# Introduction: tackling the urban through ethnography

## Camilla Lewis and Jessica Symons

### The tensions in making and realising a city

In 2006, a magnificent oak table with fine Indian ink drawings sat in an artist's studio in Manchester in the north-west of England. Three metres in length, it displayed a relational network diagram of key decision makers in the city. The art piece, called *The Thin Veneer of Democracy* (UHC Collective 2007), sketched a web of connections drawing attention to the close relationships between individuals from public and private institutions in the city. The spidery diagram identified 'the names of 101 institutions, officials, companies and private individuals invested in Manchester City Council's Knowledge Capital project' (UHC Collective 2007). The artists behind the table were critical of these relationships. They emphasised the political dynamics in the city as a cosy arrangement between connected individuals and drew attention to how others felt left out. This brought disquiet to the people named on the table. They discussed the artwork with each other, saying that collaboration to regenerate the city was to be celebrated rather than criticised.

Fast forward to 2015. In this year the British government under a Conservative administration, and Manchester City Council under a Labour administration, announced a historic agreement to devolve spending power to the city region, including the city centre itself, affecting almost three million people. Devolved power allowed for independent decision making at city-region level and this agreement was the culmination of decades-long lobbying from the Manchester City Council Executive (Haughton, et al. 2016). Yet the final decision for devolution happened in private in a meeting between the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and the Leader of Manchester City Council, Sir Richard Leese. This was an 'elite co-option' (Smith and Richards 2016) and the outcome presented to the city region as a *fait accompli*. In the press release, Councillor Sir Richard Leese claimed the devolution plans were 'revolutionary' and a model that 'other cities around the country would want to adopt and copy' (Wintour 2014).

While the UK Government Select Committee explored the potential of the Manchester agreement as a 'model' for the devolution of powers to other cities (Communities and Local Government Committee 2015), a furore erupted over the fact that it was possible for just two men in a democratic system to agree in principle to a reformed governance system without consulting the Council members or the electorate. Previously in Manchester, a 2012 referendum had sought to replicate the London model of an elected Mayor post but it was rejected by public vote. However the 2015 devolution agreement included an elected Mayor position to receive powers including six billion pounds in funding for health and social care and responsibility for transport, housing and planning.

The decision was questioned by local press, one newspaper calling it a 'democratic travesty' (*Salford Star* 2016). A national constitutional lawyer unpicked its legality (Leyland 2016) and government ministers questioned its intent (Communities and Local Government Committee 2015). Three years previously, Councillor Leese had recognised a 'very clear rejection' from the public for a mayoral role (BBC 2012). Yet just a few years later, he privately agreed to a new Mayor for Greater Manchester.

This decision did not bode well for democratic representation (Smith and Richards 2016). Despite objections, the following months led to the appointment of a new Mayor by senior politicians without an election (BBC 2015), and by 2016 the devolution process was well underway. A growing body of research 'Devo Manc' focuses on the impact of sharing decision making about health and social care budgets (see, for example, Colomb and Tomaney 2016; Haughton, et al. 2016; Walshe, et al. 2016).

The proposal for devolution and the proposal for the art collective's oak table are symptomatic of Manchester's political dynamics. An 'entrepreneurial approach' to city development has been led by two charismatic and determined individuals – Sir Richard Leese and Sir Howard Bernstein. Together they had controlled the City Council for over thirty years as Leader and Chief Executive respectively. This historic agreement for devolution was a culmination of their long-sought autonomy from central government. However, such control over the democratic process has produced consternation as well as results and respect.

From the mid-1980s, political and economic activity in Manchester was driven by an 'entrepreneurial elite', who adapted to an antagonistic national political regime by collaborating with private companies locally (Quilley 1999; 2000). Leese and Bernstein were leading figures in New Labour; they operated within the rules but also worked to reshape the way in which local government operated (Fielding and Tanner 2006; Massey 2007; cf also Ward 2003). One former Councillor, Kath Fry, identified this new approach as Manchester's 1984 Revolution. Her autobiographical account reveals how

individuals within the Council controlled change and made decisions. The majority of elected Councillors resided outside the inner circles and were not privy to decision-making processes (Fry and Cropper 2016).

