Identities of place can be a source of inclusion and exclusion

Identities of place refer to geographic locations and their meanings in relation to how people live, work, socialise and establish themselves in them. The way they effect the shaping of individual and collective identities plays an important part of who people think they are and who they become, which invariably has an impact on societies and how they function as a whole. In relation to this, this essay will look at social inclusions, which refer to people's allocation to specific rights and social exclusion, which refers to disadvantages and inequalities in certain rights of groups or numbers of people.

Whilst identities of place can provide inclusion for their inhabitants in regards to access to employment, healthcare, education and resources, they can also create exclusions with respect to housing, environment and status, which this essay will attempt to examine. Between 1831 and 1841 Manchester's population grew by 71 %, causing it to be described as the ' shock city' of its time (Briggs, 1990). Industrialisation drove large numbers of people from the countryside into the city, hopeful perspectives for better incomes and with that better lives were giving people all the reasons necessary to take this drastic step.

With increasing numbers of inhabitants and decreasing space, life in the cities changed for many families and individuals. Although the city provided a wide spectrum of opportunities to the broader public in respect to employment, ways of life, environment and connections people made with each other as well as with the space and things they were surrounded by and had to deal or engage with on a day to day basis (Steve Hinchcliffe,

Making Social Lives, 2009, p. 212), it also gave room for certain exclusions amongst groups of people.

For example, as described by Friedrich Engels (Engels, 2005, [1845]), a clerk who came to work in Manchester in the 1840s, some of the living spaces that gave shelter to the lower working class held many health hazards for its residents, cholera, various other infectious viral diseases and many sorts of bacteria were flourishing in the narrow back roads of the cheaper houses due to poor ventilation and sanitation as well as high pollution. Low wages or unemployment left some people with no choice but to live in these

areas of the city, whilst those with higher incomes could afford to live at least more comfortably and healthily. This new identity of place therefore carried in itself inclusions for the wider population but also exclusions for some groups of people, limiting them to only a few ways of existences and identities to live with and develop in. Moving from the 18th century to our current one, we can still find examples of how identities of place bring forth both inclusions and exclusions for its citizens.

An article in The Guardian by Laura Smith (9th Oct. 2004), includes the statement of the Racial Equality chairman Trevor Phillips, that there is 'passive apartheid' in Britain's countryside. Looking at one place in particular, Brockenhurst in Hampshire, which is approximately and hour and a half away from London, he referred to the low numbers of people of ethnic minorities and the high percentage of white people (98. 6 % in Brockenhurst) and the results of a research which show that only one person in 85 in the south-west is black or Asian.

Phillips outlined the fact that majority of migrants fear to move to the countryside. The reasons for this can be the non-existent access to their needed and/or preferred food items, hair and body care products, certain services related to their ethnicity, religion or heritage as well as some of the stereotypes created by travel agencies, advertising firms or television producers, showing only people of white ethnicity spending their lives or holidays in the countryside (Jacqui Stern, Countryside Agency).

Despite the fears of not being welcome or appreciated in these places, interviews with some of Brockenhursts migrant inhabitants show that there is hardly any presence of racism and all of the interviewees described how welcome and comfortable they feel in their home in the country. Residents are said to be very friendly, open minded and kind.

Jean-Marc Charton and Sue Boldrini and her husband who are also interviewed in the article, found lucrative work opportunities here and seem to be living comfortably, despite a few minor disagreements with some of the native or original inhabitants of Brockenhurst. Despite a number of inclusions, like equal access to certain services and employment opportunities for people of different ethnicities, the countryside still holds exclusions for some groups of people, who would not be able to maintain the identities they can hold on to in larger cities, where they

find access to most of the things and services they know and cherish from in countries of origin. Social inclusion and exclusion are associated with identities of place in various aspects such as people's access to employment, housing, health and services. These are influenced by the geographical

locations, environments and available resources of different places alongside other factors that make up a populace.

The places that people live in and the way they live in them, are important factors in shaping their individual and collective identities, inclusion or exclusion can have positive or negative influences on these identities as well as either creating ways for them to develop or limiting them to only a number of possible changes. Living and fulfilling personal ideas of identity can be restricted by the area in which people find themselves and the surroundings and facilities that come with them.