my own subjectivity and the way I dealt with it (Spencer et al., 2003). Drawing on Silverman (2013, p.537), achieving credibility in this thesis avoided providing high inferences by including examples of instances and clues that helped me reach the proposed interpretations. I also relied on tables for constructing relations and making comparisons during review of literature and demonstration of findings (see sections 7.1 and 8.3). Albeit, to avoid missing contextuality of data and themes, the use of tabulation only intended to complement other analysis techniques such as mental mapping and recording analysis memos (ibid.). According to the outlined considerations, I applied the following techniques for achieving creditability of the proposed knowledge:

### ***Triangulation***

Triangulation enhanced the credibility of knowledge proposed in this thesis by ensuring the coherence and consistency of the developed findings. Triangulation was applied while considering the position taken in the research from the developed knowledge (Flick, 2004, p. 181). This means that accepting multidimensionality and partial truth obtained from each data source implied that triangulation of the multiple data collection methods in this thesis did not seek replication of data or findings (ibid.). As Strauss and Corbin (1998) state, multiple sources allowed seeing multiple perspectives that allowed '*build dense, well-developed, integrated, and comprehensive theory... while keeping in mind that a true interplay of methods is necessary*' (Op. cit., p.33). Accordingly, triangulation 'between' social and architectural methods, as Flick et al explain, developed coherence between reading space in its abstract and physical forms during analysis. The emergent themes complemented one another and extended broader aspects related to the spatiality of contemporary domesticity. This approach fits with Flick's (2004) explanation of the role of triangulation in qualitative research as a 'strategy leading to a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation, and thereby a step on the road to greater knowledge' (Flick, 2004, p. 179).

### ***Dealing with subjectivity***

Acknowledging my interpretations as the outlet for the participants' constructions of space implies that the implications of my subjectivity are unavoidable. Rather I intended to avoid high inferences that could result from subjectivity by maintaining adherence to the participants' perceptions and conceptions during data analysis (see Section 4.13.3). At some stances these references to the participants' verbal and visual accounts were used as a validating tool by comparing the participants' constructions to the ones emerging through the analysis of the verbal narratives.

For example, pictures taken during home tours were utilized to compare between the emerging concepts and the reality of participants' uses of space in their flats with focus on objects and organization of furniture in space. Also, visual maps were used to compare between the reality of the participants' home living and the emerging concepts about the spatial fields constituting the spatiality of the participants' domesticity. In other cases, referring to photos of the reconstructed models for complementing the emerging conceptions about the needed spatial qualities and structural relations.

### ***Reflexivity***

Dealing with subjectivity in this thesis deviates from Spencer et al.'s (2003) when associating credibility with '*not allowing pre-conceptions or prior relevance to drive the design, data collection and analysis*' (Spencer et al., 2003, p.67). My subjectivity was acknowledged and reflected at different stages of the thesis relying on the following tools:

I relied on field sketches as a tool for tracking aspects of subjectivity influencing the analysis (see Figure 4.18). According to Rose (2016), I observed my spontaneous reaction to my encounter with the participants' lives through each of the content and features of my hand drawn sketches that my inform of distinctive features constructing my perceptions of space such as the size of furniture, objects included in the sketch and spatial proportions. Upon these observations, these sketches were compared to both, taken photos and the emerging concepts about the spatiality of the participants' experiences to outline overlapping and deviating aspects.



Figure 4.18 My hand sketch of F1 on their living room sofa at different times of the day. The sketch was drawn while revising the listening to their narratives recording after field work.

I also relied on sketches of my own imagination of the events narrated by the participants were used to represent social construction of space in its dynamic form (see Chapters 6 and 8). I relied on Revit software for drawing the spaces of the participants' flats in 3D. Then, hand-drawn sketches of objects and family members associated with each event were added to the 3D shots. These sketches allowed depicting space in its lived form through its integration in social and material aspects. These sketches also allowed comparing spaces at different times of the day allowed conveying spatial dynamics associated with multiple uses of space (see Figure 4.19).

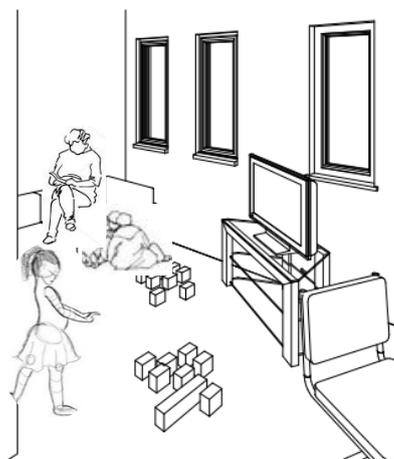


Figure 4.19 My sketch of the children playing in the living room. Children in F4 playing in the living room after school inspired from the participant's narrative. The sketch is drawn by integrating CAD drawing (Revit software) and hand drawing.

#### **4.12.2 Dependability**

As Spencer et al. (2003) note, the impact of the contextuality and my personal views on the developed knowledge in a qualitative study implies that the outcomes could never be replicated in other research contexts. Achieving dependability in this case relies on communicating the process and logic underlying the development of this knowledge (Nowell et al., 2017). This consideration directed my approach in representing and discussing the research findings as follows:

1- I included the context and the social situation associated with the journey of data collection (see sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 5.2). I also explicated anecdotes, as in section 8.2.1, comparisons, as in section 8.4, and distinctive incidents, as in section 7.2.1, that supported synthesizing the developed themes when representing the findings.

2- I referred to literature during different stages of the analysis to examine the developed concepts and themes against the existing knowledge (see Figure 4.19). Comparing between the interpretations of similar phenomena discussed in chapter 3 confirmed the synthesised concepts, allowing identification of deviations and testing against aspects of subjectivity as outlined above.

3- I used diagrams to represent and compare the revealed spatial aspects against the existing knowledge. This representation tool highlighted aspects of cultural change claimed in this thesis (see Sections 7.6 and 9.2).

4- I recorded memos of incidents that mark significant milestones of the development of knowledge proposed by the thesis and reflecting my observations during this process. As noted by Strauss and Corbin, (1998), these memos allowed the marking and sharing of the 'trail' of development of the epistemology and ontology of this thesis, data collection, and analysis process (see Figure 4.21

These memos form part of the tools adopted in this thesis for attaining what Spencer et al. (2003) referred to as 'communicative validity' in qualitative research. 5- Sharing the research journey also included explicating my own views and reaction towards my field experience when representing the findings (see Section 4.2). At the outset of the research, I intended to share personal enquiries that may have an influence on my decisions of the research design and interpretations. At the end of the thesis, I reflected on the way the research journey shaped my views about these enquiries.

#### **4.12.3 Transferability**

Connecting this thesis to external practical and theoretical discourse does not rely on the generalisation of the developed knowledge. However, and as explained in chapter 2, the focus on individual agency in this research aims to complement existing concepts about the possibilities of creating inclusive domestic architecture. According to Spencer et al. (2003, p.80), transferability of the developed knowledge is outlined through the applicability of the developed knowledge in the fields of cultural dimensions related to the diversity of contemporary domesticity; indeterminacy in contemporary domestic architecture; and the spatial structure of the contemporary dwelling. Such connections are supported with the overtness and thickness of the description that reflects the context and multidimensionality of the addressed phenomenon (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Nowell et al., 2017).

### **4.13 Data Analysis Process**

#### **4.13.1 Thematic analysis of multi-modal qualitative data**

Interpretations of the participants' models and narratives in this thesis followed a thematic analysis strategy as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006), the flexibility of this analytical method was utilised for

integrating verbal, visual and physical data in a complementary way. Accordingly, exploring the lived space through verbally reported experiences were supported with the visual maps and photos taken on site. Also, this integration allowed constructing the spatial qualities of the constructed models inseparably from social and spatial processes reported through the participants' narratives. Drawing on Rose (2016), visual data and models were considered according to their content that was identified relatively according to the level of detailing and size within the map, photo, or the model. When identifying the considered content, comments reflected during drawing and model making were also considered for ensuring the closeness of the considered content to the participants' spatial constructions. Not only did this integrative approach reveal the spatial aspects through their multidimensionality, but it also ensured the adhesion of the interpreted themes to the participants' experiences and conceptions about their domesticity.

#### **4.13.2 Theoretical dimensions driving the analysis: moving between theory and data**

Data analysis took place with no reference to prior assumptions or theories in order to open the way for exploring unprecedented manifestations of the interplay between space and social change. Nevertheless, the focus of the research questions formed a driving aspect during the process of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Srefaty, 1985). Also, recurrent references to literature in a normative way supported the conformity to the existing knowledge and the development of a critical lens while making interpretations. Following Green et al. (2007) explanation of a qualitative analysis process, an iterative process took place where the emerging concepts allowed narrowing down the theoretical aspects addressed in this research. Correspondingly, revisions of theory allowed refinement of questions leading the coding process. This process also imposed the need to refine codes

and reform concepts at different stages of the analysis and to return to data to ensure the adhesion of the refined

Accordingly, three main stages mark this iterative process (see Figure 20). First, when narrowing down the sample from diverse household structures to focus on family home living. This stage took place due to the significance of spatial aspects that accompanied conflicts of use of space in cases of the participating family households (see Table 3). Second, the focus on the duality of individuality and togetherness in family domesticity, which amplified constructions of social and spatial boundaries. Finally, addressing spatial manifestations of home-centeredness in theory directed this thesis towards looking at the spatial order and relations that informs concepts about the contemporary dwelling.

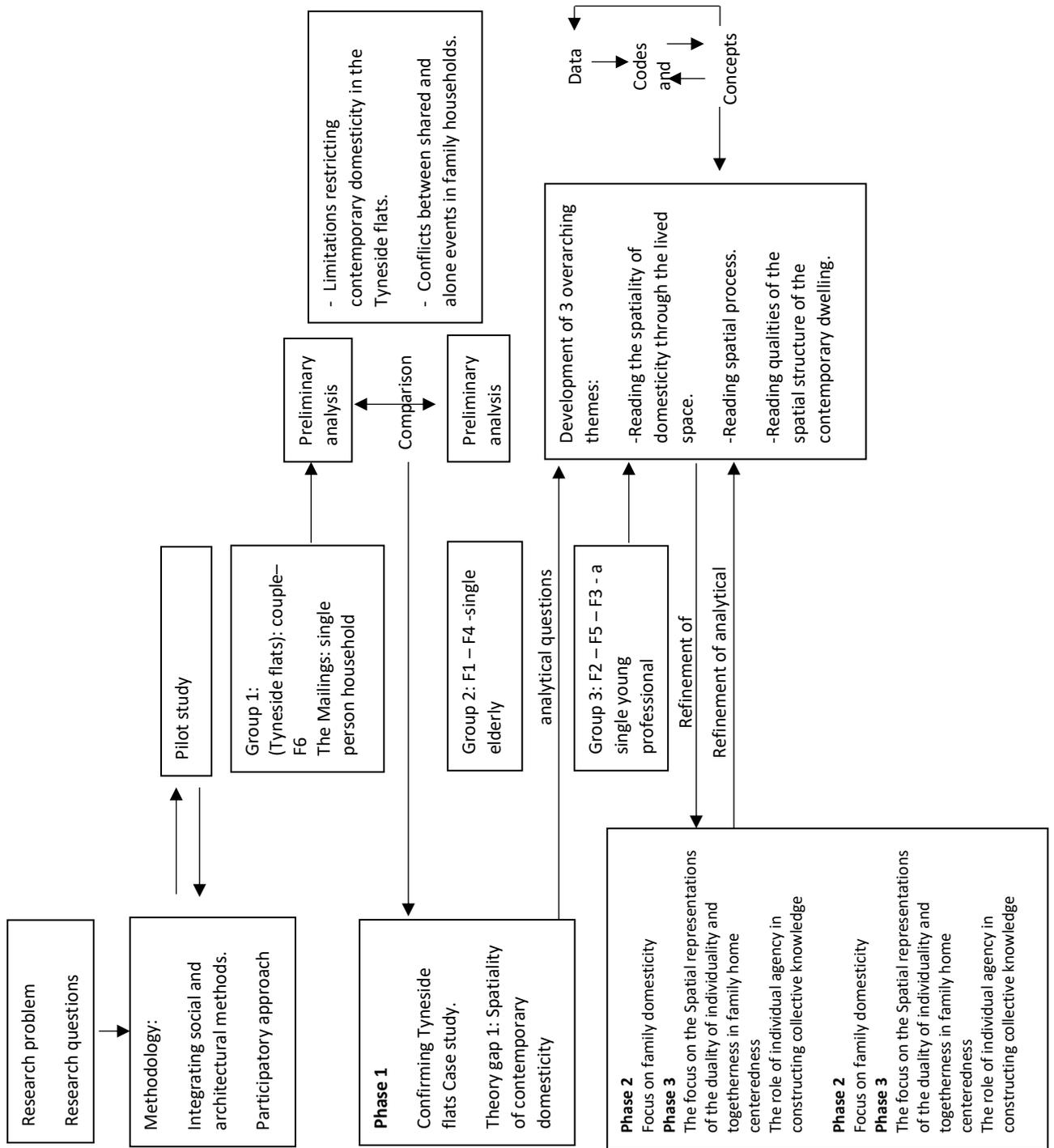


Figure 4.20 Iterative process of data analysis with integration of theory and data collection procedures.

	Outstanding aspects of their domesticity in the Tyneside flats (Identified during preliminary analysis)	
The participating household according to sequence of participation during field work	Possibilities related to spatial features of the flat.	Conflicts
F6	-Connectedness to amenities and good schools.	-Lack space for children activities.
Childless couple	-Connectedness to workplace and amenities.	-Overlap between spaces for dining and sitting in the living room. -Overlap between public and private spheres in the Livingroom.
F1	-Walkability -Connectedness to amenities and good schools.	- Lack space for children activities. -Conflicts related to shared use of the kitchen. -Spatial restrictions limiting availability of personal space.
Single elderly	-Spaciousness -Variety of possibilities of use of space. -Walkability -Security due to limited visibility from the street.	
F4	-Availability of a personal room for each member of the family. -Walkability. -Connectedness to amenities and good schools.	-Lack of space for children activities -Overlap between alone and shared times. -Overlap between utility and family living space.
Single young professional	-Informality of living space when having friends. -Walkability	
F2	-Connectedness to workplace and amenities.	- Lack space for children activities. -Spatial restrictions limiting availability of personal space.
F3	-Walkability. -Connectedness to amenities.	- Lack space for children activities. -Availability of a personal room for each child -Overlap between utility and family living space.
F5	-Connectedness to workplace and amenities.	- Lack space for children activities.

*Table 4. 4 Decision on sample frame according to identified possibilities and conflicts of living in Tyneside flats.*

#### **4.13.3 Moving from description to interpretation: Steps for data analysis**

Movement between data and theory resulted in a progressive pattern of conceptualising the meanings underlying data. Accordingly, the process of coding moved from an initial descriptive to an interpretive approach. This process was also supported by a 'reflexive dialogue' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82) that took

place through conversations with the thesis supervisors as well as by the development of questions leading the analysis as a deeper understanding of the emerging knowledge is gained while proceeding in the analysis. In such light, the move from data to critical interpretations was conducted over the following three stages:

### ***Immersion in data***

This phase followed analysis steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Charmaz (2009) for exploring and coding interview data. An initial phase of getting familiarised with data was carried out by reading field notes and taking memos of my instant reflections on outstanding aspects observed while transcribing each interview. Photos taken during home tours were considered during this phase to facilitate constructing closer imagery of the participants' experiences.

Further, immersion in data during the initial coding process relied on the questioning process (Charmaz, 2009) that aimed to outline the constructs of different events in the participants' narratives. This questioning technique allowed the capture of initial descriptive codes related to social roles, spatial and social practices, use of objects, emotions and experiential aspects. These codes were captured at different scales. 'Word by word' coding (Charmaz, 2009, p. 50) magnified indications of temporalities, localities and emotions. Words also allowed identification of social situations through reference to subjects and depiction of space through objects and sensual aspects (see Figure 21 Appendix 3). There was consideration of coding incidents that informed significant actions and conceptions (ibid.). During this coding phase, critical understanding of the identified codes was developed through a recurrent process of categorisation (Green et al. 2007) that took place during initial coding and while reviewing the developed themes at the final interpretive phase of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The analysis process did not rely on software analysis. Relying on Charmaz, 2009 and Gibbs (2012) their plausibility and significance of the development and choice of concepts and themes relied on comparative and questioning techniques rather than quantifying the emergent codes. I also found in Word search toll a substitute for sorting and searching for codes and notes during the analysis process.

### ***Conceptualising data***

Two strategies were used for axial coding (finding connections between codes) as proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990). First, comparison techniques (Gibbs, 2018) were conducted for findings relations between the developed codes. Also, in order not to lose the contextual dimension of the code (ibid.), these comparisons relied on a tabular organisation (see Figures 22 and 23 and Appendix 4) of interview extracts, photos and visual maps alongside the related codes. Notes about the developed concepts were written in a separate column within each table. Then, the developed concepts were compared across the narratives of different families until initial coherent themes were developed.

It is worth noting that data analysis was conducted without using analysis software, as the small sample size meant that the data could be analysed using editing tools in Microsoft Word. The possibilities of adding notes and managing data in tubular form and mind maps provided the flexibility for testing and exploring combinations of different data sources and relationships between codes and categories at different stages of the analysis. The need for analysis software was only realised as a matter of data management during revisions of connections between the identified concepts and codes, and the participants' accounts during the final stages of the analysis and when writing up the thesis. However, due to the length of time required to structure the textual and visual data of this thesis into such

software, revisions and writing up relied on tracing the trail of every theme through the developed Word files.

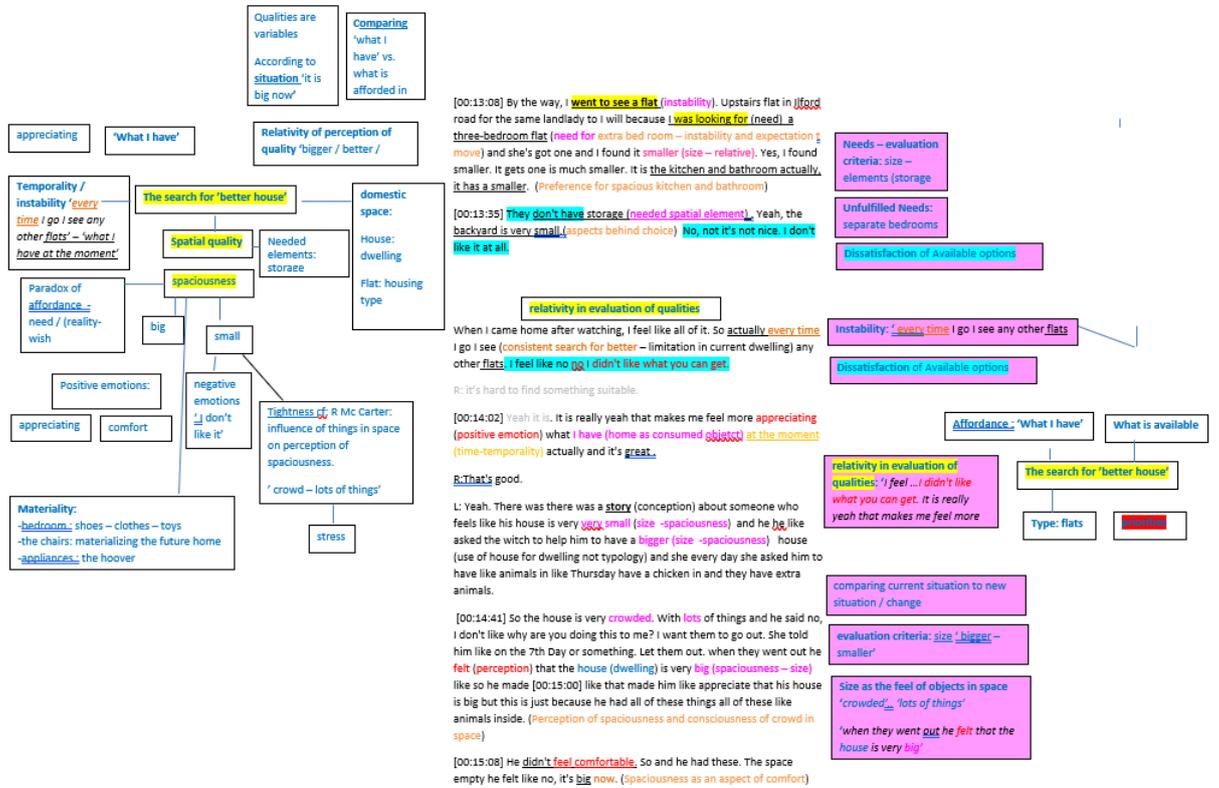


Figure 4.21 Coding process showing initial conceptualisation of data. Extract from F3's interview transcript.

Categories	Codes and Quotes	Concepts social	Concepts spatial	Concepts	visuals	themes
		-privacy as separation: 'I mean, yeah, that's a separate space'  Active hobbies: 'A special place for some sports for some ping-pong for some I mean, yeah, yes, but this hobby yes kind of hobby places'				
Personal time	<p><b>Mother:</b> Individuality Regular Pleasant Priority</p> <p>Privacy – freedom-dominance</p> <p>Emotional well being</p> <p>Feeling relaxed:</p> <p>Comfort and materiality air</p> <p>Convenience</p> <p>Atmosphere (cozy-pleasant)</p> <p>Possibilities of multi-use</p> <p>What happens</p>	<p>p.2 'my own time' 'time to myself every morning' 'enjoy the moment' 'and I quite enjoy This bit time to myself' 'go back to the table here for ' breakfast for myself.' 'after I have done all myself'</p> <p>'My own space' Repetition of I-Them confirms state of separation from family</p> <p>p.3 'I feel kind of quite refreshing' p.3 'Kind of space kind of I mean I literally but also psychologically as well'</p> <p>p.2 'sit on the sofa here' p.3: 'I'm still on my gowns'</p> <p>p.3 'this place is not ideal but it's it works well' suitability for the need.p.4 'sofa is fine. It's soft. it's not ideal' – 'if I sit on chair, I wouldn't be that relaxed.'</p> <p>p.4: air – sound: 'cozy and quite a warm' – 'nice cozy place'. p.4: 'my cozy a place'</p> <p>p.4: 'may bring the boy back into the living room ... maybe I will change my cozy a place'</p> <p>Reading:</p>	<p>-pleasant experience -self reward – care – individuality – out of the routine</p> <p>-Searching for opportunity for separation for others through time scheduling.</p>	<p>-meal at the table signifies time dedicated for event. -Association between place and event signify dedicating time for event</p> <p>'my own space – my own time' personal time associated with dedicated time and space.</p> <p>-space is depicted on the intangible level. p.3 'Kind of space kind of I mean I literally but also psychologically as well'</p> <p>-event-place: Mealtime: table Entertainment: sofa Relaxed time: sofa</p> <p>Cozy place is socially constructed through the sense of individuality in the event and through the felt comfort through temperature-clothing-</p>	<p>Transformation relies on convenience: in terms of finding opportunity for comfort (needed feel) And separation (needed spatial configuration).</p>	<p><b>Multiple modes of adult time:</b> <b>time for entertainment :</b> Practices: (father) multitasking (combining housework and entertainment). Includes music and watching (isolation) in the home. <b>Space:</b> flow in the movement between the living room and the kitchen. Sound: creating atmosphere through use of speakers a</p> <p><b>time for concentration:</b> (mother) reading &amp; self-reflection - eating separation from others takes place through time scheduling. <b>Meaning:</b> pleasant experience -self reward – care – individuality – out of the routine revitalising experience (refreshing).</p> <p>Associated with dedicated / ownership of space and time: 'my own space'</p> <p><b>Space:</b> <b>Cozy space:</b></p>

Figure 4.22 Using tables for relating the emerging concepts during coding process of F2's interview.

EXPERIENCE:	PRIORITIES AND ASPIRATIONS	MAKING CHANGE
<p>The search for possibilities Appropriation of space (meaning-use-physical change) / perceptions of possibilities allowing these appropriations</p>	<p>no 2 p24 'It's like work and play in the light, but it's somehow something to do with the light and ... you want that on there? Why not? It's a wish list. It's a wish list'</p>	
<p>Food consumption during relaxed time: p.2: 'breakfast for myself...' 'I will finish my breakfast by myself. Yeah, and then I will get my boy ready for nursery.' 'after I have done all myself and I would go to the bedroom again to get them up' integrating housework with entertainment: p.3 'while waiting for the laundry is done, he would go back to the living room again'</p> <p>-Negotiating space for physical activity through activities which do not depend on space materiality relationship (such as yoga) Priority list p15 'kind' mean it do not need to be much spacious. I mean, I kind of sports corner do the work.'</p>  	<p>Sound - Quietness: p.2 'I would say I mean not as annoyed as in the study room, but [00:38:00] it might be annoying as well. I mean if possible this kind of sports corner, it has to be quiet not kind of absolute isolation from outside of but it should be not too much noise. Think sometimes because if we with the music on the doing better because the music will cover the noise just to kind of so not the noise from outside.'</p> <p><b>Need for space for individual creative time:</b></p> <p>Associated with:</p> <p>A differentiated space: p21 'that's a separate space... p30 In priority list: 'if I could get a separate study - kind of more isolated or the kind of not interrupted.'</p> <p>Sense of ownership: 'my own space' more personalized... it's not for I mean is I mean that's just for me and this I can do whatever I like there.'</p> <p>Acknowledged through personal materiality: 'we got kind of our own book study, I mean I would say yeah, we can have our own bookshelves'</p> <p>Atmosphere: Cosiness: 'nice cozy place for reading and for studies' – 'maybe can have a sofa with cushions.'</p> <p>Quietness:</p>	<p><b>Creating space for individual creative time:</b></p>  <p><b>Creating separation for creative time:</b> priority list p12 'because if it's not separate it's a very hard, I mean I still, it's hard to do some kind of something special to me.'</p> <p><b>Differentiation of space through defined geometry.</b> When asked during priority listing if she meant separation on the physical and the visual levels, Lili replied 'p11 L: I think if it's visible is fine, but you should be separately. That was so yes physically separated but it's alright. it's alright to be visible.'</p> <p>Despite of maintaining visual connectedness between the bedroom and the study room through the use of wide span partitions, Lili relied on <b>geometry of space</b> for differentiating between the bed room and the study space.</p>

Figure 4.7 Using tables for relating concepts emerging from narrative analysis to spatial features of the constructed models.



Chapter 5

**Introducing the Case Study of The Tyneside Flats**

## **Chapter 5: Introducing the case Study of The Tyneside Flats**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the Tyneside flats as part of the single case study strategy followed in this thesis. Here, these flats are introduced as a case of transformation from Victorian to contemporary family domesticity. This introduction aims to situate the case study within the broader context of housing in Newcastle upon Tyne by illuminating both the potential and the failure of these flats in providing adequate dwellings for contemporary families.

This chapter commences by reading the spatial structure of the Tyneside flats through the domesticity of Victorian working-class families. Thus, the spatiality of Victorian domesticity in this chapter is read in alignment with the literature on the social history of housing. This reading also refers to research about the contextual forces underlying the spatiality of these flats.

The second section of this chapter introduces the six participating families and discusses the significant aspects of spatial transformation highlighted in each case. This section also explores the circumstances behind each family's reasons for living in their flat. Then the section highlights experiential aspects and the actions taken on space through the participants' appropriations of their flats and in their physical models.

The participants are introduced using data from the home tours and the opening questions of the narrative interview: How long have you been living in this place? Why did you choose your flat? What do you think about your flat? Data from the interviews has been included in some instances to further describe the experiential dimensions observed during the home tours.

## **5.2 The Tyneside flats and contextual influences**

### **5.2.1 Overview**

Understanding the cultural dimensions underlying the form of the Tyneside flats builds upon the argument raised by Daunton (1983) that the variation in the housing types in England is a product of both cultural and contextual factors. Accordingly, this review relies on literature that discusses the emergence of the Tyneside flats in relation to the changes in urban settings during the Victorian industrial paradigm, such as Daunton (1983), Burnette (1986), Kit (1994) and Roger (1995). In particular, the socio-economic influences on working-class domestic life (Burnette, 1986) compelled this review to relate the social construction of the Tyneside flats to the impact of the management of the housing crisis in Newcastle during the nineteenth century (Brake and Callcott, 1994) on the social and contextual forces shaping the Tyneside flats (Kit, 1994).

### **5.2.2 The emergence of the Tyneside flats**

Tyneside flats appeared during a limited period in the second half of the nineteenth century<sup>8</sup> within the domain of Tyneside (The Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities, 1979; Mathesius, 1982). The resemblance of these flats to the Victorian working-class terraced houses is a characteristic feature explained in scholarly discourse about housing provision during that era. Historical literature, such as Daunton (1983), points to the dominance of small-scale investors in the approach for resolving the acute shortage of housing at that time, and this is suggested to be the reason behind the spatial solution of the Tyneside flats. Accordingly, the solution provided by these separated flats offered the highest plot load among the low-rise housing typologies in England during that time (Daunton,

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<sup>8</sup> *There are also claims that the Tyneside flats have vernacular roots in the north east of England (Northern Housing Consortium, 1979; Mathesius, 1982). Nonetheless, seeking the social construction of the Tyneside flat directs this section towards the focus on the second half of the nineteenth century as the social context surrounding the development of the Tyneside flats existing in Newcastle Upon Tyne.*

1983, p. 65; Kit, 1994, pp. 62–3) (see Table 5.1). The dominance of this socio-economic group is also indicated as a reason behind the representation of working-class ideals through the Tyneside flats (Daunton, 1983, p. 65; Kit, 1994, pp. 62–3). Pearce (1994) claimed that such an association could explain the resemblance of these flats to the Victorian working-class terraced houses. These assumptions are justified by noticing the exclusiveness of these flats to well-to-do working-class families, such as artisans and clerical workers, who were able to sustain a stable income and fulfil commitments to the freehold ownership of this housing provision (Daunton, 1983, p. 65; Brake and Callcott, 1994; Pearce, 1994, pp. 62–3). Another reason behind the connotation of working-class domestic ideals within these flats was highlighted by Daunton (1983) and Pearce (1994) when relating these representations to the authority of the middle and upper classes over the housing decisions that led to imposing the separation between domestic life and the community through the design of the Tyneside flats. Despite the variation in views about social aspects associated with the construction of the Tyneside flats, the working-class domestic ideals consistently appeared as the core social construct underlying the design of these flats.

	Plot size (sq. ft.)	Area of habitable rooms (sq. ft.)	Ratio of rooms : plots
Tyneside flat	1,064	1,059	1.0
Back-to-back	768	700	0.9
Through house	1,200	590	0.5
One-storey cottage	1,275	449	0.4

*Table 5. 1 Calculations from plans of specific units achieved by different bye-law housing types, where the Tyneside flats indicate the highest ratio of habitable room area to plot size (plot load). Source: Daunton, 1983, p. 65.*

### 5.2.3 Representations of the working-class domestic paradigm in the Tyneside flats

#### *Representations of household autonomy in the Tyneside flats*

Despite the impact of the restriction of financial resources on the spatial solution of the Tyneside flats, the outdoor space surrounding the Tyneside flats is an example of the significance of the autonomy of the working-class family. In such light, including a front yard in some of these flats<sup>9</sup> indicates the significance of demarcating the distinction between the private household and the community (Daunton, 1983). This separation is further emphasised by creating individual accesses from the street and backyards for each flat to accommodate external toilets and other utilitarian spaces, such as the coal stores (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Interestingly, historical evidence, such as Ravetz and Turkington (2006), shows how working-class families reproduced the separation between family and the community by using the surrounding space for socialisation while concealing family life within the flat. While these practices inform the continuity of community ties for working-class families, they also indicate the rootedness of the concealment of family privacy within Victorian working-class family life.



*Figure 5.1 The front street with metal fencing surrounding the front yard for the ground floor flat.*

Source:

[https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/640/media/images/74145000/jpg/\\_74145914\\_74145913.jpg](https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/640/media/images/74145000/jpg/_74145914_74145913.jpg).

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<sup>9</sup> Front yards are included in flats that were built by the end of the nineteenth century (Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities, 1979).

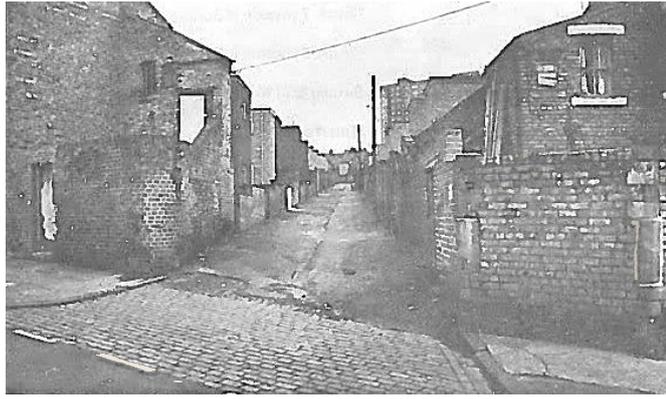


Figure 5.2 The back lane of the Tyneside flats.  
Source: Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities, 1979, p. 2.

### ***Representations of differentiated spatial practices in the Tyneside flats***

Compared to other flat-based family living solutions that emerged in the Victorian era, the spatial structure of the Tyneside flats preserves the Victorian back-and-front duality (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4). This distinction is represented through the persistence of including a symbolic front room named 'the parlour' (Daunton, 1983; Ravetz and Turkington, 2006) despite its limited use in routine domestic life. Segregated from other rooms, the front room is the biggest room in the flat and overlooks the street through a wide window. Serving the function of representing the family status to the public, the front room was decorated with non-utilitarian objects and reception furniture. As formal occasions were not frequent in family life, the separation of this room also provided an opportunity for detachment from other family members, such as isolating an ill family member (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006, p. 156).

In contrast, spaces where everyday practices took place represent the hidden back of the flat (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006). This zone separated the utilitarian functions, such as storage of coal and waste in the backyard, away from other domestic practices (Burnette, 1986) (see Figure 5.3). Housework, which was

carried out predominantly by the housewife, was also carried out in back of the house in the scullery and the backyard (ibid.).



Figure 5.3 *The back yard including laundry, bathtub and accessed by women and children. Source: Ravetz and Turkington (2006, p.135).*

The back of the flat also included the living kitchen where food was cooked and the family gathered around the dining table to share a meal (Daunton, 1983). Despite the centrality of this space in the everyday life of the family, the living kitchen only overlooked the back alleyway through a narrow window. Compared to the front room, the family space was hidden from the public. In the context of limited finances for building, the distinction between the utilitarian and symbolic zones in the Tyneside flats shows the importance of maintaining this duality (see Figure 5.4 and 5.5). Even in the cases of one-bedroom flats, builders still reserved this spatial organisation in order to maintain the differentiation between the everyday and the formal symbolic spaces in family life (see Figure 5.3 and 5.6).

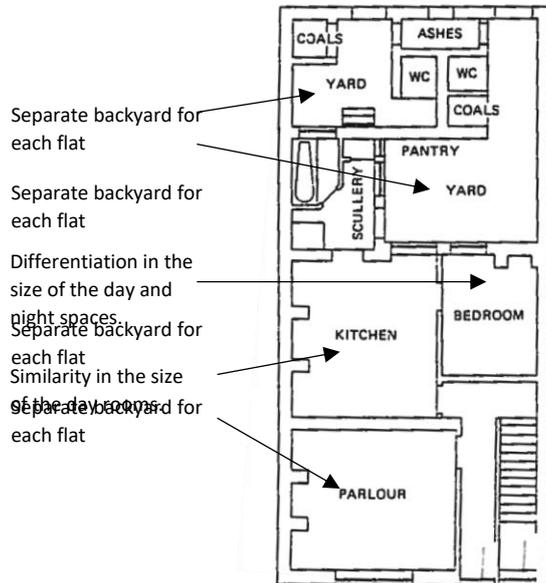


Figure 5.4 One-bedroomed Tyneside flat, Gateshead.  
Source: Daunton, 1983, p. 40.

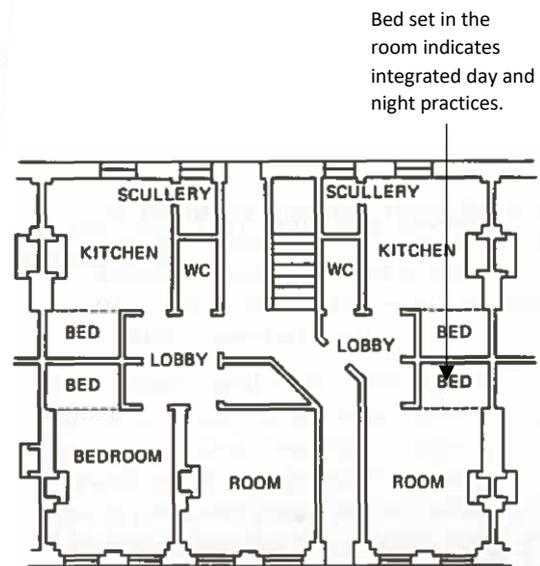


Figure 5.5 One- and two-roomed tenement flats, Glasgow. Source: Daunton, 1983, p. 56.



Figure 5.6 Non utilitarian, decorative objects in the parlour of a pre-1918 working class house.

Source: Turner and Partington (2015, p. 3).

To conclude, the emergence of the Tyneside flats as a reaction to the acute housing crisis in Newcastle significantly influenced their social construction. The provision of these flats by small working-class investors had an impact on the social sub-group and the intensification of the plot load. Despite the spatial constraints influencing the form of this housing type, the spatial structure of these flats still represented working-class domesticity – specifically the front and back duality. Based on such observations, the limitation of space and the horizontal organisation of space in this case study triggers questions about the way contemporary families experience the outlined spatial structure; and whether or not they maintain the differentiated spatial practices and the symbolic function of the parlour within these flats.

### **5.3 Introducing the participants**

#### **5.3.1 Overview**

This section introduces the participating families and the salient aspects of their lives and the negotiations with their flats that affected the findings of this research. The introduction to each family starts by highlighting the reasons behind their decision to live in these flats and the critical reason behind their plan to leave (see Table 5.1). Then, this section depicts the way the Victorian Tyneside flats operate in the context of the contemporary family domestic life. For doing so, I amplified the idiosyncratic aspects of the socio-spatial practices of each participating family in relationship to space, practices and objects. I also explain the failure of these flats in offering a suitable dwelling for contemporary families by highlighting aspects of mismatch between the participants' physical models and the existing design of their flats.

In this section, I rely on data from the home tours and model making. I also relied on the participants' responds to the initial stage of the interviews (see Section 4.7.2 and Appendix 1) and findings of the motivations behind the participants' actions on space as emerged through the analysis and demonstrated in Chapter 6. Introducing the case study through its immersion in the reality of home living in the contemporary context represents a transition from the conception of the Tyneside flats as historical precedence – as predominantly addressed in the literature and discussed in Section 5.2 – to a site of a reproduction of domestic ideals as explored in the proceeding chapters.

