

A Mile of Mixed Blessings:

**An Ethnography of Boundaries and Belonging on a
South London Street**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of
Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Science

Declaration

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Abstract

A Mile of Mixed Blessings: An Ethnography of Boundaries and Belonging on a South London Street

This thesis is an ethnography of how individuals experience urban change and difference on a south London street. My research focuses on the contemporary increase in cultural and ethnic diversity in London, and I explore what this means for social life and shared space on the Walworth Road. The purpose is to observe and interpret the forms of contact and distance people develop in living with difference in their everyday lives. I use a mixture of official, archival and ethnographic data to contrast how individuals transgress or re-inscribe social and spatial boundaries, and how systems of power authorise boundaries between people and places. I also combine ethnographic and visual methods to analyse and illustrate the layers of place, time and experience that are invoked by narratives of change on the Walworth Road.

Although my thesis connects the global and local impacts of change, I select the small independent shops along the Walworth Road as the base of my exploration. Within a selection of shop interiors, I explore forms of social contact that are locally constituted through regular, face-to-face interaction, and through shared spaces and practices that engage people across diverse spectrums. I analyse the relationships between proprietors and customers: between workspaces and work skills and social spaces and social skills. Through this empirical process, I emphasise the social and political significance of ordinary spaces and informal memberships that emerge out of everyday contact in neither overtly public, nor overtly private space.

Acknowledgements

My doctoral supervisors Prof. Robert Tavernor and Dr. Janet Foster have provided support and incisive comment throughout my exploration. My gratitude extends to Janet for introducing me to ethnography and to Bob for his insistence on maintaining an architectural voice as I ventured into the interdisciplinary terrain of merging a spatial and social approach to understanding the city.

I have been fortunate to be based at the Cities Programme in the Department of Sociology, where discussions with both staff and friends have been central to my process of learning. Special thanks to Claire Alexander, Marianne Colbran, Juliet Davis, David Frisby, Dick Hobbs, Paul Rock and Fran Tonkiss for commenting on work in progress, and to David Church, Maria Sisternas and Thiresh Govender for assistance with my computer aided drawings. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Writing Cities Workshops and the NYLON Research Network.

I owe particular thanks to the individuals on the Walworth Road who allowed me access into their local places to have discussions with them. I have learnt a great deal from my conversations with Huseyin Mustafa and George Dyer and am grateful for their generosity and friendship. Thank you also to Stephen Bourne and to the staff at the Southwark Local History Library for providing illuminating information on the history of Southwark.

A PhD exploration is neither a solitary pursuit nor one that happens outside the ambit of real life. My family, Tony, Pippa, John, Gusta and Sam have been alongside me. My heartfelt thanks to John for making sure there was time for me to work, and that a sense of perspective remained in tact throughout this journey.

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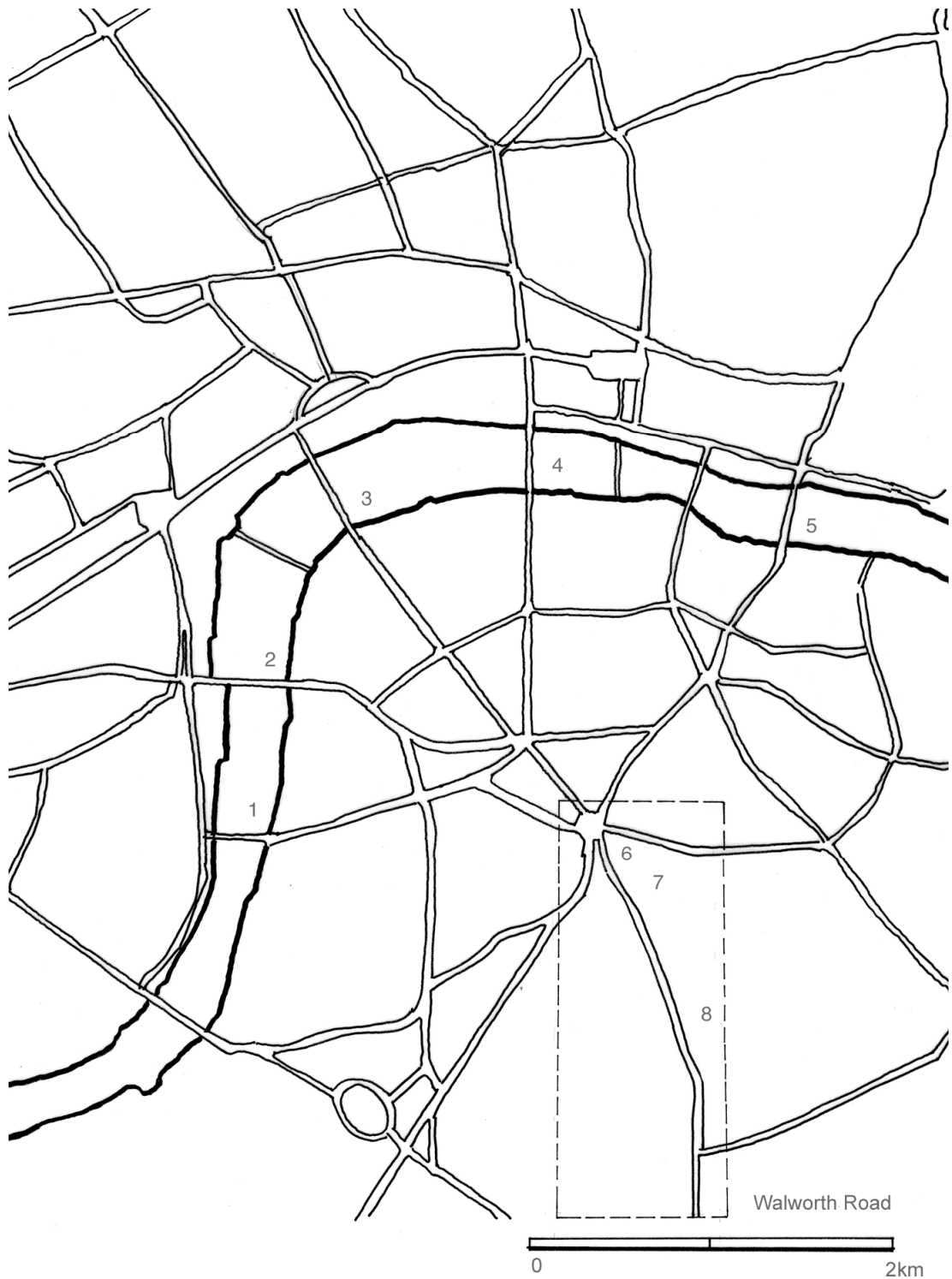


Figure 0.0.1 Walworth Road - London connections

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Lambeth Bridge | 6. Elephant and Castle |
| 2. Westminster Bridge | 7. Heygate Estate |
| 3. Waterloo Bridge | 8. Aylesbury Estate |
| 4. Blackfriars Bridge | |
| 5. London Bridge | |

Introduction

The sign above the shop-front read, 'Mixed Blessings Bakery. West Indian and English Bread'. The Bakery was on my twenty-minute bus route from South London into the centre of the city, and from the top of the red double-decker 68 or 171 buses I could see the stack of oblong loaves, that on cold days, steamed up half of the shop-front. On holidays a haphazard queue would form along the pavement outside Mixed Blessings Bakery, while people waited to buy a warm, sweet piece of the Caribbean to take back to their South London homes. The Bakery is one of many small shops along the mile length of the Walworth Road, and from the top of the bus I could see the dense, linear assemblage of these small shop spaces, and an array of different people going about their everyday routines.

As a newcomer to London from South Africa in 2004, what struck me first about the Walworth Road was the unfamiliar visual collage of diverse surfaces and expressions displayed by spaces, activities and people. The visible convergence of difference that I first observed on this street may be of little surprise to the more accustomed Londoner's eye, and in a city populated through perpetual histories of immigration, scenes like those on the Walworth Road may well appear much like those on many other high streets in London. Later, what came to matter as a local resident learning how to use the Walworth Road was the ordinariness of its difference: the basic value of social contact refined through the face-to-face meetings that occurred on the street.

My regular bus route into the London School of Economics ran past the shop-fronts on the Walworth Road, where the tight rhythm of spaces briefly paused on the east side of the street, providing a view of the perennial activity of shoppers and traders at the East

Street Market. At the northern end of the Walworth Road, the intensity of entrepreneurial life and social space was abruptly truncated by the monolithic, prefabricated forms of the Heygate social housing estate (1974) and the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre (1965), both of which are detached from the street. At the Elephant and Castle, buses and cars wound into two centrifugal roundabouts, which collected the traffic from the south and distributed it over the Westminster, Waterloo, Blackfriars and London bridges over the River Thames as the great watery divide.

The presence of a number of cranes and high-rise sites under construction, and a billboard renaming the area 'South Central', signalled that this was an area targeted for strategic redevelopment. A little further to the north, the script engraved on the obelisk at St George's Circus reminded me that I was only one mile from the symbolic centres of London represented by Westminster, Fleet Street and St Paul's Cathedral. From here it took only five minutes on the bus to reach the bridges and to cross the River Thames, entering into a city proximate to, but entirely distinctive from the Walworth Road. All in all, only twenty minutes to travel from one kind of urban experience to another: emerging from the eclectic array of small shops and large concrete housing estates along the Walworth Road, to the picturesque arrangements of world famous landmarks and Portland stone that lend prestige to the city. This bus journey was to remind me repeatedly that traversing London and crossing the River Thames was very much about experiencing the miscellaneous proximity of different local worlds.

The cheek-by-jowl juxtapositions of varied places set side by side in London that I experienced are tied to an understanding of the city as an ordinary city (Amin and Graham 1997; Robinson 2006). For Amin and Graham this ordinariness incorporates the significance of everyday life in the city, and the combination of political, economic and social layers that contribute to our diverse experiences of the city. For Robinson ordinariness relates to a wider frame of reference to the multitude of cities around the

world from which we learn. The idea of ordinariness also extends to the day-to-day use, interpretation and transformation of London by its diverse citizens. The focus of my empirical exploration of cultural and ethnic diversity and urban change is the everyday lives and livelihoods on the Walworth Road. I pay homage to Williams' (1958) insistence that 'culture is ordinary': everyday contact is the primary conduit for learning and sharing. But unlike the bus journey that introduces Williams' seminal essay by taking us through his native landscape in Wales, passing the places of his formative experiences of working-class life and labour, my empirical journey links to how we learn and share within a contemporary urban landscape that is highly varied and rapidly changing. From the base of local contact on the Walworth Road I explore the social formations of everyday life through which different individuals and groups interact, crossing the boundaries between people and places.



