

# Exploring the Meaning of Home for Six Baby Boomers

1 of 2 Volumes

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## **Abstract**

Baby boomers (those born c. 1945 to c. 1965) are entering later life. As a result, by 2035, almost a quarter of the UK population will be over 65. Current policy and practice in the UK is that people should, wherever possible, age at home, but there is no research into what home means to baby boomers. Therefore, this researcher asks two questions. Firstly, how can the meaning of home for baby boomers be explored? Secondly, what influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers? Existing literature informed the research. For example, some literature suggests methodology for researching issues similar to the meaning of home; other research explores meanings of home amongst groups other than baby boomers; and research into the life course of baby boomers has attributed to them characteristics which could influence their meaning of home. As a result, this researcher adopts a qualitative methodology which participant generated images, photo elicitation interviews and reflective review panels. This enabled the meaning of home for six participants to emerge from stories and photographs of their own homes and their individual life course. The six stories are published as a separate volume. Although based on only six baby boomers, the research suggests important conclusions. The first research question produced unique methodology for revealing deep layers of understanding of the meaning of home for these baby boomers. The second research question showed that, despite what one might expect from reading other research, the unique life course of six baby boomers has not created a meaning of home which is markedly different from earlier cohorts. However, what is acknowledged is that choice which is a key concept for the meaning of home, is influenced by the broader social context of demographic changes and changes in living arrangements. Further investigation of the meaning of home for baby boomers is necessary to help influence policy and practice; this research proposes important ideas about the methodology for that work, also suggestions for further research based on the findings from this study.

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# Chapter I: Introduction

"Homeward Bound"

I'm sitting in the railway station.  
Got a ticket to my destination.  
On a tour of one-night stands my suitcase and guitar in hand.  
And ev'ry stop is neatly planned for a poet and a one-man band.  
Homeward bound,  
I wish I was,  
Homeward bound,  
Home where my thought's escaping,  
Home where my music's playing,  
Home where my love lies waiting  
Silently for me.

Paul Simon 1965 ©

## Background

Demographic trends in the western world have dramatically changed over the last 100 years. We now have an ageing society with an increasing proportion of people over the age of 65 years and living longer. In the UK the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over is likely to rise from 16% in 2010 to 23% in 2035 (Office of National Statistic [ONS] 2012a). This sharp rise is partly because, following the Second World War, there was a significant rise in birth rate, creating a cohort commonly known as the baby boomers. Over the next 25 years those born in the 1950's and 1960's will continue into the oldest ages, reaching their late 70's and 80's by 2035.

With advanced age people spend an increasing amount of time within their own home environment (Gitlin 2003; Iwarsson, Wahl, Nygre, Oswald, Sixsmith, Sixsmith; Szeman, Tomson, 2007b). There is a UK policy emphasis to enable people to age in place (Department of Health [DH] 2006). In later life home provides a sense of security, self, safety and well-being (Gitlin 2003; Dahlin-Ivanoff, Haak, Fänge, Iwarsson 2007a and b; Haak, Dahlin-Ivanoff, Fänge,

Sixsmith and Iwarsson 2007b; Sixsmith, Sixsmith, Fänge, Naumann, Kucsera, Tomsone, Haak, Dahlin-Ivanoff, Woolrych, 2014a). Furthermore older people often express a high degree of well-being and life satisfaction despite illness, because they are able to remain in their own homes (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al. 2007a; Iwarsson et al 2007b; Roush and Cox 2000; Towers and Netten 2006). However, Sixsmith and Sixsmith (2008) discovered that old age and independent living can be marred by factors such as poor housing, poor health and poor social support. Understanding what is important to people in their appreciation of home is therefore important if we are to support people to age in place. Considering their numbers, it is particularly important to understand the meaning of home for the baby boomers. Doing so could influence policy and guidance around living arrangements and support needs as they age.

The meaning of home specifically for baby boomers has not been explored. Therefore this study has investigated the meaning of home for six people born between 1945 and 1965. The baby boomers have experienced a better education, increased choice of housing and a better welfare state (Gilleard and Higgs 2007; Demey, Berrington, Evandrou and Flakingham 2011); they are a “privileged cohort” suggests Roberts (2012, p. 483). During their life time, however, there has been an increased diversity in family relationships and solo living which could impact upon availability of support in later life (Demey et al 2013). In addition Kellaher (2002) emphasises the importance of choice in living arrangements; with such a large cohort about to enter later life, there are concerns whether there will be adequate choice of homes for the growing numbers of older people. Therefore, given their unique social context, this study has explored if baby boomers have a different interpretation of the meaning of home than current older generations. Justification for researching the meaning of home of baby boomers is discussed in more detail.

## Research Questions

Exploring the meaning of home seeks to understand the lived experience of home as expressed by an individual. However, it is a complex concept to understand, and even more difficult to articulate. Therefore the first research question for this thesis is:

### **1. How can the meaning of home for the baby boomers be explored?**

In this study the open-ended starting point of asking how can the meaning of home be explored allows the phenomena to dictate the methods to be used. This supports the flexibility of approach that Holloway and Todres (2003) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011) advocate. In asking “How” the meaning of home as experienced by the individual participants, was revealed by employing a variety of methods of interpretation. By asking ‘How?’ questions, the thesis then demands a qualitative approach to answer such questions. The thesis presents the use of visual methods to discover the depths of the meaning of home for six baby boomers. The principles of Photo-voice (Wang 1999), Photo-elicitation interviews (Harper 2002), followed by interpretative panels (Jones 2004a), helped illuminate the taken for granted experiences and meaning of home.

The baby boomers are a cohort who experienced a different social context to previous cohorts and, given the significant size of the group, exploring what home means to them is worthy of consideration. This led to the second research question:

### **2. What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?**

The methods chosen for this study enabled the participants to take the lead, both in the photographs they took and how they interpreted them. As they talked, they told their own story of their homes, discussing the past, the present and their plans for the future, thus creating a natural life course perspective that has revealed their meaning of home. The thesis explores to what extent the social context of life course can influence the experience of home and considers

how far the unique features of the life course of the baby boomer cohort have influenced their own meaning of home.

The meaning of home is a complex concept. For example, home is a presentation of self and identity (Després 1991; Moore 2000; Mallet 2004). Our understanding of the meaning of home is therefore achieved through various levels of interpretation. Després (1991) suggests four theories of interpretation to help articulate the meaning of home, namely the territorial, psychological, socio-psychological / phenomenological and developmental interpretations. This framework helps to draw together the research that has been undertaken to reveal the complex meaning of home. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II.

The meaning of home however is also a taken for granted experience and so the methods used have been chosen to allow the meaning of home to surface to the conscious level and be shared. Gadamer (2006b, p. 30), for example, discusses the “back and forth” process in interpretation to deepen understanding; this has its roots in hermeneutical inquiry. Further consideration will be given in Chapter III to the layers of interpretation required to achieve a full understanding of the meaning of home for participants in this study.

The meaning of home “all depends” on context suggests Hollander (1991). This thesis explores what that context is for six baby boomers and how it affects their meaning of home. In doing so, this study can add to our knowledge of this large cohort of people as they approach later life in their own homes.

## **Justification for the Research**

Exploring the meaning of home for the baby boomers is important on three accounts. Firstly we have an ageing population (ONS 2012a) and so the importance of healthy ageing is an important area for research as well as a

policy imperative (DH 2001). Secondly there is a large cohort of people, known as the baby boomers, which will significantly add to the proportion of the population aged over 65 years. Finally, there is a need to explore whether the baby boomers feel the same about their homes as previous generations. These three points will be explored further now and, in more detail, in Chapter II.

## **Ageing Population**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century started with an increasing preoccupation with the implications of an ageing society, the result of declining fertility and increased life expectancy (World Health Organisation, WHO, 2012). In the European Union in 2060 those 65 years and over will become a much larger proportion of the population, rising from 17 percent to 30 percent; the over 80s will rise from five to 12 percent (European Commission 2012). Sometimes this is viewed negatively. Newspaper headlines such as “Demographic time bomb, Government ‘woefully underprepared’ to deal with Britain’s ageing population” (Morris 2013), suggest a sensational and explosive impact of ageing, and not something to be welcomed. But an ageing population is something to be celebrated. We are living longer, with the potential for healthier lives and increased well-being. Therefore, given the increasing numbers of people aged over 65 years there is a need for more research that explores how to promote well-being and a healthy long life.

Ageing research, or gerontology, is a multidisciplinary activity which is developing a growing interest in social gerontology and the lived experience of ageing (Jamieson 2002). Ageing research is not just about ‘older people’ or people aged over 65 years. Ageing is experienced by everyone. Jamieson (2002) supports the importance of taking a life course perspective to add to the body of social gerontology research. Riley and Riley (1999) agree and suggest that ageing research should be about individuals over their life course. The focus of research, they suggest, is on people’s lives and the impact which social structures have had upon them, for example, the impact of social, historical and political context upon the sequence of people’s life events, leaving home, getting married, having children and so forth (Green 2010, p. 26). These

sequences of events or trends can change over a period of time, with different age groups, or cohorts, experiencing differences in, for example, education, family history and living arrangements (Riley and Riley 1999, p. 125). In addition, because life course affects choice of living arrangements, it also affects the meaning of home (Peace 2002 cited Sumner). Furthermore, research that considers a life course perspective also offers an insight into an individual's aspirations for later life. For reasons such as these, Gilleard and Higgs (2007) emphasise the value of looking at the life course of particular cohorts, such as the baby boomers, to consider the impact on ageing, which will be explored further in Chapter II.

## **Baby Boomers**

After the end of the Second World War there was significant increase in the birth rate, hence the name baby boom. The increases in the UK birth rate had two waves, firstly those born between 1946 and 1950 and then those born between 1960 and 1965 (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000). Gilleard and Higgs (2007) challenge whether, outside the USA, people identify with the baby boomers as a cohort. Given that there are 20 years between 1945 and 1965, there will be different social contexts from the oldest to the youngest baby boomers. However, what is not disputed is that this is a large group who are ageing, and during that time frame there were significant social changes, such as changes in home ownership, and significant changes in relationships, which could impact upon their meaning of home especially as they age. In Chapter II the use of the term baby boom is discussed in more detail and their shared historical, social and political context explored.

Life expectancy for this group has also increased, with the proportion of the population aged over 85 years anticipated to rise sharply as the baby boomers age (ONS 2012b). As a group the baby boomers are a cohort of people who have shared similar social and historical events (Gilleard and Higgs 2007). It is argued that they experienced significant changes in their lives which offered them far greater choices with regards to education, mobility and living arrangements than previous cohorts (Pruchno 2012; Frey 2010). However,

changes in family relationships during their life course may have negative effects in later life (Lin and Brown 2012). In this context, the findings of this study offer an interesting insight into the meaning of home for six individuals born in the baby boom years. Chapter V considers the impact of their unique social context and also considers how this could have influenced the meaning of home for the participants in this study.

## **Home**

Home has many definitions and the dictionary states meanings associated with where one lives as well as a destination (Soanes and Stevenson 2004). The word is an adverb, adjective, adverb and a noun, reflecting the fact that its meaning is diverse and can therefore have a unique significance for each individual. Developing an understanding of the meaning of home has been the key purpose of this study.

For some years the political drive for the UK government has had a focus on enabling people to remain in their own homes as they age, (DH, 2010). Whilst the majority of people aged over 65 years live in their own homes, (96.2%, Age UK 2014), a small proportion are transferred to alternative shared residential accommodation. Entering a residential setting does increase with age, yet it is still a situation which affects fewer than 16% of people aged over 85 years (Age UK 2014). An appreciation of what makes home special for people is important to enable the most effective support for individuals as they age, either in their own homes or in alternative accommodation. There has been research looking at the meaning of home for people aged over 65 years (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007b; Mallet 2004; Moore 2000; Roush & Cox 2000; Gurney 1997; Després 1991; Sixsmith 1986). In addition, various professional groups have an interest in what home means and have, for example, researched the meaning of space, attachment to place, well-being and successful ageing. So there is a body of research that highlights the various meanings home and the significant role which home plays for people aged over 65 years. There are no studies which specifically research the meaning of home for baby boomers, so this study adds something unique to the existing body of knowledge available for professionals to use.

The longing for home is frequently referred to in songs, films and poetry. It is more than just a building. Lewin (2001 p356) suggests “home is for the soul”. Home has this mystical meaning that can make what seems ordinary extraordinary. On an individual level it can be difficult to articulate what is actually represents for you. Holloway and Wheeler (2010, p. 216) suggest that “Human beings do not often take into account the commonplace and ordinary, indeed, they do not even notice it”. Home is often taken for granted and therefore its meaning is not clearly understood, perhaps until home is lost (Carroll, Morbey, Balogh, and Araoz 2009). Home is also experienced by an individual; although an individual may live in the same space as others which they all call home, it will be individually experienced. Benner and Wrubel, (1989, p. 410), for example, suggest that personal meaning is about the individual lived experience influenced by social context, “the way personal meanings arise and exist in the situation as the person experiences it”. The meaning of home is therefore both unique to each of us and influenced by our shared social experience.

## **Methodology**

What home means will be explored by seeking the views of six participants born in the baby boom years. The majority of studies that have looked at the meaning of home in later life have focused on those over the age of 60 years, but predominantly those over 70 years (Grundy, Fletcher, Smith, Lamping, 2007; Kellet and Moore 2003; Means 2007; Sixsmith 1986; Swenson 1998). Some have focused specifically on the “old old”, that is those 80 years or older (Dahlin-Ivanoff, et al 2007a and b; Grundy et al 2007). None have looked at the baby boomers’ lived experience of the meaning of home.

Given the complexity of trying to understand the meaning of home a qualitative interpretative approach has been adopted in the study, an approach that has been influenced by hermeneutics, but with a focus on the various layers of



interpretation that influence an understanding at any given time (Gadamer 2006b). Whilst this thesis presents an interpretation of the meaning of home for six baby boomers, acknowledgement to the ongoing interpretation, including by the readers of research, has been made.

Participants in the study were asked to take photographs of their home. No further direction was given, allowing the participants to interpret for themselves what home meant to them and what photographs would reflect this. This was the first layer of interpretation. The Photo-elicitation interview that followed encouraged the participants to discuss the meaning of the images they had taken and this represents the second layer of interpretation. This enabled the participants to tell their own story and, as Jamieson (2002, p. 23) suggests, it allows the participants to illuminate “forgotten or hidden aspects of past experience, and highlight minority experiences, which tend to be hidden in more quantitative studies”. She goes on to add that this approach is not without its disadvantages, since participants may not recall everything and their articulation of meaning is influenced by how they “choose” to interpret their images. So Jamieson (2002) suggests a triangulation of data, whereby the participants’ oral stories are compared with other sources of information. As will be explained in more detail in Chapter III, the capturing of other sources was by the use of interpretative teams, who examined participants’ photographs and tried to interpret what these said about the meaning of home for each participant. This third layer of interpretation led to the fourth layer when all the photographs, the transcribed interview and notes from the interpretative teams were interpreted together by the researcher.

Using visual methods of Photo-elicitation and the principles of Photo-voice, that is participant generated photographs, have allowed the participants in this study to tell their story and raise points that are significant to them in relation to their meaning of home. This non-directed approach inevitably revealed the lived experience of home over the life course. The use of photographs has been linked to the accumulation of richer, deeper data and, if the participants generated the image themselves, greater autonomy (Wang and Burris 1997;

Harper 2002, Rose 2007; Bohnsack 2008; Oliffe et al 2008; Packard 2008; Weber 2008; Phoenix 2010; Plunkett et al 2012).

Frith & Harcourt (2007, p. 1342) talk about the “freeze-framing” of emotions, events and relationships; using images of their home in this study ‘stopped time’ to enable participants to reflect on meaning and significance. Harper (2002, p. 13) further advocates the use of photographs because they stir from the subconscious a deeper understanding and meaning, connecting to the “core definitions of self”.

The layers of interpretation captured in the study have revealed a deep meaning of home, which even surprised the participants themselves. The stories of their home are presented as a separate story book and are a result of the fourth layer of interpretation. The reader of this thesis will inevitably add another layer and will hopefully be able to resonate with the discussion and conclusions made in Chapters V and VI.

## **Outline of the Thesis**

Following the introduction, Chapter I, a comprehensive literature review of studies exploring the meaning of home and the baby boom cohort is presented in Chapter II. This sets the context for the methodology which is discussed in Chapter III. This includes, in detail, a justification for the methodology and methods used with a critique of the use of visual methods in research. Chapter IV presents the findings from the first research question, “How can the meaning of home be explored?” In answering this question the meaning of home is revealed and presented as individual participants stories in a separate volume, Chapter V. Chapter VI presented the findings from the second research question, “What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?” The penultimate chapter, Chapter VII, discusses the findings and proposes a new framework to help articulate the meaning of home.

This Five Senses of Home framework are described in this Chapter, with examples from the six participants' stories. Finally Chapter VIII will draw some conclusions and note the potential implications for practice. A full reference list is included at the end of the thesis as well as the relevant appendices.

## Definitions

Key terms used throughout the thesis are defined in more detail as they occur, particularly in Chapters II and III. However, the following are key terms in the thesis and are therefore defined below.

**Cohort** - is a group, which is demographically distinctive from other groups born before or after, and/or groups who share specific historical or other experiences different to other groups (Miller 2000).

**Home** – the place where you live and call home.

**Older People**, according to the National Service Framework (DH 2001), are those aged over 60 years or, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2013), those aged over 50 years. Of course the term 'older people' and who fits that category is quite arbitrary and for many people regardless of their own age, 'older people' are people older than themselves.

**Later life** is also an arbitrary term. However in this study it refers to those aged 65 years or older.

**Life Course** is the sequence of events (such as leaving home, getting married, having children and so forth). Whilst individually experienced, these events occur within a social, historical and political context (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003). A life course approach recognises the individual experience and considers what influence the social context may have had on an individual (Elder 1998).

**Life span** is the time period from birth until death (Alwin 2012).

**Photo-voice** – participant generated images.

**Photo-elicitation (interviews)** – gathering visual data such as photographs and then using these as a prompt in an interview.

Palmer

## **Delimitations**

The sample size of six is small and, whilst the data is rich and detailed, generalisations from this study cannot be made. This study has not included the exploration of the meaning of home for those who may not consider home a safe place, such as the abused, or those who do not have a home.

People in residential settings were also excluded from this study. Other work has been undertaken in these areas and, given the younger cohort considered here, the majority would still be living in their own homes.

## **Conclusion**

This Chapter has set the foundations for the thesis. It has introduced the main themes underpinning this study, that is those related to an ageing society, the meaning of home and the baby boomers. A brief introduction has been given to the methodology used in this study which has its roots in hermeneutical inquiry. Reference has been made to the key sources used in this thesis, although other sources have been referred to throughout.

In the next Chapter a review of the literature around the meaning of home for those in later life will be presented. This will include defining what is meant by home, an exploration of what is meant by later life and consideration of the significance of home in later life. The literature around the baby boomers as a unique cohort will also be discussed before concluding why researching the meaning of home for six baby boomers is worthy of consideration.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

**Glinda**

*Are you ready now?*

**Dorothy**

*Yes. Say goodbye, Toto. Yes, I'm ready now.*

**Glinda**

*Then close your eyes and tap your heels together three times. And think to yourself.*

*'There's no place like home. There's no place like home.'*

**Dorothy and Glinda**

*'There's no place like home. There's no place like home.'*

**Dorothy**

*'There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home.'*

Wizard of Oz 1939 ©

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## Introduction

This literature review will consider the significance of what home means to those in or entering later life; that is those aged 50 years and over (DH 2001). Looking at this age group is particularly significant as the proportion of the population aged 50 years and over is set to increase dramatically. The reasons for this will be explored further. Suffice to say, at this point, in the UK alone the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over is likely to rise from 16% in 2010 to 23% in 2035 (ONS 2012a). Alongside these changes are an increase in single person households (ONS 2012b), changes in family status (Demey, et al, 2013), falling availability of homes (Palmer, Kenway, Wilcox ,2006) and potentially influential policy changes such as the bedroom tax (Power, Provan, Herden, Serle, 2014). Kellaheer (2002) expresses concern as to whether there will be sufficient choice available for older people to choose the place where they age. Choice is important for autonomy and sufficient choice about housing in later life can improve health and well-being (Pannell, Aldridge, Kenway 2012).

Home can be broadly defined as the place where you live; however, home is more than just a building. Lewin (2001, p. 356) suggests “home is for the soul”. Home and what it means has been a key concept in poems, literature and music. Home has a mystical meaning that can make what seems ordinary extraordinary. Since there is an emphasis on enabling people, as they age, to remain in their own home (WHO 2007; DH 2008; DH 2006; DH 2001), this review will consider what has been written in the literature on the meaning of home as we age and how people feel about the concept of remaining at home as they grow older.

This literature review has been divided into several sections. Following an explanation of the method for the review, home will be defined. Given the controversial notion of what ‘later life’ is, this term will also be considered and furthermore why it is worthy of consideration. The review will then consider the layered significance of home in later life using Després’ (1991) framework, whilst referring simultaneously to other frameworks that have been proposed to demonstrate the complexity of the meaning of home. Following this consideration, the social context of the cohort identified in this study will be explored. The Chapter will conclude by discussing the significance of the literature in relation to this study.

## **Method for the Review**

Searches were conducted using the following on-line databases: Academic Search Premier; British Nursing Index; CINAHL; Science Direct; Web of Knowledge. The search strategy had the initial index term searches using the following keywords (in the title, abstract or keyword) ‘older people’, ‘elderly’, ‘home’, ‘meaning of home’, ‘housing’, ‘baby boom / boomers’. From the few articles found, a snowball search strategy was used, identifying further literature from article references lists. Many articles were about nursing homes and older adults who have moved to a supported living environment. These did not reflect the person’s own homes so were excluded from the review. This initial group of

articles was read and key themes began to emerge. It was apparent that despite the increasing emphasis in the UK on allowing older adults to remain at home, there had been little empirical research on what home meant. In order to capture salient points surrounding the meaning of home for older adults, searches were also conducted focusing on dissertation abstracts and grey literature using the same methods of searching, selection and extraction as used for published empirical literature. In the absence of translation resources, searches were limited to the English Language.

## **Home Defined**

Studies considered for this part of the review used a wide range of age groups and methods to collect data. The studies demonstrate the complexity of meaning and how studying various groups can illuminate how home can be defined. These points are more poignant when considering the views of homeless people (Parsell 2012; Kellet and Moore 2003; Somerville 1992), or those who have been displaced from their homes (Carroll et al 2009). Whilst the literature from these other groups has not been included in this review, the studies noted offer some useful insights relevant for the study of home in later life.

Defining home is elusive, even though many authors have attempted to do so (Parsell 2012; Dahlin-Ivanoff, et al 2007b; Mallet 2004; Moore 2000; Roush and Cox 2000; Gurney 1997; Després 1991; Sixsmith 1986). Both Mallet, (2004) writing in the USA and Després (1991) in Canada provide an extensive review of the literature from a national perspective, (although Mallet's work does review some British publications). Molony (2010), again from the USA, presents a qualitative metasynthesis of the meaning of home, from the perspective of how to provide homelike environments in residential long-term care. Their work highlights how much more research has been undertaken in North America on the meaning of home than in Europe. However, the recent work of the European Project ENABLE-AGE (Iwarsson et al 2007b) is a large body of

research looking at the meaning of home for people aged 80- 89 years, and includes the UK in its data collection and analysis. A four domain model of housing in very old age is proposed by the ENABLE-AGE project, and provides one framework to shape the meaning of home (Oswald, Schilling, Wahl, Fänge, Sixsmith, & Iwarsson 2006).

Després' (1991) review of the literature between 1974 and 1989, Mallet's (2004) review extending up to 2003, and Molony's (2010) up to 2010, highlight the various disciplines which have explored the meaning of home including: sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy. O'Mahoney (2013) adds a further discipline by considering the legal significance of home. Interestingly she wants to be able to quantify from a compensation perspective the qualitative experience of home. The variety of disciplines that are interested in this subject emphasises the diverse and complex nature of the meaning of home.

Emphasising the complexity of the meaning of home, Hollander (1991) says its meaning "all depends" on the context within which you consider it. Després (1991), Mallet (2004), Oswald, et al 2006, and Molony 2010) all recommend further research in this area because of its complexity and significance, not only for an individual but also for the population and society at large. These papers capture the meaning of home either by a review of the literature (Després, 1991, Mallet, 2004, and Molony 2010), or by a review of their own research (Oswald, et al 2006). What these papers continue to demonstrate is the complex nature of home and the articulation of meaning is influenced by the focus of those asking the questions. (see Appendix 4 for a description of how these frameworks overlap and add additional perspectives).

Després (1991) differentiates the articles reviewed into 2 categories, namely studies that have aimed to define a conceptual model for home and secondly those which have proposed or tested different interpretative theories. She lists ten categories to group the meaning of home from a conceptual perspective and four theories of interpretation. These four theories namely the territorial,



the psychological, the socio-psychological and the phenomenological developmental interpretations, provide a broad holistic framework that incorporates much of what has been written around the meaning of home. Despite this holistic guide the meaning of home remains complex and Després (1991) suggest that more research needs to be undertaken that considers societal processes, and life courses influences on the meaning of home.

Amongst a list of ten definitions, Mallet (2004) provides a dictionary definition of home which includes home being a building, somewhere where you live, and somewhere that you are familiar with, amongst a list of ten definitions. She identifies how it is difficult to capture what we understand by home and considers the place (s), space (s), feelings, practices and the practice or act of being in the world as she seeks to articulate what is home. Factors influencing the interpretation of the meaning of home include the social and historical context. For example, she discussed the ability to own one's home and the impact this has on identity is discussed. The emphasis on the Westernised conceptions of home in the literature and the lack of research on more non-traditional homes/households is also duly noted. This differentiation between house, home and household is discussed emphasising the need to explore in more detail the factors that influence our understanding of each of these. She concludes her review by noting how the experience of and study of home is "value laden" and researchers need to be transparent about their motivations and research approach, and the inevitable limitations of their research.

Oswald et al (2006) take a broader, quantitative perspective when proposing their four-domain model of housing. The first domain noted is housing satisfaction in which they suggest objective measures are used such as the condition of the building. They also note that this measure is more significant for younger age groups. The usability or how functional the home is the second domain. Like housing satisfaction, it only provides a partial understanding of the significance of housing, focusing on the building and space within it rather than looking at the concept of home. The third domain, the "meaning of home" seeks to capture the subjective meanings associated with home by asking participants

to what extent they agree or disagreed with statements starting with “Being at home means...” The fourth domain “housing-related control beliefs” is one they argue should be incorporated into any consideration of perceived housing satisfaction. Oswald et al (2006) provide clear evidence of the value of an integration of the four domain model of housing to enable an understanding of housing and home for those aged 80-89 years. The sample size is large (N= 1223) and the instruments used to measure the significance of all the domains provided statistically significant results demonstrating the value of these in measuring perceived housing in very old age. However, they note that the comprehensive measures used need to be developed for an easier assessment and evaluation.

Molony (2010) identifies overarching metaphors that were identified from the literature and suggest that home can be viewed as a place-based entity and as a transitional process of integration. The place-based metaphors highlighted how home offers autonomy, or a feeling of being empowered. The feelings of home as a refuge and the importance of relationships within the home are also highlighted as significant. Furthermore the experience of feeling at home following major life transitions and achieving self-reconciliation, or “reconfirming the meaning of me in the new environment” links to how individuals seek to achieve a feeling of being at home throughout their life. Molony’s (2010) review focuses on studies that articulate what home means to add to a professional discourse on the meaning of home following major life transitions, such as moving to residential accommodation. It does not include reference to the building or quality of housing but has a focus on the individual experience of homeness.

These four papers (Després, 1991, Mallet 2004, Oswald, et al 2006, and Molony 2010) provide useful and often overlapping ideas of the meaning of home. (See Appendix Four to see how these papers compare and what additional perspectives they add). The first three provide a review of the literature on the meaning of home from a broad perspective, whereas Oswald et al’s (2006) work is based on an older cohort.

Després' (1991) territorial interpretation outlines how individuals "mark" their space as a way of demonstrating identity, feeling secure and exerting control. These later concepts are key to the meaning of home. Others also note the importance of having one's own space and marking it with precious (not necessarily expensive items), as an expression of self, (Molony 2010; Moore 2000; Zingmark, Norberg and Sandman, 1995; Swenson 1991). Carroll et al (2009) found that when these precious items were lost following the flooding of families homes in Carlisle, people were devastated. Carroll et al (2009, p. 545) goes on to say that losing these items resulted in a 'breaking of bonds, breaking with the past and discontinuity with present and future'. Many of the participants in the study suffered with mental health problems following the loss of their homes and the process of rebuilding their homes and, in effect, their identity was hampered by the loss of these territorial items. Even the threat of losing one's home can cause significant stress, (O'Mahony 2013).

Després' (1991) psychological interpretation draws on several theories to explain how the home is an expression of true self. For example, she refers to Freud's definitions of self and feels the home allows the individual to express their Ego, Id and Superego. In addition, noting Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, she points out that the home provides a most elementary function of providing shelter, and providing a space to express oneself with others. Després also suggests that there is a psychological need for privacy which the home can provide. It is a place where an individual can take refuge and experience solitude. Although she does refer to other research where positive feelings of solitude can extend to negative feelings of isolation and entrapment, this comprises an aspect excluded from this review.

The external features of the home can also be an expression of the self, fulfilling a psychological need for social recognition or status. This can include the need to own one's home. Dupuis and Thorne (1998) noted the importance of owning one's home as an expression of self and the significance of home. The participants in that study had a shared experience of the 1920's New Zealand depression and felt that home ownership was key to their meaning of home and

that they had retained their homes despite economic fragility. The décor of the house, both inside and outside, is a presentation of the identity of the occupier. People take pride in the emergence of their home as they make their own unique stamp on how it looks; it becomes “a symbol of the self” (O’Mahony 2013, p. 163).

Moore (2000) and Mallet (2004) also describe the psychological need for home to be a refuge or haven. Moore (2000) refers to two theories in relation to home, those of Place Attachment and Place Identity. These refer to the attachment people have, not only with their homes, but also with their surrounding neighbourhood, social networks and so forth – all intertwined with their sense of belonging and sense of identity. Mallet (2004) also considers when home may not be a haven, for example noting the cotemporary housing designs which incorporate open plan living and working space which prohibit privacy and a divide between work and home.

Carroll et al (2009) reinforce this by noting that, when their respondents’ homes were flooded, they felt devastated by the fact that their haven was invaded. During refurbishment, this previously secure domain was invaded by builders, who did not respect their property.

Kellet and Moore (2003), when researching the experiences of homeless people, found that this group were searching for home as a way of conforming to society. They wanted to create a sense of identity, and that home was inextricably linked to role and a sense of belonging.

Molony (2010) identifies the need for refuge in her qualitative metasynthesis, and Zingmark et al (1995, p. 55) highlight the “sacred space”, both noting that home is where one is safe and can be oneself. This psychological significance of home as an expression of self adds to the meaning of home, and again reinforces the complex nature of the meaning of home.

Després' (1991) socio-psychological interpretation extends the psychological interpretation by adding the dimension of social context. The home plays a crucial role in the expression of and definition of self, and a sense of feeling empowered, as discovered by Molony (2010). Both personal possessions and the property exterior define self and social status. Oswald et al's (2006) domain of housing satisfaction links to this external expression of self, although they did find that this significance decreased with age. Sixsmith (1986), found that UK participants' choice of home reflected a style that suited them, and that some homes can be of a transitory nature. This could be influenced by what stage in the life course a person is in.

The socio-psychological interpretation, however, does overlap with the psychological interpretation and Després' (1991) does not really include the broader social psychological perspective, such as how the individuals meaning of home is influenced by other people and the social context in which this occurs. In this interpretation she fails to explore the social context of family and relationships within the home. Although this was noted earlier in the paper, it could have been included in this section. Relationships with family and friends are noted as being significant by others, (Molony 2010; Mallet 2004; Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Sixsmith 1986). The meaning of home often includes the way roles are played out at home; mother, father, child, grandparent and so forth. Home is the private place where guests are invited to socialise with the homeowner (Rioux 2005). This activity continues to enable the home occupant's further reinforcement of who they are and how they see themselves. They can relax and be themselves and, by inviting people in to their homes, they can exercise control and choice and autonomy over their environment, (Dupuis and Thorns 1998, Mallet 2004). Sixsmith (1986) highlights that comfort and familiarity is altered when relationships are poor. Sixsmith's (1986, p. 291) research on students' views on the meaning of home refers to one participant who maintained that 'while her father was present there was an atmosphere of friction and the house could not be described as her home'.

Mallet (2004, p. 74) draws attention to the literature that suggests that the notion of family being significant for the meaning of home is a 'Western popular imaginary ...notion.... ideologically-laden and premised on the white middle class, heterosexual nuclear family'. The greater part of research continues to focus either on residential settings or on homeowners and traditional family arrangements (Després 1991). Thus it excludes, for example, single parents and single sex marriages and the impact these different relationships have on the meaning of home. There is a bias towards home being a positive place with certain groups not included in the literature and therefore worthy of future research, (Coolen and Meesters 2012). This review does not consider in any depth the meaning of home for those individuals where home is not a safe environment, such as in the cases of abuse or history of abuse, or for those in long-term secure units such as prison, or in residential settings such as nursing or rest homes.

Després' (1991) phenomenological and developmental interpretation suggests how the subjective lived experiences of home have been influenced by experiences over time and by particular life events. Residential history is significant, as well as familiarity with how routines have been established and lived out within the home. A combination of these two interpretative models although not clearly articulated by Després' (1991) allows for the consideration of how social context, such as housing policies could influence the meaning of home. Dupuis and Thorne (1998) when looking at older home owners in New Zealand discovered that meaning of home was influenced by social events in their participants' histories. Their participants greatly valued owning their own homes having lived through the depression after World War One. This shared event impacted on their participants' interpretation of the meaning of home. Shenk et al (2004) also considers how individual life course events can shape the meaning of home. For example the timing of life transitions in areas such as work, education and family can all impact upon attachment and meaning of home. Sixsmith and Sixsmith (1991) explore transitions from an ageing perspective with individual experiences influencing the relationship individuals have with their home.

Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) expand this, like Després (1991), and suggest that personality throughout the life course makes an individual successful in *making* a new home if needed. Molony (2010, p. 303) categorises this theme as home being a transitional process of integration, whereby people are working towards achieving “at-homeness” through life stages. Sixsmith (1986) also highlighted this transitory nature of home, underlining the complexity of meaning and the importance of understanding individual lived experiences of home.

The meaning of home is influenced by current experiences, that is, where you are living now and your day-to-day experiences but also the individual’s biography. This is apparent both in Sixsmith’s (1986) study of students living in university accommodation and Parsell’s (2012) study of people sleeping rough. Therefore it appears that life course events are significant, from an individual and social perspective. The majority of the studies reviewed however focused on women’s experiences of home and excluded men and even couples from their research. The focus also has been on home owners and not those in rented accommodation. Means (2007) would maintain that there are many older people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless because they live in rented or shared accommodation. Their interpretation of home may have been significantly different if their life course had been more stable. Given that 1.6 million people aged over 60 years live below the poverty line (Age UK 2014), this will undoubtedly influence their choice of being able to age in place, and their meaning of home.

Després’ (1991) phenomenological and developmental interpretation of home also notes the significance of living experiences and activities within the home. Angus, Kontos, Dyck, McKeever and Poland (2005) add that relationships within the home, and current and previous roles such as a mother, can add meaning. Feeling and being familiar with the environment because of time spent at home is comforting and makes home feel secure and welcoming (Dupius and

Thorns 1996, Leith 2006). Security from the outside, or home providing an “inside/outside boundary”, is seen as being “fundamental to the experience of being-at-home” (Després 1991, p.102). Carroll et al (2009) discovered that those who were displaced from their homes really struggled to regain a sense of ‘being-at-home’, because of this dramatic interruption in their life course.

Sixsmith (1986) adds to the debate around the impact of individual life course events, by considering how post-graduate students moved on from their childhood home to student accommodation and made that their home. She makes the point that home became home when it fitted in with the students’ personal objectives and what they wanted to achieve out of life. This of course was a much younger age group than the people who are the subject of this study, but making a home of where they were living was just as important. Relationships with other students and sharing similar experiences helped to make the students feel comforted and feel a sense of belonging and security in their potentially transitory home.

More recently McCarthy (2013) has undertaken a case study exploring a student’s experience of home using participant generated photographs. The single case study revealed how the student tried to create home in her student accommodation. Using her experience of her family home she furnishes her room with items that remind her of her family home, such as the display of cookery books and comforting bedding. The use of photographs enabled the student to explore in detail what was important to her about home and be able to create a homelike feel to her room.

Using Després’ (1991) framework as a guide this section of the review of the literature has attempted to define the meaning of home. Moore (2000) notes that studies have emphasised the psychological and experiential meanings of home and there is insufficient emphasis on the context of home. Later studies, however, have uncovered the fact that the experience of home is very much influenced by the social context, through studying homeless people (Kellet and



Moore 2003), older immigrants (Lewin 2001) and those who have been temporarily displaced from their homes (Carroll et al 2009). Using Després' (1991) theoretical approach to interpret the meaning of home provides a useful, albeit not exclusive, framework and reference to other frameworks has been made.

This review of the definitions of home suggests that home is more than a building in which people live. Home is significant in creating a sense of identity and security. The possessions within the home, the people who live in or are invited to socialise in the home hold significant meaning for homeowners, allowing a demonstration of self and sense of control over their lives. This demonstration is also reflected in the outside appearance of the home, even though this appears to be more relevant for the younger age groups. Whilst some reference is made to the impact of personal histories, individual personalities and the social context on meaning of home, further understanding of the significance of these aspects would be helpful.

The methods used by previous research to explore the meaning of home have been empirical, quantitative and qualitative, and has predominantly involved interviewing people aged over 65 years, although some researchers have focused their research on a broader age range (Angus et al 2005; Zingmark et al 1995).

The definitions of home have revealed the breadth and complexity of the subject. The next two sections will explore the multifaceted relationship which those in later life specifically have with their homes, initially by exploring what we mean by later life and then what home means for those experiencing it.

