



‘Do You Come From Manchester?’:  
A postcode analysis of the location of  
Manchester United and Manchester City  
Season Ticket Holders, 2001



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## **1. Introduction**

This report details the results of a post-code analysis of the Season Ticket databases of Manchester United and Manchester City. It forms one part of a much broader research project on sport in Manchester, called *Sport, the City and Governance: Football, Its Fans and Social Exclusion*. This research was funded by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Our research, *Sport, the City and Governance*, had two principle areas of investigation. The first was the relationship of the city to sport, and in particular the new ways in which sport is being used as part of economic and social regeneration. The second concerned the role of one sport, professional football, in Manchester and especially the relationships between clubs, fans and the city. This was undertaken through a one year study of one city, Manchester (UK), using the two principal professional clubs, Manchester United and Manchester City, as comparative case studies.

The research principally used qualitative and ethnographic research techniques and further qualitative findings of this work will be found in other forthcoming publications. However, we were also able to undertake some quantitative analysis, detailed in this report.

## **2. Football and Locality**

During the course of numerous interviews with fans of both Manchester United and Manchester City the issue of the clubs' links with their city played a major role. The identification of fans, the characterisations made about each club (by their own fans and opposite numbers) and the perceptions about football support in Manchester centred around a popular, but contested, stereotype. This stereotype portrays Manchester United as unconnected to the city, with few local supporters and a fan base which is more national and international than Mancunian. Such portrayals also have Manchester City as a more locally focussed club with a strong Manchester supporter base.

This stereotype is contested by supporters of Manchester United, particularly those that live in the city themselves. What is interesting in itself is that the importance of local attachments and belonging to a city remains a central tenet of football fandom and characterisations made about the clubs, within the context of a commercially globalising sport.

## **3. Season Ticket Data**

Following consultation with both Manchester United and Manchester City, we were given access to the 2001 season ticket databases of both clubs. We would especially like to thank both clubs for the excellent levels of co-operation given to our research. In the interests of confidentiality, this data was supplied 'blind' so that we did not have access to the names or first line of address of any individual supporter.

#### 4. Analysis

Databases were analysed according to post-code district. We calculated numbers of season ticket holders in the following categories:

- **Manchester** - We have used an 'M' postcode district as evidence of being in Manchester. Please note that this is distinct from political boundaries
- **Other Areas** - We also analysed numbers of fans of both clubs on the periphery of the 'M' postal area, highlighting the highest concentrations of fans in Stockport (SK); Warrington (WA); Bolton (BL); and Oldham (OL).
- **Stadium Neighbourhoods** - We calculated the numbers of Season Ticket holders of each club resident in the postal district where each club is located: M14 for Manchester City; and M16 for Manchester United.
- **North West** - We analysed the numbers of fans who reside in the North West counties of Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside and Cumbria.

These figures were then recorded as both absolute numbers and as percentages of the total season ticket databases of each club and graphically represented as tables and maps.

#### **Please Note:**

- *This is an analysis of Season Ticket holders only - we do not make any comment on the wider fan base (see 'Further Research').*
- *This is an analysis of data held in 2001 and both datasets will have changed since then (this is especially true of Manchester City, who now have considerably more Season Ticket holders).*

#### 5. Findings

Below we detail our findings.

##### 5.1 Total Numbers of Season Ticket Holders (2001)

Club	No. Season Ticket Holders
Manchester City	16,481
Manchester United	27,667

##### 5.2 Manchester Location:

A Manchester location was taken as being resident in the 'M' postal area.

Club	Numbers Season Ticket holders in 'M' postal area	Percentage Season Ticket holders in 'M' postal area
Manchester City	6,678	40%
Manchester United	7,808	29%

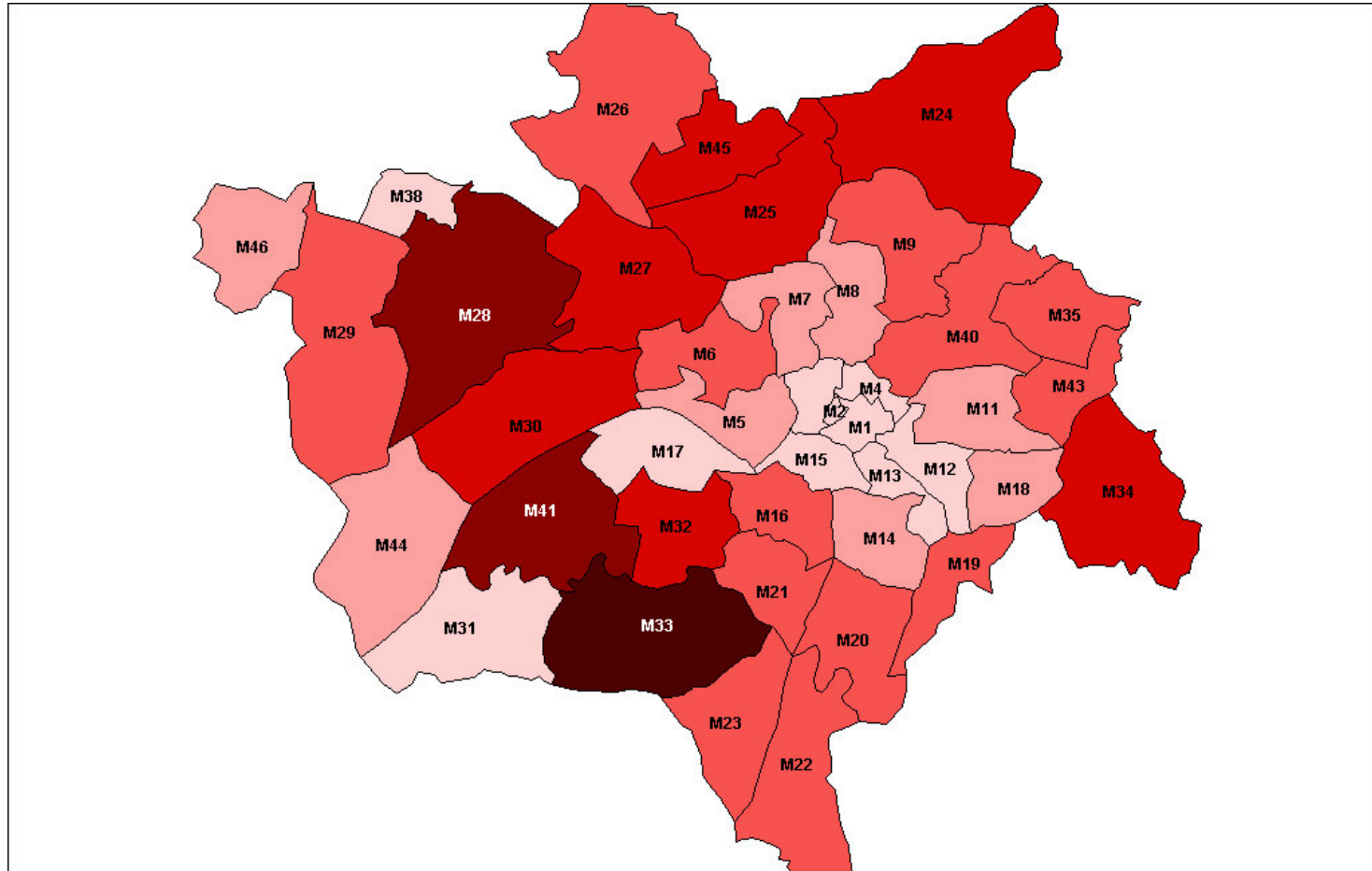
This shows that *numerically* there are more Manchester United season ticket holders living in the 'M' postal area. However, there is a greater *proportion* of Manchester City's total number of season ticket holders who live in an 'M' post-code district. As such, a randomly-selected Season Ticket holder in the