Figure 0.1 The bus stop outside Mixed Blessings Bakery (Author's photograph, 2009)

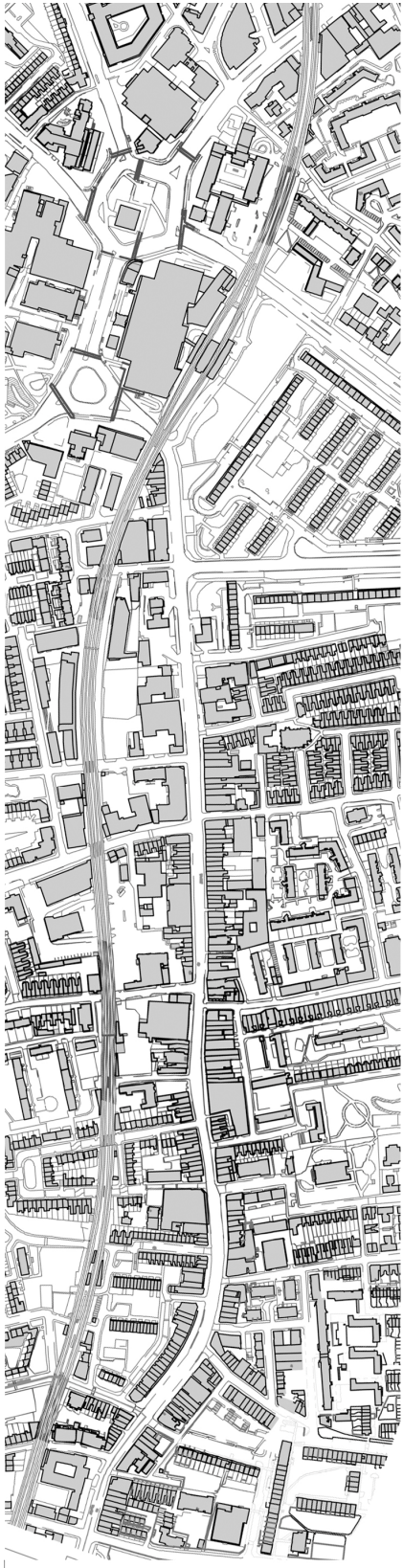


Figure 0.2 The assemblage of people and spaces along the Walworth Road

Contact on an urban high street

A key quality of an urban high street is that it is central to the local life of an area, but it also extends past the area, linking it to other places and people. An urban high street situates and connects, both focusing and expanding the possibilities for contact between different people. The intersections of individuals and groups was the starting point for my initial curiosity with the Walworth Road, a street most aptly described by a local resident as 'basically a road between other places'. This key quality of *being between* provides a crucial direction for my exploration. It captures a spatial location neither at the centre nor the margins of contemporary London. It also articulates a cultural location neither captured by a static view of the remnants of Walworth's working-class residents based on location or community, nor a segregated view of its ethnic minorities based on origin or race. The *in between* invokes the experience, time and place of urban cultures engaged in the context of deep change. Transition is central to the nature of this street, and although the Walworth Road is a place of local particularities, its local world is integrally connected to the forces of significant urban and global change. The street is positioned between central London and Camberwell, between the modernist urban ambitions and post-war regeneration of the twentieth century and contemporary ambitions for large-scale regeneration, and between white working-class traditions and diverse, emergent cultures.

While the Walworth Road is a high street, it is also a route between a local and wider world. It is supported by residents living within a convenient walking distance of the street and a broader group of people who reach the street by way of other journeys. Some of these journeys are part of the daily or weekly routines of commute common to Londoners. Other journeys to the Walworth Road involve a distinctive break with the regularity and comfort of a familiar world; these are the migratory journeys from one country to another, and require traversing great distances. To travel these actual and

perceptual distances, crossing the boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar, demands particular social and cultural skills. The capacity to engage in difference and change requires an ability to live with more than one sense of a local or familiar place – a ‘here’ as well as a ‘there’, and a ‘then’ as well as a ‘now’ – and the ability to live amongst different people. But in today’s cities, shaped by a profound rate of change, it is not only the migrant or émigré who needs to learn the multifarious skills of how to preserve custom and to learn anew. This adaptation is also required of the urban local who has seldom or never travelled, and whose fixed position in a locality or a community does not necessarily provide an antidote to the enormity of change.

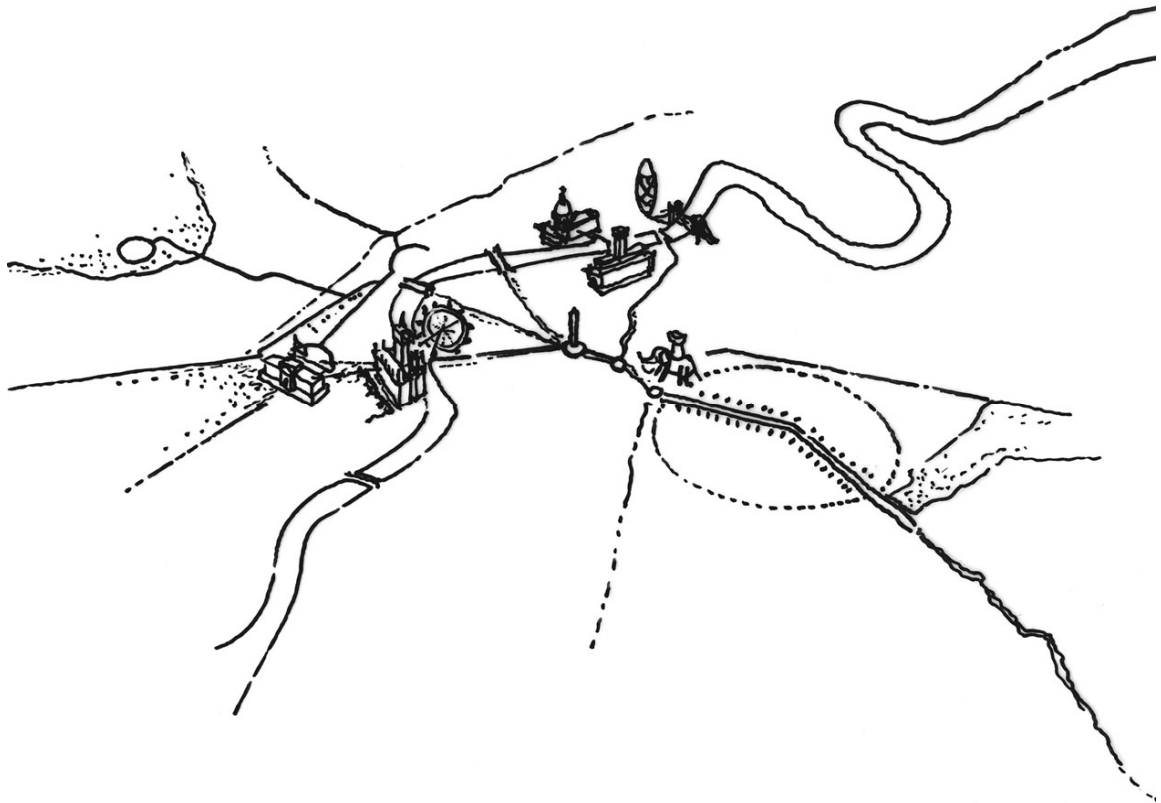


Figure 0.3 The symbolic location of Walworth Road to the south of London’s centre (Fieldwork drawing, 2006)

My thesis focuses on the capacities of individuals to engage in profound urban change and cultural and ethnic diversity within the context of their local worlds. A primary question that has charged my research is whether everyday life is significant for acquiring and refining the skills to engage with difference and change on the Walworth Road. I explore what the forms of social and spatial contact are that individuals and groups develop when using the small shop spaces along the street. My focus on shared, ordinary spaces and everyday practices has also led to an exploration of what spatial and social methods can be used to observe and interpret interaction. In exploring individual expressions and experiences of belonging, I focus on how regular and face-to-face contact is constituted as a social mode of inclusion. I have inevitably also had to explore exclusions, and the kinds of structures that limit the capacities of individuals and groups to engage in difference and change. One analytic implication of simultaneously exploring inclusions and exclusions is the need to contrast individual experiences of belonging with the structures of power and conditions under which individual and group belonging is regulated within a local area. I have therefore found it useful to juxtapose ethnographic data with official and archival information on how Walworth has been administered and controlled over time.

Towards the end of this thesis, I engage with the question of whether local, everyday, or ordinary forms of social contact are visible or legible through the lens of the outsider, passer-by or policy maker. I raise this question because of the crucial issue of how difference or multi-culturalism is recognised and represented in the UK. We know for example that in 2001, 53 per cent of all ethnic minority groups living in the UK resided in London (Hamnett 2003), indicating that demographic heterogeneity in the UK is primarily an urban phenomenon, moreover, one explicitly concentrated in London (Office of National Statistics 2001). What these statistics cannot address are the questions of *how* the impacts of urban change are experienced and, of particular emphasis in my thesis, how cultural and ethnic diversity is manifested in the social life

of a local place. However pertinent these numeric descriptions are, they do little to render a complex or fine-grained explanation of the lived meanings of difference.

The question, 'How do we represent people and places which are significantly different to us?' (Hall 1997, p. 225) raises the ontological questions of understanding how difference is constructed through binaries, stereotypes and categories of otherness. It also demands an understanding of how difference emerges through individual capacities to negotiate, contest and share. Hall's question is therefore equally pertinent when considering alternative research methodology: it leans towards questions of how we might observe and render a multi-faceted view of difference. A primary aim of my thesis is to explore what we might learn about cultural and ethnic diversity from a differentiated view of everyday life. I argue that the value of ethnography in understanding difference is that it renders a situated and multi-vocal sense of people and places, as they live in, respond to and shape their social worlds.

I came to this exploration as a newcomer on many fronts. Firstly as a South African who had grown up in the unjustly privileged white suburbs of Johannesburg, and as an architect, a stranger to ethnographic research. Researching the Walworth Road is not only my first opportunity to live amongst difference as a local resident, but also an opportunity to learn about integrating a spatial and social ethnographic understanding of the city. I started my fieldwork within the first year of my PhD programme, and while absorbed in an ethnography of everyday life, I searched for ways of understanding the layers of experience, time and place that make the Walworth Road. As an architect, I had a fascination for how urban space is designed and appropriated, and a predilection for a visual reading of the city. As an inexperienced ethnographer, I had to learn about a much slower process of seeing; making time to sit, listen and talk.

In the street-based ethnographies that have been key to my exploration (Whyte 1943; Liebow 1967; Anderson 1999; Duneier 1999) social and spatial life is primarily represented through words. However, my practice as an architect has led me to question whether our understanding of interaction could be further enhanced through a visual language, and whether visual research, or visualisation as both an analytic and illustrative process, could provide additional layers to ethnographic exploration and explanation. Research into the construction and meaning of visual material (Mason 1996; Rose 2001) tends to work with images as representations where constructed meanings behind the image are the primary subject of analysis. In my research I use visualisation or 'picturing' as a process of both finding out and revealing, or as an analytic mode in itself. I have relied on conventions of making pictures through photographs and mapping, and have also considered how the static format of drawings can depict the fluidity of movement and change. Typically the graphic is a process of 'shortening' rather than reducing information, and I have explored how analytic pictures, in order to be apposite, essentially contain a limited number of core relationships. My research has therefore been shaped by a combination of architectural and ethnographic approaches to how people shape urban space.

I spent one year of intensive fieldwork on the Walworth Road, but as a local resident I have regularly used the street, and my fieldwork informally expanded to include the four years of my PhD research period. My experiences as a newcomer and local resident have ultimately been integral to my research process. As a local resident I have had comparative ease of access to certain people and spaces, and have benefited from spontaneous conversations and observations as I have passed along the street. As a newcomer I have directly experienced some of the difficulties of being in an unfamiliar world, and have also come to a personal understanding of the significance of local friendships and networks of support. This personalised process of learning is part of the participant observation integral to ethnography, and where

possible or necessary I have tried to maintain a level of critical reflection on my personal involvement and the research choices I have made once in the field.

Although I started out with a broad remit of looking at the street as a whole, my research focus came to be the small independent shops along the mile length of the Walworth Road, and the social interactions between the proprietors and customers within them. I ended up focusing on these shops, not simply because during my research period they were, and still are, the predominant presence or land-use on the Walworth Road. Far more significantly, they appeared to me as a highly variegated whole, a dense aggregation of people and spaces, and lives and livelihoods. I chose the shops because I became intrigued by the combination of social practices and work practices on a local street, and the questions of whether the acumen and imagination of proprietors and customers would have bearing on the social possibilities within these shop spaces.

Further, the independent shop spaces off the street represented social worlds that were neither overtly public nor private. The shops are adjacent to and distinct from the street, and interactions and memberships within the shops were regulated differently than the overt public space of the pavement. Although individually owned or rented, occupancy in the shops was not controlled through the welfare mechanisms that prescribed the allocation of the social housing units that comprise a large proportion of the private residences in walking distance from the Walworth Road. I was interested in the forms of social contact in these small, intimate spaces in which things were both made and sold, and in which social and cultural learning was exchanged.

The focus on the shops has inadvertently led me to larger questions of participation and belonging in a diverse and unequal urban society. In particular, I explore whether capacities to engage in urban change and difference are connected to forms of

inclusion such as social space, social skill and meaningful work. Equally I analyse the structural restrictions that inhibit participation and interaction in the context of local life. During the first year of my research, I read very widely, pursuing potential ideas and theoretical perspectives that I could connect with what was emerging from my fieldwork. In general, I found ethnographies a useful way of navigating theory: not only because theory was given a vivid format, but because people's lives and livelihoods were inevitably more complex than the less cluttered logic of the theoretical frame. Towards the end of my fieldwork, the significance of everyday social interaction, small, ordinary spaces and informal memberships constituted within local places emerged as primary considerations that warranted further interpretation.