This book gives ethnographic accounts of Manchester's urban challenges from 2002, journeying through the city over a fourteen-year period, into the halls of power and out to local communities to understand the effects of this style of 'entrepreneurial' governance. Each author in the collection presents empirical analyses of the city's life from their ethnographic fieldwork and through this process, gives insight into how people experience civic control.

The ethnographic accounts demonstrate how a city is constituted in the productive tension between *making* and *realising*, between directing activity and allowing for its emergence. The ethnographers worked independently across different sites in Manchester, and the combined analysis shows the tension between making and realising which helps us understand how the devolution agreement came about.

The analyses also show how the oak table of inscribed relations produced by UHC Collective illustrated a bubbling undertow of resentment and feelings of disempowerment among different groups in the city. 'Making' a city rather than allowing it to 'realise' through emergent activities is a challenge that civic decision makers struggle with daily. Urban planners, civic officials and politicians are elected or employed to make decisions that shape the city but they are also charged with representing the interests and aspirations of the citizens. The tension lies in how different versions of the city are realised and how they intersect.

Ethnography is based on fieldwork in socio-cultural settings. The ensuing analysis focuses on this grounded experience to explore broad themes ranging from kinship relations to the effects of globalisation, from birth and death rituals to migration and organisational structures (Eller 2016 provides a textbook for cultural anthropologists; Eriksen 1995 provides a good introduction to social anthropology). Disciplines including sociology, geography, politics, economics, architecture, urban planning, and fields such as community studies and Science and Technology Studies (STS) use ethnography as a methodological tool. In this book, we demonstrate the potential of ethnographic analyses that build directly on insights developed during fieldwork.

Ethnographers observe and participate in the daily lives of people, working alongside them, asking questions and watching as they go about their daily lives. Misunderstandings, fallings out and friction provide particularly fruitful moments for analysis, as they reveal underlying ambiguities in social understandings. Where 'classic' anthropology primarily focused on rural locations, urban ethnographers now construct a field by living and working alongside a group of people in urban locations. In cities, ethnographers also spend time in

organisations and with people who have 'shared understandings' about how things are done. Urban contexts work well as ethnographic field sites and as multiple and overlapping 'communities of practice', a term used to describe how people learn from each other in situated contexts (Lave and Wenger 1991). Ethnographies are also valuable in research into material culture (Evans 2013; Harvey, et al. 2014), with non-humans (Candea 2010), research into finance, data and ontologies (Holbraad, et al. 2014; Riles 2013) and every other aspect of life.

The value of urban ethnography lies in the fieldworkers' ability to bring coherence to messy contexts and to 'understand urban dynamics empirically' (Pardo and Prato 2016: 3). In their Introduction to the collection *Anthropology in the City*, Pardo and Prato provide an extensive review of urban ethnographies which 'spell out the need to stay engaged empirically' (2016: 20), for example to maintain attention to what is happening on the ground.

In this book, we illuminate *who*, *how*, *where*, *why* and *what* happens in city making through observations from situated urban ethnographers living and working alongside civic actors. Their analyses provide comparative opportunities for researchers to interrogate the dynamics of other urban contexts. Cities are the 'locus of our most well-rehearsed national problems' with social arenas and 'interlocking processes of living, meeting, making, relating' (Amin, et al. 2000: 8). These processes are recorded through ethnography.

In the following ethnographic accounts, the researchers go beyond institutional frames, official rhetoric and marketing speak to find out how the city comes into being. They follow officials through the City Council and organisational networks, share the experience of workers and residents in communities, and explore negotiations over public spaces. They reveal the conflicting dynamics of a city where people both benefit from and are troubled by the political and civic administrative influence over their lives. Each ethnographer was immersed in their field site and produced insight specific to the particular circumstances. These insights combine effectively to produce a discursive manifestation of the city as it emerges in the productive tension of its collaborative development.
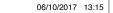
In this Introduction, we open up the city of Manchester as a site for analysis and comparative opportunities for other urban contexts.