Household details		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
<b>Household structure</b>		Two parents and two children	Two parents and one child	Two parents and two children	Mother and two children	Two parents and one child	Two parents and two children
<b>Children age</b>		10 years old boy – 8 years old girl	3 years old boy	10 years old girl – 6 years old girl	8 years old boy - 6 years old girl	9 months	10 years old girl – 6 years old girl
<b>Occupation</b>		Mother: researcher Father: Computer engineer - Book author- post graduate researcher	Mother: post graduate researcher Father: part time job	Mother: Full time housewife – Running personal business from home. Father: post graduate researcher	Mother: engaged in part time course and psychotherapy practice.	Mother: Full-Time housewife Father: post graduate researcher	Mother: Teacher – temporarily out of work (temporarily for childcare). Father: researcher
<b>Type of tenure</b>		Owner	Rent	Rent	Owner	Rent	Rent
<b>Length of residency</b>		4 Years	3 years and a half	7 years	18 months	1 year	1 year
<b>Number of bedrooms</b>		2 bedrooms	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms
<b>Level</b>		Ground floor	Ground floor	Ground floor	1 <sup>st</sup> floor maisonette	Ground floor	1st floor flat
<b>Location of flat</b>		South Gosforth	Fenham	Jesmond	South Gosforth	Heaton	South Gosforth
<b>Domestic life experience outside the UK</b>		New York	China	Egypt	The United Arab Emirates	India	Turkey
<b>Outstanding aspects of their domesticity in the Tyneside flats (Identified</b>	Possibilities related to spatial features of the flat.	-Walkability -Connectedness to amenities and good schools.	-Connectedness to workplace and amenities.	-Walkability. -Connectedness to amenities and good schools.	-Availability of a personal room for each member of the family. -Walkability.	-Connectedness to workplace and <b>amenities</b> .	-Connectedness to workplace and good schools. -Availability of a personal room for each child.

<b>during preliminary analysis)</b>	Conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack space for children activities.</li> <li>-Conflicts related to shared use of the kitchen.</li> <li>-Spatial restrictions limiting availability of personal space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack space for children activities.</li> <li>-Spatial restrictions limiting availability of personal space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack space for children activities.</li> <li>-Lack Of availability of a personal room for each child</li> <li>-Overlap between utility and family living space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of space for children activities</li> <li>-Overlap between alone and shared times.</li> <li>-Overlap between utility and family living space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack space for children activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack space for children activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Notes about engagement in the research</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in all activities.</li> <li>-Engagement took place in the participants' flat.</li> <li>-Both adults engaged in home tour and the interview.</li> <li>-Only the mother engaged in model making.</li> <li>-Children were around during data collection and were allowed to add comments during the parents' engagement in research activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in all research activities.</li> <li>-Only the mother engaged in the research activities.</li> <li>-Data collection was carried out in the flat during home tour only . Other activities were carried out at Northumbria University library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in all research activities.</li> <li>-Engagement took place in the participants' flat.</li> <li>-Only the mother engaged in the research activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The mother engaged in home tour and interview in her flat.</li> <li>-Children were not at home during data collection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in all research activities.</li> <li>-Both adults engaged in home tour and the interview.</li> <li>-Only the father engaged in model making.</li> <li>-Home tours and interview was carried out in the flat. Model making took place at Northumbria University library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engaged in all activities.</li> <li>-Engagement took place in the participants' flat.</li> <li>-Both adults engaged all activities.</li> <li>-Children were around during data collection and were allowed to add comments during the parents' engagement in research activities.</li> </ul>

Table 5. 2 Details about the circumstances associated with the participants' life in the Tyneside flats and their participation in this research.

### 5.3.2 Couples with two primary school-aged children

#### F1

This family consists of a father and a mother, who are both engaged in academic work, and two primary school-aged children (see Section 1.4.5 for details of the children's ages). The family moved to their ground floor two-bedroom flat in South Gosforth four years before their engagement in this research (see Figure 5.7). The couple's attitude towards family flat living was influenced by their previous experience of flat living in New York. Accordingly, their decision to buy their flat was related to both their appreciation of the walkability in urban setting for their home and their tendency to contest the idealised conception of the suburban family house (see Section 3.2).

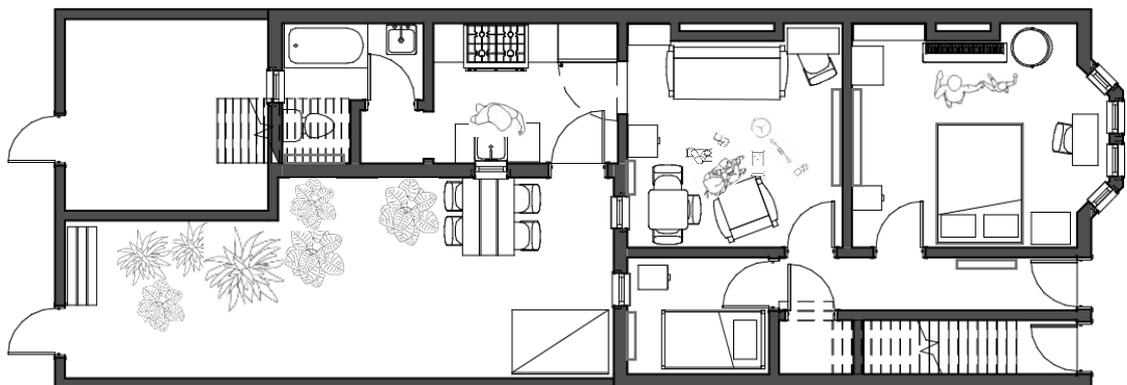


Figure 5.7 F1' ground floor flat. Source: The author.

At the beginning of their residence, the family carried out major transformation of the kitchen, which they described as their link to the twenty-first century in the flat. The change aimed to create a sense of brightness through the lighting and the white colour of the streamlined design of their new fitted kitchen. The family did not have a television and relied on their laptop and a projector to access media and watch movies. Contesting associations between socio-economic groups and flat living (Brimley, 2002), the couple were also keen to present their personal taste

and background to the outside by hanging their artwork in the front room and decorating the front door with a fine type of treatment and distinctive paint colour (see Figure 5.8). However, the spatial challenges were only explored after experiencing domesticity in the flat and resulted in their move to another flat one year after they participated in this research.



*Figure 5.8 Paintings hung in the front room facing the window in F1's flat. Photo taken by the author.*

The living room for F1 represented a multigenerational space that enfolded multiple uses by different family members, including shared and solitary activities. The furniture in that space was arranged to facilitate the family gathering for meals and to watch media, and to support the children's play. Personal practices in this family also shaped a pattern of use of space that relied on time scheduling. Accordingly, the pattern of use of the living room in F1's life created multiple social geographies scheduled at different times of the day to include children's play, adults' relaxation time, dining and an adult's personal time.

The multiple uses of the front room in this family demonstrated their need for another shared space in their dwelling where they could accommodate other children's activities, such as active play, hobbies and study. This pattern of use of space implied transforming the front room during the daytime from a bedroom to a

shared room to create two shared spaces in the flat. Most unexpectedly, this pattern of use did not include the children's room, which they referred to as 'the small room'. Due to its restricted size, this room was seldom used for any activities other than sleep and occasional play with friends.

Storage formed a significant aspect of use of space in F1's life, as seen through the mother's effort in creating and sorting storage spaces. This is an example of the impact of the difference between the materiality of the Victorian and contemporary lives on the design of the family dwelling. Storage was not only an aspect of neatness for this family, but the adults related the differentiation between what should be hidden and what should be exposed to their need to encourage certain activities, such as the adults' hobbies and children's play (see Figure 5.9). In this case the mother pointed out her perception of the ceiling height as an opportunity for sorting storage according to the frequency of use of objects.



*Figure 5.9 Storing less frequently used items, such as duvets and linen, at the top of the storage unit in F1's flat. Photo taken by the participant.*

The reconstruction of the Tyneside flat for F1 was motivated by the need to provide a separate space to extend the family space and to provide personal spaces for the son and the mother. According to these motivations, remaking their flat relied

on removing the interior walls and adding a new construction – ‘an Eco Pod’ – in the backyard (see Figure 5.10). It is worth noting that the mother approached the model making with an interest in providing an affordable housing solution for families of low-income social groups. Accordingly, the solution she proposed through the model making was derived from her interest in examining other alternatives of family living in flats.



*Figure 5.5 New construction added at the back yard in F1's physical model.*

### **F3**

This family consists of a father who works in tourism management and a mother who runs her own cooking business from home. The couple lives in their ground floor two-bedroomed flat in Jesmond with their two primary-aged daughters (see Figure 5.11). The housework and childcare duties in this family are primarily carried out by the mother, who organises her cooking activities around the children's schedules. The family moved to their flat seven years before participating in this research due to its spaciousness compared to where they lived before.

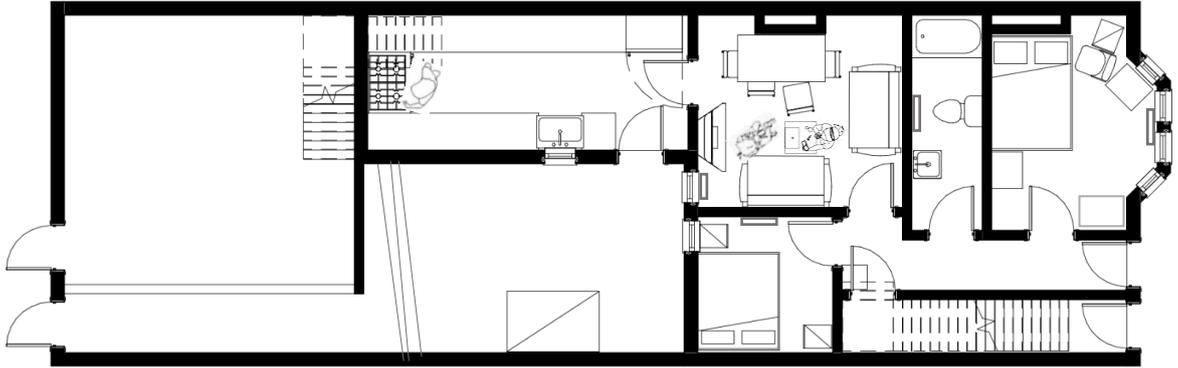


Figure 5.6 Figure 5.5 F3' ground floor flat. Source: The author.

The significance of the personal space was signified in this case when the mother referred to the spacious kitchen as her rescue from depression that she was going through seven years earlier (see Figure 5.12). Compared to the one she had before, the amount of space in the kitchen was associated with the transformation of cooking from a duty to her hobby and business. Accordingly, finding a kitchen that would allow her engagement in cooking formed the fundamental criteria behind the desire to move from her flat.

The aesthetic order of space dominated the mother's arrangement of furniture and storage in her flat. This order was challenged by a shortage of space in the flat for storing the objects that had accumulated throughout their family life. The expectation of staying in this flat for a few more years motivated the mother to arrange with the landlord to replace the existing furniture and storage units with ones that would maintain order in the flat. Accordingly, this family demonstrates the impact of the length of residence on the actions taken on space.



*Figure 5.12 Appreciated qualities of brightness and spaciousness in the kitchen in F3's flat. A photo taken by the participant.*

The living room is an example of the overlap between the private family sphere and the formality of the public sphere when the mother arranged cooking classes in the flat. During this time, the living room was transformed to a workshop by moving the dining table to the centre of the room. Otherwise, the living room represented the centre of this family's life by accommodating the family watching television together and the children playing on the floor.

The mother's approach to restructuring the flat during model making was motivated by the desire to create a space for the dining table. This space was added to the flat by moving the kitchen to a new external structure in the back yard. Otherwise, the mother relied on the rearrangement of furniture and creating extra storage units in the girls' room (see Figure 5.13). The mother also suggested that appropriations, such as swapping their double bed for single bunk beds would be enough, given their plan of temporary stay in the flat, to extend the available space in the girls' room (see Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.13 Accessible storage for ease of use in the girls' room in F3's model.



Figure 5.14 A bunk bed and a wardrobe to increase spaciousness in the girls' room in F3's model.

## **F6**

This family consists of a couple and two primary school-aged children who lived in a rented first floor Tyneside flat located in South Gosforth. The family lived in their first floor flat after moving from Turkey due to the father's engagement in an academic position at Newcastle University (See Figure 5.15). The mother, who worked as a teacher in Turkey, was a full-time housewife during their stay in England. Similar to the situation of F2, this flat was chosen based on images in an online advertisement and a description from a friend based on a live viewing. The family thought that a three-bedroomed flat located in proximity to good schools and amenities would satisfy their needs. However, the family expressed the disappointment they felt upon their arrival at the flat. The difficulty in finding a suitable alternative family dwelling after the expiry of their contract led to the mother choosing to return to Turkey with her children rather than extend her stay in their flat.

The family conducted minimal appropriation by rearranging the furniture in the living room in an attempt to create a space for family gatherings (see Figure 5.16). However, they still found that their flat could not accommodate the life of a family with children. The parents related this limitation to the inconvenience caused when

their son had to study in their room and the children's boredom due to not being able to find sufficient space for active play. Issues related to the children's security also had a negative impact on the family's experience of their flat. The proximity of one of the bedrooms to the stairs was a source of worry for the parents, in case their daughter fell if she woke in the night for water or to go to the toilet. The parents also found the segregated spatial structure of the flat to be an obstacle hindering their supervision of their children, particularly while playing outside the flat.

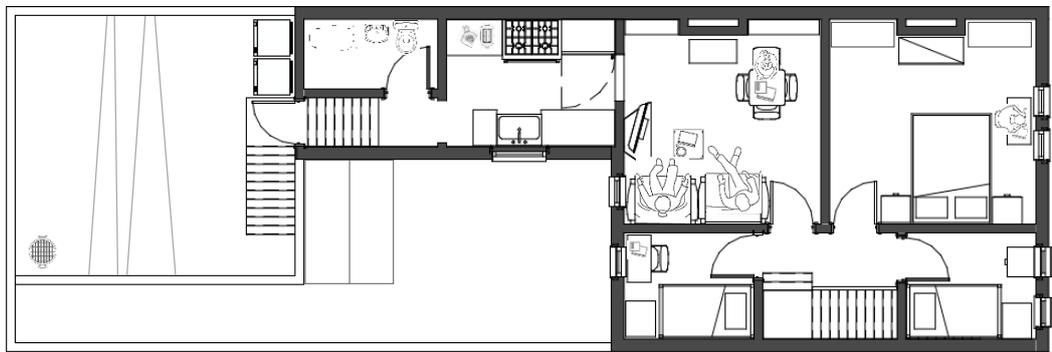


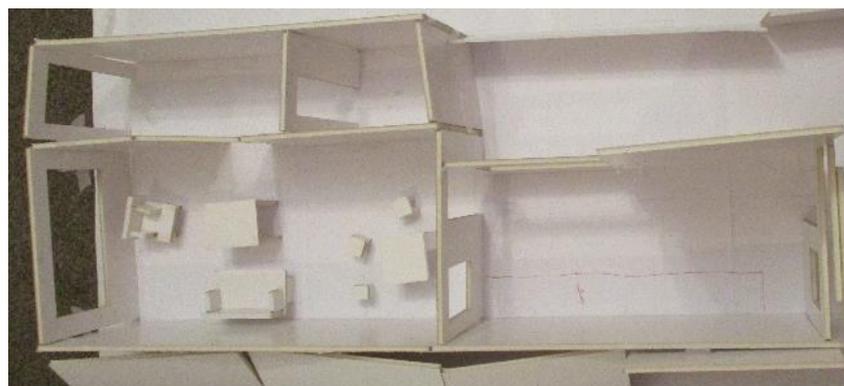
Figure 5.15 F6's first floor flat. Source t: the author.



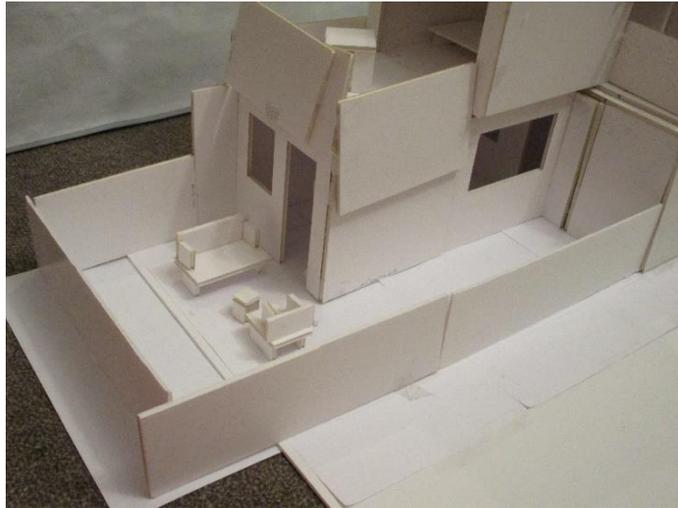
Figure 5.16 Linear arrangement to create spaciousness in F6's living room. Photo taken by the author.

Missing their kitchen life due to the limitation of space in the Tyneside flat's kitchen formed another conflict experienced by F6 in their flat. Comparing this kitchen to their former experiences back in Turkey, the parents commented that the Tyneside flat's kitchen was designed for fast food. Instead, an elaborate cooking process requires a kitchen that allows casual meals and socialisation while cooking.

According to their experiences, the model making activity was guided by the family's need to allow a personal space for each child. Therefore, the family added an extra level to separate between the children's personal spaces and the family space. The father also added an attic that overlooked the back garden for his workspace. The shared space created on the ground floor was characterised by the division between an extended kitchen with a dining table and an access to the garden; and a living room that included a dining space when hosting guests (see Figure 5.17). The family also explained that having a garden was essential (see Figure 5.18) and that a balcony may not be able to provide the sense of freedom they desired as a family to enjoy a casual barbecue and to allow the children's active play.



*Figure 5.17 Distinction between the back (the socialised kitchen) and the front (the living room) in F6's model.*



*Figure 5.18 Anticipating the use of the garden for socialisation in F6's model.*

The structure of the shared spaces in F6's model implied a front and back division in the dwelling. The front was associated with the gathering space that should be exposed to the outside world, 'the road', which they described as a spatial quality they appreciated. In contrast, the back of the dwelling implied associations with the feel of privacy from the world outside the dwelling. In such light, the kitchen and other spaces, such as the workspace and children's bedrooms, faced the back.

### **5.3.3 Growing families**

#### ***F2: The couple with two young children***

This couple is at the start of their family life; they live with their three-year-old boy and a baby girl, who was born a month after their engagement in this research. During this stage of their life, the mother was engaged in a full-time postgraduate research scholarship and the father was engaged in a part-time job. The family decided to rent their one-bedroom flat through an online arrangement without prior onsite viewing (see Figure 5.19). This rushed decision was due to the urgency of arranging accommodation for the family before arriving in Newcastle with their first

baby. However, the advertised photos did not convey the disappointing condition of the flat. Furthermore, the family's conception of the impracticality of appropriating a rented flat affected their approach to accommodating their life in their flat. Accordingly, the decision that this flat was a temporary solution was taken from the first day of residency. However, the convenience of the proximity of Fenham – where their flat is located – to town, and the lack of better options for family dwelling directed the family to extend their stay for three years.

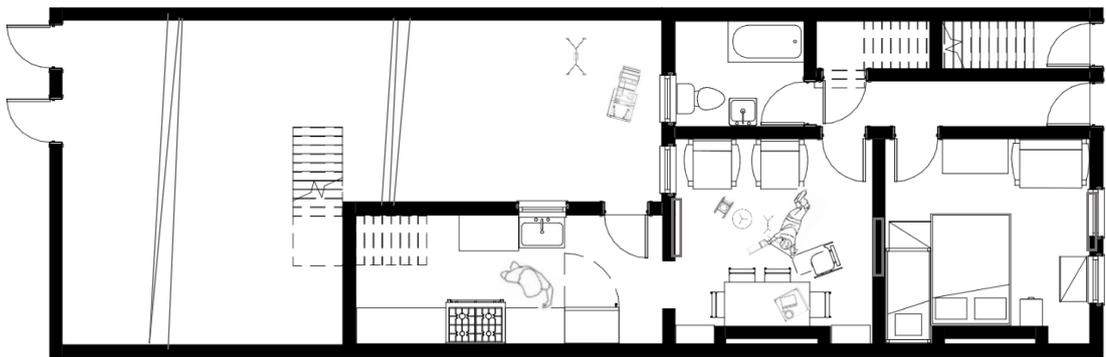


Figure 5.19 F2's ground floor flat. Source: the author.

Creating a suitable setting for childcare and play formed the fundamental motivation behind rearranging furniture in the flat. In such light, the 'narrowness' that the couple perceived in the living room was challenged by moving a sofa and a table to the bedroom to create a safe space for the child's movement and his toys (see Figure 5.20). Despite this rearrangement, the segregation of the living room still led to difficulties when socialising with friends and they referred to the lack of space in the living room as a source of discomfort when entertaining more than two guests. The experience of this family shows how the need for spaciousness of the living room is shaped according to children's needs and the informality of socialising with guests. This case is an example of the definition of the public sphere in the contemporary dwelling. Despite having a desk in the front bedroom, the mother in F2 studied at the dining table due to the inconvenience

that she found when using the front room as a space for her child to sleep and for her to study (see Figure 5.21).



*Figure 5.20 The unused desk in the bedroom. Photo taken by the author.*



*Figure 5.21 The space created for the child's play in the living room after removing the sofa. Photo taken by the author.*

The reconstruction of the shared spaces in F2's physical model was based on the mother's need for spatial differentiation between the adults' space and her child's play space. The desire for informal socialising with close friends motivated the mother to create an open plan that would make the dwelling 'feel like home' for the guests (see Figure 5.22). The mother also included 'cosy corners' in the living room and the front bedroom that would enable spatial distinctions between different activities. The spatial distinction of these corners relied on the mother's use of open partitions that maintained the flow of movement and visual connectedness while demarcating the boundedness of space (see Figure 5.23).

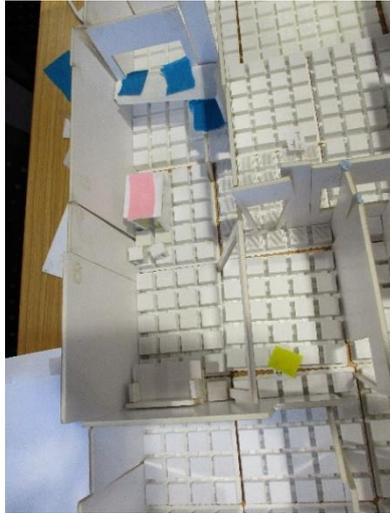


Figure 5.12 Open plan created by the mother in F2.

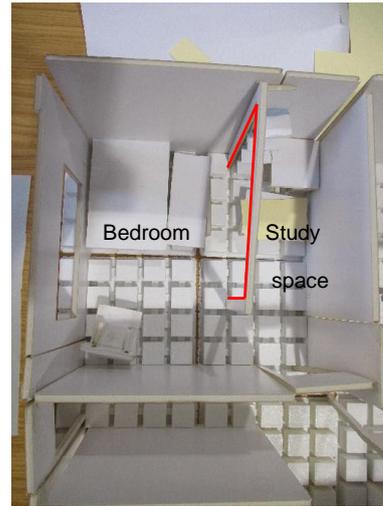


Figure 5.23 Cosy work corner created by the participant in the front room by adding an open partition.

### ***F5: The couple and their baby***

This family consists of a couple who live with their nine-month-old baby in a rented ground floor flat in Heaton. The father was engaged in his PhD studies and moved to a full-time academic position during the period of participation in this research, and the mother left her work to take care of their baby. The couple shared childcare and housework duties by scheduling shifts to ensure close supervision of the baby. The family moved to their two-bedroom flat as it was bigger and provided more privacy than the studio flat that they previously lived in (see Figure 5.24). The couple also thought that having the two bedrooms would be useful when hosting their parents' long stays during their visits from India. Proximity to the university also motivated the couple to choose this flat. Despite the couple's expression of their satisfaction with their flat experience, they still perceived it as a temporary dwelling. This decision was derived from the fathers' need for the spaciousness of the indoor living space to provide more comfort and to support his son's play.

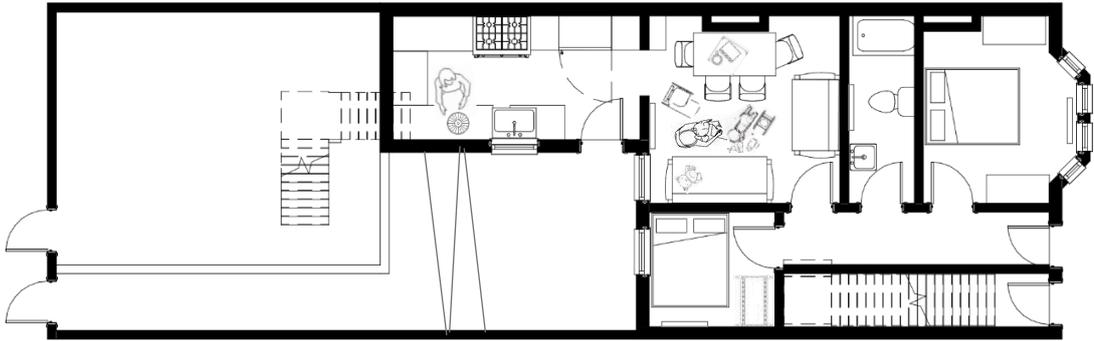


Figure 5.13 F5's ground floor flat. Source: The author.

Privacy was a salient motivation behind the couple's appropriations and use of space. Despite having an extra room in their flat, the couple chose to sleep in the small bedroom with their baby due to the bigger front room's exposure to the main street. When their parents were not around, the couple preferred to use the front room for storage rather than exposing family life practices to the outside. This decision intensified the living room's multiple uses; for example, there was a day bed in that room for mother's and baby's rest during the day. The cosiness, comfort and warmth of this room also motivated the father to spend his personal time on the living room sofa.

Childcare also had an impact on the couple's use of space due to the couple's need to control the child's movement while providing him with the opportunity to play. Accordingly, the living room included several pieces of childcare equipment, and toys were spread out on the day bed, the floor and the dining table. Despite the multiplicity of baby-related objects, the couple ensured cleanliness and hygiene for their child by differentiating between items related to the outside, such as the father's work-related objects, and their child's play zone.

The living room included a daybed, that was used for family activities with their son, and a sofa, that was used exclusively as the fathers' workspace. The distinction between the micro geographies created with both uses was apparent from the parents' regular washing the bedsheet covering the daybed for maintain the cleanness of their son's play space. Including objects from outside such as the father's laptop and books on the father's sofa was considered as a source of dirt that was not suitable for the child's splay space.

Model making in this case included minimal changes to the original spatial structure as the segregated space was perceived as an opportunity to control their son's movement and protect the family's privacy from the outsiders' gaze (see Figure 5.25). Accordingly, this case represents an example of reconstruction of the meaning of space through changes in materiality and sensual elements.



*Figure 5.25 The model that maintained the spatial structure of the Tyneside flat. Photo taken by the author.*

#### **5.3.4 The single parent family**

##### ***F4: The single mother living with her two children***

This is the family of a mother, who is engaged in practice and studies in the field of psychology, two primary school-aged children and a cat. The choice of buying their three-bedroom maisonette located in South Gosforth was influenced by its

affordability and the mother's need to stay in proximity to good schools. When buying the flat, the original Victorian plan was already changed to an open-plan living space that included a living room, kitchen and dining area, with the master en-suite bedroom in the attic (see Figure 5.26 and 5.27). However, despite the change from the back and front duality to an open-plan spatial structure in this case, the absence of suitable personal and children's play spaces resulted in the mother's plan to move from the flat within two years.

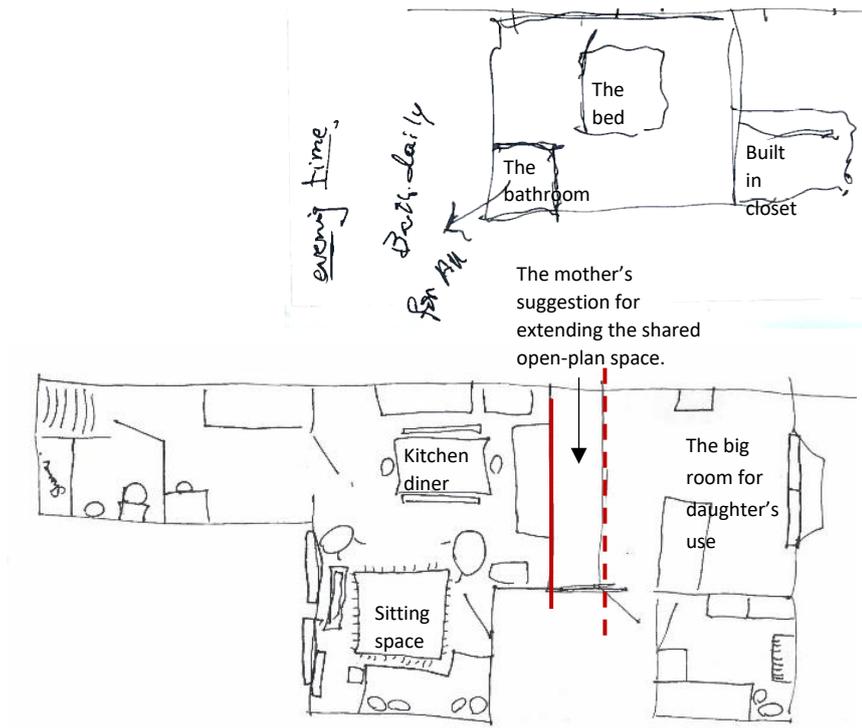


Figure 5.26 The mother's sketch of the attic in her maisonette. (Bottom) The mother's sketch of the lower level in her maisonette.



Figure 5.27 (Top) the first floor in F4's maisonette. (Bottom) the attic in F4's maisonette. Source: The author.

The mother arranged the furniture in the living space to allow enough room for her children to play on the floor. The living space also included aspects of entertainment, such as the television and books. The mother was keen on maintaining the sense of neatness and brightness in space. This preference explained choosing the white colour when repainting the flat and adding storage units.

The tension between the need for both connectedness and separation between adults' and children's activities within the family sphere represented a prominent dimension of the mother's experience of her flat. The mother's repeated expression of the experience of stress in her flat was always related to the spread of clutter and the absence of personal space. However, the mother did not insist on being apart from her children when spending her relaxed time in her attic room and allowed them to use her room as an extra space for play (see Figures 5.28). This case is an example that resonates with Attfield's (2002) point of view about the state of social connectedness imposed by the open-plan solution.



*Figure 5.28 The multiple personal uses of the mother's attic room in F4. Photo taken by the mother.*

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the Tyneside flats by relating the existing knowledge about their emergence to the new understanding proposed through this investigation. Such connections focused on relating this case of transformation to the contemporary context of family housing. A conflict between the Victorian and contemporary domesticity is indicated by the contrast between the representation of the flat to the Victorian working-class dwelling and the difficulty faced by the participants in accommodating their lives in these flats. Most significantly, the failure to fulfil the participants' needs was felt to some degree across all participating families, despite the variation in type of tenure, suggesting underlying spatial conflicts in the Tyneside flats.

The contextual aspects connect our understanding of the contemporary dwelling in this thesis by highlighting the appreciation of the participating families of family living in urban contexts where access to amenities and walkability are appreciated. The transition phases experienced by each family in their lives in the Tyneside flats also inform the impact of mobility in contemporary culture on the participating families' choices and priorities about their dwellings.

This initial overview of the participants' experiences indicated implications of childcare, family privacy, the need for personal space and informality in family life on the participants' experiences of their flats. These aspects open the way for reading the participants' domestic lives' spatiality in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

**Reading the Lived Space Through  
the Contemporary Domestic Practices**

## Chapter 6: Reading the Lived Space Through the Contemporary Domestic Practices

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the social construction of the original design of the Tyneside flats and indicated conflicts associated with the participants' domesticity in these flats. This chapter explains aspects of the lived spaces within the participants' domesticity in their flats. The notions developed in this chapter form the first step towards identifying the relationship between contemporary domesticity and dwelling model by addressing the first research question: *how is contemporary domesticity practiced in common place architecture?* To answer this question, two aspects of the lived space associated with the participants' lives were considered. First, the emerging spatial fields were identified by analysing the participants' experiences of family living in Tyneside Flats. Second, the intentions that motivated the manipulation of the spaces within the flats were identified.

Drawing on the gap in understanding the changes in the spatial manifestation of home centredness, as highlighted in the literature review (see Chapter 3), this chapter relied on the conflicts emerging from the participants' experiences of the one shared space model represented through in their flats in order to project the new spatial constructions through the spatiality of the participants' gathering and alone times. The findings in this chapter are based on analysis of the participants' narratives. The main source of data utilised at this phase of the analysis were interviews, which were complemented by visual maps, notes and photos from the home tours. It is worth noting that the concepts reported in this chapter support the interpretation of spatial features addressed in Chapters 7 and 8 by describing the social processes underlying the spatiality of the participants' domesticity.

## **6.2 Gathering in the living room: Exploring experiences and space**

### **6.2.1 Overview**

The narratives described the free time that family members shared in their living rooms. This section traces the spatiality of this time through conflicts associated with shared events spent in the participants' living rooms. The emerging spatial fields are first revealed in relation to the significance of these events to the participants, then the spatiality of this time is portrayed through emotional and behavioural aspects related to these events.

### **6.2.2 The emotional significance of the gathering space**

The symbolic value of family time emphasised the significance of the shared space in the participants' experiences. This significance appeared in the emotional associations expressed about the living room being 'the heart of the home' (father in F5), or, 'I feel home when I enter this room' (mother in F3). Accordingly, the sense of attachment expressed by the mother in F2 as, 'the time that I can play with all my heart' and by the father in F5, who wished he could 'spend more time' when playing with his child, demonstrates the need for space for shared time in the dwellings. Furthermore, such attachment was also an aspect of the regular use of the space 'where everything happens' (father in F5) and where the family 'spend most of the time' (the mother in F3). For most of the families, the attachment to this shared time was associated with its representation of family unity. This was associated with creating 'better families' (mother in F1) by maintaining closeness through social communication and opportunities for 'self-expression' (mother in F2), and physically, by sitting 'around the table' or 'all [sitting on] the couch', and the mother in F3, '... we huddle in here... We sat on the sofa and be [were] together' (mother in F4).

The identity of the shared space was constructed through the participants' appropriations of the arrangement of furniture and use of cultural artifacts. For the family in F1, furniture represented family memories, as shown by their insistence on keeping their furniture even when they moved from New York to Newcastle. Similarly, the father in F5 expressed the significance of the sofa in the family space when he said, 'If I said that the living room is the heart of the home, then the sofa is the heart of the living room.' On the instrumental level, the significance of furniture was associated with the need for facilitating family time. This necessity appeared in the participants' insistence on keeping the dining table despite the tightness of space caused by its presence in the living room, as seen in Figure 6.1).



*Figure 6.1 The dining table and sofas in F3's living room. Photo taken by the author.*

Emotional aspects of togetherness were associated with the variation of representations of family time in the shared space. Accordingly, representations of family time were associated with expressions of self-identity, such as objects related to a family's cultural background during different shared activities and within different spaces. For example, in F1's living room, culture was expressed through the mother's establishment of the traditional English 'teatime' by using a traditional bone China tea set (see Figure 6.2). Similarly, photos of family members

and children's artwork were displayed in F3's living room (see Figure 6.3). These examples demonstrate the role of displayed objects and decoration in supporting the integration of the shared space into the dynamics of contemporary family life on the representational level. Also, resonating with remarks made by Atfield (2002) and Rechavie (2009) about the dynamic nature of the identity of the living room, the individuality of self-expression in the shared spaces demonstrated the diversity of the living room settings.



*Figure 6.2 Bone China tea set on the 'spotty table' for 'teatime' in F1's flat. Photo taken by the mother.*

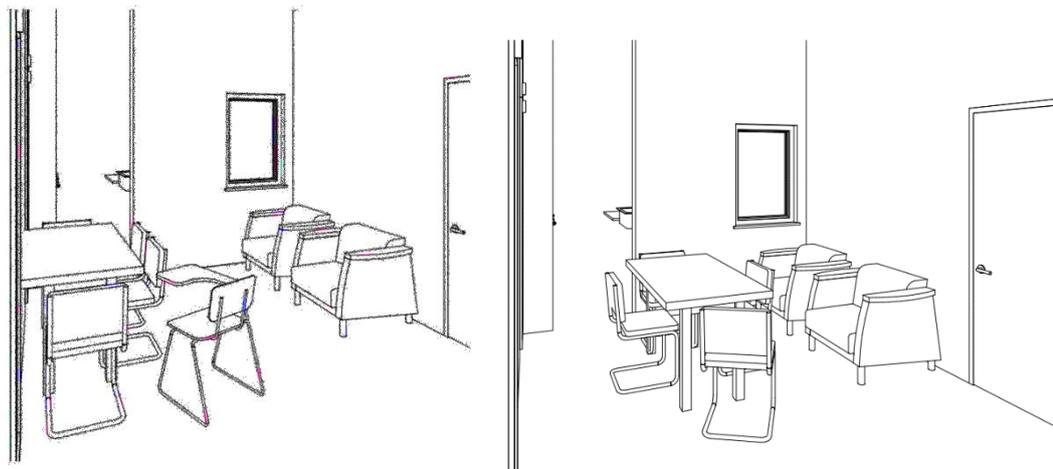


*Figure 6.2 Children's artwork, photo frames and decorative objects in F3's living room. Photo taken by the author.*

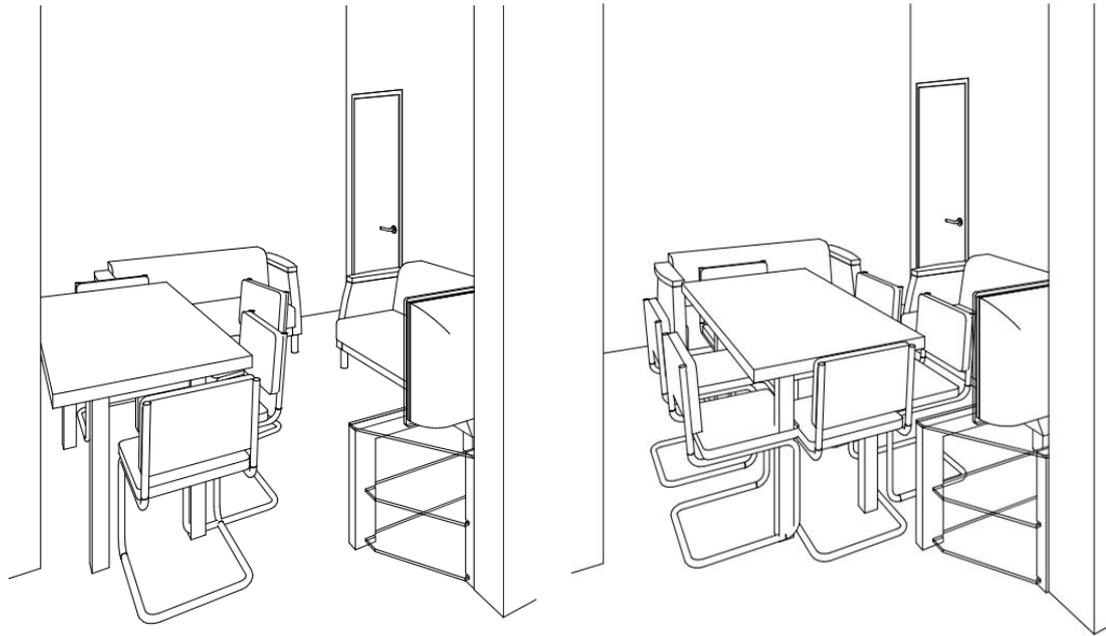
### **6.2.3 Distinctions between dining and living spaces**

Distinctions between the living and dining spaces in terms of their uses and characteristics were inferred from the conflicts experienced in the participants' living rooms. Despite the spatial challenges, the families ate their meals at the dining table or created a dining space on the floor, except in the case of F5, who enjoyed the sense of informality of eating on the sofa in the family sphere. Nonetheless, the overlap between the dining and living spaces was partially related to the need for the centrality of the dining space and was manifested in

some families through the movement of the dining table from the side to the centre of the living room to make space for friends or guests. However, as moving the dining table as part of the everyday routine was unpractical, the participants had to either adapt, by separating the adults' and the children's mealtimes, as in F1, or accept the situation. Additionally, the overlap between the dining and living spaces was referred to as a sense of 'narrowness' and 'compactness', which conflicted with the need for 'comfort' and 'spaciousness'. Spaciousness here was an aspect of comfort of the body–space experience when entertaining guests, and 'relaxation' when spending time with family (see Figures 6.4 and 6.5) or enabling physical movement while playing with children on the floor.