Out of the heightened flows between people and places across the globe over the past two decades, research areas across urban studies have engaged with how to explore composite and contingent ways of life. A primary conceptual framework that cuts across disciplinary terrains is the broad research area of 'borders and boundaries' (Newman and Paasi 1998). The significance for my research is not only the understanding of actual or symbolic lines of separation between people and places as both the permeable and fixed conditions within a more fluid global landscape. I explore the persistence and transgression of boundaries in a local urban world, through individual and collective capacities to learn to live with difference, and to assert or breach deep spatial and social divides.

The chapter outline

Much like the spaces along a street, the following chapters are structured as a series of stories or a composition of related but different parts. My intention is to reveal near and far views of a local world, and the varied experiences of how individuals engage in cultural and ethnic diversity and urban change. There are several links that provide

continuity to these parts, the first being my concern to connect the organisation of social life and spatial life on the Walworth Road. Although local space and contemporary ways of life provide a focus for my thesis, I establish continuities across space and time and draw on the presence of the past through how memories permeate individual narratives of their local place. The order of the following eight chapters is also shaped by establishing relationships across the local, urban and global worlds, as well as making connections across the structures of power and the agency of individuals.

In Chapter 1, I outline the research of urban change and difference through comparing how social interactions between different groups have been theorised, observed and represented. I contrast two primary ways in which social interaction has been framed during times of profound urban change within the past one hundred years. The theoretical underpinnings of heterogeneity established by Wirth (1938) at the turn of the twentieth century emphasised the diminishing role of local place and the increase in social detachment, as inevitable outcomes of the large-scale concentration of different groups in American cities. Social detachment is presented as a strategy and reality of profound economic and social change, to be echoed in the work of Harvey (1989) fifty years later. In contrast, the theoretical perspectives offered by the recent research on ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms (Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge and Chakrabarty 2000; Calhoun 2002; Lamont and Askartova 2002; Gilroy 2004), focuses on how different individuals engage with one another in the context of their everyday practices and local worlds. Social processes, social interactions, life-worlds and conviviality are explored as situated modes for engaging in difference and change. The latter part of Chapter 1 expands on the need for empirical enquiry to investigate the substantive claims of ordinary cosmopolitanism, and draws on how ethnography is used to explore difference and social interaction.

In Chapter 2 I develop my methodological approach to researching a multi-ethnic street. I anchor this chapter in the value of the interpretive space created between the writer and the reader, and argue for a construction of meaning that is invested in the ethnographic mode and narrative form of research. I expand on how I use the layers of experience, time and place to observe and interpret local narratives. I question what constitutes evidence in ethnographic research that relies formatively on varied individual experiences, how the researcher connects individual experiences of the present to the past, and how people individually and collectively define their local world.

In Chapter 3 I introduce the interrelated theme of inclusions and exclusions, by exploring the transgression and re-inscription of boundaries on the Walworth Road. I start with a view of the street in 2006, when I conducted a survey of each independent shop proprietor on the Walworth Road, and traced their locations on the street to their respective places of origin. I compare the experiences of varied localities and multiple belongings with how poverty in Walworth has been historically contained by fixed regulatory categories of income, class and locality. I raise questions of how social and spatial boundaries endure, and the extent to which official boundaries incapacitate people to deal with change.

The nuances of social contact are developed in Chapters 4 and 5 through detailed ethnographic observations developed in two particular shop spaces: Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop. Within these two different spaces I build on Simmel's concept of sociability (1949), which emphasised the form above the content of social engagement. I analyse 'the art of sitting' in Nick's Caff and show how different individuals and groups manage the social space of the Caff through their conduct within a room layout of sixteen tables. In Chapter 5 I explore the relationship between technical and social skills within the context of Reyd's practice as a bespoke tailor

through 'the art of attire'. Both chapters centre on the work practices of the respective proprietors, and consider whether the attainment of a work skill has a correlation with the development of social skills. In these chapters I also analyse the affinities that bring different individuals and groups together, exploring how conviviality can be created out of shared gestures such as language and humour, shared interests like football and music, and shared social symbols like food and clothing.

In Chapters 6 and 7 I explore the political significance of everyday contact and ordinary social spaces. In Chapter 6 I focus on the regular, face-to-face forms of contact in small shop spaces, and explore why locality both inhibits and enhances the possibilities for different individuals to meet and to share. I argue for the role of small, intimate spaces, neither overtly public nor private, in providing convenient space for people to learn to live with difference in their everyday lives. In Chapter 7 I begin by asking what the measures of ordinariness for the Walworth Road are. I compare the measures or values of ordinariness as described by various shop proprietors with measures defined in policy and planning reports on the development of urban high streets and urban centres in London and the UK. The shop proprietors I interviewed referred to clear indicators of value including business longevity and positive customer-client relationships, often sustained over generations. Policy documents on the planning and design of high streets tend either to employ vague or rhetorical terminology conflating 'mixed-use' with social diversity (CABE 2000), or employ economic measures of value based on increased returns of retail property (CABE 2007).

The concluding chapter reflects on the differing narratives and forms of social contact I observed in the independent shop spaces on Walworth Road through an exploration of the local worlds as layered phenomena. I argue that everyday cosmopolitanism is essentially located in local life, and that because local worlds are realms in which much is at stake for individuals and groups, social contact is as much about conviviality, as it

is about contestation and contradiction. By expanding on the notion of local worlds, I argue that social contact sustained through regular practices and familiar spaces ultimately constitutes a crucial form of belonging. I return to questions of what capacities people have to engage in urban change and difference. I expand not only on the role of social skill as the ability to observe, communicate, adapt and refine, but on the need for policy and planning to recognise the social, cultural and economic significance of the ordinary and the local.



Figure 0.4 A view from the Walworth Road (Author's photograph, 2009)

Chapter 1

Urban change and difference

During intensive periods of urbanisation and urban change within the last one hundred years, questions of how urban concentrations of difference are experienced, and what forms of social interaction emerge from profound periods of changes, have been addressed through very different theoretical and empirical frameworks. In this chapter I outline my exploration of the social and spatial experience of cultural and ethnic diversity, and review differing ways of framing, spatialising and observing urban change and difference. I start by highlighting two periods of profound urban change to draw out distinctive conceptual responses for framing difference. I compare the idea of *heterogeneity*, which emerged out of the urbanisation of the American city at the turn of the twentieth century, with the idea of *ordinary cosmopolitanism*, which gained momentum at the beginning of the twenty-first century in response to the global impact of change.

The purpose of this comparison is to consider what analytic tools are used to explore how social interaction transforms in times of profound change. Urban mobility and the pace of flux have generated diametric framings of urban social interaction over the past century, whether viewed through the lens of urbanisation or globalisation. Claims about increased social distances between people and increased detachments from place contrast strongly with the claims for the significance of local, face-to-face contact in the course of everyday life.

My thesis explores whether local, everyday social contact is significant for how people engage in urban change and difference. In this chapter I focus on social and spatial forms of expression as key constituents of interaction, and outline ways in which the socio-spatial interrelationship is conceptualised. I start with a basic outline of Lefebvre's contribution (1991 [1974]), by highlighting the political importance of the tension between the official conception, regulation and administration of urban space against the lived appropriations and transformations of space. However, I explicitly turn to Simmel (1903; 1957 [1904]; 1949) and Sennett (1992 [1977]; 1996; 1999; 2004; 2008a; 2008b), since I argue that their emphasis on experience, performance and practice has direct pertinence for empirical research in general, and urban ethnography in particular.

Finally, I review a selection of ethnographic approaches (Willmott and Young 2007 [1957]; Hobbs 1988; Back 1996; Alexander 2000; Dench, Gavron and Young 2006) and street-based ethnographies (Whyte 1943; Liebow 1967; Anderson 1999; Duneier 1999) to explore how urban difference and change is observed and represented. In addition I will question the extent to which ethnography develops both the social and spatial dimensions of everyday life. Through this literature, I claim a particular ethnographic stance that acknowledges that while the ethnographic perspective ultimately focuses on local worlds, present experiences and individual agency, it is enhanced by making analytic extensions to incorporate the impacts of global forces, historic continuities and the structures of power.

Framing urban difference: social interaction in times of profound change

In this section I outline *heterogeneity* and *cosmopolitanism* as two diametric framings of urban difference and social interaction in times of profound change. The first,

heterogeneity, emerged out of an appreciation of the dramatic effects of urbanisation and change at the turn of the twentieth century in American cities. The second, the notion of *ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms*, has developed more recently in response to global processes of urbanisation and migration, particularly evidenced in large urban agglomerations since the 1990s. Both of these theoretical framings pursue the consequences for social interaction in larger, more mixed urban societies. The idea of flux is central to both framings, and both theories portray a scepticism of the capacity of consensus as a key footing for social grouping amongst different individuals. However, their perspectives on the possibilities of social interaction between different individuals in the city diverge entirely.

The idea of *heterogeneity*, defined by Wirth (1938) in his classic essay 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', emerges from his emphasis of the large-scale, dense concentration of different groups in the city as a primary constituent of new ways of life. But Wirth's enduring framework for heterogeneity suggests that the co-location of dissimilar groups within the city takes the form of an aggregation of segmented parts. He described human association in the city in its most negative prospects:

a motley of peoples and cultures, of highly differentiated modes of life between which there is only the faintest communication, the greatest indifference and the broadest tolerance, occasionally bitter strife, but always the sharpest contrast. (1938, p. 20)

Because Wirth's understanding of heterogeneity was based on a marked distinction between the rooted 'folk solidarity' of rural societies and what he perceived as the amorphous, transitory nature of urban societies, his understanding of human association was deeply invested in kinship, neighbourliness and proximity. For Wirth the size of population increased variation, which weakened aggregation – 'the greatest indifference and the broadest tolerance' were for him the inevitable by-products of urban heterogeneity. Wirth also explicitly severed his analysis of social interaction from

the forces of industrialisation and capitalism, rooting his analysis of 'the socially heterogeneous individual' in the footloose and depersonalised lifestyle of 'the cosmopolitan urbanite' (1938, p. 16). In referring to the sociological theories of detachment through Durkheim's (1893) '*anomie*' and the '*blasé*' countenance of Simmel's flâneur (1903), Wirth's theory of heterogeneity is based on the overwhelming effect of the size of the modern city, and on the supposition of the intractable dissimilarity between people of different origins and occupations. His theory of social interaction in the context of profound change presupposes the disappearance of locality and sustained social intimacy, to be supplanted by a mobile and transitory social membership.

However, seminal ethnographic studies of race and ethnicity in American cities over the twentieth century (Whyte 1943; Gans 1962; Liebow 1967; Suttles 1968; Anderson 1999) revealed very different forms of interaction from those expressed in Wirth's theoretical perspective. Empirical evidence pointed to the significance of community and locality, or the role of propinquity and proximity as key social and spatial forms of organisation. What these studies revealed, either implicitly or explicitly, were the lived realities of heterogeneity based on confined spatial co-location and contained social connections. Neighbourhood areas within the city were revealed as deeply demarcated territories inscribed by the practices of kinship, neighbourliness and proximity that Wirth's framework had emphatically denied. These studies also described the internal ordering of ethnic and racial groups within neighbourhoods, as restricted by the external ordering of the city and society by the inequalities of income, opportunity and racism. These ethnographies reveal the profound effects of American urbanisation and industrialisation as the stratification of society by race and income, and the intensified the dependency on locality and kinship for the urban poor.

In contrast to the urbanisation of American cities in the early 1900s, contemporary patterns of urbanisation since the 1990s are broadly described by the rapid growth and intensification of extremely large urban agglomerations across the globe (Burdett and Sudjic 2008). Cities have become the centres of the global economy, and dynamic concentrations of settlement in which different people from around the world gather temporarily or permanently, propelled by the migratory forces towards the refuge and opportunity that the global city might yield (Sassen 2001). The increasing mix of people in cities across the globe, their intersections in everyday life, and the cultural overlaps that yield common projects and shared practices is the recent focus of *ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms* as a framework for understanding processes of living with difference (Pollock *et al.* 2000; Calhoun 2002; Lamont and Aksartova 2002; Gilroy 2004). Unlike the ideology of cosmopolitanism as a universal political ideal upheld across place, these ideas of cosmopolitanism emphasise the day-to-day participation in difference within local places.