## Significance of Home in Later Life

### Later Life Defined

The National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People's Services (UK DH 2001) defines those in old age as those aged 50 years and above, even though the lower end of this age group is defined as made up of those 'entering old age'. Opinions about the start of later life vary. In a report commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (Humphrey, Lee and Green 2011) respondents were influenced by their current age. For example respondents aged 16 to 34, said later life begins at 52, those aged 35 to 49 said 58 years and those aged 50 to 59 said later life began at 61 years old. The gap narrowed as the respondents' age increased, so those aged 60 to 64 were beginning to consider that they had entered later life, with the average response suggesting that later life begins at 63. Therefore the start of later life is ambiguous, age dependent, and with an increasing life span difficult to specify.

The period of old age from 50 years old can extend to 100 years plus. Neugarten (1974), recognising the heterogeneity of older people, started to distinguish between the 'young old', those aged 55 to 75 years and the 'old old', 75 years and above. Bytheway (1995) continues the debate and highlights the move to introduce the third age. He refers to the challenges of defining groups by chronological age, suggesting that people cannot be defined by chronological age because even though people may share the same age they are uniquely different.

Alternatively, Miller (2000, p. 31), suggests that looking at a defined age group or "cohort generation" is just "as significant as other major structural variables such as class, gender, religion or ethnic group". He defines cohort generation as a group, which is demographically distinctive from other groups born before or after, and/or groups who had shared specific historical or other experiences different to other groups. A well-known cohort is those born just after World War Two, 1945-1965, otherwise known as the baby boomers. The unique experiences of this cohort will be explored later.

It is evident that a research study about older people must clearly identify and define who the older people are. As the proportion of the population who are aged 50 years and over increases it is also worth considering what has caused this increase and the significance it may have for the meaning of home in later life.

The increasing proportion of the population who are entering later life is sensationalised in the media with warnings of a demographic “time bomb”(Magnus 2009, p. 28). This negative view is fiercely criticised by Bytheway (2005), who is against any form of ageism. It is also recognised that older individuals are themselves guilty of ageism, believing that ageing happens to others (Jönson 2012; Neugarten 1974). It is for this reason the term later life is being used for this study as opposed to old age or older people, since these latter terms may carry negative stereotypes.

The proportion of the population aged 50 years and over and more significantly 85 years and over has been growing rapidly (Dunnell 2008). Dunnell's (2008) report for the Office of National Statistics goes on to say that it is anticipated that the number of people aged 65 years and over is due to increase by two thirds over the next twenty three years. By 2032, based on current projections, those aged 65 years and over will account for nearly 23 per cent of the total population. This change in the population profile is partly due to the increase in births from 1945-1965 (Dunnell 2008). This increase is sometimes called the ‘baby boom’. Evandrou and Falkingham (2000), in a cohort analysis of ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, subdivides the baby boom generations into “first baby boom generation” those born 1946-50, and the “second baby boom generation” born 1961-65. Those born during this period of time are of retirement age, approaching retirement or currently of working age. Consideration must be given to the challenges this poses for society such as ensuring access to services, welfare, pensions and, significantly, for housing requirements, (Sixsmith and Sixsmith 2008; Dunnell 2008; Faulkner 2007).

Those born in the baby boom years did not continue with the high total fertility rate (TFR) of 3.3 children per woman, a feature in the 1950's and 1960's, with the birth rate falling to a current level of 1.97 children per woman, which remains below replacement levels. There has been an increase in TFR since 2001 when it was at its lowest of 1.63 children per woman; it currently stands at 1.85 children per woman (ONS 2014b). This low birth rate, coupled with improvements in mortality, has contributed to the increasing proportion of those aged 65 years and over (Dunnell 2008).

These changes in fertility patterns can affect relationships and living arrangements, which then has an impact on what home means for people in later life. For example, the increasing size of this proportion of the population alongside reduced family size is significant for family support and interactions in later life, (Sixsmith and Sixsmith 2008; Dunnell 2008; Evandrou and Falkingham 2000; Glaser 1997). Social contact between generations in later life improves mental well-being and overall health status (Lloyd 2008). This is especially true for retired men who lose their main source of social contact upon leaving work, experience loneliness and thereby increase their chance of developing depression (Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley 2006). Now that an increasing proportion of women choose to delay having children and work full-time, thus reducing their ability to conceive, (Shaw 2008), they too may not have developed social contacts outside work and be at risk of loneliness. Other women have delayed childbirth which can place an additional burden on those entering later life. Increased longevity of parents and delaying childbirth can cause a sandwich effect, with middle aged people, particularly women, having both young children and ageing parents to care for (Evandrou and Glaser, 2004; Demey et al 2011).

Ageing is considered of value for children who celebrate age milestones such as double figures at aged 10, becoming a teenager, aged 13, 'sweet 16', entering adulthood at 18 years and now perhaps the belated 'key of the door' at

21 years of age. It is not until much later that age is celebrated in earnest once more. Those who are 80 years or older and those receiving a telegram from the Queen at 100 years old celebrate their advancing years (The British Monarchy 2009). It is however those approaching later life who might be more reluctant to embrace ageing. Indeed some may be concerned at the idea of the Department of Health defining later life beginning at 50 years of age.

Adapting and adjusting to the challenges and opportunities related to ageing has been widely explored (Baltes, Freund, and Li. 2005; Sugarman 2000). Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009, p. 252) suggested that “personality influences how people adjust to life in their new communities, how they perceive them and how they behave in terms of creating a sense of home and belonging”. Further exploration of the theories of ageing and adaptation to later life in relation to the meaning of home could be illuminating in the search of finding the significance of home in later life.

This section started by taking the lead from the Department of Health and defined later life as those aged 50 years and over. It considered that, in an ageist society, people may perceive later life as happening to someone else other than themselves. This may restrict participant involvement in research if terms related to ageing or old age are implied in the study. Attempting to define the meaning of home for all those aged between 50 years old and 100+ years old is ambitious and implies a homogenous group, which of course it is not.

Previous studies that defined old age/later life by encompassing everyone over 50 or more commonly 65 years, (Askham et al 1999; Glaser 1997; Hill and Pound 2007) and studies that attempt to define a specific age group or cohort (e.g. the old old, Iwarsson et al 2007b), may not identify the social context and life histories that Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009), and Gurney (1997) suggest impact upon the significance of home for an individual.

The review will now consider what has been written about the significance of home in later life. Following which, the social context of the baby boomers identified in this study will be explored.

### **Layered Significance of Home in Later Life**

The concept of home, as noted before, is more complex than identifying where you live (Dupuis 1998, Saunders and Williams 1988). In later life an increasing amount of time is spent at home (Gitlin 2003; Iwarsson et al 2007b). It can be an expression of self-identity and a place where you belong. As noted, the proportion of the population aged over 50 is experiencing a sharp increase. Thus, a study of the meaning of home in later life is worthy of investigation. As can be seen from Appendix 1 and 2, some valuable work has been undertaken both nationally and internationally on the meaning of home in later life. This part of the literature review will consider these studies in more detail.

The majority, 96.2%, of people aged 65 years and over do live in their own homes, (Age UK 2014), often with the informal support of their families (ONS 2008, Communities and Local Government 2008). These documents note the significance of affordable safe housing for older people to maintain their health and well-being. The emphasis therefore on enabling older people to have a choice of where they live, must take into account where the majority of people live, that is in their own home. Notably, with increasing age more people live in residential setting, albeit less than 16% of people aged over 85 years (Age UK 2014).

Interest in what home means in later life has been further fuelled by UK Government initiatives that place an increasing emphasis on enabling people to remain at home throughout their life (DH 2006; DH 2001; Department for Work and Pensions 2005). The Government supports the idea of older people staying at home without any clarity over why, where home might be or what home should consist of.

Older people often express a high degree of well-being and life satisfaction despite illness, because they are able to remain in their own homes, (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a; Iwarsson 2007a; Roush & Cox 2000; Towers and Netten 2006). The meaning of home, however, needs to be articulated and understood to enable people to remain at home (if they wish) as they age. Evandrou and Falkingham (2000) projected that there would be an increase in people living alone based on statistics from the General Household Survey. Whilst this was 14 years ago they were basing these figures on trends in fertility and marital status, trends which have continued (Dunnell 2008; Demey et al 2013). Living alone could influence whether people will be able to remain in their own homes if they have increasing frailty. Living alone also increases chances of loneliness and isolation associated with a decreased sense of well-being (Sixsmith and Sixsmith 2008; Rolls, Seymour, Froggatt, Hanratty, 2010; Tze-Li Crossman 2013; Sixsmith et al 2014a).

From the empirical evidence noted in Appendix 1, few studies on the meaning of home in later life have been undertaken in the UK. More research has been undertaken in the USA, although the ENABLE project (Iwarsson et al 2007b) is a more recent European project that includes data from the UK. Many of the studies identify a broad age range implying a homogenous group's meaning of home (Askham, Nelson, Tinker, Hancock, 1999; Evandrou, Falkingham, Rake, Scott 2001). These two studies emphasise the attachment people have to their homes and its importance to quality of life and well-being. Neither of these studies by nature of their methodology articulated the personal meaning of home. Where authors have done so (Moloney 1997; Swenson 1998), a sense of home is expressed through the direct quotes of those in later life themselves. However through the empirical research (Appendix 1), reviews (Appendix 2) and grey literature (Appendix 3), the significance of home in later life emerges. Després' (1991) four categories of interpretation, namely the territorial, psychological, socio-psychological/ phenomenological and developmental interpretations, will be used to analyse this evidence.

### *Territorial Interpretation*

Després' (1991) territorial interpretation outlines how individuals mark their space as a way of demonstrating identity, feeling secure and exerting control. Dahlin-Ivanoff et al (2007a) noted how the older person (aged 80-89) saw their homes as a demonstration of themselves, a place where they were making their 'mark'. Their display of personal possessions increased their feelings of familiarity and security (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007b). Roush & Cox (2000) emphasised the importance of familiarity when describing the significance of home. This single case study conveys meaning well because of the personal story.

Shenk et al (2004) in their sample of four people further confirm the importance of marking territory as a demonstration of self and therefore meaning of home. In her study, Swenson (1998) notes how treasured items, perhaps of no particular monetary value, fill the room of the older women. Swenson (1998) goes on to describe at length where the women she researched sit in their homes. This prime position has views of the garden and front door thus enabling even very dependent people to reach out to the outside world.

This chair faced into the living area; the telephone and the television were within reach. A nearby table or second chair contained useful personal objects; sewing supplies, books, magazines, medicine and writing materials. The handiness of the items enhanced the overall comfort of the room. In this central space, the woman was in charge, she knew where everything was and could usually find it readily; she could see and hear important things (the driveway, the front door, the telephone, the television) and she has easy access to her daily tasks (sewing, reading, watching the neighbours, dozing and daydreaming) (Swenson 1991, p. 387).

Whilst these studies are small, they reinforce the view that marking territory is key in demonstrating meaning. Furthermore control of the placing of personal items and access to these is important for autonomy. These studies also portray meaning which is both easily understood and recognisable when visiting older people in their own homes. These personal objects have "symbolic meanings that contribute to perceived well-being and quality of life" (Gitlin 2003, p. 631). Molony (2010, p. 301) identifies with this theme but defines it as "home



as a place-based entity”, whereby people enjoy the rhythms and rituals of home, even sounds and smells, finding these to be very comforting.

The varied research that highlights the territorial interpretation of the meaning of home places emphasis on treasured items and functional objects and marking the territory. Furthermore, maintaining that territory and feeling a sense of pride about being active in the domestic territory of home helped maintain self-esteem (Sixsmith et al 2014a).

### *Psychological Interpretation*

Home offers a sense of security (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009), a sense of control (Dupuis 1998; Lewin 2001; Sixsmith et al 2014a) and a demonstration of self (Oswald et al 2007; Askham, et al.1999). These feelings increase an individual’s self-respect and autonomy (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a; Lewin 2001). Home is seen as a meaningful place for older people (Haak, Fänge, Iwarsson, Dahlin-Ivanoff 2007a).

Some of these studies have been able to elicit the psychological meaning of home from large samples. Using questionnaires and interviews, they elaborate further on the psychological importance of home as suggested by Després (1991). Large samples and a broad age range, 60 years and above, have been included in these studies.

Angus et al (2005) revealed, in their study of people receiving long term care at home, the sensual experiences of home. Pink’s (2003a) ethnographic research also introduces the idea of the sensory home. These sensual experiences included familiar odours, food, sounds and decorative touches, all allowing the individual to feel at home and “facilitating emotional as well as physical comfort”, (Angus et al 2005, p.169). The Angus et al (2005) study focuses on a large age range of people aged 5 to 83. However, it emphasises the personal

security and presentation of self that home offers. Furthermore under the scrutiny of visiting health and social care staff, clients try to maintain a sense of autonomy and control as their physical dependence increases. Whilst older people do live independently, with increasing age, a period of morbidity is more likely. This study reminds health care professionals about respecting the autonomy of clients especially in their very private arena at home.

Askham et al (1999) discovered that older home owners were very attached to their homes, benefiting from being familiar with the local environment and services such as shops and the local doctor. Home-owning demonstrated a sense of identity. However, it also carried worries about financial burden and maintenance. Despite these worries their attachment to home was such that most in this study did not want to move. Whilst this study emphasises attachment and reluctance to move, from a large sample of people, it does not elaborate in detail what it is that people are attached to. Dupuis and Thorne (1996 and 1998) also noted the importance of home ownership in later life. In this study of the lived experiences of the 1930's Depression, people who witnessed others losing their homes later displayed an increased attachment to their own homes. These two studies focus on home owners and not those in other forms of accommodation.

In Gurney's (1997) ethnographic study we hear the voices of individuals and their lived experiences of home. They identify the emotional significance attached to home and the impact of relationships and health on whether home was safe or happy. Gurney recommends that further research on the significance of emotions in relation to home should be undertaken. His work reminds the reader that home is not always a safe and secure private place and can in fact feel like a prison. This intimate understanding may not be revealed via questionnaires, and becomes more significant through the voices of the individuals.

Iwarsson et al (2007b) reinforces the psychological significance of the meaning of home. This large data set predominantly focuses on those between the ages of 80 and 89 years. Many of the researchers involved had an occupational therapy background and therefore a functional interpretation of home. This is significant, since, despite declining health and function, people wanted to remain in their own home because it maintained autonomy and a demonstration of self (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009). “Home means freedom” Dahlin-Ivanoff et al (2007b, p. 28) discovered; people could live their life how they wanted to with or without rules imposed upon them, free to be quiet and reflect and ‘be sufficient unto oneself’. Being familiar with the home environment and local environment made the older people in the ENABLE Age project feel safe and secure and was key to health and well-being (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009). This supports Després’ (1991) reference to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, where safety and security are ranked very high if self-actualisation is to occur. However, the older people in Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff’s (2009) study did recognise that declining health and lack of social support could mean a transfer to alternative care. As Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) discovered the success of this move could be influenced by personality types.

As smaller samples were selected to be interviewed in the ENABLE-AGE project, more subtle meanings of home emerged (Haak et al, 2007b). Whilst there was a function/performance focus for this study it is clear that participation in any activity, be it for themselves or others, prevented loneliness and social isolation (Haak et al 2007b). As health declined and more time was spent within the home, the opportunity to be participants in activities, even decision making, promoted feelings of autonomy or independence (Haak et al, 2007b). The participants in these studies by Haak et al (2007 a and b) were older people living alone in their own homes, and excluded people in other forms of tenure.

The ENABLE-AGE project (Iwarsson et al 2007b) provides excellent data, from a large sample of people aged between 80-89 years across Europe, about their home environment and what it means to them. The study’s strengths lie in the sample size and narrow age range, but also in its implications for health and

social care professionals. The home environment for people aged between 80 and 89 is significant for a sense of well-being and independence, despite declining health. Little reference is made to the life course events on shaping what home means, especially as a small cohort has been identified. More recently, however, Sixsmith, Sixsmith, Callender and Corr (2014b), do consider the wartime experiences and their implications on the meaning of home for older people living in the UK. The participants in their study reflect how their experience of home during the war years has continued to influence their feelings about home throughout their lives. Because of the inevitable disruption to home life caused during the war, some of the participants discussed their difficulties of feeling at home whilst others became determined to create a stable home. This shared social context had individual effects on the lived experience of home during the life course. This consideration links to the social interpretation of the meaning of home as expressed by Després (1991), which now is explored further.

#### *Social-psychological interpretation*

Després' (1991) social-psychological interpretation incorporates feelings of self-identity, social identity and the social organisation and cultural milieu a person belongs to. This interpretation is very evident when health is deteriorating and a sense of healthy self has altered. Angus et al (2005, p. 177) discovered how clients tried to hold onto their sense of self and social identity when health care professionals came into their homes, but "felt shame as their homes increasingly reflected their position of dependency and incapacity to order and care for their surroundings". Home offers a sense of identity developed over time, and Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff (2009, p. 344) suggest that staying in their own homes promotes the health of people in later life.

Després (1991) does not mention families or family structure in this interpretation specifically, although she does mention social organisations which can include family and relationships. By adopting a broader social psychological perspective, however, an individual's meaning of home and how it has been

influenced by the social context is considered. The memories of raising a family and social gatherings within the home increase the attachment to home and may contribute to reasons why people want to remain in their own homes (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a; Dupuis and Thorns 1996). Relationships are significant in maintaining well-being and quality of life within the home, especially with declining health and increasing amount of time spent at home (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al. 2007b). As an individual ages, family support enables them to remain in their own homes. (Lowson, Hanratty, Holmes, Addington-Hall, Grande, Payne, & Seymour, 2013). Family involvement either physically or verbally makes the older person feel valued, and making a continued contribution to the family maintains a sense of self (Dupuis and Thorns 1996). Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff (2009, p. 342) maintain that home is the “hub of health”, that a key aspect is their relationships with others and “being able to maintain close relationships to children and grandchildren was of the utmost importance for health”. Dunnell (2008) suggests that over the next 25 years there is going to be an increased number of people living alone. The significance of not having another person to look after you in later life increases the likelihood of entering residential care, such as a nursing or rest home.

The sample group in many of the studies are women, so the male perspective is not made. Historically the women in these age groups were expected to remain at home to bring their children up, even if, as discovered by Gurney (1997), it could make home feel like a prison. Shenk et al (2004) discuss cohort norms and expectations where women born between 1920 and 1937 saw home-making and staying at home to bring up their families as the cultural norm. This gender perspective of home, and consideration of the impact this may have on the meaning of home, is worth exploring in more detail.

Després' social-psychological interpretation helps identify the social influences on the meaning of home. Although the interpretation overlaps with the psychological domain it offers the broader perspective necessary to understand the various factors that influence the meaning of home. The significant feature of family and support in later life is apparent in many of the studies and

changing family structures and choices in life course events could impact upon the meaning of home.

### *Phenomenological and Developmental interpretation*

Després' (1991, p. 101) phenomenological and developmental interpretation suggests that "home is a process that can only be experienced a long time and that people's particular life events influence their experience of home". Gurney (1997), through episodic ethnographies, found that how people define their meaning of home is influenced by their life histories. These life histories are marked by their relationships as well as social influences such as the housing and labour market. This is a small study but it adds to the body of knowledge that asserts that whilst the meaning of home is individually defined there may be some commonality in the significance of home driven by external social drivers. Gurney (1997) also suggests that interpretation of the meaning of home is not gender neutral and women and men have different emotional attachments to home, suggesting that further research to explore this phenomenon should be undertaken.

Home descriptions can vary over time and will be influenced by the lived experiences of home (Lewin 2001). If a group has shared experiences such as the depression in New Zealand (Dupuis and Thorns 1998) home descriptors will reflect this. Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) discovered that personality, life course events and life course perspectives influenced how well people settled into a new community and felt at home. A more positive outlook and willingness to create a sense of belonging helped people settle into their new homes. These are of course representative of a population that have the financial resources to enable them to move.

Moloney (1997), Shenk et al (2004), and Rioux (2005) found that people's homes had a sense of their own history. The place where families were reared, partners were loved and lost, houses were extended or redecorated, all

contributed to a sense of security and well-being for the women in these studies.

The sense of personal history and the impact of life course events have been highlighted as influential with regards to the meaning of home. These are just part of the layers of meaning associated with home. Furthermore, as previously discussed, over the next 20 years the proportion of those entering later life will significantly increase, because of the baby boomers. It is this specific cohort that is the focus for this study and a consideration of their social and historical context could have influenced their meaning of home. A review of what has been written about the baby boomers will now follow. A combination of these two interpretative models, although not clearly articulated by Després' (1991), allows for the consideration of how social context, such as housing policies, changes in family relationships, access to support in later life could influence the meaning of home.

The participants for this study are part of a cohort some may call the baby boomers. Why this group has been identified in the literature as such will now be considered.

## **The Baby Boomers**

As this group prepare to enter later life, an understanding of their needs is important to influence health and social care policy, including housing availability. Again as previously noted the meaning of home all depends and is influenced by social context. Therefore in this study, where the meaning of home of six people born in the baby boom years has been researched, a review of the literature about this cohort is necessary.

Defining the baby boomers as a cohort as well as the timing of the baby boom are both controversial. The term baby boomers appears to have emerged from the USA as the media and politicians tried to exploit the mass of people about to enter later life, with ideas ranging from talk of a financial drain at the

anticipation of a large group becoming dependent older people to the enticing ways to spend the 'grey dollar'. Whether individuals both in the USA and UK identify as being a baby boomer is another matter (Gilleard and Higgs 2007). What is clearly evident is that between 1945 and 1965 there was a significant increase in birth rate in the USA and the UK and this large group of people are entering later life.

The baby boom years in the UK have been defined as one large cohort, those born 1945-1965 (Willetts 2010), or a smaller cohort that is those born 1945 and 1955 (Beckett 2010). The increases in the UK birth rate had two waves, firstly those born 1946-50 and the second wave those born 1961-65 (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000). Gilleard and Higgs (2007) challenge whether, outside the USA, people identify with the baby boomers as a cohort. Given that there are 20 years between 1945 and 1965, there will be different social contexts from the oldest to the youngest baby boomers. For example in the 1960's there will be baby boomers who were small children and others who were experiencing the liberal 1960's as teenagers and young adults. Gilleard and Higgs (2007) argue against the use of the term cohort for baby boomers, maintaining that as a cohort they are not unique because the impact they have had, for example on consumerism, has had a rolling effect on future cohorts. However, what is not contested is that this is a large number of people and researchers are increasingly considering the implications of this group entering later life (Higgs and Gilleard, 2010; Leach, Phillipson, Biggs and Money, 2008; Gilleard and Higgs 2007; Evandrou and Falkingham 2006; Nettleton and Burrows, 1998). Furthermore, this group did experience unique social and political changes, influencing housing choices, education, and relationships which could all influence the meaning of home. In this study Willetts (2010) definition of the baby boomers has been adopted, that is those born between 1945-1965.

When comparing those born before the Second World War with the baby boomers there are significant social, economic and technological differences (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000). These are worthy of consideration because



of the potential impact these factors may have on the meaning of home for the baby boomers. Beckett (2010) and Willetts (2010) cynical perspectives on the baby boomers are worth reading but less relevant for this study. However, what they both highlight is the uniqueness of this cohort and their heterogeneity.

The baby boomers were being born during a period of post 1949 economic growth. Post World War II the drive to provide safe, clean decent homes recommenced (Stewart 2005) (see summary of housing policies Appendix 5). The introduction of the welfare state pioneering the NHS and subsidised council house building emphasised the role of Government as provider (Stewart 2005). Demand was great following the destruction of homes during the war and the increase in birth rate following the war (ONS 2012a). Time was of the essence to provide homes and significant investment was made to build high-rise flats, which ultimately proved to be a poor choice for physical and mental well-being. Significantly, throughout this building process, the views of those seeking new homes were not sought. This created the potential for future slums and not the homes people wanted (Jones 2004c). Post World War II to 1979 housing stock was either owner occupied or council housing, with owner occupation accounting for 58% of homes (Jones and Murie 2008). During this period the older baby boomers were bringing up their families in their own homes or council homes, whereas the younger baby boomers would still be in school or just about to leave school.

During the 1980's the emphasis changed with housing control moving from central Government to individuals, with tenants becoming customers with allegedly more choice in where and how they lived. Those in council houses were given the opportunity to buy their homes following the governments "Right to Buy" policy (Stewart 2005). It was at a time of recession, however, and the later baby boomers were entering the labour market during the 1980's recession, impacting not only on job security, but also their ability to pay their mortgages (Scanlon and Whitehead (2011). This was compounded by the 1990's recession with increasing unemployment, and families concerned about being able to pay their mortgage and people losing their homes (Stewart 2005). It is the mixed employment experiences of the younger baby boomers that have resulted in greater income inequality within the cohort (Evandrou and Falkingham 2006). Despite this, by 2005 owner occupation had increased to

70% (Jones and Murie 2008), but what remains is a greater divide between the rich and the poor, impacting upon housing choice in later life (Leach et al 2008; Settersten 2007).

Evandrou and Falkingham (2006) have considered whether the baby boomers will be financially more secure than their parents in retirement, which can influence housing choices. They acknowledge the differences between the economic and social environments of the earlier and later baby boomers, which can influence access to opportunities, including housing choice through the life course. They do note that, in comparison to pre-Second World War cohorts, the baby boomers are more likely to own their homes. Whether this ownership impacts upon subjective well-being is considered by Nettleton and Burrows (1998) who discovered that those who struggle financially and worry about the debt of a mortgage are more likely to visit their General Practitioner, especially men.

As noted previously, the baby boomers have experienced significant changes in family life, with more single-person households (Demey et al 2013), a decrease in marriage rates, increased divorce rates and decreasing fertility (Dunnell 2008). Changes in marital status during the life course can influence opportunities for home ownership, the preferred option for individuals, (Herbers, Mulder, Mòdenes, 2014), albeit the promotion of ownership was politically constructed (Stewart 2005). The emphasis on ownership may have influenced feelings about home, such as security or sense of belonging. It is important, therefore, to seek the views of those who experienced these changes to find out what is important about home for them today.

Furthermore, changes in fertility patterns can affect relationships and living arrangements, which then have an impact on what home means for people in later life. For example, the increasing size of an ageing population considered alongside reduced family size is significant for family support and interactions in later life, (Sixsmith and Sixsmith 2008; Dunnell 2008; Evandrou and Falkingham 2000; Glaser 1997). New homes typically cannot accommodate extended families where older relatives can be invited to share the home of their children. Unfortunately current Government Policy such as the bedroom tax, (Power et al 2014), aimed at encouraging people to downsize, can cause anxiety for both

the younger and older baby boomers. What is missing, argue, Kneale et al (2013) is an understanding of the needs of individuals, what downsizing actually means and the impact of limited choices for those wishing to downsize.

The baby boomers are known as an individualistic cohort. They grew up during a period of significant social and technological change and, according to Gilleard and Higgs (2002, p. 376), they “broke the mould of the modern lifecourse”. Compared to previous cohorts the baby boomers have higher incomes, reduced working hours, more women working, significant advances in technology, increased access to higher education and increased leisure time and foreign travel (Gilleard and Higgs 2002 and 2007; Leach et al 2008). Willetts (2010), would argue that they are a selfish cohort spending their children’s future. Higgs and Gilleard (2010) are more positive, maintaining that it is the government and global economic advisors that are promoting a generational divide which is not reflected in day-to-day experience. They add that the opportunities that opened up for the baby boomers continue for all post war cohorts. Higgs and Gilleard (2010) agree that the baby boomers are individualistic, but argue that everyone is. They believe that boundaries of age are less well defined and the whole of society should be examined to find solutions to what Willetts (2010) and Beckett (2010) might argue are the economic mistakes of the baby boomers. These comments surrounding individuality are not irrelevant when it comes to housing and the purpose of this research is to discover if the broader social context of the baby boomers is reflected in how they interpret their meaning of home.

What impact housing policies and changing family circumstances has had on the baby boomers meaning of home has not been specifically explored. What is known from the literature is that positive relationships within the home are important for individuals (Dupuis and Thorns 1996), that access to support with increasing age enables an individual to remain within their own home (Lowson et al 2013). The housing policies during the life course of the baby boomers may have had a significant impact on where an individual lives and the choice of home that they have (Stewart 2005; Kneale et al 2013). From growing up in a

council house to owning their own home, a significant proportion of the baby boomers will have had more choice than their parents about where they live. This, in turn, could have influenced their meaning of home. Although the baby boomers have witnessed these changes as a cohort, the impact will be individually experienced. Just as WW2 was experienced by an older cohort, the impact on their meaning of home was not the same. In other words the same war had different influences on an individual's meaning of home (Sixsmith et al 2014b). There is increasing interest in the baby boom cohort as they age and further research is needed that considers all these variables and the potential implications for individuals and policy makers. This study has focused on gaining insight into the meaning of home for a sample of baby boomers, something that has not been covered specifically in the literature reviewed.

## **Discussion**

Home is broadly defined as the place where you live. It is, however, more than just a building. For some people, it is the “anchor orienting them both in time and place” (Gurney and Means 1993, p. 124). As people age and become less able, they spend an increasing amount of time at home. They form a deep attachment to their homes and the personal possessions within it. The home becomes a demonstration of self-identity and where, with increasing age and frailty, an individual can still be autonomous, when their bodies appear to be failing them. Carroll et al (2009) found that even a wider age group felt devastated when their homes were destroyed and many in this sample went on to suffer with depression.

The majority of studies have considered those over the age of 60 years, but predominantly included those over 70 years. Some have focused specifically on the old old, that is 80 years plus. Others have had a gender bias illuminating experiences of older women thus avoiding the story of older men. Other studies help explore vulnerability in later life by sharing the experiences of others who are vulnerable, namely the homeless and older immigrants. Whilst there are

common themes emerging in the literature, important comparisons can still be made. Després' (1991) theoretical approaches to interpreting the meaning of home provides a useful framework. However, the elements of the frame work can overlap, and key areas such as family and relationships are not included. The personal story found in studies such as Swenson (1991) and Moloney (1997) reinforce the view that there is no single meaning of home. Gurney and Means (1993) suggest the meaning of home must be considered in the light of the cultural, political and personal biographies of individuals. The issue of life stories having impact upon the individual's interpretation of home is seen as significant. Many of the studies did not allude to the length of occupancy people had in their homes; this could impact upon their attachment to a specific place. Nonetheless home is more than the place. It's the relationships people have, the memories and the display of treasured items that contribute to meaning.

Having descriptions of what home means can help us appreciate the impact home has on health and well-being, and give consideration to the ways in which we support people to be at home if they wish. It is an emotive concept that can often conjure images of a place and detailed descriptions of meanings. The various methodologies employed included grounded theory (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a) and interviews (Askham et al 1999), whilst others employed a more narrative approach. Sample sizes also varied from large numbers (2000 plus participants) as in the ENABLE-AGE Project (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a and b) or as few as five participants (Swenson 1991; Moloney 1997).

Swenson (1991) and Moloney (1997) adopted more narrative approaches; these have helped the reader visualise what an individual's home looks like and the significance of these surroundings.

Changing demographic patterns, namely birth rate, marital/cohabitating arrangements, increase in divorce and increased life expectancy all impact upon the living arrangements in later life (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000; Glaser 1997). Living arrangements, availability of support and social interaction

all influence quality of life, which could influence the meaning of home. The impact of these extended family relationships on the meaning of home has not been explored. Lloyd (2008) suggests that relationships may be limited or constrained as a result of these extended families. Currently people in later life resist going into residential care. What is not explored is whether those entering later life have the same feelings or even think about the need for residential care as they age.

The samples in these studies however were women, so the male perspective is not made. Historically the women in these age groups were expected to remain at home to bring their children up, even, as discovered by Gurney (1997), making home feel like a prison. Perhaps a younger cohort, where women have increasingly gone out to work and had their own careers, could have a different meaning of home.

## **Conclusions**

The literature has revealed a growing interest in the meaning of home, specifically as people get older. As Government promotes ageing in place it is only appropriate that the views of the next large cohort entering later life are explored, regarding what their homes means to them. In comparison to previous cohorts the baby boomers have witnessed significant changes and choices in family structures, (Demey et al 2013) housing policies (Stewart 2005), education and working practices (Ní Bhrolcháin and Beaujouan 2012), during their life course, all of which can influence their meanings of home.

The focus of this review is to bring together the dominant and recurring ideas on the meaning of home. The intention is not to produce a definitive interdisciplinary approach to the study of home. The intention of this review is more modest. It aims to highlight the recurring themes around the meaning of home, and how these relate to older people or those approaching later life. For the purpose of this Chapter Després' (1991) four theories shaped the review, providing a broad structure for the complex meaning of home. However

reference was also made to the work of Mallet (2004), Oswald, et al (2006), and Molony (2010) and how these authors overlap or extend our understanding of the meaning of home. In the end, the purpose of this review is to ascertain whether the existing literature has (already) answered the research questions proposed by this study. Our conclusion is that it has not.

The variety of disciplines in this review seeking to explore the meaning of home reveals the multi-layered nature of home. The meaning of home has been captured in a variety of frameworks, (Despres 1991, Mallet 2004, Oswald, et al 2006, and Molony 2010), with overlapping themes but also additional perspectives, revealing how difficult it is to capture what home means in one study. Therefore, this study seeks to discover a way to capture the meaning of home that does not lead the participants, allowing them to say whatever they want about their home. In considering 'How can the meaning of home be explored?', the participants take the initiative and reveal what home means to them. Given the increasing interest in the baby boomers the study will also consider what influence if any, their individual life course, during a time of significant social, and political change has had on their meaning of home

Despite this complexity of home, researchers who have uncovered individual meaning of home with smaller samples have provided a detailed in-depth appreciation of what home means. Therefore this study seeks to understand the phenomenon of home of six individual baby boomers. An appreciation of what home means could help health and social care practitioners support individuals with their housing needs and individuals themselves during later life transitions.

## Chapter III: Method and Methodology

Peace and rest at length have come  
All the day's long toil is past,  
And each heart is whispering, 'Home,  
Home at last.'

Thomas Hood (1798-1845)

### Introduction

In the literature review, Chapter II, the meaning of home was explored and is summarised in the next few paragraphs, to give a context for this chapter. The meaning of home is significant in later life, providing a sense of security, identity, and well-being (Gitlin 2003; Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a and b; Sixsmith et al, 2014a). There is a sense of longing experienced when people are not at home, (Carroll et al 2009). As people grow older they spend an increasing amount of time at home (Gitlin 2003; Iwarsson et al 2007b), and there continues to be an emphasis on allowing people to age in place to maintain a sense of self and well-being (DH 2006, 2008, 2010). There is also a growing interest in researching the experiences of ageing, including exploring people's home environment because of the ageing population worldwide. In the UK alone the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over is likely to rise from 16% in 2010 to 23% in 2035 (ONS 2012a).

Research exploring the meaning and experience of home has used a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, demonstrating the complexity of this subject. The qualitative methodologies have revealed a rich understanding of the meaning of home for older people, especially those aged over 80 years. None of the studies, so far however, have looked specifically at the meaning of home for those born following the Second World War, that is 1945-1965, a cohort described as the baby boomers. Over the next 25 years those born in the



1950's will continue into the oldest ages, reaching their late 80's by 2035. Those born in the 1960's will reach their 60s around 2025 and 70s by 2035.

During the baby boomers' lifetime there have been significant changes in how people communicate with each other. The growth of the internet and mobile communication tools have meant that messages can be received almost simultaneously as stories emerge from across the world. There is a constant supply of visual stimuli with the result that the meaning of everyday life is initially conceptualised and understood by what we see (Weber 2008). Furthermore Goodley (2011, p. 129) notes that the immediacy of story sharing means "...an infinite number of perspectives can be generated around a single issue, perhaps through which the sharing of narratives can empower and provide alliances between people in ways that cross national, class, race, income and age boundaries".

Many qualitative researchers have embraced the opportunities that these advances in technology provide, resulting in a growth of more creative ways of gathering and disseminating research findings. Exploring the meaning of home is seeking to understand the lived experience of home as expressed by an individual. Meaning cannot be observed and measured since researchers do not know what someone is thinking; so meaning needs to be expressed. It requires a dialogue between two people, the person expressing meaning and also another seeking meaning. Meaning may not be expressed or understood until it is sought, hence the frequent expression of 'What do you mean?!' The expression of meaning will be shaped by an interpretation of that lived experience (of home) and the language available to express meaning. The researcher who is seeking understanding of meaning will also be interpreting what is being said which in turn will be influenced by their own lived experience of home.

Meaning is also very much context specific and is reliant upon the interpretation of that context. For example a person's interpretation of their meaning of home

might be altered if, after sharing their meaning of home, the following day they were burgled. Home is often taken for granted and therefore its meaning may not be clearly understood until home is lost (Carroll et al. 2009). Personal meaning is about the individual lived experience influenced by social context, (Benner and Wrubel 1989). The approach in this study resonates with hermeneutics and uses some of its underlying ideas because it focuses on meaning and interpretation.

In addition the meaning of home in later life is influenced by living arrangements, such as marital status or availability of family support (Dunnell 2008; Evandrou and Falkingham 2000; Glaser 1997). It is also influenced by social context as suggested before. For example home ownership was important to the meaning of home for older people who had experienced the Great Depression of the 1920's in New Zealand (Dupuis and Thorne 1998). Hareven (1994) reinforces the importance of considering social and historical context to understand the experience of ageing. She also notes that cohorts, who have had a shared historical/social experience, can experience differences in living arrangements compared to other cohorts.

Understanding the relationship between the individual experience and social context is a key interest in social gerontology. Social gerontology is about studying ageing from a broader perspective than just 'old age' (Jamieson 2002). Hareven's (1994) research with adult children from a life course perspective provided an understanding of how earlier experiences shaped by historical events and social context have influenced the nature of support they offer their older parents. By researching the experiences of those before later life it will be "possible to anticipate some important features of the later life of future generations" (Wadsworth 2002, p. 113). Therefore, this research has explored the meaning of home of six baby boomers from a life course perspective. A life course perspective considers the sequence of events that occur, from birth, going to school, leaving home, having your own home, getting married and so forth, and the impact these have on the present and future. Understanding the

life course is about describing individual and collective experiences and taking the social, political and historical context into consideration (Settersten 2006).