M postal area is more likely to be a Manchester United fan; whilst a randomly-selected season ticket holder at Manchester City is more likely to live within the 'M' postal area. Below we provide both a tabular and a graphic representation of the distribution of Season Ticket holders for each club across Manchester.

### Season Ticket Distribution in 'M' Post-code Districts

Post Code District	Numbers of MCFC Season Ticket Holders	% of MCFC Season Ticket Holders	Numbers of MUFC Season Ticket Holders	% of MUFC Season Ticket Holders
M1	20	0.12%	27	0.10%
M2	4	0.02%	53	0.19%
M3	13	0.08%	52	0.19%
M4	19	0.12%	16	0.06%
M5	46	0.28%	108	0.39%
M6	102	0.62%	228	0.82%
M7	60	0.36%	115	0.42%
M8	74	0.45%	109	0.39%
M9	234	1.42%	172	0.62%
M11	104	0.63%	89	0.32%
M12	48	0.29%	36	0.13%
M13	44	0.27%	24	0.09%
M14	261	1.58%	88	0.32%
M15	26	0.16%	21	0.08%
M16	102	0.62%	212	0.77%
M17	0	0.00%	18	0.07%
M18	146	0.89%	97	0.35%
M19	245	1.49%	150	0.54%
M20	411	2.49%	254	0.92%
M21	238	1.44%	210	0.76%
M22	277	1.68%	163	0.59%
M23	250	1.52%	165	0.60%
M24	395	2.40%	348	1.26%
M25	195	1.18%	329	1.19%
M26	122	0.74%	192	0.69%
M27	175	1.06%	336	1.21%
M28	162	0.98%	470	1.70%
M29	80	0.49%	184	0.67%
M30	140	0.85%	261	0.94%
M31	43	0.26%	33	0.12%
M32	196	1.19%	394	1.42%
M33	419	2.54%	820	2.96%
M34	528	3.20%	367	1.33%
M35	265	1.61%	184	0.67%
M38	11	0.07%	39	0.14%
M40	311	1.89%	242	0.87%
M41	320	1.94%	560	2.02%
M43	305	1.85%	181	0.65%
M44	77	0.47%	149	0.54%
M45	180	1.09%	280	1.01%
M46	30	0.18%	80	0.29%