*Figure 6.4 Sketches of F2's flat: The dining table in its original place (left) and the dining table moved to the middle of the living room when hosting formal guests (right). (Source: the author).*



*Figure 6.5 Sketches of F3's flat: The dining table in its regular place (left) and the dining table moved to the middle of the room during cooking classes (right). (Source: the author).*

The outlined accounts demonstrate the challenges faced by the participants when negotiating their shared activities in the Tyneside flats. However, these conflicts informed spatial distinctions through the identified meaning of the dining and living room spaces in the dwelling. Nonetheless, while these conflicts showed the failure of the shared space in fulfilling the needs of family time, the spatial boundaries regulating these spatial distinctions were not clarified within the participants' narratives.

#### **6.2.4 Distinctions between children's and adults' spaces**

The distinction between spaces according to age informed further dimensions of complexity in the shared space. Tensions between the need for this distinction and the need to maintain proximity to the children informed the internal order and the boundaries within the structure of the living room.

### ***A space for adults***

Spending free time in the one shared living room led to conflicts between the adults' need for 'relaxation' and their need to maintain social communication with their children. However, adults' freedom here was not necessarily expressed as time alone. In fact, the different uses of space were described as feelings of cosiness and freedom while spending time with partners and close friends for F1 and F2, and while relaxing alone. Accordingly, sharing the space with children had a negative impact on the adults' ability to relax in their living room, as the mother in F4 complained: 'I find it very stressful in here [living room] when the children [are] back from school, it's a bit overbearing.' Distinctions between uses of space were manifested through expressions of both the ownership of space, as 'our little oasis' or 'our own space', and the dialectic of 'inside' and 'outside'. Also, socially, the separation was expressed through references to the actors engaged in such times of day, such as 'I' or 'we', and 'them'.

A sense of 'cosiness' associated with the adults' free time informed further spatial aspects of the space while the adults spent time together. First, 'cosiness' was identified through the perception of the connectivity between the living room and the kitchen as an aspect enabling informality of food consumption, which complemented their relaxed mood. This pattern of food consumption was expressed as 'top[ping] up snacks', 'having a cup of coffee', 'having a cup of milk chocolate', or by referring to the light breakfast as part of the relaxed mood in the morning for the mother in F2. Second, cosiness was also expressed in association with the setting that would support physical comfort during this time of the day for most of the participants. This association implied the significance of furniture associated with relaxation time, such as the comfortable sofa and an armchair.

As well as being perceived as an adults' space, the living room also appeared as a locus for sedentary activities in family life. This multiuse of the living room was shown in the similarities between the need for cosiness associated with both the adults' time and shared family activities, such as watching television or talking (see Section 6.2.2).

### ***Play in the living room for connectedness between adults and children***

The coexistence of children's play time and adults' time in the Tyneside flats amplified the need for distinction between the spaces for each activity due to the tension between the needs for connectedness with children and adults' freedom. On the experiential level, the difficulties in combining a relaxed mood with the noise of children playing and conflicts over preferences in watching media explain the need for a differentiated space for adults. Aesthetically, a distinction between the identity of adults' and children's spaces has been described on the material level through a contrast between the 'tidiness' of the adults' space and the amount of 'stuff' and 'things' related to the children's play. This perception was clarified when the participants referred to objects 'piling up' and the presence of 'clutter' and 'mess' in the living room as a source of disorder in space (see Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8).

Despite the need for such spatial differentiation, the participants' parenting style imposed a need to maintain connectedness with their children. The emotional dimension of playing with children motivated parents to extend the opportunities that would enable such connection as expressed by the father in F5 and the mother in F2. Additionally, the need to ensure the safety of toddlers meant that adults' and children's activities had to coexist, as explained through the routine of the mother in F5 taking care of her son: 'I stick him [in] this room [living room] and thankfully we have doors.' Similarly, the mother in F2 restricted her son to the living room

and did not allow him to play in the bedroom. Additionally, the need to play in the living room was also shown by the primary school age' – as reported by the parents in F1 and F3 – who refrained from playing in their bedrooms owing to the sense of isolation.

Perceptions of the relationship between the living room and the outdoor space were also shaped according to the need to supervise older children during outdoor play, leading to the requirement for visual connectedness between the living room and the backyard. This need was highlighted through the experiences of families who live in first-floor flats, such as F4 and F6, relating the inconvenience of playing in the backyard to the separation from the living room. This was associated with the parents' concerns about the children being 'not safe', or not being able to 'see the children, if they are safe or not' (mother in F6). Accordingly, visual connectedness between the backyard and the living room was visualised by the mother in F4: 'So, it would be so lovely if we were on the ground floor and we had

some doors that open to, you know, an outdoor space. But now I would love these two windows [living room windows] to go down to the ground.'

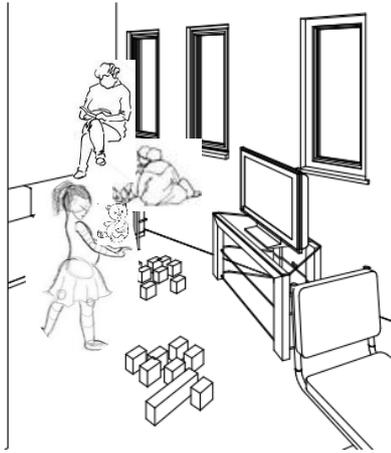


Figure 6.6 Sketch of the children playing in the living room. Children in F4 playing in the living room after school. (Source: the author – inspired from the participants' narratives).

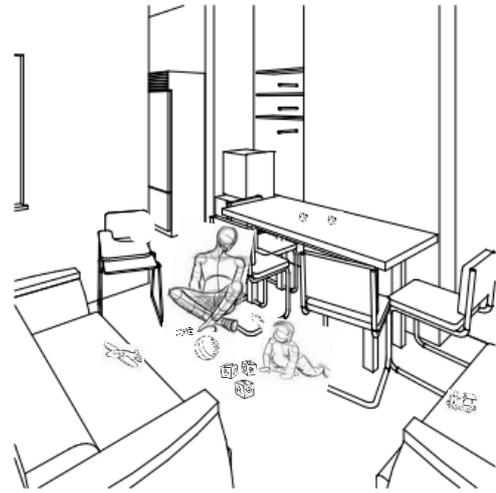


Figure 6.7 Sketch of the father in F4 playing with his son in the evening. (Source: the author – inspired from the participants' narratives).

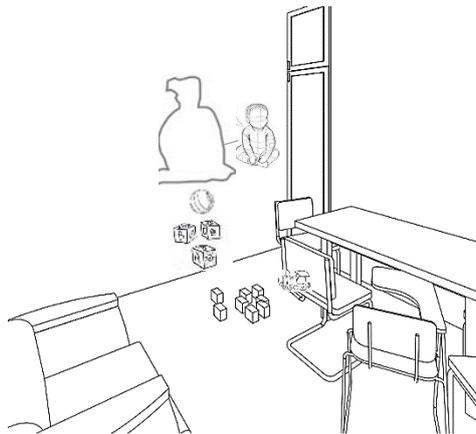


Figure 6.7 Sketch of the mother in F2 playing with her son in the evening. (Source: the author – inspired from the participants' narratives).

### **A space for children**

The children's play space is shaped according to the degree of freedom given to them by their parents. The participants with older children allow them to 'play in all rooms' (father in F6) or even 'hide in all the cupboards' (mother in F4) while playing. However, the spatiality of children's free play indicated a spatial field that was different to the family gathering space in its boundaries and qualities.

In contrast to the cosiness of the adults' space, children's active play involved them contesting the boundedness of the Tyneside flats to extend the spatial field of their playtime (see Figure 6.9<sup>10</sup>). The children's movement within the corridors, stairs and multiple rooms during active play extended the boundaries of the living room and created a fluidity between the different spaces used by the children. Furthermore, the freedom to play shaped the qualities of the play space through object–space and the children's body–space relationships that would support safe movement and the freedom to use objects in the space. Accordingly, a need for spaciousness of the play space was evident even during less active play, such as playing with building blocks and puzzle-solving, to accommodate many toys and allow ease of movement. Therefore, the space in the middle of the living room appeared to provide an opportunity to play on the floor in all the participants' flats (see Figures 6.10 and 6.11).



*Figure 6.10 Traces of children's play time in the corridor in F1's flat. (Photo taken by the mother).*



*Figure 6.10 Toys spread out on the living room floor in F2's flat. (Photo taken by the author).*

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<sup>10</sup> Images included in the findings are drawn by the author inspired by the narrative and home tour carried out with each participant. The images combined CAD drawings (Revit) and manual sketches.

The need for an alternative play space, in addition to the living room, was shown in the possibilities found to extend opportunities for children's active play in a large space outside the boundaries of the living room by using the 'big room', the backyard and the back alley. When these opportunities were not possible, parents, such as the mother in F3, relied on spatial appropriations to create a 'bigger' space in her girls' bedroom. This attitude was apparent through her arrangement of furniture and concern about order and tidiness in the room for allowing a space in the middle for the girls' play (see Figure 6.12 and 6.13).



*Figure 6.11 Traces of play on the front room floor in F1's flat. (Photo taken by the mother).*



*Figure 6.12 Toys spread out on the living room floor in F2's flat. (Photo taken by the author).*



*Figure 6.11 Playing on the living room floor in F1's flat. (Photo taken by the mother).*

During the search for an alternative play space, the perception of spaciousness was explained through the size of objects that could be accommodated in a space, such as the reference to the size of the backyard being an opportunity for younger children to play with 'big toys', such as scooters and bikes, as the mother in F2

described. Additionally, parents and children assessed the spaciousness their flats according to the ease of movement in a room.

The adults' conception of the manifestations of distinction between the children's play space and the living room was dependent to the degree of freedom they provide for their children. Accordingly, playing out of sight of the parents gave the children a feeling of liberation from the constraints experienced in the spaces shared with adults. This was expressed as 'we can make mess' (daughter in F1) and 'take the lease to jump' (mother in F1) when describing play away from adults at the front room. Similarly, the mother in F2 described the front room as the children's 'paradise', with opportunities for unstructured play and the children's choice of decoration. The segregated spaces of the Tyneside flats magnified these distinctions through the visual boundaries between the front and the back of the Victorian dwelling. Instead of the separation between the public and the private spheres, the visual boundaries separated the aesthetic order of the family space and the space for unstructured free play.

The encouragement of children's play demonstrates a new dimension of the children's space in a home-centred lifestyle. In accordance with the inconsistency in manifestations of the play space in the literature (see Chapter 3.5.2), a number of different play spaces were described independently, from the children's private spaces to depict the shared indoor and outdoor spaces of the dwelling used for children's play. Additionally, various forms of boundaries could be drawn from the participants' narratives that implied purposes ranging from maintaining social connectedness while keeping spatial distinction, to controlling visual exposure within the extended shared space. However, in conclusion, it can be inferred from the outlined accounts that the extended time spent by the children inside the family

sphere was accompanied by their dominance over the use of the shared spaces, and this had implications on the spatiality of shared family time.

### **6.3 Connectedness between the kitchen and the living room**

#### **6.3.1 Overview**

The participants' described several times of the day when adults performed housework while other members of the household are at home. The centre of family practices moved from the living room to the kitchen due to the importance of housework duties, that required their presence in the kitchen such as cooking, washing dishes and laundry, and the interdependence between family members at these times. However, the struggles to accommodate the participants' use of the Victorian family kitchen, that was designed to accommodate women's housework in separation from the family, revealed the impact of shared familial roles and the need for closeness to children, and the spatial qualities of the socialised kitchen.

#### **6.3.2 The centrality of the kitchen**

The centrality of the kitchen is amplified due to the adults' commitment to multiple housework tasks. Such centrality is partially related to accommodating many housework practices in the kitchen, including food preparation and cooking, washing dishes and laundry. This centrality implied the need for practicality in the use of the space. The narratives revealed a sense of rushing while getting 'everything ready' (mother in f3) including the preparation of a 'fast' and 'simple' breakfast (mother in F2) during busy mornings. Practicality was also related to a sense of obligation, as they 'have to cook' (mother in F2) and 'tasks need to be done' (mother in F1). Furthermore, the significance of the family gathering for the evening meal was demonstrated by the parents' care when cooking dinner.

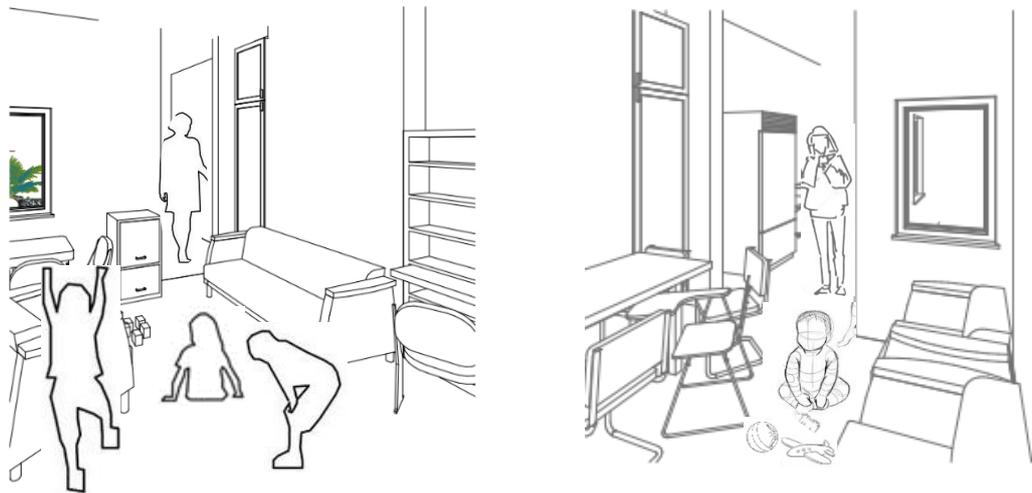
Complexity of cooking procedures is inferred when the mother in F1 described her experience of 'ruining dinner' if she talked on the phone while cooking. Such obligation was rendered with sentiments related to 'motherhood' when describing cooking dinner as a pleasant experience by the mothers in F2 and F3. Despite describing herself as 'not good at cooking', the mother in F2 related her 'happiness' while cooking to her enjoyment of motherhood when she does 'anything good for' her son.

Nonetheless, the adults' experiences of limitations in their movements conflicted with their concerns about maintaining connectedness with their children (as reported in Section 6.2.4). Considering the boundedness and limitations of the kitchen that mean it can accommodate only one person's activities, questions can be asked about how the cook communicated with other members of the family.

### **6.3.3 The need for social connectedness in the kitchen**

the demands of housework and childcare in the participants' lives required multitasking and connectedness between the kitchen and the living room. This connection appeared through the repetition of the temporal reference 'while' used to describe synchronised activities taking place outside the kitchen (see Figure 6.14). For example, the father in F2 and the mothers in F3 and F4 found in patterns of housework while being alone an opportunity to enjoy their free time by watching the TV or resting 'while' managing some duties. For example, the use of the living room while engaging in housework appeared through description of the morning routine of the father in F2: 'will go to the kitchen to do some laundry, and while waiting for the laundry [to be] done, he would go back to the living room again, maybe sit on the sofa.' Additionally, patterns of multitasking were indicated as the need for supervising children while the parents do housework and the children play

or do their homework', as expressed by mother in F1: 'I can keep sort of like popping over and seeing... know [that] you need to keep him on track.' The mother in F2 described a similar form of social communication: 'but I'll check him from time to time... Are you okay? Or things like that.' This pattern of multitasking amplifies the need for spatial continuity between cooking and other social activities. However, the need to control children's access to the kitchen informs spatial restrictions associated with the connection between the kitchen and the living room.



*Figure 6.14 Sketches of the Parents supervising children from the kitchen during their engagement in cooking. F1 (left), F2 (right). (Source: the author).*

Owing to the small size of the kitchen in these flats, an overlap between the utilitarian nature of housework and leisure in the living room was indicated in most of the participants narratives. It can be proposed from the proceeding accounts that, while this overlap disturbed the aesthetics of the living room, it also rendered the features of the kitchen with an atmosphere of a socialising space. In F3 and F4, the mothers' descriptions of their morning routines included activities taking place in the living room, such as adults ironing clothes, 'little ones' getting dressed, eating breakfast, listening to the radio and watching television. They also

described the flow of movements of family members during this time to include movement between the bathroom and the living room for getting ready. The concurrent uses of the living room rendered the 'getting ready' routine with social dimensions, such as communication through 'talk' and 'play', and also virtual social communication with distant members of the family. Additionally, being in the living room facilitated sharing media consumption while getting ready.

The distribution of familial duties between the adults in the participating families informed the socialised nature of the kitchen. This was partially illuminated through F1's, F5's and F6's dissatisfaction with the size of their kitchen that caused difficulty in allowing more than one user within the space. As the father in F6 explained, 'working there [referring to the kitchen while his wife is cooking], I cannot [be] comfortable. I cannot use the space.' Furthermore, the cooking space did not provide enough space for other housework duties, such as managing laundry. Accordingly, this limitation caused further disorder in the shared spaces of the flat due to the diffusion of housework-related objects, such as laundry and cleaning equipment (see Figure 6.15).

It can be assumed that, despite achieving connectedness through the direct access between the kitchen and the living room in the participants' flats, the socialised space required to support the adults' engagement in housework was not seen as equivalent to the living room. This distinction was inferred from the sense of disorder arising from the accommodation of housework and childcare-related practices in the living room. The presence of objects related to both 'getting ready time', such as clothes and school equipment, and laundry in the living room was perceived as a conflict between the aesthetics of the living room and the utilitarian nature of childcare and housework (see Figure 6.15). Accordingly, a sense of disorder was associated with negative feelings of 'stress', 'anger' and 'low

mood'. The sense of disorder was further clarified through the tidying up routine common to the participants who could return to their flats after nursery drop-off, as the father in F2 and mothers in F3, F4 and F6 did. As the mother in F4 explained,



*Figure 6.15 A photo showing the overlap of objects on the dining table in F1's flat. (Photo taken by the mother).*

'And then, and then I'll just come and tidy up after that, really quickly to tidy up.' Accordingly, due to experiences of the conflicting uses of the living room, the need for distinction between the utilitarian nature of the kitchen and the aesthetics of the living room formed a prominent aspect of the participants' experiences of the shared space.

To conclude, the depiction of the socialised kitchen was built upon the familial roles played in the participating families' domesticity. In such light, the pattern of the adults' engagement in housework within the participating families resulted in the need to extend the space of the kitchen to allow more than one person to use it at the same time. However, it is noticeable that the participants' presence appeared in the form of fulfilment of duties where none of the participants – apart from the mother in F3, who cooked as a hobby and for work – raised any personal dimensions related to women's attachment to the kitchen, as discussed in Chapman (2002c), or personal dimensions, such as representations of personal memories and self-expression as indicated in each of Meah and Jackson (2016)

and Meah (2016b). Further, connectedness between the kitchen and the living room did not provide a suitable solution for the necessary communication with children while parents were busy in the kitchen. In fact, the sense of disorder due to the overlap of objects related to housework and childcare suggested a need to control of the spatial flow between the kitchen and the living space.

## **6.4 Detached individually used spaces**

### **6.4.1 Adults' personal spheres inside the dwelling**

#### ***Detachment from others***

During alone time, most of the participants engaged in activities that implied a sense of individuality while being separated from others. In some cases, these activities were related to personal interests through their engagement in work, study or hobbies. The participants associated this time with a sense of achievement by acknowledging that the outcomes of their activities formed a salient quality of this time. The participants' feelings towards this time were grounded in the sense of appreciation of the value of individual productivity. This was evident through the adults in F1 referring to this time of the day as 'the golden time'. Additionally, the sense of accomplishment was expressed as, 'my best writing happens really early in the morning' (mother in F1), 'I feel like I did it!' (mother in F2), and the sense of pride was expressed by the mother in F3 when her girls tell her 'mom, you are the best cook' which makes the mother feel 'really happy'. However, engagement in such activities required concentration and dedication of time, which provided the motivation for detachment from others.

In other cases, detachment from others enabled the participants to experience a sense of individuality through their freedom of choosing what to do (see Figures 6.16 and 6.17). Activities during this free time implied a sense of emotional release

and rejuvenation; for example, during a casual chat over the phone with friends, while writing self-reflections, or meditating. This need for wellness also included practices related to self-care, such as yoga (mothers in F2 and F4), having warm baths (the mother in F1) as self-reward after engagement in work or study.

Nonetheless, it can be assumed from the variety of individual activities that the centrality of the participants' family lives is countered by the need for freedom to regulate the state of connectedness with others. It can also be assumed that this extended amount of time spent in the dwelling brought new forms of integration between individuals' family lives and their public lives, such as in work and virtual connectedness via external social networks.



Figure 6.16 The phone in F1's kitchen. (Photo taken by the participant).



Figure 6.17 Yoga mat and study space in F4's attic room. (Photo taken by the participant).

### ***Temporal boundaries for quietness***

Patterns of time scheduling for accommodating alone time reflected the need for quietness to enable the participants to engage in their activities (see Figures 6.18, 6.19 and 6.20). This appeared in the repetition of terms that link the time for creativity with the state of being alone, such as, '*in the morning*' (after school drop-offs) (the mother in F1) and '*40 minutes every morning*' (the mother in f2), and '*late is alone time*' (mother in F1 describing the father's routine) and '*after [the] baby sleeps*' (father in F5). The state of detachment was associated with the quietness

experienced during these times. For example, the father in F1 explained his use of headphones to ensure quietness during his work late at night, and the father in F5 described how he enjoyed his alone time in the living room during his child's bedtime. Similarly, the mother in F3 related her choice of working on her cookery business very late at night to being able to concentrate while the others were sleeping. However, despite the segregation between spaces in the Tyneside flats, it is interesting to find this consistency in prioritising temporal boundaries for achieving detachment from others. Nonetheless, in order to reveal further details about the order of space in the dwelling, it was necessary to distinguish between the use of time for time scheduling the use of space, or as a boundary per se.



Figure 6.18 A sketch of the alone time of the mother in F2's living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author).



Figure 6.19 A sketch of the alone time of the father in F5's living room. (Source: The author).

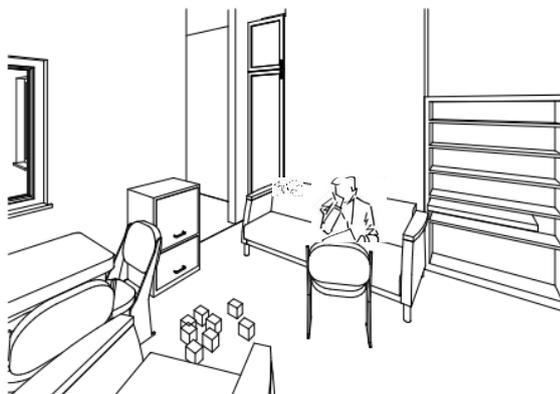


Figure 6.20 A sketch of the alone time of the father in F1's living room. (Source: The author).

### ***Spatial attributes of alone time***

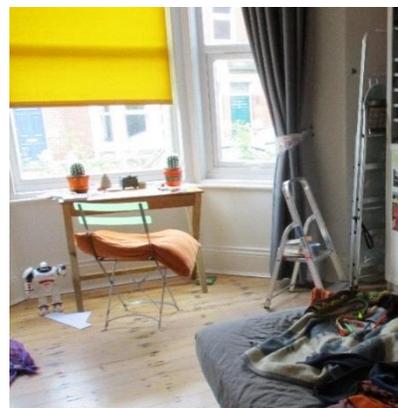
The spatial qualities associated with alone time were constructed through the participants' reflections on experiential dimensions in relationship to their body–space experiences. In such light, cosiness appeared as a prominent spatial quality that was commonly expressed by the participants in a way that enfolded a sense of physical comfort and boundedness of space. Features supporting physical comfort, such as comfortable furniture, thermal comfort and ease of access to food (see Section 6.2.4) shaped the understanding of personal space. Accordingly, such need for physical comfort heightened the role of furniture such as 'the bed' or 'the sofa' in accommodating solitary activities in different rooms in the flat (see Figure 6.21). In this sense, participants, such as the mother in F2 and the father in F5, specified their enjoyment of sensual qualities like warmth in their living room during their individual free time. Likewise, participants acknowledged the influence of soft light in the early morning, as described by the mother in F2, or from indirect lighting, as described by the mother in F1, on their sense of cosiness during their individual time. Cosiness was also expressed in the form of the sense of containment and boundedness owing to the small size of the space in the reflections of most of the participants on their alone relaxed time. In the narratives, descriptions of the sense of the size of the space, such as 'tiny', 'boundedness', and 'cosy' (as in the sense of small) were commonly used by participants to describe their perception of their personal space through their sense of the body–space and object–space relationships.

Choices of spaces where the participants, particularly the mothers, spent their alone time informed the need for mood conditioning. This need appeared through the mothers' preferences for brightness, which they expressed using terms such

as 'mood lifting', 'cheerful' and 'enjoy'. On the temporal level, the mothers explained their scheduling of their alone time for when they could enjoy daylight, as expressed through terms such as 'morning', the 'June light' and a 'sunny day'. For that reason, the mother in F2 enjoyed her alone time early in the morning at the armchair near the window in the living room (see Figure 6.21). Furthermore, the sense of pleasantness was also associated with avoiding isolation while being alone. As clearly expressed by the mother in F1, visual connectedness with the outside was one of her reasons for situating her study space at the front window (see Figure 6.22). These findings suggest the independence of alone time from fixed spatial associations and the spatiality of this time of the participants' days contributes to the understanding of the flows of spatial processes taking place in the participants' dwellings.



*Figure 6.21 The armchair where the mother spends her alone time in the morning near the window and radiator in F2's living room. (Photo taken by the participants).*



*Figure 6.22 The mother's workspace overlooking the main street from the front window at the bedroom.*

### ***Ownership of space***

The need for ownership of space that accompanied the sense of individuality during the participants' alone time invites an enquiry about the constructions of the

alternative social space, as raised in the literature review (see Section 3.3). In this case, the distinction between personal and shared spaces denoted implications for the spatial structure of the dwelling. The need for a dedicated space for personal use appeared through expressions like 'my own space' (mother in F2), or 'my sofa' (the father in F5). Such sense of ownership was constructed through the need for space for display and storage of personal objects related to personal practices. In the Tyneside flats, the small size of the living room and bedroom spaces – with the exception of the large front room – caused spatial conflict due to restrictions in dedicating a space for personal use. Accordingly, negotiations about creating spaces dedicated to alone time within shared spaces accentuated the significance of material representations of the ownership of space. For example, the father in F5 signified his ownership of the sofa where he worked by leaving his personal objects, such as his bag, laptop, books, papers and clothes on 'his sofa'. Similarly, this was seen in the difficulty the mother in F1 found in using the desk for sewing due to the objects piled on the desk that were not related to her hobby (see Figure 6.23). Yet, and despite demarcating their spaces, a temporal boundary was still needed, and the participants were not able to use their micro-geographic entities (Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009; Anderson and Jones, 2009) without being alone in the space.

It was noticeable that not all participants needed a space for themselves in their flats. In fact, rather than relying on spatial segregation for separating alone and shared times, spaces associated with alone time were constructed according to the spatial conditions that would support the participants' performed activities. The absence of associations between the dedicated personal space and the need for physical boundaries in such situations indicated the persistence of the enquiry about the nature of the spatial relationship between the shared and personal spaces.



*Figure 6.23 Mother's sewing machine on the desk with other piled up objects in F1's living room. (Photo taken by the mother).*

## **6.4.2 Children's personal spheres**

### **Overview**

Most of the participating families acknowledged specific features of the spatiality of their children's personal spheres. It was seen in the literature that the general understanding of the children's personal sphere corresponds to his or her bedroom (see Chapter 3 Section child's space). However, rather than the children having only their own rooms, the participants' narratives offered the opportunity to

consider alternative constructions made through their experiences of their flats. Accordingly, this section reveals distinctions between the spaces for play and alone times. The findings also indicate attributes of the children's ownership of space.

The spatiality outlined in this section differed from distinctions between children's and adult's uses of the shared space (see Section 6.2.4) due to the focus in this section on identifying the impact of children as a social unit on the spatiality of the participants' domesticity. It is worth noting here that reflections expressed by children in F1 and F6 did not contradict their parents' conceptions, though, to some extent, they provided more details about the constructions of the children's spaces in the participants' lives.

### ***Children's cosy space for alone time***

The need for a cosy space away from others was associated with the children's engagement in sedentary solitary activities, such as reading or drawing. It was seen that children needed detachment from others to avoid noise while concentrating on their activities. However, further spatial qualities were revealed when considering the link between the feelings of 'solitude' and 'refuge', and the senses of comfort and relaxation expressed during this time. This link was apparent in the relaxed sense of time when the children stay 'forever' (the mother in F4) while doing activities alone. The image of a cosy personal space was further articulated through physical comfort and a sense of confinement with the self while engaging in these activities within the comfort and defined space of their beds. This image resembles descriptions of children's spaces in children's environment literature, such as Day (2007), who highlighted children's needs for hiding spaces and for spaces of small scale, such as dens. This image of a cosy personal space

was portrayed in the following extract, in which the daughter in F1 expressed her desire for informal food consumption while relaxing in bed, which can be compared with adults' enjoyment of food consumption during their relaxation time described in Section 62.4.

*Father asking daughter: Would you like to add something else, any dreams for our apartment?*

*Daughter: A bed... Like... Like when you press the button it just like lifts an arm up with like a burrito inside it, so you can just take it and eat it.*

*Mother: Burrito bed!*

*Me: Do you like to be near food when you play?*

*Daughter: Yeah, especially sushi! Then she added: You can refill the bed with, like, burritos!*

### **Children's ownership of space**

The limitation of space in the Tyneside flats amplified the parents desire to support their children's sense of ownership of space. This was expressed by the father in F5 as: 'You just want to make him ... feel, you know, it's for him. So, it's not for us.' In such light, the lack of a room for each child, which motivated F1, F3 and to want to move from their flats, highlighted the significance of dedicating a room for a child's use in the participants' lives. According to experiences of this restriction, the following conceptions were based on the participants' explanations of their thoughts and visions of their children's owned spaces.

Representations of the children's ownership of space was perceived at the spatial and the material levels. Spatially, the boundedness of a space – either as a room or a corner in a shared space (see Chapter 6) – was a tool for emphasising the child's ownership of the space, as the father in F5 expressed: 'a separate room for him'. As with the spatiality of the children's use of the shared space (see Section

6.2.4), the appreciation of children's freedom was associated with the perception of spaciousness as a spatial quality that would allow children's active play and their free use of objects. The participants also referred to the child's space as the space dedicated to their own objects (see Figure 6.21). Accordingly, storage formed a significant component of the children's owned spaces due to the number of toys and equipment, as well as the parents' interest in facilitating the children's play.

On the aesthetic level, the representation of childhood formed a common conception for most of the participants. This included representations of themes and colours commonly related to childhood for decorating the children spaces, as F2 described: 'maybe some figures or his favourite stories or things like that'. This attitude also implied the intention to break from the normality of adults' spaces, which F5 expressed as a 'fancy' space (see Figure 6.24).



*Figure 6.24 Bright colours and fancy decoration of the daughter's bedroom in F4's flat. (Photo taken by the mother).*

The findings showed that separation from others in a segregated room did not fully satisfy the children's needs for privacy. Rather, the different experiential modes and patterns of use of space expressed in the narratives led to a variation in the spatial qualities of the children's private spaces. It was the small size of their

bedroom together with the comfort they found on their bed that provided them with the cosy space for their alone time. Furthermore, the spaciousness of the front room provided freedom while playing, and included furniture and equipment for solitary activities. However, the repeated expressions about the significance of the children's ownership of their spaces informed the association between the children's personal objects and the need for space that is dedicated to their use.

The experiences of children's domestic lives in the Tyneside flats indicated that having their own room per se did necessarily not fulfil the children's need for their own space. Accordingly, the limitation of the children's bedroom size amplified the children's socio-spatial practices outside their rooms. The children's use of the living room was partially related to the need for maintain social connectedness between the children and parents and in other situations this pattern of use of space was related to the spatial restrictions imposed by the size of the bedrooms (see Section 6.2.4). However, the need to place personal objects and participate in activities, such as playing with friends, in a dedicated personal space explained the need for the embodiment of the child's autonomy in the family through their ownership of space. Nonetheless, the participants' experiences did not include links between sleep and ownership of space, which opens the way to questioning the possibility of accommodating the child's personal sphere in spaces other than the bedroom.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter depicts spatial fields<sup>11</sup> that developed according to social aspects of the participants' home lives. Accordingly, the findings revealed the impact of the parenting styles and familial roles taken by the adults on a variety of shared and

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<sup>11</sup> Drawing on Lefebvre (1991), spatial fields represent abstract fields of social practices depicted through objects and behavior (see Sections 1.4.3 and 4.2).

personal practices. In such light, unfolding the spatiality of participants' family lives informed the symbolic and experiential significance of the gathering space. However, informed by the conflicts experienced in the use of the living room, the findings outlined spatial distinctions accompanying different social practices. Further, the revealed variation of modes of social connectedness, particularly between parents and children, during shared activities informed the complexity in the depicted spatial fields.

The descriptions of the time spent by members of the participating families in the dwellings included different personal practices that varied in their forms of social connectedness and needs for spatial distinction. In such light, instead of the polarity between the personal and family times spent in the dwelling, as seen in Hunt (1989) and Munro and Madigan (1993), the spatial manifestation of the duality included behavioural and temporal boundaries, as depicted by Alexander et al. (1977), of the forms of social interaction in family life.

The temporalities of the narrated events informed social and experiential aspects shaping the spatial relations of coexisting and time-scheduled events. Accordingly, the family space implied distinctions between the utilitarian nature and aesthetic pleasantness of a space. Also, the findings outlined that the need for personal space did not represent a necessity for accommodating alone time. Instead, the spatiality of alone time indicated that the dedication of space for personal use was dependent on the need for ownership of space, and that need appeared equally among members of the family regardless of their age and gender.



Chapter 7

**Reading the Dwelling Through the Lived Space**

## Chapter 7: Reading the Contemporary Dwelling Through the Lived Space

### 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained abstract spatial fields by considering contemporary domesticity in Tyneside flats. The depictions were accompanied by enquiries about the spatial relationships and the architectural features that supported their social constructions. In contrast, this chapter reports the spatial structures through the participants' reconstructions of their flats through their physical models. This does not aim to propose a generalised dwelling model. Instead, it addresses the third research question: *what do negotiations with architectural space reveal about the contemporary dwelling model?* In this chapter, the participants' reconstructions of their flats are related to gaps in the existing knowledge about the contemporary family dwelling model (see Chapter 3).

The findings reported in this chapter result from reading the spatial structure of the physical models in parallel to both the intentions and structural relationships expressed through the participants' priority lists, and the spatial fields depicted in Chapter 6. Furthermore, gaps identified in the literature review were also revisited and guided the process of interpretation of the constructed qualities. The interpretation of the participants' reconstructions of their dwellings was guided by two analytical questions. First, what is the spatial structure that manifestations of the contemporary home-centredness? Second, what does the revealed spatial structure tell us about the change from the mid-twentieth century to the contemporary model?

It is of relevance to note in this introduction that the structural features were revealed through the physical models relied on the encounters between the body and space as described in the participants descriptions of how they imagined the

way they would use and experience their proposed dwellings. The reported features of the physical models included the spatial conditions created by the architectural features as well as the spatial relations created by the physical models. It is also worth noting that, as the flat of F4 had already been refurbished into an open plan model (see chapter 5), the interpretation of the constructed model of this flat was based on the narrative of the mother in F4.

## **7.2 A place to sit together**

The manifestation of a comfortable space for gathering represents one of the common spatial conditions created by the participants through their models. According to the findings in Chapter 6, this space was consistently associated with the senses of freedom, relaxation and intimacy in the family sphere. Socially, intimacy was associated with the closeness of social relationships, such as a couple's relaxation time, playing with children and gathering with close friends. Furthermore, such relationships also hinted at an informality of behaviour in terms of the use of space and movement. This was manifested in using the sitting space for entertainment and informal food consumption. Participants commonly associated freedom from duties and restrictions with watching movies, or their enjoyment of having snacks or eating a meal on the living room sofa (see Chapter 6). This relaxed mood was complemented by descriptions of spatial cosiness. Correspondingly, the cosiness of the sitting space was acknowledged through the physical comfort of the furniture – commonly the sofa and soft cushions – thermal comfort and the spaciousness that would provide a comfortable body–space experience while sitting and moving.

It was striking to observe that some of the participating families – except for F4 and F6 – did not have a television in their reconstructed sitting space, despite including representations of other objects and decorative features. Drawing on

Rose (2016) in interpreting the significance of meanings within visually represented data (see Chapter 4), the degraded significance of the television in the family space could be inferred. This suggestion was also supported by indications from some of the families of prioritising social communication over media consumption while together. For example, the father in F5 explicitly stated that he did not want to have a television in the socialisation space. However, the participants' narratives also included similar explanations related to controlling screen time, as expressed in F1.