## **Justification for the Methodology**

From the literature review clear priorities emerged that influenced the choice of methods used for this study, creating an emergent underlying philosophical stance. These priorities are;-

- Searching for meaning could not be undertaken using quantitative methods. A qualitative approach was needed to capture the full meaning of home.
- A narrative meaning of home has revealed a deep and rich understanding of its importance (Swenson1998), so an exploration of narrative methods has influenced the choice of method.
- Social context has been found to play a part in the articulation of meaning of home, (Kellet and Moore 2003; Lewin 2001; Carroll 2009). Baby boomers have experienced what is described as a unique shared social history (Leach, Phillipson, Biggs and Money 2008) which may influence their meaning of home. A narrative perspective would hopefully reveal social factors during the participants life course that may have influenced their meaning of home.
- The meaning of home is a challenging question to answer as it is often taken for granted, making it difficult to articulate. Therefore, how to interpret more deeply what is taken for granted needed to be considered.
- Having autonomy and control are key aspects of feeling at home (Dupuis and Thorns1998; Mallet 2004). Therefore, to uncover these feelings about home, autonomy should influence the methodology for the study.

## Qualitative Approach

The research questions for this study [How can the meaning of home for the baby boomers be explored? and What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?] have influenced the methods chosen for the study.

The very nature of the research questions themselves required that a qualitative, rather than quantitative, methodology be chosen to elicit the meaning of home in this study. Central to the research questions are the twin issues of an open-ended concept – the meaning of home – and the use of specific individuals to explore and analyse this concept. Holloway and Todres (2003) suggest that qualitative approaches are particularly suited to these twin issues as they share a broad philosophy of valuing the involvement of participants and facilitating them to tell their own story.

In order to answer the second research question, “What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?” requires an examination of the meaning of home for baby boomers. This examination of the meaning of home for baby boomers then enables an exploration of the ways in which life course influences meanings of home.

A qualitative approach enables participants to focus upon what is important to them and “throw light on forgotten or hidden aspects of past experience, and highlight minority experiences, which tend to be hidden in quantitative work” (Jamieson 2002, p. 23). Qualitative research, therefore, often can reveal what is important to individuals. To put it another way, qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), makes the world visible.

Furthermore, in relation to the *meaning* of home, qualitative research is particularly suited to reveal meaning rather than measurement. Denzin and Lincoln state that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, [for example their own home] attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the *meanings* (italics added) people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.3). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explicitly maintain that a study searching for meaning requires a qualitative approach. This research has not employed just one method of qualitative research, however; it has adopted a flexible combination of qualitative research methods or a multi-

method. It is not using a 'mixed' method, however, where elements of both qualitative and quantitative research would be used.

This methodological approach is also driven by the research questions. For example, a mixture of research methods offers the opportunity to capture multiple voices and to broaden the interpretations of the phenomenon as the researcher endeavours to make sense of the data. This process acknowledges that multiple realities do exist and are context specific. It also acknowledges that a researcher's initial interpretations are challenged and broadened when other interpretations are encountered, thus enabling them to present a version of reality collated from a variety of sources, (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Guba 1996). These other sources can include the participants' own interpretations of the phenomenon being expressed. This interpretive approach values the contributions of the participants, and the interpretation made by others. Capturing and presenting these interpretations clearly will give the reader confidence in the scope of the research process.

There are many other reasons, however, for using a flexible combination of qualitative research methods when exploring the meaning of home. For example, Holloway and Todres (2003, p 345) argue that, to understand the lived experience of another requires a qualitative approach to research, not dictated by a specific methodology but by the appropriate use of flexibility and "doing what works". Holloway and Todres (2003, p 347) add that adopting a flexible approach means,

"Respect[ing] as much as possible the primacy of the topic or phenomenon to be studied and the range of possible research questions by finding a methodological approach and strategy that can serve such inquiry. This means not being attached to method for method's sake – a kind of reductionism".

The choice of a variety of qualitative methods for the research questions posed by this study is further reinforced by Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p 3) who note that following "successive waves of epistemological theorizing" researchers have learnt to borrow from different disciplines. This has the effect of making the researcher rather like a "bricoleur", putting together a patchwork quilt by using a variety of interpretive practices, each revealing more depth and better understanding. They conclude that this frequently produces "a commitment to

using more than one interpretive practice in any study” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p 4).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p 12) also make another powerful argument for the variety of qualitative methodologies adopted by this study, suggesting that

“Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp all of the subtle variations in on-going human experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience they have studied”.

This reinforces the need for interconnected interpretive methods to research and report the subtle variations of human experience involved in the meaning of home. But it also highlights important key points worth exploring in relation to qualitative research, specifically the issues of objectivity and the issue of using full explanations or stories about the phenomenon being explored.

### **Objectivity**

Qualitative research, as demonstrated by this study, requires a range of ways of ensuring objectivity. Fink (2014) for example states that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p5) add that the use of multiple methods or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question, furthermore the use of these multiple processes “adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry”.

When conducting any research, researchers bring their own sets of beliefs, values and ideas about the subject of their research (ontology), which influence the specific research questions (epistemology), which are then examined (methodology) in specific ways (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). The existence of a researcher’s own beliefs and values can undermine objectivity, even at the stage of deciding research questions. In this study, asking an open-ended question about *how* the meaning of home can be explored is an attempt to reduce researcher bias dictating the research questions. Furthermore, an open-ended research question allows a variety of interpretative methods. This also reduced the influence of the researcher’s own beliefs, For example, by letting

the phenomenon dictate the research process as suggested by Holloway and Todres (2003), the participants in this study were able to take the lead in what they chose to say about their meaning of home. This also helped to ensure objectivity.

Objectivity is also an issue at the stage of making conclusions. The researcher's own interpretation obviously influences the final thesis. Holloway and Todres (2003, p355) address the issue of the objectivity of researchers' conclusions, by discussing how researchers can be called to "account for the credibility of whatever claims [they] make about the truth-value of [their] qualitative research endeavours". They advise being clear about the decisions about the research process undertaken and how the claims made as a result of the research are arrived at. Consequently, attempts have been made in this study for transparency at each stage of the process. For example, the original data that had been produced by the participants has been shown for the readers themselves to interpret. Jones (2004b, p103) advocates the use of openness saying "By clearing the air in this way, we not only can attempt to produce more transparent data, but also can often find keys to understanding that we may have otherwise overlooked".

During this study transparency of the data and involvement of others interpretation of the data has reduced the researcher's potential bias and is one of the validity procedures adopted. Whilst objectivity is raised as a concern in qualitative research adopting multiple methods adds validity (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Participant involvement in the interpretation of the data, (photographs), then inviting reflective panels to view the photographs has provided a broader lens and thus understanding of the meaning of home. This process of data triangulation and the use of multiple methods add validity suggests Denzin and Lincoln (2011).

Holloway and Wheeler (2010, p308) define triangulation as "the process by which the phenomenon or topic under study is examined from different perspectives". Furthermore, Gergen (2000) argues the advantage of having

multiple perspectives or voices because they create a mix of meaning and a collective means of deliberation. When researching a singular or a small number of case studies, as in this study, triangulation has been undertaken by employing a variety of methods and clearly articulating the research process, as supported by Yin (2013).

Therefore, to summarise, objectivity in this study is ensured by being transparent and clear about the research approach, by using the perspectives of others when interpreting the data, presenting the images in the thesis and by providing rich thick descriptions that enable the reader to have an understanding of each participants meaning of home.

### **Storytelling**

To answer the research questions in this study, perspectives from narrative inquiry have been utilised. The various terms used when discussing narrative , however, can be misleading. Terms such as life history, life story, life course, story-telling and biographical perspective can be used interchangeably when in essence the aim is to understand the lived experience of an individual, (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Miller 2000, Holloway and Wheeler 2010, Chase 2011). Roberts (2002, p, 1) reiterates this, stating that this is a “stimulating and fast moving field which seeks to understand the changing experience and outlooks of individuals...and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future”. Participants in this study have been encouraged to tell or narrate a story of their meaning of home, without researcher-generated questions. The participants were able to reveal what their home meant and in turn give an insight into what influenced this meaning. As the data was interpreted, a more specific focus on the participants life course considered if the individuals social context had influenced their meaning of home (Elder 2001).



People's lives are made up of a collection of life stories and can be viewed from different perspectives, such as education, relationships, or indeed home life. Storytelling has a long history; it's how traditions, family history, and, therefore, sense of identity, are created. Stories have the power to "mend us when we are broken, heal us when we are sick, and even move us to psychological fulfilment and maturity" (McAdams 1993, p.31). Asking people to talk about what various aspects of their lives mean to them will inevitably lead to an account of what has shaped that meaning.

In seeking to identify the lived experience, without the influence of researcher-driven questions participants were encouraged to tell a story about themselves. Similar to the biographic narrative interpretive method (BNIM) where a single, narrative-inducing question is posed to illicit an uninterrupted story (Wengraf, 2001), the participants were only asked to tell the researcher what their photographs meant to them. This technique maintains the 'gestalt' – or overall shape - of the participant's story (Jones 2004a); the participant is able to tell their whole story even revealing hidden untold aspects because they are uninterrupted. The researcher adopts the role of listener and the participant the narrator thereby reducing the authority of the researcher and enhancing the expertise of the participant (Miller 2000, Roberts 2002, Jones 2004a, Flick 2014). Jones (2004a) proposes that obtaining the lived experience of another involves them telling their story or narrative. By adopting a narrative approach, the researcher is able to access specific personal information and re-tell that story using the words of the participants. The phenomenon being explored in this study, that is home, is a taken for granted experience and difficult to articulate. Encouraging the participant to tell their own story prompted by their photographs and then using a variety of interpretive approaches is therefore a suitable method of revealing their meaning of home and the factors influencing their meaning of home.

Furthermore, open-ended life story work allows the participants to take the lead in what they say (Jamieson 2002), thus maintaining their autonomy. Since autonomy is so important to the meaning of home, in this study autonomy became important for the data collection in this study as well. Participants were

able to take control of what they shared in their narratives and to explore their meaning of home with minimal influence by the researcher, avoiding manipulation of data that may occur with specific questions (Ollife and Bottorff 2007). Methods used that enabled the participants to tell a story about their home are explained in more detail later in this Chapter.

As with all qualitative research the participants will select and prioritise what story they will tell (Holloway and Wheeler 2010) and this story could and probably would change with time. This is a challenge for those adopting a narrative approach, since the truth is always variable and what you capture is the truth as expressed at any given time. It is in the interpretive processes that follow that enable the researcher to make sense of an individual's` story. The researcher needs to adopt what Roberts (2002, p.8) calls a pragmatic approach in the retelling of those stories “to gain insights into individual lives...reflecting wider cultural meanings of...society rather than dwelling on differences in methodological and theoretical assumptions”.

As Roberts (2002) notes, individual stories also “yield information about a generation and a cohort as well as accounts which are gendered, cultural and historical” (Bornat 2002, p.17). Making conclusions about the meaning of home for our participants required an understanding of the social and historical context that may have influenced their own interpretations. Capturing what these different life stories mean and interpreting them will help social scientists understand each individual and their life trajectory. A combination of individual stories will help predict future needs and expectations. Furthermore, small in-depth case studies, that explore the interaction between individuals and their social context, “can add more illuminative aspects to large-scale studies”, (Jamieson 2002, p.24). Inviting the participants to tell the story of their meaning of home will inevitably lead to an understanding of how their personal biography could have influenced this meaning. An understanding of the how their unique life course could have influenced the meaning of home could be illuminating for a larger scale study exploring the lived experiences of the baby boomers.

## Theoretical Underpinnings

Home is a “private domain” (Arber and Evandrou 1993, p. 21) and a place of refuge and security, enabling individuals to be ‘themselves’. During the life course this relationship with home inevitably changes from being a child in one’s family home, to perhaps ‘leaving home’ and going to university to live in communal accommodation, or getting a job and finding a new home, progressing to relationship forming and perhaps building a home together. Individual lives will be influenced by relationships, finance, social policy and social norms, all of which are influencing factors in the meaning of home (Haak, et al 2007a).

Researchers of the life course (Hareven 1994; Elder 1998; Settersten 2007) have shown us that it is possible to analyse the life experience of cohorts of people who experience similar lifetime experiences. For example, they note the significance of historical events and the timing of life transitions (such as forming relationships) on individual life trajectories including living arrangements (Robison and Moen 2000). This is significant for this study, since, given the life long experience of home, a life course perspective to research of baby boomers will help contextualise the meaning and significance of home for this group.

Appreciation of the life course emerged from longitudinal research on human development throughout the life span (Elder 1998). Elder’s interest in child development during the Great Depression and First and Second World Wars highlighted the significance of social and historical context. The timing of the experience of poverty or bereavement on different cohorts of children had “profound influences on [their] life trajectories” (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003, p, 26). These historical events impacted upon family relationships, for example the availability of parents who could be either working/looking for work or at war, resulting in children depending upon their age or age cohort, having to care for younger siblings or be cared for by older siblings (who were still children themselves). The timing of these roles, for example an older child being a ‘parent’ to a younger sibling, impacted upon their access to education and forming of peer relationships important for their development (Elder 1998). The

timing of social roles and the timing of historical location for different cohorts and the interaction between these are key aspects of Elder's (2001) theory of the life course. "Time, process, and context are analytic themes that join the two problem foci (on linking social change and individuals and on linked lives overtime) in a framework that has become known as life course theory" (Elder 2001, p. 178).

Life course research also shows the practical effect of shared life experience. Hareven (1994) for example shows the importance of generational relationships and the timing of these on the impact on availability of support in old age, all of which have been shown to influence the meaning of home. She says that adopting a life course perspective, "...provides an understanding of the ways in which earlier life experiences of older adults, as shaped by historical events and by their respective cultural heritage, have affected their values governing family relations, their expectations of kin support, and the nature of their interaction with welfare agencies and institutions" (Hareven, 1994, p 438).

Another benefit of a life course approach to research into an age cohort, like the baby boomers, is that looking at a specific cohort from a life course perspective avoids viewing all older people as a homogenous group (Hareven 1994). A birth cohort, such as the baby boomers, share a social history and dramatic changes in family structures, which have impacted upon their family relationships and living arrangements, (Demey et al 2013). Members of a birth cohort "share a social history-historical events and the opportunities and constraints posed by society at a given time", (Alwin 2012, p. 216), and experience life transitions at the same age and point in history. Adopting a life course perspective of the baby boomers meaning of home allows for "anticipatory gerontology", (Settersten 2006, p. 16) whereby the housing needs of those who are not yet old can be better predicted, (Clapham, Means and Munro 1993). Historically the period 1945-1965 was a remarkable time yet there are differences in the experiences between the older and the younger baby boomers. Nevertheless a life course perspective enables "within-cohort" analysis (Alwin 2012, p. 216).

Life course analysis is therefore very relevant to this study. To date, research with a life course perspective has predominantly been undertaken outside the UK (Jamieson 2002). Increasingly, those interested in gerontology in the UK have adopted this approach (Demey et al 2013) because living arrangements in later life impact on being able to age in place, well-being and independence. The baby boomers have experienced significant changes in family life, with more single-person households (Demey et al 2013), a decrease in marriage rates, increased divorce rates and decreasing fertility, all of which reduce the potential availability of support which is so important for maintaining independence in later life. Given the size of this cohort, the reduction in family support of older relatives has wider societal implications. By focusing on the baby boomers, who are “not yet old” (Settersten 2006, p. 16), an understanding of their future needs can be predicted.

Furthermore, Settersten (2007) emphasises the heterogeneity of people and with increasing age there is greater individuality. An understanding of the individual experience and the various societal, historical influences through the life course will therefore offer an insight into the meaning of home. There is undoubtedly value in considering context when exploring the meaning of home, since it is influenced by various significant consequences such as relationships, (a personal experience), to housing policies (social structure) and the relationship between these across the life course. It is the exploration of this relationship (Hareven 1994) that will enable a fuller understanding of the meaning of home.

Life course research is, therefore, clearly powerful for the study of the meaning of home. Methodologically life course research is costly and lengthy because of the need to collect retrospective data and extensive life histories (Alwin 2012). Retrospective life history techniques are effective “for recovering knowledge about the enduring effects of past events” (Elder 1998, p. 2). In this study retrospective life history methods were adopted to enable participants to revisit and then reveal the taken for granted experience of home over the lifespan. Nonetheless, before further discussion of the methods used in this study can be

made, the layers of interpretation required to reach understanding needs further exploration.

Adopting a narrative lens and asking people to talk about the meaning of various aspects of their lives will inevitably lead to an account about what has shaped that meaning (Roberts (2002). Using an interpretative approach will help the researcher consider how the life course might have influenced the participants meaning of home.

Gadamer (2006a) advocates the consideration of an individual's past when interpreting their present, suggesting that when making sense of any data the researcher should be mindful of the context within which these interpretations are made. Gadamer (2006b p.45) talks about hermeneutic horizon stating "One can describe this as follows: the interpreter and the text each possess his, her, or its own horizon and every moment of under-standing represents a fusion of these horizons". Using the perspective of Gadamer the layers of interpretation adopted for this study will be explored in detail in the Research Procedures section. First an exploration of the rationale for using an interpretive approach will be discussed.

### **Interpretative Approach**

One difficulty of researching the meaning of home is that it is taken for granted. Adopting a narrative interpretative approach in this study enabled the participants to identify what was important to them about their home and tell their own story. Home is experienced by an individual; although an individual may live in the same space as others which they all call home, it will be individually experienced. This individual experience is context specific and interpreted by an individual. For example a husband and wife may share a home. Their individual interpretation of what home means for them, however, will be influenced by their previous experiences of home, their relationships, the roles they play within their home and, the amount of individual freedom and choice they experience in their home, their life course. Yet home is often taken for granted, and unless home is lost, or at threat of being lost its significance is

not known. “Human beings do not often take into account the commonplace and ordinary: indeed, they do not even notice it” (Holloway and Wheeler 2010, p. 216). The approach used in this study resonates with hermeneutics and uses some of its principles as a theoretical base because it focuses on meaning and interpretation.

Being asked to reveal what is the meaning of home required the participants to interpret what that means to them. According to Heidegger “a person is a self-interpreting being, that is, the person does not come into the world predefined but becomes defined in the course of living a life” (Benner and Wrubel 1989, p. 41). Heliker (1997, p. 69) also suggested that people are oblivious to the world around them and take it for granted and Heideggerian phenomenology is “a matter of disclosing or letting this world become manifest”. Holloway and Wheeler (2010, p. 217) note that Heidegger developed an interpretive philosophy which formed the basis of hermeneutics. The concept of Hermeneutical inquiry has its roots in Greek mythology, in which Hermes transmitted messages from the Gods to mere mortals. Gadamer (2006b, p. 29), a former student of Heidegger, states that “Hermeneutics is the practical art, that is, a *technē*, involved in such things as preaching, interpreting other languages, explaining and explicating texts, and, as the basis of all these, the art of understanding, an art particularly required any time the meaning of something is not clear and unambiguous”.

Interpretation is an art and requires the interpreter to draw upon the understanding of those listening (or reading) to illustrate the points being made (Palmer 1969 cited Chadderton 2004). Interpretation in this study therefore starts with the meaning of home being asked; the participant then interprets what that means to them and translates that to the researcher. The researcher then has to interpret what the participant is saying in an attempt to understand their meaning of home. Even at this stage of the interaction, there have been three layers of interpretation. Gadamer (2006b, p. 30) discusses the “back and forth” process in interpretation to achieve a certain understanding. Furthermore he suggests that there is a certain freedom in interpretation in an attempt to

achieve understanding, perhaps suggesting a potential for manipulation. “The business of translating therefore always has a certain ‘freedom’. It assumes a full understanding of the foreign language, but still more an understanding of the true sense of what is meant, in the specific expression in the target language”(Gadamer 2006b, p. 30).

Whilst the experience of home has not been an unknown experience for the participants in this study, it is an unexpressed experience and taken for granted. Therefore translating meaning into a language that is understood by others is challenging, hence a variety of methods have been used to assist with this translation. There is an acknowledgement however of the layers of interpretation and the factors influencing interpretation in an attempt to respect each individual participant’s story.

Gadamer (2006b) emphasises the importance of achieving understanding and this is achieved through conversation. However, even before a word is spoken, there is an inner conversation, the thinking and own inner interpretation of what is being asked (Gadamer 2006a), which is then shared. Gadamer goes on to discuss how at times people are “speechless” when they struggle to find the words to express what they mean. “Language deserts us, and it deserts us precisely because what enlightens is standing so strongly before our ever more encompassing gaze that words would not be adequate to grasp it” (Gadamer 2006a, p. 4).

People struggle to articulate what home means to them because of its complexity. Words do fail them and finding methods that allow an expression of its significance requires imagination and skill. The expression of meaning involves an encounter with another, who will be influenced by their own experiences and interpretation as they work towards an understanding (Gadamer 2006b). One must acknowledge these pre-conceived ideas and be prepared to have these challenged during the process of reaching an understanding. This need for self-reflection is important and difficult, so in this



study other layers of interpretation have been incorporated in an attempt to reach this understanding. As suggested by Gadamer (2005b) every contribution leads to further development and understanding of lived experiences. Ingram (1985 cited Chadderton [2004], p. 66) reinforces this saying that the “to and fro” of an exchange enables new truths to emerge, or new insights. However, care must be taken to present the participants’ interpretation as honestly as possible and not distort or manipulate meaning. Palmer (1969 cited Chaddertson [2004], p. 65) states “that one does not seek to become master of what is in the text but to become the servant of the text; one doesn’t try to observe and see what is in the text, as to follow, participate in, and hear what is said by the text”.

In summary, a qualitative approach was proposed to answer the research questions and was adopted for this study. Using a flexible qualitative approach with multiple methods is appropriate but attention has been made to clearly articulate and justify the methods used as recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Holloway and Todres (2003). By adopting a flexible approach the research questions for this study are answered. Asking ‘How the meaning of home for the baby boomers can be explored?’ acknowledges that the meaning of home is a difficult concept to articulate, and methods from different methodological perspectives have been adapted to answer this question. By encouraging participants in the study to reveal their meaning of home, a participant led method reduces the power base of the researcher (Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011) and encourages an uninterrupted story of their meaning of home. Using perspectives from narrative research that highlights how story telling inevitably leads to the sharing of a personal biography (Roberts 2002, Miller 2000) helped the researcher consider how the life course influenced the participants meaning of home. Each individual will have their own unique story and interpretation of their meaning of home and using thick descriptions (Cresswell and Miller 2000) and the perspectives of others (Gergen 2000, Cresswell and Miller 2000, Denzin and Lincoln 2011), and presentation of original data (Cresswell and Miller 2000), demonstrates the validity of the research approach adopted.

## Research Procedures

Given the preceding theoretical and philosophical exploration underpinning this study, an interpretative approach was taken. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p 12) suggest that “individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why”. The qualitative researcher eager to hear the lived experience of the participants should, therefore, be flexible in their approach in gathering these stories. Methods were chosen that would reveal the taken for granted experience of home and bring it to the conscious level of the participants’ thinking. There were several layers of interpretation to reach an understanding of what home means for these individuals. The methods used have acknowledged these levels and captured them to produce stories of what home means to the six participants.

Photographs became a key part of the methods used. The use of photographs in research does have a long history (Kolb 2008, Pink 2007, Banks 2007). The photographs used can be generated from a number of sources, for example archive images, family photographs, magazines, or researcher generated or participant generated photographs dependent upon the purpose of the specific research project (Lawthorn 2001, Banks 2007). However, increasingly participant-generated photographs have been used to inform interviews (Balmer, Griffiths and Dunn 2015, Pink 2007, Lawthorn 2011, Moreland and Cowie 2005, Wang 1999).

Asking participants to take photographs of what home means to them enabled them to consider what it means, take a photograph to show what it means and then during an interview further interpret what it means when reflecting on the photographs they had taken. In this study the photographs were generated by the participants to retain their autonomy and reduce researcher influence. Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011) note that participatory visual methods enables the participants to be creators of their own knowledge, challenging the power

relations between the researcher and the researched associated with more traditional forms of research. “Participants are then able to exercise control over the presentation of themselves through the research” (Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011, p.275)

Participant generated images follows the same principles adopted by Wang (1999) who use the term Photo-voice, and the interview that follows is what Harper (2002) calls photo elicitation. Other researchers, for example Moreland and Cowie (2005) would call these stages auto photography and photo interviews. A blend of these two approaches was adopted for this study to enable the participants to share their reflections and interpretations of their meaning of home. The photographs created a snapshot of the meaning of home that became understood through various levels of interpretation. These initial stages of interpretation followed Gadamer’s suggestion (2006b, p. 30) of the “to and fro” process in interpretation to achieve a certain understanding. Finally, using an image based method helped to reveal the meaning of a ‘taken for granted’ lived experience, without which articulation of meaning would be difficult to express.

### **Showing What Home Means**

Asking participants to take photographs of what home means enabled each participant to take the lead in what they wanted to ‘show’, and gave them time to consider what to take. Thus this first level of interpretation required them to interpret the question asked and enabled them to choose what photographs to take.

As noted previously home is a place of familiar, regular routines, so it can easily be taken for granted. This can create a problem which photographs help us to solve. Using images in research is appropriate since the meaning of everyday life is initially conceptualised by what we see (Weber 2008; Rose 2007). Images have the potential of “freeze-framing” emotions, events and relationships (Frith

and Harcourt (2007, p. 1342). So photographs can help to create an initial idea of the meaning of home.

But, once an image has captured an idea, it can also be used to analyse it. Harper (2002, p. 21) explains: "Photographs can jolt subjects into a new awareness of their social existence. As someone considers this new framing of taken for granted experiences they are able to deconstruct their own phenomenological assumptions.

Thus, art forms such as photographs can offer a fresh perspective on the familiar and help individuals interpret the complex (Eisner 2008). Using images of their home in this study stopped time, to enabled participants to reflect on meaning and significance and bring to the surface subconscious ideas. Photographs stir from the sub-conscious a deeper understanding and meaning connecting to the "core definitions of self" (Harper (2002, p. 13). This makes photographs particularly powerful for interpreting meanings of home, since these are inextricably linked to self (Moore 2000). Photographs enabled participants, therefore, both to conceptualise and then analyse their meaning of home.

Another key principle of the study is allowing participants autonomy in what they chose to show and then discuss at interview. By asking them to take their own photographs of 'home' they were given control of the camera and choice about what photographs they took and chose to share. Using visual images such as photographs can empower participants and recognise their autonomy (Harrison 2002a, Frith and Harcourt 2007). This is in contrast to more traditional forms of collecting data. The integrity of what the individual is sharing should be accepted and not influenced by a series of researcher driven questions (Denzin and Lincoln 2001).

The use of photographs has been linked to the accumulation of richer, deeper data and if the participants generated the image themselves greater autonomy is achieved (Wang and Burrell 1997; Harper 2002; Bohnsack 2008; Oliffe et al 2008; Packard 2008; Phoenix 2010; Plunkett et al 2012). Participant generated

images have been a core principle for Photo-voice. Photo-voice is where participants take their own images, which are then discussed in an interview. It is a method mostly used in community development (Wang 1999). Whilst this study is not about community development, it is about understanding the meaning of home, which is difficult to articulate. It could also be argued that those who are ageing, or 'not yet old', are a seldom heard or invisible group, therefore the emancipatory method of Photo-voice is appropriate. The principle of autonomy for the generation of data, in this case photographs of home, is central to this study, because home is an individual lived experience. The importance of autonomy has also been found to be linked to the meaning of home (Dahlin-Ivanoff 2007; Lewin 2001). Furthermore, asking the participants to take their own photographs helps to equalise the power base between researcher and participant.

Photo-voice "can yield fascinating empirical data and provide unique insights into diverse phenomena, as well as empowering and emancipating participants by making their experiences visible" (Ollife and Bottorff 2007, p. 850). Making experiences 'visible' is significant when exploring home, since as previously mentioned home is a place which can be taken for granted and its meaning is therefore elusive. Giving participants control of the photographs encouraged them to be more reflective, both in the images taken and the story they told at interview (Ollife and Bottorff 2007). Gadamer (2006a, p. 13) would call this the "inner conversation", the deep thinking when one is trying to understand something complex. A significant feature of participant generated images is that the discussion is "grounded in what participants chose to share rather than being based entirely on responses to predetermined interview questions" (Ollife and Bottorff 2007, p. 852). The method of Photo-voice offers autonomy and shapes the photo elicitation interview that follows.

When the photographs had been taken they were printed and taken to the photo elicitation interview. Although considered separate to Photo-voice the principles of the interview that follows the collection of the photographs is the same in Photo-voice and photo elicitation and the data that emerges equally

rich. As noted by Moreland and Cowie (2005), their research using the same principles but different names of auto photography and photo interviews, participants' interpretation of their images surprised even themselves. Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011, p.276) also discovered that engaging the participants in this initial level of interpretation provides "a new means of narrative understanding, enabling deeper access into the lives of the participants themselves".

Photo elicitation was first named by John Collier in the 1950's. He was a researcher and photographer, and was examining the environmental basis of psychological stress (Harper 2002). Collier's research team struggled to explore this by using surveys or in-depth interviews, but, by using photographs a more detailed comprehensive response was given. Collier (1957 cited Harper 2002, p. 14) went on to develop the method suggesting, "The pictures elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helped subjects overcome the fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews".

Photo elicitation interviews in this study encouraged another layer of interpretation by the participants, as they articulated why they took certain photographs and why they represented their meaning of home. The handling and sharing of images also helps reduce any awkwardness of the interview, providing a focal point for discussion rather than face-to-face eye contact all the time. It also fully engages the participants; this is helped by the tactile nature of passing the images between the participant and the researcher. The intimacy of handing the photographs, rather than looking at them on a screen, encouraged reflection and gave time for the participants to find the words to express themselves. Photographs are tangible and can be treated "as concrete and objective records of events that can be examined, and explored in the interview" (Cronin 1998 cited Frith and Harcourt [2007] p. 1343)

When exploring the meaning of home the participant is the authority on what their home means to them: it is difficult to articulate but the photographs act as

emotive prompts encouraging reflection and insight. Photo elicitation is “based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher” (Harper 2002, p.15).

Photo elicitation interviews produce a significant amount of data, in the form of photographs as well as the transcript of the interview. However, the use of photographs as data is contested (Holm 2010). This challenge to the value of research using visual imagery came from those seeking to present objective, positivist research. Visual data has been considered to be too subjective, unsystematic, and unrepresentative. This opinion partly arose from the use of photography as illustration which contributed to its perceived insignificance as data (Emmison 2004). Therefore if photographs are to be considered as data they must be interpreted and not merely used as an illustration (Banks 2000 cited Holm 2010).

Prosser (1998), a major proponent of image-based research in the UK, noted that social research tried to establish its credentials by using objective or scientific data. This resulted in image-based research being marginalised because it was perceived as being too subjective. Yet subjectivity is a risk for all data since how they are interpreted and presented is subjective. This is why, in all research an analysis of how both written texts and visual data have been produced should be articulated (Lynn and Lea 2005). In this study the photographs have been integral at all stages of the presentation of findings as will be seen in the next Chapter. This demonstrates a more transparent presentation of findings allowing readers to monitor the author’s interpretations and to make their own interpretation of the images presented.

The photographs support the integrity of findings in another way too. The participant-generated images are a snapshot in time of the individual’s meaning of home. Layers of interpretation take place before understanding is reached. For example, various factors, such as the life course perspective, will influence interpretation. Pink (2007, p. 27) notes that “context and reflexivity are integral to the creation of texts (visual or otherwise) and therefore must be included in

any analysis”, adding that there is a moral responsibility by the researcher to avoid dominating the ‘text’. However, the photographs remain as focal points during these phases of interpretation and this helps to sustain an integrity and honesty in the translation of understanding into a verbal form (Chadderton 2004).

Chadderton (2004) discusses the competing versions of the truth and points out that understanding is temporary, referring to the “hermeneutic horizon”. This is valid since with each layer of interpretation a deeper understanding is achieved.

The term ‘hermeneutic horizon’ refers to the understanding a person holds about any aspect of their world. Dialogical play with hermeneutic horizons means that when a person views their world – and this includes engaging in dialogue, reading a text or considering pictures,... (Gadamer [1972] 1976) - the process involves playing with competing versions of the truth a reader brings with them in their language, and the resultant truth is of its time, which will ultimately be replaced by new truths of their time. In this sense, understanding is a temporary fusion of horizons. Chadderton (2004, p. 68).

Given this temporariness and the desire to respect the integrity of the participants’ understanding of the meaning of home from their own pictures, a further layer of interpretation has been added to the study. The additional level or layer of interpretation was added after the interview. A small group, or reflective team, was invited to interpret the meaning of home from each participant’s photographs. The reflective teams and the method behind them are based on the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (Jones, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). Using reflective teams added “multiple views and perspectives into the interpretive process” (Fenge and Jones 2012, p. 306). Having this additional layer of interpretation enriches the qualitative interpretative approach adopted in this study. Having multiple methods, including the addition of other perspectives broadens the interpretations of the phenomenon and supports the validity of the study, (Creswell and Miller 2000, Gergen 2000, Holloway and Todres 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2011).



As a final interpretive stage, all data was reviewed and interpreted together, that is the photographs, the interview transcripts and notes from the reflective teams. These rich sources of data helped to produce a version of the truth that captured the participants' initial versions (photographs), the readers' versions (reflective team), the interview transcripts, and finally the researcher's own interpretation based on the entire data set. The constant is the photographs, these 'snap-shots in time'.

Using these multiple perspectives added rigor, breadth and richness to the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 5) suggest that this "triangulation" of data increases depth of understanding. The value of having 'others' contribute to the interpretation phase of images has been well documented (Plunkett et al 2012, Ollife et al 2008 and Dowdall and Golden 1989), suggesting that multiple voices add a richness to the interpretation of data. Jones (2004a, p. 47) also advocates the value of introducing "multiple voices", a "collective means of deliberation". Rose (2007) stresses the importance of group analysis since the most important place where the meaning of the image is made is not by the author but by the audience of those images, who bring their own ways of interpreting and making sense. However, there are pitfalls to avoid. For example, knowing something about the context of the 'author' of the photograph will help when considering the various aspects of the image. Collier (2001) cautions against drawing conclusions from a single photograph, re-emphasising the importance of being aware of the context. In this study the reflective teams had the advantage of viewing all the images the participant had taken.

### **Choice of Sample**

This study is examining the meaning of home for the baby boomers, who are those born between 1945 and 1965. People living in residential settings were excluded from this study as this group has been explored elsewhere. Purposive sampling was used to identify people born during this time frame. Identification of potential participants was accomplished through chain referral or snowball sampling (Holloway and Wheeler 2010), a variation of purposive sampling,

whereby colleagues/family members of the researcher were asked to identify people who met the criteria.

Participants were identified one at a time to ensure a broader range of people were included. For example colleagues/family members were asked to identify either a man or woman or someone from a different social background, depending upon who was being recruited and to encourage some diversity in the sample. Marital status was not a consideration during sampling although with hindsight a perspective of someone living alone would have been interesting. Furthermore only participants who had no personal relationship with the researcher were included. This was to avoid preconceptions during the interviews and also because discussing home could be an emotive concept. Awareness of an individual's personal circumstances could inhibit the interview if the researcher interrupted the flow of conversation by trying to prevent the participants from becoming distressed.

Six people, born between 1945 and 1965, were asked and agreed to participate in the study. The sample size is small yet the methods used produce a vast amount of deep rich data and a narrative of each individual's meaning of home. Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011) note how time consuming the process of interpreting visual data can be, although it does facilitate an understanding of the lived experience. Furthermore, the methods chosen for this research included follow-up sessions with reflective panels, with rich thick data to interpret, as well as detailed and labour-intensive interpretive procedures. These procedures necessitated that the sample frame remain necessarily small. The narrative interpretive paradigm for this study acknowledges the presence of multiple realities and the various methods used provided different lenses through which to view the data. Yin (2014) suggests concerns about rigor and generalisability when small sample sizes are used can be allayed by being transparent about the research process and including multiple methods. Riessman (2008, p.194) adds that when using a narrative approach important insights can be gleaned by the attention to detail on the "little things" that matter. As well as being transparent in the research process Riessman (2008)

also adds that making primary data available can advocate for the trustworthiness of the data and the interpretations made.

Richness of data and thorough and meaningful analysis involving reflecting teams to explore and hypothesise what home meant necessitated, from the outset, the limiting of the number of interviews to analysed. What may have been lost in not using a method with the potential for larger numbers of subjects, producing large data sets, was more than compensated for by the method's capacity for deep and meaningful case studies (Jones 2001). The photographs, interview transcripts and notes from the reflecting teams are rich with potential for the discovery of new material and potential to generate further hypotheses, effect change in social policy and ultimately validate and illuminate the baby boomers' lives and their meaning of home. Small scale studies whilst not generalizable can be used to illuminate individual experiences that can also be used to test hypotheses in larger studies (Jamieson 2002; Bornat 2002; Ritchie, Lewis, Elam 2003). Furthermore, Jones (2006, p.2) adds that an emphasis should be placed on the meaning of the persons experience, stating that "the tyranny of numbers is abandoned for the enigma of words" and the search for meaning as expressed by an individual, rather than an exercise in proving or disproving, but instead interpretations of the truth.

The age of the people in the sample was specifically chosen because the majority of studies that have looked at the meaning of home in later life have focused on those over the age of 60 years, but predominantly those over 70 years (Grundy et al 2007; Kellet and Moore 2003; Means 2007; Sixsmith 1986; Swenson 1998). Some have focused specifically on the "old old", that is those 80 years or older, (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007; Grundy et al 2007). The meaning of home for the large cohort of baby boomers has not been studied specifically, hence the focus of this study. Miller (2000, p. 30) suggests that looking at a defined age group or "cohort generation", is just "as significant as other major structural variables such as class, gender, religion or ethnic group". He defines cohort generation as a group, which is demographically distinctive from other groups born before or after, and/or groups who had shared specific historical or other experiences different to other groups. Evandrou and Falkingham (2000,

p. 28), in a cohort analysis of ageing in the 21st Century, subdivides the baby boom generations into “first baby boom generation” those born 1946-50, and the “second baby boom generation”, born 1961-65. They maintain that there are sociological differences between the two groups which could influence their articulation of the meaning of home.