### Introducing Manchester

Greater Manchester, in the north of England, is the country's second most populous urban area, with a population of almost three million in the greater city region. Its status as the first city in the UK to achieve a devolution agreement with central government fits together with an ongoing civic ambition to

be a 'city of firsts'.[1] When Peter Saville, a successful musician and producer was commissioned to develop a civic identity for the city, he proposed the notion of Manchester as the 'original modern' city. Saville's idea rested on representing the city as a world leader in innovation, which began with its emergence as the 'first industrial city' (Bramley and Page 2009; Leadbeater 2009; O'Connor 2007). Socialism, the co-operative movement and female emancipation are claimed as 'firsts' alongside the parks, libraries, sewers, railway stations and 'Baby' the original computer. New initiatives such as the Manchester International Festival, a biannual art event, use this notion to commission all original work. The discovery of graphene, a new carbon structure, at the University of Manchester was celebrated as 'another first'.

*City of Revolution*, Peck and Ward's edited collection about the regeneration of the city, tells the story of Manchester's transformation into its 'modern' status today (Peck and Ward 2002). It shows how the apparent success of Manchester is actually a story of contradictions – flourishing in some areas, decline in others that never recovered from the collapse of the manufacturing sector in the 1970s. This volume extends this analysis to share insight from fieldwork among the communities themselves as these changes have happened.

While its origins date back to Roman times, Manchester gained city status in the nineteenth century during the Industrial Revolution. The city boomed rapidly as 'Cottonopolis', a hub of technological and social innovation, and gained city status on the back of its industrial success. From the 1950s onwards however, the city's fortunes changed and its industries closed down as the outsourcing of mass production went to developing countries such as India and China. By the 1980s, the city was struggling with mass unemployment, poverty and social unrest.

Frozen out by a central Conservative Party, the predominantly Labour City Council began to leverage public–private partnerships to re-build a 'post-industrial city' (Peck and Ward 2002). During the New Labour period under Prime Minister Tony Blair, Manchester City Council strengthened their relationships with the private sector, foregrounding a property-led strategy of urban regeneration in the city (Quilley 2000). Their aim was to harness the potential of private capital to be used for public good rather than solely for market gain. Manchester is now cited as a case of 'entrepreneurial urbanism'- a 'new urban politics', where the city is viewed by government and private companies as a business in its own right (MacLeod and Ward 2002: 155; Peck and Ward 2002; Ward 2003: 116).

This bold move heralded a strong re-entry onto the international stage as a regenerated city whose new wealth and success were based on property speculation, a growing services sector and the attraction of commercial business to a large vibrant city in the UK. A revitalised inner-city housing market was

accompanied by flourishing business quarters, booming retail, and cafes, bars and restaurants, as well as multiple ambitious projects to regenerate some of the city's most deprived neighbourhoods (Peck and Ward 2002).

The apparent 'success' of the city's 'boom-bust-boom' trajectory and transformation has produced widespread recognition and emulation of a 'Manchester model' of regeneration (Sanjek 2000). However the post-industrial city transition narrative from 'a grimy, northern industrial city', to a 'hip, fashionable and dynamic place where people are excited to live' (Jones and Evans 2008: 163–164) does not account for the inequalities and divisions which remain and a growing unease about the future for some residents (Binnie and Skeggs 2004; Mellor 2002; Young, et al. 2006).

As Cochrane, et al. (1996) argued in the 1990s, Manchester City Council's bid to host the Olympic Games, the enthusiasm for 'boosterism', or developing city regions as an economic strategy, actually put the city in a compromised position. When obliged to deliver formerly national responsibilities, the city became constrained in unexpected ways. Danger resided in the replication of a command-and-control model at a city rather than national level. This issue continues to hold resonance with the devolution process. The 'Manchester model' and its 'Rolls-Royce reputation' may have succeeded *because* it had 'political and policy stability under a hegemonic Labour council' (Hebbert and Punter 2009: 3; Jones and Evans 2008). But it was this form of command-and-control that also produced accusations of exclusion, such as the art collective's oak table questions about why only some people have influence over the city's development.