Spatially, the models included manifestations of aspects of relaxation through three features. First, the participants required easy access to food. Particularly, the mother in F2 explained the proximity of the kitchen as the reason behind her decision to include the place for relaxation in the open-plan shared space. Similarly, the father in F5 included the dinner table in the living room while reconstructing his flat to allow the ease and informality of food consumption. Second, the need for quietness and keeping order in the sitting space (see Chapter 6) was apparent through the consistency of distinguishing between the children's play space and the sitting space in the models. For some participants such as in F5, who had a baby, and each of F3 and F6, who have primary school aged children the children's space was associated with the children's rooms or a separate playroom. However, F1 and F2 manifested this separation by distinguishing between spaces within their open-plan living space (see Section 7.2.1). Finally, the participants emphasised the cosiness of the sitting space through their decisions about architectural and material features. A connection between cosiness and the feel of containment was shown in the boundedness of the sitting space in the models. In F3, the mother explained the need for cosiness while maintaining the spaciousness of the shared space as the reason behind her use of an arch to separate the dining and sitting spaces. In a similar manner, while

listing his priorities, the father in F5 explained his vision of the family space as a space that is 'not too big' in order to allow comfort while keeping the sense of closeness. From this perspective, the father in F5 maintained the boundedness of his sitting room by relying on the segregated spatial structure of his Tyneside flat. Besides physical features, F2 relied on sensual qualities, such as dimmed lighting, to create cosiness in the 'joined space' for her and her husband within her open-plan shared space.

The place to sit together forms a central space in the family dwelling that is spatially distinguished from other shared spaces for its uses and aesthetics. However, variations in the participants' conceptions of its physical boundaries were noticeable through the participants' references to its unbounded form as part of an open-plan space – the 'living space' – or as a separate bounded space – the 'living room', 'sitting room' or 'lounge'. However, in all cases, the sitting space, as explained in the following findings, was interrelated with other spaces and was characterised by accessibility to the kitchen and garden. Therefore, owing to the similarity of these spatial relations, and for ease of discussion, the term living space will be used to refer to the 'sitting place' in both situations for its independence from the architectural form.

### **7.2.1 A cosy corner in the shared space**

The complexity of the spatial structure of the family space was reinforced through an observable pattern of connection between main and complementary spaces that the participants referred to as corners. Symbolic and aesthetic means of differentiation between spaces were mentioned during the interviews and the conversation during priority listing and model making. The mother in F1 explained that having a space attached to the living space provided an opportunity to spend time alone while avoiding isolation in a segregated space. Even when others were around, the mother expected this space to enable engagement in hobbies as she

could keep her equipment separate from objects related to the shared space. The mother in F2 added that the elimination of physical partition between this space and the living space would support ease of movement while playing or practising yoga.

From a similar perspective, the mother in F3 anticipated a dining 'corner' adjoined to the living 'room' to be an attribute of spaciousness that would support the sense of comfort in the living space. At the outset, knowing of her use of the dining table for her cookery classes together with her preference of separating between her public and family life, I was confused when the participant decided to remove the partition between the dining and living spaces. During a conversation with my supervisor about this contradiction, two aspects clarified the mother's acknowledgement of this spatial continuity as a matter of comfort in the family shared space. First, the mother's reference to family dining in a separate space as an aspect of spaciousness by using an Arabic expression that describes the enjoyment of relief from spatial constraints: 'Why tighten ourselves up, if God is providing ease for us!'. This comment was expressed when extending her flat by adding a construction in the back yard during model making. Further, the mother's explanation of her enjoyment of relaxation, comfort and freedom in the living room, through her narrative, reinforced the interpretation of joining the dining corner to the living room as the mother's perception of spaciousness as a sort of liberation from spatial constraints.

Complementary spaces were commonly portrayed as cosy, as expressed by the participants as a 'small corner' or an 'extra cosy space'. This spatial quality was constructed by the participants on the spatial and material levels. Spatially, cosiness was related to the sense of containment in space that the participants manifested through the boundedness of these corners (see Figure7.1). The sense

of containment also appeared to be related to each of the body–space and object–space relations that appeared through the relative perception of the 'small' size of the cosy corners. In fact, in the case of F3, the dining corner that the mother created in the model was of a similar size to the living room. However, her sense of the small size of this corner was related to the size of the dining table within the boundaries of the dedicated space (see Figure 7.1). Additionally, the sense of cosiness was further articulated during model making with the visual and tactile qualities of objects. In most cases, cosiness was associated with the softness of colour and texture of objects in the space.

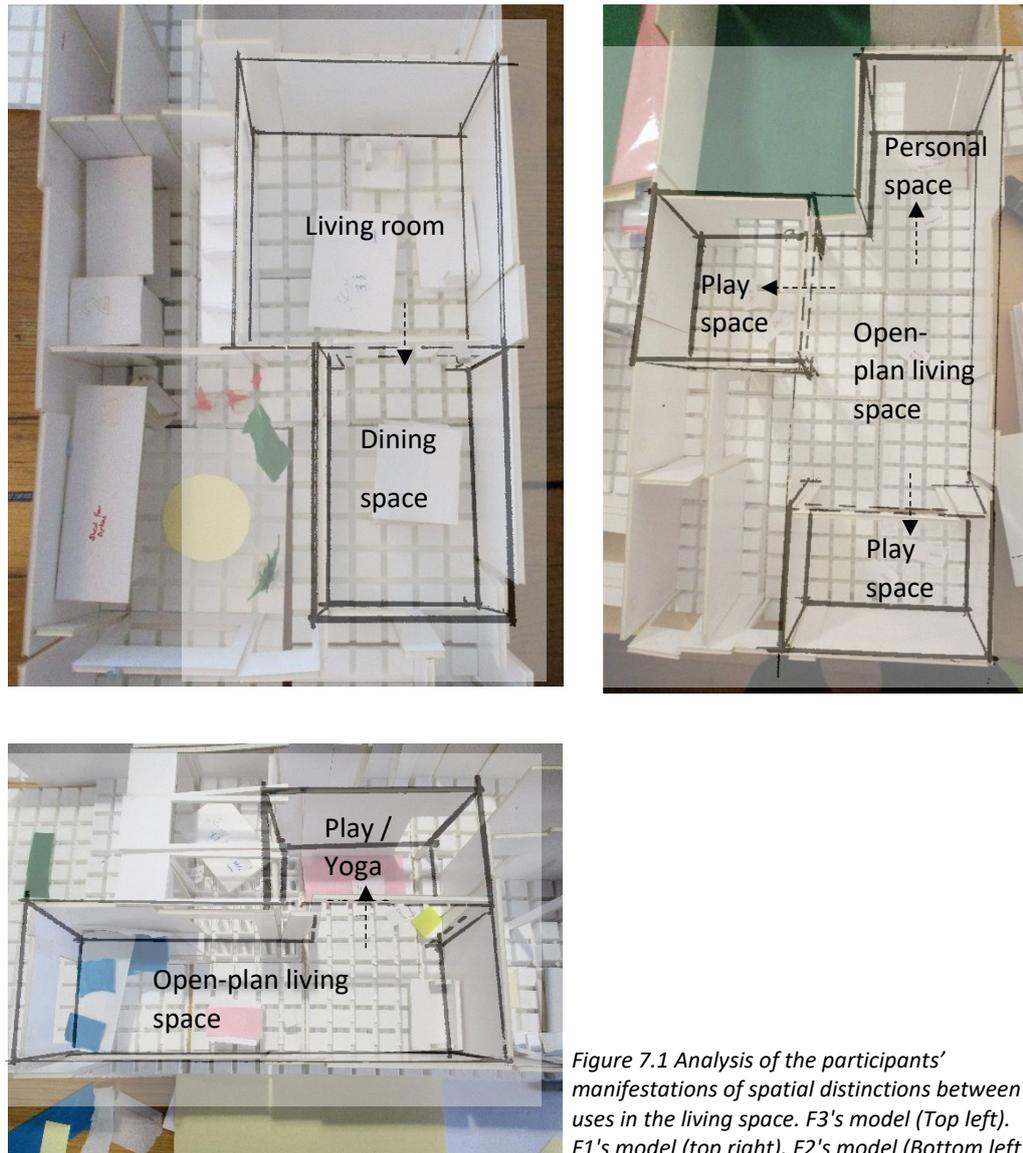


Figure 7.1 Analysis of the participants' manifestations of spatial distinctions between uses in the living space. F3's model (Top left). F1's model (top right). F2's model (Bottom left).

According to the outlined spatial structure, a move away from the one shared space model (see Chapter 3) might be suggested. However, in this case, the construction of the alternative social space was not related to resolving the tension between individuality and togetherness per se (see Chapter 3). Rather, the conception of the alternative social space also included experiential dimensions that were revealed through the perceived opportunity to support freedom and comfort by integrating these corners within the living spaces.

### **7.2.2 Connectedness between sitting and play spaces**

Making decisions during model making showed that participants wanted to enable social connectedness with their children while being in the sitting space. However, opportunities for social connections were perceived by the participants' in various forms. In some cases, participants ensured spatial continuity between the living and play spaces, as seen in F1 and F2. Nonetheless, while creating this flow, participants from both families showed awareness of creating geometry and boundedness of space to distinguish between the living space and complementary play spaces. In F1, this complementary space was created by replacing the wall separating the living space and the bedrooms with foldable doors that could be opened during play. In F2, the participant created a corner with an open arch to emphasise the distinction between the spaces. Besides allowing social connectedness, these decisions were explained as a means for extending opportunities for play and free movement within the spaces of the flat.

Ease of accessibility between the play and living spaces was perceived as another form of supporting connectedness between the adults and children. Facilitated by the proximity between rooms in the Tyneside flat, families F3 and F5 found the ease of access between the living room and the bedrooms to be an opportunity for allowing social connectedness (see Figure 7.2). At the same time, both families found the segregated rooms to be an opportunity to support their children's autonomy. From a similar point of view, despite the interest in supporting the children's autonomy by accommodating play in the children's bedroom on the first floor of the constructed model, the parents in F6 enabled such connectedness by creating direct access between the living space and the backyard.

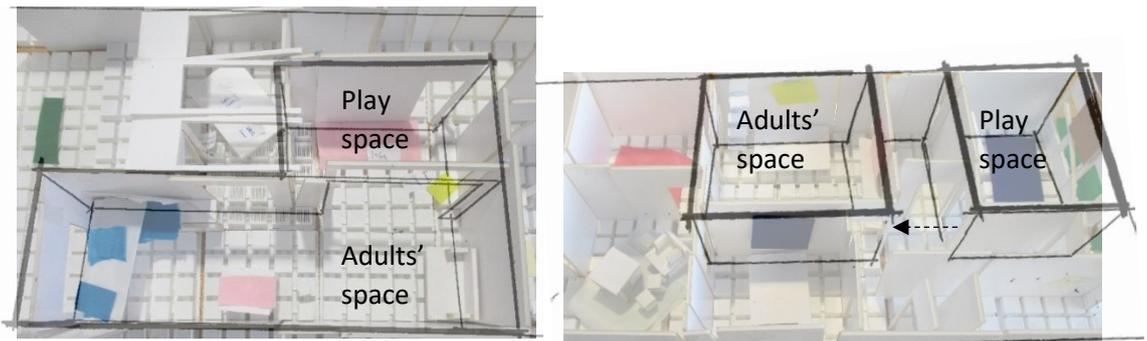


Figure 7.2 The analysis of the flow between adults' and children's spaces (left). Direct accesses between adults' and child's spaces (right). (Source: The author).

### 7.2.3 Connectedness with the cooking space

Decisions about the relationship between the kitchen and the living space were shaped by social, practical and aesthetic considerations. The way in which the flow of movement was enabled between the spaces was manifested in the models in different forms. For F1, the flow created through an open-plan structure provided a sense of spaciousness and extended opportunities for social connectedness between the cook and other members of the family. Similarly, the same spatial structure was seen by the mother in F2 as an opportunity for creating a sense of informality and encouraging guests to move freely. In contrast, in cases with the dining table in the living room, direct access between the kitchen and the dining space was explained by the participants in F5 and F6 as an opportunity for serving food. Interestingly, the desire for connectedness between the kitchen and the living space was apparent in the models constructed by both families. Identical manifestations of such connectedness appeared when a partition with openings was placed between the living space and the kitchen to limit visibility while maintaining the sense of spatial continuity between different spaces used during family time (see Figures 7.3).

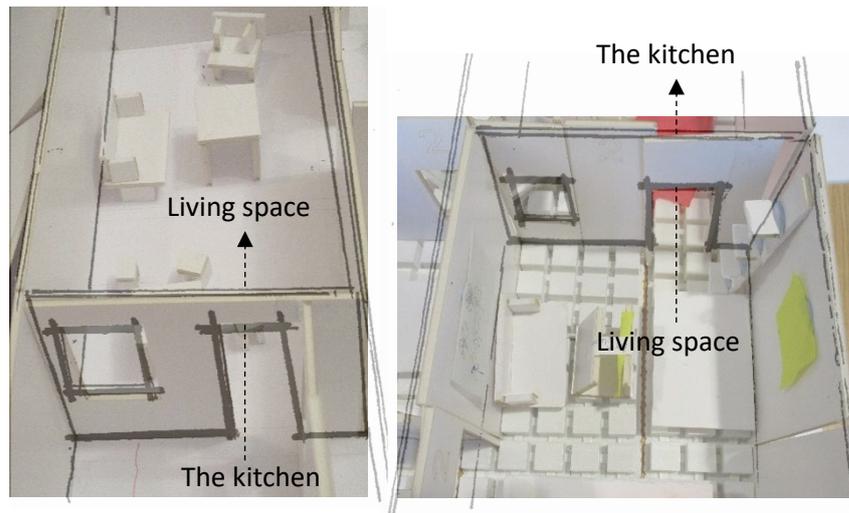


Figure 7.3 Analysis of the direct access between the kitchen and the dining room. F6's model (left). F5's model (right). (Source: The author).

Nonetheless, the visibility of the kitchen from the living room was an aspect of caution for all participants. Most of the participants referred to this differentiation between the aesthetic order the living room and the utilitarian nature of the kitchen. Using terms like *'the kitchen is just purely work'* or *'I don't feel anything in the kitchen'*, the father in F5 expressed the unpleasantness of his experience of the kitchen due to the disorder of cooking equipment, which he wished to conceal. Accordingly, despite the informality of the family sphere in F5, the father preferred to maintain the boundaries between the living room and the kitchen. Sensitivity towards the visual exposure of the kitchen was also raised by the father in F1, who favoured the spatial continuity of an open plan, and who expressed his vision of the family realm when telling the type of houses the family was searching for as *'when we look at a few of these houses, the ones that have had like a little dining area separate living space though.'* In addition, the separation between the kitchen and the sitting space also related to the separation between the formality of the public sphere accommodated in the sitting space and the informality of the family time in the kitchen, as reflected by adults in F6 during model making. Such separation was also explained through the narratives when participants were

asked about their conception of the relationship between the kitchen and the living room in reference to their cultural background:

*[the] kitchen is close to [the] living room, but not such kind of way. They have different doors [for] separation, and also, [it is where] we have lunch and dinner and other eating activities. If we have guests, we can go in the living room in this form for eating something together but in general our eating activities [take place] in the kitchen.*

Different forms of differentiation between the kitchen and the living room draw attention to a duality in the structure of the family space. This duality was created due to the differences in the aesthetics of each division. This implied that the decision regarding the visibility of the kitchen from the living room was guided by the inhabitants' position from the utilitarian nature of the kitchen and the aesthetic order of objects in the living room.

### **7.3 The socialised kitchen**

As outlined through the participants' experiences in Chapter 6, supporting togetherness in the family sphere (see Section 6.3.3) included the need to facilitate social communication while the parents were engaged in household duties and shared meals. This need was amplified through the participants' dissatisfaction with the size of their kitchens, which did not allow the space to be used by more than one person at a time.

Accordingly, their aspiration for social connectedness during family time was manifested through the transformation of the separated Victorian scullery, which accommodated one person's activities, to a populated space in the dwelling. Such transformation chiefly relied on creating spatial continuity between the cooking and dining spaces, as expressed by the father in F1: '*to talk from the kitchen to where*

*people are eating*'. In addition, the integration between the cooking and dining spaces imbued the kitchen with the significance of the family meal in the participants' lives.

The concept of connectedness between cooking and dining was interpreted in different forms depending on the participants' perceptions of the level of informality in the family sphere and their attitudes towards the cooking process. Accordingly, while creating spaciousness in the family shared space, an open-plan structure was seen by the mothers in F1 and F2 as a means for extending social communication and informality when guests were present. The mother expressed this in F2 when she decided to remove any form of division – a wall or open arch – between the living space and the kitchen-diner that she created in the outset. Adults expressed a similar point of view in F1 when appreciating the spaciousness of the open plan despite sensitivity to the visibility of the kitchen. Otherwise, a kitchen-diner created by F6 replicated the layout of their former home that created a sense of informality in the pattern of food consumption and enabled the socialisation of the food preparation process.

Nonetheless, due to the conception of the utilitarian nature of the kitchen, as described in Section 6.3, The parents in F6 explained the need to include another 'formal dining space' outside the kitchen for entertaining guests in a formal manner. From a similar perspective, F5 did not find the kitchen a suitable space for family socialisation and framed connectedness between the kitchen and dining area through the practicality of direct access for serving food.

It is worth noting here that none of the participants linked the segregation between the kitchen and the living room to the control of social interaction. Accordingly, in reference to the aspects of distinction between the living space and the kitchen in Section 6.3.3, references to aesthetic dimensions while making decisions about

this division confirms the duality governing the order in the shared spaces. Nonetheless, and deviating from the duality of public and private spheres in the Victorian dwelling, the participants associated this spatial order with the aesthetic identity of the space. Such duality also confirms the inclusion of the kitchen within the realm of the family sphere as another gathering space in parallel to the living space. Nonetheless, the findings also clarify the complexity of the family space in the dwelling.

#### **7.4 Connectedness between the backyard and living space**

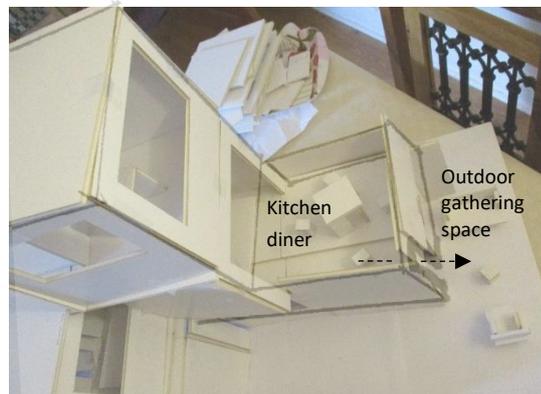
The reconstruction of the backyard implied a transformation in the conception of the outdoor space from a place for refuse in the Victorian dwelling to a space for accommodating the contemporary pattern of family time that appeared through the participants' accounts. Thus, similarities between the indoor and the outdoor spaces in the participants' models formed a salient feature of this transformation. Through this section, a role of the backyard in reinforcing the feelings of freedom and comfort in the reconstructed family space is revealed.

This section starts by constructing the participants' conceptions of freedom and order in the backyard. Then, it reveals opportunities for accommodating these conceptions through the aesthetics of the constructed models and the qualities of the spatial structure.

##### **7.4.1 The backyard as a space for freedom in the dwelling**

Freedom in the backyard was envisioned by the participants as the liberation from spatial and behavioural constraints. This conception of freedom was associated with multiple dimensions on the social and behavioural levels. Accordingly, liberation from social formality was manifested through gatherings for meals and socialising. The common pattern of having the outdoor dining table near the

kitchen demonstrated the participants' aspirations for extending the socialised kitchen into the outdoor space (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5). This pattern was apparent through the narratives.



*Figure 7.4 Analysis of the direct access between the kitchen-diner and the gathering space in F2's model.*



*Figure 7.5 Analysis of the wide windows and doors connecting each of the sitting and dining rooms with the outdoor space in F3's model.*

The father in F6 explained the conception of informal family gatherings in the outdoor space: 'You can go through the kitchen to the balcony. We eat something or drink tea and then sitting there sometimes.'

The mother in F2 described her aspirations for the backyard: 'Think I'll try to BBQ [in the] backyard...I mean [if] it's a sunny afternoon or [some]things like that... Maybe some chairs, some coffee, some drinks... just chatting!'

Liberation from behavioural restrictions on the body-space and object-space experiences within the indoor environment was appreciated by the participants, as shown by the mothers in each of F1 and F4, who reported their conceptions of active play in the garden, expressed as being able to 'run' and have 'proper exercise'. The participants associated the outdoor space with interacting with nature through elements such as water or mud. These elements were described as a source of disorder, which was expressed by the mother in F1 as 'messy play' that could only be accommodated within the outdoor space. Furthermore, indoor

restrictions on materiality also appeared, as the mother in F2 acknowledged the outdoor environment as an enabler for using 'big' objects, such as bicycles and gym machines that could not be accommodated within the limited indoor space. Finally, the feeling of liberation from indoor limitations was also related to the type of food consumption outside, such as the commonality of suggesting barbeques for outdoor meals.

The participants' expressions of a sense of restriction of space in their flats aligned with spatial qualities that represented the origin of the backyard as a space for refuse. The mother in F2 explained her aspiration for family space inside her flat:

*It is kind of more open-ended a space<sup>12</sup>, you can get out the way they want, and also kind of feeling just to do, not feel that limited.*

The parents in F6 expressed their children's experience in their flat:

*Actually, for kids there is not enough space to play together [in the] backyard. For example, sometimes they go to [the] backyard but it's actually, it's quite limited the area. How can I say small area so they only spend maybe what 10 minutes or 15 minutes and they say [they are] bored.*

In these cases, the participants found no opportunity other than the space inside their flats to accommodate their family time activities. Furthermore, most of the suggestions for reconstructing their flats were devoid of additional practices other than those performed during family time within the indoor spaces. Instead, the possibilities for the use of space were created through replication of play and gatherings within the backyard.

Such multidimensionality of freedom had an impact on the spatial qualities of the outdoor space through its organisation and relationship with the indoor spaces.

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<sup>12</sup> open ended-ness here is mentioned as freedom to move – lack of restriction.

Additionally, extending the sense of freedom in the family sphere through the outdoor space had an impact on the aesthetics on the visual and tactile levels.

#### **7.4.2 Reconstruction of the backyard**

The participants' aspirations for visual aesthetics in the backyard enfolded an analogy to the living space through its order, which they described as tidiness and cleanness<sup>13</sup>. In some cases, perception of cleanness outdoors was linked to the controlled presence of nature. When the mother in F3 listed her priorities, it was clear that she saw such visual qualities as aspects of pleasantness through her use of expressions such as, 'I like to see these things'. Similarly, the appreciation of tidiness in the living room was expressed by the mother in F4 as, 'my feeling is dependent on how tidy everything is... If my room is tidy, I feel very cosy.' Such similarities explained the participants' appropriations to create visual continuity between the indoor and outdoor spaces in the constructed models.

The participants referred to the aesthetics of the outside space through the order of its materiality, including nature and objects (see Figure 7.6). From this perspective, plants in the yard were described in association with favourable images of nature or through visual qualities like colours (Power, 2010). Furthermore, the visual aesthetics of nature outside were acknowledged inextricably from positive values that the participants associated with having nature in the home. Accordingly, the outdoor space was seen as an enabler for the dwelling's productivity while enhancing its aesthetic quality, which the mother in F3 related to growing her own food at home.

*The mother in F3 describing her aspirations for remaking her backyard: Maybe I have some pots... Hmm... some for tomatoes, some for strawberries. I like to have some flowers, different kinds of things. I like to see these things.*

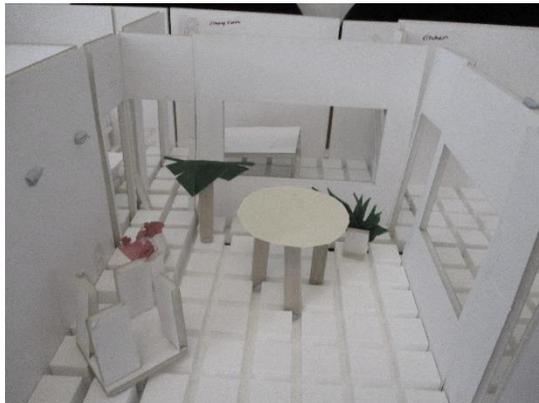
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<sup>13</sup> Rather than meaning of 'cleanliness' that refers to the sense of hygiene, the term 'cleanness' here refers to the sense of pleasingly simple space.

*The author: How will how will it feel like?*

*The mother in F3: They're, yeah, look, feel amazing actually, Beautiful, and handy as well. Just till and healthy to have your own things out. [it's] the organic thing.'*

Additionally, being close to plants was also associated with closeness to the purity of nature, as the mother in F1 reflected. 'I don't know if this image of this pastoral playing and the green space. I mean in a cherry backyard!'



*Figure 7.6 Photo of F3's model showing the Use of plants for decoration in the backyard.*

Accordingly, the construction of freedom and visual aesthetics of the backyard was built on the interrelation between the indoor and outdoor spaces in the dwelling. This relationship prioritised aspects supporting visual and spatial connectivity between both realms when remaking the participants' flats. Therefore, the descriptions of remaking the backyard in the following subsections amplify the spatial and visual dimensions underlying the continuity between the indoors and outdoors within the participants' aspirations and actions.

### ***Visual aesthetics of the backyard***

The participants aimed to reinforce aspects of connectedness between the indoor and outdoor spaces on the visual and spatial levels. Furthermore, subtle boundaries between the indoor and outdoor spaces were associated with a mutual impact on the reconstruction of their spatial qualities. On the one hand, visual connectedness between the inside and the outside was seen as an opportunity for supporting the brightness and openness of the indoor space. The mother in F4 related brightness inside the living room to having large windows: *'it is a lovely big window and lovely, lovely light.'* The opportunity to enjoy nature while being inside appeared in the models of F1 and F3 through the arrangement of placing plants outside the kitchen window.

On the other hand, the use of the outdoor spaces to accommodate family time resulted in similarities between the materiality and aesthetics of the outdoor and indoor spaces. For example, the outdoor gathering space was rendered with aspects of comfort such as softness of materiality and comfortable furniture, as expressed by the mother in F2: *'it's not that feasible. I think I mean the backyard is, I mean, I think ... It's not that at least we make it cosier.'*

Supporting accessibility between the indoors and the outdoors was related to the need to allow the flow of children's movement and encouraging guests to move freely within the living space. Thus, allowing spatial continuity between the inside and the outside was influential when reconfiguring the boundaries separating the indoor and the outdoor spaces (see Figure 7.7). Furthermore, the proximity between the indoors and the backyard on the ground floor was acknowledged as a quality enabling such continuity. This was clarified through F4's experience of their first floor flat when it was suggested that visual connectedness between the living room and the backyard was seen as a solution for mitigating the detachment between these domains, as the mother in F4 explained:

*We were on the ground floor and we had some doors that open to an outdoor space. Um, but yeah, now I would love these two windows to go down to the ground. Yeah. And then have like the Juliet balcony. So that we can just open the doors and then at least I'm on the balcony, like, you know, the little balcony.*

A solution for allowing spatial continuity between the first floor flat and the outdoor space was suggested by the construction of elevated decking by the mother in F3. This was associated with the participants' concern about achieving equality between the ground and first floor flats regarding accessibility to outdoor space. This concern illuminated the criticality of creating continuity between the indoor and outdoor spaces in the participants' family sphere.



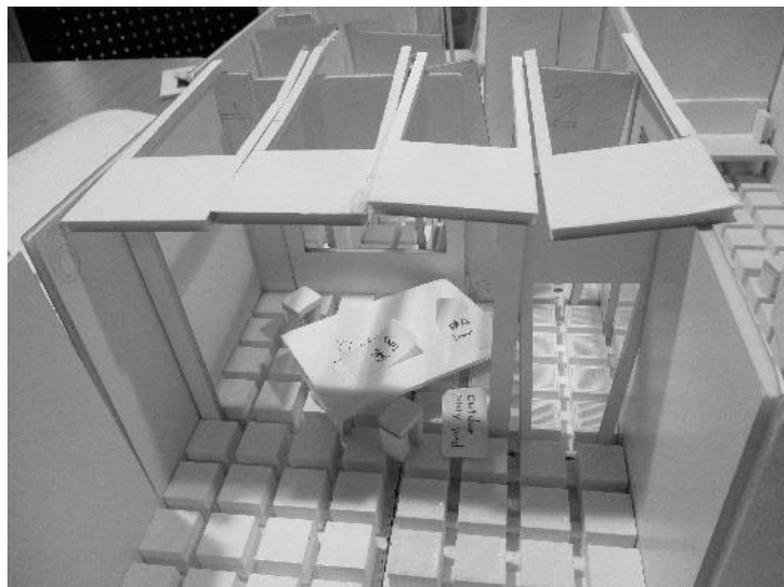
*Figure 7.7 Windows and glass doors for connecting the socialised kitchen with the remade outdoor space in F3's model (left) and F6's model (right).*

### **Controlling nature**

The visual aesthetics of the outdoors accompanied the participants' need to control the materiality – in terms of the presence of objects and nature – and the weather (Chevalier, 1998; Alexander, 2002). As an influence on their approach to remaking the backyard, the unpredictability of nature formed a limitation on the use of the outdoor space. Accordingly, the search for ways to replicate the order of the indoor

space while maintaining closeness to nature was a prominent motivation during the remaking of the backyard.

The changeability of the weather was associated with limitations on the time of use of the outdoors, which appeared within the narratives through the participants' use of terms such as 'summer' and 'sunny afternoon', and only being able to use the space for 'two months' or 'for a short time'. The need for warmth and dryness was further confirmed through their appropriations and aspirations for including sheds and outdoor structures (see Figure 7.8). Such meaning was further clarified through the sensual qualities – such as warmth, brightness and freshness – that the participants specified in their descriptions of these semi-outdoor spaces.



*Figure 7.8 The outdoor structure for shelter from rain in F2's model.*

The participants' approach for achieving thermal comfort deviated from the specific meteorological meaning by including descriptions of multisensory attributes, such as warmth, brightness and freshness. From the outset, this intention was clarified through participants' appropriations to achieve thermal comfort during the summer, such as adding an umbrella to avoid the direct sun in F1. The aspiration for thermal comfort while being close to nature was further pictured by the mother in (F1) as:

*Some sort of, I sometimes picture some kind of conservatory type space or heated outdoor space... It's all about doing stuff like in the light or in the fresh air, but [either] inside or outside.*

Limitations imposed by the weather were also related to the need for shelter from rain, as expressed by the mother in F2 when suggesting an outdoor structure during model making.

Creating pleasant visual aesthetics in the backyard was associated with plants. Remaking the outdoor space to support the sense of freedom in the home imposed the need to transform nature from what Alexander (2002) explained as 'nature in the raw' to nature as a 'made thing'. This conception was dominated by the tension between the unpredictability of nature and the appreciation of order. Such tension was manifested through the differentiation between disorder and neatness in the outdoors in the models; for example, in the acceptance of mess and dirt owing to the proximity of the lawn-covered play space to soil. In contrast, the participants pictured the attributes of the pleasing visual aesthetics of nature in the gathering space by specifying colours of plants and order in the outdoor space (see Figure 7.9). Their approach for achieving such an image was dominated by the ease of making the outdoor space clean and ordered, which they expressed in their priority lists as 'tidy' and 'manageable'. This included an inclination to control of the appearance of plants as expressed through the tendency to use 'pots' for planting and specifying a limited amount as 'some flowers'. Even for the grass covered space, the sense of control was manifested in limiting the purpose of this space to

play and aesthetics, as expressed through terms such as ‘just a patch of grass’ or ‘some grass area’.



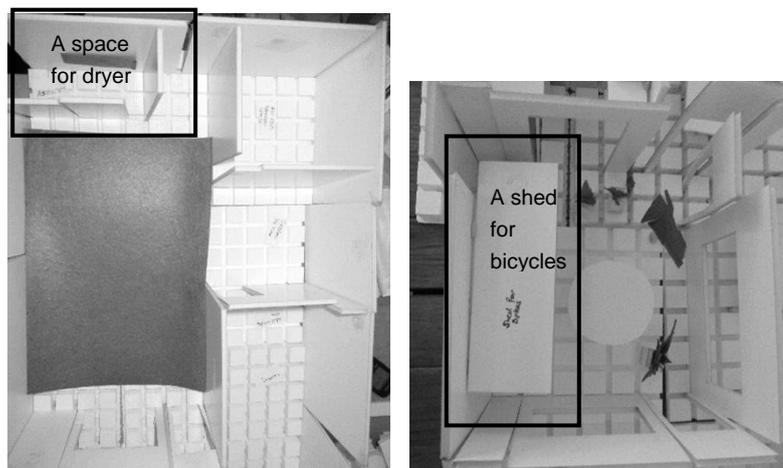
*Figure 7.9 Outdoor sitting space in F5's model (left). Use of nature for aesthetics and production in F3's model (middle). Space for outdoor teatime differentiated from play space on grass in F1's model (right).*

Extending the possibilities of visual continuity between the outdoor and indoor spaces of the family sphere drove the significance of order in the outdoor space. This quality was manifested through the need to control objects in the outdoor space, as shown by the presence of storage units in the models (see Figure 7.10). This was further clarified when the participants talked about the large size of outdoor objects such as ‘big toys’ and ‘bicycles’,<sup>14</sup> as well as for separating utilitarian items from the family space.

It can be assumed that the reported findings may offer suggestions about the nature of the alternative social space in terms of its quality and its presence within the spatial structure of the shared space. The reiteration of the democratic multigenerational living space (Attfield, 2002) through the participants’ constructions indicated several practices other than gathering during free time. However, the need for keeping spatial order and creating the sense of spaciousness resulted in spatial distinction between uses and, consequently, the

<sup>14</sup> Bicycles also needed to be kept in the backyard for F1 and F3 for the practicality of access to the outside through the back gate.

expansion of the shared space in the dwelling outside the realm of the living space. Further, the participants' reproduction of the backyard highlighted the integration of the outdoor space as part of the shared family realm in terms of aesthetics and space. While such indications may resemble those of Alexander's (2002) study, the findings contribute to illuminating the connection between both realms in relation to manifestations of freedom in the outdoor space that emerged through the analysis.



*Figure 7.3 Hiding aspects of utility in the back yard by dedicated space for separating laundry from the family space to limit sources of dampness inside the flat in F1's model (left).  
Dedicated space for bicycle storage in the outdoor space in F3's model (right).*

## **7.5 A space for detachment from family**

As described in Chapter 6, the findings about the personal sphere drawn from the participants' narratives included the need for a dedicated space to enable both a sense of autonomy and detachment from others to allow concentration on tasks. Thus, the models represented the criticality of these spaces by challenging the spatial limitation of the flats and creating new constructions; for example, the older child's bedroom in F1, the kitchen for the mother's business in F3, the father's study room in F6 and the mother's study space in F2.

The created spaces chiefly inform the nature of the spatial relationship between the personal and the shared spaces in the dwelling. Otherwise, the impact of the

variety of uses on the spatial qualities of the constructed personal spaces was partially clarified by the participants – particularly in the cases of the study space of the mother in F2 and the kitchen constructed by the mother in F3 – either verbally during our conversations or through representations of uses through the model.

The conception of the qualities of the mother's study room in F2 were based on her experience of a personal space in a former dwelling, which included two aspects of spatial qualities. First, her perception of the limited amount space provided a sense of containment during her alone time. Second, creating a cosy feel supported her need for comfort. By locating the study room in the front room – where there was enough space for sleep and study – a link between the boundedness of the space and its cosiness was amplified. Therefore, the mother explained her insistence on surrounding the study space with partitions as a means of creating a cosy study space and representing the separation of her states of mind while studying and at bedtime. Furthermore, the mother emphasised cosiness through her choice of colours and by specifying the importance of comfortable furniture.

The need for spaciousness to allow movement and accommodate the equipment needed for the mother's cookery business in F3 might appear to contradict the need for cosiness in the study space created by the mother in F2 (see Figure 7.11). However, the practicality, facilitated by the spaciousness of the kitchen for the mother in F3 and the desire of the mothers in F1 and F2 to display personal objects and tools, draw attention to the need for both convenience and comfort when using the personal space.

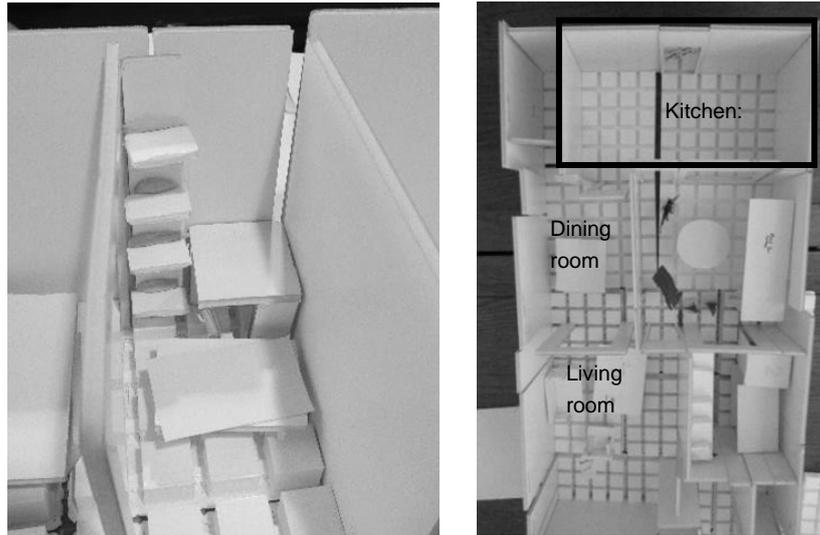
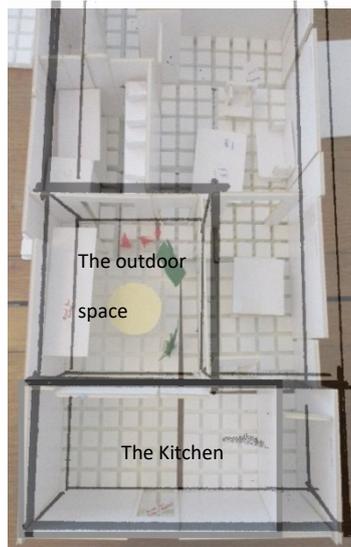


Figure 7.4 The furniture in the space showing the compactness of the study room in F2's model (left). The mother's spacious kitchen in F3's model (right).