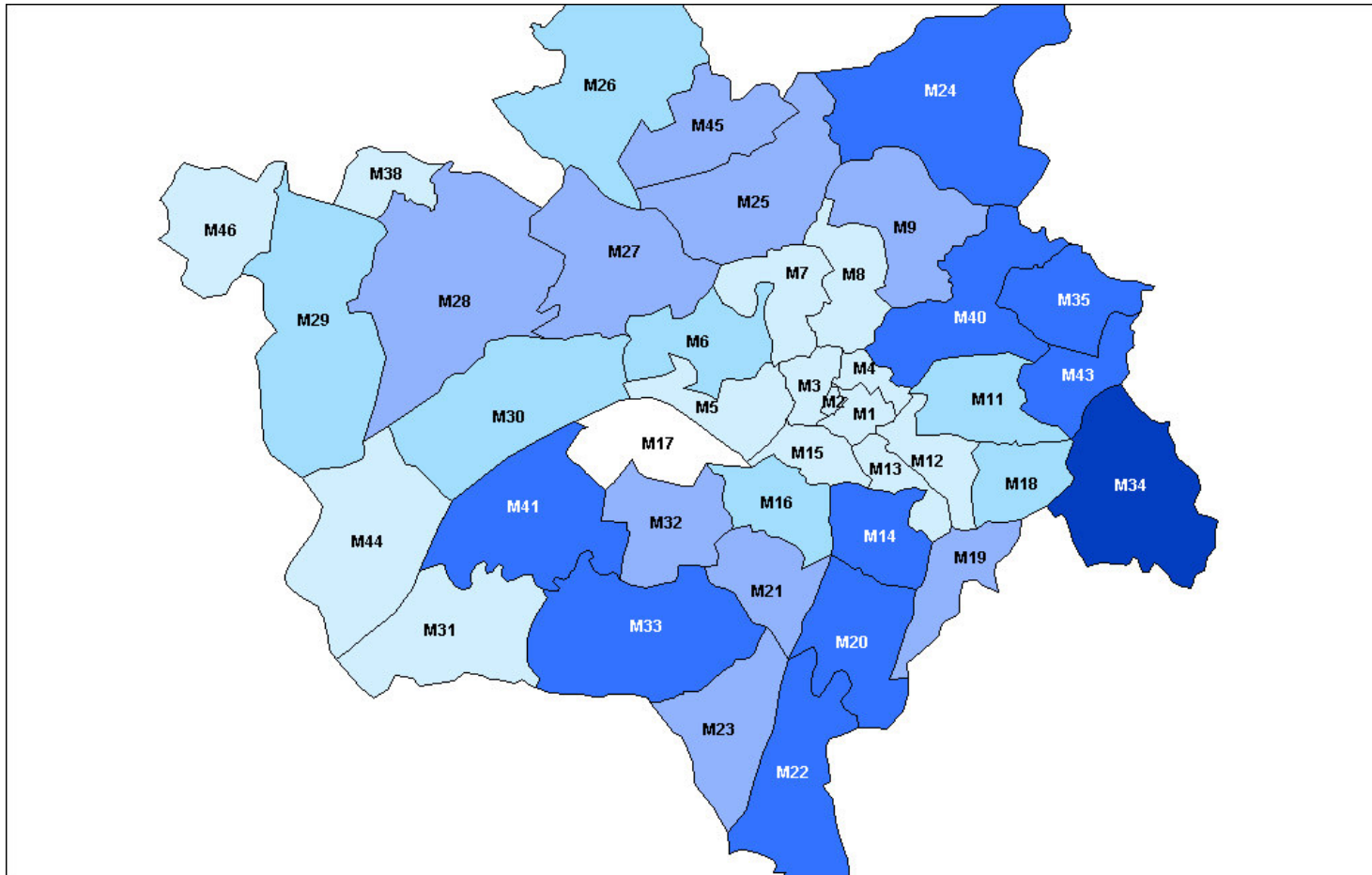
### MUFC Season Ticket Distribution In 'M' Postal Area (Absolute)



**MUFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by M Postal Districts**  
 Absolute Numbers

1 to 80	(10)
80 to 150	(8)
150 to 260	(13)
260 to 470	(7)
470 to 650	(2)
650+	(1)

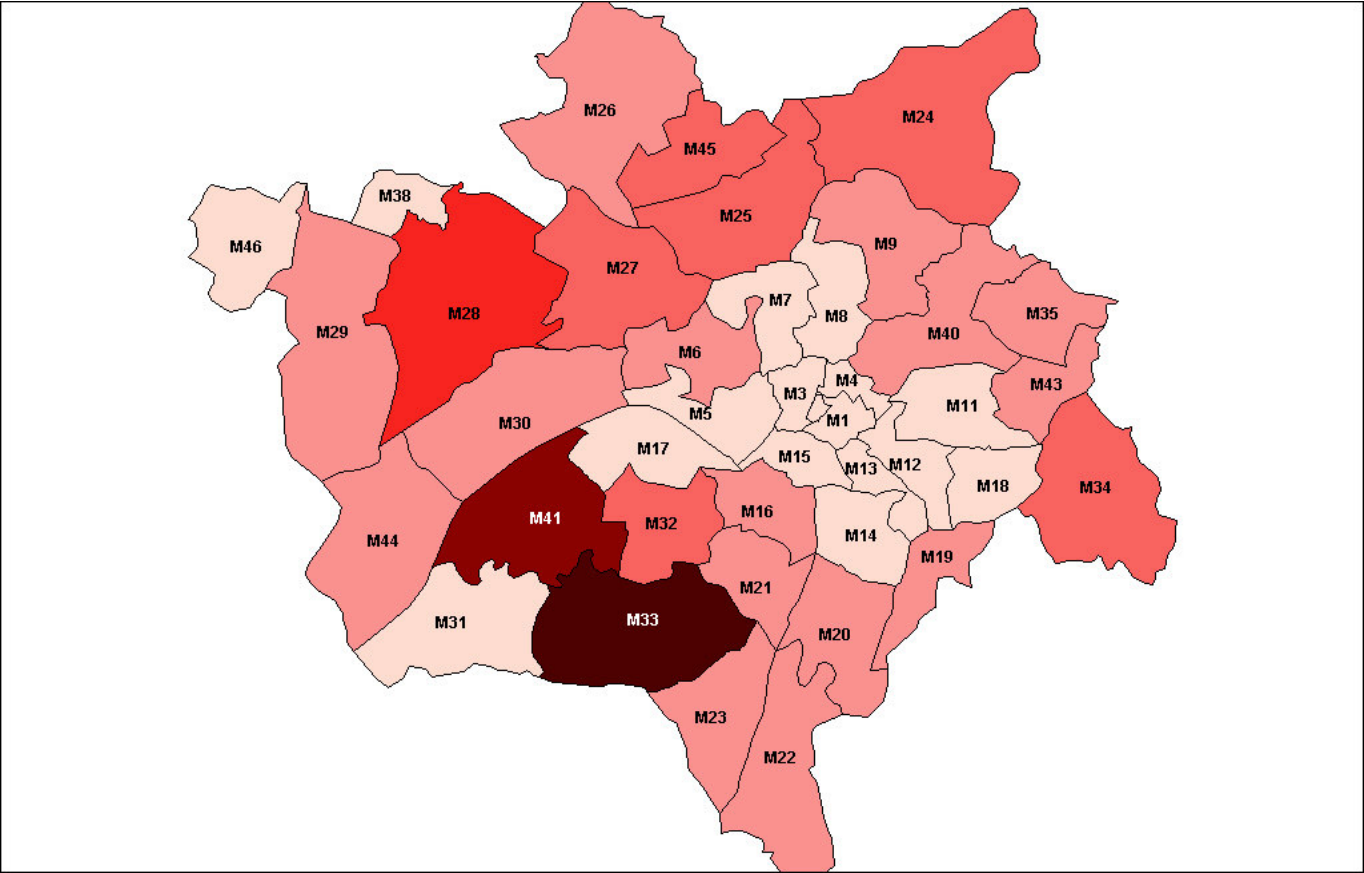
### MCFC Season Ticket Distribution In 'M' Postal Area (Absolute)



**MCFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by M Postal Districts**  
 Absolute Numbers

0	(1)
1 to 80	(14)
80 to 150	(7)
150 to 260	(9)
260 to 470	(9)
470 to 650	(1)

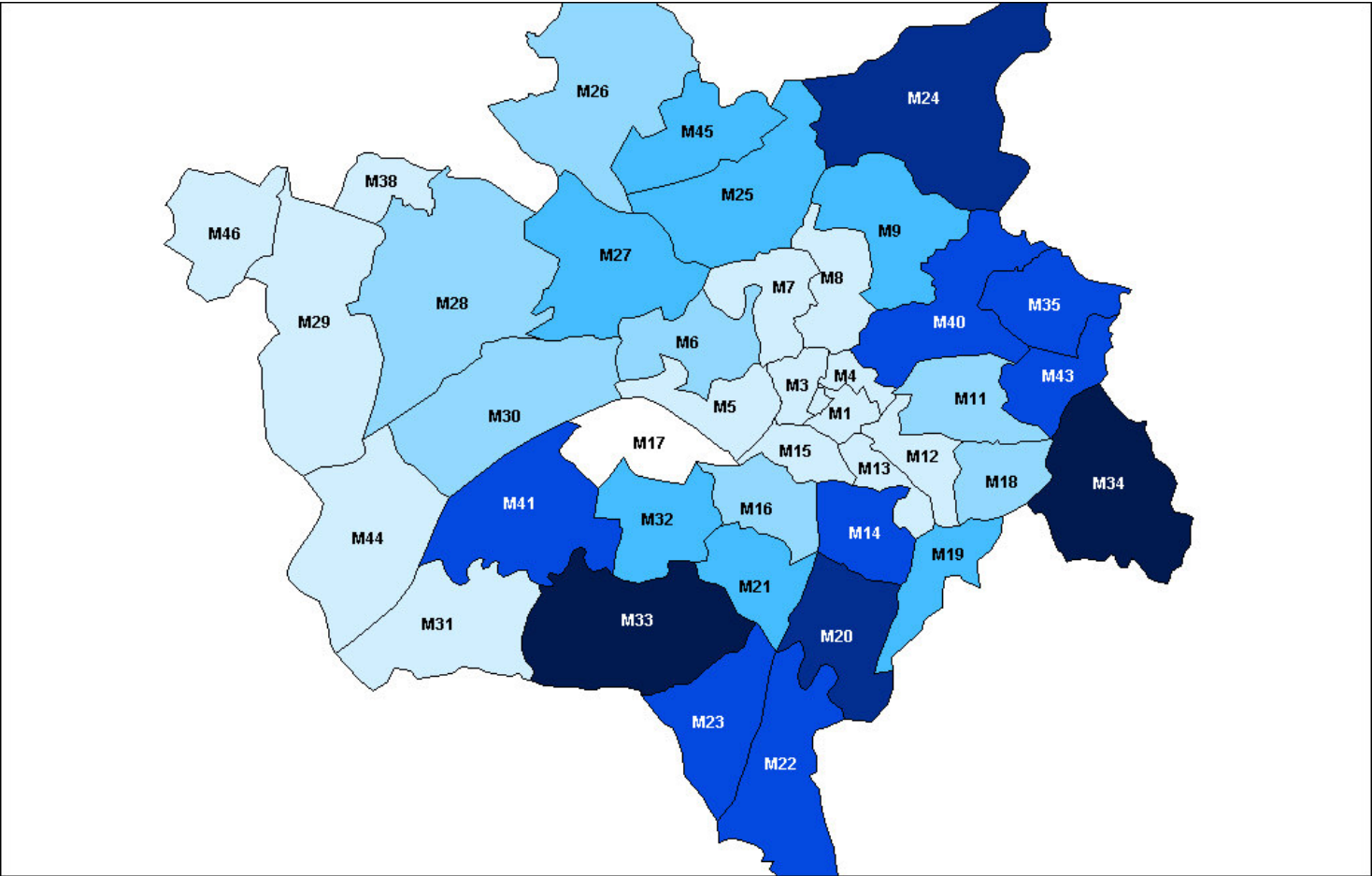
**MUFC Season Ticket Distribution In 'M' Postal Area (Percentage)**



**MUFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by M Postal Districts**  
 Percentage of Total Season Ticket Holders (27,667)

0.00%	(0)
0.00% to 0.50%	(17)
0.50% to 1.00%	(15)
1.00% to 1.50%	(6)
1.50% to 2.00%	(1)
2.00% to 2.50%	(1)
2.50% to 3.00%	(1)

**MCFC Season Ticket Distribution In 'M' Postal Area (Percentage)**



**MCFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by M Postal Districts**  
 Percentage of Total Season Ticket Holders (16,481)