Gilroy's (2004) idea of *conviviality* articulates the significance of ordinary social interactions and shared affinities in cities across Britain, where multi-culture is a primary urban quality. For Gilroy, conviviality is essentially about contact above identity. He gives conceptual primacy to the social acts of living with difference, as opposed to the construction of solidarity or sameness on the basis of race or ethnicity. Through his empirical exploration (1987) into the imaginative composition and appreciation of music between different groups in London from the 1960s onwards, he *combines* black Diaspora culture with white youth culture. In his amalgamated exploration of the inventions of 'two-tone' music, he describes the social spaces where dancing, listening and making produced the urban cultures of blue beat, ska, rocksteady, modern reggae and punk. His analogy is also extended to political life sustained across race and ethnicity, which formed part of trade union movements and advocacy groups in the UK during the same period.

In his new preface to *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (2004 [1994]) links these local or 'vernacular' social interactions to the fluidity of cultural practices which are carried across local places, and are vitalised by processes of translation and transformation. For Bhabha the idea of difference as cultural hybridity, or the capacity for individuals to explore more than one culture, rests on the assertion of 'personhood'. Through recognising individual expressions, the active, rather than the subjected role of minorities is acknowledged in the formation of urban culture.

While Bhabha's theoretical contribution is developed primarily through the medium of language and literature, Isin's idea (2002, pp. 28-51) of the everyday political expression of difference is firmly located in urban space. In focusing on the period of urban immigration since the 1970s, Isin asks what forms of urban milieu immigrants bring with them to their receiving cities. In this process of crossing borders, Isin asks how the social and spatial dispositions of these immigrants are then adapted to the symbols and institutions that they inherit in their new spaces of life and work. Her explanation of 'alterity' as the lived experiences of difference is theoretically explored through how groups constitute relations between others by using strategies of affiliation as well as estrangement. Social grouping and spatial appropriations are emphasised as changing processes rather than as stable social or spatial forms.

Just as it was impossible to separate heterogeneity as an idea of difference from the structural and lived realities of inequality, these authors recognise the need to conceptually connect cosmopolitanism as local practices and interactions, with contemporary urban inequalities. The underlying research implications are twofold, and demand first that the study of inclusion incorporates the study of exclusion and vice versa.

The cosmopolitan frame recognises that the increased capacities for power, economies and people to transcend borders be they national, urban or local is also a process that can increase boundaries between people and places. Globalisation may increase connections and contact, but it also yields global inequalities and uneven competitions over resources (Beck 2007). Second, if we are to understand processes of belonging and estrangement, then everyday life is a primary medium to observe how people actually engage or disengage in difference. Through the global increase in migration and urbanisation, the city has become a primary space of both the overlap and contest of differences (Isin 2002; Sandercock 2003; Keith 2005). This urban phenomenon highlights the need for greater ethnographic understanding of the changing forms of social interaction and social space.

One primary measure of contemporary urban inequality is the increasing polarisation between the richest and poorest of city dwellers. This polarisation is evidenced in Hamnett's (2003) analysis of London over the last four decades, as the UK economy shifted from a manufacturing to a service base. The endurance of this polarisation is made apparent in recent research into social exclusion in the UK between 1998 and 2008 (Hills, Sefton and Stewart 2009). Indicators of disparity, including income inequalities and unemployment, raise key questions at the onset of severe economic recession in the UK as to the impact of economic exclusion on urban social life. The increasing difficulty in accessing resources to sustain secure work and life in cities, particularly on the part of the urban poor, had already been identified in the 1990s as part of an acutely uneven urban geography attributed to the restructuring of the global economy (Sassen 2001).

A marked inequality in income and access to resources is not a new condition for London, as is epitomised by the nineteenth-century studies of Booth (1886-1903) and Mayhew (1849-1850). However the effects of the substantial change in economic

organisation on urban society in London since the 1970s have resulted in concentrated patterns of uneven development and income disparity. Statistical records confirm the increased inequalities between ethnic groups and between spatial areas (Logan, Taylor-Gobby and Reuter 1992). In Southwark, the central London borough in which the Walworth Road is located, the National Statistics for 2001 indicate that 47 per cent of the population consists of a combination of ethnic minority groups (www.statistics.gov.uk 2007). In the English Indices of Deprivation for 2007, Southwark is ranked the ninth most deprived borough in London, with a number of wards ranking among 10 per cent of the most deprived in England (www.communities.gov.uk 2008). Detailed borough level analysis show that income, employment, skills and training, and children living in families on benefits were the primary features of this local deprivation (www.southwarkalliance.org.uk 2008).

Globalisation is also associated with the heightened spatial stratification of the city, where a focus in the area of planning, urban design and architecture is on the production of prestige through design (Gospodini 2002). A feature of this stratification is the speculative separation of the pre-eminent city from the everyday or ordinary city. The processes of place-branding and marketing, as well as regeneration through area, event or building, are shaped by an emphasis on the 'spectacularisation' of the city as the space of consumption (Jacobs and Fincher 1998, p. 252), associated with a proliferation of iconic projects and buildings (Sklair 2006).

But the fundamental question of who imagines the city, and whose realities surface in the divergent imaginations of politicians, developers, design professionals and city dwellers, needs to be positioned within the disparate realities of the global city. Hence the predilection amongst politicians and policy makers for an inventory of world cities, which privileges the capacity of a city in terms of its assets as a global service centre, and ranks cities including London as a 'World City' or 'Alpha City' (Beaverstock, Smith

and Taylor 1999), is deeply flawed. It is a singular view of economic success, unrealistically separated from other economic realities of London as a 'Divided City' (Fainstein, Gordon and Harloe 1992) and an 'Unequal City' (Hamnett 2003).

The relevance of the cosmopolitan frame to my research is the emphasis on the value of understanding how 'ordinary' people imagine and shape their local spaces, and what forms of social interaction occur in the current era of urban change and urban inequality. Within this frame, the local experiences of transition and social processes of inclusion and exclusion are connected to global mobility and economic restructuring. In addition, I will need to relate the appropriation of the small-scale, incremental formation of the Walworth Road and its aggregation of local imaginations to the large-scale regeneration efforts of a potentially prestigious development area at the Elephant and Castle, to the northern edge of the Walworth Road.

Spatialising urban difference: connecting social and spatial interaction

Features of inequality, flux as a prevalent mode of urban life, and transformations in social life and social space mark the impact of urban change and difference on contemporary ways of life in the city,. My exploration has focused on the social and spatial experience of difference, and I have viewed the socio-spatial interrelationship as crucial to both my substantive framework and methodological approach. Lefebvre's thesis in *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]) sits at the theoretical foreground of much of the research on how urban space constitutes and is constituted by urban society. Lefebvre defined the mutually constitutive production of society and space by expanding on the interrelationship of structured and lived space. His essentially Marxist emphasis is on the political struggle over space, and focuses on the tensions between how space is simultaneously shaped through official and individual action. City space is

constituted by the ongoing tensions between the regulation of space that defines where individuals and groups reside, and the processes of how individuals and groups reconfigure space through social interaction.

While Lefebvre is undoubtedly important for providing a theoretical footing for social and spatial research, I have turned to a theoretical base that yields clear directives for empirical research, and more explicitly for ethnographic observation. In this regard De Certeau's (1984) focus on the social significance of routine in everyday life, where space is regarded as integral to practice, is key. Like Lefebvre, De Certeau draws on the social dynamics that emerge from the urban tensions between conceived or planned space, and lived or spontaneous space. The social significance of the tensions between the ordered and contingent life of the city has directed me towards a crucial empirical stance, where the observation of everyday life is related to the historic structure of the city. In this sense it is not only space but also time that has become central to my ethnography, where individual experiences of the present and the historic structure of the past are explored as a continuum.

In particular I have relied on Simmel's focus on social form (1903; 1957 [1904]; 1949) and Sennett's performative emphasis (1977; 1996; 1999; 2004; 2008a; 2008b) in their analysis of the urban milieu. Simmel's work is rooted in the emerging metropolis at the turn of the twentieth century and, like Wirth, his exploration draws on the distinctions between the life experience in small towns and villages as strongly contrasted with the unprecedented scale of the modern city. It could be argued that his theoretical contributions are more social than spatial; however, his articulation of the nuanced forms of urban social expression is given particular quality through the expressive dimensions and location of his descriptions. With Simmel the reader is always positioned in a social space, and whether we are in a crowd, or face-to-face, we learn through the specific quality of a watchfully described experience.

In the following chapters I refer to my observations of social interactions between individuals and groups on the Walworth Road, and re-interpret Simmel's work *The Sociology of Sociability* (1949). In particular I explore 'the play-form of association' (1949, p. 255) or the art of social interaction, which regulates conduct and allows for understandings to be shared and differences to be raised through inherently tacit forms of communication, including etiquette, conversation, humour and attire.

Sennett's work on the urban milieu (1992 [1977]; 1996) forefronts the integral relationship between urban bodies and public space through his distinctive combination of historic and ethnographic views of *being* in the city. While De Certeau (1984) worked with the conceptual premise of practice and space as integral dimensions for understanding everyday life, Sennett expands on social performance in public space as a key dimension of public practice, and as a located expression of exposing and refining who we are with respect to self and other. In *Flesh and Stone* (1996) his configuration of 'the public' draws on public performances established within the context of explicit political structures with clear or commonly understood ideologies and codes of participation. For example, Sennett's analysis of the performance of rhetoric in Ancient Greece is connected to the politics of *being* democratic. But how does our conceptualisation of the codes and spaces of public performance alter, when we move away from cultures explicitly structured by politics, to heterogeneous cities where experiences of public life are not only more diverse or plural, but where political structure is more fragmented?

In understanding how diverse urban citizens are able to actively participate in contemporary urban life, there is an argued shift away from a binary conceptualisation of 'public' versus 'private', as well as a consensual or collective base to the definition of public. In *Everyday Urbanism* (Chase, Crawford and Kaliski 1999), the theoretical and empirical focus is on the ordinary spaces or 'counter-publics' in which diverse groups

are able to engage in everyday urban life. Similarly, Amin's argument (2002) for the role of 'micro-publics', formed in response to racial and ethnic confrontation in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the UK in 2001, displaces the city's formal public spaces as places in which engagement across ethnicity and culture fails to occur. Counter-publics and micro-publics are local spaces in which social life is sustained by regular and repeated acts of exchange, including workplaces, schools, youth clubs and community centres. Such shared spaces where different individuals participate in common projects are the basis of Amin's premise for the effective engagement between different ethnic and cultural groups.

Sennett's recent essay *The Public Realm* (2008a) connects the social engagement between strangers to the small and local spaces in which people both meet and learn. In relating the informality of membership to the social processes of participation and belonging, Sennett's key question is what kinds of urban systems are responsive to the inevitability of change? The capacity for spatial adaptability is explored as a baseline for allowing for social adaptability. Ideas of social membership that are vested in equilibrium and integration are replaced by a regard for instability or the fertile border zones or edge conditions of interaction and mutability. Questions for my thesis arise as to whether living with difference is largely negotiated through localised interactions, and what role the main street plays as a social conduit. Does the street, itself an edge or an in between space, contribute to social engagement across diverse individuals and groups, and do the small shop spaces, themselves edges between a public and private world, play a role in sustaining informal social membership?

The following section of this chapter focuses on the substantive concerns of methodology and how to explore experiences of difference within local urban contexts. By referring to seminal fieldwork studies, I raise questions of how ethnography frames difference and reveals or submerges the relationships between structure and agency,

and between the global, the urban and the local. I make connections between substantive findings and methodological choices by exploring the consequences of how the unit of research is established, how the study area and social group are defined, and which methods are selected to both extract and represent data.