### 7.5.1 Spatial remoteness of personal space

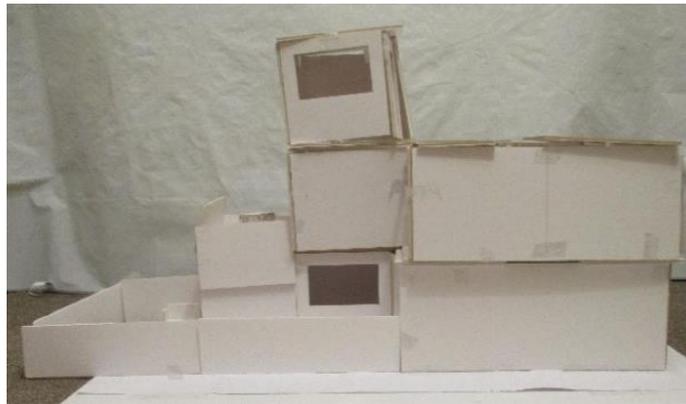
Accommodating the need for individual time in the participants' decisions during model making depended on the availability of space. Ideally, the participants searched for spatial remoteness to achieve solitude. Such opportunities were found vertically in the attic, which was acknowledged as an opportunity for quietness and separation, or horizontally by constructing rooms in the backyard away from the flat (see Figures 7.12, 7.13 and 7.14). Other solutions were considered, such as including a personal space for the mother in F1 beside her son's Eco-Pod, or including the study space for the mother in F2 in her bedroom. Otherwise, in cases of a shortage of any space to dedicate for personal use, a compromise was suggested by accommodating individual activities within a shared space while relying on time-scheduling for detachment from others.



*Figure 7.12 An Eco-pod in the backyard for older son's individual room in F1's model.*



*Figure 7.5 The kitchen for the mother's cookery business and hobby in F3's model.*



*Figure 7.14 The attic room for the father's study in F6's model.*

Such representations suggested a change from the representation of the individuality–commonality dialectic through the multicellular spatial structure (West and Emmit, 2004) (see Section 1.1). Instead, the findings show the integration of spatial and temporal techniques for enabling both social and experiential detachment (see Section 8.4.3).

### **7.5.2 A space for individuals' autonomy**

The participants' constructions of their personal spaces highlighted their need to support a sense of autonomy in their family lives. This was shown in their appreciation of opportunities for connectedness between their personal space and the outside via an independent access route to provide the option of being connected to the outside. This pattern appeared in the designs of both the Eco-pod in F1 and the space for the mother's cookery business in F3. This opportunity was also associated with the remoteness of the personal space, which was perceived as a representation of the distinction between the personal and family spheres.

### **7.5.3 Avoiding isolation**

Visual continuity between the detached rooms and the outside was appreciated as being a quality of pleasantness during alone time. Being visually connected to the outside provided a view of nature or urban life, depending on the surroundings, and was described by the mother in F1 as an enhancement of the cheerfulness of the space (see Section 6.4.1). This perception was evident through the narratives; for example, the mother in F1 explained her choice of accommodating her workplace in the 'big room' overlooking the main street, and she used the same reason when deciding to place her workspace near the garden during model making (see Figure 7.15). Similarly, for the mother in F3 (as mentioned in Section 5.4.1) the influence of daylight from the outside on creating a bright atmosphere was seen as supporting a good mood while engaged in duties or work. Furthermore, while deciding on the direction of the window in his attic office, the father in F6 raised the importance of the balance between avoiding isolation and distractions from the outside. Owing to this concern, he avoided the noise of the

main street by placing the window overlooking the back garden that he and his family created in the model (see Figure 7.15).

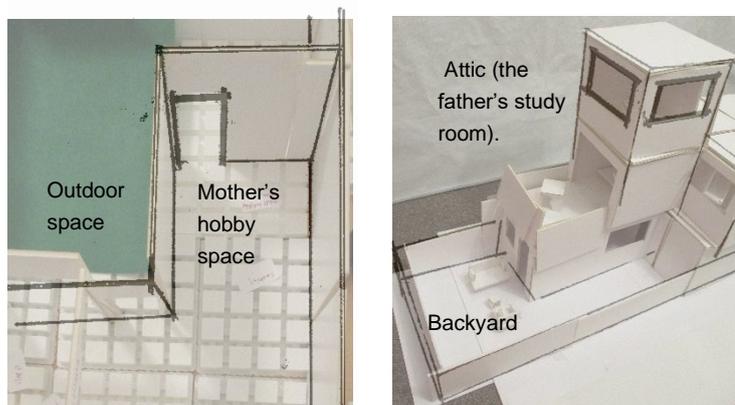


Figure 7.15 (left) Openings in personal space for connectedness with the outdoor space. F1's model. F6's model (right). (Source: the author).

## 7.6 Conclusion

The findings reported in this chapter demonstrate the need to increase the space in Tyneside flats to accommodate the participants' critical needs. Additional personal space was created in the reconstructed flats vertically by adding floors, or horizontally by constructing additional rooms in the backyard. These extensions were also associated with multiple shared spaces in the reconstructed dwellings. While these extensions did not provide a realistic spatial solution, they represented the need to extend the pre-existing space.

However, comparing this model to the one shared space model, which has dominated home centredness during the second half of the twentieth century, suggested that the participants' actions on space did not only represent extending the amount of space. Rather, reading the model in relation to constructions of lived spaces discussed in Chapter 6 told of different modes of social connectedness supported by the new spatial structure (see Figure 7.16). Thus, the opportunity for allowing freedom in the form of social connectedness was reflected by cosy corners that represented alternative social spaces that permitted social

connectedness. Similarly, this perspective illuminated the sense of detachment intended in the new constructions in the backyard and the attic. Further, noticing the sensitivity of spatial relations to states of social connectedness explained the dissatisfaction stemming from the proximity of the bedrooms to the living room.

Reading the models based on the social constructs of space reported in Chapter 6 highlighted the variations in habitation conditions of the participants' reconstructions of their flats. Thus, the findings provided distinctions between utilitarian and aesthetically ordered spaces. Similarly, the models included opportunities for cosiness and tranquillity in gathering and personal spaces, and freedom and flow of movement in the shared indoor and outdoor spaces. Constructions of opportunities for uses of space were also created through the subtle boundaries between the backyard and the shared spaces.

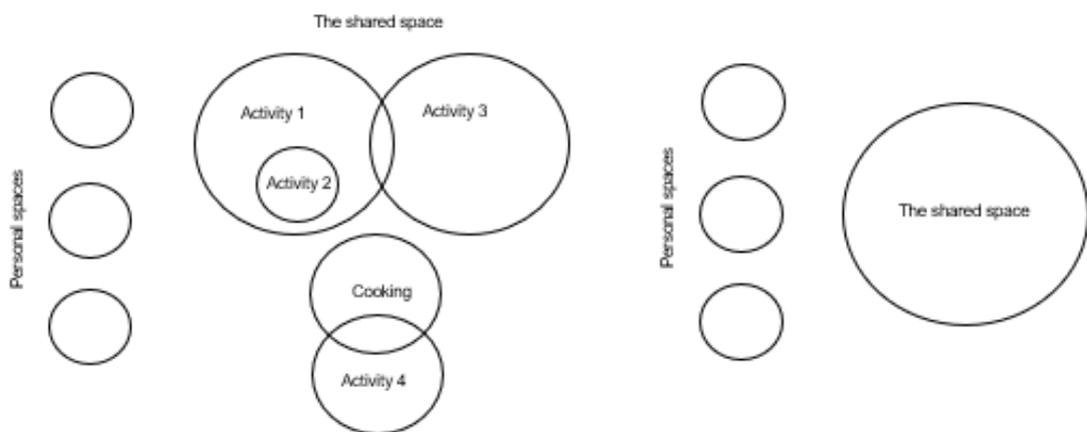


Figure 7.16 Comparison between the reported spatial structure (left) and the mid-twentieth century one shared space model (right).

To conclude, the findings reported in this chapter suggest a reiteration of the spatial representation of home centredness through the complexity of the spatial structure of the reconstructed models. However, and in relation to the diversity of the social context addressed in this thesis, the variety of possibilities of uses of space that were illuminated when relating the spatial qualities to social

constructions suggest the need for reading the spatial qualities of the dwelling separately from predetermined uses or symbolic associations. Rather, reading spatial conditions created by the spatial features indicates possibilities of broadening the understanding of the dwelling model from its abstract representation of pre-determined functions to acknowledgment of space through its interrelation with social and behavioural dimensions of domesticity within a certain time and place.

Chapter 8

**Negotiating Commonplace: Exploring  
Indeterminacy in Domestic Architecture**

## Chapter 8: Negotiating Commonplace: Exploring Indeterminacy in Domestic Architecture

### 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters revealed features of the spatial structure of the contemporary dwelling model, suggesting the reserved centrality of the shared space and a multicellular form of the individually used spaces. Nevertheless, the findings so far have hinted at a contradiction between the limitation of space in the Tyneside flats and the complexity and multiplicity of the components of the revealed spatial structures. Further, the findings indicate limitations restricting the Tyneside flats from supporting changes in ideals of domesticity. It is worth emphasising here that this chapter does not report solution for flexibility of space through the participants' spatial constructions. The focus here is on revealing aspects associated with the process of transformation from the pre-existing space -represented in this thesis as the Tyneside flats – and the dwelling that would accommodate the participants' domesticity. Accordingly, this chapter addresses the second research question: *how is pre-existing space negotiated by the inhabitants?* by discussing appropriations and changes in the spatial structure reported in chapters 6 and 7 to enrich the understanding of indeterminacy in domestic architecture (see Chapter 2).

The findings reported in this chapter illuminate spatial dynamics as part of the social process by relating motivations and actions to spatial features associated with each of the participants' perception of their flats and their constructed models. Exploring these aspects relied on data from narratives, priority lists, field conversations and the participants' models. Then an analysis of the spatial process associated with the transformation is developed, relying on two analytical questions. First, what does the challenge of the restrictions of the Tyneside flats

tell us about the dynamics of domestic space? Second, what does the change in the spatial structure of the Tyneside flats tell us about the role of space in supporting changes in ideals of domesticity?

The chapter addresses issues related to indeterminacy in domesticity architecture by reporting three forms of spatial negotiations. First, it highlights how far material appropriations can support the outlined process of transformation by reporting processes, opportunities and limitations associated negotiations of space carried out during the participants' everyday life in their flats. Then, the chapter highlights design features carried out through the model making to allow the transformation from a Victorian to contemporary dwelling. Finally, the chapter elucidates conditions and actions associated with situations of time-space compression.

## **8.2 Negotiating the Tyneside flats**

### **8.2.1 Overview**

The participants' perceptions of the spatial conditions in their flats provided opportunities to restructure the flats according to the participants' patterns of domesticity. These opportunities were supported by appropriations of space carried out within the participants' everyday lives. In some situations, these opportunities were satisfactory in fulfilling the participants' needs. However, some possibilities that had been anticipated when the participants moved into these flats were hindered by an absence of other critical spatial features. The findings reported in this section reveal the perceived opportunities and the associated actions as well as the success and failure of these appropriations to satisfy the participants' needs.

## 8.2.2 Opportunities created through appropriations and behavioural adaptations: negotiating the back and front duality

The perceived opportunities in spaces emerged from descriptions of physical, emotional and spatial dimensions of spatial experiences. Accordingly, identifying the spatial condition underlying the perceptions of the amount of space needed were entangled with the body–space and object–space relationships, as well as the sensual qualities of space. Such experiential aspects informed the participants' intentions and perceptions guiding decisions they made through their appropriations of their flats and during model making.

I would commence this section by sharing the way relativity of the perception of the amount of space was magnified through a story recalled by the mother in F3 when she was expressing her need for extra space:

*The participant: Shall I tell you a story?*

*Me: Yes, of course.*

*The participant: There was, there was a story about someone who feels like his house is very, very small and he asked the witch to help him to have a bigger house and she, every day, she asked him to have, like, animals in, like, Thursday have a chicken in and they have extra animals. So, the house is very crowded. With lots of things and he said, 'No, I don't like. Why are you doing this to me? I want them to go out.' She told him, like, on the seventh day, or something, 'Let them out.' When they went out, he felt that the house is very big like, so he made, like, that made him, like, appreciate that his house is big, but this is just because he had all of these things, all of these like animals inside. He didn't feel comfortable. So, and he had these. The space empty, he felt like, 'No, it's big now.'*

Upon hearing this story, I approached the data analysis with a question; *Is the perception of the amount of space the only spatial feature associated with the appropriation of space?*

In the section I report the spatial attributes associated with the participants' appropriations.

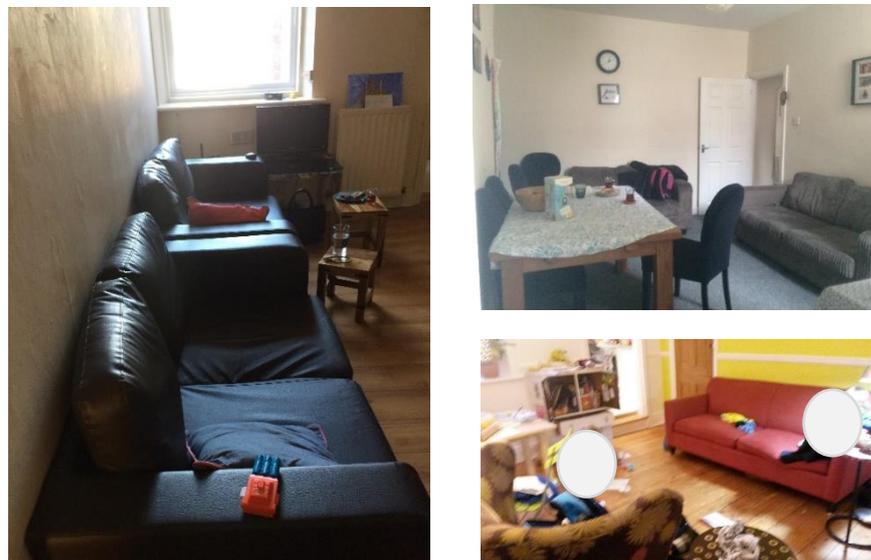
### ***Cosiness at the back of the Victorian dwelling***

Experiences of cosiness were reported in association with the living room of the participants' flats. The space that formerly served the Victorian family dining and cooking (see Section 5.2) was also associated with a sense of intimacy in the participants' experiences. At gathering times, the size of this space was associated with the sense of physical closeness informality in socialising with family and close friends. This feeling was expressed by the mother in F1 when describing her living room when entertaining a group of friends 'When we have a gathering in here, it's really nice cause it's a kind of small space so it kinda feel really busy'. Similarly, the mother in F3 described her living room as an enabler for informal socialising when hosting her cookery classes: *'It's more relaxed here and they enjoyed it here more, like even if it's a small table. The library was quite big and, you know, so they won't [socialise] ... they were more connected around the table.'*

Additionally, the perception of cosiness of the space appeared to be accompanied by a sense of containment. This feeling was reported in descriptions of the boundaries of spaces in different situations. Associating this feeling with the boundaries of space was inferred when shutting the bedroom door during the mother's relaxation time in F1, despite the quietness of the night-time in her family life. In the living room, this perception was apparent from decisions taken during model making that emphasised the sense of containment through boundaries. For

example, the mother in F3 found in keeping the boundedness of the living room during model making in order to maintain its cosiness.

Physical comfort in cosy spaces was acknowledged through qualities of the furniture, such as a sofa or comfortable chair as the father in F5 expresses 'So, this is like the heart of the house [the living room] and this is the cosy bit in the heart of the house...' Accordingly, appropriations of the Victorian kitchen by including a comfortable sofa alongside the dining table was another aspect that enhanced the experience of cosiness. (see Figure 8.1). This image of physical comfort in such a cosy space in the living room was even complemented by the association between comfort in the living room and wearing lighter clothes by the father in F5: 'I prefer warm, it just makes [it a] little bit cosy for me here because I don't usually like to wear like, you know, full track pants. I wear shorts like this. [It] just makes me cosy, concentrate better.'



*Figure 8.1 The transformation from the Victorian living kitchen to a living room for the participants. (Left) F6's living room – (Top right) F3's living room – (Bottom right) F1's living room. Photos taken by the author except F1's living room – photo taken by the participant.*

### ***Spaciousness of the front room***

The front room of the Victorian home is characterised by its spaciousness and separation from other spaces in the dwelling. These qualities, that formerly represented the formality of the public sphere and its separation from the everyday life of the Victorian family, provided opportunities for accommodating multiple everyday uses in the participants' lives (see Figure 8.2). Accordingly, and in reference to findings about the participants' experiences of their flats in Chapter 6, it was common to hear the participants referring to this room through its spatial quality as the 'big room', which offered them ease of movement and the opportunity to spread out multiple objects during children's active play, as seen in F1. The amount of space in the same room allowed F6 to accommodate furniture related to both study and sleep while time-scheduling these activities. Similarly, during model making, the same perception influenced the mother in F2 to accommodate her study corner in her bedroom, which was the front room of her flat.

The big window at the front room was also perceived by the mother in F1 and the father in F6 as an opportunity for work.

However, uses of the front room were not solely depending on the spaciousness of this room. The suitability of the front room for activities such as studying, practising musical instruments and children's free play, was enhanced by the need for separation from the shared space during these activities. Working at this spot of the flat, the participants appreciated the exposure to the outside while being separated from other members of the family. The mother in F1 specified the way this window created a pleasant working space that she enjoyed (see Section 6.4.1).



Figure 8.2 The transformation of the Victorian parlour to a multi-functional bedroom. (Left) F6's bedroom – (Right) F1's bedroom. Photos taken by the author except F1's living room – photo taken by the participant.

While considering the distinction between the front room and other rooms in the flat (see Section 5.2), the outlined connections between socio-spatial practices and spatial qualities resonate with the discussion in section 2.4 about the way variations in the spatial conditions in the dwelling may extend 'suggested' opportunities for accommodating different needs within the pre-existing space.

### ***Extending spatial fields through proximity between rooms***

Despite the segregated spatial structure of the Tyneside flats, the proximity between rooms allowed the participants to integrate multiple practices taking place in different rooms. In reference to the findings reported in Chapter 6, direct access between the living room and the kitchen provided an opportunity to extend the spatiality of cooking between the kitchen and the living room while engaged in childcare, as reported in Section 5.3.3, or self-entertaining activities, as reported by the mothers in F2, F3 and F4. Additionally, the ease of access between these spaces in the flat was mentioned by the participants in F1 as an aspect of comfort during the adults' 'teatime' and the father's alone time. Additionally, this connectivity was reported by the mother in F2 an opportunity to enhance the sense of informality and homeliness when having close friends around.

Additionally, the significance of flow between spaces in the families' domesticity was further amplified through the way that the children in F1 encountered the proximity between rooms as a feature of flat living. As reported in Section 5.2.4, the children found this proximity enabled them to extend the flow of their active play between the bedrooms and the living room. In the light of the outlined interpretations of possibilities of use of space, the families' experiences show the importance of the role of spatial qualities, such as visibility, accessibility, proximity and spatial relationships, in order to read the possibilities for the various forms of social connectedness.

Reading such significance of enabling movement between spaces was further supported when noticing such spatial connectivity repeatedly in the participants' models. For F1 and F2, this perception was associated with the open-plan living space to support the movement of guests and children. In these cases, visual exposure was also acknowledged as an encouragement of the movement of guests and children within the family space. Additionally, spatial connectivity was associated with comfort during activities.

To conclude, opportunities found in the back and front of the Victorian dwelling provide evidence for the way use of space depends on intersections between spatial conditions, created by the amount of space, visual exposure and spatial relations, and the desired experience of body-space and object space relationship. Despite the reported conflicts between uses that were experienced in the living room (see Section 6.2), the participants captured the cosiness of the Victorian family gathering space. Similarly, the spacious of the formal Victorian parlour was interpreted as the possibility for multiple uses that needed to be separated from the family space.

Appropriation here was a tool to reproduce the meaning of such intersections. Cosiness of the Victorian kitchen, that was originally created through the centrality of the dining table and the heat of the fireplace, was reproduced by including the sofas to emphasise the sense of comfort in the cosiness of the contemporary family living room. Similarly, the separation and spaciousness of the front room were reproduced when the participants accommodated objects and furniture related to multiple everyday uses that are separated from the family gathering time.

### **8.2.3 Limitations hindering appropriations**

The Tyneside flats also had limitations that hindered the transformation of the Victorian flats to a contemporary home through spatial appropriations and behavioural adaptations. At the outset, similarities between some components of the Victorian dwelling and those indicated in housing studies about contemporary family life, such as the number of rooms and access to outdoor space, promised possibilities for individual privacy and family activities (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, the experiences revealed in Chapter 6 highlighted differences related to the spatial relations, aesthetics and amount of the available space, which, associated with the original and contemporary uses of these spaces, hindered the participants' use of space. Accordingly, in the case of the Tyneside flats, despite the availability of a private open space, the contrast between the detachment, roughness and small size of the Victorian utility space, and the envisioned connectedness, softness and spaciousness of the participants' conception of the outdoor space as part of family life, hindered the use of the Victorian backyard (see Figure 8.3 and 8.4). This was confirmed through participants' descriptions of the backyard as a 'quite limited area', 'not enough space' or 'small area', which tell of the limitations in accommodating children's movement during play. In F1's experience, there was not enough space to accommodate play alongside sitting and drying laundry in the backyard. For F6,

the limitation of space was chiefly related to the children's need for active movement, as the father expressed (and as mentioned in section 7.4.1), 'Actually, for kids there is not enough space to play together [in the] backyard. For example, sometimes they go to [the] backyard but it's actually, it's quite limited the area. How can I say small area so they only spend maybe what 10 minutes or 15 minutes and they say [they are] bored.' (also see Section 6.2.4).



*Figure 8.3 A sitting place in F1's back yard with limited space for older children play. Photo taken by the participant.*



*Figure 8.4 Unused table and a grill in the backyard in F6's flat. Photo taken by the author.*

It is worth noting that the back lanes were perceived by both adults in F1 and the mother in F3 as an opportunity to compensate for the restrictions imposed by the limitation of space on children's play. The participants related this opportunity to the connectedness between the backyard and the back alleys that would allow the children to extend their active movement and use bicycles and balls outside the limitations of their dwellings. However, the use of the semi-public space was hindered by external forces, such as residential instability in student areas, which eroded the sense of familiarity and intimacy of the shared semi-public space. Additionally, the use of the back lane for refuse was also seen as an unpleasant atmosphere for children play, owing to the odours and presence of bins. As

explained by the mother in F1, 'In the summer, they love [to] play with water and there are these back lanes (see Figure 8.5). A lot of people are very passionate about the back lanes, which used to be places where children would play, but now they're not.'



*Figure 8.5 The bins in the back alley at F1's flat. Photo taken by the author.*

Additionally, despite having enough bedrooms for each child in the three-bedroom flats, the families with school-age children, as in F1, F3, F4, and F6, found it difficult to support their children's privacy in rooms that had been dedicated to sleep in the Victorian domesticity. Divergence between the use of a space for a single sedentary activity and the participants' needs to accommodate multiple children's activities showed how much the limitation of space hindered the children's privacy. Similarly, the coexistence of dining and family activities gave rise to another set of unfulfilled expectations from the shared space, particularly due to the failure of the Victorian family dining-kitchen space to provide separate dining and living spaces (see Section 6.2) (see Figure 8.1). The space that was originally designed for accommodating family gathering around meals, was not sufficient to include space for relaxation and children play alongside the dining table.

The outlined limitations revealed the failure of the tight functional fit of spaces in Tyneside flats to provide possibilities for reproducing patterns of domesticity. Thus,

a comparison of Tyneside flats with other Victorian housing types in the UK suggests the limitation of space to be a reason for the failure of material appropriations for mitigating the mismatch between the spatial manifestation of the back and front duality and the centredness of contemporary domesticity. Accordingly, accommodating the extended time spent by family members in their dwellings imposed the need for a structural change that included the number of shared and personal spaces, and supported multiple forms of connectedness between members of the family. This situation suggests that limitations related to the spatial structure of the dwelling may hinder the homemaking process in situations of cultural change. Further, the outlined spatial restrictions align with Norberg-Schultz's (1987) and Venturi's (1965) critique on disregarding the role of the qualities of space when addressing means of extending the users' power in taking actions on space (see Chapter 2.4). Rather, the findings showed that the variation in the spatial qualities enabled the range of possible socio-spatial practices.

### **8.3 Opportunities created through reconstruction of the flat**

#### **8.3.1 Overview**

Reconstructions of the participants' flats hinted that the transformation was not only related to the spatial order. This section demonstrates the way reconstructions of the flats through the physical models reveal the role of the reconstructed spatial relations in supporting the change from Victorian to contemporary domesticity (see Table 8.1).

Social process.	Spatial Process (including reference to chapter 7).	Manifestations of change	Created opportunities.
The change from public - private duality to individuality – family life duality.	Transformation from one shared space to the multiplicity of shared spaces in the dwelling.	Extending the living room space.	spatial differentiation between uses for maintaining order.
	Transformation from segregated uses to fluidity in movement between spaces.	Use of arches for flow of movement between distinguished spaces.  Change from separation to spatial connectedness between the backyard and living room.	Flow of movement.
	Including individually used space.	Adding new constructions to the flat.	Detachment from the family sphere.

Table 8. 1 Critical spatial transformations that required change in the spatial structure of the flat.

### 8.3.2 Complexity of spatial relations

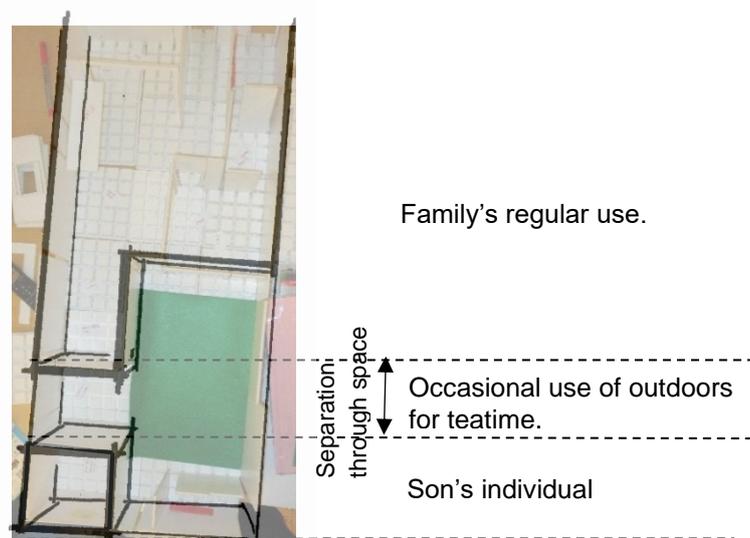
This subsection highlights how various forms of spatial relations support the multiplicity of opportunities created through the participants' models (see Table 8.2).

Created spatial relation	Architectural tool	Aspects of indeterminacy: <i>possibilities</i>
Detachment <b>from</b> the family sphere	The use of: detached spaces in the dwelling such as the attic and room in the backyard. Transition space	Scheduling activities taking place in the transition space according to the use of the detached space.
Connectedness between separated spaces	Consideration of: Direct access Proximity between spaces	Possibility of control of accessibility.
Spatial distinction within an open plan	The use of arches	Extending alternatives of use of space in an open plan.

Table 8. 2 Architectural tools represented in participant models to support particular spatial relations and possibilities

### ***Detachment through spatial remoteness and temporal boundaries***

As reported in Chapter 7, situating individual time in rooms that were spatially remote from the family sphere limited the opportunities for social interaction and enabled a quiet atmosphere. Spatial remoteness was prioritised for solitary activities, such as engaging in study, hobbies and work, that were separate from the family sphere and required the participants' concentration. This detachment was also important to support older children's social life, in which individuality represented a significant construct (see Figure 8.6). In addition, this distinction was manifested in the need for separation between the family sphere and the sacredness of the prayer space in F5.



*Figure 8.6 Spatial and temporal boundaries.*

The approach taken by the participants when creating opportunities for detachment led to the inclusion of spatial and temporal transitional spaces in their constructed models (see Table 8.3). Spatially, remoteness was achieved vertically in the attic, and horizontally by adding structures at the back wall of the backyard. In both cases, the transitional spaces, such as the outdoor space or the first floor, regulated the relationship between the individual and shared spaces in the models.

However, temporal boundaries were also used to enhance this physical separation between the family and personal spheres. Thus, occasionally occurring events, such as teatime in F1, or those that took place according to a schedule, such as cookery classes or family dinner in F3, and sleep in F6, were accommodated within the transitional space (see Figures 8.7 and 8.8). Furthermore, this temporal order allowed multiuse of these transitional spaces for individual and shared activities while limiting situations of temporal overlap between the spheres. The complexity of the integration between time and spatial remoteness revealed the multidimensionality of social distancing. In addition, such complexity also informed the approach taken by the participants to reconstruct their flats based on the consideration of the social and experiential needs.

Family	Separated activities	Scheduled activity
F1	Personal use (older child's uses). Family activities.	Occasional use of the outdoor.
F3	Personal use (the mother's cookery business). Family activities.	Dinner time and Cookery classes
F6	Personal use (the father's study). Family activities.	Sleep and children study and play with friends.

Table 8. 3 Use of temporal and spatial remoteness in F1, F3 and F6.

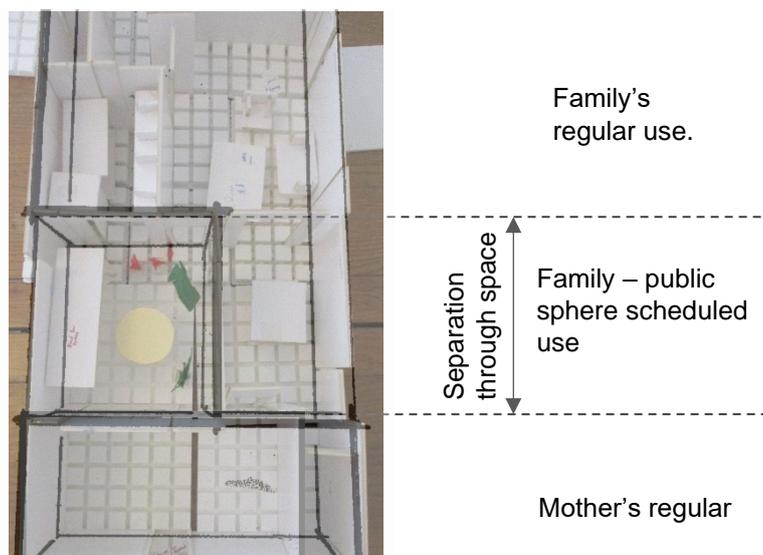


Figure 8.7 Spatial and temporal boundaries separating the Eco-pod from the family space. Photo of F1's model.

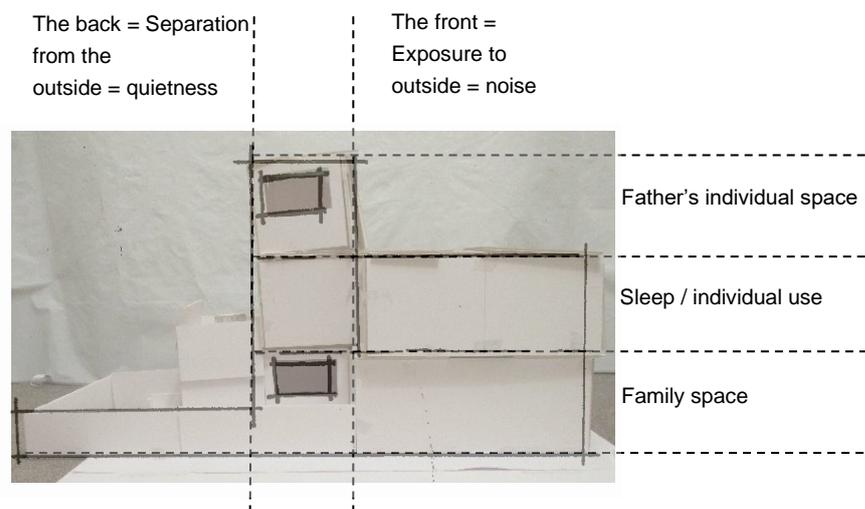


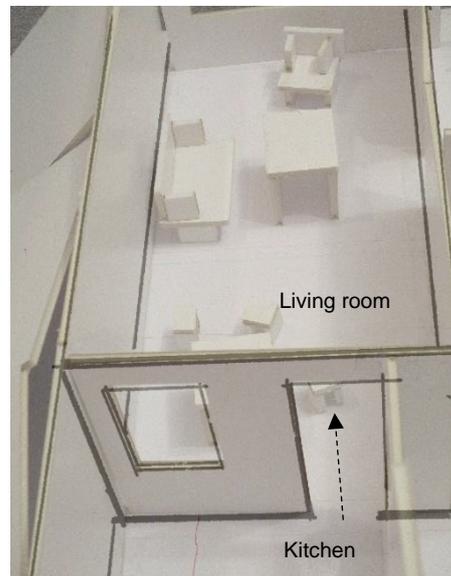
Figure 8.8 Vertical and horizontal spatial order for separating father's study from the family sphere. Photo of F6's model.

### ***Flow of movement through the proximity between spaces***

The spatial separation of interconnected activities was seen in cases when there was a need to obscure visibility between spaces. For example, separation between the living room and the kitchen was desirable either because of a dislike of the experience of the kitchen, as in F5, or due to the sensitivity of exposing the informality of the family kitchen to guests in the living room in F6 (see Figures 8.9 and 8.10). In other cases, the separation between family and children's spaces was needed to signify the children's ownership of a space or to enable control of children's movements. Consequently, the participants preferred placing physical boundaries to separate the spaces in both cases.

Despite such separation, the interdependence between each of the cooking and dining, and children and adults imposed the need for ease of movement between the separated spaces. Opportunities for supporting the flow of movement were seen through the proximity between spaces, which appeared as direct access

between spaces or via a shared transitional space. This was expressed by the participants of F5 and F6 when they explained their reasons for allowing direct access between the kitchen and the living room.



*Figure 8.9 Proximity between the living room and each of the playroom and kitchen enabled flow of movement between the kitchen and the guest's dining table in F6's model.*

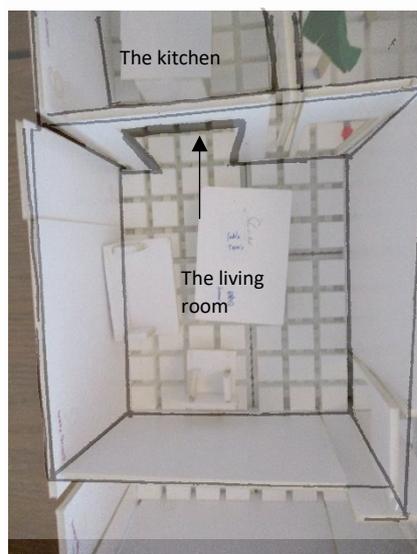


*Figure 8.10 Proximity between the living room and each of the playroom and kitchen enabled flow of movement between spaces in F5's model.*

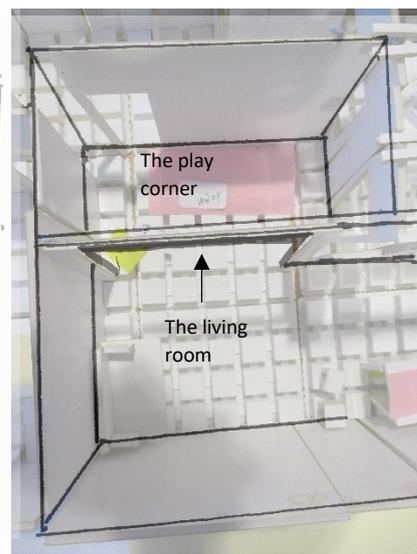
As indicated in Section 7.2.1, the participants' reconstructions of their flats also included situations when they needed to separate areas within the same space. In

these cases, the need for spatial distinction did not derive from the intention to separate zones of movement or visual exposure. Instead, the spatial distinction here aimed to articulate the sense of cosiness (see Section 8.2.1) and to maintain order in space (see Section 7.2.1).

In such light, the participants acknowledged the role of the experiential qualities in distinguishing between areas within open spaces. As reported in Section 8.2.1, boundedness was explicitly acknowledged as an attribute of distinguishing the cosiness of these corners. However, spatial boundaries, in this case, were manifested using arches that allowed movement and social connectedness (see Figures 8.11 and 8.12).



*Figure 8.11 Direct access for ease of movement between the living room and dining room in F3's model.*



*Figure 8.12 Direct access for ease of movement between play corner and living room in F2's model.*

This form of spatial differentiation illuminated the participants' response to the tension between separation and connectedness. The spatial manifestation of this tension appeared in both the relationship between the adults' time and children's playtime, and the relationship between cooking and family time. Nevertheless, the consideration of proximity and ease of movement – either through direct access or

flow via transitional spaces – when separating spaces informed the participants' differentiations between the behavioural and social dimensions underlying the need for connectedness.

To conclude, it can be assumed from the outlined variation of spatial relationships that the participants' reconstructions of their flats relied on a transformation from using the physical boundaries for regulating spatial relationships, to using variations in spatial relationships.

#### **8.4. Reproduction of space through time–space compression**

Another link between the opportunities perceived in the use of space and habitation conditions is magnified through the participants' attitudes towards time–space compression in their dwellings. While time scheduling provided a compromise for multiple uses of space where space was limited, this solution worked only when the required physical and sensual spatial qualities were available; for example, spaciousness that is just enough for moving comfortably with 'no need to be too big'. Softness and separation from the shared space of a 'corner' were common needs for both children's play and adults' physical exercise, as explained by the mother in F2, and provided an opportunity to accommodate both activities in the same space (see Figures 8.13 and 8.14). Similarly, the fathers in F1 and F5 found comfort in the living room sofa and accessibility to snacks in the kitchen and took the opportunity to use their living room as a study space while other members of the family were sleeping.

(B) Adult space: Relaxing space  
 - not bright → (light)  
 - Comfort → cosy/soft sofa.  
 (C) Sym. space, early in the morning/late in evening.  
 (D) space - not too size-conscious - enough for yoga  
 (E) Yoga separated from food time.  
 (F) Quality: Comfort → in terms of memory comfort  
 - Fresh air / brighter than social space  
 not noisy. / color → darkness → neutral:  
 according to sports.

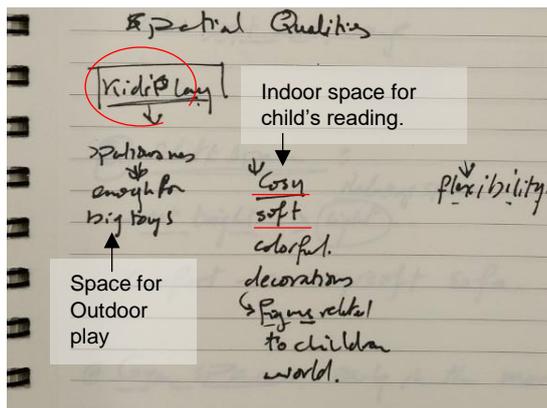


Figure 8.13 Direct access for ease of movement between play corner and living room in F2's model.



Figure 8.14 Representations of the child reading and yoga within the same corner in F3's model.