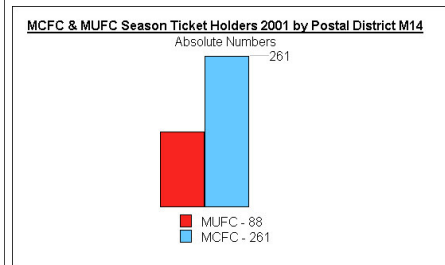
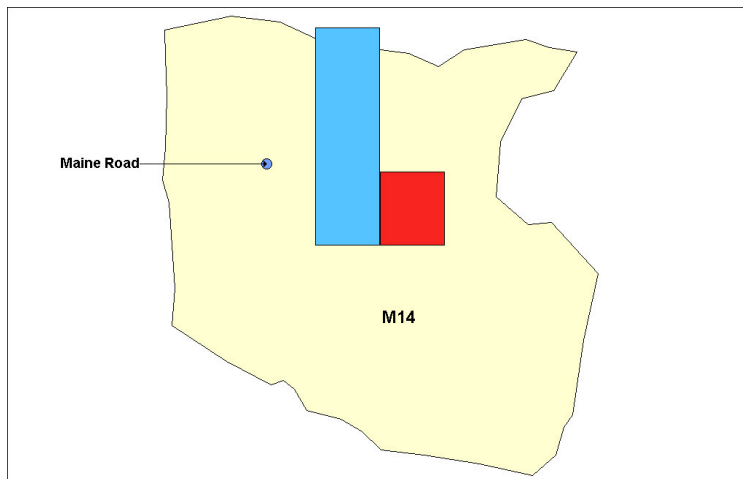
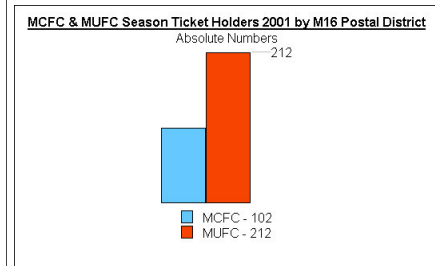
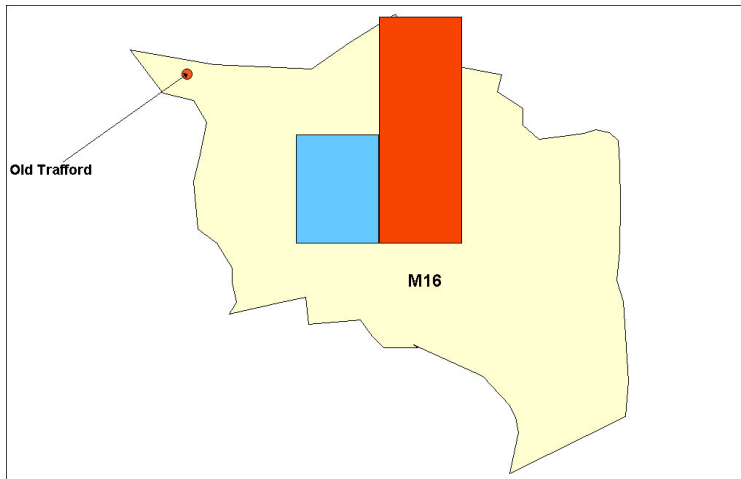
0.00%	(1)
0.01% to 0.50%	(15)
0.50% to 1.00%	(7)
1.00% to 1.50%	(7)
1.50% to 2.00%	(7)
2.00% to 2.50%	(2)
2.50% +	(2)



### 5.3 Ground Location

Given concerns about football clubs' immediate communities, we calculated the numbers of Season Ticket holders living in the same postal districts as the two clubs' grounds: Maine Road (Manchester City, M14); and Old Trafford (Manchester United, M16).

Club	Numbers Season Ticket holders in M14	Percentage Season Ticket holders in M14	Numbers Season Ticket holders in M16	Percentage Season Ticket holders in M16
Manchester City	261	1.58%	102	0.62%
Manchester United	88	0.32%	212	0.77%



## 5.4 Manchester's Periphery

Given existing knowledge about the 'flight to the suburbs' and other geographical social mobility, we also calculated the numbers of season ticket holders of each club in post-code districts adjoining Manchester. These show high levels of support around the periphery of the Manchester conurbation as it joins Stockport (SK), Warrington (WA), Bolton (BL) and Oldham (OL). The numbers and percentages of the highest incidents in these post-code districts are shown below and they are represented graphically overleaf.

### Season Ticket Distribution In 'Peripheral' Non-'M' Post-Code Districts

Post Code District	Numbers of MCFC Season Ticket Holders	% of MCFC Season Ticket Holders	Numbers of MUFC Season Ticket Holders	% of MUFC Season Ticket Holders
OL1	37	0.22%	31	0.11%
OL6	162	0.98%	126	0.46%
OL7	88	0.53%	77	0.28%
OL8	72	0.44%	64	0.23%
OL9	164	1.00%	202	0.73%
SK1	67	0.41%	43	0.16%
SK2	233	1.41%	161	0.58%
SK3	186	1.13%	116	0.42%
SK4	367	2.23%	312	1.13%
SK5	249	1.51%	156	0.56%
SK6	379	2.30%	310	1.12%
SK8	664	4.03%	637	2.30%
SK14	359	2.18%	225	0.81%
SK16	176	1.07%	124	0.45%
WA14	186	1.13%	356	1.29%
WA15	315	1.91%	534	1.93%
BL4	36	0.22%	87	0.31%

We can see here that some of those sectors on the fringe of the 'M' postal area where Manchester borders Stockport, Oldham, Bolton and Warrington, contain high numbers of Season Ticket holders of both clubs.