Observing urban difference: ethnographic perspectives of social and spatial interaction

In focusing on the everyday practices within local worlds, the theorists of ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms have underscored the need for more empirical and specifically ethnographic understandings of social and cultural interaction. Calhoun (2002) calls for a focus on 'lifeworlds' and an understanding of the multiple social memberships that form as much out of residing, working and recreating as from locality, community, ethnicity and religion. Keith (2005) emphasises the need for the 'double act of scrutiny' (2005, p. 13), both a close, ethnographic engagement, and a broader contextualisation of the historic and contemporary dimensions of change. In this section I select a variety of ethnographies to ask what the situated process of observation tells us about the lived experiences of urban difference. Because my thesis emphasises the socio-spatial relationship as my primary lens for connecting difference and change, I also ask whether the field of urban ethnography renders views of social interaction in which spatial organisation and expression is given as much consideration as the social.

When Willmott and Young (1957) wrote their seminal comparison between working-class life in the established urban neighbourhood of Bethnal Green and the New Town at Greenleigh, they stressed the integral relationship between social and spatial networks that are refined within local areas over time. Their observations in Bethnal Green revealed the roles of pubs, small shops and neighbourhood streets as part of

the collective medium of social life. By contrast, their interviews with the Greenleigh residents, who had been rapidly displaced from Bethnal Green as part of a large-scale, post-war regeneration effort, articulate a deep sense of a social interregnum. The gap had resulted from a truncation of social networks that had depended on the propinquity of space and continuity of time.

The official urgency of the delivery of new post-war housing at Greenleigh had entirely outpaced a more gradual emergence of a social environment. The social life that had been severed from its previous locality at Bethnal Green would need time for reinvention in response to this new spatial and social reality. These ruptures in the continuity of social life raise the issue of the effect of rapid change on social life in local areas. It also highlights the mismatch between the official understanding of how to conceptualise and deliver spatial resources, from the very different processes of sense making that local residents employ to appropriate and reshape their local worlds. This tension inherent in place is analysed by Rock (2001) who argues that local place is both a position and condition structured in relation to the city and a series of processes in which the sense of place is perpetually re-defined by the activities of its inhabitants.

Hobbs' (1988) ethnography of working-class life, entrepreneurial culture and policing in the East End of London in the 1980s is distinguished by an analytic capacity that integrates the observation of individuals and groups in a local area with the historic structures and institutional mechanisms of power which transcend the local area. In Hobbs' words, a sociological account of local life relies on a layered articulation of vernacular experiences or 'local vocabularies' as well as the impact of 'a firm, structural base' (1988, p. 2). Hobbs integrates these layers through exploring histories of work practices in the East End alongside the emergence and demise of the London Docks. His ethnographic account of policing and villainy effectively reveals the lived experiences of control and transgression, and structure and agency. It also points to

the significance of locality in the formation of culture and the particular connections between culture, place and work practices as the collective ways of life that are integral to collective forms of labour and livelihoods.

Within the crucial explanatory task of integrating the forces and experiences of everyday life lies the question of how to reveal differentiated experiences of urban change. Dench, Gavron and Young's study (2006) *The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict* is a return to Spitalfields fifty years after Willmott and Young's study, and explores urban change with a focus on immigration. The structural aspects of their account are well developed, beginning with the history of immigration from the Sylhet district in the area now known as north-east Bangladesh. They draw out the effect of Britain's colonial history by connecting the severance of the trade route between Sylhet and Calcutta as a result of partition in 1947, to the scale of immigration from Sylhet to East London from the 1950s onwards. The authors also analyse the effects of change through the allocation of social housing by way of the 1977 Housing Act, in particular the primacy given to homelessness as a measure of need, over the length of time spent either in the area or on housing waiting lists.

However, the strength of their research into causal effect is only partially matched by their interview material. We are introduced to individuals as 'characters', and while extensive transcript material is included, we are not given a fuller sense of who these people are outside the frame of the interview. This leaves the reader with little understanding as to who these people are, and how the complexity and variability of their social lives are experienced. Social contestation is explored primarily within the context of homes and schools, two areas of publicly allocated spatial life over which there is limited choice. The possibilities of social overlap within other spaces are not fully addressed, delivering an account of change, immigration and housing allocation that is focused on contestation over limited public resources. By comparison, Parker's

(1983) collection of interviews on a south London housing estate in the 1980s is without structural analysis, but delivers a non-stereotypical account of life on the estate that is sustained by the variety of its multi-vocal emphasis.

The varied approaches to the observation of social life in these studies, in particular the differing approaches to engaging and representing social issues through individual voices, raises the issue in researching difference of how to capture differentiated views of social worlds. Comparison potentially offers a multi-focal perspective, as shown in Back's ethnography (1996) of racism and multi-culture in different youth centres within two physically proximate but distinctly different social housing estates in South London. Back situates his account by contrasting the differing histories of regulation and allocation in the two social housing estates, and contrasts this with the varied social encounters experienced by young people in the two respective localities. His comparison of 'Riverview' as a historically white working-class area, and 'Southgate' as a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, points to the structural tension generated for example by the housing allocation system. But unlike Dench, Gavron and Young's 2006 study, Back's deep ethnographic pursuit reveals the variability and volatility of individual expression and group cohesion.

While meeting and mixing between young people emerges out of the local spaces of 'school playgrounds, youth clubs and street corners' (Back, 1996 p. 123), the frameworks of reference that young people use to interact, imagine and innovate are shown to be multiple. Back's comparison reveals both the locality and fluidity of urban youth culture and social life. Spatial categories like neighbourhood or social categories like ethnicity or class exist within the multiple frameworks of these young people's references. But Back also reveals their relationships with culture networks that cross national and urban borders. From Back's study deduce that social space is both fixed and fluid: while social activity happens 'in' space and 'in' a locality, young people's

cultural affinities are also developed across time and place, including, for instance, their references to black Diaspora and American cultures. In Back's thesis, social space is both deep and wide, saturated with layers of history, and connected to the networks of people and places across local neighbourhoods, cities and nations.

Alexander's (2000) ethnography of a group of boys in a local south London neighbourhood is both multi-vocal and multi-sited. We come to know the boys through the institutional setting of their youth centre and also through a range of spaces where they develop their public and private persona, including school, home, college and work. Alexander shows how the boys adopt a variety of behaviours and modes of expression as they learn about themselves and their friends. Her account, developed over a five-year fieldwork period, yields the social codes of solidarity as much as the inconsistencies and contradictions that are integral to individual exploration. However, Back's and Alexander's accounts both focus on urban youth. This begs the question of whether the concept of individual and group fluidity is equally applicable to older, more established age groups, whose lives and livelihoods may be more invested in place, and whose affinities or solidarities may be more entrenched.

Do we gain a different sense of public space and of public bodies, through ethnographic observations of social interaction? What do we learn about public space and bodies in contexts of urban isolation and marginalisation? The seminal urban ethnographies of street life in American cities examined in this thesis (Whyte 1943; Liebow 1967; Anderson 1999; Duneier 1999) present not only the segregated arrangements of people and space, but also the social consequences of lack of opportunity, mobility and participation that are key to belonging. Of significance for my thesis is the location of these accounts on the street and the agile, adept and imaginative repertoires that are developed on the street through social interactions both in groups and with passers-by. These ethnographies also articulate a counter-

culture, or what Liebow (1967, p. 213) portrays as 'a shadow systems of values' adopted by groups within the limited confines of the neighbourhood or categories of race, ethnicity and income. Because of the reality of spatial and social dislocation, Anderson suggests that these repertoires and values are also fragile, and represent not simply the culture of the subaltern, but the marginalisation of people from participating in the full prospects of the city.

Work prospects, the practices of legal and illicit work as well as the practices of waiting for work are primary anchors for the analyses of social interaction and inclusion in Whyte's (1943) *Street Corner Society*, Liebow's (1967) *Tally's Corner* and Duneier's (1999) *Sidewalk*. The pertinence of these studies for my research relates to questions of what kinds of sociability emerge out of entrepreneurial activity that locates on the street, how the acts of selling and buying involve engaging a public who is passing by. Do these combinations of skills, mercantile and social, lead to particular forms of interaction and social space?

Duneier's (1999) participant observation amongst a group of book-sellers in New York on the pavements of Eighth Street, Greenwich Avenue and Sixth Avenue explores the structural conditions and social experiences that intersect to make these sidewalks a 'habitat'. Duneier reveals the different embodiments of social roles that emerge in these public spaces that are regulated by both official mechanisms and group organisation. Although in this case the entrepreneurs occupy an informal or marginal status in terms of the city's regulation of sidewalk trade, Duneier analyses the value of their engagement through 'self-directed entrepreneurial activity' (1999, p. 317). He regards these work practices as a crucial form of belonging, in spite of persistent urban inequalities and official regulation of defining who has the right to the city. Public contact, encounter and exchange are key to Duneier's thesis, but so too is the idea of

work as a primary form of participation in the city, as a practice of ordering one's daily time around the pursuit of income, skill and social position.

Duneier's intimate focus on individuals also highlights the role of persona in the organisation of group life, and particularly the key role of the 'public-character' (1999, p. 6) as one who actively takes on a highly engaged position in local life on the street. In both Jacobs' (1961) and Duneier's analyses, such individuals play a key part in how individuals and groups conduct social life in public space. While public characters don't necessarily provide formalised regulation, their persona acts as a form of chaperone in different social situations. The notion of public characters and persona remains relevant for exploring the directive social roles played by either proprietor or customer in the small shops on the Walworth Road.

Whyte describes North End in Boston as a place both proximate to and detached from the mainstream city: 'Cornerville is only a few minutes walk from the fashionable High Street, but the High Street inhabitant who takes that walk passes from the familiar to the unknown' (1943, preface). Whyte compares the pursuit of social mobility within a closely knit Italian community through illicit and legal work practices, regulated through the social organisation of 'the corner boys' and 'the college boys', and their respective spatial organisation on Norton Street and in the Italian Community Club. On the street, social position and ranking is established through a reciprocal process of enactment and judgement. Expression, behaviour and the use of status symbols all serve to construct social ranking. By contrast, conduct was equally crucial to the organisation of the Italian Community Club, where formalised conventions of constitutions and by laws served to regulate group order.

These seminal street-based ethnographies highlight the crucial role of everyday spaces in sustaining social life. In differing ways they define the street as the public

setting for social encounter, and represent street space as a place of refuge and opportunity for those on the edge of society. This is partly because the street is a comparatively accessible public space without excessive restrictions and regulations - one of the few places in which marginal individuals and groups can congregate. These ethnographies also reveal the street as a space for being public as the place to pursue and enact social position and prestige. The spatial constituent of these ethnographies is essentially articulated through social organisation, that is, the organisation of space is often made less explicit. In addition, the way the reader is given a view of the social and spatial overlap is largely through a textual rendering.

This is exemplified by Whyte's diagrams of how individuals in social networks are connected (figure 1.1). Individuals are coded diagrammatically by social type, and although connecting lines between individuals represent the 'path of interaction', we have little sense of the social form or physical expression of these interactions. As the spatial dimensions and physical context of these connections are essentially absent, it is difficult to read the social relationships between the individuals without the supporting text. Whyte's diagrams are arguably sociologically instructive in that they emphasise the social organisation of individuals and groups, and are therefore possibly legible to the sociologist. But as an architect the diagram appears devoid of physical context, thus depriving the reader of the important spatial and social nuances that help to preserve the social organisation.