However, in the case of incompatibility between the habitation conditions and the uses scheduled within the space, the atmospheric qualities of the space could be controlled to layer multiple 'places' within the same space. In these cases, the control of sensual qualities – such as air quality, thermal comfort, lighting and sound – could create suitable conditions for different activities that were separated in time, as shown in the participants' narratives. The father in F5 described variations in the sensual qualities of the living room during study time (see Figure 8.15):

*So, let us say in the lounge. Especially the sofa. I prefer warm... it just makes [it a] little bit cosy for me... this just makes me cosy, concentrate better.*

and family time:

*Everything is relaxed... Spacious with plenty of light and this is almost perfect for it.*

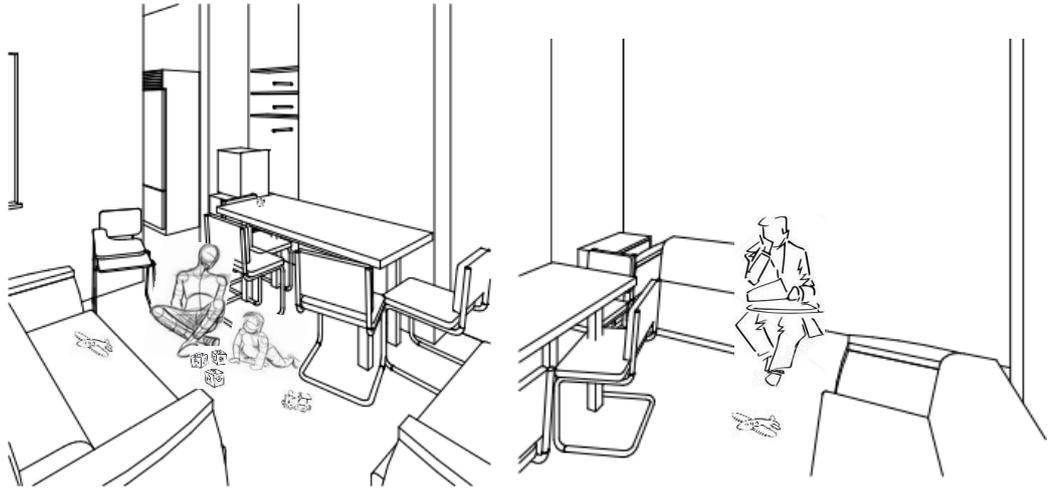


Figure 8.15 Different Experiences in F5's living room. (Left) the father playing with his son on the living room floor. (Right) The father studying on the 'comfortable' sofa at night after the baby's bedtime.

Similar variations appeared when comparing the descriptions provided by the mother in F1 of her relaxation time:

*I go into the big bedroom and I close the door to create a kind of sense of night time just because there's lights on through the house still and then I read in bed. [Then she points to each of the boundedness of the room and the lamp beside her when indicating spaces on the visual map].*

and working in her bedroom:

*I use this space more like in... if I do work in the morning from home. Because it's really bright. This is beautiful light in the morning, like if it's a sunny day and it's just a really nice uplifting room in the morning. So, if I am not going in to work, and I'm working here [at her desk in the big bedroom], I want to feel like I can see the postman or, like see, you know, see some human life.*

Similarly, time scheduling and patterns in nature, such as the sensual qualities associated with day and night, were also used by the mother F2, who enjoyed the daylight and quietness when spending her alone time in the living room during the early morning.

A variation in the spatial fields accompanying the different activities indicated the independence of the spatial structure of the lived space from pre-existing physical boundaries. Representations of the behavioural patterns, emotional dimensions and perceptions of spatial identities on the visual maps informed several ephemeral spatial fields associated with each activity. These findings show that the availability of space is not the only factor that can create opportunities to use the space. Hence, the reproduction of atmospheric qualities extends our understanding of the opportunities to use spaces by highlighting the role of the sensual qualities of spaces in enabling and expanding these opportunities.

Thus, the findings outlined in this section suggest aspects related to the role of space during the process of home making by depicting architectural qualities in a dynamic form inseparably from the social process of home making.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

The findings reported in this chapter show the interrelation between motivations and architectural features for creating opportunities when negotiating domestic space. The spatial restrictions imposed by the Tyneside flats amplified the impact of the body–space and object–space experiences on the opportunities for use of the spaces. This means that possibilities for accommodating different patterns of domesticity cannot be read without awareness of the nature of the accompanying socio-spatial practices.

Further, the interrelation between the created opportunities and body–space experience highlighted the active role of the inhabitants in reproducing the domestic ideals in their dwellings. This perspective points to the role of the sensual

attributes of space in extending the possible uses of space at different times, owing to the ability to control sensual qualities, such as lighting and temperature. Furthermore, considering the materiality of the architectural space in the light of the reported findings shows the impact of colour and tactility of objects on the participants' perception of spatial features. These findings amplify the role of individuals' agency in sustaining the dynamics of social processes through their actions on space.

Negotiations undertaken through changing the physical boundaries of the flats revealed the aspects of architectural indeterminacy through the changes carried out in the spatial structure of the Victorian Tyneside flats. The findings demonstrated change from the segregated spatial structure to the complexity of the spatial relations constructed to enable various modes of social connectedness. Additionally, it can be assumed from the change in the spatial boundaries of the flats that the integration of domestic architecture in social processes through behavioural adaptations and appropriations should not be taken for granted. Rather, accommodating changes in patterns of social relationships in family life may be accompanied by changes in the spatial structure of the dwelling.

Chapter 9

**Re-conceptualising the Dwelling Model**

## Chapter 9: Re-conceptualising the Dwelling Model

### 9.1 Introduction

The previous chapters depicted the contemporary dwelling as a process and a product of contemporary domesticity. Drawing on conflicts and suggestions raised through these findings, this chapter conceptualises the dwelling model through connections between the dwelling as produced through the individual's practices and the existing notions about the one shared space model. Such connections are synthesised by addressing the main research question of this thesis: *How does contemporary domesticity negotiate commonplace domestic architecture?* To answer this question, negotiations of the conception of commonplace are discussed in this chapter on two levels. First, by the explored spatial qualities of the contemporary dwelling model. By doing so, this section articulates manifestations of cultural change by highlighting aspects and processes of contesting the mid-twentieth century constructions of home-centredness through individuals' practices of domesticity. Second, by reconceptualising the dwelling model in the light of the socio-spatial processes discussed on the idiosyncratic and collective levels of domestic life.

This chapter highlights way of conceptualising the contemporary dwelling model alongside contextual and experiential aspects. This discussion connects the findings of this thesis about attributes of the contemporary dwelling as lived, produced and negotiated (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8) to the literature about both contemporary domesticity and conflicts arising from the one shared space model in the present time (see Chapter 3). Then, the findings of this thesis are related to the current views about commonplace as a construct of contemporary culture.

## 9.2 Restatement of the one shared space model

This section highlights connections between the micro level of the participants' spatial constructions and the spatiality of contemporary domesticity indicated in the literature (see Chapter 3). The proposed understanding of the contemporary dwelling is juxtaposed with the one shared space dwelling model developed in the mid-twentieth century articulated in the Parker Morris Committee report in 1961. Furthermore, this discussion highlights how the contemporary family dwelling may conflict with spatial scarcity (see Chapter 1). Specifically, it considers the differentiation between utility and relaxation, the significance of individuality and the need for private open space.

### 9.2.1 The distinction between utility and relaxation

The one shared space model is acknowledged in the literature as the representation of togetherness in the family sphere (Attfield, 2002; Dowling, 2008; Costa Santos et al., 2018). Nonetheless, restrictions experienced within this model are emphasised in cases of open-plan solutions that impose a state of connectedness that Attfield (2002) described as '*the political tension created by the juxtaposition of the terms "open" – meaning public and referring to "common" as in shared unconcealed – in contradistinction to private – coupled with "plan", meaning "with the intention to control" both conceptually, as in "to plan", or "to design".*' (Attfield, 2002, p. 250).

Interestingly, this critique is supported by the design approach taken by contemporary designers. Media reports<sup>15</sup> point out a shift from the open plan towards what designers refer to as the 'broken plan' (Cocoza, 2015; Heath, 2018). The change in the open plan as noted in the BBC show *The 100k House* (24<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Reports included statements such as:

'In 2018 I think we can expect to see the move from open-plan living to a more zoned approach' stated Daniele Brutto (Heath, 2018).

"Broken-plan living" is the new open-plan living' stated architect Mary Duggan (Cocoza, 2015).

February, 2016), the sensitivity of the relationship between the kitchen and living room directs the design towards creating a connected living space that maintains spatial distinctions between the different zones.

Broken-plan living: the evolution of open-plan layouts and zoning kitchen spaces

In alignment with the outlined scholarly critique and the approach taken by contemporary designers to reconfiguring the one shared space model, this section depicts a spatial distinction between symbolic and utilitarian uses in the shared space (see Figure 9.1). This discussion raises conceptual and functional aspects associated with the size of the family dwelling.

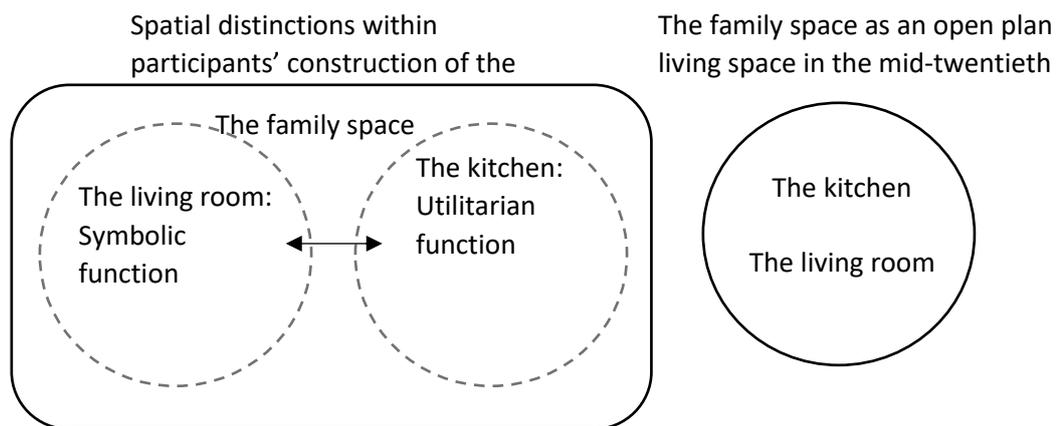


Figure 9.1 The duality of symbolic and utilitarian spaces in the family sphere constructed by the participants compared to the overlap between the kitchen and living room in mid-twentieth century open plan. Source: the author.

### **The heart of the house**

Scholars, such as Rechavi, (2009), specified the symbolic role of the living room in domestic life. Resonating with this point of view, the findings in this thesis show that the living room still manifests the conception of the home through representations of self-identity, intimacy and the temporality of the use of the living room. In such light, an association between the sense of homeliness and the

representation of the self resonates with the findings of Csikzentimihaly and Rochberg-Halton (1997), particularly when the father in F5 described how self-representation distinguishes between the feelings of being in a hotel and at home. The participants expressed self-representation at a material level through artwork, the use and exhibition of objects associated with their cultural backgrounds (including traditional food and an elaborate tea set), decorative taste, and the display of family photos (see Section 6.2.2).

The homeliness of the living room was complemented by the participants' spatial conditions that enhance informal socialising. Supporting Rybczynski (1988), my findings show how the participants associate this conception with their body–space experience through the sense of physical closeness and comfort that is achieved through furniture (see Section 6.2.4), such as with the sofa and a comfortable chair, and the defined boundaries of space (see Section 7.2.1). The participants' materialisation of homeliness in the living room was also associated with time. Expressions such as 'the heart of the home' (father in F5), or, 'I feel home when I enter this room' (mother in F3) (and see Section 6.2.4) when explaining the importance of the living room as a part of everyday life demonstrate how the frequent use of space cultivated the sense of attachment to home through the living room.

As well as emphasising the symbolic significance of the living room, the participants' socio-spatial practices and conceptions also articulated the identity of the living room as an adults' space. The participants' accounts described how the living room was used for children's play and for supporting childcare (Dowling 2008; Luzia, 2011; Cieraad, 2013; Stevenson and Prout, 2013); to facilitate social connectedness and play with older children (Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009; Leeuwen and Margetts, 2014; Michelin et al. 2013); and to set behavioural rules (McIlvenny 2009). Nonetheless, the distinction between children play and adults'

spaces in the participants' reconstructions of their flats demonstrates that a compromise is required due to the spatiality of the one shared space, and that the living room is primarily conceived as a space for adults where children are allowed in for socialising and play.

Notably, the criticality of the amount of space resulting from this spatial distinction supports Dowling's and Power's (2012) suggestion that '*bigger houses are a spatial accommodation of the complexity of contemporary middle-class family life*' (Dowling and Power, 2012, p. 616). This point of view supports the idea that extending the shared spaces in the participants' reconstructions of their flats provides evidence for challenging the conception of the open plan as a solution for overcoming the scarcity of space. Rather, spatial distinction form a significant aspect in the findings of this thesis that relied on architectural features, such as the geometric articulation of each space; spatial hierarchy in terms of size and significance of space; and finally, the spatial conditions created for both play and relaxation (see Section 7.2). These findings suggest that the one shared space model is not appropriate for contemporary domesticity.

### ***The liveable kitchen***

The participants' constructions of their kitchens depict an independent space for socialising in the family dwelling that stands alongside the living room. Reaffirming the modernists' manifestations of the liveability of the kitchen, as indicated by Cieraad (2002) and Attfield (2007), connectedness between spaces for cooking and eating formed a significant construct of the participants' kitchen life (see Section 7.3). In agreement with Supski (2017), the participants' kitchen life included practices also associated with the living room, such as listening to the radio, watching TV and communicating with their social network (see Section 6.3.2).

Despite such similarities, the utilitarian nature of the kitchen distinguished it from the living room. This distinction was expressed by the mother in F4 when describing her stress due to the overlap between the objects related to the kitchen and childcare and the living room setting (see Section 6.3.3). Furthermore, despite appreciating the informality and practicality enabled by the flow of movement between the living room and the kitchen (see Section 7.2.3), participants also expressed their need to obscure the utilitarian nature of housework in the kitchen from the experience of the living room. The kitchen, according to the participants' reflections, represented a space for engagement of housework, such as cooking and laundry, while maintaining social contact with other members of the family or close friends, as the father in F6 explained 'in Turkey [we] also be spent time in the kitchen – except preparing the food – for example drinking tea and have some conversation'. Such acceptance of informal socialisation in the kitchen further emphasises that housework related materiality is a salient aspect of this need for distinction between the kitchen and living room.

In other words, the refusal to integrate the living room and the kitchen to enhance socialisation articulates the significance of the identity of the living room. Here, it is useful to recall the criticism of Raymond Unwin describing the symbolic function of the parlour as being 'worse than folly' (Unwin, 1902, p. 11, cited in Ravetz and Turkington, 2006, p. 157). According to such a functional point of view, the parlour was not considered to be a useful space in a small working-class family dwelling and was replaced by the living room in model dwellings proposed by the Tudor Walters Committee in 1918 (see Figures 9.2 and 9.3) (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006; Turner and Partington, 2015; Stilwell, 2017). Nonetheless, examples of the incompetence of such a functional view are given by families described in Attfield (2002) who rendered the modern living rooms with objects representing the formality and respectability of the household (see Figure 9.4). Interestingly, the

outlined distinction of the identity of the living room replicates the significance of the symbolic space in the dwelling. In fact, the notions suggested in this section do not merely emphasise the cruciality of space in the family living room. Instead, and in line with the discourse about the appropriateness of the dwelling (Park, 2017), limiting the spatial qualities to the quantitative spatial requirements may bypass significant concepts, such as the duality of utility and relaxation within the family space.

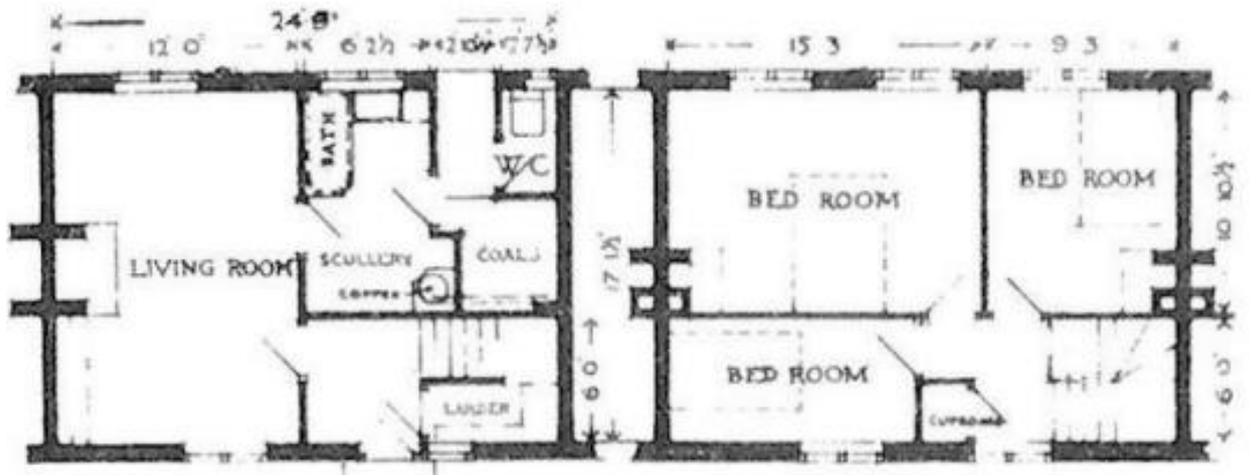


Figure 9.2 Model dwelling type 'B' proposed by the Tudor Walters Committee with the living room replacing the parlour. Source: Stilwell, 2017, p. 3.

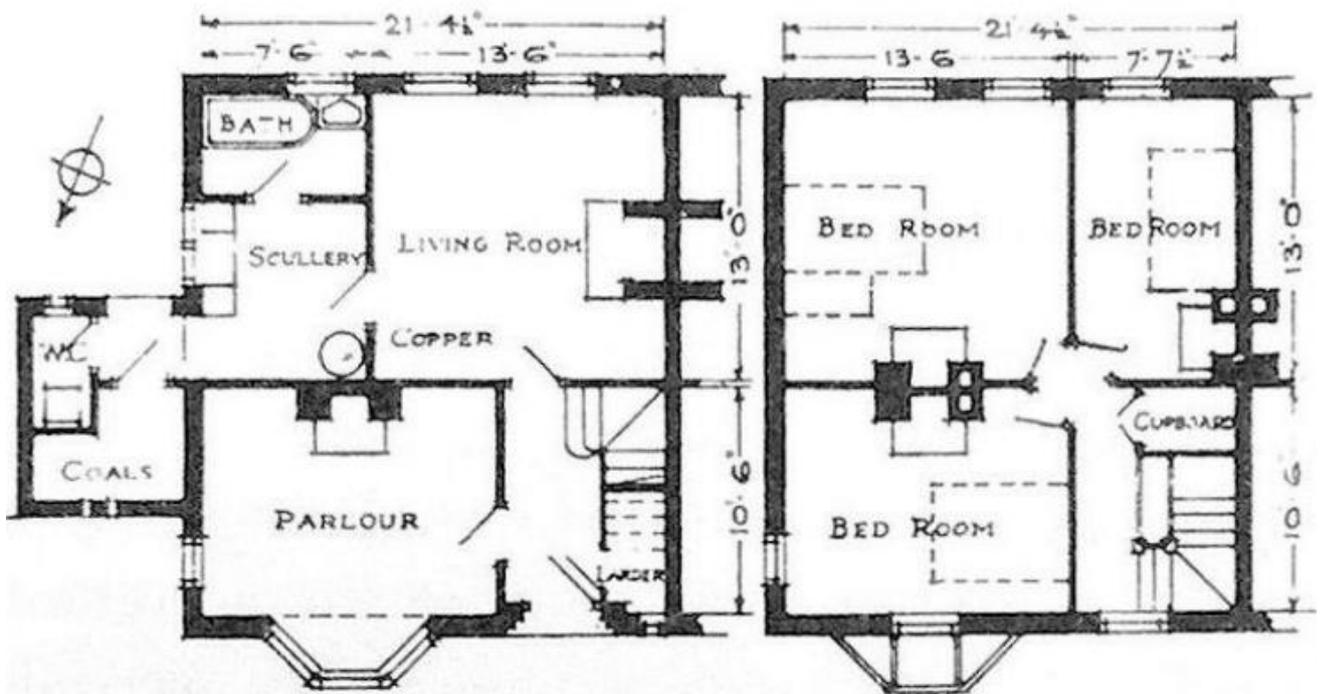


Figure 9.3 Model dwelling type 'C' proposed by the Tudor Walters Committee with the parlour and living kitchen. Source Stilwell, 2017, p. 3.



Figure 9.4 Reproduction of the parlour's furniture and decorative objects within the living room in Harlow. Source Attfield (2002, p. 255).

### **9.2.2 The personal space**

Evaluating the family dwelling according to the number of bedrooms (CABE, 2009) is indicated as a problematic aspect affecting the social equality in the accessibility to the appropriate dwelling (Morgan and Cruickshank, 2014). Findings about the personal spaces in this thesis propose that the obstacle limiting personal privacy lies in referring to personal space and the bedroom interchangeably. In the light of the limited knowledge about the features of the adults' personal space in contemporary domesticity (see Section 3.5.5), scholars such as Munro and Madigan (1993) and Madigan and Munro (2002) and Saunders and Williams (1988) found that children's bedrooms formed a salient personal space for children in the dwellings investigated in their studies. Alongside this limitation in knowledge, the prominence of bedroom culture studied in the literature about children's environments, such as Wilson et al. (2012) and Ilze (2014), articulated the significance of the bedroom as the children's personal space that represents the distinction between the children's environments and their separation from the 'outside' adults' world. Such notions limit possibilities of achieving personal space in cases when it is necessary for children to share bedrooms. Further, this principle does not hold for adults' bedrooms, given that, in most cases, this is a shared space. This discussion suggests notions about personal space: first, the adults' alone time is considered independently from their familial roles; second, various possibilities for achieving personal space in the dwelling are articulated.

#### ***The adults' needs for personal space***

Acknowledging the adults' personal space independently from representations of gender in this thesis is driven by the movement towards the liberation of women from their traditional space in the home (Cieraad, 2002; Pink, 2004). The absence of the conventional feminised identity of the kitchen appeared in Section 6.3.3 through including members of the family while managing housework (Cieraad,

2002; Jerram, 2011; Meah, 2016a). The sharing of the kitchen in the participants' accounts was accompanied by a lack of sense of ownership of the kitchen by either the mothers or the fathers. Even opportunities for engaging in personal activities within the kitchen, such as talking on the phone, were devoid of the sense of belonging or place ownership. Instead, such practices were explained by the mother in F1 as an attempt to transform the sense of isolation in the Victorian scullery into an enjoyable experience (see Section 6.3.2). In such light, reconstructing the kitchen during model making was devoid of intentions for dedicating a personal space for mothers.<sup>16</sup> Instead, enabling other family members to use the kitchen affirms the faded identity of the kitchen as the women's space in the dwelling.

It is also worth highlighting the way this neutrality in the representation of gender contrasts with some of the literature related to contemporary domestic architecture. This contrast is clarified by comparing the participants' accounts with the masculine identity of detached spaces indicated in Browitt's (2017) study about Australian houses. Two factors must be considered when making this comparison. The model making was carried out by the mothers in the participating families, while Browitt's (2017) findings were based on men's accounts about their use of their garages for personal time. Furthermore, the lack of available space – particularly compared to the houses studied in Browitt (2017) – may have reduced possibilities for constructing a distinct space for the fathers, if that was an unexpressed intention. The findings in this thesis relating to the representation of gender also disagree with the developer representations of gender in the model homes' showrooms in Chapman (2002a). A distinction between women's and men's spaces in the family dwelling was clear in Chapman's show dwellings, through the types of practices and decoration in the spaces dedicated to each

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<sup>16</sup> Excluding the mother in F3 who carries out her cooking business in her kitchen.

gender. Such inconsistency in attitudes towards the representation of gender in the dwelling demonstrates that the social construction of gender in contemporary domesticity is under dispute.

Beyond gender representation, the integration of work into domestic life shapes the adults' personal space in contemporary domesticity (Tietze and Musson, 2002; Jarvis, and Pratt, 2006; Kaufman-Scarborough, 2006; Park et al., 2011; Spinney et al., 2012). Boundaries regulating the relationship between work and family life form a salient attribute of workspace in terms of time (Tietze and Musson, 2002) and space (Kaufman-Scarborough, 2006). From this perspective, engaging in paid work at home dominated the participants' constructions of their personal spaces, as evidenced by the boundaries created between the personal and shared times to enable concentration and the use of equipment (see Sections 6.4.1 and 7.5). Alongside these functional aspects, the need for a sense of autonomy in the workspace motivated the participants to construct boundaries for their 'own' space in their flats (see Sections 6.4.1 and 7.5.2). Owing to this emotional dimension, the workspace in the home appears to resemble spaces where personal interests are pursued in terms of their significance for the participants. Here, time and physical boundaries may not be the only aspects demarcating between the personal and shared spaces. Rather, the findings of this thesis suggest that such separation is complemented by symbolic distinction through the display of personal objects.

The similarity between the adults' and children's needs for personal space is evident with regards to the children's need for autonomy and power to control their space (Ilze, 2014; Palludan and Winther, 2017). Alongside the need for such distinction, the participants also indicated that a dedicated space for older children enabled them to withdraw from the family and engage in individual activities. Despite the revealed variation of the meanings attached to the personal space,

these emotional needs suggest that the need for personal space in contemporary domesticity is shared among family members regardless of age – except pre-school children – and gender. This shared need also indicates the number of personal spaces required in the family dwelling, which leads to another conflict in situations of scarcity of space.

### ***Space for detachment in the family dwelling***

Variations in the levels of social connectedness needed during participants' personal time contribute to understanding the spatial structure of the contemporary family dwelling (see Figure 9.5). The need for remoteness associated with alone time in this discussion was identified by considering literature from environmental psychology that distinguishes between the imposed state of isolation and that of voluntary solitude (Newell, 1996; Pedersen, 1997, 1999). From this perspective, it is notable that the participants' adopted tactics for achieving the setting that allowed 'being alone' and 'unobserved' (Newell, 1996), and 'where other people cannot see or hear what [they] are doing' (Pedersen, 1999, p. 400). The participants also described the state of solitude while avoiding 'the negative aspects of separateness' (Newell, 1996, p. 91) that might be imposed by the spatial features of the personal space. Aligned with these views, temporal and spatial remoteness revealed through the participants' constructions of their personal space contribute to our knowledge about the contemporary dwelling by highlighting the criticality of the spatial aspects that enable detachment during alone time.

Notions about personal space are extended through the findings of this thesis by suggesting features that differentiate between the personal space and bedrooms. Remote spaces constructed by the participants took various forms that depended in nature on the personal practices and users; for example, the attic room, separate structures in the backyard, children’s bedrooms and playrooms (see Section 7.5). Accompanying the need for spatial remoteness was a tendency to avoid the feeling of isolation by maintaining visual connectedness with the surrounding context. Accordingly, large windows overlooking the backyard, or the surrounding urban area were indicated as preferable features for personal spaces (see Section 7.5.3). As is inferred from F1’ and F3’s backyard structures, another factor that differentiated personal space from the bedrooms is that the independent access to the outdoor space or the outside of the dwelling that enhanced the sense of autonomy.

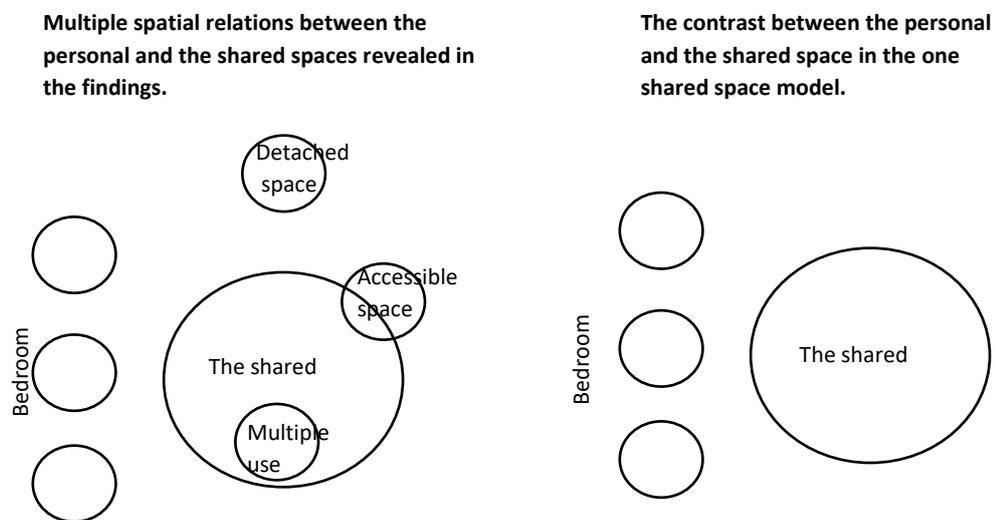


Figure 9.5 Multiple forms of the relationship between the personal and shared spaces suggested by this thesis compared to the contrast between the shared and personal spaces in the mid- twentieth century one shared space model. Source: the author.

Nonetheless, a contrast between the detachment of the adults’ space and the connectedness between children’s spaces and the shared space suggests that

age influences the need for personal space remoteness. In other words, the polarity between the individual and the family appeared in association with adults and adolescents. Most significantly, the features depicting the personal space show distinction from the bedrooms and indicate how the lack of features, such as independent access and visual exposure to a pleasant outdoor view, may restrict the use of the bedroom as a personal space.

The impracticality of dedicating a remote space for each adult and adolescent in the family amplifies the significance of temporal detachment from others during personal time. Accordingly, relying on temporal remoteness allowed the creation of a distinct personal space within a shared space, such as the living room or the bedroom, as the participants' compromise when spatial remoteness was not possible. We have seen this in Section 7.5.1 when the mothers in F1 and F2 dedicated spaces for themselves in the living room and bedroom, respectively. Similarly, the father in F5 dedicated a sofa in his living room for his own work and entertainment time, and to accommodate his personal objects. The association between these spaces and the sense of individual autonomy was further clarified in the way these spaces were used to spend time pursuing activities related to personal activities, such as hobbies and work. Nonetheless, relying on time for detachment from others in these cases also informs us of the possibilities of flexibility in the state of social connectedness during engagement in personal interests.

Relying on multiple uses for creating personal space within shared spaces also depended on the participants' awareness of the body–space experience needed for their alone time (see Section 6.4.1). As described by the participants, a comfortable setting relied on the lighting, thermal comfort and choice of furniture. During the model making, creating a cosy personal space was explained by most

of the participants as a means for enhancing their need for the feel of containment while being alone. Commonly, the participants constructed their cosy space relying on both the boundedness and the amount of space needed to accommodate the size of furniture they needed (see Section 8.2.1). Such placemaking tools adopted by the participants remind us that personal space is not only defined through the spatial separation of their rooms. In fact, the spatial character of the personal space and the variation of forms of spatial connectedness with the shared space represent its key constructs.

On a broader level, the findings discussed in this section extend our notions of the one shared space model to uncover the duality of individuality and togetherness in contemporary family life. In particular, the findings open the way for considering multiple ways to achieve personal space in the family dwelling (see Figure 9.5). These findings also challenge the conventional quantitative criteria that limit the possibilities of family living in a dwelling by the number of bedrooms. This approach not only forces financial restrictions on families when siblings must share rooms or when there is a persisting need for personal space, but it also restricts the means to achieve alone time to one spatial form – the bedroom. Accordingly, the contribution of the approach proposed through my findings relies on mitigating these restrictions by identifying spatial and temporal attributes that would fulfil the social and emotional needs associated with alone time.

### 9.2.3 Freedom and privacy in the outdoors and boundaries with the semi-public space'

The negotiated boundaries of the outdoor private space are discussed in this section to highlight a deviation from the dominant conception of the role of the back garden as a manifestation of the separation of family life from the community. As raised in Section 3.5.4, prevalent notions about the private open space are embodied in the senses of ownership and autonomy (Blomley, 2005); leisure, escape from labour and solitude (Bhatti and Church, 2000; Bhattie et al., 2004); and children's play (Alexander, 2002). Nonetheless, the association between freedom and the backyard seen in the findings indicate a change in the boundaries of the back garden (see Figure 9.6) that are discussed in this section to highlight new ways of considering the family dwelling.

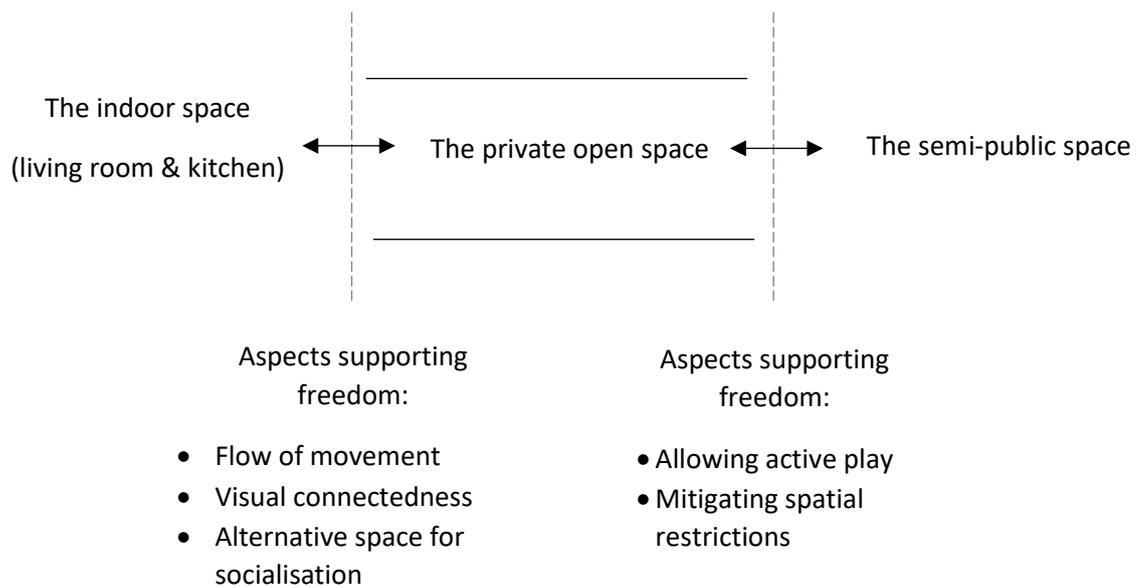


Figure 9.6 Manifestation of freedom through the spatial connectedness between the private open space and both the indoors and the semi-public spaces. Source: the author.

#### ***The connectedness between the indoor and outdoor spaces of the dwelling***

The back garden embodies an emotional significance in the family sphere due to the sense of wellbeing associated with interactions with nature (Freeman et al.

2012; Cervinka et al. 2016) and opportunities for solitude (Craig, 1989; Bhatti and Church, 2000, 2004). However, my findings reveal how creating a spatial flow between the living room and the private outdoor space enhances freedom in the family dwelling (also discussed Section 9.2.1 in relation to parenting needs). Freedom here is partially constructed to extend the choices of spaces for socialising and to mitigate restrictions imposed by the indoor environment. This role has been enabled by a change in the boundaries from the separation between the backyard and the indoor space of the Victorian model to a flow that allows direct access and visual connectedness between the spaces (see Chapter 8). This need was further emphasised during model making when the participants replaced the existing windows with doors that would allow the flow of movement between the living room and the backyard. The significance of this connectedness was magnified when the mother in F3, who lives on the ground floor, suggested a spatial solution for enabling direct access between the indoor and outdoor spaces in the first floor Tyneside flats. Providing an alternative space for socialisation within the backyard was also reinforced by replicating the spatial conditions of the living room, such as ensuring tidiness, using nature to reflect personal aesthetic taste and enabling physical comfort (see Section 7.4.1).

The need for freedom in kitchen life also influenced the participants' reconstructions of the boundaries between the backyard and kitchen. This finding deviates from Alexander's (2002) views about the utilitarian uses associated with the connectedness between the kitchen and the back garden. Instead, extending kitchen life into the backyard, in this case, complements the image of the liveable kitchen through the flow of movement and visibility between the kitchen and the outdoor space. This form of connectedness was particularly depicted through the outdoor sitting spaces created near the access to the kitchen (see Section 7.4.1). This aligns with Supski's (2017) depiction of the liveable contemporary kitchen as

having an '*essential link to the garden*' and that when '*the doors were opened, and the space became an extension of the "sociable kitchen"*' (Supski, 2017, p. 236).

Questioning the role of other forms of private open spaces, such as patios, terraces and balconies, is inevitable when regarding the reconstruction of the boundaries between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This question is proposed in consideration of the dualities of nature and culture, and indoors and outdoors (Alexander, 2002), that have been challenged by the findings of this thesis. Aesthetically, harmony between the indoor and outdoor spaces was created when the participants used nature in their decoration and maintained the tidiness and neatness of the outdoor space (see Section 7.4.2). The need for comfort also motivated the participants to reproduce the spatial conditions of the living room within the backyard by building structures for shelter from the weather and including comfortable furniture outdoors. Such aspects of connectedness suggest a complementary role taken by the backyard in supporting the sense of freedom in the dwelling. Accordingly, questioning alternatives to the back garden in this section not only aims to provide solutions for situations of the scarcity of space that limits a back garden in the family dwelling, but also challenges the domestic ideal represented by the back garden (Bhatti and Church, 2000; Bhattie et al., 2004; Blomley, 2005).

### ***Subtle boundaries between the dwelling and the semi-public space***

The participants' need to allow freedom for active movement (see Sections 6.2.4 and 8.4.2) impacts our consideration of alternative private outdoor spaces. The size of the private outdoor space is another feature revealed in this thesis that shaped the constructions of the boundaries between private outdoor spaces and semi-public spaces. In the case of the Tyneside flats, the limits to active play due to spatial restrictions of the backyard led to the participants' welcoming the use of

the back alleys for older children's play. In alignment with these findings, the residents' willingness to interact with the community within the back alleys described in the study of Martin (2002) was also related to the shortage of space inside their dwellings. However, such porosity in the boundary between family life and the public sphere was impacted by external factors, such as the sense of insecurity and the undesirable environment created by the presence of refuse bins. These findings contribute to indications about the social construction of the back alleys raised by Martin (2002) and Moreau (2017). A recognisable association between using the back alleys and play (see Section 8.4.2) suggests the need to shed light on specific aspects of the parents' and children's needs during play in the outdoors.

Deviating from conceptions of the back garden as a representation of the separation of family life from the community, these views indicate a reproduction of the integration between the family life and the community within the Victorian backyard (Ravetz and Turkington, 2006). Nevertheless, suggesting such an interface as a solution for mitigating the limitation of space of the Tyneside flat opens the way for further enquiries related to the role of the semi-public space in extending alternative housing solutions for families. Most significantly, such negotiation of the boundaries between the family sphere and the community also emphasises the need to coordinate between the urban and architectural design of the residential environment.