In this study three older baby boomers were selected and three participants born in the 1960's. Efforts were made to insure that the selection of subjects for interview included a diverse range of socioeconomic groups. Furthermore, individuals from urban and rural settings, all living in their own homes, were selected. The samples were not selected specifically for ethnicity, they just happened to all be white British. Also marital status was not identified as specific criterion for participants; in the study all the participants were married. Targeting specific ethnic groups and/or baby boomers living alone could be future research areas. A brief introduction to the participants is offered below. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

**Dan** - is a 62 year old married man (at the time of the interview), born in 1949. He lives in his own thatched cottage in a rural location. He has lived there for over 25 years. He works full-time as a managing director of a local science based company.

**Ruth** - is a 61year old married woman, (at the time of the interview), born in 1950. She lives in her own home, which had been a school room in the 19th Century. It is located in a semi-rural location and she has lived there for 15 months. Ruth is a self-employed researcher.

**Tessa** - lives in her own home with her husband, in a small town. She is 57 years old (at the time of the interview) and was born in 1953. She works part-time as a receptionist in a local GP surgery. She has lived in her home for 21 years.

**Karen** has three homes, one in the city, one in France and another in a rural location, which is where we met for her interview. She was born in 1962 and

was aged 49 years at the time of the interview. She and her husband have owned the UK rural home for 22 years, the home in Europe 18 years and her city flat for eight years. She works part-time as natural therapist.

**Paul** was born in 1964 and was 47 at the time of the interview. He lives with his wife and two children in an urban setting. It is their own home and they have lived there for 19 years. Paul works full-time as a labourer.

**Barbara** lives in an urban setting. Her home is rented and she has lived there with her husband and two children for 14 years. She was born in 1964 and was 47 at the time of the interview. She works part-time as a domestic cleaner.

### Recruitment of Reflective Teams

The reflective teams were made up of three to four people with an age range of 20 years to 80 plus, (see table 1 for the profile of the panel members) Occupations ranged from student, to professionals and retired individuals. Members were identified to represent a broad age range and therefore perspective. The first team consisted of three academic colleagues, to review the process; they reviewed one set of photographs. Following the success of this it was decided that a different reflective team would be used to interpret each of the other participant's photographs. Four of these teams consisted of people of mixed ages and backgrounds; the final team were retired nurses living in a residential setting.

| Table 1 Profile of Reflective Panels |                   |  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Participant photos reviewed          | Location of panel | Panel profile  |
| Dan                                  | University.       | X 3 nursing academics<br>1 male 2 female<br>Age range 40-56                          |
| Ruth                                 | University        | X3<br>1 male (aged 25, secondary school teacher)<br>2 females (60 plus both retired) |

|         |                     |   |
|---------|---------------------|---|
| Tessa   | University          | X 4 Age range 50-70<br>2 female (50 plus) psychotherapist and housewife<br>2 men (50 plus and 60 plus) volunteer and personal trainer |
| Karen   | Retired Nurses Home | X4 female retired nurses aged 70 plus   |
| Paul    | University          | X3 female retired nurses, aged 65 plus<br>An additional member was unable to attend on the day.                                       |
| Barbara | University          | X4 people (2 male 2 female)<br>Age range 18-56<br>2 students; 1 primary school teacher;<br>1 IT engineer                              |

## Data Collection

### *Briefing Interview*

When participants were identified they were contacted to arrange a short briefing interview. Participants were met at a mutually convenient time in their own homes or the briefing interview conducted over the phone, depending upon the participant's availability. The project was explained, and a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) given or emailed to each participant (see Appendix 6). The participants were told that they were invited to participate because they were members of the baby boom generation born between 1945 and 1965. The term baby boomer was not included on the PIS because it's a term that not everyone will relate to (Elliot 2013). The PIS notes that participants born in the 1950's and aged in their 50's and 60's, however those approaching aged 50 understood that they were included because they were members of the baby boomer generation. The photographs produced need to be a reasonable quality and be reproduced so a relatively inexpensive digital camera was purchased to give to the participants. The use of the camera was explained

before being left with each participant. In some instances the participants preferred to use their own camera.

At the briefing interview a broad remit for photographs was given as recommended by Harper (2002); Smith, Gidlow and Steel (2012); and Allen (2012). Participants were asked to take photographs of their home. They all asked for further clarification, asking what they should take, and the response was take photographs of whatever home means for you. Participants were asked to take as many photographs of their home as they wished. Five of the participants were happy with this but Karen sought further clarification by telephone about what she should take. She was advised to take whatever home means for her. As Allen (2012) found, giving insufficient information can cause some participants anxiety, resulting in too few or no photographs being taken. Karen did in fact take the smallest number of photographs. Rose (2012) maintains that the initial meeting helps to build a trusting partnership and Oliffe and Bottorff (2007) found this initial rapport building helpful in advance of the interviews. Whilst all participants were not met face to face at this initial stage, the building of rapport did commence over the phone and via email, the ice was broken in advance of the main interview.

Two of the participants declined the use of the camera and said they would use their own camera and send me the photographs. Another participant decided to take additional photographs with his own camera and sent these to me in advance of the interview. Karen did not send her images in advance of the interview saying she would have them ready for the interview.

### ***The Interview***

Once the photographs had been taken, two copies of each photograph were printed, and a date arranged to meet at the participant's home to discuss them. Conducting the interviews in the participants' homes reinforced their control of the data collected, and their ability to relax 'at home'; this is supported by Rose (2012). The process as outlined on the consent form and PIS and project

outline was reiterated once more and written consent obtained before the recorded interview commenced. Assurance was made that the participants could withdraw at any stage if they wanted to. However, none of them declined, and all appeared enthusiastic about the process.

The participants were given both sets of the printed photographs. They put one copy aside to retain after the interview, and then they were asked to discuss the meaning of their photographs in any order they chose. Throughout the interviews minimal questions were asked, only seeking clarification on points made. Interviews lasted on average an hour; Karen's interview was the longest and lasted 90 minutes.

Throughout the interview, the participants took the lead, choosing which photographs to discuss and the order in which they were discussed. An excerpt of Dan's interview transcript is included in the appendix (Appendix 7) and demonstrates how there was minimal questioning, with key words reiterated, or clarification sought on points made. This maintained the flow of conversation which deepened the reflection by each participant. For example Dan appeared very reflective as he considered his meaning of home, asking rhetorical questions such as, "Why is that important to me?", or reflecting upon the significance of a photograph of his sofa, saying "I don't know why I took it,... it's really about feeling very much at home in that lounge area".

Rose (2012, p. 312) reinforces the richness of this method, noting that "even the most banal of photographs...can prompt participants to give eloquent and insightful accounts of their lives". This was very evident during the interviews. For example, Barbara took a photograph of a corner on her landing. This was a very significant place for Barbara and she revealed a great deal of her meaning of home whilst discussing this apparently simple image.



All the participants were interviewed alone and only during Paul and Barbara's interviews were other members of the family met. Paul's wife was in another room for most of the interview, but at times Paul would call her to seek clarification on points, such as how long they had lived in their house. He was also keen to introduce his two children and called to them towards the end of the interview to say hello. Barbara's husband returned home from a walk during the interview and said a brief hello before going to the kitchen. She was also keen to introduce her daughter when she arrived home from school towards the end of the interview.

This brief involvement of other members of the family is reflective of Paul and Barbara's ages. They were the two youngest in the sample and still had dependent children living with them. Perhaps in the intimacy of his home Paul may have felt more comfortable having his wife around whilst he was being interviewed. Also, they appeared to have a strong bond, and family unit, which was also significant to his meaning of home.

The interviews were recorded, but notes were not taken during the interview, so that the conversation could flow normally. Every effort was made to ensure the participants had said all they wanted to, by asking whether there was anything more they wanted to add when there was a long pause. This is a useful open question and at times led to a further flow in conversation and reflection by the participant. Reflective notes were made after each session. The interviews were later transcribed from the recordings.

### ***Interpretation after the Interview***

Once the interviews had been transcribed reflective teams were invited to interpret each participant's photographs. The method was seen in action by the researcher during research undertaken by Jones, Fenge, Read and Cash (2013). As a member of a reflecting team in that research, the potential benefits for this current study became apparent. Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011, p 276) would disagree suggesting that "Visual imagery is not self-evident or self-

explanatory but requires interpretation from the creators of the images themselves". Rose (2012) suggests, however, that images can be interpreted, just like textual narratives, saying that it's not the discovery of truth but an interpretation. In this study, the panels interpretations were deeply reflective and insightful, broadening what Gadamer (2006b) calls the hermeneutic horizon.

In this study each participant's photographs were reviewed by a different team. At the start of these sessions the reflective teams were given a very brief biography of the participant, such as: their pseudonym, whether they lived in an urban or rural setting, how long they had lived there and who they lived with. Then they were asked to review the photographs in the order the participants had previously done. No further information about the participants or their interpretation was given during this stage. Notes were made on flip chart paper capturing what the reflective teams considered to be the meaning of home conveyed by each image.

At the end of the session a few comments made by the participants about a couple of the photographs were read to the reflective e team. This process enabled the team to understand the participant's story more, but notably how accurate their interpretations had been. Jones (2004a) also found in his reflective teams that the team members were captivated and keen to know more of the story, and that their incidental comments were often the most insightful.

These multiple methods of generating ideas about the meaning of home - participants taking their own photographs, then sharing their interpretation during a recorded interview, followed by a team review or interpretation of these photographs - produced a large quantity of multiple texts for the next stage of interpretation, when all the data collected was reviewed. Keats (2009) discovered the advantage of using multiple texts when analysing complex issues, suggesting that "multiple texts are an important option for recording and interpreting meaning" (Keats 2009, p.182). Keats added that each text, and

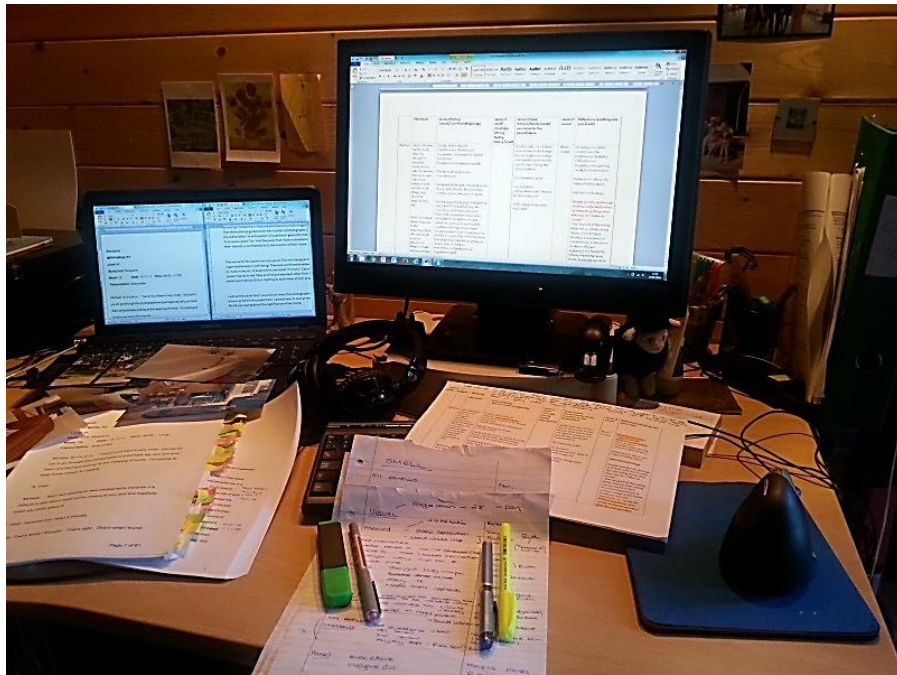
these can be spoken, written and visual texts, have their own story yet together a deeper richer understanding is achieved. The meaning of home is context specific and the various perspectives must be considered during the final interpretive stage of the study.

The holistic-content approach of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Ziblers (1998) was used during the final stage of interpretation. [At least, final in the sense of the thesis, although as indicated before, any reader of the research will continue that interpretation to achieve their own understanding]. Initially all the material was read and listened to several times and a general impression of each participant's meaning of home was made. This included all the photographs being on display. Significant meanings were then identified to see if these were developed during the interview, with coloured markers highlighting points that connected. The reflective team's interpretation, recorded on flip charts, was also considered as they added a different dimension and understanding. (see Figure 1). Their thoughts were reflective and evolved as they endeavoured to make sense of the participant's meaning of home. It was frequently surprising to hear the thoughtfulness of their reflections and how with just a small amount of information about the participant, and stimulated by the images only, they showed great insight. For example, when reviewing Ruth's photograph of her garden seat one of the panel said she felt an overwhelming feeling of sadness. She did not know that Ruth had been seriously ill in the preceding year, and at times felt trapped in her home, like it was a 'cage'.



**Figure 1: Holistic-Content Approach**

Reviewing the data as a whole continued when preparing the discussion. Once again the recordings of the interviews were listened to, whilst reviewing the transcripts at the same time, with the photographs set out on the desk. (see Figure 2). During this process, notes were made on a prepared chart to record how participants described their homes from a life course perspective, but also from a sensual perspective, the latter becoming a revealing feature of the descriptions of home, (see copy of a completed chart Appendix 6).



**Figure 2: Reviewing the data again**

The holistic approach retained the integrity of the whole story as told by the participants. Central to the research was reducing the influence of the researcher as much as possible. The participants chose what photographs they took, then they led the discussion during the Photo-elicitation interview.

### ***Presentation of Findings***

The findings are presented separately as stories of each participant's meaning of home. The photographs have been included in these stories to provide transparency, and allow the reader to experience the layers of interpretation—the participant's, the reflective team's and the researcher's. Readers then make their own final interpretation from the images presented.

These multiple texts and layers of meaning have added richness to the understanding of the meaning of home.

## Ethical Issues

This is a qualitative study and Marvasti (2004) reminds qualitative researchers that when researching the lives of people the researcher enters into a relationship with them. This relationship requires that researchers abide by the moral rules of courtesy and treat people politely and respectfully. It is the application of these moral rules that underpin ethical principles. The relationship researchers and participants have, however, is based upon a specific purpose i.e., to gain data, and, therefore, researchers can be faced with ethical dilemmas about how to treat the participants and the data collected.

There are various approaches to ethics in research to ensure that research is undertaken ethically. Christians (2005) summarises the main code of ethics in qualitative research under the following headings; informed consent, opposition to deception, privacy and confidentiality and accuracy. These are similar to other principles for guiding ethical decisions in research, such as those put forward by Beauchamp and Childress, (2001); respect for the individual's autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

The application of these ethical principles in a PhD research project are reviewed by the University Research Committee before the research can proceed. This research is operated in accordance with Bournemouth University's Ethics Policies and Procedures (2008), and gained ethical approval from the School Research Committee. However, Wiles et al (2008) suggest that not all the ethical issues are apparent at this early stage and that many emerge as the research proceeds. It is crucial, therefore, that researchers have in mind respect for their participants, drawing upon the ethical approaches outlined and discussions and support from their supervisors. The ethical considerations for this PhD are now explored in more detail.

## **Informed Consent**

The building of rapport with each participant started from the first contact, establishing a respectful relationship. Only people not known personally were asked if they wanted to participate, thus avoiding pressure to say yes for the sake of friendship or loyalty. At the initial meeting either in person or by a telephone conversation it was made clear that participants had complete autonomy when choosing to participate.

The expectations and process of the research was carefully explained to each participant. They were each given written information (PIS) to retain to remind them of the key stages of their contribution to the research, (see Appendix 6). Participants were then invited to sign a consent form agreeing to participate, (see Appendix 9). The aim of this process is to gain informed consent that respects the autonomy of the individual and protects them from any potential emotional or physical harm by being involved with this research.

Obtaining consent is, however, a dynamic process and participants were made aware that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Consent was also obtained to use the photographs for the thesis, reflective teams, future presentations and publications. Photographs taken by participants are legally owned by them and, therefore, future use of images has been made explicit on the consent form, and participant information sheet (see Appendix 9 and 6). The development of a relationship with participants is key during the various stages of the data collection and analysis process in order that mutual trust is established. Participants needed to feel safe that their contribution would not be exploited and trusting the researcher is paramount.

## **Confidentiality**

Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity is crucial when respecting an individual's autonomy in research. Therefore, participants' names have been changed, only the general locality of where they live is revealed, e.g., rural, or

urban setting, and their names and addresses were recorded in a secure location. For this project, data collection and storage follows Bournemouth University's Data Protection Policy and Guidelines (2008) and the principles of the Data Protection Act (NHS Executive 2000). The participant information sheet and consent form clearly state how anonymity and confidentiality can be assured, for example during the publication and dissemination of the data collected.

In visual methodologies maintaining confidentiality and anonymity can be an added challenge (Wiles et al 2008). Where photographs contain images of people their visual identity is immediately exposed, even if names are changed. Participants have been asked to take photographs of the home in this instance, and have responded in the main by not taking images of people. Once again confidentiality can be breached if those viewing the photographs recognise the home or surrounding areas. Wiles et al (2008) suggests that when visual data are used by social researchers, and consent has been obtained, no attempt is made to anonymise individuals. However, careful consideration of this must be made since participants may not be fully aware of the implications when consenting to not being anonymised (Wiles et al 2008). As a result, for the purpose of this research names of participants have been anonymised. They have taken photographs of their home and to avoid any further invasion of their privacy the locations of their homes have not be specified.

With participant-generated photographs, as in this research, autonomy is produced by the participant choosing what images to produce. There is the potential however for some ethical dilemmas. Allen (2012, p. 449) was torn between giving the participants freedom in what they choose to photograph, and advising them against taking photographs of "people, places or events that could be deemed dangerous or embarrassing" advising the participants to be "smart about finding themselves in a position where the act of photographing could result in unnecessary conflict". This avoidance of any potential ethical dilemma is highlighted on the consent form. (Wiles et al 2008, p. 19) discusses



the dilemma associated with photographs that contain images of others and suggests the participant should gain the consent of others before taking their photographs, noting, “Researchers are advised to be circumspect in the use of images of identifiable others and to consider whether or not someone might be at risk of harm or moral criticism as a result of use of the image.”

One participant took a photograph of his son. Whilst this was discussed during the interview, further copies of these photographs have not been used. Wiles et al (2008) noted the complexity of using images of people and that blurring images of faces is possible but may distort the interpretation of that image. Furthermore there are stringent laws around the use of photographs of children in research, relating to capacity and consent. In this study the images of the participant’s child were discussed during the interview but were not shown to the reflective- teams to maintain the child’s confidentiality.

Another participant took photographs of her husband who had posed in the kitchen, because he did all the cooking. As Wiles et al (2008) suggested, ethical issues emerge during the study and that is when there must be an application of ethical principles. In considering whether the image of the participant’s husband could be included in the presentation of the participant’s story and to the reflective team a review of the University’s ethical approval was undertaken.

Following a discussion with the School Research Ethics lead and supervisors we agreed that not only had the research process been verbally articulated to each participant, the participant information sheet also outlined clearly the research process. This included the statement “I may invite a small group to help me make sense of the information I collect” (Appendix 6). We debated the “may” since at the time of approval it was unclear whether the reflective teams would be beneficial; it was only following the first successful attempt, that it was decided that each participant’s photographs would be reviewed by a small group. These small groups are what have subsequently been called reflective teams, which were each reminded of their responsibility in terms of anonymity

of the participants. This example shows how there must be ongoing review and application of ethics during research and the discussion with the School's research ethics lead and supervisor was a beneficial reminder of that.

Upon further reflection of the extract from Wiles et al (2008, p. 19) and considering whether the images of the participant's husband could put him "at risk of harm or moral criticism as a result of use of the image", the answer would probably be no. Despite this the image of the participant's husband has not been displayed, though the importance of her relationships are discussed in her story.

### **Opposition to Deception**

Opposition to deception (Christians 2005), is similar to the principle called by Beauchamp and Childress (2001) 'beneficence and non-maleficence'. That is the principles that the researcher is not seeking to do any harm throughout the research process and ensuring the participants were fully informed about the whole process.

As noted before, whilst ethical considerations may be discussed and consent agreed at the outset, sometimes it is only as the research evolves that these need to be applied. For example at an early pilot study a friend of a close relative agreed to participate in the research. The participant's husband had died eighteen months prior to the interview. She was then planning to sell her family home of 40 years, and move to a flat. Despite her consent to discuss the meaning of home, my preconceived ideas about the life changing events she was going through stilted the interview; it was restricted in an attempt to protect the participant from any distress. These are examples of the ethical dilemmas in research. Beauchamp and Childress (2001) refer to this as non-maleficence, avoiding doing any harm, and this was the intention. Upon reflection it may have had the opposite effect since the participant may have appreciated the opportunity to discuss the importance of her home during this transition period in her life. From this pilot study two actions for future data collection emerged, namely not working with known participants: and secondly recognising that

efforts should be made to remain neutral (Barrett 2006) when listening to participants' stories and avoid trying to 'save' people from anticipated distress, when they may not need saving.

The methodology chosen involved participants choosing, taking and discussing photographs, which capture their meaning of home. However, at this stage the participants can reveal more of themselves than they had anticipated. Harper (2002, p. 21) suggests that photographs, "can jolt subjects into a new awareness of their social existence. As someone considers this new framing of taken-for-granted experiences they are able to deconstruct their own phenomenological assumptions".

One participant did become upset during the interview. As she reflected upon her meaning of home she thought of her childhood home and her parents. Both her parents had died and as she discussed their illness and death she became very emotional. She then became concerned that she was 'spoiling my research'; she was immediately reassured that she was not. She did become more settled before the interview was completed. The next day she phoned and apologised again, saying that she was still grieving after the loss of her parents but had felt better having had the opportunity to discuss them during the interview. She did appear calmer but she was reminded about seeking additional support if she felt she needed some, as outlined on the PIS (see Appendix 6).

## **Conclusions**

Little research exists on the meaning of home for the 'baby boomer' generation. Yet life course research has shown the value of such study and, indeed, also makes clear the need for a qualitative approach. This study seeks a complexity and depth of understanding of the meaning of home that only a qualitative method can elicit.

Similarly, the benefits to this study of visual stimuli, both to create and to analyse meanings of home, are also clear. It attempts to refute or overcome concerns about the validity of photographs as data; Olliffe et al (2008) and Rose (2007) strongly support both the value and complexity of visual methods.

Autonomy for the participants has also been a feature of this research. Participants made the initial visualisation of the meaning of home and its first interpretation. The participants' photographs have been the mainstay of interpretation throughout. All this has emphasised the autonomy of the participants and enhances the validity of their emerging meaning of home.

The Photo-voice method initially influenced how photographs were used in this study. Olliffe et al (2008) showed the value of an interpretative approach to visual stimuli. Crucially, this meant that the visualisation of home by participants, their own interpretation of their photographs, questioning by the interviewer, the review panels and the author's own overall evaluation created deeper and deeper levels of understanding of home. This to and fro approach between the photographs and those interpreting their meaning, are the key features of this research and its contribution to method.

The use of photographs, then, has been a key part of this study. They have made the meaning of home 'visible'. This has also influenced the final form in which the meaning of home has emerged. Denzin and Lincoln's (2000, p. 6) reference to the quilt maker is an effective and evocative image for this study:

The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labor is a complex, quilt like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.

Like a bricolage, this study is presented as a powerful collage of visual and written interpretations of the meaning of home for six baby boomers. The participants' stories can be read in the separate book, entitled, 'Stories of the Meaning of Home'. Prior to reading those stories, Chapter IV will answer the research question, "How can the meaning of Home for the baby Boomers be Explored?" Following that, the reader will be directed to the separate Volume, Chapter V, consisting of the Stories of the Meaning of Home. After that, Chapter VI will answer the second research question, "What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?" The discussion and conclusions will be presented in Chapter VII and VIII.

## Chapter IV: Findings Part One Making Sense of Home

*I suppose I just feel my own comfort zone. I can just feel relaxed. It's just. I don't know I just feel safe in that. I suppose that's the thing. I just feel safe. It's not so much with that. It's definitely that with the window. I've always done that. I always come to that window. That is something that I would really miss. Yeah, I suppose I'm in my safe environment, I suppose. I can just feel relaxed and be myself – Tessa.*

Home is more than the building where you live and with increasing age people spend more time within their homes. Understanding what home means therefore is important. As the large cohort of baby boomers age, an understanding of their interpretation of home can help shape policies related to housing and long-term care.

This study has sought to answer the following questions,

1. How can the meaning of home for the baby boomers be explored?
2. What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?

In this study, asking an open-ended question about the meaning of home allowed the participants more freedom to consider what their home meant to them, without being led by preconceptions held by the researcher. This was a risk since the participants may have struggled to articulate the taken-for-granted experience of home. By using the visual methods explained in chapter III, however, the phenomenon (home) was able to drive the research process as suggested by Holloway and Todres (2003), and the participants in this study were able to take the lead in what they chose to say about their meaning of home.

Participant generated photographs and participant led interpretation of the meaning of their photographs in the photo elicitation interview, followed by

interpretative panels, helped to illuminate the meaning of home. Harrison (2002b) and Frith and Harcourt (2007) suggest that using visual images such as photographs can empower participants, recognising their autonomy. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) challenges the traditional forms of collecting data, namely interviews, and believes the integrity of what the individual is sharing with you should be accepted and not influenced by a series of researcher-driven questions.

This chapter will discuss the significance of the approach used in this study and how it revealed the meaning of home of the six participants. The participant's individual stories of their meaning of home are presented in a separate volume. Roberts (2002) suggests it is these individual stories that helps reveal the personal meanings of people as they make sense of their lived in world. The participants' were able to show what their home meant to them through the photographs that they took. Presenting these photographs in a separate volume allows the reader to become part of that 'show and tell' process. The photographs have been integral to the participants' stories. Their presentation as a photo album aimed to acknowledge their significance in the research process.

Throughout the process of data collection and interpretation in this study, the showing and sharing of images have been central. As discussed in the literature review, the meaning of home is multi-layered and the specific visual and interpretative methods used in this study were very effective at revealing those layers. The participants were asked to take photographs of their meaning of home, whatever home meant for them. At the briefing interview stage they clarified what this meant. The same phrase was repeated by the interviewer, "Just pictures of whatever home means to you". This allowed the participants full autonomy in what they chose to capture, which reflected the importance of home being about choice and independence (Després 1991; Sixsmith et al 2014a). At all stages of the data collection an emphasis was placed on minimal direction from the researcher. Asking the participants to take their own photographs and being invited into their homes to discuss the meaning of these photographs, enabled the participants to retain control over what they shared, especially as they were in the safety of their own homes. Using an interpretative approach and visual methods, or a hermeneutic photography, was

the method used to reveal the meaning of home in this study. This is clearly evident in how the participants chose what photographs to take, how they later interpreted these and how others were able to interpret that meaning just by viewing the photographs. The findings from each of these stages demonstrated how useful the approach adopted was at revealing the lived experience of another.

## **Choosing Which Photographs to Take**

It was evident in the Photo-elicitation interviews that the participants had carefully considered what home meant as they were taking the photographs. Karen had been the most tentative and had sought clarification several times about what she should take. This hesitancy continued because she was the only one who did not send the photographs in advance of the interview to enable them to be printed. Instead she kept them on her iPhone during the interview and only afterwards sent the images via email. Without knowing how Karen shared her photographs, the panel felt that Karen was being careful not to reveal too much of herself. For example they noted that the photograph of the dining room table in France obscured the information in the pictures on the wall.





**Figure 3: Karen's dining table at her home in France**

Barbara was also very reflective as she took the photographs. Despite some challenges by her teenage son, Ben, about what she was taking, she was thoughtful and keen to show what was important to her. She told Ben “I know what I am doing”, and did not let him interfere with what images she took to reflect what home means to her. When showing the images she had taken she said,

So, but yeah, so I thought it was harder than what it was going to be to be honest because you had to put a bit more thought into them. It was too easy to go round clicking at absolutely everything and just saying there you go. Because everything is important because you're buying it and you want it to last. But it wasn't actually relevant things as to what these [photographs] are.

Ruth had moved home more than the others, but was equally reflective about what photographs she took, wondering “What is this essence of home that we recreate?” To her surprise the process of taking and interpreting the meaning of home revealed that at times her current home feels like a “cage” and that she was “hemmed” in. Taking the photographs made her very thoughtful and reflective throughout the interview. For example at one point she said:

But it's a nice place to be, it really is. But I have ...reassessed my thoughts of home. I have felt the physical part of it's lovely. Um.. I have... It was our dream to live in the country, or at least somewhere more rural. And um... I do my...I do feel hemmed in by it, definitely, in a way, that...because I'm not going out to work. I'm here more than I ever was. I think. So I can understand the idea of getting hemmed in by somewhere.....and irritated by all the things that need to be done.

## **The Photo-elicitation Interview**

All the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. Participants were given printed copies of their photographs. Only three questions were asked at the interviews. Firstly at the start of the interview each participant was asked to talk about the photographs in any order that they preferred. When they appeared to hesitate, a second type of question was asked, one that reiterated a comment they had made about a specific image. This then facilitated further elaboration on the significance of the image and how it related to their meaning of home. Lastly when the interview appeared to be coming to an end, the participants were asked the third question, "Is there anything else you would add?" This open-ended question was really helpful and enabled the participants to reflect further and in most cases continue with their interpretation. This question was repeated until they said that there was nothing further. So the questions were facilitative and non-directive throughout the interview, retaining the photographs as a visual stimulus and allowing the conversation to flow.

When the participants were first given the photographs they scanned them quickly and then chose in what order they would discuss each one. This process allowed the participants to retain control of the interview and not be influenced by researcher-generated questions. Each participant spent approximately a third of the time discussing their photographs and why each one symbolised home to them. using reminders about what they had said about certain photographs, they continued to reflect and consider what their meaning of home was.

The participants shared stories about the roles and rituals played out in their homes, their histories of homes, their fears for the future and the sense of refuge and comfort that their homes provide. The methods used were very evocative, not only for the participants, but also for the panellists who viewed the photographs in order to understand the sense of the meaning of home conveyed by the participants. The benefits of using a panel to interpret the images is discussed in more detail later.

Not all reflections were positive and the images evoked sad emotions and feelings of frustration associated with the meaning of home. Tessa became very distressed as she discussed her family home whilst growing up and the values that her parents had instilled in her about home life. This then led to her telling the story of how they had died and her sense of regret and sadness about this. Barbara frequently mentioned feelings of anger, frustration and the battles she has to fight to create a home that is safe for her disabled husband and a place where her teenage twins could feel at home. Living in housing association accommodation means Barbara will have less control about where she lives in the future. Her fear is that as soon as her children leave home she will be asked to leave the home that only her family has occupied, the home where she has built all her family memories, and be moved into something smaller. Barbara's anxiety is clearly evident when for example she said:

I don't ever want to leave. But one day we have to. Because it is Housing Association, so when your children leave, you have to downsize now. It's just the rules. They don't make you go immediately but you have to be seen to be looking for somewhere smaller because obviously it is a three bedroom house that belongs to them. So I don't want to leave, I can't ever see. Because they were brand new. So we've got the first memories in the house. So again that is important because in every room we've made all these memories in this house. So that is important really. So that will be a really sad day when we have to go. But my children are not leaving home yet.

### *Images of Outside the Home*

The images taken were of inside and outside spaces emphasising the broader meaning of home, beyond the building. Participants took photographs of the view from their windows (Dan, Ruth, Tessa, Paul) and outside in their gardens

(Barbara, Paul, Karen), and Dan took a photograph of the approach to his home, saying this image alone made him feel like he was coming home.



Figure 4: Dan's view of the valley near his home

And we sometimes stop at this lay-by and gaze down 'cos it really can be quite nice with the sunlight over it. So it's about feeling that one is at home if you know what I mean and all the rigours of the journey you have been on or if you have been abroad or, umm, and that is why I particularly wanted to take a picture and perhaps discuss that sort of aspect, that sort of feeling of homeness, (Dan).

Dan's wistful "gaze" over the valley where he lives enables him to articulate his reflection on its meaning highlighting how an image can create a sense of "homeness". Asking participants to take photographs of their meaning of home, and then sharing their reflections in a recorded interview has provided an in-depth insight into their sense of what home means to them. The depth and breadth of understanding was far more than anticipated and has been a significant finding for this study. For example, as Barbara discussed her photographs the profound effect of her husband's near fatal accident many

years before on her meaning of home was revealed. This event means her husband can no longer work, thereby reducing the household income and limiting their choice of where they live.

The images looking out of the window reinforced the feeling that inside they are safe and secure home is a place where they can be themselves. As Tessa looks out into the garden she says:

I suppose I just feel my own comfort zone. I can just feel relaxed. It's just. I don't know I just feel safe in that. I suppose that's the thing. I just feel safe. It's not so much with that. It's definitely that with the window. I've always done that. I always come to that window. That is something that I would really miss. Yeah, I suppose I'm in my safe environment, I suppose. I can just feel relaxed and be myself.



Figure 5: Tessa's view of her garden

As Paul looks out of his window onto the road, he emphasises how inside his home he is free from being invaded, saying "It's your space. No one else is going to invade it. No one else is going to hassle you. You just come in and relax". The blinds and criss-cross pattern of the windows provide additional protection from the outside.





Figure 6: Paul's view from his bedroom window

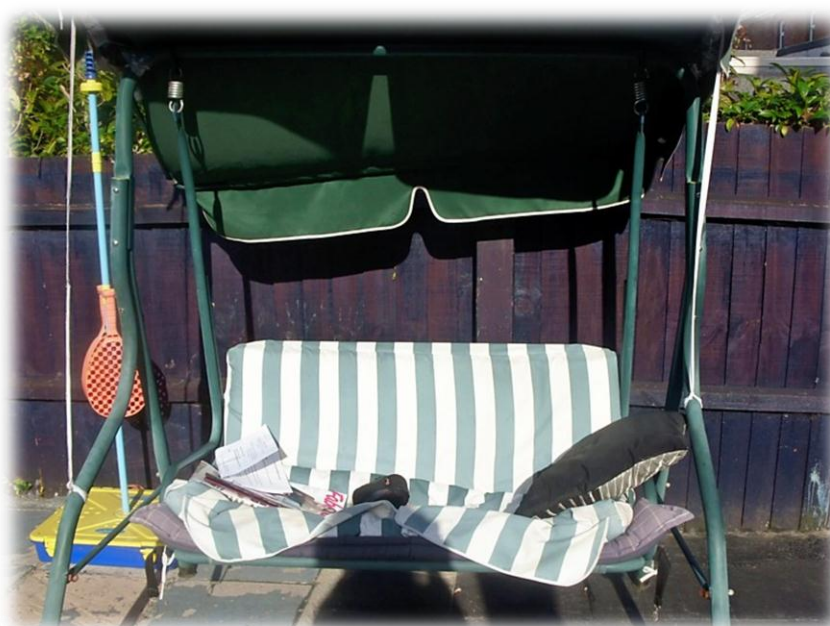
Karen's outside images are of the trees in her rural family home. The significance she places on her role as a mother resonates with how she feels about the trees. She describes the monkey tree in the garden that has grown like her own children - "It pushed up the first baby on the right hand side, which is now no longer very much a baby and these have grown", and the large oak tree with its wide round circumference, like the round table where she has sat with her children. The sense of a round shape, sitting in a round, symbolises for Karen that, as long as she can sit and be with her children like that, irrelevant of where that is, she feels at home. Karen's sense of home is very visual, yet as noted in her story, (Chapter V), there appears a disparity in what she says and then what she shows. All her references are about her role as a mother, yet she says she finds home within herself, when she's on her own. The photographs and her reflections on this process conveyed a sense of transition that Karen is going through as all her children are no longer living at home.



Figure 7: Karen's Monkey tree

In contrast to Karen, Barbara's garden is a concrete area, made safe for her disabled husband to access. Yet the outside is equally important for her meaning of home. The "swing and think" seat in the garden is the place where she goes for reflection and time to herself. Like Karen she feels the need to spend time on her own to feel a sense of peace at home.

Figure 8 Barbara's Swing and Think Seat



For Dan, Paul and Ruth in particular, being known and part of the local community were significant features of their meaning of home. Despite living in her current home for just over a year, Ruth enjoys the relationship-building with her neighbours, with her beloved dogs providing an excellent conversation point with new people. Dan and Paul's relationship with the community is about the longevity and familiarity with the area they live in, Dan's rural setting and Paul's urban setting offering each of them a historical context, and they find this very comforting. Despite her frequent house moves, Ruth builds new relationships and retains her relationships with her former neighbours: "I'm still friends with everybody there, send millions of Christmas cards there and all that sort of thing [laughs]. So I haven't really let that go, and I still do with the other house as well.....mm....." Ruth is perhaps trying to retain a sense of longevity and familiarity that Paul and Dan have with their community.

Ruth took a photograph of the gravel path leading up to her front door, saying that as she walks on this she feels she's achieved what she wanted to achieve, that is living in the country, "I walk in the door and I crunch up the path in my boots and I think "Oh" and I feel as if I'm in the country. So I love this [laughs]".



Figure 9: Tessa Gravel Path



### *Images Inside the Home*

All the participants took photographs of their kitchens, either to symbolise the 'hub' of the home, (Karen and Ruth), or the place where their spouse does the cooking, (Tessa and Paul), or where they eat as a family, (Barbara). Dan, Karen and Ruth each took photographs of their Aga. These images symbolised the comfort and warmth which they associate with their meaning of home. Karen also visualised how when her children are all home they grab cushions and sit with their backs against the warmth of the Aga.

Figure 10: Karen's Aga



Ruth mentioned that perhaps home is a “presentation of ourselves” and like many of the participants she shared images of the ‘things’ that were important to her sense of home. Some of these things were functional objects, such as the bath; Ruth, Tessa and Barbara discussed how having a long warm soak was important for their sense of home. Other ‘things’ were pictures of the activities that they like to do in the home, such as reading, watching the television, drinking cups of tea in their favourite chair and playing music, suggesting that home is about autonomy about what you do, and when and how you do it.