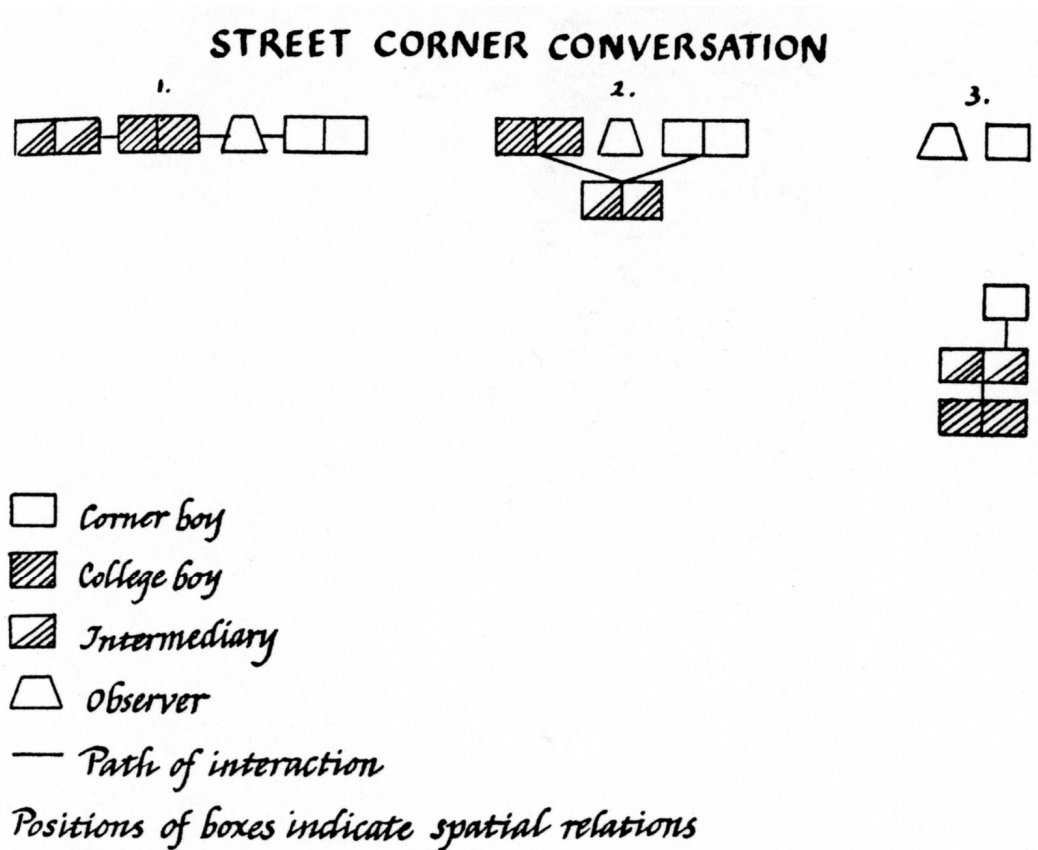


Figure 1.1 A typical diagram of social networks in Whyte's ethnography (Whyte 1943, p. 95)

By comparison, Duneier's (1999) ethnographic exploration is carried out alongside Ovie Carter's photographs of the integral social and spatial dimensions in *Sidewalk*. Duneier indicates that this visual information was central to his process of both understanding and representing urban life on the street. In the genre of documentary photography, these images are not explicitly analytic, rather they are suggestive of time and place, and require of an audience that they are carefully read and felt, the meanings revealing themselves more slowly than the first glance yields. I started to compare these different forms of visualisation with images of streets that I was familiar with from my set of architectural references.

As an architectural student I had been impressed by the visualisation of the 'roadside eclecticism' of the Las Vegas strip in *Learning from Las Vegas* (Venturi, Scott Brown

and Izenour 1991 [1977]). The project was conducted within a two-week fieldtrip and follow-up studio at the Yale School of Art and Architecture in 1968. Their exploration worked with the idea of eclecticism itself – the dense proliferation of expressions aggregated with a linear space. The graphics took the form of untidy overlaps, film-like sequences and collages where formal spatial categories rather than random surfaces established the sense of urban clutter (figure 1.2). But despite the rich variety of visuals, the graphic content essentially portrayed an emphasis on form and surface, and not on the social worlds that also vitalised the architecture of the strip.

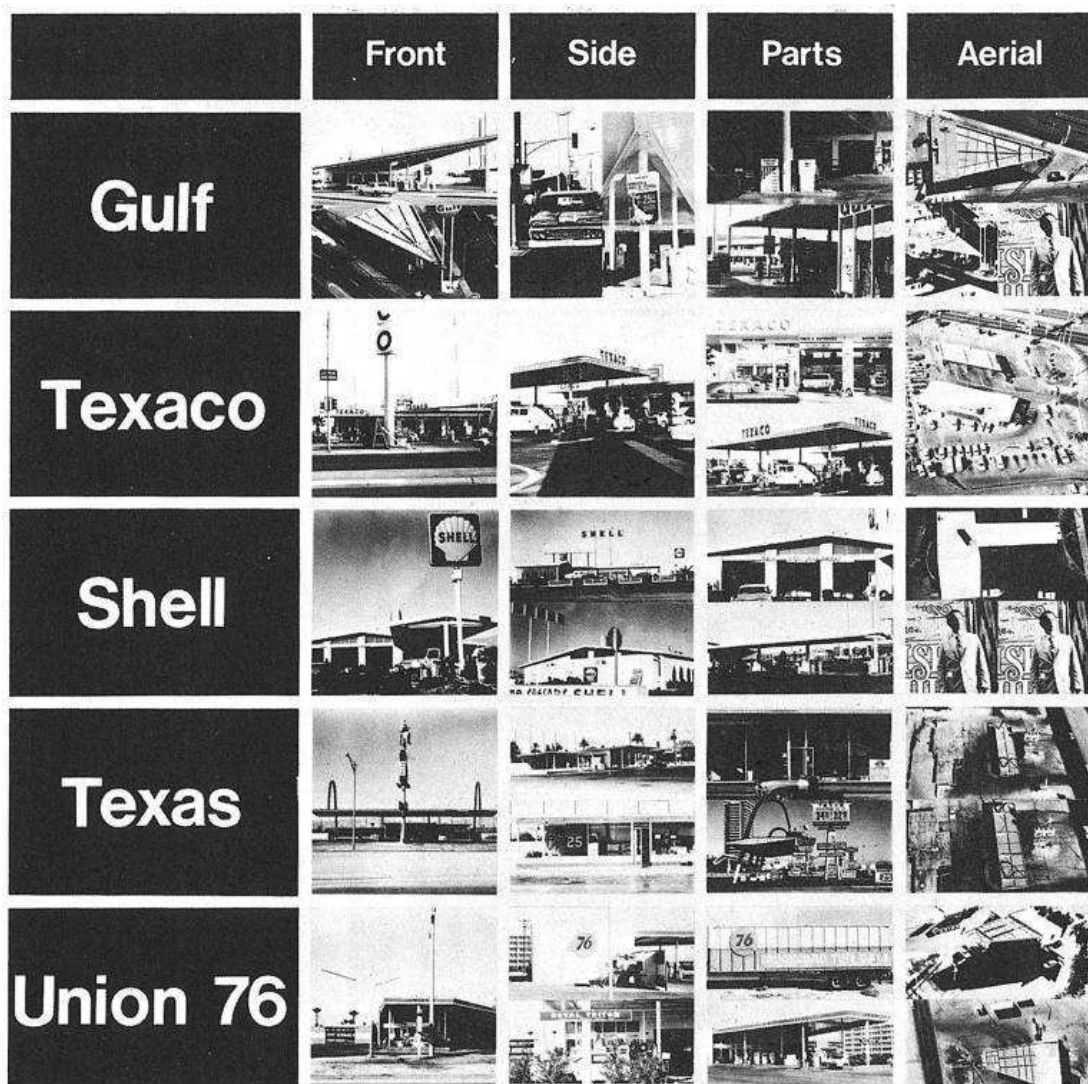


Figure 1.2 The collage of urban forms and surfaces on the Las Vegas Strip (Venturi, ScottBrown and Izenour 1991 [1972], p. 43)

Conclusions

I started this chapter by reviewing how difference is framed in times of profound urban change. As my thesis essentially explores contact between different individuals and groups, I focused on the two divergent ways that social interaction is framed through the lenses of heterogeneity and ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms. I highlighted the conceptual relevance of the new theoretical directions in cosmopolitanism, specifically the emphasis on social interaction as formed and refined in local places in the course of everyday life. The cosmopolitan lens also insists on the connections between social life and the broader forces of economic and social change. A primary task of my thesis is to relate the nature of social contact on the Walworth Road to the impacts of change over time.

The body of this chapter was concerned with how interaction is conceptualised in its social, spatial and physical dimensions. While I briefly outlined the formative value of Lefebvre's and De Certeau's conceptions of social space, I emphasised the empirical directions offered in both Simmel's and Sennett's work on the experience and expression of social and spatial interaction. These two bodies of work, in particular Simmel's ideas of sociability, and Sennett's thinking on the public realm and the role of open systems, will be explored across my empirical chapters. Finally, I selected different ethnographic lenses to understand the relationship between how difference and social contact is observed and portrayed. I argued that although urban ethnography focuses on social life, spatial and physical relationships are key to our understanding of the context of social life. In the following chapter, I develop my approach to researching the social and spatial experience of urban change and difference, and outline a combination of ethnographic and visual methods for revealing the complexities of social interaction.

Chapter 2

Exploring a multi-ethnic street

Research is a process of exploration and communication: both a finding out and a revealing. In his book *Telling about Society*, Becker (2007) raises the key issue of the interpretive space created between the writer and the reader, and in the process of representing society he considers the form and purpose of different modes of telling. What, for example, is the meaning of the quantitative regularity of the census table and how might this differ from the way a reader interprets an untitled photograph? Becker introduces questions for the researcher about the space between the writer and the reader in which there is sufficient room created for interpretation, and for the complexity of social meanings to surface. But at what point is it appropriate to limit or to expand this interpretive space when representing society, and how do selected modes of analysis and representation alter this space? The purpose of this methodology chapter is to address the related issues of how to observe, understand and re-present difference from the vantage point of everyday life on the Walworth Road.

I focus on researching difference in the contemporary city through the mode of the narrative and explore how it combines with ethnography to situate and potentially expand our sense of social life in a local place. Stories depend on the reciprocal engagement between performer and observer and reader and writer, and their currency is derived from the acts of repetition and reinterpretation as a way of conveying meaning. Telling and listening are human acts, and therefore stories are not primarily objective or factual renderings of 'the truth', rather their pertinence lies in the

subjective sense of 'ringing true', of conveying meanings that capture relationships between people and circumstances.

I employed the oral, auditory and visual forms of storytelling as an empirical approach to understanding social and spatial expressions of difference on the Walworth Road. In my process of listening, looking and retelling, I aim to compile and interpret a collection of multi-vocal expressions from an array of people on the Walworth Road. Central to this chapter is also the question of how the 'serious true fiction' (Back 1996) of ethnography and the 'social drama' (Turner 1981) of the narrative connect individual experiences of the local world with the broader relationships of how mixed and fluid urban societies are shaped (Marcus 1995; Burawoy *et al.* 2000).

I started my research with a place – the Walworth Road – rather than with a particular group of people. Although this is contrary to many seminal ethnographies that explore particular social groups in the urban street setting (Whyte 1943; Liebow 1967; Anderson 1999; Duneier 1999), I had no specific, identifiable group on the Walworth Road to begin with. Should I have elected to focus on a particular group on the basis of age, class, race, gender, kin or profession, how would I develop an understanding of the relationships *between* diverse individuals and groups? Equally, if I contained my unit of analysis to the street as a limited stretch of physical space within a local area, how would I explain the street's connections with the city, and with people and places beyond the city? At the outset, I found it difficult to define an explicit social group, or a contained spatial area as a unit of research.

A further purpose of this chapter, then, is to explore alternative ways of understanding and defining the contingent aggregations of people within a local place. This is the essential challenge of researching complex objects of study, and by definition composite units of analysis. The narrative or story itself, rather than analytic categories

or social types, provides a medium to incorporate the palimpsest of everyday life: an infinite layering of past and present, here and there, power and experience. The narrative is also the mode that reveals complexity: the performed mixtures of individual truths that are part real, part remembered and part imagination. The narratives in my research take different forms, and are as much about words and gestures as about positions in space. By combining my architectural and ethnographic interests in understanding how different people express themselves within the medium of urban space, I have sought ways of analysing social and spatial interactions. Drawing, photographing, listening and talking have all been integral to my observations.

In this chapter I expand on the process of telling about a multi-ethnic street. I pursue the conditions of the palimpsest of place and the complexity of social life through the methodological approach of layering. Specifically, I explore the layers of *experience*, *time and place* that give emphasis, sequence and locality to this collection of stories. In the first section on *experience* I explore the ethnographic balance between 'voice' and 'evidence'. I raise methodological challenges of how to avoid the reproduction of stereotypes in fine-grained research, as well as how to manage the entry of emotion into the fieldwork process. I then focus on *time* and the connection between past and present. I explore how to write about the diverse histories of the Walworth area, as well as how diverse experiences of the past resurface in experiences of the present. Finally I look at how spatial and social boundaries are invoked in fieldwork conversations and observation through place-oriented narratives. I introduce the method of juxtaposing places to relate the transgression and re-inscription of boundaries that emerge in everyday life, to the symbolic order of a place shaped by systems of power.