The representation of civic decision makers as a clique of connected individuals manipulating power dynamics in the urban realm is a familiar one and not unique to Manchester. However, the critical role of city officials, activists and citizens, and how they contribute to the formation of the city, has not been given sufficient attention. The Chief Executives, city leaders, key civic administrators and media stars may be remembered but less so the democratic body made up of different parts of the Council, community groups and organisations, the influencers and the intermediaries.

This collection captures the day-to-day practical dynamics of the people who have been involved in making this vibrant and rapidly changing post-industrial city over two decades from 2000 onwards. These 'ethnographic moments' of Manchester explore the activities of city makers such as politicians, administrators, company leaders, workers, activists and residents. They show how a city will never be produced from a singular vision or set of activities, yet people act as if the city should be realised according to their individual aspirations. They also show that conflicted understanding gives the city dynamism but also creates disruptions and spaces of contestation or 'friction' (Tsing 2004). From residential neighbourhoods to cultural events in the City

Council, from businesses to the city's airport, people's decisions and actions co-produce the city daily and give it shape and its identity.

These ethnographies show that people have ideas and go about bringing new realities into being but how there is always a *politics* to this because what existed before either gets moved, forcibly, out of the way (generating resistance) or gets recruited into the vision of the 'way things will be from now on' (Evans 2013: 207).

## Aims of the volume

Within and across these accounts is the potential for urban ethnography to provide insight into how a city comes into being and the role which different actors play in that process. In this way, ethnography can be compared to 'urban assemblage' analysis (Farías and Bender 2012) and compliments approaches to how infrastructure makes a city (Graham and Marvin 2001). In this volume, we consider the 'social infrastructure' of the city (Simone 2004).

The ethnographic accounts focus on particular places in Manchester to explore issues such as: the ethics of self-policing on a housing estate (Smith); loss in former working-class communities (Lewis); disenfranchised football fans (Poulton); negotiating sexuality and public space (Atkins); civic parades as nurturing for an emergent city (Symons); defining the commons in public spaces (Lang); conflicting futures thinking (Pieri); networked urban governance (Knox); and how airport design shapes behaviour (O'Doherty). Their specificity provides grounded contexts for identifying ideological patterns, structural processes and the contingency of everyday life. These accounts demonstrate the potential of ethnographies to go beyond the particular and into the theoretical and philosophical realm.

As each ethnographer describes their experience in Manchester; as they focus on different parts of the urban environment at a similar period in time and under the same civic administration, it becomes possible to identify common threads across these settings. A broader perspective emerges, one that points to a tension between attempts to direct a city and a desire to allow it to emerge.

These accounts show the everyday effects of urban policy on social relations and the ways in which urban policies come to fruition through their multiple entanglements of people, places and things. They illuminate the social, spatial and temporal reorganisation of a city under post-industrial conditions (Smith and Hetherington 2013). By putting the accounts together in an edited volume, they provide an 'urban portrait' – an 'essence of the city' (Hannerz 1980). In particular, they show how people attempt to realise (to make real) imagined versions of a city. Each act has an affective outcome and it is in the combination that the characteristics of the city emerge. Here is a comparable

example of distributed urban dynamics, attendant to the unexpected insights that emerge through an open and discursive ethnographic process. Others can use these analyses to shape research into their own cities.

In this way, we suggest that a city's future may be planned but it does not materialise as the perfect representation of its blueprint drawings, strategies or vision documents. Instead it emerges through the accumulative efforts of thousands of people over time and with what Scott (1998) describes as 'metis', meaning people's local, experiential wisdom. As anthropologist Harvey suggests, 'The trick for ethnographers and local people alike is not to be beguiled for too long by the State's own version of itself and look instead at the details through which things come to seem as they do' (Harvey 2005: 139). In this volume, through urban ethnography, a nuanced story of urban dynamics of the city emerges, which complicates accounts of Manchester as an entrepreneurial city of renaissance.