Figure 11: Tessa's Lounge with sport on the TV

Photographs of their beds were also taken by Ruth and Tessa, with both wanting to emphasise the feel of comfort their beds gave them. Ruth says,

And the bed. ...Again, I think I'm quite a comfort person, because... it's really important to me to have nice bed-linen and I change it regularly. And we've got this enormously wide 6 foot bed that is so comfortable that whenever we go anywhere else it's horrible.

Karen talks a great deal about the importance of things or “stuff” and how these can represent home or her feelings of home. In each of her homes she has a cupboard that holds all her things that she opens and closes as she arrives and departs. If she's travelling she takes a collection of visual cues such as images of motherhood, or other “stuff” to make her feel at home. It is interesting to note that despite visual cues such as photographs being important reminders of home, she took the fewest images, perhaps knowing how revealing they can be and thus wanting to avoid revealing too much of herself. She keeps her feelings and sense of home locked up inside, just like the cupboards she has in each of her homes, revealing some aspects but then locking them back up again afterwards. She showed a photograph of her large old cupboard from her home in France, but not her cupboards in her other homes. She also failed to send a copy of the image of the cupboard following the interview. Yet its significance was not lost when as she showed the photograph. She said:

It is enormous. And it is in the other house. And when I am there, everything of mine, is in there – so whether it is clothes, books, make-up, whatever else. Obviously, we don't live there all the time. So it becomes my encapsulation of home, and I open that, and gradually unpack it, and I live from there while I'm there. And then it all goes kind of goes back in again. So I took...(*hesitates*).. sort of took that as a way that it is kind of a mini thing within the home that it is completely my stuff. And that sort of made me think that effectively wherever I can do that, I can make home. I had to stay a few nights at the Ibis Hotel.

And it is the same kind of thing. You'd decant into an area, a part of somewhere. And for that time that you're there, because you've got your clothes and your books and sometimes I have a photograph, depending on how long I'm going for. And suddenly that sort of becomes (*hesitates*).. And so I wanted that image to record that sense of actually a certain number of things with you anywhere that becomes your new little home.

Paul on the other hand had all his “stuff” on display, with his 30-plus photographs covering many angles of the home. His home was like an explosion of what was important to him about his sense of home and it did appear to be a presentation of himself.

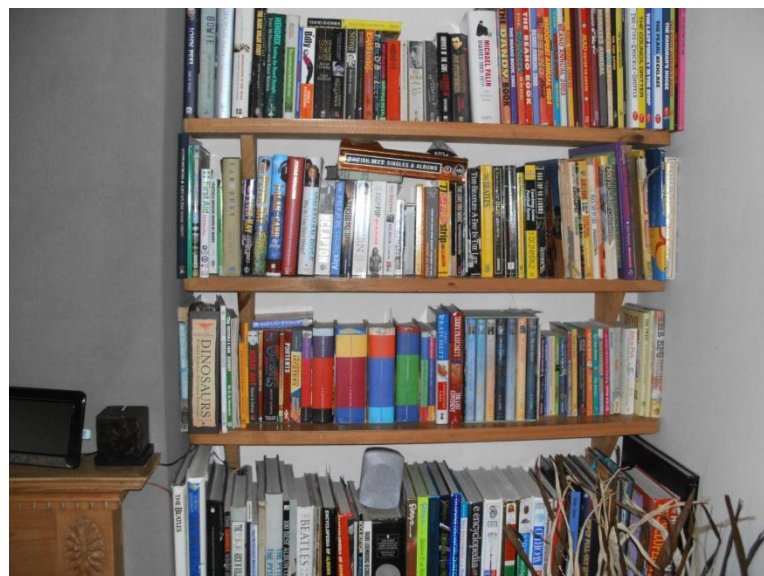


Figure 12: Paul's collection of books

But, like Karen privacy was also important and the outside of his home did not reflect the personality within. He likes that his very old home was “squashed there, squeezed in between the two houses”, shielding his home and keeping his home as his refuge and sanctuary, explaining:

When you've had a bad day at work or something, you know, and it's just pouring down with rain, and especially with the winter, you come in and it's a sanctuary. Well, you probably feel the same. It is. It's your space. No one else is going to invade it. No one else is going to hassle you. You just come in and relax. Shut the curtains and put the TV on or whatever, or read a book or have a bath or whatever. You know, it does mean everything.

Figure 13: Pauls House



Of the participants, Ruth has moved home the most and 'recreated home' each time. Her images of her home show the shared and independent spaces she and her husband have in their home. Her own private study has her special things. It's a place where she goes to meditate, look at the pictures of her children and "be". She is conscious that she is trying to present a vision of who she is, noting that when they bought this house her friends expressed that it was "so me". Whilst wanting to de-clutter, she likes having her things about her helping her to retain this sense of self. These personal "things" are important and notably absent she feels from a friend's room in a nursing home, which she feels neither reflects her friends own home or the person that she is. Ruth said she would hate to live in a shared residential setting.





Figure 14: Ruth's Study

When they appeared to hesitate during the interview the participants were asked a second type of question, one that reiterated a comment they had made about a specific image. This then facilitated further elaboration on the significance of the image and how it related to their meaning of home.

For example Barbara discussed all her photographs and why she had taken them. She was then asked “So what do you call your corner on the landing?” She then elaborated in far more detail about the “make-up” corner, where family members put the arguments of the day behind them, and the importance of these kind of rituals in her family. She explained the context for the make-up corner, her fears and anxieties and the importance of creating a good home for her children, saying,

So it is just important because that is the last time you see them that specific night. So it is important. And it's just before I go to the bedroom and it's before they go off to theirs..... So they've got nowhere, with the kids, they've got nowhere to go, (*laugh*)...they have to pass me there first before they go off to bed. So and nine times out of ten, it's me and Ben [son] making up because we're two red heads and we clash badly. So it is usually Ben.

Researcher: So why is it that you are saying that? Are you are saying it is important that you don't go to bed with a cross word?

Yes. Because I always feel it, although I wouldn't want to say it, I always feel, and I feel it more now, as I realise I'm approaching 50, because it is that fear of not waking and that fear of being left.... of that notion of the

last thing I said to my mum and dad was. But that goes back to – when did Alan [husband] have his accident? ....umm 1992..... that feeling goes back to then because even those years ago it made me think you know if, we hadn't quarrelled that morning, but if we had...(voice trails off).

Asking for clarification about certain images during the interviews, or reiterating key words which participants used about certain images, kept the images as the focus and encouraged deeper reflections illuminating more about the meaning of home. Barbara's meaning of home has been significantly influenced by her husband's terrible accident. She had no control over the accident, and likewise no control how long she remains in her current home, hence the need for control of the activities, décor and rituals in her home. Being in control is important for Barbara's meaning of home as revealed when interpreting her images. Her family are aware of her needing control, but she feels she needs it to stop her home falling apart. "Well, they all think I'm bossy in this house which I probably am. But if I wasn't it would all fall apart".



**Figure 15: Barbara's make-up corner**

The participants' relationships with others especially their family members, were evident in all the interviews. A few of the participants either took photographs of their family or photographs of photographs of their family. To maintain

confidentiality these photographs are not being presented, although they were discussed in the interviews. These relationships were central to their meaning of home as revealed in their stories in Chapter V. Dan shared a photograph of the view from the room that was the nursery in his home because it reminded him of a time when his children were small and his role as a father, provider, teacher and protector. Like the other participants, he is very reflective as he interprets his photographs demonstrating how revealing this approach is. He says about the photograph of the windowsill,

This one here is a strange picture to take. Its just in the window sill in the small room next to our bedroom. Why did I take a picture of a windowsill, it's a strange thing. It was because I always used to sit on the windowsill with the children when they were small and it has always been a nursery this room or it has till recently. .. So I always used to sit in here, sit with the children, look out into the garden and talk about things, talk about nature or whatever. And I probably concentrated on that cos now we have changed the room and made it into a spare bedroom with a double bed in it. So I didn't want to take a picture of that cos that is not how I associate this room. I always associate it with where all the children have been, and they have always been right next to the main bedroom, the nursery really, and I always think of it as the nursery although it is done up as a spare bedroom. So I took the picture of the window rather than the room itself because of the association with the children. I think it will always be that room to me no matter what one uses it for.

Figure 16: The nursery window in Dan's home



Finally, when the interviews appeared to be coming to an end, the participants were asked the third question, "Is there anything else you would add?" This open-ended question was really helpful and enabled the participants to reflect

further and in most cases continue with their interpretation. This question was repeated until they said that there was nothing further. So the questions were facilitative and non-directive throughout the interview, retaining the photographs as a visual stimulus and allowing the conversation to flow. When Ruth was asked this final question she summed up the complexity of articulating the meaning of home, saying that unless it was taken away from you, you do not know what it really means and, like Barbara, she said it was about control.

I do like my comforts, definitely. I mean, we used to go camping and do all that sort of stuff, but... I do like to be comfortable now....Mm...And I suppose it's like a lot of these things, that, unless it's actually taken away from you it's hard to describe exactly what it is. If it were taken from you, you probably could immediately say what it was. I don't know what um...Rebecca – my friend who's in a home – I don't know what she misses...too much. I don't know, I haven't talked to her about that.....Mm....But it's about control I suppose. It's about it being yours.

### Benefits of the Panel



Figure 17: Ruth's panel

The third level of interpretation was undertaken by the panels. Each panel viewed one participant's set of photographs to understand the sense of the meaning of home conveyed by the image. (The panelists consented to their images being included in this thesis). The panels were strikingly insightful as they looked at the photographs, offering a broader perspective than just one



researcher on his/her own could do. Whilst only minimal information was shared with the panels about the participants, they were able to gain a sense of home, as they studied the photographs in the same order as the participants had discussed them. They could even sense the emotion expressed by the participants. For example when they looked at the photograph of Ruth's garden chair one of the panel said she felt a sense of sadness, and that the position of the chair facing the house suggested that Ruth too was looking inward. This corresponds so well to the deeply reflective approach that Ruth undertook during her interview, and how she was rethinking what home means.



**Figure 18: Ruth Garden Seat**

Each panellist was fully engaged with the process. Following the review of Dan's photographs however, two panellists expressed concern that they had been judgemental and felt uncomfortable about their opinions. As they looked at Dan's photographs, they commented that Dan had a patriarchal meaning of home, where he was the dominant force in choosing the décor, and that his home was his castle. These panel members were nurses and as Jones (2001) discovered using a similar reflective panel process, nurses want to appear to be non-judgemental, despite, in their day to day practice, often having to assess and make judgements about people. When this was discussed with the panel members they were reassured and felt more comfortable. From the researcher's perspective it offered a different lens to view Dan's photographs and listen to his interview again. The significance of his home through his first marriage, when he was single again and subsequent second marriage was

clearly evident. His home had grown with him and been a source of comfort and security throughout some major life transitions.

Inevitably the panel's interpretations of the photographs were influenced by their own experiences. For example the nurses interpreting Dan's photographs wanted to demonstrate that they were non-judgemental. Ruth's panel of three consisted of two retired women and a 25 year-old teacher. For example the male teacher mentioned that Ruth's home reminded him of his parents' home in contrast to his current home, a shared accommodation in a rented flat.

These different interpretations of the photographs are a useful reminder that with any data the process of interpretation is influenced by the interpreters own experience. This also applies to the researcher and of course the readers of research papers.

To reduce the bias of the researcher the panel's interpretation added a broader and richer perspective. It was also very interesting to hear that without knowing the transcripts of the participants, the panels were able to make sense of that person meaning of home. Tessa's panel sensed from her images that she was struggling to let go of the past, indicated by the teddy bear on her bed. They did not know that Tessa was very upset during the interview as she recounted the loss of her parents several years before. Interestingly, however, a psychotherapist was on this panel.

The retired group of nurses living in a residential setting looking at Karen's photographs became very animated with their interpretations. The photograph of Karen's Aga made them recount stories of meals they had prepared for their families in the past on their own Agas. They said they could almost smell the casserole cooking and the bread in the oven. This was an interesting perspective from these women who now have meals prepared for them, without the associated sounds and smells of cooking to stimulate their appetites, or a sense of their own home.

The panels provided an invaluable opportunity to stand back from the data and consider different perspectives. As a researcher, a sense of loyalty to the participants can prohibit objectivity, so capturing different perspectives helped to

make sense of the data. The panels found the photographs to be very evocative and further views will be shared in the stories of home in Chapter V.

## **Summarising how the meaning of home for the baby boomers can be explored**

Investigating how the meaning of home can be explored is a key part of this research. The visual method adopted facilitated the interpretative approach needed to explore the taken-for-granted experience of home. As Weber (2008) suggested there is a constant supply of visual stimuli with the result that the meaning of everyday life is initially conceptualised and understood by what we see. Enabling the participants to take their own photographs and then explain what their home means to them gave participants control. The images became the focal point during the Photo-elicitation interviews and the panel discussions and, as layers of interpretation of the images were exposed, a deeper understanding of the meaning of home was revealed. This visual approach enabled the sharing of each participants meaning of home. Their detailed stories also offered indications of how their life course might have influenced their meaning of home. The participants' meaning of home have been presented in a separate volume and the reader is respectfully asked to read this now before proceeding to Chapter VI where the findings will be presented in relation to the second research question, "What influence does the life course have on the meaning of home for six baby boomers?"

## **Chapter V: Stories of the Meaning of Home**

The participants meaning of home have been presented in a separate volume, thus ensuring that the photographs remain integral to the participants' meaning of home.

See attached volume, 'Stories of the Meaning of Home'. The author suggests that the reader explores the volume at this juncture.

## Chapter VI: Findings Part Two The Meaning of Home “All Depends”

*Well the Aga stays on sort of 7 months of the year, and you always come down in the morning and its always very warm and it make a gentle sort of chugging noise, chug, chug, and the flames you can sort of hear, ..., you go down in the morning and there you feel the warmth in the middle of January and hear this gentle chugging sound and again if you're in the house on your own it's a gentle comfort as you hear this chugging, you can hardly hear it when there's someone else is talking, it's a gentle sort of noise - Dan.*

As noted in the literature review, Hollander (1991) suggests the meaning of home “all depends” on the context within which you consider it. As a very large group, the baby boomers have been identified as a unique cohort sharing a significant historical and social context post WW2. Because of the lack of specific researcher-led interview questions, the methods used in this study enabled the participants to take the lead in describing what their homes meant to them. This inevitably led to them telling the story of their past homes and their hopes for their future homes. These stories revealed their own unique social context, giving insight in to the meaning of home for six baby boomers.

Considering what impact the life course may have had on the meaning of home for the participants proved very interesting albeit a risky research question because the participants may not have shared in this query. Despite this risk, the methods adopted meant that the participants suggested the factors which influenced their meaning of home, for example different relationships, employment choices, housing choices, and life transitions. Also they shared stories from their peer group that added a further perspective on other baby boomers and what may influence their meaning of home for others beyond this study's small group.

Life Course consists of a sequence of events (such as leaving home, getting married, having children and so forth). Whilst individually experienced, these events occur within a social, historical and political context, (Elder et al 2003) and this influences choices: for example, where to live, or even the types of

relationships that are 'acceptable'. A life course approach recognises the individual experience and considers what influence the social context may have had on an individual (Elder 1998). The individual experiences of Paul, Barbara, Karen, Dan, Tessa and Ruth, therefore, are now delineated and a consideration of how the life course of each has influenced their meanings of home.

### *Paul*

Paul is an only child and until he was four lived on a small island with his parents. They left the island so that he could go to school. Paul did not go to university. Initially he was a drummer in a band and had his records played on Radio 1: his idol was Ringo Starr from the Beatles. Now his drums are in the loft because he says he's getting older and has to focus on his family. He currently works as a tradesman. Paul got married in his early 30's. He met Amy his wife when he bought their current home; she lived across the road from the house that was to become their family home. Whilst they refurbished the house they had their two children and they are both fully engaged in their children's upbringing. Both Paul's children attend grammar schools, having passed the entrance exam. Paul says his children are much brighter than he is. As his children grow up, Paul is conscious of passing time. For example, he found their transition to secondary education distressing, making him conscious that the next stage is them leaving home. He contemplates the time when he will be older and the things he will do to occupy his time, such as getting his drums down, or drawing. Paul is very nostalgic about the past and his home is decorated with items that remind him of his younger days; photographs of the Beatles and vintage metal signs adorn his walls. His garden has a nautical theme reminiscent of his days of living on an island. He explained how important his home and family were to him and that he could not contemplate ever wanting to leave his house. He believed that this was caused by his secure upbringing and the strong family values his parents had instilled in him. This, he said, was in direct contrast to his wife, who he felt needed their home to be safe and secure because her childhood home had been more unsettled. There was

a sense of traditional roles played out in their home with Paul taking great pride in his role as father and provider of a safe sanctuary for his family.

Paul himself says that his past experiences have influenced what home means to him. His life as a musician, not getting married until his early 30's and working hard to provide the safe sanctuary for himself and his family are very much tied up into his meaning of home. He says with pride that he has six years left to pay off the mortgage.

Paul represents a member of a cohort who had more choice than the previous generation. His life as a musician, emulating the iconic band the Beatles, demonstrates choice and independence. He is not however, spending his childrens' inheritance as Willetts (2010) suggests that baby boomers might. His home-making is very much influenced by his own experiences of home as a child. Like his parents he is keen for his children to do better and obtain a good education to improve their choices. He has embraced, albeit with some trepidation, the transitions in his life, buying a house, having children, the children becoming more independent and he is making plans for when he gets older, or becomes as he says an "old fart".

Paul's meaning of home is very much influenced by the relationships he has had in the past and his role as a husband and father. His fear of the life's next transition makes him concerned about what home will feel like without his children. His home is his private domain and the opportunity to buy his own home, in contrast to his parents, is something he is very proud of. His attachment to home is clearly evident, and as revealed in his stories and photographs his past and present are on display, showing how important this context is for his meaning of home.

### *Barbara*

Barbara is the same age as Paul yet her life course has been different. She is more fearful about the future and her ability to retain her much loved home.

Barbara has several siblings, none of whom live locally. Barbara does not say so much about her childhood and her previous home life. She does say her parents were music hall entertainers and, apart from her, all her family can sing! As she talks Barbara reveals more about the impact of living in social housing, not only through her own fights to get the right equipment for her disabled husband, but also through the stories she tells about her neighbours. She discusses the single mother of four living next door and how she has been told to find employment or her benefits will cease. Barbara cannot understand who will look after her neighbour's children if their mum has to go out to work. She feels frustrated at a system that seems so unfair and punitive to those who can least afford it. She says:

This is what angers me really with the government. And like Hannah [neighbour] next door, four children under 10 and she had to go to the job centre yesterday. They are pushing her to work. And she sat and said well what can I do? I've got four children under 10. She said what job can you give me? Because at the end of the day I've got school holidays go get through. But they've given her until February or they take her money. See I don't understand it. And then you've got all these school leavers and there's nothing. We're at the highest unemployment. But yet they've told Hannah if she doesn't find a job by February - irrelevant that she has four children under ten. I just don't get it.

Barbara's husband's near fatal fall and his inability to work have had a significant effect on their housing choices, and subsequent meaning of home, now and for the future. Furthermore her thoughts about Hannah indicate her concern about choices for the next generation because they have to fund themselves going to university with no employment guarantee. Her fears for the future "scare the hell" out of her; she finds it "frightening" and "scary"; she does not want her children to be in debt when they are looking to buy their own homes.

The impact of Barbara's husband accident has significantly influenced their life course and their ability to buy their own home. Choices in living arrangements have been a key feature in housing policy as the baby boomers grew up. If you are unable to buy your own home, it appears that choices become more limited. She is very attached to her home but, in equal measure, is her fear about being forced to leave it. In addition her meaning of home is significantly influenced by



her role as a mother and, like Paul, she is anxious about the next transition in her life when the children leave home.

### *Karen*

Karen's housing choices are completely opposite to Barbara's, as she is trying to decide whether to sell her rural home and buy a larger home in "London, or Paris or wherever". This decision, she feels, will be influenced by how much they need to support their children. Yet, like Barbara, she has concerns about how her children will be able to afford a mortgage and buy their own homes. This is an interesting observation, since during the life course of the baby boomers there has been a drive to increase the number of homeowners, perhaps beyond the earning capacity of the owners themselves (Higgs and Gilleard 2010). These changes according to Higgs and Gilleard (2010, p. 1446) have been influenced more by social policy and the "vagaries of the market", resulting in "intergenerational compromises including more young adults returning to the parental home". So concerns about children leaving home may change with worries that their children are not able to afford to leave home. These changing relationships and loss of normal transitions in life may impact upon an individual's meaning of home.

Karen has her own home and she cannot understand how a sense of home can be created in a rented house, saying, "Are they going to have the same sense of home? Will they ever put the same energy and interest in something that is rented and not theirs, temporary and not permanent as other generations perhaps have put into their homes?" The differences between the choice Karen and Barbara have about where they live demonstrates the significant gap between the rich and poor people in the UK. Karen is two years older than Barbara and has had a different life course, yet their views on home are similar. Their roles as mothers are equally significant and relate to their meaning of home. They are both coming to terms with this next life transition and considering how this will influence their sense of home.

Karen was more guarded during her interview, although her interview lasted the longest. She revealed less about her life course but, like Barbara, gave insights

into the life course and how it could influence the meaning of home with examples from her friends and family. She considered her father and mother-in-law's deaths. Her father-in-law died in his own home, surrounded by his family, and her mother-in-law died in her daughter's home, but again surrounded by her family. Karen contemplated whether her mother-in-law would have really wanted to die there because her daughter's sheets were not the type her mother-in-law liked. She emphasises the importance of family and people being able to die where and how they chose. This of course becomes significant if that person doesn't have family. Furthermore Gomes and Higginson (2008) note a decrease in home deaths in England and Wales. They express concern that individual's choice of place of death will be severely compromised if there is insufficient investment in end of life care, whether in intuitions or in community care services.

Karen also considers this when discussing her friends who have no children and who do not own a home. This reveals as much about what is important to her about home as well as insight into the lives of other members of the baby boom cohort. For example she says:

I mean you know we've got several friends who've never owned, they've always rented whatever house they've lived in. They made their money do other things, the money that they had. A very close friend of mine has always been a teacher in boarding schools. She's never had her own home. It's really hard for her. Pause

Interviewer: She finds that really hard, does she?

Really hard. Although she says to me "No" she's almost, she's getting to the stage now. What's she going to do? She's going to go from a boarding home environment to a retirement home because she says, you know, there's going to be no point, there's nobody. And she's very strong.. if you look at her she's a very strong home maker kind of person. She quilts and everything's always very homey, and she bakes and cooks. And she does everything that you'd imagine someone standing by their Aga in their kitchen to do, very, very homemaker person. And running the boarding house, it was always hot chocolate with the girls. A very good homemaker kind of environment. But she is acutely aware that nothing in her environment is as she would have had it because she is not in the accommodation of her own. And unlike you know other teachers for whatever reason they had never

bought anywhere of their own. They just stay there in the summer or they go and visit family in different places (Karen).

As noted in Karen's story her mothering role as homemaker was very influential in her interpretation of home, and is in fact how she thinks others might define home. Her reflections provide further insight into the diversity of choices in living arrangements for other baby boomers and Karen's concerns are not unfounded. The increase in solo living particularly of people in midlife will impact upon how they will age in place without the support of family (Demey et al 2011). This has implications for accessible accommodation and the funding of support to enable people to remain in their own homes.

Karen, Paul and Barbara were born in the 1960's and are representatives of what Evandrou and Falkingham (2000) call the second wave of baby boomers, who were born between 1961 and 1965. Their three stories and insights into the stories of others show the diversity of living arrangements of the baby boomers. This cohort is not a homogenous group, and if anything they have had more opportunities than previous cohorts, which increases their individuality, (Demey et al 2011; Higgs and Gilleard 2010). Hearing these individual stories of the life course can give us an insight in the future needs of older people to enable them to age in place if they wish to.

Ruth and Dan are members of the first wave of baby boomers that were born between 1946 and 1950 (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000); Tessa was born a few years later in 1953. Once again the methodology of the research encouraged the participants to share aspects of their life course that could have influenced their meaning of home.

### *Dan*

Dan said very little about his childhood, only that if he went across the road and through his friend's house and garden they were then in the countryside. He

cannot imagine living in a city and his home as his refuge and sanctuary was clearly evident, from the high hedges surrounding his front door and how he described his meaning of home. His experience of life reflects the ways in which family relationships have changed during the life course of the baby boomers, with more people experiencing divorce and new partnerships (Demey et al 2011). He has been married, divorced, lived alone and remarried. He has two children from his first marriage and one from his second marriage. He did not mention his parents or siblings but he does discuss his wife's parents who live in the same village as they do. Financially he says he is secure and the house is worth far more than he paid for it. Despite some of his friends having a second property abroad this is something he could not contemplate. He said:

You talk to people and they say they've bought a house in Spain or France and so forth. And I couldn't think of anything worse! I would hate it. It's like, I wouldn't even want one as a second home, it's like, No! I'll just go and rent like a hotel room or a villa or whatever. The thought of having another house somewhere or like two homes is like something I would feel very difficult to reconcile; I don't even know how I would feel about it. It's so far off my radar that I couldn't even contemplate it. It can't be that, (muffled), though cos I've got quite a few friends who have houses in different places, it just never enters my head.

Leach et al (2008) state that as a cohort the baby boomers have travelled far more than previous cohorts and are more likely to have invested in a second home abroad. Whilst this is not what Dan wants, he, like the other participants, shares an insight into his fellow baby boomers. Like Ruth, Tessa and Paul, however Dan has invested in his property. They have all extended and refurbished their properties either to accommodate their families (Paul, Dan and Tessa) or as an investment (Ruth). Improving the value of homes and an increase in DIY has been a notable change in the baby boom cohort (Leach et al 2008).

Dan's story highlights the increased choices of where to live and work during the life course of the baby boomers. Despite being offered well-paid jobs further afield, Dan declined because of the attachment he has to his home. His and Paul's connection to their home is an unexpected finding from this study. They both have had the opportunity to move away from the community they live in but

declined, preferring to invest a considerable amount of time and money developing their homes.

### *Tessa*

Tessa's life course story was the most detailed. She says that she was brought up in a council house near to where she currently lives. She is the youngest of four children and has one sister and two brothers. Her dad was an ambulance man and part-time gardener. He was very much a familiar face in the small town where they lived. She said they had a very hard childhood post Second World War, with little money available. She recalls when her mum bought their first fridge when she was 10 years old. It was only when she had left home that her parents decided to buy their council home, during Margaret Thatcher's "Right to buy policy", so that they could leave some money for their children when they died.

Tessa's husband was an electrician by trade but during the recessions of the 1980's he was made redundant three times. He felt he needed a more secure occupation because by this time they had their first daughter. He became a policeman and was posted further away from her parents. Tessa said she hated being away from her mum and dad. Fortunately her husband was posted back to where she grew up and they first lived in a police house before buying their current property.

Tessa says she is not attached to the property and if her husband were to die she would leave it because the garden would be too big to manage on her own. She has the "things" that are important about home, but the most significant factor is her family being nearby. Being near her parents and supporting them as they got older and eventually dying is very important to her. Although she became quite upset when she discusses this time, the importance of these relationships are clearly evident.

The prospect of her mortality is also playing on her mind. She says at the doctor's surgery where she works she looks in the "death book" and notes with unease that the dates of birth of the deceased are nearing her own. Her sister's husband has died and she sees how isolated her sister has become since then. It reinforces to her the importance of being around family especially as you get older. This is a consistent theme when she was exploring the meaning of home. She shared photographs of her family and friends and regretted not having more to show. Her husband and her family are key to what home means to Tessa. Her life course events are typical of her generation, and she owned her own home before her parents did (Leach et al 2008). She is representative of what Leach et al (2013) call the "bridging generation"; that is, the first wave of baby boomers. The older baby boomers were found to share a similar value set to the previous generation, whilst embracing the new opportunities available during their life course. For example Ruth brought her own family up near to where she herself grew up. Yet she bought her own house before her parents bought theirs. They suggest that this cohort is not the selfish self-centred cohort proposed by Willetts (2010) and Beckett (2010), since they retain some of the values set by their parents.

Tessa's anticipation of future life transitions, such as her husband dying or even herself makes her re-evaluate what is important about her meaning of home. Her family, friends and familiarity with the community appear more important than the actual building where she lives. Again like the Paul and Dan, Tessa has remained for most of her life in the same community and is comforted by this familiarity. This was more important than choosing to move away and the potential financial gain this would offer.

### *Ruth*

Ruth was the life story that perhaps Willetts (2010) was referring to. During their marriage Ruth and her husband Tim have bought and sold their homes to accumulate more housing wealth. Ruth mentions wanting to "make a killing", suggesting ruthlessness about their motives when moving. Yet Ruth currently seems more vulnerable and her meaning of home has been influenced by the choices she has made during her life course.

Ruth and Tim moved to the area when they were first married. Initially they lived in the YMCA which Ruth hated, making her dread the thought of communal living such as a residential setting when she is older. She believes Tim did not mind the YMCA because he attended boarding school and was used to shared living spaces. Tim has a disability which with increasing age influences their choice of homes. In their current home their bedroom is downstairs because Tim struggles with the stairs. Ruth believes when they move next they will need to live near to local amenities and their home will need to be easy to manage.

Ruth says she is reassessing what home now means to her. She was so reflective about this throughout the interview, only briefly referring to the other members of her family. Ruth refers to her two children, not by name, but just how important they are to her. Her father has died and she and her brother supported her mother re-locate into sheltered accommodation. She is pleasantly surprised how well her mother has adapted to being a widow and leaving the family home. She and her brother helped their mother explore various options as she chose her new home. Her mother was very clear about what she wanted and where she wanted to live. As Ruth reflects on this she reveals how important choice in where she lives is. Furthermore, Ruth is conscious of ageing and becoming more dependent on others and needing to be able to plan and choose where she lives to avoid dependency. She ponders this as she says:

But they were very much a couple [her parents] and when...and they loved their house, their home, and they had a lot of um....they did a lot indoors together, you know, they played Scrabble and all this sort of stuff. They liked their home. I think I've been brought up in that atmosphere, you know that...like to be at home. And um...when...when he died my Mum stayed there for a couple of years and then she went and got a bungalow. And the thing that we kept saying to her was: the house was a bit bigger and so costs more to run – that is an element, I mean, this house, we don't need... five bedrooms, four to five bedrooms, we just don't. Um...I mean you've got to heat all of them and that does get expensive. But we were saying to Mum: if you are going to move you should move now while you can, while you're well. Because if you leave it, you'll go where you get put. And this is always the message. And I talk to this about...with my friends a lot with their parents as well – that... you .....and I suppose that's got stuck into my head, that I want to always have the choice of where I'm going to be. I don't want to sort of hang on living in some place that I can't manage, and then be really old and have a fall or

something and then just end up somewhere that ...isn't suitable. You know...in a residential home or have to do something that I haven't then had time to plan out and think about in advance.

Ruth mentions that she has recently been unwell and that this is having a bearing on how she feels about home, perhaps increasing her thoughts about the importance of choice and fear of dependency. Interestingly the panel recognised a sense of sadness about Ruth when they noted the chair surrounded by hedges looking inwards towards the house. Ruth herself talks about feeling "hemmed in". So despite being able to invest in property and have her home in a long desired location there is more to her meaning of home than the choice of location. Ruth loves having certain things around her and her own study reflects this, her place for meditation and stillness. The company of her pets is important to counter the sense of isolation which she feels living and working at home.

During Ruth's life course she has moved several times, not out of necessity, but because of the choice which she and Tim made to improve their property wealth. Ruth is also able to work from home, although she sees this as a disadvantage because she not able to return to the comforts of home after a busy day at work, increasing her feelings of home as a "cage". This negative impact on the meaning of home is interesting given that there is a significant increase in the number of people working at home (ONS 2014a). More people tend to work at home as they age, relating to the greater choices and opportunities open to the baby boomers. Ruth's comment may indicate an area of concern if home becomes less of a "sanctuary" (Dan) and more of a "cage" (Ruth). Working life has changed dramatically during the life course of the baby boomers and is a key dimension for organising the life course, (Setterston 2007). Reducing the divide between work and home life can have a negative impact on health and the comfort of home.

Ruth has had more choice to buy and sell properties during her life course. Seeing homes as an investment has become a significant feature during the life



course of the baby boomers (Leach et al 2008). Ruth quickly develops a sense of familiarity with the people living in her local community, seeing this as important to her sense of belonging at home. Yet, as she anticipates a future move she appears to lack confidence in her ability to recreate home once more.

So in conclusion in answering the research question, 'How does the life course influence the meaning of home for six baby boomers?' a few answers have emerged;

1. The method used encouraged deep and thoughtful reflections from the participants. As they chose, organised and then discussed their photographs they revealed much of their life course. The participants demonstrated individuality and more complex life courses, typical of the baby boom cohort (Beer et al 2011). Whilst, for example, Tessa lives near to where she grew up, Karen and Barbara have moved much further away; the increased mobility and choice of where to live has occurred during the life course of the baby boomers.
2. Their own individual social context appears to have influenced their meaning of home. For example, Paul said he has tried to establish a stable home for his family just like his was growing up, whereas Ruth's search to make "a killing" in her house moves means that she is currently in a state of uncertainty as to what home means for her. Life course events do influence an individual's expectations and choices, with later life transitions influenced by previous life course events (Robison and Moen 2000; Alwin 2012). Ruth's dread of living in a residential setting for example, has been influenced by her experiences of living in the YMCA and visiting a friend currently living in a residential setting.
3. The participants did not appear to relate to the term baby boomers as discovered by Elliot (2013). However, what is known is that during their

life course significant changes in housing, relationships and employment were occurring, which less overtly increased their choices about where they lived. Choice in where you live has been found to be a significant factor in an individual meaning of home (Després 1991; Sixsmith et al 2014a). The concern expressed particularly by Karen and Barbara is that there will be less choice available for their children, which in turn could impact upon their sense of home.

4. Whilst this is a large cohort, with only a small sample selected for this study, what the participants have revealed has reinforced the view that even though they share some aspects of their life course, they are a very heterogeneous group, possibly because of the increased choices that have become available over their life courses (Gilleard and Higgs 2007).

## Chapter VII: Discussion

“The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”

— Maya Angelou, 1986

The meaning of home is a complex, multi-faceted, taken-for-granted conundrum. The word is defined in many ways, including where you live, where you were born, even the place you are staying at whilst on holiday. When home is missing, it is a longed-for experience (Parsell 2012; Carroll et al 2009; Kellet and Moore 2003; Somerville 1992). Research has been undertaken to consider the meaning of home for those aged over 65 years because, with increasing age, people spend more time in their homes (Gitlin 2003; Iwarsson et al 2007b) even ‘home-bound’ and feeling at home has been linked to a sense of well-being (Fänge & Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009; Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007;; Iwarsson et al 2007a; Roush & Cox 2000; Towers and Netten 2006).

The proportion of the population aged over 65 years is set to increase significantly over the next 15 years, (ONS 2012a) as a result of the increase in birth rate following the end of the Second World War. This period of increased in birth rate is often referred to as the baby boom years and those born at that time referred to as the baby boomers. Settersten (2006) refers to anticipatory Gerontology to help meet both the expectations and needs of those about to enter later life, to shape and influence policy, care practices, or health promotion strategies. Given the taken-for-granted experience of home this study sought to explore how the meaning of home could be explored. Furthermore, because the baby boomers were growing up during a time of significant social change, for example, in family structures and living arrangements (Demey et al 2013), the study considered whether the specific life course events of six baby boomers had generated an understanding of what the influence of being a baby boomer has had on the meaning of home.

This chapter will firstly discuss how visual methods were used to answer the first research question, “How can the meaning of home for the baby boomers be explored?” The methods used to answer this revealed the complex meaning of home for the six participants. Given this multifaceted meaning of home, a new framework will be presented called the Five Senses of Home to help shape the lived experiences of home. Finally how the life course influenced the meaning of home for the six baby boomers will be discussed.

## **How Can the Meaning of Home be Explored?**

The meaning of everyday life is initially conceptualised and understood by what we see (Weber 2008), The use of visual methods enables people to share their lived experience of a given phenomenon or experience, (McCarthy 2013, Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011; Weber 2008; Rose 2007; Frith and Harcourt 2007). Having visual methods that enabled the participants to show what home meant to them created an opportunity for them to share in great depth the importance of their home and the factors that shaped these feelings.

The visual methods used for this study captured a deep understanding of the meaning of home of the participants by allowing them to choose what photographs they took, and interpret these without researcher driven questions, within the safety of their own home. As they talked, the participants told a story about their home, with whom they lived with, how long they had lived there, their daily routines and rituals and the sensual lived experience of their meaning of home. As Jamieson (2002, p. 23) suggests, this qualitative approach allowed the participants to illuminate “forgotten or hidden aspects of past experience, and highlight minority experiences, which tend to be hidden in more quantitative studies”.

Participant generated photographs and photo elicitation interviews have been well documented as useful methods to capture the lived experience of another

(McCarthy 2013, Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011; Weber 2008; Rose 2007; Frith and Harcourt 2007). The meaning of home for those in later life has been researched, producing some understanding of its significance (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007; Iwarsson et al 2007a; Roush & Cox 2000; Towers and Netten 2006). The meaning of home for the baby boomers has not been specifically explored despite them being the next large group about to enter later life. It was not known, therefore, if their meaning of home would be the same as an older cohort, or if their unique social context had influenced their meaning of home. In order to avoid any pre-conceived ideas about what home might mean for the baby boomers, the participants took their own photographs and interpreted these in the Photo-elicitation interview with minimal input from the researcher.

Using participant-generated photographs respected the autonomy of the participants - an important aspect of the meaning of home. As Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011) noted, participatory visual methods enabled the participants to be creators of their own knowledge, enabling them to tell their own unique story. Furthermore the non-researcher driven Photo-elicitation interview, challenged the power relation, between the researcher and the researched, associated with more traditional forms of research, allowing the participants further control over how they presented themselves ( Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011).