Experience, the emphasis in telling

I started my fieldwork in Nick's Caff, the space on the Walworth Road that I was most familiar with. I put on clothes that were smart enough to look as if I was serious but casual enough not to appear too out of place. I walked a few blocks from my home to reach the Caff. Although I would be researching my own backyard, this was new territory for me. Not only was I a newcomer from South Africa, I am an architect and a stranger to ethnographic research. It is also important to admit to an uncomfortable heritage – I grew up in the height of South Africa's apartheid years in privileged, segregated, white suburbia. Although my practice as an architect later took me into the South African townships, I had never lived in a remotely mixed, let alone urban, environment. And then I moved to the Walworth Road.

I cannot pretend that the street made great first impressions, and the messy collision of people and aesthetics, interspersed with the unforgiving concrete mass of large social housing estates, was a new experience for me. However, I was soon drawn in by other qualities, most essentially the diversity of people working on, living next to and using the street. I was presented with a mixed street which, while undoubtedly full of its own frictions, was working as a place in the city for a wide range of people. The Walworth Road also presented a collection of urban spaces that had not been overtly designed by the deft hand of architect or urban designer, but rather by the appropriations of the different people whose lives and livelihoods have shaped this street. My initial curiosity grew into a need to explore the spatial and social dimensions of the Walworth Road, with the aim of reaching an understanding of the everyday experiences of difference. I am aware that my curiosity was partly driven by my personal interest in difference, and that my exploration would need to avoid a 'romantic fascination' (Burawoy *et al.* 2000) of this multi-ethnic street, or worse still a 'liberal complacency' (Armstrong 1998), which might reduce the complexities of such a place to its stereotypes.

Voice and evidence

A fine-grained approach such as ethnography potentially serves to question the coarse or generalised overview of the stereotype, not only by making the representation more particular, but also by opening up the exploration to more individual variables. Unlike the quantitative research process, in which parameters and variables are defined and controlled at the outset, ethnography relies on what Liebow (1967) described as 'the snowball effect', where the conversations and contacts established early on in the fieldwork, lead to further research directions and findings. This individual variability raises methodological questions of validity, both on the part of the researcher's filters and of the subjectivities of those researched. For example, how does the researcher responsibly go about finding and analysing the myriad of individual experiences in a local place? What relevance do the highly situated individual experiences of local life have for telling us about the broader issues of cultural and ethnic diversity in the contemporary city?

In pursuing an understanding of culture from the base of how 'ordinary' people relate to their world, Williams clarified the writer's task: 'A writer's job is with individual meanings, and with making these meanings common' (2001 [1958], p. 24). Working from Williams' premise that 'culture is ordinary' and that meaning is located in the experiences of learning and sharing in everyday life, my research challenge lay specifically in how to make appropriate connections across individual accounts. In my process of grounding meaning in the individual perspective and then excavating these meanings within a broader perspective, my challenge was to find what would provide the balance between voice, variability and validity.

As outlined in the previous chapter, Bhabha (2004 [1994], preface) explores the emergence of cultural meaning in diverse urban contexts through 'personhood' or the individual experiences of urban life. Bhabha directs the reader to the analytic value of 'voice', and how narration reveals meaning both through the expression of personhood and how different individuals communicate their sense of self with others. He uses the frame of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' to connect the city as a postcolonial meeting ground with inter-cultural relationships that are vitalised by ongoing interaction and expression of personhood. The regard for individual voice and expression, specifically the perspective of the 'subaltern' or 'the underdog', has occupied explorations of both urban ethnographer and the *flâneur* (Jenks and Neves 2000, p. 4). However we can extract from Bhabha the significance of the act of recognition as both a cultural and political concern: the crucial importance of listening to and recognising 'the unheard' and of revealing everyday life often invisible to the lens of power. To extend this tradition, my thesis seeks to explore the commonplace as made and experienced through daily life, but invisible to or easily overlooked by the passer-by.

Bert Weir, a pensioner from a south London housing estate close to the Walworth Road, states:

I'm seventy this week, and in all my life so far no one's ever asked me my thoughts on anything. No one's ever thought I had anything to say that was worth hearing. I don't think anyone ever thought I had anything meaningful to say, I suppose. (Cited in Parker 1983, p. 255)

Bert's words capture the poignant omission of people and places rendered invisible by broader overviews of society. These perspectives serve to construct a generalised or official reading of society, through both the mode and form of representation, and through their authorisation and distribution. In ethnography the question of how to see and reveal the *invisible* is closely tied to the question of how to avoid the production of stereotypes.

However, for Wacquant (2002) the essential inclusion of individual voices in ethnography is an insufficient guarantee against the re-inscription of authorised stereotypes and 'public clichés'. In his acerbic review of three street-based ethnographies on poverty within the American city (namely: Duneier's *Sidewalk* 1999; Anderson's *Code of the Street* 1999; and Newman's *No Shame in my Game* 1999), Wacquant insists that the re-inscription of stereotypes around poverty and race emerge out of an analytic severance 'between interpretation and evidence' (2002, p. 1469). But what constitutes evidence for Wacquant, and what frames are appropriate for analysing voice in ethnography? Wacquant's particular insistence is that the frame of power is more analytically appropriate than the frame of morality: an individual's circumstantial relationships to the mechanisms of power adds explanatory depth to understanding an individual's formation of social values.

Wacquant's assertion that the ethnographer ought to give *evidence* to the likes of Bert Weir's *voice* seems justified, yet, in the context of my own research, it raised methodological questions about the explanatory balance between voice and evidence. Following on from Becker's regard for the role of interpretive space between reader and writer, I ask whether the voices from the field are sufficiently informative in their own right, and what understanding these voices give us beyond their individual form. In other words, what do we learn from the everyday social acts of 'storying'? What do people wear? Where do they sit? What gestures do they adopt? Which of these acts do they repeat individually or with others, and where and how might they break their customary patterns?

During my fieldwork I tried out various techniques of reaching different forms of expression, and worked with spontaneous conversation, time-protracted periods of observation, survey and semi-structured interviews. Through these different methods of observing social interaction, different modes of narrative emerged. As Creswell (1998)

suggests, ethnography is a tool for understanding what people say, do, make and use. During my research however, it became apparent that regular and sustained observation over time was also a tool for accessing the differences between what people say and do, a way of coming to see important contradictions and inconsistencies.

The visual and verbal surveys that I conducted along the length of the Walworth Road provided me with a broad overview of the range of social relationships between proprietors and customers across the spectrum of the street. These methods were useful as a primary filter, highlighting the variability of the shops, the differences in products and spatial layouts and the impact of time on social relationships. Early on in my fieldwork, in September 2006, I conducted a face-to-face survey of each of the independent shops along the Walworth Road (Appendix 1). After the two-week survey period, I had a basic introduction to 128 independent proprietors and their respective shop spaces.

However, the depth and substance of social interactions within these spaces escaped the survey format, and was only partially suggested in the informal or semi-structured interviews that I held with eight of the independent shop proprietors (Appendix 2). These eight proprietors, all male and mostly between forty and fifty years old, were selected on the basis that they had all been on the Walworth Road for over ten years. Three had occupied their retail spaces for over forty years as family businesses. These interviews generally lasted an hour, and the proprietors' respective measures of longevity emerged as a common narrative. Longevity was most strongly associated with relationships forged between proprietors and customers, often spanning over generations.

While simultaneously involved with surveys and interviews, I was engaged in an ethnographic exploration of two of the independent shops along the Walworth Road: Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop (Appendix 2) . How I came to select these two spaces was largely contingent, and it was only well into my fieldwork that the full significance of focusing on two different spaces became apparent. The justification for focusing on these two shops rested on a mixture of circumstantial, intuitive and practical and validation. I had used Nick's Caff prior to my research project; it was a place I frequented for its traditional English breakfasts and lunchtime roasts, as well as for passing conversations with Nick, its proprietor.

The Caff often had an interesting mix of people in it, and this, coupled with Nick's agreement for me to start my research in his Caff, provided me a base for my research. In Nick's words, 'It's fine darlin'. Once I'd vouched for you it's fine. Because you don't have the same accent as here, you're a bit of an outsider. You got a posher accent... and you don't have any tattoos!' Initially, many of the regulars in the Caff that I spoke to were introduced to me through Nick. These regulars had varied occupational backgrounds and places of origin, and their ages ranged between thirty and seventy years. Although I regularly spoke to Dorah, Nick's wife, my conversations with her were more fleeting as Dorah moved between the spaces of the Caff, the kitchen below the Caff, and their home above the Caff.

After a few months of sitting in the Caff for a few days each week, a customer suggested I should go and 'have a chat' with Reyd, whose bespoke tailor shop I had regularly passed by. I began my first meeting with Reyd much like I had begun the informal interviews with the other proprietors along the Walworth Road. But in Reyd's case, my more usual period of about an hour of conversation was expanded into four hours, with an open invitation to return. After many conversations with Nick and Reyd it became apparent that the practices and interactions in their respective shop spaces

provided an important variety of expressions of difference and sociability. Researching social interaction through its dimension of regularity, repetition and face-to-face encounters called for sustained observation of long time periods. Simply by being in Nick's Caff a couple of days of the week over the course of a year, and of numerous but more intermittent visits to Reyd's shop over a two-year period, ruled out the possibility of further protracted observations in other shops.

More importantly, these two spaces provided me with the opportunity of juxtaposing two parallel sets of stories. In both spaces, material objects and social relationships were made or formed on site, and I could align the work practices of Nick and Reyd with the social practices associated within their particular workspaces. Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop were both work places associated with immigrant communities establishing a work position in London at different points in history. The space and practice within the caff and the tailor shop both had particular cultural links with the urban working class, and both tailoring and running a caff were under threat or undergoing substantial reinterpretation in line with marked changes in contemporary urban production and consumption. Moreover, Nick grew up in Walworth and Reyd in Peckham (a neighbouring area), and they both described themselves as 'south Londoners'. In both cases, their sense of being 'local' was also strongly shaped by their particular connections to other places: Nick's parents had emigrated to London from Cyprus in the 1950s before Nick was born, while Reyd's parents had made their journey from Jamaica during that same decade when Reyd was a small child.

Emotion

The connection between work practices and changing economic circumstances, and social practices and changing social spaces in the city, would ultimately provide me with routes to address Wacquant's prerequisite for a correlation between interpretation

and evidence. However, I was still faced with the issue of how to deal with the entry of emotion in ethnographic research. Emotion as both a dimension of expression on the part of the researched, and a cause for critical reflection on the part of the researcher, had its most compounded effect in my observation periods that were conducted over long time periods. It was in this extended process that a combination of professional and personal relationships can, and did, emerge between the researcher and researched. Ethnographic research inevitably requires a certain closeness between the researcher and those researched, and the management of this relationship formed an important part of my research process.

Both Nick and Reyd became friends and were individuals with whom I enjoyed talking. This investment of time and, to an extent, of emotion opened up opportunities for different sets of questions and answers in fieldwork conversations, and was only revealed to me after spending months in the field. As I repeatedly saw individuals in the context of the Caff or Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop, I became most interested in interactions in these shop spaces. Partly because of my emerging research focus, and because I lived in the area, I elected not to meet individuals in their homes. This choice would have affected the kinds of conversations I had. I learnt, particularly in the Caff, that some of my best conversations with individuals followed after a few initial conversations – regularity and repetition became great research assets.

Perhaps partly due to my ethnographic inexperience, I was only comfortable after a period of time with pressing individuals about some of the inconsistencies that were apparent in their formal presentations of self and their informal interactions with others. This included a sharp disjuncture between individual views on race and ethnicity in the Caff that were broadly categorised by a references to 'the blacks' and 'the immigrants', respectively, contrasted with far more generous individual relationships amongst some of the Caff regulars. The incongruity between words and actions was an important cue

for understanding some of the complexities of social life on the Walworth Road. Moreover it is one that is the ethnographer's privilege, since it is accessed through the process of spending time and gaining trust.