## The emergence of urban ethnography

Urban ethnography contributes to analyses of cities across multiple disciplines. Since ethnography is designed to accommodate communities of practice that operate within and across organisations, it is well designed as an analytical tool for complex circumstances. In the following section, we explore the emergence of urban ethnography across disciplinary fields. We focus here on how trajectories of ethnographic work orient around the city rather than provide a comprehensive review of all urban ethnographies.

A precursor to urban ethnography could be Engels' account of industrialising Manchester; a comparison made by historian Tilly (1978). *Conditions of the Working Class in England* (Engels 1993 [1845]) explores in intimate detail the desperate living and working conditions of urban factory workers in Manchester and other industrialising cities. Engles' work remains inspirational for urban scholars today exploring the relationship between political and urban change and, crucially, the conditions of the working poor in industrialised cities.

Industrialisation across the world has resulted in growing migration to cities, and anthropologists have followed them there, sharing often devastating accounts of urban experiences. For example, Scheper-Hughes' seminal text *Death Without Weeping* provides a harrowing account of people's life in a Brazilian urban slum (Scheper-Hughes 1992); Kleinman, et al. write about urban violence as 'social suffering' (Kleinman, et al. 1997); Bourgois shares experiences of selling crack in inner-city America (Bourgois 2003). Many anthropologists now practise ethnography in cities alongside other disciplines (See Low 1999 for a summary). Ethnographic work by visual anthropologists has brought images, film, sound and sketches together with text-based

narratives, often in urban settings (See Pink 2013 [2001] for an overview of visual ethnography).

Sociology also used ethnography as an analytical device for urban dynamics early on in the discipline's development. While Malinowski (1922) was in the Pacific, sociologists from Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s adopted ethnography for research in urban areas of the USA (Pole and Morrison 2003). The Chicago Schools founder, Robert Parks, designed a 'laboratory metaphor' for the city as a 'laboratory' where social processes could be studied. For him, the city contained 'ecological niches' occupied by 'human groups' in concentric rings surrounding a central core (Low 1999). The studies produced by Parks and his students provide detailed understandings of social groups and their related behaviours (Emerson 2002).

Parks' students focused on studying the 'exotic' members of their own societies, looking at the commonplace with 'new eyes' (Duneier, et al. 2014). Like anthropologists, these sociologists adapted their behaviour to blend in with the locals and experience their lives first hand (Pole and Morrison 2003). They focused on unfamiliar people living in close proximity – 'the strangers next door'. This emphasis led to the 'case-study method' closely associated with urban ethnography (Duneier, et al. 2014).

William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943) documents life in an Italian slum through close observations of the lively conversations on the street. Foot Whyte and his contemporaries' monographs are richly detailed and historically sensitive urban studies that attend to politics and power, describing daily life in these urban localities (Sanjek 2000). A second generation of Chicago School urban ethnographers, including Hannerz (1969), further developed this approach, revealing the potential for social scientists to penetrate and interpret social worlds in their own cities (Jackson 1985). For further discussion on how ethnography developed in anthropology and sociology, see Hammersley (2016).

Meanwhile in 1950s London, the Institute for Community Studies was exploring slum clearances and rehousing. Young and Wilmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957), provides a detailed study of the impact of slum clearances in the post-Second World War period, stressing the continuation of social ties among changing urban communities.

While the Chicago School viewed the city as a configuration of ecological niches, these scholars approached the city as a collection of urban communities based on extended networks of family relations and kinship networks (Low 1999). Community studies in Britain have traced the impact of urban policies on working-class communities showing how networks of informal support have strengthened an attachment to place and sense of identity (Lewis 2016 explores this further). Rather than industrialisation and urbanisation leading to a loss of social ties, community studies showed

how personal relationships were consolidated and reconfigured as a result of urban change.