The tactile nature of Photo-elicitation made the interviews with the participants and the panels more intimate and more personal, allowing the focus to be the photographs. This intimate 'show and tell' exercise enabled the participants to share "...an infinite number of perspectives... generated around a single issue". Goodley (2011, p. 129).

As revealed in their individual stories, the participants shared a great deal about themselves, not prompted by the researcher, but driven by their reflections on the images they produced. During the Photo-elicitation interviews, the participants discussed their meaning of home from a life course perspective; offering a context for their meanings of home.

Swenson (1991) used participant generated photographs in her research to uncover the meaning of home of five older women, however these were never published, not even in her thesis. In this study the photographs and how they are interpreted has been an integral part of the study. The reflecting teams who were invited to interpret the participants' images, broadened the overall interpretation of the meaning of home, but also demonstrated how others could understand the meaning of home by looking at someone's photographs of home. Furthermore presenting the images throughout this thesis enables the reader to see and interpret the data themselves.

The reflective panels were able to interpret the participants' meaning of home from their photographs. Just by looking at the visual representation of someone's home individual panel members were able to suggest what was important about each particular person's meaning of home. For example, the reflective team looking at Dan's photographs felt he was a man who needed to feel in control, that his privacy at home was very important; the high hedge surrounding his home suggested his need to feel safe and secure in his home. Dan himself had said, "I definitely have a feeling of refuge within the house, we'll all be safe and secure, just close the door". Feeling safe has already been noted as important about home (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009, Zingmark et al 1995), and the photographs taken by the participants actually show what this can look like. From the hedges surrounding the front door (Dan) or garden (Ruth), to the blinds and criss-cross patterned windows (Paul), home is a place where you can be yourself, shielded from the outside.

Capturing the "voice of the audience" (Plunkett et al 2012; Ollife et al 2008; Rose 2007; Dowdall and Golden 1989) , or the reflecting, was really powerful. Their insight and their perspective was very useful in helping to understand the participants' meaning of home. Collier et al (1986, p. 99), early proponents of Photo-elicitation, note the benefit of unbiased interpretation of photographs. "When native eyes interpret and enlarge upon the photographic content,

through interviewing with photographs, the potential range of data enlarges beyond that contained in the photographs themselves...[becoming] communication bridges between strangers...[and] pathways into unfamiliar, unforeseen environments and subjects". In this study the additional interpretation of the panels provided a larger perspective than a single researcher on his/her own could do.

This interpretation of meaning from the photographs of others could be useful in several ways. If an individual is cognitively impaired they may be unable to articulate their meaning of home, yet it is so important that they feel the safety and security that home offers. Family, health and social care professional could look at photographs of someone's home and be able to identify what might be important about home for that individual. For example, is there a well-worn chair where that individual sits? What does it look like? Where is it facing? The answers could suggest that the comfort of a specific chair would be of comfort to an individual. Is there evidence of what that person likes to do in their home, reading or favourite music?. Are there family photographs? Are there ornaments of significance and so forth? All these observations give an indication of what is important about that individuals meaning of home. This can then help in the planning and delivering of services to ensure that individual needs can be met.

## **The Meaning of Home for Six Baby Boomers**

Frameworks have been proposed to help capture the complex meaning of home (Després' 1991; Mallet 2004; Oswald, et al 2006; and Molony 2010). However, driven by the findings from this study which made the sensual lived experiences of home so apparent a further framework for describing home is proposed, that of the Five Senses. The senses of sound, taste, touch, smell, and sight provide a useful structure to capture the many meanings of home revealed in this study. This structure, explained in more detail below, provides a pragmatic approach to reveal the ordinary, yet multi-layered, lived experience of home. Furthermore unlike Depres' (1991) domains, for example, the proposed framework could be a useful tool when exploring the meaning of home for those

who are struggling to feel at home, or are unable to articulate what home means to them.

### **The Five Senses of Home**

The sensual nature of home has already been considered by Angus et al (2005) and Pink (2003b). This new Fives Senses of Home Framework, however, provides a structure which can reveal the various evocative layers of the meaning of home. Like the other frameworks discussed, the Five Senses of Home Framework is not inclusive, but it could be an effective tool when trying to articulate the complex meaning of home.

The five human senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell were significant revelations of the meaning of home for the six participants. A creative approach has been applied to the interpretation of the five senses. The visual sense of home relates to the things shown in the photographs and the participants' visual presentation of self and what this showed us is important about home. The sense of touch describes both the textures which people feel within the home and the factors that influence emotional feelings about home. The sense of sound highlights how different soundscapes can create both comfort and/or anxiety within the home. The sense of taste denotes preference, and so a non-literal approach to taste has been adopted to reflect how important choice is to make an individual feel at home. The sense of smell relates to how meals cooked and shared are important features of home life as well as how evocative certain smells can be.

### **The Visual Sense of Home**

The literature highlights how home is an expression of self (Molony 2010, Oswald et al 2007, Zingmark et al 1995, Askham et al 1999). As Ruth reflected on photographs of her home she considered how they showed a presentation of herself and what was important about her meaning of home, musing, "I mean it is to do with decoration and...it's having certain things, and I suppose you present them in a certain way, don't you? Is this ...presentation of ourselves?" In this sense, the participants had been 'marking their territory'. In this sense,



the participants had been 'marking their territory'. But the participants included photographs showing what was outside their homes as well as inside, demonstrating that the meaning of home also has a broader reach.

### **Marking the Territory**

As mentioned in the literature "marking" your territory with familiar items is both comforting and reassuring. Being able to see these familiar possessions confirmed to the individual their sense of self, their history and a sense of homeness (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007b, Shenk et 2004, Gitlin 2003, Swenson 1998). Even with declining health when their sense of self is compromised people want to remain in their own home because it has this visual demonstration of who they are and what is important to them (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009). Paul suggests that the visual presentation of yourself within your own home can reveal a great deal about that person, and what is important about their meaning of home, saying, "You could actually piece it together and you could actually see, yeah, by looking around what we do and who we are and that sort of thing. I think."

The participants in this study said that seeing their possessions around them made them feel comfortable, at-ease and at home. Furthermore the participants were able to show what the possessions were that made them feel secure and in control, from Tessa's and Barbara's television, Paul's book and music collection, Karen's cupboard of 'things' that she keeps in each of her homes, Ruth's special rug in her study, and Dan's cup with a crack in it. Just like the older group in Dahlin-Ivanoff et al's (2007a) study the visual display of the participants' possessions made them feeling secure and in control.

Karen talks a great deal about the importance of things or "stuff" and how these can represent home. Even when she travels she takes a collection of visual cues such as images of motherhood, or other "stuff" to make her feel at home. McCarthy (2013) also noted that her young student liked the familiarity of "stuff" to make her feel at home. Personal objects have "symbolic meanings that contribute to perceived well-being and quality of life" (Gitlin 2003, p. 631) and

having one's own space and marking it with precious (not necessarily expensive items), is an expression of self, (Molony 2010; Shenk et al 2004, Moore 2000; Zingmark et al, 1995; Swenson 1991). Roush & Cox (2000) emphasised the importance of familiarity when describing the significance of home, therefore seeing your own things about you, especially if you are not at home, such as in hospital, or a residential setting or even in a hotel, is important if you are to feel secure and in control.

Karen offers an example of how seeing your personal possessions around you, such as a mother giving birth in hospital, can be reassuring and give them a sense of familiarity and control saying,

If they've decided to have a hospital birth, there's this whole thing about the more that you can look around the room and see things that are your own possessions. And so again ... I think that I can see that for some people bringing in their objects makes them think that's okay, I can at least imagine that this is as safe as I would feel at home.

Not seeing your personal possessions around you or losing them can have devastating effects, as discovered by Carroll et al (2009). Losing these personal items resulted in a "breaking of bonds, breaking with the past and discontinuity with present and future" (Carroll et al 2009, p. 545). Many of the participants in that study suffered with mental health problems following the loss of their homes and the process of rebuilding their homes and, in effect, their identity was hampered by the loss of these territorial items. Where possible enabling people to retain personal possessions and retaining their sense of self will help maintain their well-being which is so important for the meaning of home, (Gitlin 2003; Dahlin-Ivanoff, Haak, Fänge, Iwarsson 2007; Haak et al 2007a; Sixsmith, et al 2014a).

### **Broader Reach of Home**

Some photographs showed how participants see their homes in their broader context. Dan's view of the valley, for example, as he approaches home is a

visual reminder of the place of his home in his community. Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) noted the importance of being part of a community and being part of the community where they live was mentioned by Paul, Ruth, Tessa and Dan, as important for their meaning of home. Swenson (1998) talks about home being a sense of reach to the outside for the older women she interviewed and Tessa's view of her garden, from her favourite chair, suggests that her sense of home extends beyond the walls of the house as she looks outside. Paul too enjoys the views from his window and appreciating the age and history of the surrounding buildings. This nostalgic view very much influencing his meaning of home saying,

The views from the windows, looking out from the windows, it's um something you see every day and it is something you are used to and which you associate with home.

The photographs also show a sense that the participants see their homes as a place in the community but also safe *from* the community. The image of the outside of their homes or the approach to their homes, is reassuring; they are safe within or they will soon be safe within. When Paul arrives home he sees his front door, and this image tells him he is home, saying,

That's the entrance to, that's the first thing you see, what you go through to your house to get into your house, so I mean, yeah, it's the first thing that makes you think of home is your door really.

### **Summarising the Visual Sense of Home**

The visual sense of the Five Senses Framework helps us to appreciate the importance of the broader reach of home such its place within the community and also how a person's possessions within the home enable an expression of self, all of which are important for the meaning of home. As health deteriorates, or when an individual is in an unfamiliar environment, having personal possessions around them may be comforting and remind them of home. The visual representation of the outside of the participants homes in this study highlight how being comfortable and familiar with the community where you live and even the image of your own front door can tell a person that they are home

and safe. Having your own front door to your private space for example in a residential setting can allow residents to know that beyond that door they can be themselves. Tessa alludes both to the chair which is the visual representation of her home and the view which provides the context for her home when she talks about returning home after being on holiday,

If I was away, as I say, if we've been [on holiday], I suppose when I think about home to come back to, it's that chair with that view.... because that's the thing I actually look forward to come home to.

## **The Sense of Touch at Home**

If a broad approach is adopted to the sense of touch in feelings about home the Five Senses Framework can give us even more insight into the complexity of what home means. Touch is the sense that tells us what something feels like, this can be through your skin and in this study the emotional sense of feeling. The sense of 'feeling' - feeling by touch and feeling emotions, helps us to structure and further reveal an additional layer of the complex meanings which people have for the concept of home.

### **Tactile feelings of Home**

The participants shared how the feeling of some textures and sensations made them feel at home, something not widely noted in the literature. For example, for Ruth and Tessa their own beds are essential to their sense of home. They both said that when they go away they look forward to returning to their own beds. Ruth remarked that she loved her own linen, and Tessa said it was one of the essential "things" she needed to feel at home. The other things were also things she could feel - her comfortable chair and a warm bath, saying,

I just feel at home in that context. Sitting in that chair with a cup of tea looking at that, with the comfort of my own bedroom and my own bathroom, which I do miss when I am on my holidays. I still like my own bathroom and my own bed.

Karen also mentioned how having textural items when away from home could help an individual feel secure and at home, saying,

If you just had your own blanket on the bed and your own little sort of image or vase of flowers or something that is very much yours from home, that that meant the space was safer and more secure because I think that is a common thing that means home is security.

Karen also has concerns about the impact of these things not being there for an individual's ability to feel comfortable. For example she discusses how when her mother-in-law was dying at her daughter's home, she did not have her own sheets on the bed. Karen highlights the importance of the little things that can make a significant difference to how people feel at home. As she visits her dying mother-in-law at her sister-in-law's home she notices the sheets on the bed saying,

She hated, and I'd known for a fact for example something, but really small details, I think, how she hated the sheets that they weren't full cotton.

The daughter just always used poly-cotton, you know half-half.

I remember her coming to stay with me and then absolutely berating the daughter: "Why don't you have linen sheets? Why do you have these ghastly poly-cotton things?"

And I therefore, after having that conversation, was always seeing her lying there thinking: "You must be hating those sheets on one level.

Even a younger person at university enjoys the feel of home by using linen from her family home comforted by the familiarity of these textures from home (McCarthy 2013). An appreciation of things like the bedding for an individual's ability to feel at home is pertinent in hospital and residential settings. Knowing a person's preferences, be it cotton, or duvets or blankets for example, and trying to meet that need could increase their comfort in this new environment.

Ruth, Tessa and Barbara all took photographs of their bathrooms, emphasising how good it feels to have a good long soak in your own bath. This is an interesting observation for later life when baths are often replaced with walk-in showers for ease of access. Furthermore in care settings consideration of a

person's night time routine, such as having a bath to aid restful sleep could avoid a restless night sleep (Gordon and Gladman 2010).

Places where the participants like to sit and feel comfortable were also highlighted. This issue of experiencing the comfort of just feeling at home by sitting in your favourite chair was a common theme. Tessa liked looking into the garden from her chair, with the physical comfort of a cup tea and contemplating her day; Karen sits in her chair to meditate; in Ruth's home her husband has his chair and she has hers; Dan always sits in the same spot, with the remote control, next to the warm, open fire. Finally Barbara's chair is the most obvious physical representation of her feeling at home. The arms on Barbara's sofa are broken because she and her family sit tightly together. They are uncomfortable, but it is familiar, making her feel safe, yet she is anxious about the time when they will no longer do this together. She says:

So it's become like a running joke that the four of us squash on a three-seater settee, but it's also become, sort of significant, I can't think of the word I'm looking for. It will feel abnormal if the four of us weren't sitting there.

Researcher: That's nice.

If you see what I mean. Although we are sort of all squashed, it sort of become the norm for the four of us to sit which is why we have ended up with two broken sides. So that was why I thought that was important to the home, because if we didn't have the three-seater it is almost like it is us splitting up.

Having your own seat to sit in was important for the participants. The feel and comfort of these seats making them feel safe and secure. Swenson (1998) also discussed the importance of her participants chairs', like a control centre for these older women. It would be worth considering for example if people in residential or hospital settings have their own chair to sit in, something that belongs to them. In addition to this tactile feel of home was the emotional sense of feel of home.



Figure 19: Participants favourite chairs

## Emotional Feelings of Home

Feeling an *emotional attachment with family and friends* is noted as being significant for the meaning of home, (Molony 2010; Mallet 2004; Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Sixsmith 1986). A sense of belonging and relationships with family and friends were expressed as key to how people 'feel' about home both in the research (Marshall 2008; Knotts 2003; Saunders and Williams 1988), and the participants in this study.. Relationships are significant in maintaining well-being and quality of life within the home, especially with declining health and the increasing amount of time spent at home (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al. 2007b). As individuals age support from their family enables them to remain in their own homes (Lowson et al 2013). Family involvement either physically or verbally makes the older person feel valued, and making a continued contribution to the

family maintains a sense of self (Dupuis and Thorns 1998). Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff (2009, p. 342) maintain that home is the “hub of health”, that a key aspect is relationships with others and “being able to maintain close relationships to children and grandchildren was of the utmost importance for health”.

Willetts (2010), would argue that the baby boomers are a selfish cohort more interested in self-satisfaction. This was not apparent for the participants in this study. Relationships with their children significantly influenced how Paul, Karen, Ruth, Dan and Barbara feel about their home. Karen discusses a sense of “connectiveness” with her children in the home whereas Barbara talks about “togetherness”. The continuity of relationships and their sustainability are central to the way they feel about their homes. Karen has eight children and, as she ages, this will mean she has sufficient support to enable her to age in place. However, for the moment, she appears to have lost that feel for the importance of family relationships in her homes. Now that her children have moved away she says she now feels that home can be found within herself. Nevertheless, you sense that Karen is struggling to feel at home.

For Paul his relationships with his family make him feel at home saying, “But I think it’s because we’ve always been happy, and happy together, and a happy family and stuff. And you just associate it with being at home”. Like Barbara, he is fearful of when his children will leave home, fearing how this transition will impact upon how he feels about home. Nonetheless, the importance of ongoing relationships appears to remain. For Tessa, having her family around her and/or visiting regularly are really essential. Significantly, she feels she could live anywhere as long as her family were nearby.

In contrast to this, Sixsmith (1986) highlights that comfort and familiarity is altered when relationships are poor. O’Mahony (2013) also notes that when relationships are failing individuals feel enormously stressed at the fear of losing their home. These negative feelings can have direct link to health and well-



being (Lin and Brown 2012) since we know that positive feelings about home have a direct link to health and well-being (Fänge & Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009).

*Feeling part of the local community* was highlighted by Ruth as important to her meaning of home. Her dogs have become the means of forming new relationships in her community. Being familiar with the local community has been noted by previous research (Moore, 2000; Mallet, 2004; Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey, 2009), and this research reinforces this and suggests how having a dog for example provides an individual with opportunities to make connections in the community.

But Ruth's feelings for her dogs are also a crucial part of her feelings about home. She says, "I couldn't imagine a home without a dog. You come in and the dog's waiting there to greet you". This reminds us that, for many, their pets may reduce their choice of accommodation if pets are restricted.

Finally, feelings of refuge and sanctuary were also specifically mentioned as important to the meaning of home. Some of the participants said they needed home to feel like somewhere they could feel *safe and secure* away from the pressures of everyday life. Paul and Dan liked the idea that they could shut the rest of the world out. Behind their own front door, home is the place where they felt safe from external pressures. Dan is more specific about this when he says:

You've got this security type blanket I think it's about that way as home, I do see it as a refuge in some way. That sounds a bit frightening doesn't it? Somewhere you can go and shut out the world. I think that sometimes the pressure of all sorts of things can get on top of you, whether its work or money or anything at different points in your life can... I think there are different points at times that can pressure you. It depends what's going on,

I definitely have a feeling of refuge within the house. We'll all be safe and secure, just close the door and....(laugh) that will be fine (laugh).

The use of terms such as "sanctuary" and "feeling of refuge" were poignant and, although not specifically expressed by all the participants, the ability to shut out the rest of the world and 'feel' safe emerged. Moore (2000) and Mallet (2004)

also highlighted that people felt safe and secure within their homes. For older people when more time is spent at home and perhaps when their needs for health and social care support at home increases, professional staff entering their homes need to be alert to their 'invasion' of an individual's sanctuary (Angus et al 2005), taking heed to introduce themselves, being respectful and so forth.

For Ruth, who works at home, however, feeling a sanctuary from work stress in her home is more challenging, and she is conscious of separating work and home and how this affects how she feels about home saying,

I do...my...I do feel hemmed in by it, definitely, in a way, that...because I'm not going out to work. I'm here more than I ever was.

I suppose it's all about sanctuary isn't it? It's um....I suppose it's making a dividing line between work and leisure.

The increase in people working at home (ONS 2014a) during the life course of the baby boomers will be discussed in more detail later. But it is worth noting that not having a dividing line between work and home can prevent individuals feeling the sense of sanctuary or haven that they seek at home.

### **Summarising the Sense of Touch at Home**

The sense of touch or feeling in the framework of the Five Senses gives us further scaffolding to our understanding of the complex concept of the meaning of home.

It is evident that what home means to people is partly made up of 'feelings', both physical and emotional. From the physical feel of clean sheets, comfy chairs and long soaks in the bath, home makes the participants in this study feel secure, protected and somewhere to be themselves. Furthermore, emotional feelings generated by relationships are also very important to a sense of feeling at home and therefore the meaning of home.

## The Sense of Sound of Home

The importance of sounds to feeling at home also recommends the Five Senses Framework as a means of interpreting the complex concept of the meaning of home. The literature revealed that familiar sounds within the home can be comforting (Pink's 2003a; Molony 2010), "facilitating emotional as well as physical comfort", (Angus et al 2005, p.169). The participants in this study said that the sounds of home could be comforting or had the potential to be alarming. For example when Dan talks about his Aga, he explained how the sound of it working is reassuring saying,

It make a gentle sort of chugging noise, chug, chug, and the flames you can sort of hear... if you're in the house on your own it's a gentle comfort as you hear this chugging. You can hardly hear it when there's someone else talking, it's a gentle sort of noise.

In addition he notes that sounds can also be alarming and that when his second wife moved into the cottage with him she could be alarmed by the sound it makes and that it took her time to adjust, he says,

Yeah I remember about sounds and again talking to Ann [wife] about the sounds in the house, cos she has only lived in very modern houses and when she first came here she would find it quite distracting in the night, a click or a creak. Literally does it all the time here, and she thinks there was somebody in the house, but she's used to it now and I think that strangely you adapt to it. You become, oh it's the house and it's talking to you and telling you it's okay (laugh) or about to fall down, one or the other!! I'm not sure which!

Dan describing his house talking to him with its characteristic noises is a clear indication of the way in which sounds can also form part of the meaning of home. The familiarity of the sounds it makes is comforting and he explains how the creaks and the squeaks of the home and gentle chugging of the Aga all making him feel secure and warm. Dan's comments about the sound of the Aga were shared with the panel at the end of their reflections about the photographs. Prompted by this quotation, the panel also shared the positive, comforting sounds of their own homes. A different panel, looking at Karen's Aga, also referred to the comforting sound of its workings. So a framework which includes

sound gives us an extra insight into the meaning of home for a wide variety of people.

Both Ruth and Paul also mentioned the comforting sounds of their homes. For Paul it was the sound of his dog walking around at night and he remembered how he missed that sound when a previous pet had died. He missed the familiarity and comfort of the sound of the dog, saying, “It was that weird thing about not hearing the dog walking round, because the floors, it was not hearing the walking around on the laminate floors”.

For Ruth the crunching of the gravel as she walks to her front door says to her that she’s got the home she wanted. In this latest house move she and her husband wanted to live in a more rural location and the sound of the gravel makes her feel like they have achieved that. “I walk in the door and I crunch up the path in my boots and I think ‘Oh’ and I feel as if I’m in the country. So I love this [laughs]”.

So the sounds associated with the meaning of home convey a sense of comfort, security and achievement. Reflecting upon this it seems obvious how evocative sounds can be when discussing the meaning of home. It is also obvious that the sounds of home could evoke anxiety and fear if home is a place not of your choosing. It jars with us when the familiar sounds of home are changed. For example older people living in a residential setting would have to adjust to the sounds of communal living, even if they had their own private bedroom. All the members of one particular panel now live in supported accommodation and talked about the challenge of having to adjust to the new sounds of communal living.

If we realise the importance of sounds in the meaning of home, we can do something about this. The negative effects of sounds in new environments, for example, can be ameliorated. The effects of sounds in a hospital setting have

been studied and it has been noted that patients can feel very alarmed by the plethora of noises in a clinical setting (Mackrill, Cain and Jennings, 2013). However, this anxiety can be reduced if they understand more about the sound for example the bed pan washer, or an explanation as to why a patient might be calling out. And positive sounds can be put in their place. Paul and Barbara, for example, found that playing music brings them a sense of joy and freedom, so sounds can be created to generate positive feelings.

Those with a cognitive impairment will have additional difficulties interpreting the sounds in a clinical or residential setting (James and Hodnett 2009). The benefits of music to reduce their stress were noted by Barbara and Paul. For people with dementia, there are significant benefits of using music and singing to help reassure them (Osman, Tischler, Schneider, 2014).

### **Summarising the Sense of Sound at Home**

So, within the context of the Five Senses Framework sound is a powerful insight into the many-layered concept of the meaning of home. The revealed meanings of home in this study make that clear. But sounds can cause comfort or stress so attention to this needs to be paid, to ensure people feel at home regardless of where that home is. Barbara even felt 'at home' the very private area of her own car, where she could have her music on as loud as she wanted and sing to her hearts content. Being able to do this was invigorating and a useful insight into a different dimension of what home means for individuals.

### **The Sense of Taste about Home**

The sense of taste also plays its part in the Five Senses of Home Framework in revealing aspects of the meaning of home. A non-literal understanding of the word taste has been applied to throw light upon yet more aspects of the meaning of home. The sense of taste denotes preference, which is about *choice*. Being able to choose suggests being autonomous and being in control. Choice, control and autonomy are key features of the meaning of home.

For example despite declining health and function, people would choose to remain in their own home because it maintains an important feature of home, autonomy (Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009). “Home means freedom” Dahlin-Ivanoff et al (2007b, p. 28) discovered; people could live their life how they wanted to with or without rules imposed upon them, free to be quiet and reflect and ‘be sufficient unto oneself’.

Exercising *control* within the home environment is also important for the meaning of home (Dupuis and Thorns 1998; Lewin 2001; Sixsmith et al 2014a) increasing an individual’s self-respect (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007a; Lewin 2001). For example, home is the private place where guests are invited to socialise with the homeowner if they choose (Rioux 2005). They can relax and be themselves and, by inviting people in to their homes, they can exercise control over their environment, (Dupuis and Thorns1998, Mallet 2004).

The participants in this study also showed that autonomy and control were important aspects of their meaning of home. They valued the privacy of their home, and being able to choose to shut their front doors and be just be themselves. Ruth says “I like the idea of, as I say, being in control” about where she lives, how her home is organised and the rituals and rhythms of her home. Paul says being able to choose what he does within his home, without being invaded by others is very important for his meaning of home, saying,

It’s your space. No one else is going to invade it. No one else is going to hassle you. You just come in and relax. Shut the curtains and put the TV on or whatever, or read a book or have a bath or whatever. You know, it does mean everything.

Barbara also talks about how important it is that she exercises control within her home. She has adopted a ritual within the home, the make-up corner that everyone has to abide by, demonstrating the control she has within her home. Keeping her family happy and secure is very important for Barbara’s meaning of home so much so that she does not even want them to go bed on an argument, saying “And that’s where however bad things have got or however happy things are, or whether any of us have squabbled, that’s where we have to make up

before going to bed. So that's a rule that I've always kept going". These patterns and routines of home offer a sense of purpose and control that is satisfying and reassuring, and an affirmation of an individual's self-identity (Shenk et al 2004). Being familiar with the daily routine helps make a house into a home found Dupuis and Thorns (1996 and 1998). Therefore as people age being able to choose and maintain established routines is important if they are to retain a sense of well-being associated with being at home.

Being able to choose where they live was mentioned as part of the meaning of home by all the participants. Whether that was choosing to remain in their current homes (Paul and Dan), where they would move next (Karen and Ruth), or where they would not choose to live, for example in a nursing home (Ruth and Tessa). Barbara however feels she has less choice and as her children get older it has become more uncertain about where her future home will be. This apparent lack of control and choice in where she lives is very poignant when the emphasis by the government is to allow people to age in place. Furthermore it is at odds with other government policy such as the bedroom tax, (Power et al 2014), aimed at encouraging people to downsize. Carroll et al (2009) also noted that when flooding took away participants' choice about where their home was it had a significant impact on their well-being.

Supporting individuals to maintain their independence is crucial especially during times of illness and/or with increasing age. Encouraging and facilitating choices in living arrangements, and when needed how care is organised within their home, helps people to retain control over their home environment, helping to sustain their sense of well-being.

### **Summarising the Sense of Taste about Home**

A broad interpretation of taste to reflect the exercise of choice helps the Five Senses Framework increase our appreciation of the meaning of home. Being at home enables choice and freedom, so important for the meaning of home.

Choice enables autonomy and control, both important features of feeling at home and being able to choose where you live can make a place to live feel like a home.

## **The Sense of Smell of Home**

As noted previously Pink (2003a) and Angus et al (2005) revealed the sensual experiences of home, including familiar odours and food. A sense of smell is very evocative and can conjure powerful memories, both positive and negative (Stafford 2012; de Lange 2011). Memories recalled by odours were found to be significantly more emotional and evocative than those recalled by the same cue presented as visual or auditory reminders (Herz, 2004). Whilst a focus of this project captured what people could see, participants and panel members referred to the sense of smell and its relationship with home. This further illustrates how the Five Senses Framework to reveal yet more features of the complex meaning of home

Dan mentioned that “You can be reassured by sights, smells or be reassured by sounds”, when he was discussing the picture of his Aga. Molony (2010, p. 301) identifies with this suggesting that people enjoy the rhythms and rituals of home, even smells, finding these to be very comforting.

The panel looking at Karen’s Aga once again became very animated. They recognised the significance of this for Karen, but it also reminded them of cooking large meals for their families and the smell that pervaded the house on baking days. This panel of retired women living in a residential setting became nostalgic when discussing this. In their present accommodation, they could no longer smell the meals being cooked; they have them delivered to their rooms or to the dining room. This is a useful observation given the importance of adequate nutrition in later life and how the sense of smell can prepare an individual for their meal and encourage their appetites (Stafford 2012).



All the participants took photographs of their kitchens and talked about family meals together. The process of meal preparation and eating being a ritual within their homes, enhanced by the smell of a favourite meal. Ruth discussed the smell of curry night on a Friday evening when she and her husband savour that it's the start of the weekend, by eating their favourite meal.

When Paul discusses the painting in the hall completed by his father he reminisced about how his father and aunty and uncle were very creative people. This picture reminds him of the smell of oil paints that his father used, also the home of his aunty and uncle who were both artists. This picture, and its associated smells, was redolent of when he was growing up and therefore significant for his meaning of home. Using the sense of smell to capture the memories of people with dementia could stimulate conversation and enable further insight into their life story which is so important when caring for them.

### **Summarising the Sense of Smell of Home**

The panel observed that different homes have different smells. You may not notice the smell of your own home unless you have had a long absence and then return, but you do notice the smell of other people homes. Smell is very pervasive and for Paul for example very evocative. Even the very visual methodology of this study was able to conjure the significance of smell and its relationship with the meaning of home.

### **Summarising the Five Senses of Home Framework**

The meaning of home is complex, as revealed in the literature review. Whilst Després' (1991) categories provided a helpful way to shape the literature review, the new Five Senses of Home Framework, derived from the findings of this study, emphasises the sensual nature of the meaning of home, and provides a useful framework to capture the multi-layered meaning of home. The framework highlights how the meaning of home for the baby boomers is similar to that already cited in the literature. However the methods used in the study

captured a more sensual lived experience of home and provide a practical way of how the framework could be adopted in a practice setting. For example, using the Five Senses of Home Framework as a guide, health and social care professionals could help create a more homely environment in residential or even hospital settings, because feeling at home helps an individual feel safe and secure, promoting well-being. Having personal possessions, involving loved ones, comfortable chairs and familiar linen, reassuring sounds, favourite music, meals and if appropriate being involved in food preparation could enable an individual to feel at home.

Consequently, this study has suggested a revealing method of investigating the meaning of home and also a powerful framework within which to report findings about the meaning of home. In addition to this, the study has also revealed insights into the impact of the life course upon the meaning of home for baby boomers. It is this aspect of the study that will now be discussed.

## **What Influence Does the Life Course Have on The Meaning of Home?**

Life course is the sequence of events in a life (such as leaving home, getting married, having your own home, having children and so forth). Whilst individually experienced, these events occur within a social, historical and political context. A life course approach recognises the individual experience and considers what influence the social context may have had on an individual (Elder 1998). Dan, Paul, Ruth, Karen, Tessa and Barbara revealed how their individual life courses have influenced their meaning of home, such as where they live, where they work, their roles as parents, grandparents, the effect of illness and their fearful anticipation of future life transitions such as their children leaving home, growing older and even death. Yet these individual life course events are set within the broader unique social context of the baby boomers where there have been significant changes in relationships, working and living arrangements. Consideration of how the life course from an individual and

broader social perspective influences the meaning of home will now be discussed with a specific focus on relationships, illness, living arrangements and employment.

The methods adopted in this study enabled the participants to tell a story about their meaning of home and the factors that influenced that meaning. As the methodology unfolded, deeper and deeper explanations of the meaning of home were revealed. Since participants talked in the form of stories, as they explained their feelings about home, they quite naturally set these within the story of their individual and shared life course. As a result, the impact of the life course quite naturally emerged from the stories of the participants.

Consideration of how the individual life course and broader shared life course has influenced the meaning of home will now be discussed with a specific focus on relationships, illness, living arrangements and employment.

## **Relationships**

The literature review shows that the quality of relationships influences the meaning of home (Dupuis and Thorns 1996; Dahlin-Ivanoff et al. 2007b; Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009; Lawson et al 2013). This study found that, from an individual life course perspective, relationships with their families did indeed influence the meaning of home for the participants in this study. For example Paul's visual presentation of himself shows the impact of his childhood upon his understanding of home. We see the importance of relationships with his extended family demonstrated by his father's picture in the hall and his grandmother's window. He wants to create a home for his children that offers the same sense of security which he felt as he grew up.

But for the baby boomers, a number of factors have changed social relationships in the home during their life course; these factors include an increase in divorce, remarriages, falling birth rate and an increase in solo living. All of these changes can affect the meaning of home. For example, they could influence whether people see their home as a place in which to age, by affecting the availability of family to support them at home (Demey et al 2013;

ONS 2014c). This study illustrated how the individual life course of participants sat in the context of these broader social changes and how this affected their meaning of home.

Although it is a small sample, apart from Dan who has been divorced and remarried, the participants did not demonstrate the changing relationships often described as typical of their cohort. It is worth pausing to remember, therefore, that the disrupted social relationships sometimes regarded as typical of the baby boomers is not typical of large numbers of them. Indeed, like Paul, mentioned above, traditional family relationships, within their own individual life course, are often the most powerful forces in shaping their meaning of home. However, in their stories some of the participants discussed their peer group offering insights into people who did demonstrate the disrupted family structures of baby boomers. For example, Barbara's neighbour who is bringing up her children alone. In addition, Karen's single female friend, who has not had children and has no home of her own, is reflective of the increase in solo living in this cohort (Demey et al 2013). Consequently, the impact of the broader, shared life course of the baby boomers does need to be considered. This increase in people living on their own as they age needs to be considered not only by the providers of health and social care but also those planning and designing new homes.

The timing of childbirth with people delaying having their children (ONS 2014), is another aspect of the shared life course of baby boomers that affects their meaning of home. It is a change partly caused by the increase in women accessing further education after school, according to Ní Bhrolcháin and Beaujouan (2012). This delay in child birth coupled with the increased longevity of parents can cause a sandwich effect, with middle aged people, particularly women, having both young children and ageing parents to care for at the same time (Evandrou and Glaser, 2004; Demey et al 2011). This in turn can influence their meaning of home. Increasing levels of stress and increasing demands on an individual's time can also increase the need for a safe sanctuary at home. Both Paul and Barbara delayed having their first child to when they were in their

30's. Whilst they did not mention the responsibilities of having to care for their parents, the impact of these responsibilities and the effect they have on the meaning of home would be worth exploring in more detail.

Relationships with family throughout the life course can influence the meaning of home. As in previous research (Dupuis and Thorns 1996; Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009), the participants did reinforce the importance of having a family and how it positively influenced their meaning of home. However, they also shared their anxiety about life transitions that could impact upon their relationships and therefore their meaning of home. For the younger participants Paul and Barbara, they are anxious about the impact of their children leaving home and wonder what their home will mean then.

Other participants also talked about the end of life and how the death of family members can impact upon the meaning of home. For example, when discussing the meaning of home and her important relationships she became very tearful about how her parents died. She mentioned specifically how both her parents, despite wanting to be able to die at home, they died in hospital. This is still causing Tessa some distress and makes her reflect on the importance of being able to die within the security of your own home if you wish; and for Tessa that would not be in a residential setting.

In addition to Tessa's concern about being to die in place, Karen's reference to her parents-in-law's place of death raises the questions whether there is sufficient support to allow people to die where they would like. The Government wants individuals to be able to Age in Place (DH 2006); it would follow, therefore, that individuals should be able to choose where they die. Sadly the majority of deaths occur in hospital with carers reporting that was the last place their loved ones wanted to die (Gomes, Calanzani and Higginson 2012). Life course events do impact upon the meaning of home and being able to choose where you die, and for most that is at home, emphasises the significant meaning of home.

This anticipation of the next life transition and the impact it may have on relationships and therefore, the meaning of home is interesting and it would be worth researching the impact of this anxiety on an individual's well-being and whether there is the need for additional support to help individuals cope during these transitions. Further investment in allowing individuals to die at home if they choose is important for families as well and helping them come to terms with their loss knowing that their loved one died at home.

## **Illness**

During individual's life course, the impact of major illness can influence the meaning of home. Both Ruth and Barbara highlight how the impact of serious illness during their individual life courses has influenced their meaning of home. Ruth had been unwell which meant she was spending more time at home. This meant home felt more like a cage than a sanctuary, she felt hemmed in. Barbara's meaning of home was significantly influenced by her husband's serious accident. Home became associated with anxiety, about disabled access, for example, and insecurity about the loss of control of her home life. She was conscious that she relies heavily on additional funding for home adaptations. She says she has to fight for the 'stuff' to ensure their home remains accessible for her husband.

Barbara's individual feeling of insecurity about home is heightened by the effect of some aspects of the shared life course of baby boomers. During declining health and function, many would choose to remain in their own home because it maintains their autonomy (Dahlin-Ivanoff et al 2007b; Fänge and Dahlin-Ivanoff 2009). However, the context of the broader social life course events has undermined the security of home for many baby boomers. The divide between the rich and the poor has increased (Leach et al 2008; Settersten 2007), reducing choice for those who have less money, which in turn means home feels less secure.

Further exploration of the meaning of home for people who are sick at home would help health and social care professionals ensure that home retains as much as possible a place of sanctuary, promoting well-being despite illness. With an increasing emphasis to enable individuals to age in place (DH 2006,

2008, 2010) further investment to support individual needs could avoid, for example, the feeling of fighting that Barbara describes and is an important consideration for policy makers.

## **Living Arrangements**

Thinking of home as the place people *choose* to live is an important part of the meaning of home both in the literature and for Dan, Paul, Tessa, Ruth, Karen and Barbara. During the broader life course events, baby boomers have experienced greater choice about where they live, with more people becoming home owners during their life course (Evandrou and Falkingham 2006). Being home owners is important for an expression of self and the significance of home (Dupuis and Thorne 1998). Askham et al (1999) also discovered that older home owners were very attached to their homes, benefiting from being familiar with the local environment and services such as shops and the local doctor. This was certainly true for Dan, Paul, and Ruth: they took great pride in their own homes and being familiar with the local community.