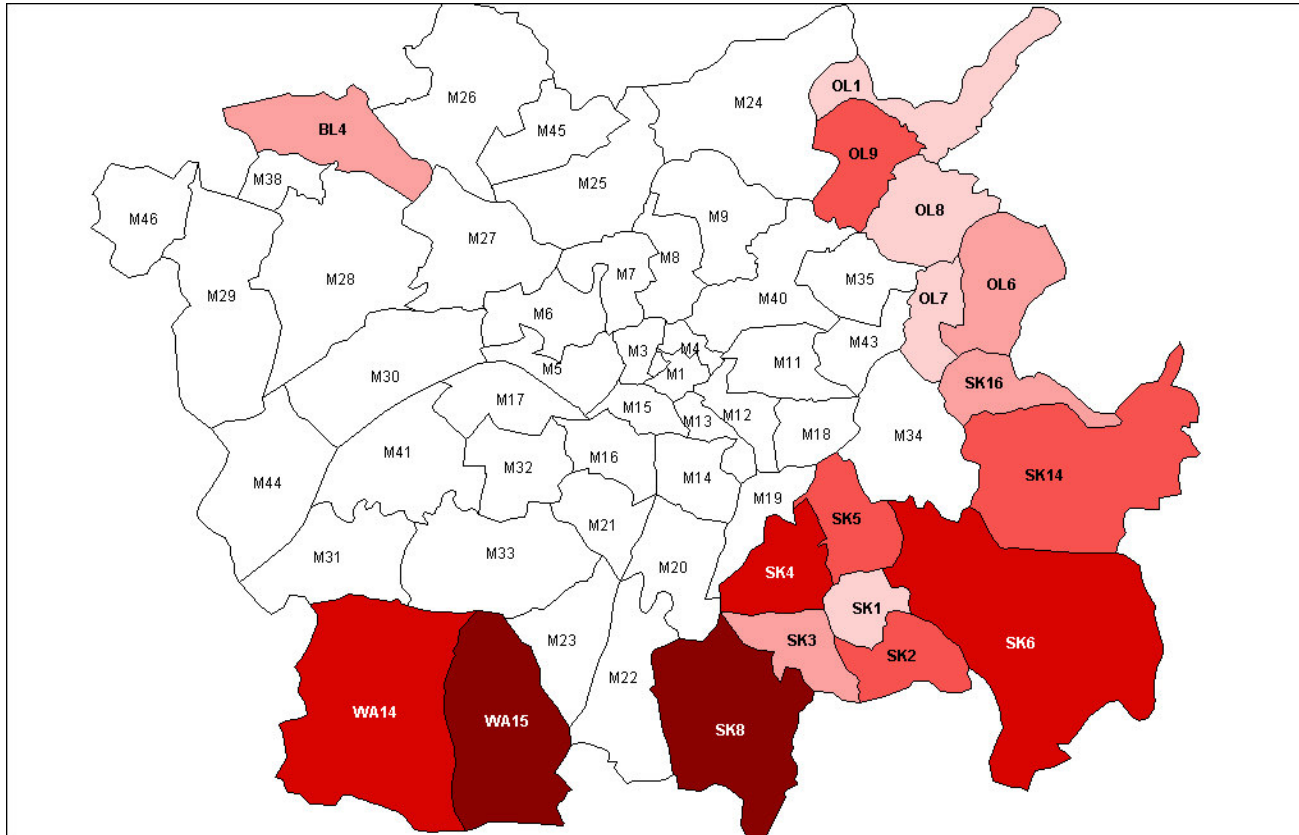
## 5.5 'Top Five'

We have also listed the top five post-code districts for each club across the whole of Greater Manchester. These areas are as follows.

Club	1	2	3	4	5
Manchester City	SK8 (664) Cheadle/Heald Green	M34 (528) Denton	M33 (419) Ashton UM, Sale	M20 (411) Withington/ Didsbury	M24 (395) Birch/ Middleton
Manchester United	M33 (820) Ashton UM, Sale	SK8 (637) Cheadle/Heald Green	M41 (560) Flixton / Urmston	WA15 (534) Ashley / Hale	M28 (470) Boothstown / Worsley

As can be seen, some post-code districts, particularly M33 and SK8 have some of the highest numbers of both clubs, suggesting that these are 'hotbeds' of football support.

### MUFC Season Ticket Holders By Highest Non-'M' Postal Districts (Absolute)

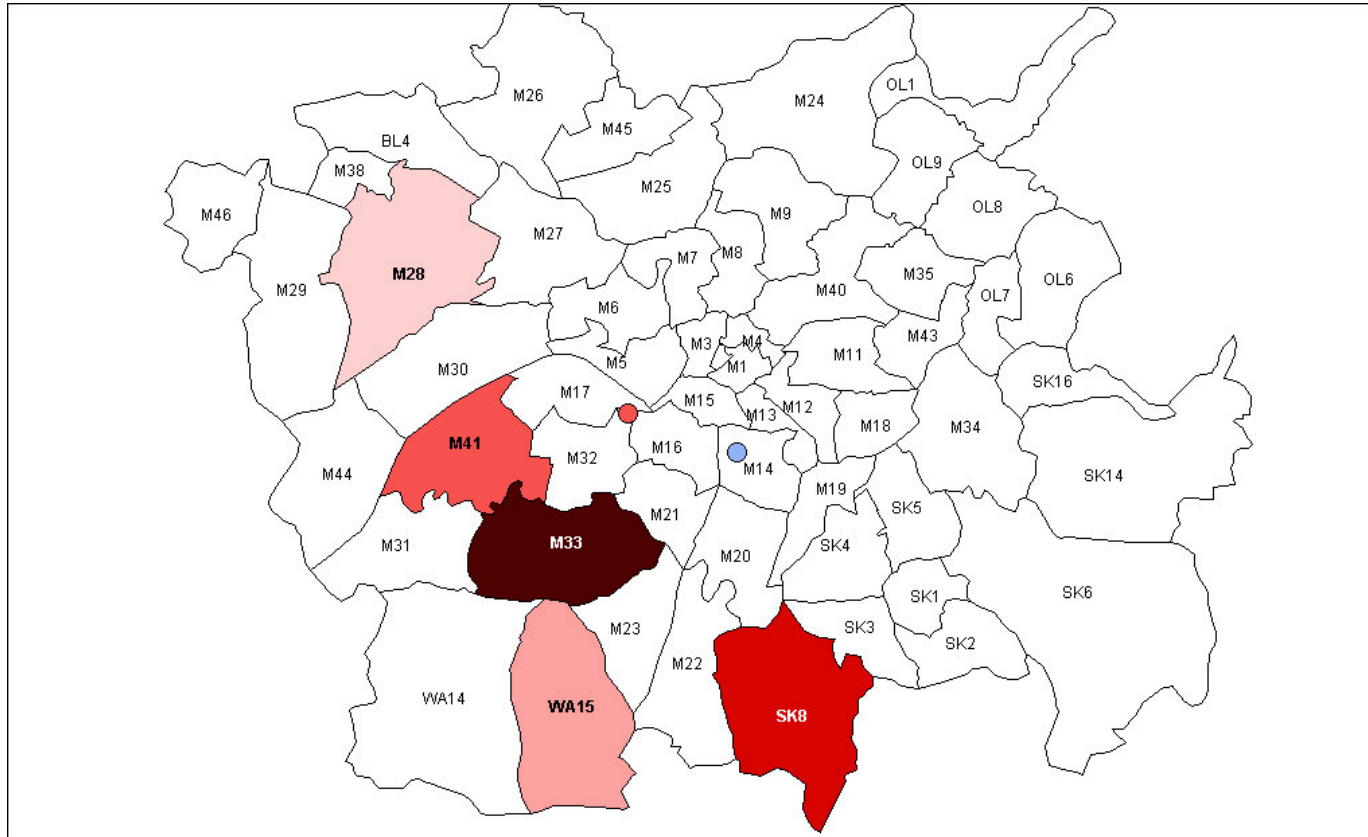


**MUFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by highest non-M Postal Districts in Greater Manchester**  
 Absolute Numbers