Informed by these founding schools, ethnographic accounts of urban lives have proliferated among anthropologists, social workers, political scientists, urban studies specialists and sociologists. These accounts provide important contributions to the conceptual vocabulary of scholars and social theorists, journalists and social critics (Duneier, et al. 2014). They have inspired collaborations with disciplines such as Science Technology Studies (STS), architecture and art (see, for example, Blok and Farías 2016; Corsín Jiménez and Estalella 2016; Farías and Bender 2012; Yaneva 2016).

In the 2000–2010s, there was growing recognition that these contextual analyses of cities should be valued for their particularity; for the fact that they acknowledge the complexity of diverse urban cultures and the need for situated, grounded research. Recent debates in urban studies call for a new 'epistemology of the urban' (Brenner and Schmid 2015; Walker 2015). These discussions make distinctions between and wrestle over the difference between grounded and theoretical or philosophical analyses. Ethnographic approaches are unique as they provide perspectives on urban challenges which focus both on the particular – groups of people in specific geographic locations in the city focused on different themes – but also explore broader social, environmental and economic issues. The theory comes from the particular.

### Ethnographic moments: creating a portrait of the city

In this volume, nine ethnographic accounts bring to life the day-to-day activities of actors living, working and shaping the city of Manchester. Three thematic sections open up the city as a site for ethnographic analysis with perspectives on urban organisations, public spaces and local communities. Drawing on ethnographic methods, the authors interrogate the relationships between government officials, private sector companies and people living and working in the related areas. They share ethnographic methodological approaches including observation, participation and interviews.

All the researchers explored their communities by 'hanging out', helping with projects, attending meetings, following email and verbal conversations, uncovering histories, reviewing documents, and participating in events and social activities. Over time, they developed working relationships and made friends with people 'in the field'. These practices underpin ethnographic work. Through day-to-day conversations, they gained insight into how things were done – customs and rituals, established understandings, common practices. Interviews towards the end of their fieldwork provided opportunities for clarification, eliciting quotes and further detail about particular observations. Each

chapter presents an ethnographic account which orients around a particular people, place and insight revealed through the process of fieldwork.

Part I, 'Realising urban organisations', explores the process through which organisations take their shape from the constituent parts of a city, with people as its 'social infrastructure' (Simone 2004). It is the way relationships weave through organisational structures that shapes the dynamics of how a city operates.

Hannah Knox describes how Manchester's civic administration has responded to calls to reduce its carbon emissions. Creating 'real' spaces for action depends on establishing collaborations between individuals and organisations who act as proxies for and extensions of the local authority in areas that exceed the Council's shrinking domain of responsibility. Knox argues that these changes extend the capacity of state actors to effect change, and offer a form of engagement that reformulates what it might mean to be a citizen of the contemporary state and the mechanisms through which a sustainable world might be pursued. She also shows how people will engage with initiatives that they do not necessarily agree with, in order to realise broader objectives.

Jessica Symons argues for an 'emergent city' urban policy, inspired by organisers of civic parade in Manchester, which involved over 1,800 participants from ninety community groups. She compares the top-down process of cultural strategy development in the city with the nurturing emergent approach of the organisers commissioned by the Council to produce a civic parade. Drawing on parade making as a cultural trope, Symons describes how the parade makers held back, allowing the parade shape to develop rather than over-directing it. She suggests that city decision makers can learn from this restrained approach.

Damian O'Doherty follows the practices of architects, designers, project managers and quantity surveyors working on a new experience airport departure lounge at Manchester Airport. As he traces the development of the lounge and an attendant notion of 'loungification', he seeks moments where decisions are made and instead finds obfuscation.

Part II, 'Realising urban spaces', explores tensions in how organisational processes and community aspirations are negotiated through physical sites in urban spaces. The authors show how these places are manifested into something in particular in the confluence of multiple trajectories.