The participants reflected the increased choice which baby boomers have enjoyed during their shared life course in comparison to their parents. For example Paul and Tessa discuss how they were homeowners before their parents, having been brought up in council housing. Baby boomers like them think of their homes as a personal space, which they can treat as they please. Dan, Paul and Tessa demonstrate the increase in home refurbishment typical of this cohort (Leach et al 2008). Dan and Paul in particular take great pride in their homes and discussed at length how they developed their properties into the home that is so important to them. Increased home ownership has, therefore, affected the meaning of home for many baby boomers. This, however, is not the case for them all.

Of the six participants Barbara was the only one who did not own her home, and, in comparison to Karen, who owned three homes, her choice about where she lived was limited. Her fear of having to move in response to the bedroom

tax (Power et al 2014), makes insecurity, not security, part of the meaning of home for her.

These very different meanings of home for Barbara and Ruth reflect the wider social changes which have occurred during the life course of the baby boomers. Despite an increase in homeownership, it is not available for everyone and the divide between the rich and the poor is increasing (Leach et al 2008; Settersten 2007), limiting choice and the feeling of security as part of the meaning of home.

Their different social status not only has an influence of the home they choose but also their health as they age, (Demey et al 2011). Poor health in later life and increased dependency could have a significant bearing on the meaning of home, and indeed where that home is.

There was another way, too, in which private house ownership had increased the spectre of insecurity in the participants' feelings about home. Karen and Barbara both had concerns about how their own children will afford to buy their own homes. So, whereas during the life course of the baby boomers homeownership significantly increased, it is now decreasing. Karen and Barbara's concern about younger people being to afford to buy their own homes is well founded, with decreasing number of homeowners under 34 years (ONS 2015).

So home ownership, part of the individual life course of five of our participants and also part of the shared life course of the baby boomers, has an important impact for the meaning of home.

## **Employment**

Access to employment and choices of employment has significantly changed during the shared life course of the baby boomers. Increased mobility of employment and choice in careers was evident in the participants' stories, which influenced the meaning of home. Ruth, for example, is part of the growing number of people choosing to work from home (ONS 2014). Unlike previous



cohorts, the baby boomers have had more choice in where and how they work (Evandrou and Falkingham 2006). Workers constantly being on call, however, because of increased technology, can have an impact on well-being (Gilleard and Higgs 2002 and 2007; Leach et al 2008). This may be why Paul and Dan, for example, discussed the “refuge” of home to escape the stresses of everyday life. Yet Ruth felt “hemmed in” and “in a cage” because she works at home and she did not always feel the divide between work and home. So the increased flexibility of employment, like other aspects of the shared life course of the baby boomers already discussed, has affected the meaning of home for some, but by no means for all.

Adopting a life course perspective of the baby boomers’ meaning of home allows for “anticipatory gerontology”, (Settersten 2006, p. 16) whereby the housing needs of those who are not yet old can be better predicted, (Clapham, et al 1993). This research could build towards further research to capture a better understanding of what baby boomers want from their home, which is in contrast to the housing policies of the 1970’s when the views of the general population were not considered (Stewart 2005).

The broader life course of the baby boomers, containing features such as more disrupted relationships, increased home ownership and later parenthood, has therefore, had an impact on the meaning of home for baby boomers. None of the baby boomers can completely escape this; their individual life course exists in the context of the shared life course of their generation. However, the impact of the shared life course has not been clear-cut. This study is based on a very small sample. Nevertheless, it shows that, for any given participant, their individual life course may have a stronger impact on the meaning of home than the shared life course. Individual circumstances determine, for example, whether the increased opportunities for home ownership bring a greater feeling of security or a greater feeling of insecurity to the meaning of home. Indeed, the study shows that, in some ways baby boomers are more similar to other generations than the literature might sometimes suggest. For example, there was a very powerful association of family with the meaning of home for the participants in this study. This shows the impact of a traditional aspect of

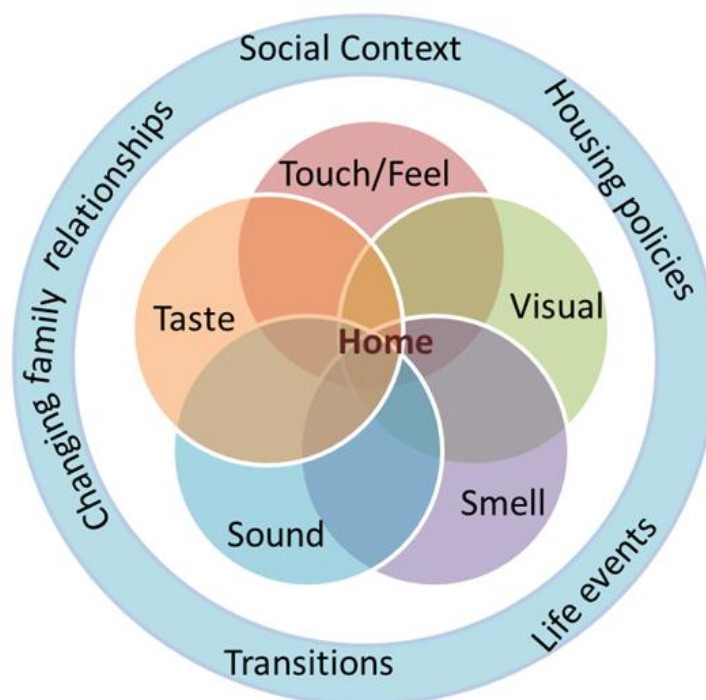
individual life course which runs counter to the shared life course of disrupted relationships. The impact of life course upon the meaning of home is complex therefore. Social planners should take careful note of the power of individual life course changes to confound the predicted effects on the meaning of home which one might expect to come from the shared life course of baby boomers.

## The Meaning of Home “All Depends”

The meaning of home is complex. In this discussion a new framework has been proposed that demonstrates the impact that sight, sound, smell, touch and taste have on the meaning of home. In addition the discussion has also considered how the life course influenced the meaning of home for the baby boomers. For clarity these perspectives were presented separately but they are all aspects of the meaning of home.

To demonstrate the relationship between these overlapping influences on the meaning of home. the following Venn diagram has been produced.

Figure 20: Five Sense of Home Framework



The diagram shows the juxtaposition of the five senses and the individual life and shared life course events that can shape the meaning of home. It can be summarised as follows.

- *Visual Sense of Home.* The visual method adopted facilitated the interpretative approach which is needed to explore the taken-for-granted experience of home. The broader reach of home into the community and surrounding area as well as how participants presented themselves suggest how the meaning of home can be understood from a visual perspective. The participants presented what was important about their home, but also the factors from their life course that influenced this meaning.
- *Sense of Feeling at Home.* This relates to the tactile nature of home, from comfortable chairs or clean sheets, to the emotions which one feels about home. The sense of belonging to their home, to the local community and to others, was key to the sense of feeling at home. Relationships with family and friends were important about feeling at home. Transitions in these relationships caused a degree of anxiety for some participants, for example Paul and Barbara. During the life course of the baby boomers there have been significant changes in family relationships, living arrangements and employments all impacting upon how the participants feel about their home.
- *Sense of Sound of Home.* The sounds associated with the meaning of home convey a sense of comfort, security and achievement. The sounds of home could evoke anxiety and fear if home is a place not of your choosing. It can also be created and joy experienced, as expressed by Paul and Barbara, playing their own music brings them a sense of joy and freedom. Understanding an individual's life course will help identify sounds that could be of comfort or distress, particularly pertinent for those who are cognitively impaired.

- *Sense of Taste of Home.* The sense of taste denotes preference, which is about choice, and choice in where you live, who you live with, how you live is a key concept for the meaning of home. The sense of taste of home is reflected in where the participants have chosen to live which in itself has been influenced by what they can financially afford. Choice about where you live as you age is also influenced by having family around to support you, this is particularly pertinent since during the life course of the baby boom cohort there have been significant changes in family relationships.
- *Sense of Smell of Home.* Distinctive smells can be very evocative and can conjure powerful memories, both positive and negative. Smell is a powerful memory evoking significant memories from the life course of an individual, such as shared family meals or, cooking for your family as well as the reminding us that the smell of food enhances the appetite, particularly pertinent for those whose appetite is poor.

This has been a small study which has

- Revealed a powerful mixture of visual methods to discover the meaning of home for six baby boomers:
- proposed a new framework for organising and presenting the complex concept of the meaning of home:
- and revealed insights into the impact on the meaning of home of the individual and shared life course of the six participants.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research will be discussed in the final chapter.

## Chapter VIII: Conclusions

Home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit ever answered to, in the strongest conjuration”.

Charles Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, Ch. 35

### Introduction

This research has explored how the meaning of home can be explored and what influence the life course may have had on the meaning of home for six people born between 1945 and 1965. Using participant generated photographs and then inviting the participants to interpret these revealed a deep sensual meaning of home. There were no researcher-generated questions and the participants took the lead in interpreting their photographs. This inevitably led to them telling a story about their homes, with whom they lived with, how long they had lived there, and previous homes and plans for the future. Respecting the autonomy of the participants at this stage fitted in with how being at home means being able to be autonomous and by enabling them to take the lead in what they were prepared to share respected that autonomy.

What is clearly evident from the literature review in Chapter II is that attempting to categorise the complex meaning of home is challenging. A number of frameworks have been proposed each with a different emphasis (Després 1991, Mallet 2004, Oswald, et al 2006, and Molony 2010). Després (1991) gave an overview of research undertaken and proposed four theories of interpretation, and this shaped the literature review, however, it became apparent that this was not an inclusive framework. Comparisons to other frameworks were made (see appendix 4) which demonstrated that whilst there was considerable overlap each framework offered an additional perspective, highlighting once more that complex meaning of home. As a result of this research a further framework to categorise the meaning of home has been proposed in chapter VII, the Five Senses of Home Framework. This framework

captures the sensual lived experience of home and is a useful tool to articulate the complexity of the meaning of home.

Given the unique social context of the baby boomers, and the potential of varied living arrangements (Demey et al 2011; Evandrou and Falkingham 2000, Glaser 1997) an understanding of their meaning of home was worthy of consideration. Smaller studies (Haak et al 2007a; Shenk et al 2004; Swenson, 1991) have given a potent insight in to the meaning of home for older people. Furthermore, other studies that have used visual methods such as photographs have been powerful in providing more comprehensive and detailed data from participants about the lived experience (Harper 2002). It is the small studies, however, that add to the growing knowledge and understanding of a cohort such as the baby boomers. This small, visual method-based study makes a useful contribution to understanding the meaning of home for baby boomers and the potential impact of their life course on defining it. Previous studies of this group's meaning of home, using visual methods, have not been found in the literature.

The social context of the baby boomers influenced the meaning of home either directly, for example Barbara and her response to the bedroom tax, or indirectly, for example with increase choice in living and employment opportunities. Figure x in the discussion Chapter VII, shows how the individual sensual lived experience of home is set within a broader social context which influences the choices for the individual.

The rationale for the visual methods chosen and the how these were implemented was explored in depth in Chapter III. The findings for the research question how can the meaning of home be explored was presented in chapter IV, and the findings on what influence the life course has on the meaning of home for the baby boomers was presented in chapter V1. The Photo-voice method initially influenced how photographs were used in this study, (Wang 1999), the principle of autonomy resonating with the research question. However, Photo-voice usually describes research undertaken with marginalised

groups (Frith and Harcourt 2007, Olliffe and Bortoff 2007, Wang 1999) and baby boomers would not be considered a marginalised group. As the research progressed the adoption of the term participant generated photographs has been used to reflect photographs taken by the participants themselves. The photographs were central to the photo elicitation interview, providing a focus that engaged the participants in this initial level of interpretation and providing what Woolrych and Sixsmith (2011, p.276) suggested as “a new means of narrative understanding, enabling deeper access into the lives of the participants themselves”

Asking reflective teams to interpret the photographs of Dan, Paul, Ruth, Karen, Barbara, and Tessa demonstrated how others could interpret the meaning of home by looking at their photographs; furthermore their perspectives enabled the researcher to broaden her perspective and capture the perspective of the reader. Interpreting this visual data is just like interpreting textual narratives suggests and the researcher is interpreting this data not to discover the truth but an interpretation of truth as presented at that time Rose (2012).

Presenting the photographs in a separate volume, Chapter V, enabled the reader to see the data and make his/her own interpretation of the data. Swenson (1991) used photo elicitation in her interviews of five older women. Evidence of these photographs are not apparent in her publications, however, or their value fully explained. When the photographs used are printed in publications, they provide further insight into the phenomenon being explored (Olliffe and Bottorff 2007; McCarthy 2013). The stories presented are the about the meaning of home for each participant, discovered as a result of the methods used.

The photo book in Chapter V is a visual representation of the participants’ meaning of home. This same format could be used for people who would benefit from describing the importance and meaning of home, such as those with a cognitive impairment, or moving into a residential setting, those who are

terminally unwell and needing home care, or those who have to spend long spells in a hospital setting. The process of reflecting on photographs and then presenting them in the book could assist those caring for these groups create home in different circumstances.

## **Conclusions about the Research Questions**

This thesis has explored a consideration of how the distinctive life course of six baby boomers may have influenced their meaning of home. Research has been undertaken outlining the unique social context of the baby boomers (Evandrou and Falkingham 2006; Gilleard and Higgs 2002, 2007; Leach et al 2008; Higgs, Gilleard 2010, Demey et al 2011). They have outlined the characteristics of the baby boomers that differentiated them from previous cohorts, such as an increase in solo living, variations in wealth, increased home ownership and more varied family relationships,-- all of which could influence their meaning of home. What has been interesting to discover in this research was that the meaning of home for the participants was not necessarily what one might be led to expect from the research about baby boomers. A focus on this group and the methods used to explore their meaning of home has yielded rich information that could be the starting point for further research in this important area.

What also emerged during the stages of interpretation was a multi-sensual meaning of home. A new Five Senses of Home Framework was introduced in chapter VII to help shape the complex meaning of home shared by the six participants in this study. In addition enabling the participants to tell their own story inevitably involved a beginning, middle and end. This created a natural life course perspective clearly evident in each of the interviews.

This small study generated a large amount of data from which an understanding of Dan, Paul, Tessa, Ruth, Karen and Barbara's meaning of home and the factors influencing that meaning could be interpreted. Conclusions from this study are presented, whilst at the same time, noting the caution expressed by Holloway and Todres (2003). They argue that, though wide generalisations



cannot be made, what can be said about qualitative research findings is the following:

These seem to be the essential features of this experience as lived through these individuals in these contexts. One can speculate as to why and offer plausible interpretations in one's discussions but the approach cannot speak of 'causes' or 'explanations' as if such objective 'how-things-are' analyses were possible. The 'knowledge claim' is one that others can relate to in a way that deepens readers' understanding, and that can be of use for application. (Hollaway and Todres 2003, p351).

Conclusions about the research will now be summarised, following which implications for theory, policy and practice will be considered.

### **Visual Methods Capture the Lived Experience of Home**

Given the complex taken-for-granted experience of home, (Harper 2002), the methods used in this study were extremely effective at revealing that complexity and answering the research questions. The principles of hermeneutics have been applied leading to the use of participant-generated photographs to delve deeply for interpretations of the meaning of home. The use of photographs is not new; (for example Hagedorn 1994; Moreland and Cowie 2005; Ollifee and Bottorff, 2007; Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011; Sitvast and Abma 2012, McCarthy 2013), however, the significant difference in this study was the use of reflecting panels, adding another layer of interpretation. Furthermore, the presentation of the photographs throughout the thesis has retained the significance of the image in conveying meaning.

Participant generated photographs enable the participants to take control of what photographs they wanted to take (Woolrych and Sixsmith 2011). Given the personal, private domain of home, enabling the participants to take their own photographs respected their privacy and empowered them to give their own very personal interpretation of home.

The interviews were undertaken in the participants' own homes. This was helpful on two counts. They remained the hosts, showing what their home

meant with the photographs they had taken; also, being comfortable in their own environment, made the interview less daunting. The photographs “frozen framed” (Frith and Harcourt 2007, p. 1342) emotions and thoughts and enabled the participants to consider the taken-for-granted experience of their homes and interpret the meaning and significance of their homes to them.

After the interviews, a further layer of interpretation was made by the panels. The panels were influenced by the Biographic Narrative Interpretative Method (Jones, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). The panels interpreted the meaning of home from the photographs alone, which demonstrates the potential of their use in a practice and teaching scenario.

Using a layered approach with a hermeneutic lens to reveal the complex meaning of home was so effective. The participants retained control of what they chose to share about their meaning of home. The use of photographs provided a focus for their reflections and revealed enough about their meaning of home that others could see that meaning also.

### **The Meaning of Home for Six baby Boomers**

The baby boomer cohort has experienced unique social changes that influence their meaning of home. It would not be appropriate to make generalisations about the impact of the life course on the meaning of home with such a small group. What this study does show, however, is the impact of the individual life course on their meaning of home, and this is set within a broader social context which influenced the choices available for that individual. It reflects the heterogeneity of the baby boomers whereby choices that are made are partly about availability of choices but also based on individual life course experiences. The baby boomers have experienced more choices than previous cohorts, but like older cohorts the meaning of home is individually defined.

The Senses of Home Framework devised as a result of the findings from this research provides an effective tool to understand the meaning of home of the

participants. Whilst appreciating the individual life course of the participants is set within a broader social context the following conclusion about the meaning of home can be made.

### **Visual Sense of Home**

Home provides a place where individuals can 'mark' their territory, creating an environment where a presentation of what is important for that person is displayed. Having personal effects around you creates a sense of familiarity and comfort providing a sense of identity and security. Home is where you can be yourself. Familiarity with the local community and being able to see that from within your home is an important feature of what home means.

### **Sense of Touch at Home**

From the tactile feelings of comfort to the emotional feelings of home, the sense of touch reveals a further dimension of the meaning of home. Hot baths, own beds, own chairs, were examples of the tactile comforts of home. Home is a place of refuge and security the participants felt, albeit Ruth provided an example that home is not always a place of safety.

Relationships with family and friends and having a sense of belonging and purpose, was identified by all the participants as a very important feeling about their meaning of home. Fear of the next life transition in their families, for example when their children leave home, severe illness, and end of life made the participants wonder what their meaning of home would be after this transition. Home is where you share your life with others, be it with family or friends, and those relationships can add a rich dimension to the meaning of home

It is perhaps in this sense that the changing demographics during the life course of the baby boomers could have the most impact on the meaning of home for

this cohort. As previously noted for example the rise in solo living and declining birth rate could have a significant impact on the meaning of home for those living alone or have no family, also their ability to remain within their own home as they age.

### **Sense of Sound of Home**

Sounds within the home can be a source of comfort or if the sound is unfamiliar can create a sense of alarm. Dan mentioned that the sounds of his home were like his home talking to him, providing him with reassurance and comfort. Barbara and Paul talked about how playing their favourite music lifted their spirits, so positive sounds can also be created.

This perspective of home is interesting and an awareness of the impact of sound on an individual's meaning of home can help those involved in care delivery, or even the design of homes consider the impact of positive and negative sounds.

### **Sense of Taste about Home**

A very broad application of the sense of taste has been applied. Taste denotes preference and this suggests choice. The participants highlighted the importance of choice and their meaning of home, as reflected in the wider literature. As a cohort the baby boomers have had more opportunities and choices when compared to a previous cohort. During the wider life course of the baby boomers there has been more choice in education, employment and living arrangements, all having the potential to impact upon the meaning of home. Barbara highlighted however that choice is greater only for those that can afford it if you have less money you have less choice which is particularly significant for feeling secure at home and a sense of well-being.

Being able to choose where you live, who you live with, being in control of the routines and rituals within the home are important for the meaning of home. Enabling people to age in place means respecting their choice of how they want to live, which is so important in the comfort and security of one's own home.

Choice in employment was noted by the participants as they discussed their meaning of home, with Ruth highlighting the negative impact of her feelings of home now that she works at home. The baby boomers have experienced greater choice in how they work during their life course. The effects on income, retirement, pensions, age of the workforce for the baby boomers is significant and will directly link to their ability to age in place. Whilst beyond the scope of this thesis, this is an area worthy of further research.

### **Sense of Smell**

Like the sense of sound the sense of smell was an unexpected finding from this study. Dan mentioned how reassuring the sense of smell can be at home. From favourite meals, to memories of shared family meals, to food preparation, the sense of smell can trigger contentment about one's home. This insight again has useful applications when caring for people in hospital or residential settings. The smell of cooking can stimulate appetites, yet will often be missing in these communal settings. Contributing to meal preparation in a residential setting can help individuals feel that more at home as they re-enact the ritual of cooking.

From this small study it is evident that the individual life course of the participants has influenced their meaning of home. Some of the conclusions made can be viewed in the context of the changing social and political context of the baby boom cohort, such as home ownership, employment and life transitions. Other conclusions appear to be contrary to what might have been expected from the literature on this cohort, they are not as selfish as Willetts (2010) for example would lead us to think, rather they have retained the same values as the previous cohort on the importance of close family relationships.

This research offers insight into the meaning of home of six baby boomers, a cohort not specifically considered before. Dan, Paul, Ruth, Tessa, Barbara and Karen reinforced the idea that their homes really are very significant for them. Feeling at home and being at home provides a deep sense of security and belonging. Furthermore, the sustained use of photographs throughout the process provides a visual cue on the meaning of home. For example, the participants' chairs look comfortable, and Dan's description of the sounds of his Aga is very powerful. It is these examples and others that led to the development of the Five Senses of Home Framework . Angus et al (2005), and Pink (2003b) note the sensory experience of home. This new Five Senses of Home Framework is a useful addition to this previous research and acts as a guide to help understand the significance of home, offering specific examples to stimulate discussion and understanding. The methods used in this research were less time-consuming than Pink's (2003a) ethnographic work and also ensured the autonomy of the participants. Home is a sensory experience and the depth of this sensory experience was an unexpected finding from this study, and was made much clearer by the methods used to undertake the research.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The meaning of home for the six baby boomers in this study has been individually defined and presented. The insights they shared can add to a growing understanding of the significance of home of those who will be entering later life over the next 15 years. A number of applications to practice can be drawn from this small group of stories. They are outlined below.

- 1) Extending the application of participant generated photographs to include reflecting panels, could help explore the meaning of home for those who are having difficulty exploring its significance. For example O'Mahoney (2013) wants to be able to justify the meaning of home from a legal perspective, such as when home is lost or when relationships break down. In addition the methods could be used to help individuals identify

what is important about home for them if they have to move into residential or supported accommodation.

- 2) Using visual methods respected the autonomy of the participant. Participant involvement in the research process is to be encouraged since their perspective can help inform the research process from a personal perspective.
- 3) Using visual methods encouraged the participants to talk about their life course. Understanding an individual's life story is so important particularly for those with a dementia to enable health and social care staff see beyond the diagnosis and understand the behaviour of those who struggle to articulate how they are feeling.
- 4) Home is a sensory experience. Using the Five Sense of Home Framework as a guide can help health and social care staff explore the meaning of home with people who wish to remain at home, or transfer to other accommodation, or have difficulty expressing what they want. For example, people living with dementia will respond well to sensory cues, which could make them feel the securities and comfort of home even if they are living in a residential setting. It can also help staff consider sensory factors within residential homes or indeed hospital settings that may cause distress to the residents.
- 5) The meaning of home extends to the communities where these six participants live. Being familiar with the local community, belonging to the local community, was an important aspect of the meaning of home expressed in the interviews. Ruth gave us an insight into this by explaining how her dogs helped her fit into new communities when she frequently moved home. Policy should consider the aspect of an ageing community and how people can remain integrated and cared for within their familiar, local communities.

- 6) The baby boomers are a large cohort and have significant voting power. An understanding of their meaning of home can help influence housing policy, including a review of the potentially damaging effect of policies such as the bedroom tax. Policy makers would do well to consider what is important for this large voting cohort.
- 7) There is growing emphasis to allow people to age in place (DH 2006). There are, however, conflicting messages from the Government. Firstly the bedroom tax (Power et al 2014) is making people like Barbara fearful about their long term security. She is anxious that as soon as her children leave home she will have to leave the home she has created with her family. This is in direct contrast to Karen who has three homes, and more choice about where she lives. This research has offered an insight in to the lived experience of the significance of home, and also, sadly, the huge divide between the rich and the poorer members of society.
- 8) Additional resources need to be allocated if people are going to die in the place of their choosing. Inevitably, as the baby boomers age, mortality will increase necessitating further investment in end of life care.
- 9) Using the process of 'show and tell' could be used in a teaching setting where health and social care students, for example, could be encouraged to try to understand how important home is for individuals, to develop an appreciation of this private space and perhaps how to create this in clinical and residential settings.
- 10) Also in a learning environment students can benefit from the 'show and tell' experience themselves. Asking students to share photographs with each other creates a situation where students can be encouraged to talk and then listen to another's story. This process demonstrates to the student the value of actively listening to another's story and how much can be learnt about another in a relatively short period of time. It also gives the students the opportunity to talk about themselves and be listened to. During this interaction the students will invariably see



commonalities in each other stories, which can deepen that interaction, removing any powerbase that might occur during such an interaction.

11) This exercise is very effective at demonstrating to health and social care students for example, how much information can be gathered about another in a relatively short period of time, just by using visual prompts such as photographs. Especially relevant because of the demand on time yet it is so important to know more about patients/service users to deliver appropriate personalised care. Furthermore this 'show and tell' exercise creates a sharing experience that recognises the humanity of another, especially relevant for those who are more vulnerable to receiving dehumanised care because of their advancing years or because they have dementia. Taking time to share with these more vulnerable groups offers health and social care staff the opportunity to see the individual beyond their diagnosis and their age.

## **Limitations**

The research was somewhat limited by the number of participants. Having tested these methods on a smaller scale, however, they could be replicated in a larger study which could continue to add to the body of knowledge about the baby boomers. At the start of the study the baby boomers meaning of home was not so well understood. It is clear now, as a result of this study, that the meaning of home is individually defined, regardless of age.

The use of photographs in research is timing consuming and produces a huge amount of data. Replicating the methods used in this research on a larger scale would have cost implications, albeit the rewards would be great.

Not having specific researcher led questions during the Photo-elicitation interview runs the risk of particular questions not being answered. However, respecting the autonomy of the participants during the interview was very

important, so that they could take the lead on identifying what was important to them about home. In future research additional questions about the life course could provide a more detailed housing history for each participant which could be considered in light of housing policies, for example, could prove helpful in light of housing policies..

## Implications for Further Research

- Further work could be undertaken to explore the meaning of home for the baby boomers that are living alone. Given the significant increase in numbers of people living alone, and the value the participants placed on sharing their home with others, an insight into the meaning of home of this group would be beneficial.
- Dan's story of remaining in the same home during his first marriage and family and now with his second wife and family is an example of the increasingly complex relationships experienced by the baby boomers. An in-depth study of such a family, asking all members of the family to be involved, would offer a more complete knowledge on the meaning of home within family groups.
- Another option for further research might include using the methods with a therapeutic emphasis for older, frailer people, for example people with a dementia.
- Further research could be undertaken to examine the impact of the life course on the meaning of home. For example, a survey might ask for timings of life transitions (for example, when participant left home, entered a relationship, acquired their own home, and so forth). Given the increasing choices available to the baby boomers this work could identify areas for further in-depth studies to add to the lived experience of the baby boomers.
- The impact of life transition on the meaning of home is interesting and it would be worth researching the impact of the anxiety these transitions

have on an individual's well-being and whether there is the need for additional support to help individuals cope during these transitions.

By returning to the research questions, conclusions have been drawn that add to the knowledge of the meaning of home for the baby boomers and the impact the life course has on that meaning. In addition a contribution has been made to the use of photographs and reflecting teams to investigate the lived experience of individuals. Implications for policy, practice and further research have been addressed and limitations noted.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1: UK Research on the Meaning of Home

Review Matrix of UK research undertaken on the meaning of home included in the literature review.

| Author, year of publication                       | Purpose   | Methodology              | Method  | Age Group          | Size of sample | Major findings  | Significance for current research   |
|---|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|---|---|
| Asham, J., Nelson H., Trinker A., Hancock R. 1999 | To discover the bond older people have with the homes they own and what influences their decision to remain or move home. Key question 'Do older home-owners find homeownership a benefit or a burden?' | Qualitative              | Interviews  | 65+                | 102            | Majority of people preferred to remain in their own homes. Although independence, financial status and sense of identity were key to owning their own homes, the reverse was also true, challenging these key areas. Marital status and children also impacted on choices to move home. About half the sample had not considered declining health as they aged and the impact this may have on their ability to remain in their own home. On the whole people were very attached to their homes having lived there a long time. | Need to consider if non-home owners have a similar bond with their homes. There are policy implications for research into the meaning of home. Age group considered very broad. Meaning of home significant but not a specific research question. |
| Carroll, B.; Morbey H., Balogh R., Araoz G. 2009  | The lived experience of those who had experienced being removed from their home for a period of time after their homes had been flooded.  | Phenomenology            | Interviews  | 30-70              | 40             | People had a great psychological attachment to their homes. The removal of their possessions and having to live elsewhere whilst their homes were repaired adversely affected their sense of identity and security.   | Broad age range, did not consider distinctions between different generational cohorts. Meaning of home is significant.  |
| Eyandrou M., Falkingham, Raks., & Scott A. 2001   | To consider what changes in living arrangements occur in later life.  | Quantitative             | Secondary data analysis from British Household Panel Survey (1991-99) | 50 and over        |                | There is a high degree of mobility for older people who are co-residing with younger household members. There is also a high degree of stability for older people living in simple households. Main changes are due to death, bereavement and moves into institutions. Increasingly children are moving back home.  | Living arrangements are a key dimension of quality of life and well-being in old age. Those living alone have been found to be more likely to enter an institution than those living with other people.   |
| Kallagher, L. 2002                                | Considering choice of living arrangements for older people  |                          | Secondary analysis from ERSRC EQUAL and EHCS                          | Older people       |                | Increased diversity of living arrangements, where people are living, gender roles. Concerned that there be limited choice available for people as they age, with where they live. Allowing people to age in place may need a review of what help may be needed and how it could be provided.  | Older people = broad age span. Worth considering the life courses of individuals.   |
| Sixsmith, J. 1986                                 | Primary aim was to elucidate people's own conceptions of home.  | Phenomenology            | A scoring system to provide comparative statistical analysis.         | 22-29              | 22             | Meaning complex, can be divided into physical, social, and personal home. Related to theory of place. Suggestive of generational cohort effect.   | Significance of shared experience. Categorising meanings of home. Younger age group reviewed  |
| Sixsmith, A., Sixsmith, J. 2008                   | UK findings from some of the interviews as part of the ENABLE Age project   | Grounded theory approach | Interviews  | 80-89              | 40             | Aging in place isn't always positive. Home offers comfort, security, a place for memories. The influence of the course may mean home is a negative experience   | Factors that could influence the meaning of home, including demographics, carers, neighbourhood.  |
| Sixsmith, A., Sixsmith, J. 1991                   | Consideration of transitions of home in later life  | Phenomenological         | Interviews  | 65 years and over. | 65             | Various holistic factors that could influence the meaning of home   | Ambiguity re term later life. Life courses important.   |



## Appendix 2: Non UK Research on the Meaning of Home

Appendix 2. Review matrix of Non - UK research undertaken on the meaning of home included in the literature review.

| Author, year of publication                                  | Location    | Purpose  | Methodology              | Method                              | Age Group              | Sample size | Major findings   | Significance for current research  |
|--|-------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Augus J., Knotos P., Dyck, M., McKeever, & Poland B. 2005    | Canada      | The physical, symbolic and experiential aspects of receiving long-term care in their own homes are examined using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field.  | Ethnography              | Observation and focused interviews. | aged 5-83              | 16 Homes    | Home was 'invaded' by care providers, impacting upon feelings about home. Bourdieu's maintains there's an interplay between space where the body and social structures are co-constituted. Introduces the concept of habitus, and suggests that the being at home is influenced by self, structure, processes of being at home.  | Sample had chronic ill-health. Wide age range considered. Useful to consider impact of declining health on meaning of home.  |
| Claoutier-Fisher D., Harvey J., 2009.                        | Canada      | To use Oywards and Wahl's heuristic meaning of home framework to explore the relationships between older adults and their homes and communities. Also to use empirical findings focusing on the core concepts of meaning of home and sense of belonging for new retirees in an area. | Qualitative case study   | Interviews.                         | Range 57-77            | 25          | Personality, life course events and life course perspective influence how well these younger older people settle into a new retirement community. A sense of 'belonging' in the community was a significant feature of well-being.   | Personality, health and finance influences choices to move home and the settling into a new home. Oyward and Wahl's framework useful at organising and analysing data although categories overlap and are dynamic. |
| Dahlin-Ivanoff, S., Hask, M., Fänge A., & Ivarsson, S. 2007. | Sweden      | Explore aspects of the meaning of home as experienced by very old single-living people. ENABLE-AGE project.  | Grounded theory          | Survey.                             | Aged 80-89             |             | Meaning of home complex, but related to context. Home central place for older people, it means security, by living in a familiar neighbourhood, independence and a place for memories. It means freedom, for reflection, a meeting place and leaving your own mark.  | Small generational cohort considered. Functional, occupational therapist perspective implicit in findings.   |
| Dahlin-Ivanoff, S., Hask, M., Fänge A., & Ivarsson S. 2007.  | Sweden      | Findings from the ENABLE-AGE project, focusing on the multiple meanings of home.   | Grounded theory          | Interviews                          | Aged 80-89             | 40          | Meaning of home is complex, with different layers. Homes means security; familiarity with internal and external environment; having memories, noting the significance of displayed photographs to demonstrate meaning; home means freedom, a place of reflection and meeting place. Feelings may be linked to increasing frailty. Referred to theories of aging to describe significance of findings. Focus on function (OT perspective) | From an OT perspective when visiting people in their own homes the meaning attached to homes must be considered. It is essential to ensure very old people remain in control of this environment.                  |
| Dupuis, A., Thoms, D. 1996. and 1998                         | New Zealand | Part of larger study examining housing wealth inheritance. This study focused on the meaning of home.  |                          | Interviews                          | 50+ (85% aged over 60) | 53          | Home ownership for these age groups significant. Family significant. Being familiar with the environment and daily routine helps 'make a house into a home'. Suggestions that different age groups may view home differently.  | Broad age range considered   |
| Fänge, A., Dahlin-Ivanoff S., 2009.                          | Sweden      | Findings from the ENABLE-AGE project, exploring health in relation to the home for single living people.   | Grounded theory approach | Interviews                          | Aged 80-89             | 40          | Home is the most central and important place for health in the lives of very old people. Safety, familiarity and security key.   | Sample restricted to urban area only. Need to consider a more diverse view of what kind of housing arrangements are optimal for very old people.   |

| Author, year of publication  | Location | Purpose  | Methodology  | Method  | Age Group                         | Sample size | Major findings  | Significance for current research  |
|--|----------|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| Hask, M., Fänge, A., Ivarsson, S., & Dahlström, I. 2007  | Sweden   | Findings from the ENABLE-AGE project exploring the significance of home for older people in maintaining their independence and autonomy.   | Grounded theory approach                           | Interviews  | Aged 80-89                        | 40          | As people age and they learn to adapt to the aging process control in their own home becomes more meaningful as a demonstration of independence and autonomy. The thought of moving is continually postponed.   | Functional perspective bias because occupational therapists conducted interviews. Sample all lived alone and therefore not reflective of the wider older population. Lacked detailed description of what home means. |
| Hask, M., Dahlström, I., Fänge, A., Sixsmith, J., Ivarsson, S., 2007..                                     | Europe   | Part of the ENABLE-AGE Project, the aim was to focus on experiences of participation in relation to home.  | Grounded theory approach                           | Interviews  | Aged 80-89                        | 8           | As people age and they have an increased risk of functional decline, participation in activities remains important but more focused within the home. Participation in activities, being of use to others even from within the home boosted self-esteem and autonomy which was significant for well-being. Home is an important locus and origin for participation in very old age.  | Value of eliciting the views of older people themselves. Occupational, functional perspective was the focus of the paper. Significance of home whilst aging reinforced.  |
| Imamoglu, C. 2007  | USA      | Study of older people who live in 'assisted living' environments. (Perhaps similar to residential homes in the UK, albeit with a very specific focus of providing a 'home' like experience.) | Quantitative                                       | Questionnaire and photographs of different interior and exterior home environments. | Mean age 82, range not specified. | 98          | Acknowledgement that the accommodation of older adults needs to be considered as the proportion of older people increases. Attributes of home; nursing home and assisted living listed rated by respondents. Home scored more positive ratings, nursing homes rated more negatively and assisted living in-between. Respondents views of the 3 types of accommodation were influenced by where the majority were currently living (i.e. own home), and current health status. | Age range not specified, danger of homogeneous understanding of home. Photographs useful to help understand views on home environments.  |
| Ivarsson, S. & Horstmann, V. S., B. 2007   | Sweden   | Explore how aspects of housing are related to life satisfaction and perceived health an  | Quantitative                                       | Survey  | 80-89                             | 387         | Used various self-report scales to identify issues such as life satisfaction; perceived health; objective aspects of housing; dependence in activities of daily living (ADL). Usability of home; housing related control beliefs and meaning of home questionnaire.   | Important to consider home from an environmental context also.   |
| Ivarsson, S., Wahl, H., Nygren, C., Orwald, F., Sixsmith, A., Sixsmith, J., Szeman, Z., Tomsova, S., 2007. | Europe   | Introduction to the ENABLE Age project   | Multiple questionnaire, semi structured interviews |   | 80-89                             |             | The project included three study arms: (a) The ENABLE-AGE Survey Study; (b) the ENABLE-AGE In-Depth Study; and (c) the ENABLE-AGE Update Review.  | Introduction to whole study.   |