□	M Postal Districts	(41)
□	1 to 80	(4)
□	80 to 150	(4)
□	150 to 260	(4)
□	260 to 470	(3)
□	470 to 650	(2)
□	650+	(0)



### MUFC Season Ticket Holders - 'Top Five' Post-Code Districts (Absolute)

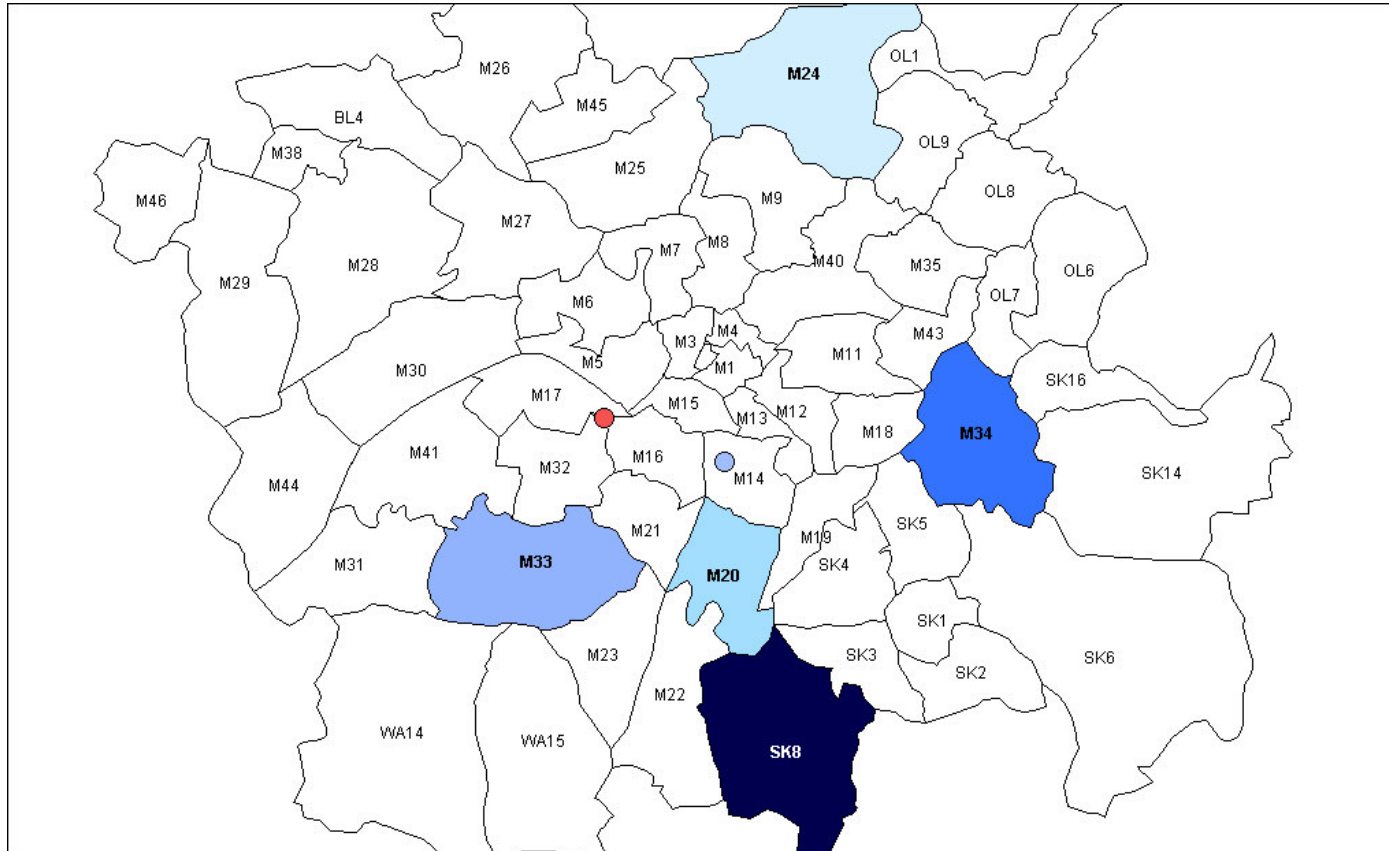


**MUFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by Top Five Postal Districts in Greater Manchester**

Absolute Numbers

- 1st (820)
- 2nd (637)
- 3rd (560)
- 4th (534)
- 5th (470)
- All Others

**MCFC Season Ticket Holders - 'Top Five' Post-code Districts (Absolute)**



**MCFC Season Ticket Holders 2001 by Top Five Postal Districts in Greater Manchester**

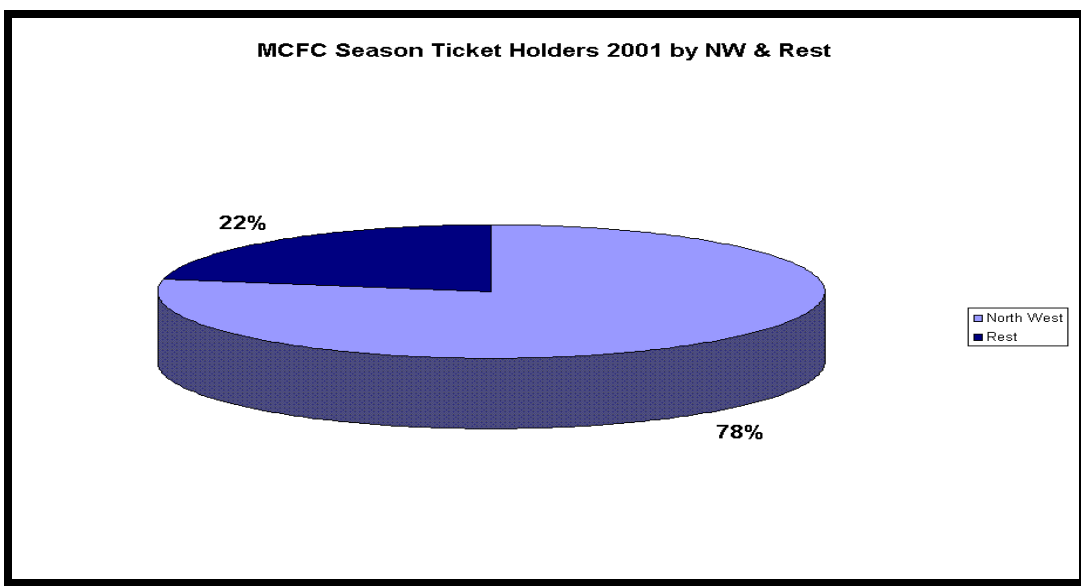
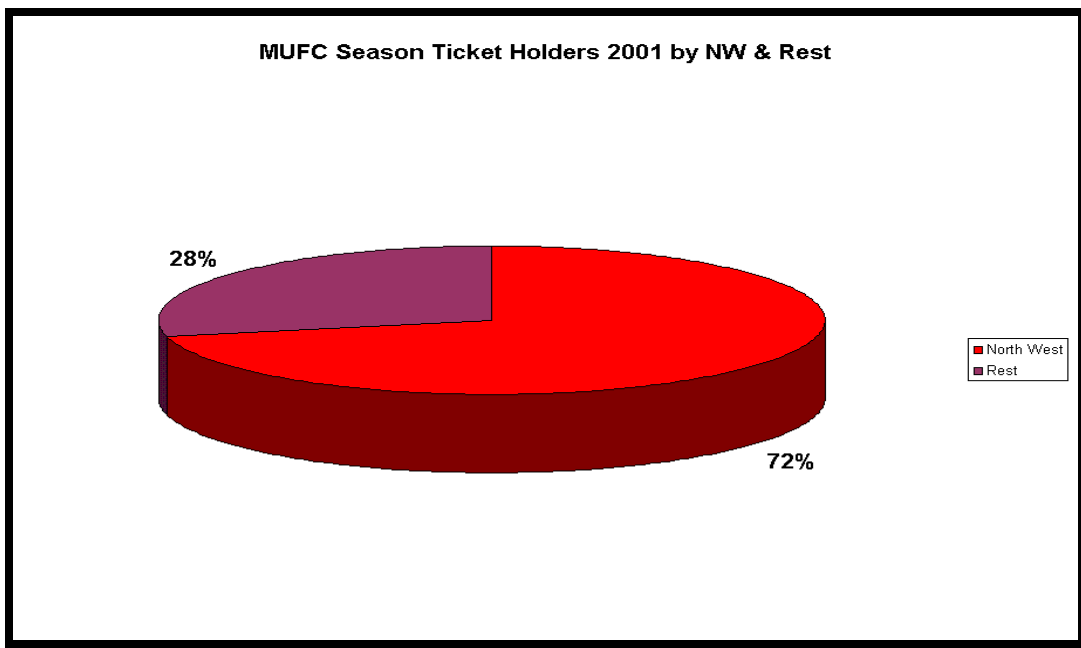
Absolute Numbers

- 1st (664)
- 2nd (528)
- 3rd (419)
- 4th (411)
- 5th (395)
- Others

### 5.5 North West Location

Given knowledge about the dispersal of city communities and the influence of Manchester as the regional capital, we calculated the numbers of season ticket holders of both clubs living in the North West counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cumbria.

Club	Numbers Season Ticket holders in North West	Percentage Season Ticket holders in North West
Manchester City	12,864	78%
Manchester United	19,788	72%



## 6 Conclusions

We have mapped the location of both Manchester United and Manchester City Season ticket holders from 2001 data supplied by both clubs.

In terms of the importance of football - and these two clubs in particular - to the city and region, these findings suggest that both retain strong local links and remain embedded in their host areas.

This evidence also suggests that, despite the huge changes in football's finance, organisation and consumption in the last decade or so - processes which have suggested to some that football has become 'gentrified' and has lost its association with 'place' - hard core support for both clubs remains strongly regional and local. As such we can see a vibrant and thriving local football culture within what is a globalised cultural form. The tensions between these two forces - one localising and one globalising - will be explored further in future publications.

Further, despite the contrasting fortunes of both clubs since the formation of the Premier League, patterns of Season Ticket holder location remains strikingly similar. For both clubs, there remains very strong support in the hinterlands of Manchester and across the North West, with the heaviest concentrations in Lancashire and Cheshire.

We believe that these findings, interesting themselves, have provided important supplementary material to the qualitative research we have conducted. One could argue that it suggests that there are 'two realities' regarding the location of fans. One is the lived experience of fans where a Manchester habitus becomes a badge of honour and/or a jibe against the opposition. This generates its own social and cultural dynamics and is treated as a 'social fact' by some fans. The other are these findings which suggest relatively strong local support and very strong regional support. We recognise, however, that whatever statistical data is produced, the 'cultural contest' over 'coming from Manchester' will continue.

## 7. Further Research

This is a somewhat basic analysis of the location of season ticket holders. Further and more sophisticated research, which we will be discussing with both clubs, would be possible given:

- The improving nature and sophistication of data held on both clubs' supporters
- Cross tabulation with 2001 Census findings (including ethnicity, socio-economic status etc), when available
- More extensive data, such as Membership and Executive databases
- Customer tracking data, allowing analysis of the location of fans for any particular match
- Historical data.

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