Michael Atkins argues that combining narratives of success and community with imagery and maps actually characterises and regulates Manchester's Gay Village as a distinct, bordered, hedonistic and particularly tolerant place. This chapter provides collaboratively produced graphic stories, created using combinations of drawings, text, photographs and found images. These 'ethno-graphics' describe lived experiences of men seeking sex in public and

engaging in exchanges of intimacy, money, goods and services that challenge the master narratives that are openly recognised and spoken about in the village.

Luciana Lang explores three different interventions on public land in Cheetham Hill, an area of North Manchester often regarded as a place of community disengagement. Amid austerity measures and cuts to public services, the author argues that the 'commons' are made as people adjust to new scenarios brought about by historical disruptions, collapse of work opportunities, and breakdown of state support. 'Commoning' provides a space for productivity and, in the process, people's sense of belonging emerges as they envisage, realise and retrieve their right to the city.

Elisa Pieri focuses on Manchester city centre to argue that exploring the futures that different stakeholders envisage for the city centre reveals tensions that are otherwise glossed over. Critically engaging with urban futures, as mobilised by institutional stakeholders, and how other actors envisage the future, highlights whose interests are currently being prioritised and whose are traded off. Engaging in an analysis of these urban futures reveals not only important tensions connected to future developments and imagined uses of the city centre, but also opens up to scrutiny the present experiences and uses of the city centre and competing interests.

Part III, 'Realising urban communities', explores how people's lives interact with the dynamics of urban transformation and development in their daily experiences. The impact of city administrative or political activity can be traced through ethnographic analyses, in particular as a presence that affects people's ability to realise their own ambitions.

George Poulton analyses urban economic transformation through his fieldwork among a group of football fans who, in 2005, formed a breakaway club 'FC United of Manchester' in response to a transnational debt-leveraged buy-out of Manchester United Football Club. Poulton shows how notions of locality and community had become increasingly politicised amongst these fans. With Manchester United's growing international presence, local fans perceived that the club no longer needed a relationship with them. In response, the fans increasingly articulated a moral claim about Manchester United's responsibility to its local 'community', which Poulton relates to anthropological theories of gifts and commodities. This analysis contextualises the subsequent formation of FC United and its enduring reciprocal obligations to its 'community'.

Camilla Lewis shows how, despite millions of pounds worth of urban regeneration, high levels of unemployment and welfare dependency continue to characterise East Manchester. The rapid disappearance of industry brought about not only a dramatic reduction in jobs, but also a deep sense of uncertainty about the future, and a strong sense of loss for former ways of life. This

chapter argues that the industrial past continues to shape older people's sense of place, through physical reminders in the material environment and also discursively, through sharing memories of previous places of employment. It reveals, however, that place attachment has become ruptured for long-standing residents who are highly conscious of the discontinuities between their own experiences and those of previous generations.

Katherine Smith explores self-policing of urban violence in Harpurhey, Manchester. She argues that ethical decision making is practiced regularly in the process of policing the actions and behaviours of others. Through an encounter on this social housing estate, she suggests that self-policing is not an outcome of neo-liberal ideologies of self-management, but an ethical engagement with the quotidian aspects of everyday life.

In the Afterword, Symons considers these chapters together to argue that cities are made in the tension between attempts to make a city according to particular visions and the entity that emerges – realises – is made real in the resultant foment of activity.

## In summary

These ethnographies show that people have ideas and go about bringing new realities into being but there is always a *politics* to this because what existed before either gets moved, forcibly, out of the way (generating resistance) or gets recruited into the vision of the 'way things will be from now on' (Evans 2013: 207). Such conflict gives the city its dynamism but also creates disruptions and spaces of contestation or 'friction' (Tsing 2004). These accounts help make sense of how Leese and Osborne could meet in a room in Manchester and personally agree devolution – a significant change to the city's governance. They show why the art collective might be motivated to make a substantial oak table decorated with the network of relations between individuals in the city. They go some way to answering the question 'Who are city makers really?'

## Notes

1  www.marketingmanchester.com. Accessed 8 February 2017.

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