Here, it is plausible to connect these propositions with problematic aspects of contemporary family housing issues. Particularly, the impact of spatial restrictions imposed by high-density development on the size of the back garden of the family dwelling. Accordingly, new boundaries for the private open space, as indicated in

this section, may open the way for new solutions that would support the sense of freedom in the family domestic life.

### **9.3 Cultural change and the criticality of space in the contemporary dwelling**

Resonating with Rapoport's (1983) views about the sensitivity of the features of the dwelling to cultural change, this thesis identifies the attributes of the spatial structure of the contemporary dwelling that conflicts with the one-shared space model. Despite indications from the literature about the continuity of the home-centred lifestyle (see Section 3.2), the inadequacy of the mid-twentieth century family dwelling for accommodating the participants' lives has been indicated in relation to the spatiality of parenting styles and personal time spent in the dwelling (see Sections 6.2.4 and 6.4, respectively). In such light, a gradient of forms of social connectedness – as seen in this study through the varying spatial relations within the participants' reconstructions of their dwellings (see Section 8.4.3) – is suggested to contest the polarity between the individuality and togetherness underlying the structure of the one shared space model (Hardey, 1989; Munro and Madigan, 1993; Madigan and Munro, 2002). The separation between the family and public spheres accompanying the home-centred lifestyle forms another intrinsic construct of the mid-twentieth century family dwelling that has been challenged by the spatial structure revealed through the findings in this thesis. The tendency towards creating spatial connectedness between the private open space of the dwelling and immediate semi-public space was shown to challenge the spatial restrictions imposed by the size of the dwelling (see Section 8.4).

Alongside the outlined aspects of change, this thesis revealed trajectories to theorise features of the contemporary dwelling rooted in the context and experiential dimensions of domestic practices. The outstanding impact of the

scarcity of space within the context of the study amplified conflicts and suggested solutions due to the criticality of the spaciousness associated with the socio-cultural constructs of contemporary family life. In reference to Serfaty-Garzon's (1985) note about the distinction between homemaking process and technical or ephemeral changes (see Section 2.3.2), this qualitative perspective amplified the distinction between the utilitarian and symbolic spaces as an aspect that conflicts with the scarcity of space. However, solutions for extending possibilities for family housing under such spatial restrictions are also postulated by challenging spatial constructs of the mid-twentieth century ideal, specifically, the suburban detached house (Brimley, 2002). Such possibilities are suggested when highlighting both the incongruity between the bedrooms and the personal space in the dwelling (see Section 9.2.2) and alternatives to the back garden when revealing its connections with the interior of the dwelling and surrounding semi-open space (see Section 9.2.3).

Connections between the shared mid-twentieth century ideal and the participants' practices only appeared through what Rendell (2011) describes as 'critical spatial practices', where transformations and redefinitions of space are only created by the individuals' reproductions of the shared socio-cultural ideals. Contesting the spatial structure of the mid-twentieth century dwelling model in this thesis offers an application of Bourdieu's (1977) centralisation of the role of the individual in the process of cultural change.

#### 9.4 Reconsideration of the dwelling as a context for reproduction of domestic ideals

This section particularly focuses on limitations and possibilities that may accompany the reproduction of domestic ideals within the dwelling. Addressing indeterminacy of space in this thesis originated from the need to understand and criticise the spatial process associated with the inhabitants' reproduction of their

dwellings. Accordingly, this section discusses the spatial dynamics, revealed through findings in Chapter 8, in relationship with the discourse about indeterminacy of space and the individuals' agency in reproduction of domestic space.

#### **9.4.1 Indeterminacy in the dwelling place**

Indeterminacy of architectural design forms the pivotal concern in architectural discourse that addresses means of supporting individual's agency (Habraken, 2000; Hertzberger, 1991, 2015; Schneider and Till, 2009; Awan et al., 2011). However, spatial qualities and processes revealed through the findings also indicate that supporting the individuals' agency in re-producing the dwelling is not an inherent attribute of architectural space. Relying on features revealed in Chapters 7 and 8, an approach for identifying aspects of indeterminacy in domestic architecture is proposed in this section in consideration with the spatial qualities associated with the intersection between the physical architectural features and social and experiential dimensions.

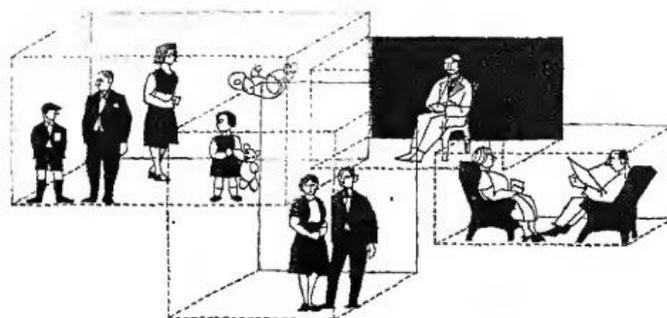
Spatial conditions were fundamental to the participants' interpretations of opportunities to accommodate their domestic life in the Tyneside flats. As seen in Section 8.4.1, this approach to dealing with space was inferred from the differences between the spatial representations of the back and front duality when explaining the reason for accommodating the activities performed in each zone of the flat. For example, the separation of the Victorian front room from the family space was seen as an opportunity for detachment from family time during study and older children's play. Otherwise, the direct access between the Victorian scullery and living room enabled connectedness between the adult performing housework and other members of the family – particularly children. Accommodating new practices within the pre-existing space in this way resonates with Hertzberger's (2008) reference to the 'suggestive' spatial conditions that were

constructed by the participants through architectural features, such as proportion (Hertzberger, 2008; McCarter, 2016); the assemblage of architectural details (Hertzberger, 2008); and sensual qualities (Pallasma, 2014). Nonetheless, cosiness and spaciousness represented salient spatial conditions associated with the participants' differentiation between the various practices of domesticity, such as the distinction between objects and body–space experiences associated with the uses of each of the cosy corners and spacious living room (see Section 7.2). This approach was also recognised through references to the size of toys and by specifying active play when explaining the spatial restrictions hindering the use of the backyard in Section 7.4. Reading possibilities of use within a dwelling from this perspective also suggests the role of the spatial structure of the dwelling in enabling various domestic practices. In this sense, acknowledging spatial relations did not merely rely on physical elements such as walls and partitions. The participants' physical models resonate with Hertzberger's (2008, p.83) references to spatial distance as a factor shaping spatial relations. This resemblance was inferred through a gradient of forms of social connectedness that included both spatial and temporal detachment of the personal spaces from shared spaces, as well as the spatial distinction between uses within an open-plan solution (see Section 8.4.3).

The complexity in the way participants reconstructed their flats – either during the everyday lives or through their models – to allow a variety of uses support theoretical propositions in Habraken (2000) about the means to maximise the inhabitants' control over the spatial structure. According to Habraken, the type of the spatial boundary has impact on the inhabitants' mode of habitation of space on the behavioural, social and experiential levels. Resonating with Habraken (Op. cit.), the need to consider the nature of boundaries for enabling indeterminacy of

the spatial structure was apparent through the variations in the type of boundaries associated with the participants' actions on space as indicated in Section 8.3.

These findings suggest corresponding to the debate about the incompetence of measured spatial standards in providing the adequate spatial quality in housing (Park, 2017). The findings of this thesis also extend the approach taken by the Parker Morris Committee (1961) in proposing functional neutrality when addressing diversity in domestic architecture (see Figure 9.7). This thesis extends this approach by relating the existing notions about indeterminacy of space to the changing socio-cultural ideals of domesticity. Particularly, by considering the spatial conditions in relation to objects and body-space experiences. This perspective opens the way for reproducing use and the identity of space by relating the pre-existing spatial conditions to the patterns of behaviour (Rapport, 1990) and use of objects (Attfield, 2000; 2002, 2007; Forty, 1992; Silva, 2003; Hand et al., 2007) associated with such changing domestic ideals.



*Figure 9.7 Liberating space from pre-determined function proposed by Parker Morris Committee report (1961). Source Parker Morris Committee Report, 1961, p.6.*

#### **9.4.2 Limitations hindering space from supporting social change**

There is a wide acknowledgement that a dwelling represents a milieu for the reproduction of domestic ideals (Gregson and Lowe, 1995; Walker, 2002; Blunt, 2005; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Costa et al., 2018). This has been informed by the

material appropriations on the dwelling by studies that address materiality in the home, such as Attfield (2000, 2007), Miller (2001b) and Mackay and Perkins (2019). The interest in illuminating the architectural aspects supporting such changes directs the discussion in this sub-section towards reasons that might be behind the failure of attempts to redecorate or reorganise the setting to accommodate changing domestic practices (see Section 8.4.2).

Attitudes towards spatial restrictions in domestic environments were particularly reflected in participants' narratives about their search for ways to mitigate the spatial restrictions that they experienced in bedrooms and the backyard. Examples included participants' search for opportunities for active play in the back alley, the use of the large front room for active or social play that could not be accommodated in children's bedrooms, as well as other uses, such as study and practising hobbies. This approach aligns with Schneider's and Till's (2005, 2007) explanation of the restrictions imposed by the tight functional fit of space, and their explanation of the role of having 'slack space' in supporting the social reproduction of space in domestic architecture. This point of view is further clarified in my findings through the participants' attempts to expand the space of their dwellings in their model making – either vertically, by including additional floors to their flat, or horizontally, by adding new structures in the backyard.

Practically, the outlined architectural features suggested to extend the possibilities of the use of space in domestic architecture explain the failure of the Tyneside flat in sustaining its original use as family dwelling. Despite the availability of enough beds, the misfit of the lives of the participating families within the Tyneside flats was only identified through the consideration of modes of habitation and materiality associated with their socio-spatial practices.

The lack of inhabitants' power in taking action on space in the case of the Tyneside flats amplified the need for architectural intervention in situations of accommodating dwellings designed during different domestic paradigms. Compared to the extended possibilities for reproducing ideals related to kitchen life when the participants in the study of Hand et al. (2007) were able to expand their kitchens, the integration of the Tyneside flats with contemporary family life is hindered due to restrictions related to the cost-effectiveness of change or the type of tenure of the participants' residence in their flats. This situation highlights the way in which distribution of power among the actors involved in the housing system – inhabitants, developers, authorities – impacts the integration of space in the social process. In other words, the findings in this research show that enabling the reproduction of the domestic ideals within the existing commonplace is not an inherent attribute of architectural space. Instead, such cases require the awareness of aspects affecting the inhabitants' ability in making spatial change.

Practical implications for sustainability of residential environments are also inferred in relation to the mismatch between the Victorian and contemporary domesticity indicated in this thesis. (see Section 8.4). The participants' reconstructions of their flats through their physical models mandate the need to consider architectural spatial processes alongside material appropriation of the dwelling in situations of change in domestic paradigms. Disregarding architecture when addressing dynamics of socio-spatial processes results in what Keith (2007) calls the 'obsolescence' of residential environments. Resonating with Awan et al. (2011) and Bouzarovski (2016), the findings of this thesis represent another evidence clarifying the need for considering individuals' agency in the transformation of commonplace inseparably from the context and other actors involved in the implementation of housing.

## 9. 5 An alternative understanding of the dwelling model

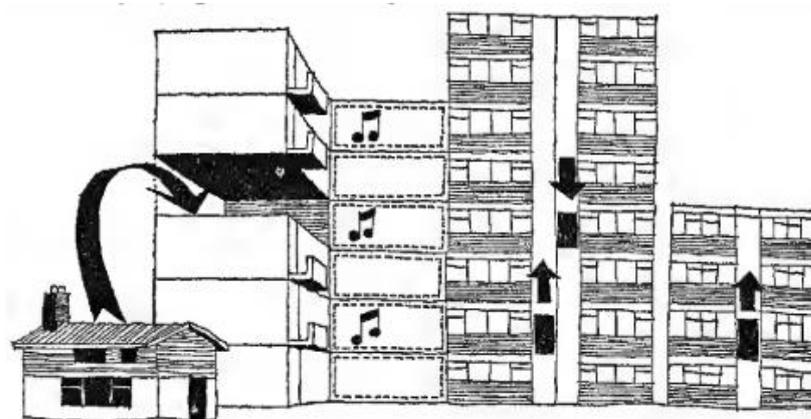
The preceding sections of this chapter link contextual and experiential issues related to the individuals' homemaking processes to existing knowledge about contemporary dwelling model. This section raises conceptual issues associated with the understanding of commonplace domestic architecture (see Figure 9.8). In doing so, this discussion responds to features of the spatiality of domestic practices as an intrinsic construct when building connections between the individual and collective conception of the contemporary dwelling model proposed in this thesis. Particularly, by discussing the way the spatial qualities of the dwelling explored in this thesis provide new trajectories for conceptualising the dwelling model as a manifestation of domestic practices.

Relating the dwelling model to domestic practices was a significant concern directing the Parker Morris Committee back in 1961 in its challenge to the conflict between the idiosyncrasy of domestic life practices and the collectiveness of the dwelling model. Accordingly, a focus on qualities of spatial conditions directed their approach:

*... the specification of standards of space by reference to individual rooms with specific labels – bedrooms, working and dining kitchens, and so on – tends to assume a conventional arrangement of the dwelling and the particular way a given room will be used. This inhibits flexibility both in the initial design and the subsequent use of a dwelling... As a result [,] this report is not about rooms as much as it is about the activities that people want to pursue in their homes... This approach to the problem of design starts with a clear recognition of these various activities and their relative importance in social, family, and individual lives, and goes on to conditions necessary for their pursuit in terms of space, atmosphere, efficiency, comfort, furniture and equipment; organising together those activities that demand it; separate those which cannot be carried on together or near one*

*another; considering frequency, time and sequence as well as place.* (Parker Morris Committee, 1961, p. 4).

This approach aligns with the findings of this thesis in identifying space independently from pre-determined uses. Accordingly, the findings in this thesis extend understanding of the contemporary dwelling model through intersections between the changing aspects of domestic life, such as time, behaviour, social interaction and emotions from one side, and the fixity of architecture from the other side. Such intersections were revealed in Chapters 7 and 8 through the reading of the opportunities associated with architecture and the participants' practices. Away from pre-determined model of spatial functions, these findings suggest the possibilities of reading the dwelling model according to the spatial qualities associated with the intersections between dynamic socio-cultural constructs of domesticity and physical features of different architectural spatial solution.



*Figure 9.8 Suggesting flats as smaller form of the house in Parker Morris Committee report. Source: Parker Morris Committee report (1961, p.28).*

The individuals' constructions of their dwellings in this thesis allowed seeing socio-cultural change relying on connections between the idiosyncratic and collective conceptions of domesticity, as addressed by scholars such as Somerville (1997),

Attfeld (2000), and Miller (2001a). Accordingly, the alignment between the literature discussed in Chapter 3 and the findings of this thesis, in terms of practices associated with parenting style, personal time, and the need for the sense of freedom in domestic life, affirm socio-cultural aspects of change from the mid-twentieth century to the contemporary dwelling. Constructing the spatial structure of the dwelling through the performative and sensual aspects of the individuals' experience extends our understanding of the spatiality of the socio-spatial practices with regards to the complexity of the family shared space (see Section 9.2.1); the variety of forms of personal space (see Section 9.2.2); and the role of the semi-public space in mitigating spatial restrictions imposed by the size and design of the dwelling (see Section 9.2.3).

These findings align with the stream of literature that studies socio-cultural constructs constituted in the materiality of domesticity. In similarity with Pink's (2004) and Silva's (2010) studies about change in constructions of gender in domestic life, the detected aspects of change did not emerge as a sudden transformation. The explored attributes of distinction between one shared space the contemporary dwelling model were also immersed in the multiple emotional, social and contextual dimensions when being produced and re-produced during domestic practices. Looking at space being produced and performed through its integration in social processes also allowed extending beyond the abstract structural form when representing change in the dwelling model (see Section 2.2). Instead, the findings contribute to highlighting the change in the structure of the one shared space dwelling model through the spatial qualities that result from the interrelation between the performed domestic practices and the architectural space. From this perspective, the findings contribute in providing another evidence that considering the role of the individuals' constructions of culture is inevitable.

Indeed, the dwelling model, through the discussed social and spatial constructions in this chapter, represented a product at the individual level of the homemaking process undergone by the participants. In alignment with Duncan and Duncan's (2004) views about the need for 'acknowledging the inherent fluidity, heterogeneity, complexity, and fragmentation of cultures' (Op. cit., 2004, p. 396), reading space in relation to the performative nature of domesticity also allowed the identification of the dwelling model as representation of the reality of domestic life in certain society.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

This discussion highlights the way existing conceptions about commonplace domestic architecture are negotiated by practices and socio-cultural constructs of contemporary domesticity. Relating the participants' re-constructions of their flats to the literature about contemporary domesticity and the one-shared space model of the mid-twentieth century confirmed distinctive spatial qualities characterising the contemporary dwelling model. A suggested restatement of the one shared space model in this thesis relies on the revealed complexity of the shared living space, the distinctive spatial conditions associated with the explored personal space(s), and the porosity of the boundaries of the private outdoor space. Then, relating the one-shared space model to these spatial attributes affirms indications about change in socio-cultural aspects of domesticity, particularly in terms parenting style and the nature of the personal time spent in the dwelling. However, the participants' accounts of their home making processes investigated in this thesis does not merely provide evidence that supports indications about challenging the mid-twentieth century one shared space dwelling model. Instead, such connections revealed trajectories to theorise features of the contemporary dwelling model rooted in the contextual and social dimensions of domestic

practices. The outstanding impact of the scarcity of space within the context of the study amplified conflicts and suggested solutions due to the criticality of the spaciousness associated with the socio-cultural constructs of contemporary family life.

This discussion also conceptualises commonplace inseparable from attributes of the process of its production. The body–space relationship associated with negotiating the pre-existing space amplified the possibilities of integrating the dwelling in the social processes of domesticity. Such emphasis on the role of dynamic social and experiential aspects implies replacing conceptions about the technical approaches for enhancing the flexibility of space, such as those of Brand (1994) and Habraken (1999), with varying spatial conditions and complexities of spatial structure that would support the sustainability of domestic architecture (Hertzberger, 1991, 2014; Habraken, 2000).

A conceptual framework about commonplace in the context of domestic architecture is proposed in this discussion. In light of the individuals' domestic practices, the dwelling model that represents the reality of domestic life at a certain time and place is explored the detachment from predetermine physical architectural elements. Instead, the fluidity of the intersections between the social and the physical attributes of architecture envision the dwelling model as a unique constituent of culture that is identified by contingencies and openness to change in the relationship between people and place.

Chapter 10  
**The Negotiated Commonplace**

## **Chapter 10: The Negotiated Commonplace**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This final chapter of the thesis reflects on the developed conceptions of commonplace domestic architecture as they relate to different issues raised in this investigation. Section 10.2 returns to the answers provided by the findings and the discussion to the main enquiry and the three research sub-questions and relates them to the theoretical and contextual dimensions and the research gap raised in chapter 1. Similarly, the proposed conceptions of the commonplace are discussed in the light of practical and theoretical dimensions of the duality of idiosyncrasy and collectiveness in the context of contemporary domesticity. The chapter then moves to reflect on the limitations of this thesis and its implications for practice and theory. I also share reflections on my own experience of this research by discussing both my experiences as a researcher and the impact of the research journey on aspects of my personal interest.

### **10.2 Thesis recapitulation**

This thesis journey is guided by exploring contemporary dwelling model relying on relating the micro and macro levels of domesticity. Through this inquiry I did not aim to criticise the power relations underlying the provision of contemporary dwellings, nor did I aim to extend participation channels for wider sectors of the society in the design and provision of housing. Rather, I intended to envision the individuals' spatial constructions of their domestic lives to better understand the difficulties in providing appropriate dwellings for contemporary families. In this section, I summarise this research journey and interlinkages between the questions and theories that led my investigation.

The division between architectural and socio-cultural considerations when addressing housing and culture was pivotal in developing the philosophical positions taken in this research. An architectural and cultural research approach traditionally addresses the dwelling in its representational form. This approach envisions commonplace domestic architecture as a representation of ideational and social constructs of domesticity through an abstract model of the spatial structure of a dwelling (see Section 2.2). Criticised by scholars, such as Duncan and Duncan (2004), this approach implies the reduction of the impact of the individuals' practices during the reality of domestic experience on the conception of the dwelling. This representational form was seen to limit the ability to capture the progression of culture. Another research approach elucidates dynamic geographies associated with domestic practices (see Section 2.3). Nevertheless, the abstract form of the lived spaces explored in such research left a gap between the notions of these abstract geographies and the physical architectural form of the dwelling.

Relying on the three sub-questions of this thesis, I reported how individual agency can reveal spatial constructions of the contemporary dwelling model: first as abstract spatial fields, then as architectural constructions. Through this exploratory process, I also reported socio-spatial processes associated with the reproduction of the architectural space, indicating the active roles of the inhabitants, objects, and architecture in this process. This investigation addressed conflicts associated with the existing conceptions of commonplace architecture and domesticity (see Section 2.2). Relating the findings to scholarly discourse in Chapter 9 illuminated the contribution of this thesis in extending the understanding of dimensions of this conflict: first, the notions of the spatial qualities of the contemporary dwelling model; second, spatial challenges associated with the scarcity of space and contemporary domesticity; finally, the limitations challenging the individuals'

agency in the reproduction of domestic ideals. Reflecting on this research journey ended with a statement about the dwelling model in the context of contemporary domesticity, and as a generalised cultural concept.

### **10.2.1 New geographies in the home-centred family life**

Portraying the layers and flows of lived spaces created while accommodating the participants' domesticity in the Victorian dwelling was my first step towards exploring the commonplace. During this phase, I did not look at uses of each room separately to read the lived space created in the participants' flats. Instead, I explored fields of practice by immersing myself in the multidimensionality of the participants' experiences. Accordingly, critical gathering and personal spaces were constructed as micro geographies produced and reproduced through the participants' routine negotiations with space, independently of the physical boundaries. In these lived spaces, the social and emotional dimensions motivating these negotiations revealed the utilitarian and symbolic spaces in the family dwelling (see Sections 6.3.2 and 9.2.1). The active role of objects in materialising the meaning of these distinctions was also seen; for example, the dining table and sofa were associated with the sentiments related to shared time (see Section 6.2.2). We have also seen the way personal belongings were used to signify ownership of personal spaces (see Section 6.4.1). Spatial restrictions in the Tyneside flats amplified the role of temporal boundaries and informed spatial relationships between different domestic practices. Most evidently, temporal boundaries informed the detachment of the personal space from the shared space in the contemporary dwelling, as this separation could not be achieved by relying solely on the spatial or material (see Section 6.4.1). In other situations, the spatial interdependence between different practices was informed through behavioural and material manifestations of flow between different spaces. This flow was seen between the kitchen and the living space during the adults' engagement in

housework (see Section 6.3.2). The children's pattern of movement and use of toys also demonstrated the fluidity and connectedness between the living room and play space. The ways in which the fields of the lived spaces transgressed the boundaries of the dwelling, showed the fields of the participants' domestic practices within the surrounding context. The participants' narratives depicted the boundaries between the public and private spheres through descriptions of the children playing in the back alleyways outside the boundaries of the dwelling (see Sections 6.2.4 and 8.4.2).

The approach of tracing the fields of participants' practices has been followed in housing research, such as that of Attfield (2002, 2007), Pink (2004), Luzia (2011), Cieraad (2013), Stevenson and Prout (2013), Petite (2015), Olesen (2010), Petite (2015), Costa Santos and Bertolino (2018) and Costa Santos et al. (2018). However, in reference to theories that have addressed the spatial structure as an embodiment of culture (see Section 2.2), looking at the lived spaces in this thesis sought to depict structural relationships between these fields. The complexity of the human experience of space has been considered in this thesis by looking at the way socio-spatial practices define these relationships through emotions, time and modes of social interaction. In such light, the interrelations between children's play and adults' spaces were elucidated through the need to maintain proximity to children while reserving a relaxed space for adults. Distinction in this case was only detected through the difference between the orderliness of objects associated with children's play and of those related to the living room (see Section 6.2.4). In contrast, the differentiation associated with spatial separation was only explained when the participants related their temporal detachment during personal time to the need for quiet and to avoid distraction. Depicting spatial relations through the multidimensionality of social experiences in this thesis contributes to knowledge in architectural research about the embodiment of culture through spatial structure.

Appropriations of space associated with the revealed spatial fields were not considered to be the end product of spatial negotiations. Instead, seeing appropriations of space as processes informed the understanding of the constructed critical geographies through their connections with motivations and practices (Rendell, 2011). Micro geographies depicting personal spaces in the living room, for example, were only detected when the participants explicated the need for quietness during personal time. Similarly, the dining table's significance for the family gathering was associated with the care given to food preparation for family meals and manifested by its relocation to the centre of the living room at dinner time (see Section 6.3.2). These findings support those of Serfaty-Garzon (1985, pp. 10-13), in that understanding the meaning of appropriations is essential to differentiate between instrumental actions on space and the homemaking process.

The identification of themes during the investigation of spaces in their abstract form was the first step towards addressing the main research question, as they provided evidence of the individuals' agency in reproducing the commonplace. First, the themes enabled the reading of the participants' architectural constructions created through their physical models. Second, they supplemented the existing knowledge about the spatiality of contemporary domesticity (see Chapter 3) with further details about the spatial and temporal relations between different domestic practices.

### **10.2.2 The extra space in the contemporary family dwelling**

Reading the participants' architectural constructions through their socio-spatial practices and physical models extends understanding of the contemporary dwelling model and explains difficulties facing the provision of suitable dwellings for contemporary families. Architectural representations of the participants' imagined dwellings offered access to the spatial conditions associated with

contemporary domesticity that might be missed through verbal expression. The integration between the verbal, visual and physical expression of architecture allowed the construction of spatial conditions of domesticity through the interrelation between objects, sensual features, spatial relations and proportions. In accordance with scholars, such as Hertzberger (2008), Pallasma (2014) and McCarter (2016), the findings of the thesis contribute to the understanding of the contemporary dwelling model (see Section 3.5) by emphasising the role of architectural qualities – particularly the spatial relations and size – in shaping the spatial conditions associated with the proposed dwelling model in Chapter 7.

The findings of spatial conditions associated with contemporary domesticity in the UK reinforces the evidence about the significance of the spatial distinctions in the family dwelling and the conflicts that may arise in situations of space scarcity as proposed in the work of West and Emmit (2004) and Power and Dowling (2012) conducted in Australia. The similarity between both contexts was evident through the multiplicity of spatial distinctions revealed through the findings. However, the findings also contribute to this point of view by indicating possibilities for mitigating implications of spatial restrictions on family domesticity. This contribution was seen through evidence provided by the findings about possibilities of accommodating personal time in spaces other than the bedroom relying on multiple forms of spatial relations between the personal and shared spaces (see Section 7.5, 8.3.2, 8.2.2 and 9.2.2). Proposing opportunities for mitigating the spatial restrictions in this thesis also relied on the participants' acceptance of using the semi-public space for active play (see Sections 6.2.4 and 8.2.3).

These findings respond to the critique on the quantitative approach taken in the UK for addressing the space scarcity (see Section 1.2.3). By providing a structural form of the contemporary dwelling that is depicted through the interrelation between its architectural features and domestic practices, this thesis contributes

towards filling the gap in understanding about ways in which extra space would fit in the design of the dwelling (see e.g. HATC, 2006; Roberts-Hughes, 2011).

### **10.2.3 Individuals' agency and domestic architecture**

Understanding the duality of idiosyncrasy and collectiveness in domesticity required consideration of indeterminacy in the design process. By exploring processes that inform spatial aspects supporting the reproduction of domestic ideals, the findings in this thesis contribute to knowledge in the field of indeterminacy of space, by providing a critique of the spatial dimensions associated with accommodating contemporary domesticity within the existing housing stock.

Experiences and reproductions of the participants' flats have shown the more varied the spatial conditions and more complex the spatial relationships, the more possibilities there tended to be to accommodate diverse uses. When seeking to identify the participants' perceptions of the opportunities that enabled their uses of space, the role of various spatial conditions in this process was initially noticed through the participants' awareness of the distinction between the separation, spaciousness and brightness of the front of the dwelling on one side, and the connectedness and centrality of the back of the Victorian structure on the other side. Similarly, when creating possibilities for the use of space during model making, the participants tended to accommodate their various domestic practices by creating a hierarchy of spaces that included a main shared space complemented by cosy corners. The spatial relations in these models also included spatial integration, direct access and proximity, or spatial remoteness of separated spaces. These findings support Venturi's (1965) and Norberg-Schultz's (1987) critique on approaches to supporting indeterminacy of space in architectural design (see Section 2.4), by providing evidence of the way complexity may enable different uses of space in the domain of domestic architecture.

These examples also show that the inhabitants' agency in reproducing domestic space should not be taken for granted in housing research. Incongruity between the spatial manifestations of the Victorian back and front duality and the centrality of the shared space in the findings suggested further limitations to the reproduction of domestic ideals in commonplace. From the participants' physical models, we have seen how accommodating contemporary domesticity within their flats required extending the space of the dwelling to include new spatial components, such as the living room<sup>17</sup>, play space and the liveable kitchen, that were not present in the Victorian dwelling. We have also seen the change from the segregated Victorian spaces to the connectedness of the spaces constructed in the participants' models. Thus, the changes carried out during model making demonstrated the inhabitants' latent power in reproducing the dwelling through appropriation of space on the material level. These findings contribute to the research stream that focuses on the active role of the dwelling in enabling the reproduction of the domestic ideals (see Section 2.2.4) by illuminating the role of the architectural elements in revealing the change in the spatial structure of the dwelling. The outlined spatial processes also contribute knowledge to housing research by providing evidence that the approach and methodologies taken for investigating the inhabitants' negotiations with their dwellings should consider limitations and possibilities affecting changes made in both the material and the architectural constituents of space.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, criticising the broader circumstances influencing family housing delivery does not lie within the scope of this thesis. However, these findings make reference to this research context due to the constraints imposed on the inhabitants' domestic practices within their dwellings.

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<sup>17</sup> *Shared spaces in the Victorian family dwelling was divided into back and front zones. A living kitchen at the back accommodated cooking and the family's everyday gathering during mealtime. In contrast, the front room of the dwelling was dedicated to formal socialisation with guests (see Section 5.2).*

Within this study, the participants' reasons for not making such changes, including evaluations of cost-effectiveness and the type of tenure, showed how external forces could be in tension with the inhabitants' ability to make change. As well as illuminating indeterminacy in relation to design features, the findings highlight the way that the inhabitants' power to accommodate their lives within the commonplace is in itself controlled by actors, such as designers (Attfeld, 2000; Till, 2005), decision-makers (Petrescu, 2005, Awan et al., 2011), and market forces (Awan et al., 2011).

#### **10.2.4 Commonplace as a representation of the reality of domestic life**

The contemporary domestic practices reported in this study contribute to a conceptualisation of commonplace domestic architecture by constructing connections between the collectiveness and idiosyncrasy of domestic life (see Table 10.1). On the general perspective of culture, the thesis proposed an approach for conceptualising commonplace architecture by offering an alternative understanding of the dwelling model. Addressing the context of contemporary domesticity directed the thesis towards exploring the contemporary dwelling model through three aspects of deviation from the mid-twentieth century family dwelling and challenges facing practices of contemporary family domesticity. Exploring the dwelling model through the individuals' domestic practices illuminated a way for identifying the spatial qualities of the dwelling model independently from pre-determined architectural form.

The researched theoretical gap	Theoretical approach	findings	contribution
<b>Exploring the spatiality of contemporary domesticity:</b>			
- The gap between the understanding of the social construction of the one shared space model and contemporary family domesticity.	Exploring the spatial structure that represents the duality of individuality and togetherness in contemporary domesticity.	-Complexity of the family shared space. -Variation of the spatial relations between the personal and shared space. -Variation of the spatial conditions associated with the personal time. -The significance of the private outdoor space for supporting freedom in domestic life.	-Restatement of the one shared space model according to the practices of contemporary domesticity.
<b>Exploring individuals' agency in reproducing domestic ideals:</b>			
-The gap between the existing understanding of the inhabitants' reproduction of domestic ideals relying on material appropriation and spatial reconstructions relying on actions taken on the spatial structure of the dwelling.	Exploring space through the duality of the fixity of architectural space and dynamics of the domestic social processes.	-Possibilities and limitations associated with the reproduction of domestic ideals. -Spatial and socio-cultural dimensions associated with changing the spatial structure of the dwelling.	-Providing an evidence-based critique of the spatial dimensions associated with accommodating contemporary domesticity within the existing housing stock. -Evidencing the need to consider constraints and possibilities affecting changes made in both the material and the architectural constituents of space when designing a methodology when investigating inhabitants' negotiations with their dwellings.
<b>Re-conception of the dwelling model</b>			
-The gap between the abstract form of representing the spatial structure of the dwelling model and the reality of the socio-spatial practices of domesticity.	-Addressing the dwelling model through the duality of the idiosyncrasy and collectiveness of domestic space. -Exploring the dwelling model through the individuals' socio-spatial practices of domesticity.		-Representation of the dwelling model through the spatial condition supporting contemporary domestic practices.

Table 10. 1 Phases of proposed construction of commonplace in the context of contemporary domesticity.

In such light, the revealed deviations from the idealised mid-twentieth century family dwelling model has guided the conceptualisation of the contemporary dwelling model in this thesis as spatial conditions created through the participants' negotiations with their flats (see Table 10.2). In such light, multiple forms of spatial distinction in the shared family space (see Sections 7.2 and 9.2) indicate a deviation from the existing conception of the one shared space model that was only explored through the spatial relations and the aesthetics of space. For example, the distinction between the utilitarian identity of the kitchen and tranquillity of the living room represents one of the aspects of the complexity of the shared space in the family dwelling. The complexity of the shared family space was also revealed through the distinction between the children's play and adults' spaces in the living room. This approach for conceptualising the spatial structure of the dwelling model even highlighted the significance of the criticality of space due to the need to keep spatial connectedness between these distinct spaces to enhance the sense of freedom in the contemporary dwelling. While the findings evidently reserve the centrality of the shared family space, these distinctions contest the restricted state of socialisation imposed by the one shared space model (Attfield, 2002) – either the in the form of a separate living room or an open-plan layout (see Figure 9.2).

The faded distinction between men's and women's spaces of the mid-twentieth century dwelling (see Sections 3.2 and 9.2.2) was indicated within the proposed spatial structure through the variety of forms of personal spaces, other than the children's bedrooms. Depending on the sense of autonomy and state of social connectedness, personal spaces were revealed in the findings either as spatially remote, spatially connected or even spatially overlapping with the shared spaces (see Sections 7.5 and 9.2.2). Distinguishing characteristics of personal space revealed cosiness, connectedness to the outside context and comfort to be the

spatial conditions needed during the inhabitants' engagement in personal activities (see Sections 7.5 and 9.2.2). These findings do not relegate the criticality of the personal space within the proposed structure of the contemporary dwelling model. Rather, the findings reinforce its significance through the multiplicity of personal spaces associated with various personal activities introduced into contemporary family life (see Section 6.4.1).

Most strikingly, motivated by the children's needs for active play, the demarcation between the family sphere and the surrounding context in the home-centred life was contested by allowing children to play in the back alleys (see Sections 6.2.4 and 8.4). The way in which the back yard supported a sense of freedom in the dwelling by offering alternative social spaces indicated that the nature of the private open space – including all definitions demonstrated in Section 1.4.4 – in a dwelling should be reconsidered. Such indications about subtle boundaries of the private open spaces lead to questions about the new role of the semi-public space in contemporary family domesticity, as well as the integration of different forms of private open space in the dwelling. With respect to the concern of this thesis about the impact of the scarcity of space on the quality of space in family dwellings, this change in the boundaries of the private open space provides further evidence that the mid-twentieth century family dwelling model needs to be revisited.

The spatial structure of the one shared space model	The spatial structure of the proposed contemporary dwelling model
The living room as the only shared space	Complexity in the shared space due to: -Distinction between the space utility of the socialised kitchen and the tranquillity of the gathering in the living room. -Distinction between the children play space and the adults' space.
Personal space represented through multiple bedrooms	-Significance of the bedroom for the adolescents' autonomy. -Multiple forms of the spatial relationship between the personal and shared spaces for adults and young children,
Separation between the dwelling and the outdoor public space	-Intersection between the family life and the public within a semi-public space.

*Table 10. 2 Aspects of deviation from the one shared space model of the mid-twentieth century.*

Revealing aspects of cultural change in the context of contemporary domesticity, the thesis resonates with Rapoport's (1983) argument about the need to 'identify those elements of the built environment which are supportive to the core cultural elements' (Rapoport, 1983, p. 256). Accordingly, and despite the depicted repertoire of complex spatial relations and conditions, this thesis contributes in highlighting the way the duality of the personal and family spheres characterising the existing notions of the family life still played a prevalent overarching role in shaping the family dwelling. This resemblance was particularly apparent in the findings which were still dominated by family and personal spaces, thereby restating the core architectural manifestations of home-centred family life inseparably from the reality of the contemporary family domesticity.

On the broader level of cultural theory, this thesis contributes to the conception of the representation of the dwelling model as constituent of culture (Rapoport, 1969, 1990; Lawrence, 1982, 1990; Kent, 1990). This thesis proposes re-conceptualisation of the dwelling model as 'commonplace' in order to integrate into this concept the reality of domestic life within a certain time and place. This conception depicts the spatial structure of the dwelling model in relationship to spatial conditions that were constructed in this thesis through the intersections

between architectural features, such as spatial relations, lighting and thermal comfort, and each of the material and behavioural aspects related to the contemporary domestic practices. Considering undetermined intersections between the individuals' social practices and space also opens the way for considering variations in architectural solutions for intersections between space and the subtle variations in of the individuals' reproductions of collective ideals of domesticity. Conceptualising commonplace from this perspective suggests that the dwelling model is not identified as an end product. Instead, commonplace domestic architecture specifically represents a case of an open-ended space produced and reproduced according to the possibilities created and negotiated through the relationship between people and place.

### **10.3 The original contribution to knowledge**

The knowledge constructed in this thesis contributes to understanding of the contemporary dwelling model in three ways:

- a) The thesis contributes to the field of housing and culture (see Section 2.2) by depicting the spatial structure of the dwelling model through the interrelation between the architectural qualities and the reality of domestic practices. This proposed reconceptualization of the dwelling model deviates from the abstract depictions of the spatial structure of the dwelling model in existing studies within this scholarly stream. This contribution was facilitated by the approach taken in this thesis in relying on the idiosyncratic practices of domesticity in building understanding of the spatial model that represents the collective conception about domestic life within a certain time and place.
- b) This thesis aligns with housing research that addresses aspects of the spatiality of contemporary domesticity such as Attfield (2002, 2007), Hand and Shove (2004), Blunt and Dowling (2005), Blunt (2005), Luzia (2011),

Cieraad (2013) and Stevenson and Prout (2013). However, the thesis contributes to this scholarly stream by highlighting distinctions between the contemporary and mid-twentieth century, one shared space model. Despite similarities between the models in terms of the duality between the personal and family spaces, the multidimensionality and criticality of the individuals' spatial practices revealed the complexity of the contemporary dwelling through multiple emotional and social geographies, and forms of boundaries. Particularly, the findings contest the polarity between individuality and togetherness in the one shared space model by depicting the spatiality of a gradient of forms of social connectedness through a variety of spatial relations. The deviation from the mid-twentieth century family dwelling was also suggested through the findings about acceptance of the overlap between the family domesticity and the surrounding semi-public space.