| Author, year of publication   | Location   | Purpose   | Methodology                 | Method                         | Age Group                    | Sample size | Major findings  | Significance for current research   |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---|---|
| Knoett, V. 2003   | USA  | Aim to determine the meaning older women attach to their homes. Taken from an occupational health perspective but has implications for other health care professionals. | Phenomenology<br>PhD Thesis |                                | 71-94                        | 12          | Emerging themes identified were: creating and defining one's personal space; performing self-care; developing and maintaining supportive relationships and encouraging a positive attitude and philosophy of life.  | Gender specific. Broad age range.   |
| Leith, K. H. 2006.  | USA  | Explores the meaning of home for older women living in congregate housing.  | Phenomenology               | Interviews                     | Aged 63-91<br>Mean age 77.95 | 20          | Highlights vulnerability of older women living on their own, and financial difficulties this may pose. Important to understand the processes older women have to re-establish sense of home. Important to consider life-course to explain meaning. Undertaken in assisted living environments, perhaps similar to warden controlled living in the UK. Making a 'new home' possible when an individual is autonomous is choosing where to live. A positive personality or self-efficacy helps make the new home. | Developed a coding structure for what home means to people, as expressed by this sub-group of older women who had moved into this supported housing. Being autonomous in decision making key to meaning of home. Did not look at couples; men or those who do not have the choice to move because of financial reasons. |
| Moloney, M.F. 1997.   | USA  | Exploring the importance of home and how it contributed to the inner strength of women in this study.   | Narrative                   | Story telling                  | Aged from 65 to 87           | 12          | Individuals have a fundamental need to feel at home. Home is about security; providing a safe place for others; having loved ones to share the experience of home either as visitors or living with family. When home is lost there is a need to create 'homeness' somewhere. Meaning of home influenced by life story.   | Life story significant for meaning of home. Focus on women, couples or men not included in study. Social context in interpreting meaning not included.  |
| Orswald, F., H., Schilling, W., H., Fänge, A., Sixsmith, J., Iwarsson, S., 2006   | Germany, Sweden and the UK.<br>ENABLE-AGE data set | Aim to introduce an integrative and comprehensive approach to understanding and measuring perceived housing fit in very old age.  | Quantitative                | Survey and case study-example  | 80-89                        | 1223        | Meaning of home measured in four areas: physical, behavioural, cognitive/emotional and social. Identified case study to illustrate complexity of meaning.   | Home as centre of self, linking to Swenson's findings. Lived experiences within home influential. Control over home important. Generational cohort considered but significance of shared experiences not discussed.   |
| Orswald, F. & Wahl, H. S., O.Iwarsson, S., 2007   | Europe   |   | Grounded theory approach    | Interviews                     | 80-89                        |             |   |   |
| Orswald, F., & Wahl, H., Schilling, O., Negron, C., Fänge, A., Sixsmith, A., Sixsmith, J., Szeman, Z., Tomason, S., Iwarsson, S., 2007. | Europe   |   | Quantitative.               | Survey with specific measures. | 75-89                        | 1918        | Meaning of home related to ability to function independently within home. Negotiation on ability to remain at home and retain control is essential for well-being.  | Suggests that the longer people have lived in the same home the more attached they are to it. Emphasis on functional perspective, because of large involvement of occupational therapists in study.   |

| Author, year of publication  | Location   | Purpose  | Methodology              | Method  | Age Group                         | Sample size                  | Major findings   | Significance for current research   |
|--|------------|--|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Parsall, C. 2012   | Australia. | Focus on the meaning of home for people sleeping on the streets.   | Ethnographic research    |   | Most between the age of 30 and 50 | 100 and 20 formal interviews | Homes influenced by day-day lives and individuals biography. For those sleeping on the street home = housing, aspire for the physical structure of home.<br>Homes about feeling, family and control  | Context important when exploring the meaning of home.   |
| Rioux L., 2005.  | France     | Aim to assess the well-being of aging women in their homes and to determine likely predictors of this well-being.  | Mixed methods            | Questionnaire and interviews  | Aged 72-86                        | 114                          | Women wanted to remain in their own homes to retain control over their lives. Homes had a sense of history, where they brought up their families. Homes allowed choice and freedom, and choice who to invite in. Older people did not prepare their homes in anticipation of increasing frailty. Well-being did not decrease with age despite declining health.  | Focused on couples but only asked the women their views. Quantitative measure do not allow expression of meaning.   |
| Rough, C., Cox, J 2000   | USA        | Explores why patients want to go home from hospital or residential settings.   |                          | Case study  | 66                                | 1                            | Application of a Health and Home Model in home healthcare. (Home as protector, home as center, home as familiar. Home and its importance is individually defined.  | None noted.   |
| Shank D., Kivshara K., Zablotzky D. 2004.  | USA        |  | Qualitative              | Interviews  | Aged 64-80                        | 4                            | Widowed women criteria for participation, because of a perception they would have the greater attachment to their homes, because of their role in nurturing their family, specifically in this age group. Consideration of life course, following social norms, place attachment on meaning of home are explored. Home meaning determined for some by their attachment to place because of bringing up their family. For others attachment to place was not about family but choice in where and how they lived. Display of possessions, particularly photographs were demonstration of meaning. Routine and ritual played = important for identity. | Focus on woman, men excluded. Significance of life course events on perspective of home. Significance of generational cohort on interpreting meaning of home apparent.  |
| Sixsmith, Sixsmith, Fange, Neumann, Kucera, Peirson, Hask, Reinhold-Wagner, Woodych 2014 | Europe     | Part of the ENABLE Age project   | Grounded theory approach | Interviews  | 80-89 years                       | 190                          | Focus on healthy ageing offering a good definition of this. Home a transitional space as people age. Challenges whether people will be able to age in place as they age because of their complex needs.  | Very current. Meaning of home can evolve. Life course approach therefore helpful  |
| Swanson 1998   | USA        | Explores the meaning of home for five elderly women.   | Herminautic Study        | Non directed interviews ('conversations' p.382)   | Aged 75-87                        | 5                            | Control psychologically remains. Home as the centre of self, caring and reach. Attachment to home is significant for sense of self. The older person connects to the home in diverse ways.   | Asked participants to take photographs of their homes to facilitate interviews. Did not use these in the analysis. Did not refer to social history as being significant |
| Zingmark, K Norberg, A. Sandman, Per-Olof 1995.  | Sweden     | To find out what the phenomenon of home, or 'at homeness' is to better understand and therefore help patients with dementia as they search call out for home their mother. | Narrative                | Interview, asked to narrate experiences related to a few questions. With children role play used. | 2-102                             | 150                          | Refer to suggestions that experiences related to home play an important role in our lives. p48 Identified categories related to home; safety, rootedness; harmony, joy; privacy; togetherness; recognition; possessions; nourishment initiative, power, freedom.   | Important to look at the experience of being at home, especially when people struggle to 'feel at home' e.g when depressed or diseased such as in dementia.             |

# Appendix 3: Literature reviews on the Meaning of Home

**Appendix 3 Literature Reviews**  
Matrix of Literature Reviews undertaken on the meaning of home included in the literature review.

| Author, date                   | Location                     | Focus of review  | Age range considered             | Major Findings   | Implications for current research  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Coolan, H., Messers, J. 2012   | The Netherlands              | Introduction to the journal which has a focus on home, home and dwelling. Offering an international perspective. This article highlights some of the key research around the meaning of home | Not specified                    | Re-emphasis on the complexity of defining home. Home often described as a positive single family household, whereas 90% of the world population this is not the case. Presents a conceptual framework for studying people, environment and the relationship between them.  | More current<br>Refers to research already included, Maller, Moore, Despres<br>Does not refer to ENJABLE age project                                 |
| Despres, C. 1991               | USA                          | Literature review on the meaning of home and direction for future research, 1974-1989.   | Not specified                    | Identify concepts of home. Theoretical interpretation of home. Further research on non-traditional households need to consider broader social context when looking at home   | Social context significant for meaning of home.<br>Behavioural/human theoretical model for analysing home used.                                      |
| Glaser, K. 1997                | UK                           | Review living arrangements of older people.  | Age 65+                          | Living arrangement for older people significant in who is available to help care for them as they age.<br>Factors influencing living arrangements significant for policy makers.   |  |
| Gittin, L. N. 2003             | USA                          | Theoretical review within the fields of environmental gerontology focusing on home environments.   | 'Older people' age not specified | Home, specifically the physical locality, is preferred residence to grow old in. Reiterated how home helps individuals maintain their identity and well-being as they adapt to ageing. The home environment may be hazardous for the older person. However the home does have symbolic meanings that contribute to well-being and quality of life. One of the key unanswered questions is 'What are the interrelationships between the home environment, psychological well-being, and daily functioning throughout the aging process?'<br>Proposes some theoretical frameworks that could be expanded upon such as personal control theory, whereby the home helps older people adapt and improve their self-efficacy | Functional, occupational therapy perspective implicit. Significance of the environment in relation to 'control theory' pertinent to meaning of home. |
| Gurney, C. M. 1997             | UK                           | To contribute to the debate around the meaning of home for women; using episodic ethnographies as a way of making sense of home;   | approx 44 years                  | Researching home is difficult because of the limited access, and time investment required by the researcher. Further research into developing theories and measures that explain the significance and complexity of home needed. These may not be a <i>rigid</i> methodological approach or measure.<br>Considers how the meaning of home is influenced by life histories.   | Significance of lived experiences on meaning of home.  |
| Gurney, C. and Means, R. 1995. | UK                           | Review research undertaken; makes recommendations for future research and outline findings from own study.   | 'Later life' age not specified   | Outlines research undertaken by Harrison and Means using taped interviews. A framework on home, a hierarchy of meanings - Cultural, Intermediate and Personal.   | Suggestion for classifying meaning of home proposed.   |
| Kallert, P., Moore, J 2003     | London; Dublin and Columbia. | Review of empirical studies of homeless people   | 'Young adults' age not specified | Meaning of home complex. Form sense of self and social identity.<br>Marginalised groups trying to conform.<br>Important to explore the meaning of home from different contexts.  | Home is associated with independence and control.  |
| Lewin, F. A. 2001.             | Sweden                       | Review of the meaning of home for elderly immigrants.  | Elderly, age not specified       | Overview of the literature on the meaning of home. Definitions of home influenced by social context 'history', noted in immigrants interpretations of home. Idealistic interpretation of home, especially during times of uncertainty.<br>Home perception changes over time.<br>Review of Gurney and Means (1995) work<br>Does not define age group specifically but generic 'elderly' term used.<br>Further research in immigrant's interpretation of home needed. Need to consider 'history' when interpreting what makes a home for an older person.  | 'Elderly' as a homogenous group implied. Need to consider 'history' when interpreting what makes a home for an older person.                         |



| Author, date                      | Location  | Focus of review   | Age range considered | Major Findings  | Implications for current research  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|----------------------|---|--|
| Mallatt, S., 2004.                | Australia | Review: Critiques recurring and dominant ideas about home represented in theoretical and empirical literature.  | Not specified        | Broad perspective about home offered, from language used, importance of interdisciplinary perspectives and overall complex nature of home.<br>'Meaning of home all depends'   | Home is significant and meaning complex. Useful to look at different sub groups to explore meaning, since historical and social context significant. |
| Marshall, E., 2008.               | USA       | Theoretical: Explore home as a place for healing  |                      | Refers to empirical studies exploring home, Notes significance of home for healing albeit recognises that for this may not be the case for all.<br>Further research needed on the significance of home for healing and exploring the significance of relationships.   |  |
| Means, R., 2007                   | UK        | Review of three studies looking at vulnerable older people and the challenges this poses for 'ageing in place'.   |                      | Vulnerable groups considered are, homelessness; older people in the private rented sector and owner occupiers with dementia<br>Outlines UK historical perspectives on ageing in place, and this may not be possible for all groups.<br>'Nearly all human beings have the desire to leave or to make a home'   | Emphasis on heterogeneity of the older population.<br>'Staying put' not always an option.  |
| Means, R., 2007                   | UK        | Review of studies looking at the potential of 'ageing in place' for vulnerable older people or those living in vulnerable housing. Looked at studies re homeless older people; older people in rented accommodation and those with dementia.  |                      | There has been a policy emphasis to allow older people to age in place arguably since the agricultural and industrial revolutions when there were increasing numbers of older people living in workhouses. However, there may not be a home available or a suitable or safe home available for the vulnerable groups noted.<br>This policy focus is apparent internationally also, although there is a growing appreciation that for some groups this is problematic.<br>Refers to Higgins (1989) typology of what home means.<br>Heywood et al (2002) description of home and Kellaher et al (2004) work on attachment to place in later life.<br>Makes 3 recommendations for developments and commitments to allow older people to 'age in place' but also have sustained quality of life. These include support and advice, improve housing stock and develop a more positive approach to residential homes when there are the best option for a minority of people. |  |
| Molony, S., 2010                  | USA       | A Meta-Ethnographic Synthesis of the Meaning of Home  |                      | Review of key literature around the meaning of home.<br>Includes ENABLE Age.<br>Highlights number of nursing studies.<br>Only 1 UK paper. (Sixsmith and Sixsmith 1991).<br>Offers 5 categories for home:<br>Empowering – do what I want, Empowering, mastery<br>Refuge, Relationship, Self-reconciliation.  | Value of small studies.<br>Life course approach useful.<br>Objects important.<br>Good summary.   |
| Moore, J. 2000                    | UK        | Aim to broaden the debate on home within environmental psychology by examining the key themes in the social science literature on home.   |                      | Categories: interpretations of home into four, psychological, cultural, philosophical and social. Context of home very important. Home isn't always a good experience for people.<br>Need to develop theoretical frameworks and models when examining home.   |  |
| O'Mahoney L. F. 2013              | UK        | Aim to analyse the development and application of the conceptual framework within which housing scholars can think, talk about and advocate for home.<br>To understand the meaning of home from a legal perspective, helps to articulate this to support claims when home is lost<br>To explore the role of the home in contemporary British Society. |                      | Provides a framework under which the meaning of home can be explored:<br>Home as a financial asset<br>Home as an adequate physical structure<br>Home as territory<br>Home as identity and self-identity<br>Home as a social and cultural signifier  |  |
| Saunders, P., Williams, P., 1988. | UK        |   | Not specified        | Relationships help establish home. Need privacy of space and free from intrusion. Meaning of home culturally driven, even the micro culture within home<br>More empirical research needed in to the meaning of home.  | Impact of political context on meaning of home. For example Margaret Thatcher encouraging home ownership.  |

## Appendix 4 Comparison of Reviews/Frameworks Describing the meaning of Home.

| APPENDIX 4 Comparison of Reviews/Frameworks Describing the meaning of Home. |   |  |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Despres (1991) Definition   | Territorial   | Psychological  | Socio-Psychological                        | Phenomenological and Developmental  |   |
| Other authors   |   |  |  |   | <b>Additional perspectives</b>  |
| <b>Mallett (2004)</b>   | Home as a symbol of self. Furnishings/making of our home important.                             | Home ownership = sense of identity. Relationships important but varied relationships not explored. Home as haven/refuge, but not universally felt.                                     |  | Nostalgic view of home Familiar. Routine activities at home.                    | Different meanings of the word home. Political/social/historical context influence meaning. Differentiate between house, home and household. Housing design incorporating work space, intrusion or flexible? Home and gender considered. Home and journeys to and from. |
| <b>Oswald et al (2006)</b>  | Usability of the home, how useful is the home for everyday activities. 'Storehouse of memories' | Home creates a sense of identity. Having a sense of control, especially with increasing age very important. Fear - of burglary/falls. Increased frailty means home feels like a prison | Centre of social community                 | Familiarity and routines developed over time.                                   | Four domain model of housing: housing satisfaction, usability in the home, meaning of home, housing related control beliefs. Specific focus on those aged 80-89 years old.  |
| <b>Moloney (2010)</b>   | Autobiographical icons.   | Place of refuge Relationships with others Autonomy, personal power. Feelings of accomplishment/strength. Self-reconciliation after transitions   | Defined role contributes to 'at homeness'. | Familiarity with rhythms, rituals, feel of home. Thriving across the life span. | Sharing story of home. Spiritual aspects of home. Sense of homelessness. Home as a place-based identity and a process.  |

## Appendix 5 Overview of Housing Policy 1945-2003

Adapted from Stewart (2004)

| <b>Post World War 2 (1945–1979): overview of housing and public health policy.</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Post 1945  | Labour election victory; introduction of Welfare State, new organizational structure, responsibilities to housing and National Health Service; development of New Towns                                  |
| 1952   | Census shows 1 million more households than dwellings  |
| 1954   | Housing Repairs and Rents Act—local authorities could take over slum areas for site value; new private rents removed from rent control   |
| 1956   | Extra height subsidy introduced for high-rise blocks   |
| 1957   | Rent Act decontrols rents; legislation protects sitting tenants; Rachman era   |
| 1960   | Park Hill Estate (Sheffield) becomes UK’s first deck access block  |
| 1961   | Parker Morris Report establishes minimum space standards for council housing   |
| 1964   | Labour election victory; Wilson adopts target of 400,000 new homes/year  |
| 1964   | Housing Act established Housing Corporation in England   |
| 1965   | Milner Holland Report on housing and race in Greater London  |
| 1965   | Rent controls and rent officers introduced   |
| 1966   | Labour re-elected, pledging 500,000 houses/year  |
| 1967   | Erno Goldfinger designs 32-storey tower block  |
| 1968   | Housing White Paper calls for renovation, not redevelopment  |
| 1968   | Gas explosion at Ronan Point, kills five   |
| 1969   | Housing Act introduces General Improvement Areas and Home Improvement Grants   |
| 1970   | Conservative victory   |
| 1972   | Housing Finance Act encourages slum clearance; boost to Home Improvement Grants  |
| 1974   | Housing Action Areas introduced  |
| 1974   | More than 100,000 council house completions; Rent Act extends security of tenure to most furnished lettings  |
| 1977   | Homeless Persons Act; new duty for councils to house certain homeless people   |
| <b>Post 1979: overview of housing and public health policy.</b>                    |  |
| 1979   | Conservative election victory; 1979 Priority Estates Project (HIP funded) to rescue unpopular estates; Urban Programme established   |
| 1980   | ‘Right to Buy’ introduced, urban development corporations, competitive tendering   |
| 1981   | Development Corporations begin, EHCS survey shows 1.1 million unfit houses; post-rioting enquiries identify socio-economic and policing problems in rundown estates                                      |
| 1985   | Estate Action targets capital at rundown estates where management is localized and tenants are consulted. Voluntary transfer, estate management boards, etc.   |
| 1986   | Unemployment reaches 3.5 million   |
| 1988   | Housing Act introduces assured tenancies and promotes stock transfer; UK housing market collapses; Housing Action Trusts and Tenants Choice further break up council housing                             |
| 1989   | Housing Associations become the major developers of new social housing, using private finance for the first time. Needs-based lettings led to polarization. Increased funding for tenant-led initiatives |
| 1989   | Local Government and Housing Act introduces mandatory Renovation Grants linked to statutory fitness; Home Improvement Agencies encouraged  |
| 1996   | Housing Act creates registered social landlords and local housing companies; restriction on homeless people’s rights; end of mandatory Renovation Grants   |



| <b>Post 1997: overview of housing and public health policy.</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 1997  | Labour election victory<br>One in five families headed by single parent; nearly one-third of children live in households where no one is in full-time unemployment |
| 2000  | The Joseph Rowntree Foundation published results of the first national study to attempt to measure social exclusion, confirming rise in poverty rates              |
| 2002  | Homeless Act to encourage development of local strategies to help prevent homelessness and<br>deliver partnership working  |
| 2003  | Community Plan to create sustainable communities in all regions  |
| 2003  | Housing Bill provisions seek to more closely re-integrate housing and health   |

## **Appendix 6: Participant Information Sheet**

### **Study Title**

How significant is the concept of 'home' for those entering later life?

### **Introduction**

- You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the project is being undertaken and what it will involve.
- Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.
- Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.
- Thank you in advance for reading this information sheet.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

I am carrying out this study in order to understand the significance of your concept of 'home' in later life. For example, I want to know if you wish to remain in your current home when you enter later life or if you would consider moving. I am also interested in the significance of 'home' for an individual.

### **Why?**

Government health and social care policy places great emphasis on the importance of people being able to remain in their homes, especially during illness and/or declining health. Previous research has shown that home is very important as people age and the meaning of home can be physical and psychological. Previous research has predominantly focused on those over 65 years and mainly on those over 75 years. This study will look at a younger group of adults and consider if their interpretation of home is any

different. In particular, it will help us understand what influences the significance of home for people born during the 1950's. With this understanding I hope to be able to inform the makers of health and social policy and also help individuals plan for where they want to live in later life.

### **Who will be participating?**

People aged between 50 and 60 years.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. Even if you begin to participate you can withdraw your consent and participation at any time.

### **What will happen if I take part?**

- We will meet initially at a mutually convenient time when the project will be explained in full. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to sign a consent form.
- You will be loaned a camera at this initial meeting and asked to take photographs of your home. I will show you how to use the camera if needed.
- You can chose to take photo's of the parts of your home that hold meaning for you.
- A week later I will return to collect the camera and arrange to have the photographs developed. A second date will be agreed at this point when I will meet to discuss the photographs (after they have been developed).
- At this follow up meeting you will be asked to talk about the photos that you have taken.

- With your consent, the meeting will be tape recorded so I don't have to take notes and can concentrate on what you are saying.

### **What do I have to do?**

You will be asked to participate in three meetings in total over a period of approximately one month. The first should not last more than an hour, the second a maximum of 10 minutes and the third between 1-2 hours. But no more than three hours. With your consent, these meetings will take place in your home.

### **What are the possible disadvantages?**

- Some of the subjects that might arise in discussion could be upsetting, such as previous sad experiences. If you feel that you are upset, please let me know and the meeting can be stopped immediately, if you wish. If you become upset about anything, I will be able to suggest where you can receive follow-up counselling if required

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

- The study will give you the chance to express your opinions and views on the meaning of home.
- It is an opportunity to take part in a study that aims to have a positive impact on any future developments relating to the planning of services for those entering later life.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Absolutely. I will make a record of your name and address and contact details, and of course we will call each other by our names during the meetings. These records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and only my two supervisors and myself will have access to

your details. However, when I make the written records of the meetings and when the findings are published, I will choose a different name for all of the participants, and any other personal details that might lead to a participant being identified will be changed. I may invite a small group to help me make sense of the information I collect, but once again all names will be changed.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the research findings, including the photographs, will be used in the writing and presenting of my PhD thesis. You and Bournemouth University will have joint copyright ownership of the photographs. In addition, the researcher will aim at having the study published in a leading peer-reviewed research journal and presented at a relevant national conference in the UK or abroad. As previously stated your name will be changed, and any other details that might lead to the identification of an individual will be changed. In other words, your identity and details will always remain anonymous. If you would like a full report at the end of the study, please contact the person named towards the end of this information sheet.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The program has been reviewed by independent experts who have the job of establishing whether measures have been put in place to protect the integrity and wellbeing of participants. Planned measures include the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality of all participants, and the potential to refer to others who will be able to offer counselling should it be necessary. Finally, the project has been reviewed by Bournemouth University's School of Health and

Social Care Research Committee, the body that oversees such activity.

### **Contact for further information**

If you require any further information please contact:

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I hope you have found this information sheet useful. Please feel free to keep it for later reference.

**Thank you for thinking about taking part in the study**

## **Appendix 7: Excerpt from Dan's Transcript**

**MB** – Ok, just talking about the photographs really

**P1** – Do you want to start in any particular order?

**MB** – No whatever order you like

**P1** – Ok well ahm...o real reason for doing it in this particular order, perhaps I'll start with the 2 outside pictures. Umm This picture here is actually taken from the road as you come down of from the Bypass and into towards x and why I associate this with home is very much associated that I associate this with as I come down and as I come into this valley, it's not just the house that I that I regard as home but that I have arrived at home and it's a strong feeling I have and I'm touched by it every time and even if I've only been away a few days if you know what I mean. And not just necessarily if I've only gone down to Poole shopping for the day and whenever I'm away I always feel very much part of this scenery and this valley and this sort of area having lived here I suppose for a very long time. 35 years or so. So that's what I was really trying to show. And we sometimes stop at this lay by (the picture's not very good) and gaze down 'cos it really can be quite nice with the sunlight over it. So it's about feeling at one is at home if you know what I mean and all the rigors of the journey you have been on or if you have been abroad or ??? and that is why I particularly wanted to take a picture and perhaps discuss that sort of aspect, that sort of feeling of homeness.

And then I took the odd picture that is just out in the drive here or looking out from the garage here or just looking out across the meadows or over the river meadows this way

**MB** – Was it frosty then?

**P1** – It was very frosty on that one yeh. What I was trying to sort of capture with that was really again was the feeling of...umm umm the feeling of very much settled comfortable, safe almost I would say sort of, in this sort of local environment, and it sort of says something to me that home is associated with the countryside, and that's the sort of view out towards the church again, same kind of February weather and, view

towards the village and church, again its probably a sort of extension to this or probably a bit closer even then when I get home and I look at the fields here inevitably I feel pretty comfortable that I see this view pretty much unchanging really in quite a long period of time.

**MB** – I like the word ‘homeness’, it’s a lovely word

**P1** – Yeh, I like that and I like the way some element of this doesn’t change and I think that gives me some element of security, a comfort blanket perhaps. That’s what I was really trying to... the thoughts and feelings sl was trying to convey by shots around the home and the surrounding area. So that’s really...not sure if this a really sensible way to do it, Then, I’m trying to make it flow when it’s not really meant to flow. There’s quite good pictures of the outside of the house, there’s several pictures of the outside of the house rather than the inside. Why is that important to me? The answer is when I moved here a long time ago, it is a long time 35 years, the house was a very tiny house, a tiny 2 bed roomed place, all the extensions that are on it, I’ve actually built myself, including thatching it

**MB** – Did you?

**P1** – I didn’t build this bit, I did the roof but I did the design for this and then got a company to make it in x On the outside the house used to come down and finish there so I built a lot, on I literally sort of built the lot on myself single handedly then I thatched the whole lot on myself, then added sort of laundry rooms and utility rooms and again I built all that on myself. So what I am trying to say about that is I feel there is a lot of me in the house, it is a home as well. It’s not like if you just move into a house and someone has built it. It’s like it has grown with me very much over these years. It’s a strange feeling really. It’s almost like a kind of oneness with it really in the context of pretty much every room has been rewired and re plastered and I’ve done everything. Its not like I have used builders so that’s partly what I was trying to convey in these kind of pictures. Maybe it was a kind of arrogance, the house that Jack built kind of thing, I don’t know. I’m still very proud of it. Its something that I enjoyed doing, it somehow gives me a sense of involvement with the



house, which to me feels that it's a kind of deeper involvement to somebody that just buys a house and moves into it.. That's partly why I've taken these pictures of the outside.

**MB** – How long did it take you?

**P1** – Well it's like topsy of course, its sort of grown. First of the thatch was a bit bad so I re thatched the front of the house, and then I built the kitchen on that wasn't there before. Then I built the bedroom over the top, then I think I built the bedroom on the ground floor of the flat extension, just with a plastic roof, then I built the next floor over the next year or so then thatching that. It took pretty much the next year or so. I cut the reed in x, put it on the roof of the mini, brought it home and then used to thatch it each evening. When I would run out of reed I would come and have my supper. It was quite an effort really but I did it cos I wanted to do it. Maybe I was too tight fisted to pay for someone else to do it but I think it was something I wanted to do. So that was sort of one thing and then the other rooms like the room on the back like the shower and the utility room and the laundry room have been added in 2000 for my millennium project. Then 2 years ago we decided to put this room here on the front. Although I got to get the builders to make the thing out of oak, it was very much, well I designed it, I couldn't decide what I wanted then they said they couldn't do the roof, so I said I would do the roof then and it went on from there. So there are a lot of pictures there that are, dare I say it , my own historical, over the years, from the beginning, starting it as I moved in, to the most recent project which we completed only a year or so ago, 2 years ago this room on the outside

**MB** – A sense of ownership I should imagine

**P1** – Yeh, an immense sense of ownership. It's more than an ownership thing because clearly you can obtain ownership by just going out and buying the deeds and owning it. That's not, well it's a little bit more than that, it's a more ingrained feeling I suppose. So I suppose what that means to me is that I would find leaving this house, home, a huge wrench. I got divorced several years ago form my first wife and I bought the house off her and paid the money, but I wonder if someone else sort

of said to sell the house and go and start again, do you know what I mean, a fresh start sort of thing. That would have been fine, I would have been quite happy with that, but I sort of justified it to myself in not doing that cos I wanted continuity with the children cos I still had custody of the children. It was their home and xl had actually been born here sort of thing, and my eldest son was only about 8 months old when he first moved here so they have always seen it as home. So I have probably always justified hanging on to it on that basis. But I'm not sure about that, mixed feelings. Already I felt that I had put such a lot into it that I didn't really feel that I wanted to... you know we had lived here together for quite a long time, 14 years or something, so we were very happy actually. So I think that's how I felt about the house and that's why I probably stayed. I thought of moving again when I remarried to x and we talked about it. Would it be nice or wouldn't it be nice to make a move, a new start, a house that's her house and not sort of feel it was a house she had somehow partly inherited from my first wife. But she doesn't feel like that at all now, she moved in here before we got married, for a year or so. She feels its so much part of her, she feels the same. You have to be careful how people feel about these things in relationships. She's done a pretty good job of making sure that every single item that had an association (laugh) has been thrown out, but at least she let me keep the house!

**MB** – That's the deal!

**P1** – and of course she has been fully supportive of putting our own stamp on it in the context of a couple of the extensions we've built. X was just being born so back in 2000 and then this room and then most recently it was her idea to knock the dining room and the lounge together so we have got this very big sort of lounge now which is quite unusual for a cottage of this size. So I think she feels, what with changing that and everything else right the way through, every light switch and bathroom fitting, its part of her own, which is very important as well. Cos I feel it's a home now and a home together which it hasn't been necessarily, it was my home with x and my home on my own and then with someone else coming in, and you sort of make them feel... well it really hasn't been a

problem I don't think it has, you can speak to her. She, we have really felt tremendously at peace here and we talk about moving and its, no, no we couldn't contemplate it

**MB** – So when do you talk about moving, when does that sort of come into it then?

**P1** – Oh just occasionally, well if I'm honest, more and influence from outside. One of her friends will move house or something or other and she'll sort of think, oh maybe we should move to another house, or a bigger house. Cos of course, we could afford one, that's not the issue if you know what I mean. Then she starts this thing or maybe we start it together, oh yeh, but we couldn't move out of the valley could we. So that means to say we are only looking at a certain number of houses which come on the market fairly infrequently, and things like that. So I think we have talked about it in that sort of context. Occasionally it comes up in the context – would we want to live here forever or what age would you feel when you didn't want to be here – and that gets tricky cos we never really talk about it, we talk about it but never really resolve it. I mean we talk about it but its all too open ended, it's all too difficult. And then I always think to myself that it's a dreadfully sort of inappropriate house to live in on her own. Ann is quite a bit younger than me, she's 14 years younger than me, and old houses like this are lovely but always need constant attention, there's always something that needs doing here ??? so I don't think it would suit her if she were at some stage on her own. So I think we should move somewhere that would suit you better but we just never get any further than that. We have got lots of friends in the village and in and around so it never gets any further than that. So I guess we're sort of tied to it as well now. Certainly I think we both feel very happy and comfortable her.

**MB** – You say about the area being home and say about staying in the valley

**P1** – Yeh that's right I think we could contemplate moving to another house in the valley but I'm not sure we could contemplate any more than about 4 or 5 miles, you know, so its sort of like whoa, that's a bit freaky!

And of course you could justify that all sorts of ways , with your friends, you could certainly justify that with your children and their friends and say, well they wouldn't want to move away from da da da, cant justify it ??? So that's probably enough about that. So here are just a few of the internal pictures. This one just happens to have my birthday celebrations on it, that's not so relevant really, its just that its an internal shot of this room and to be honest we spend a lot of time here both in the summer and the winter. So we spend, apart from watching telly in the evenings, we probably spend time at the dining table, on the sofa or just reading books, or get out there on the bbq. And also its very much a room that... again I feel that we've designed and done together so in some ways its an idea that its one area that's sort of the heart of the home. I suppose if I asked Ann she would probably say it's the kitchen but I feel there are other areas that are associated more with the sort of family thing and I suppose we just spend a lot of time here. Anyway I just thought that was really what that was trying to convey.

Appendix 8: Example of Senses Framework Notes

Appendix 6 Example of Senses Framework Notes

|         | The Visual  | sense of feeling<br>Secure/ comfort/refuge/cage  | sense of smell?<br>/nostalgic (strong feeling history/smell | sense of taste<br>Kitchen/family meals/ evocative for the panels/decor  | sense of sound   | Reflections<br>(anything else you'd add)   |
|---------|---|--|---|---|------------------|--|
| Barbara | Very reflective, harder to do than she thought it would be. Took time to take the photos that were very important. Debated with son but took things that would be important to her.<br><br>Reflective about what things are really important, feels she only needs a certain amount of things | Family, where they sit<br>Children can't afford much, trampoline, important for shared family time.<br>Family room/family photograph<br><br>Rituals, making up corner.<br>I run the home<br><br>Swing and think seat, outside from the house, and stresses. Motion helps/soothes. Its become part of my life.<br><br>Feeling angry/frustrated. 'hitting brick walls' kids/husband/fighting the council<br>'wouldn't dare ask me to leave' p38, neighbours experience, she jumped ship before she was asked, recognition of passing time, neighbour leaving, new younger family moving in. Can't imagine going back to a couple, fear of the transition, fear of getting older 44 |   | Hardly cook, out of times; shared time in the lounge.<br>Kitchen table school days eat together/parents of a specific age sharing the meal, tradition.<br><br>TV, relaxation, pride<br><br>Car, freedom, independence p47. Have to be able to get out<br><br>Only certain things were important | Music=<br>escape | Housing association, control over the bath/versus disability.<br>Difficult times.<br>Disability toilet, getting ready for deterioration.<br><br>Reference to life on the edge of falling about<br><br>Kids into technology.<br><br><b>People quickly ran through and then reflected further, by reiterating things that they say, ie "make up corner"</b><br><b>'You've got 3 of the swing'</b><br>What did you think taking |

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|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | <p>to make a home perhaps not the 4 walls. When she thinks logically 'do we think logically'. Only thinking about it now. Fear of children leaving but the process of the photos made her think about what's important about her home a few things. p46. Fear mentioned a lot. Conscious of hubby deteriorating perhaps would have looked forward to a healthy retirement but hubby deteriorated,</p> | <p>'weighing me down'. Fear of children Fear of loss, of family time of togetherness p40 Things land sliding p51 so planning for the future<br/><br/>Fear, not waking up and the last word being a cross word.<br/><br/>Fear about kids leaving and having to leave the house. Neighbour had to move after her children left so she knew she'll have to leave. 'I don't want to leave this house, weighing on my mind.<br/><br/>Created the memories from new.<br/><br/>Worried about getting older.<br/><br/>1<sup>st</sup> memories in the house, don't ever want to leave.<br/><br/>Battling with husband who does things he knows he shouldn't and from teenage children. Removing herself to the swing when she gets angry.<br/><br/>'Feel I'm bad cop'<br/><br/>TV comfort blanket, on all the time,</p> |  | <p>theses, found it hard.<br/>Prioritise importance of certain things in the home.<br/>So places that are important for family life.<br/>History impacting upon home, husbands accident glad she said goodbye before he went out that day. Not going to bed on an argument.<br/><br/>Want validation, do you know what I mean, and I think the relationship important and if honestly you can say I now what it means to have teenagers you can say honestly I know what you mean.<br/>Showing that you are listening.<br/>Anything you would add 33 pages more<br/>Anything else p55, then related back to her da key board. Taleneta parenst, play around the clubs.<br/>One of 7 children BB time</p> |
|--|---|--|--|--|

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|  | <p>going down not forward or up.</p> <p>Interest in what others have had to say.</p> <p>Perhaps put the life course in here because the photos stimulate that reflection that give you insight into the past and future/life course</p> | <p>back to childhood, perhaps when the telly was always on.</p> <p>Passage of time and the fear of the future associated with where she lives, really anxious about moving on, leaving her current home a sense of that its out of her control</p> |  |  | <p>Worried about jobs for her children, getting jobs, reflection on social context impacts on getting a job, for her children. Importance of bring up children conscious of the single mu next door, worried about nature/nurture.</p> <p>Worried about kids having to fund their uni education, future life course</p> |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|

## Appendix 9: Consent Form

### CONSENT FORM

**Organisation:** Bournemouth University

**Title of Study:** How significant is the concept of 'home' for those entering later life?

**Aim of Study:** To understand the meaning of home, using photo elicitation, and identify appropriate support/information for individuals, health and social care practitioners during later life transitions.

**Researcher' Position:** PhD Student

**Researcher's Name:** Michele Board

**Contact Details;** [mboard@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:mboard@bournemouth.ac.uk); tele 01202 967279

#### Consent:

- I..... agree to take photographs of my home with the use of the camera supplied to me by the researcher.



- The researcher will have the photographs developed for discussion during a tape recorded interview. Any photographs not used for the study will be destroyed.
- I understand that some of the photographs may be used by the researcher in the final research paper, presentations and journal articles. Anonymity will be maintained.
- I understand that typewritten excerpts from the taped interview may be used in the researcher's paper, articles and presentations. The taped interview will not be shared with anybody other than the researcher and the researcher's supervisors.
- All excerpts from the taped interview used will remain anonymous and individuals will not be identified.
- I am not required to answer specific questions that I chose not to and have the option to withdraw at any time from the interview or study. If this is the case, the tape and photographs will be destroyed.
- The researcher will retain the taped interview until completion of the study, a period of 36 months, and then it will be destroyed. The tape will be destroyed in accordance with Data Protection and the Records Management Code of Practice (DH, March, 2006).
- Please note that if any illegal images are produced the researcher will discuss with you the appropriate action needed to be taken.
- Photographs may be held for longer and used in presentations of the study at academic conferences, lectures, and academic publications. Anonymity will be maintained at all stages.

- The procedure and intended use of the taped interview and photographs have been explained to me by the Researcher, Michele Board.
- I understand that I will not be identified in the study and that I will remain anonymous.

I.....agree to take part in the study

Signature of  
Participant.....Date.....

**Signature of  
Researcher.....Date.....**

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