- c) This thesis contributes to the body of research into the spatiality of domestic practices, such as that of Gregson and Lowe (1995), Graney (2001), Attfield (2000, 2002, 2007), Walker (2002). The findings resonate with Costa Santos et al. (2018) specifically by addressing the reproduction of the modern dwelling model through the domesticity of contemporary households. However, existing knowledge about contemporary domesticity draws on the abstract form of lived spaces that results from the inhabitants' behaviour and appropriations for exploring the lived space. Accordingly, including model making in the methodology of this thesis contributes methodological knowledge by looking at the inhabitants' actions through changes made to the physical elements of architecture, such as walls and openings. This method enabled exploration of the participants' actions on

space by eliminating external constraints that might restrict changes they would like to make in their dwellings.

d- The approach taken in this research was guided by Bourdieu's (1977) vision and the theoretical postulations of Duncan and Duncan (2004). In housing research, this contribution extends the views of Valentine (2001), Somerfield (1997), Attfield (2000) and Miller (2015) about the need to destabilise the boundaries between the individual and collective knowledge of domestic space. This thesis contributes to this theoretical strand by demonstrating and evidencing an approach to integrating architectural and social methods for investigating the abstract philosophical connections between the micro-level of the individuals' practices and the macro-level of socio-cultural ideals.

#### **10.4 Limitations and evaluation of the developed knowledge**

Overtness in discussing the quality of the knowledge developed in qualitative research is an essential aspect of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Spencer et al., 2003). Accordingly, in this section I reflect on limitations to the transferability of the findings (also see Section 10.8) and the extent to which the research question has been answered by this thesis. As explained in Section 4.13, in order for the findings from the qualitative approach followed in this thesis to be transferable, both the investigative procedures and the phenomenon being studied were described thoroughly (Silverman, 2003). Being open about specific criteria supports transferability (Spencer et al., 2003) by allowing the reader to decide the 'fittingness' of the findings to other settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Quinn, 2002, p. 584). Accordingly, the following specific aspects should be considered when relating the outcomes of this thesis to other research contexts.

First, the experiences of the small number of participants of this research do not represent a generalised pattern of domestic practices. Instead, the sample was chosen to highlight the multidimensionality of the participants' experiences. As explained in Section 4.13, the quality of the revealed themes was evaluated based on their plausibility in relation to the reviewed theoretical background and triangulated using multiple methods.

Second, the impact of my voice – as the researcher – on the developed knowledge, the design and direction of the research, and the interpretation and representation of the findings was related to my background in architectural practice in the residential field (more details on my position as a researcher in Section 10.5). This experience resulted in my interest in augmenting architectural dimensions associated with the developed notions about the commonplace. My voice was also affected by my prior experience of family living in the Tyneside flats that allowed me to notice potential conflicts related to this enquiry. To embrace the impact of my perception of the narratives during the analysis, I expressed my voice through the visual representation of the participants' experiences and explained my prior experience of living in the flats. Aspects of my subjective voice were also shared during conversations with my supervisor at different stages of the development of this thesis.

Transferability of the outcomes of the study should also be approached in consideration of the methodology and fieldwork process that are described in different contexts of this thesis. The following represents a brief overview of these aspects:

- a- The Tyneside flats represent a context specific solution of the Victorian working-class dwelling model, namely, the Victorian terraces. Accordingly, relating these findings to other Victorian dwellings should be attended with

consideration of the specific features of this housing type and their impact on the findings as explained in the thesis.

- b- The snowball sampling process used, impacted the socio-cultural group reached through my social network. My position as a researcher who is new to the community of Newcastle, resulted in a difficulty in recruiting participants who would engage in fieldwork that would examine their life in such depth. The participating families were also engaged in either academic or art-related positions, and many were also in a transition phase in their lives and were not planning to live permanently in their Tyneside flats. As such, these circumstances do not represent generalised living conditions of the residents of the Tyneside flats. However, exploring their domestic lives in these flats still informed the reason behind both the failure of these flats to accommodate contemporary family living, and critical spatial aspects of contemporary family domesticity.
- c- The variation in the participants' reactions to having a researcher visit their flats resulted in the absence of materiality related to everyday life during some of the home tours. In some cases, recording these aspects of everyday life relied on the participants' descriptions, which may have varied from reality. Owing to this limitation, the plausibility of the narrated experiences was assessed through their consistency and alignment with the literature.
- d- Despite the adequacy of the employed tools, their application in the fieldwork imposed some limitations that affected the nature of the collected data. Most models constructed by the participants were only one floor high despite their freedom to construct additional floors. Indeed, the participants explained social reasons for their interest in exploring solutions to family flat living. However, the difficulty and duration of the task discouraged them

from exploring other possibilities. Accordingly, different outcomes of the model making activity may have emerged if using a kit that could overcome this limitation.

- e- Despite the importance of reflexivity in enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative data analysis (Spencer et al., 2003) and the participatory research approach (Spinuzzi, 2005; Bergold, Thomas, 2011), the length of time of both the engagement in the research and data analysis limited possibilities for gaining the participants' feedback on the knowledge developed in this research. Gaining reflections from the participants or external audience through a participatory event was planned at the final stage of the research which was not possible due to restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- f- The model making activity was mostly made by the mothers. This implies limitations in including the fathers' and children's conceptions about the anticipated space in their dwelling. Specifying the age and gender of the participants in further research may reveal further dimensions about the contemporary dwelling.

### **10.5 Personal reflections**

I started this research project with personal questions related to my position as a researcher/architect and researcher/former inhabitant of the Tyneside flats. These questions were constantly revisited at different stages of this research journey to observe changes in my point of view and the relationship between the research and these questions.

As I clarified in chapter 1, I approached this research with a question about my role as an architect when practising in the context of domestic architecture. During my early career – 20 years ago – I recognised a conflict between my aspiration for

innovation and individuality as a designer, and the clear, repeated visions that clients had for their homes. I did not realise at that time that this conflict was in itself a result of a transformation from the authority of the designer towards the consideration of the users' participation in design. A similar situation occurred during data collection. I had expected the model making to be carried out in collaboration between the participants and myself so I was surprised about the participants' clear visions of what they wanted to do in their flats. In fact, I sensed that any solution I proposed would feel like an interruption to their process of thinking, and to their enjoyment of imagining how their flats would look after remodelling. I realised at this point the way that the for-grantedness of the inhabitants' body-space and object-space experiences of their dwellings gave them the position of '*enthusiastic amateurs*' (Longfield, 2014, p.231) who link the process of design to the vividness of their life experiences. In this situation, I also realised the designer's position as a facilitator who supports the integration of the inhabitants' visions into design. In such light, my background in architecture might have also facilitated the realisation of the architectural dimensions underlying the participants' stories in this thesis.

During the research, while collecting the narratives and conducting the model making, the participants' engagement in the construction of the architectural space mirrored phases of clients' engagement in design during my experience of architectural practice. I recalled how the clients were engaged in conversations both about their routines and how they used their dwellings at the initial phase of the projects, and onsite when they could get the feel of how their body and objects would be situated in space. In the interim design phase, the clients were less reflective than during the initial and construction phases. This similarity informed me of the necessity to consider methods of engaging the users in the design process – either in participatory research or architectural practice – and to consider

the way body–space and object–space relationships suggested possibilities for the use of space.

The design of the methodology, particularly the narrative approach, was influenced by my attachment to architecture as a gateway for seeing and imagining real-life stories happening in place. This personal interest in the relationship between stories and place was furthered through my experimentation into visually representing my imagination of the participants' stories in Chapter 6. My enjoyment of this experiment motivated me to question the dominance of the verbal expression of narratives in architectural research despite the richness of the sensual, social and emotional aspects of the spatial experience that could be gleaned through visual representation. I also realised how the participants' engagement in visual representation could extend their active role in the research process. However, I could not go beyond this limited experiment due to the limitation of this project's resources and the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 situation.

Explicating my voice in the research exposes the dynamics of power between the researcher and other actors involved in the research. During the literature review, an objective tone was adopted to prioritise qualities of space within the raised arguments. At this phase of the research, I felt that the influence of my voice was limited compared to the existing knowledge about space. I also preferred the objective voice when demonstrating the findings in order to represent the dominance of the participants' role in the construction of the proposed findings. I was open to including my subjective voice during this phase when I realised unexpected findings or connections with instances from outside the field. My subjective voice was also used during the explanation of the methodology design and discussion of data to express my view of the originality of these phases of the research.

As I clarified in the thesis, case study choice was partially directed by my past experience of living in a Tyneside flat. I was surprised by the similarity between my own and the participants' questions about why these flats were not comfortable despite having all the necessary functionality. In fact, this question was also related to my former experience of living in a smaller flat in which we never felt such discomfort as a family. I realised my personal insights about flat living during the investigation and I revisited them at every phase of the research to find answers and to examine how they affected my voice during data collection and analysis. As explained in the data analysis procedure (see Section 4.14), I repeatedly revised my field notes and sketches to examine my own reflections on them at different stages of the research. I also shared my views about my experience during conversations with my supervisor at different phases of the research to clarify the implication of my experience on my approach to each phase of the research. I also maintained closeness to the participants' views by relying on photos of their flats and models alongside texts during the data analysis.

## **10.6 Implications for housing research**

This thesis contributes to the body of literature by providing a thorough description of the conception of commonplace dwellings in general and contemporary dwelling model in particular. The findings of this thesis highlight each of the personal space, space for children's active play and the private open space as attributes in the contemporary family dwelling that conflict with situations of scarcity of space. Writing up this thesis during the situation of Covid-19 supported its findings due to the exacerbated implications of the absence of these spaces, which deprived people of lower socio-economic groups of the possibility to 'work from home' (Meenakshi and Guleria, 2020, p.9), and made it more difficult to maintain children's (Rundel, 2020) and adults' (Amerio et al., 2020; Carmona et al., 2020)

wellbeing during the extended time spent in the dwelling. This thesis explains conflicts associated with experiences of contemporary domesticity by highlighting attributes of the family dwelling. Accordingly, further research in the following directions would provide deeper understanding:

a- Work is associated with the nature of the personal space in the family dwelling. This thesis proposes that different types of work were associated with variations in the spatial and temporal boundaries of the personal space. Difficulty in relating this finding to existing knowledge was experienced in this thesis due to the gap between housing and business management research in the knowledge about the workspace in the home. Further research into the spatiality of 'work[ing] from home' (Kaushik and Guleria, 2020, p.9) is required.

b- New boundaries of the dwelling raised in this thesis are reinforced by the indications of Salama (2020) and Devine-Wright et al. (2020) about the destabilised boundaries of the home during the lockdown in 2020. Overlap between family life and the immediate surroundings has already been raised in research outside the UK such as Martin (2001) and Moreau (2017). However, further examination of the inhabitants' social and spatial constructions of the immediate context in the UK is needed for exploring means of mitigating the impact of the spatial restriction inside the dwelling on the children's and adults' wellbeing.

c- As mentioned in the limitations of transferability in this study in Section 10.5, the snowball sampling procedure relied to some extent on the range of my social network. An opportunity for further research on this topic is suggested if another researcher were to carry out the same procedure, voices from other economic and socio-cultural groups may have been included.

d- the dwelling as a designed product in contemporary domesticity implies considering the designers' role in representing and hence shaping ideals embodied in the dwelling model. Despite constructing the ideals revealed in this

thesis primarily from the residents' voices, designers are depicted in the literature as mediators of ideals that serve predetermined targets (Wright, 1991; Attfeld, 2000). Other scholars question the designer's position through his or her immersion in the social context as a 'citizen architect' (Longfield, 2014). Noticing similarity between the findings and designers' views in section 9.2.1 was based on my observation, as a designer and a researcher in the field of housing, of the trends and views about the design of the contemporary dwelling. This preliminary observation triggers an enquiry about the designer's role in the development of the ideals of the contemporary dwelling model. First, by investigating the designers' conception of the contemporary dwelling. Then, by investigating how these conceptions are related to the householders' own. Finally, such a connection also implies investigating the role of the designers' visions in constructing the contemporary dwelling model.

## **10.7 Practical recommendations for the design of the contemporary family dwelling**

### **10.7.1 Design aspects related to space scarcity.**

The following new insights emerged from consideration of contextual forces, such as the scarcity of space and the need to support diversity in residential environments:

a- The distinction between the bedroom and personal space for adults and young children in this thesis opens the way for consideration of situations when alone time only requires time boundaries to achieve detachment from sources of distraction. The thesis also indicate the need to consider complexity in the design of spaces in the dwelling when specifying cosiness, comfort and connectedness

to the outside as spatial conditions needed for accommodating personal time in a shared space such as the family living space or a shared adults' bedroom.

b- The appreciation of both the attic room as a personal space and locating the children's bedrooms on the first floor indicates the role of vertical separation in supporting personal remoteness. This form of spatial detachment explains the preference for houses over flats, even if having similar floor area, for family living, as the proximity of the bedrooms to the living space, in the participants' views, does not support either individual autonomy or detachment from sources of noise.

However, the findings also indicate that vertical solutions are not able to resolve conflicts between spatial scarcity and the multiplicity of distinct spaces required in the shared space. Vertical separation between spaces contradicts the need for a flow of movement between the living room and kitchen (see Section 9.2.1). Another limitation of the vertical solution is related to subtle boundaries between the private outdoor space and each of the kitchen and living room. A vertical solution in this case would restrict the sense of freedom associated with the spatial continuity between these spaces (see Sections 9.2.3). These findings imply the need for further investigation about the experiences of vertical family dwelling design solutions.

c- The significance of children's wellbeing explains the persistent need for a spacious outdoor private space. However, the role of the semi-public space in mitigating restrictions caused by the size of the private open space depends on design criteria that would support children's play and the adults' parenting needs, such as visual connectedness between the private and semi-private spaces, and the safety of the semi-private space for play. However, the focus of this thesis on the dwelling limited possibilities for further enquiry about the features of the semi-public space in this case. Further research on this topic is needed to explore

additional potential and aspects of the relationship between the family dwelling and the semi-public space. Exploring the role of the semi-public space in family life may open the way for considering alternative forms of smaller private open spaces, particularly balconies and patios.

### **10.7.2 Design aspects supporting dynamics of domestic life**

At the outset of the research, the duality of individuality and collectiveness of the dwelling was indicated as a design challenge that is amplified in diverse societies. Inhabitants' negotiations with space illuminated the approach of addressing indeterminacy in domestic architecture (see Section 2.4.) This approach has been broadly addressed in architectural research and practice by architects such as Hertzberger (1991, 2008, 2014), Jilk (2009), Pallasma (2014) and McCarter (2016). Taking this approach in domestic architecture allows the avoidance of predetermined solutions that rely on abstract conception and quantified standards about the dwelling (see Sections 2.4.2 and 9.3.1). Creating spatial conditions based on proportions, spatial relations and sensual qualities is central to create 'polyvalent' space (Hertzberger, 2014) that extends opportunities of use of space. Variations of these conditions in the dwelling extend possibilities of intersections between space and the changing uses.

### **10.7.3 Housing re-use and regeneration**

Taking the Tyneside flats as a case study highlights the potential for regeneration of dwellings that belong to former domestic paradigms. Therefore, addressing indeterminacy of space in this thesis raised issues related to the reuse of existing residential models.

The mismatch between the dwelling's back and front duality and the participants' contemporary domestic practices gives rise to problems when the dwelling is

inhabited under different domestic ideals (Kintrea, 2007). As seen in the Tyneside flats, this mismatch results from changes in components of the spatial structure, such as the change from two shared spaces to one (see Section 9.2.1), and spatial relations, such as the change from separation to connectedness between the indoor and outdoor spaces (see Section 9.2.3). This mismatch is also informed by the differences in the spatial conditions associated with each of the Victorian and contemporary domesticity. This is exemplified through the mismatch between the backyard being a place for refuse in Victorian domesticity, and a place for leisure and freedom in contemporary domesticity.

These architectural spatial appropriations require consideration of the inhabitants' power to make changes to the places where they live. As clarified through the differences between the participants' flats and their reconstructed models, the type of tenure and cost-effectiveness of change hindered their ability to take the actions represented in the models. This situation suggests the need to consider wider levels of interventions, such as those carried out during the modernisation of the Tyneside flats during the second half of the twentieth century (Northern Consortium for Housing Authorities, 1979). In this case, channels for ensuring the inhabitants' input throughout the process of regeneration should be considered.

### **10.8 Concluding thoughts**

This research commenced with concerns about the efficiency of the quantitative approach followed by bodies in authority in the UK for achieving the 'decent dwelling'. Considering the spatial qualities through their interrelation in everyday homelife practices, this thesis has not merely justified the need for extra space in the family dwelling. Rather, this thesis argued the necessity of understanding the way the design of the dwelling enables contemporary domestic life practices. The

magnitude of the researched problem was remarkably indicated through the participants' disappointment for the failure of the Tyneside flats in accommodating their lives. This problem was forcefully brought up into the broader societal discourse due to the experience of Covid-19 lockdowns. During this situation, sensitive issues affecting the quality of life in the present time, such as difficulty in sustaining work and wellbeing, were referred to the lack of consideration of contemporary life needs within the design of the existing commonplace domestic architecture. Most crucially, such implications were mostly indicated within low-income socio-economic groups who may face restrictions that may limit possibilities of changing the design of the dwellings. This thesis offers insights into householders' experiences of everyday lived space in the form of commonplace domestic architecture and evidence-based recommendations for guiding design solutions suitable for contemporary family living. Foremost, this thesis supports calls for this urgently needed re-examination of UK housing design.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Narrative Interview schedule

### 1- Opening questions:

How long have you been living in this place?

Why did you choose it?

What do you think about it?

### 2- Topic focussed questions:

**1- Initial narrative question:** How about taking few minutes to think of your daily life at home as series of events and give a name for each one.

Which is the most important event for you in your home? Why?

### 3- Internal questions:

#### Event content questions:

*While marking this on the map can you tell me*

what happens during 'each event'?

Who are the people involved?

What do you do during this event?

What are the usual conversations that take place? If any!

What does this event mean to you?

#### Event, time and place questions:

*Time related questions*

When does this event happen?

What normally happens at the same time / before / after?

Is it related to the experience of parents' home or grandparents' home?

### *Space related questions*

What changes did you make in your home to make this event happen the way you wish? Why?

What would you like to do in your home, and you are not able to? Why?

### *Questions related to the perception of the spatial relations*

How do describe your experience / how you feel during 'the event'? (prompts: see Table 4.2)

Can you outline the area / the space that describes / defines this 'event – micro event' for you? Why did you outline it this way?

What do you do to shape / control the way you are related with the surrounding during ....?

### *Questions related to the perception of the spatial atmosphere: (prompts: see Table 4.2)*

Can you describe this place / area during 'the event'?

how does the space feel like?

Can you state certain aspects that make you feel this way? Like the space available, the high of ceilings, the openness or closed – or other things like the light, the sound, or even what you smell / air qualities that you sense during the event

## **4- Ending the interview questions**

How far are you satisfied with the place where you live?

Do you have plans to move?

If you are given the opportunity to make changes in this place what would you do to?

How will that make your life better?

Can I ask is there any aspect of your experience of your home that has not been covered in this interview?

## **5- Questions asked during the priority list activity**

What are the events that you would like to perform in your home? Can you please list them according to their priority?

Who are the actors in the event?

Where would you like to experience this event?

How would you relate this event to other events in space? (*Prompt: Use spatial propositions as prompts with list – near ... – far from ... – together with...*) – why?

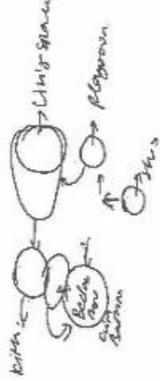
How would you like the atmosphere while you perform this event to be like?  
(prompts from Table 4.2)

## Appendix 2: Examples of the Participants' Priority Lists

ACTIVITY? What will happen? Who'll be	Where About! Near ..., Away from..., with...,	How Will It Feel Like There? <i>Cosy, warm, airy.</i>
<p>kid's play area</p> <p>Social time with friends</p> <p>own my own space / adult space</p> <p>study, reading, films</p> <p>joint space</p> <p>gym sports</p>	<p>indoors living room</p> <p>outdoors backyard</p> <p>indoors dinner room</p> <p>outdoors cooking kitchen</p> <p>separate study</p> <p>living room</p> <p>living room</p>	<p>safe: spacious Empty fields</p> <p>cosy // ready corner</p> <p>soft cushion de</p> <p>varieties / flexibility</p> <p>bright open-ended comfortable home like.</p> <p>airy fresh</p> <p>isolated individual personalized. me. / like!</p> <p>self-reflection</p> <p>sofa / cushion. separated</p> <p>quiet. / warm light. lamps</p> <p>relaxing space / not bright light</p> <p>soft. cozy space: <del>it</del></p>
		<p>air floor</p> <p>morning companionsly</p> <p>chairs</p> <p>restaurant.</p> <p>music.</p> <p>relaxing.</p>

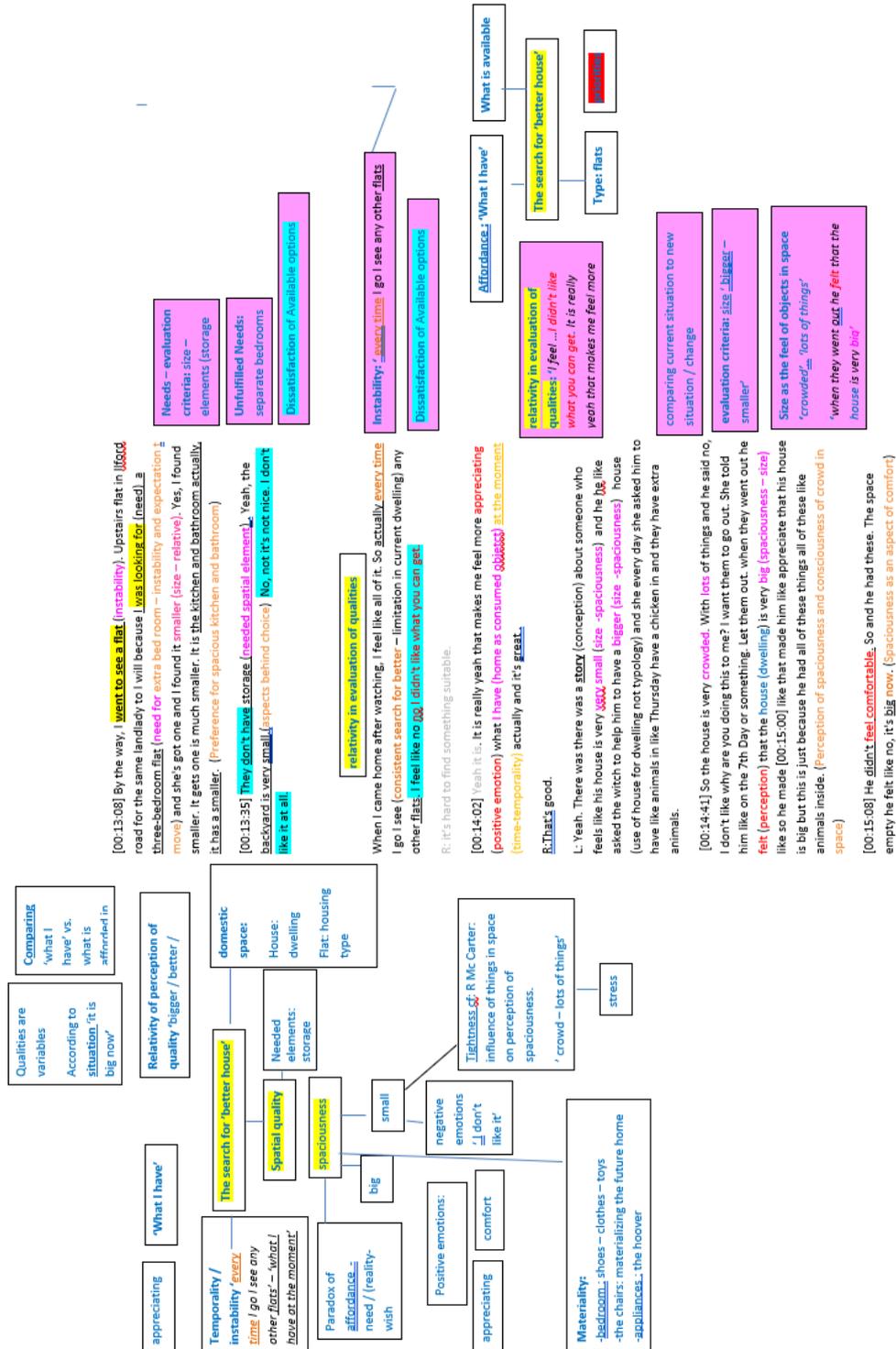
Priority list of the mother in F3.

**Wish List!**

ACTIVITY? What will happen? Who'll be	Where About! Near ..., Away from..., with...	How Will It Feel Like There? Cosy, warm, airy,
<p>① Baby play room</p> <p>② Large living room / space</p> <p>③ A separate small room for praying.</p> <p>④ medium sized kitchen</p> <p>⑤ 3 normal sized bedrooms</p> <p>⑥ 2 Bathrooms with attached lavatory.</p> <p>⑦ parking space one. Big SUV.</p> <p>⑧ no no <del>field</del> full fledged garden, but some grass and flower pots, and some stone board decoration</p> <p>⑨ small room for shoes</p>	<p>max child playroom →          make shift. Bedroom →          dining space.          two sofa sets.          close to the playroom.</p> <p>on the other side of the living space with one bedroom.</p> 	

## Appendix 3: Initial Coding

Word by word coding and use of mental maps for relating the codes to developed descriptive concepts about the event and conceptualise the associated meanings.



Extract from F3's narrative interview.



## Appendix 5: Mapping the sketched events

F1

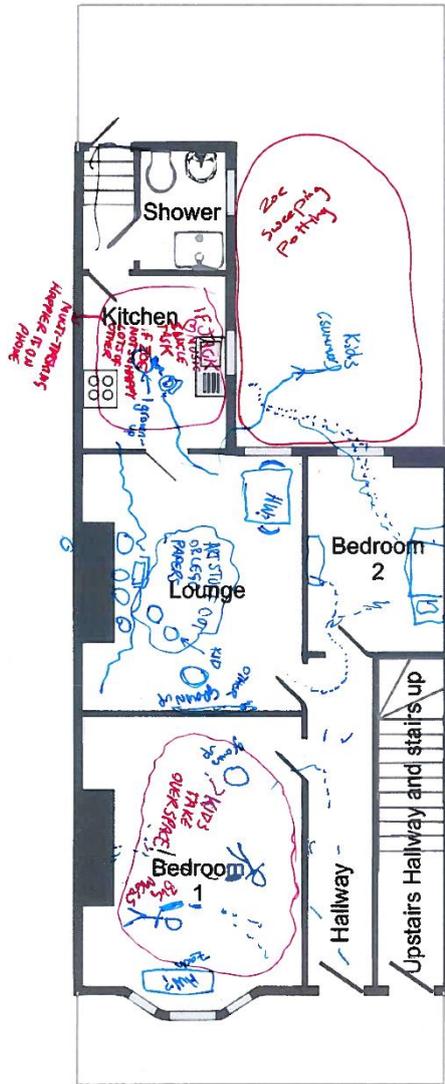


Figure 6.12 Parents supervising children from the kitchen during their engagement in cooking. (Source: the author.)

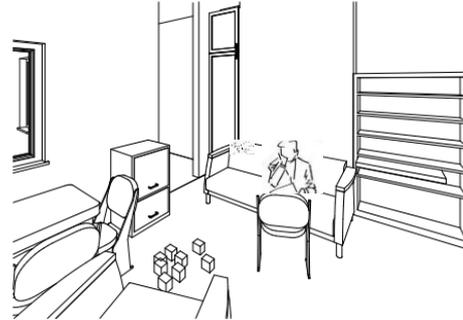


Figure 7.112.1 the fathers' alone time in the living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author.)

— Represents the emotional aspects.

— Represents behaviour and objects.

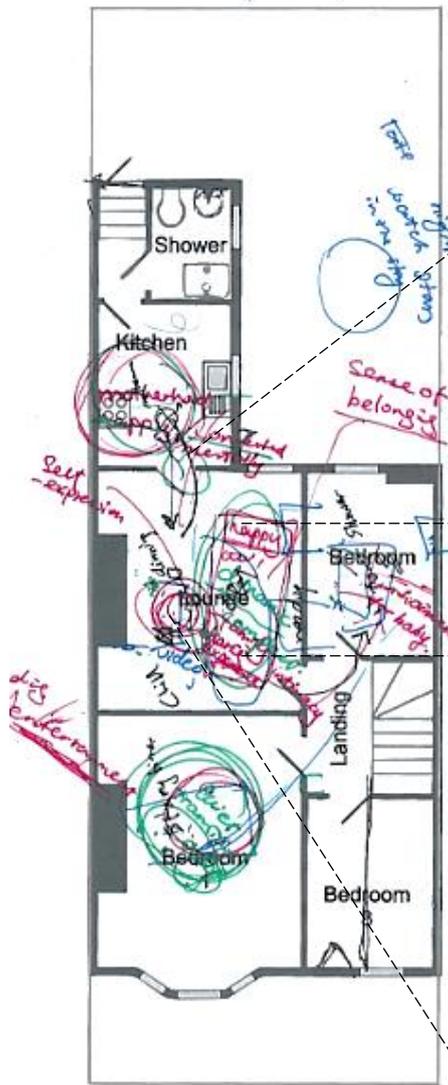
Sketches

— Represents the emotional aspects.

— Represents behaviour and objects.

place in the living room - inspired by F1's narrative.

F2



- Represents the emotional aspects.
- Represents behaviour and objects.
- Represents perceived spatial qualities



Figure 6.12 Parents supervising children from the kitchen during their engagement in cooking. (Source: the author.)

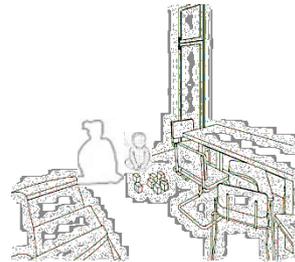


Figure 6.6 The mother in F2 playing with her son in the evening. Source: the author

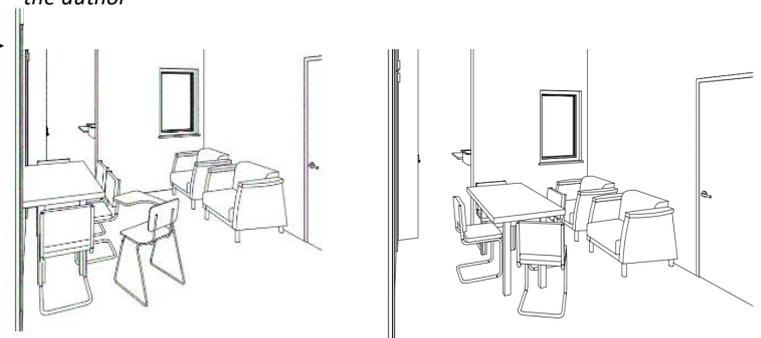


Figure 6.4 F2's flat: The dining table in its original place (left) and the dining table moved to the middle of the living room when hosting formal guests (right). (Source: the author.)



its original place (left) and the dining g room when hosting formal guests

Figure 7.112.3 The mother's alone time in the living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author.)

Sketches of the use of space during different ev... Figure 7.112.4 The mother's alone time in the living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author.)

F3

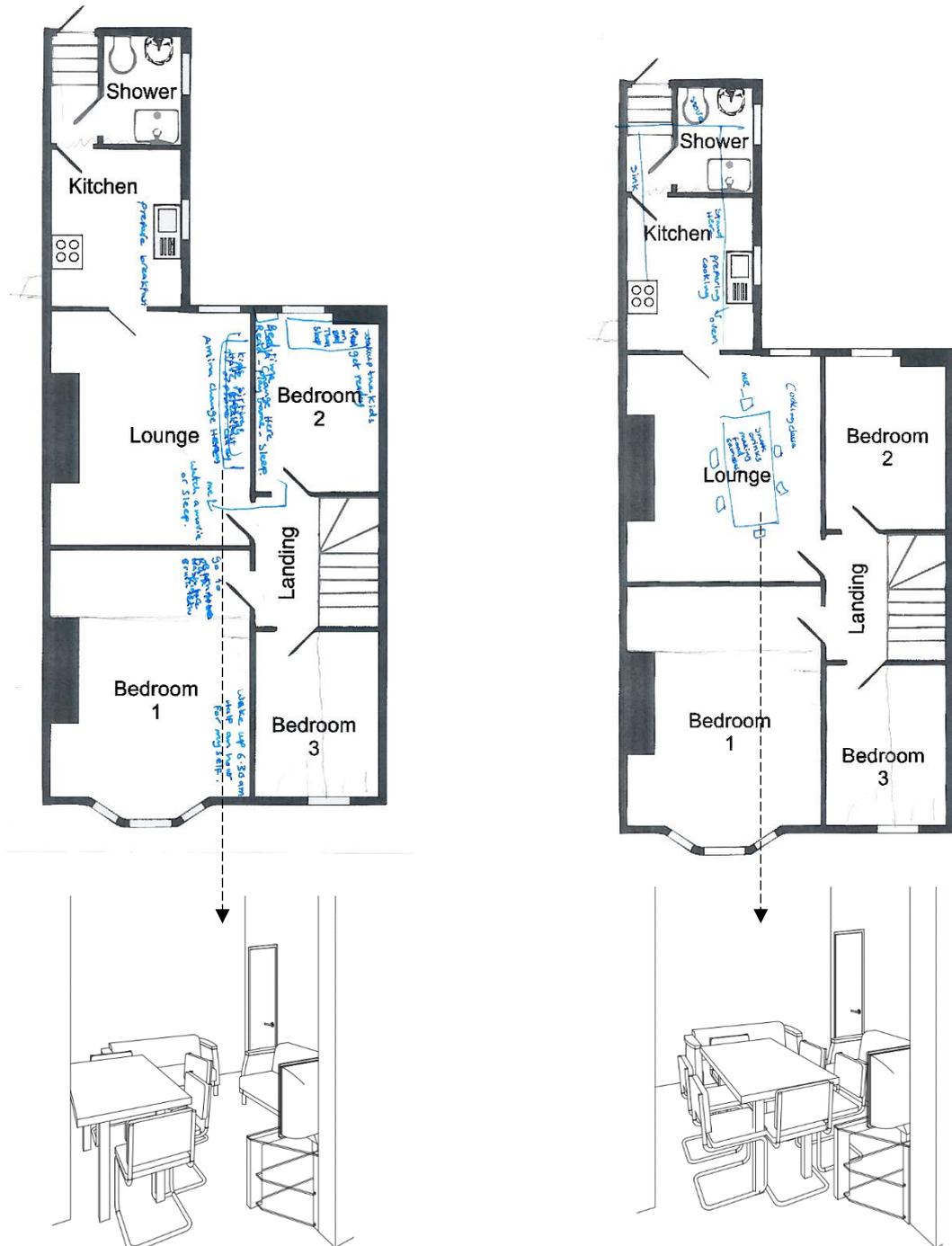


Figure 6.5 F3's flat: The dining table in its regular place (left) and the dining table moved to the middle of the room during cooking classes (right). (Source: the author).

Figure 6.5 F3's flat: The dining table in its regular place (left) and the dining table moved to the middle of the room during cooking classes (right). (Source: the author).

— Represents behaviour and objects.



F5

Sketch of the overlap between the personal and shared time in the living room - inspired by F4's narrative.

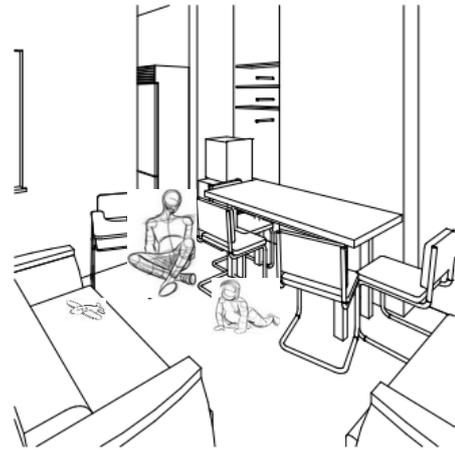
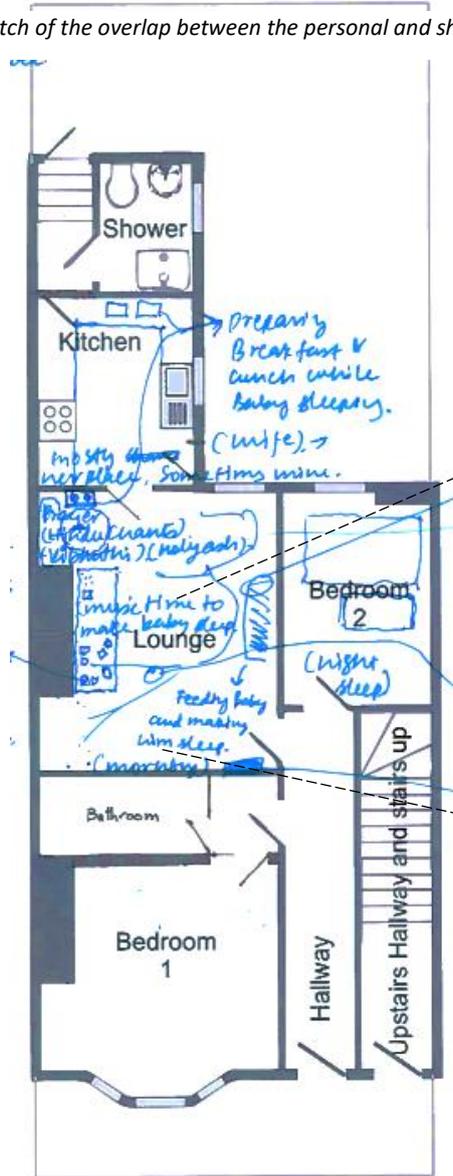


Figure 6.12 Parents supervising children from the kitchen during their engagement in cooking. (Source: the author.)



Figure 7.112.5 The father's alone time in the living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author.)

Figure 7.112.6 The father's alone time in the living room when others are asleep. (Source: The author.)

— Represents behaviour and objects.

*Sketches showing the temporal separation between the personal and shared time in the living room - inspired by F5's narrative.*