It would have been easy, on the basis of their words to dismiss some of the people I spoke with as racists, but our respective investments of time and emotion had exposed me to some of their friendships and actions that seemed to counter-pose their use of racial lexicons. These incongruities demanded a more astute diagnosis into causal effects. Equally, it would be easy to build a view of the shops along the Walworth Road as social spaces where such societal inconsistencies were overcome through positive encounters and interactions. Admittedly this was an easier option – I liked many of the people I engaged with during fieldwork. But as Wacquant is only too quick to point out, ethnography is poorly served by replacing one stereotype with another, or in this case a view of the 'white-working-class racist' potentially replaced with a moral view of the 'hard-working, family-oriented public character' that could also be used to describe many of the people I met.

What Wacquant's analysis of the potential pitfalls of ethnographic research leaves out is the recognition of the voices themselves. There were moments in my fieldwork where I felt disturbed, particularly in the instances of the matter-of-fact delivery of bigotry. Undoubtedly, these bigotries required causal explanation, but in the research process it is equally crucial not to underestimate what stories elicit – a deep capacity to feel and to think, when we hear a powerful narrative. There is also the matter of the relationship between poignancy and meaning – the moment when the guard slips during fieldwork, and when things are said or done that are both infinitely revealing and impossible to forget. Much like Simmel's idea of the 'snapshot', these momentary fragments – a pause, a slip, a stutter – have crucial explanatory value since they reveal the overlap of thought, sentiment and emotion, 'The paradox of the snapshot is that

although it is literally like a fleeting image, it is also one that can be made to endure' (Frisby 1981, p. 103). Therefore while Velleman (2003, p. 6) points to the importance of 'the emotional cadence' in the structure of narrative, he draws an artificial distinction between emotional meaning and rational meaning. By separating emotional explanation from rational explanation, the researcher undermines the value of emotion as fundamental to the constitution of meaning.

Anonymity and consent

Ethnography demands that voices from the field are edited without sanitising them, a task made difficult by the trust gained while in the field. The methodological consequence of granting anonymity and gaining consent, as is a customary ethnographic practice, is not simply an ethical matter but also a substantive one. Anonymity directly relates to the researcher's capacity to reveal the full range of dimensions of a character, without exposing the researched to the risks of formal identification. By creating anonymity, the researcher can more easily expose illicit, unpleasant or difficult realities; anonymity protects the integrity of the research findings.

Constructing this anonymity relates to the extent to which a disguise is created, and in my research the degrees of disguise required were not clear-cut. I adopted different approaches for the street than for the individuals and small spaces within the street. As far as possible, all participants have remained anonymous, and in most cases individuals selected their pseudonyms with appropriate concern or humour. In spite of the veneer of this disguise, it is likely that people who know this street well, or who have detailed knowledge of particular individuals or spaces, would recognise themselves or others. Although I have renamed the shops, I have resisted subjecting the street and area to an alternative naming. This is because the actual location of the

Walworth Road in relation to the space of the city, and in relation to the structures of time, economics, politics and culture, is of key explanatory substance to my thesis.

In order to gain formal consent, I provided a single information sheet at the outset of each fieldwork interview (Appendix 3). The sheet contained an outline of my research and contact details of the Cities Programme at the LSE, to give participants a base of contact and the opportunity to retract their information from my research at any stage of the research process. Contrary to the firm suggestions offered at the Methodology Institute at the London School of Economics, I avoided asking for signed consent, since many participants were unwilling to be identified explicitly, particularly on paper. Equally I adopted site-specific methods of record, and I used a voice recorder on only a few occasions. Often, and particularly in Nick's Caff, I sensed the recorder would be invasive, and most conversations were captured through handwritten notes.

After the months of intensive fieldwork had passed, I asked Nick and Reyd to read through drafts of their respective chapters, and specifically asked for comments on inaccuracies, misrepresentations, or areas over which they might feel uncomfortable. I approached this exercise with trepidation, particularly over the possibility of offending either of them, and over the risk of being asked to address what I might view as unreasonable changes to the writing. I had set myself a bottom line; I would alter inaccuracies or details that would blatantly interfere with anonymity. This process itself was informative, particularly in the case of Nick who asked me to blur some of the pointedly specific details that might lead to easy recognition of the Caff by outsiders. More importantly, he made the suggestion that I might add, 'a bit more of the smell and taste of the place', by describing the kinds of food that gave the Caff its culinary and cultural distinctions. Reyd made only minor points of revision that were directed at my factual inaccuracies.

What remains crucial to urban ethnography is voice. In my research process the ethnographic exploration of meaning is not only the matter of addressing the 'why' questions about social and spatial relationships in the city, but also empathically the matter of engaging in the 'how' questions about voices and bodies and their expressions and experiences of urban life. By allowing sufficient research space for voices to surface both in the field and in writing up we gain a differentiated view of the immeasurable and often invisible emotional and social investments that people make amongst each other in their urban places. Issues pertaining to the organisation of social interaction, sociologically categorised through lexicons of insiders and outsiders, class, ethnicity and race are presented in human terms, from the standpoint of individuals and groups often on the edge of mainstream society and space.

When Duneier (2006; 2002, p. 1575) speaks of the 'capacity of urban ethnography to humanise its subjects', he raises the significance of voice as an explanatory mode in its own right. Through voice we learn about the city and about difference from the perspectives of differentiated views as opposed to generalised ones. This is not to say that the research connections to 'history, situation and structure' (Duneier 2002, p. 1574) are any the less important for this emphasis, and in the following two sections of this chapter I explore how to relate voice to the settings of place and time.

Time, connecting pasts and presents

How do individuals experience time in their local place, and how does the researcher in turn interpret relationships across the past and present? Two methodological issues are raised by these questions: the first concerns the experience of time itself and how the researcher interprets time as experience, as opposed to research knowledge gained through a chronological order of time. The second is the particular experience of time passed, and whether individual experiences of the past correlate with a

dominant or official record of history. These issues of how the researcher relates particular experiences and authorised knowledge of the past has bearing for my understanding of the experience of difference on the Walworth Road.

The presence of past experiences featured prominently in people's narratives. But the analytic significance of these narratives was not only that local knowledge of local places is saturated by accumulated experiences of a place over time. As was suggested by instances during fieldwork, the local knowledge of time and place transcended generations, so that experiences of parents or grandparents also entered into an individual's current understanding of local place: the experience of past and present were concurrent. Crucially, perhaps obviously, there were many different experiences of Walworth's past, and a key issue that emerged during my research was a sense of a lack of recognition of certain voices from the official records of the past. While this narrative of historic displacement emerged in some of my fieldwork conversations, it was also supported by the interviews in Parker's book, *The People of Providence* (1983), as well as in the more explicit themes of omission by race and by class, which form the basis of Bourne's (2005) and Collins' (2004) histories of Southwark and Walworth respectively.

Time passed

Prior to what I regarded as my formal period of a year of fieldwork, I started my preliminary research on the history of Walworth at the Southwark Local History Library. I was struck by the comparatively diminutive shelf space occupied by the section on 'Walworth', and I turned to the variety of official surveys in the form of maps, census data and *Post Office London Directories* that recorded how the Walworth area had measurably grown and changed over time. True to my architectural sensibility I started at the front of library in the map section, where I could engage with the familiarity of a

visual language. At that stage, it seemed appropriate to start with the conventions of a chronological representation of change over time. However, when I started my ethnographic fieldwork, a disjuncture surfaced between the varieties of diverse histories of Walworth as told by people on the street, and the singularity of the official records on the history of the area.

For a start, there was only limited official information on Black histories, what Bourne's book, *Speak of Me as I Am: The Black Presence in Southwark since 1600* (2005), reveals as the omission of the significant social and cultural contribution of Black people to the area over a period of five centuries: 'Black historical figures from the past had been made invisible, and there was a wall of silence around Britain's Black History' (2005, p. 5). There was also very little information from first-hand accounts that were officially available, particularly from the working class.

Collins' account *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class* (2004) attributes to the class-based organisation of power and knowledge the vetting of an account of history on the part of the professional class, particularly the stereotypical portrayal of Walworth's working class on the part of 'outsiders'. These gaps between official representation and different individual understandings of Walworth's past presented me with the dilemma of how to work with the significance of the past, and more specifically how to make connections between past and present. From a practical perspective, time was limited, and foreclosed the possibility of me undertaking any substantial form of historic survey. Nevertheless the exclusion of voice in the historic representation of Walworth's and Southwark's pasts remained a key concern for my methodology.

I began to pursue ways of relating official pasts and experienced pasts through voice. The co-presence of past and present was integral to the way individuals expressed

themselves during fieldwork conversations. There were also patterns, systems or events in the past that had absolute significance for understanding current ways of life and work practices. Marcus' (1995) pursuit of a 'multi-sited ethnography' is particularly useful for grounding the methodological challenge of connecting past and present. He outlines an ethnography that traces the movements of people and circulations of objects and symbols, a method of connecting across places that could be extended across time. The technique he suggests, amongst others, is to 'Follow the Life or Biography' (1995, p. 109), thereby pursuing the multiple sites that aggregate to form individual life stories. The application of this technique inadvertently emerged in my fieldwork, out of how people pieced together their life stories through references to a host of different places that had individual significance. Their collages incorporated different countries and cities they were connected with, neighbourhoods that they had lived in or passed through, and the settings of home, work and recreation that had deep bearing on their networks of people, place and time.

Following from this method, I explore the lived and historic dimensions of practice. In Chapter 5 I focus on Reid's practice as a bespoke tailor, through how the historic organisation of tailoring in London and the structure of the apprenticeship system, as well as the emergence of mod culture in the 1950s, all surface in his contemporary *modus operandi*. Similarly, in Chapter 4 the peculiar cultural combination of life and livelihood in Nick's Caff is traced from the histories of immigration and urban change in the UK in the 1950s. The 'institution' of the Caff is explored as a space symbiotically formed by the culinary skills of Italian, Greek, Turkish and Cypriot immigrants, and the changing patterns of consumption on the part of the working class. Although ethnography privileges everyday experiences and practices, its potential methodological strength is not simply a focus on immediate expressions and interactions. By following practices across place and time, the researcher traces the cultural and social formations that are vested in individual experiences (Calhoun and

Sennett 2007). In the chapters that follow, voices, gestures and sentiments are therefore interspersed with maps, census data and street surveys.

Rhythmic time

Time fluctuates. It acquires a rhythm that emerges from the regular and repeated actions of people using the city. While these fluctuating patterns of use in the city seem obvious, it was only through sitting day after day in Nick's Caff that I began to appreciate that the rhythms of time offered within one space offer opportunities for different patterns of sociability across the day. It became apparent that social spaces were deeply inscribed by the daily fluctuation of time, since it allowed for a variety of participants a choice; not only of where to go but also of when to participate. Had I only ventured in to Nick's during mid-morning, I might think the Caff was a very male affair, an eating-place for men engaged in physical work around the area. If I had popped in mostly in the evening, I might think the Caff home to the born-and-bred remnants of Walworth's white working class who tended to gather at a few tables around five on most evenings. And if I missed that brief half hour on Wednesday mornings, I wouldn't see Mustafa roll in in his wheelchair and order in his stroke-infected accent his usual 'lemon tart and 'cinno'. Rhythmic time was crucial for how difference was accommodated in the Caff across the day, and these nuanced shifts in social life were just as significant for how different people used the street.

I explored how social space is shaped by fluctuating patterns of use through the method of layering. My analysis of the Walworth Road, Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop includes both visual and textual representations of difference, through the layers of practice across the intervals of the day, as well as the public and private layering of space. Through words, I was able to describe each layer independently, but was unable simultaneously to show how all the layers together

enabled a social space that was at once both part and whole, both existing as the experience of one layer and the potential of all layers.

Through drawing, I explored how to make analytic images of these spaces that would show how each layer sat within a tier of layers, and began to represent a social space refined by the nuances of use and increments of time. These drawings of the tiered arrangement of people, time and space also allowed me to question the validity of separating the public realm from the private in the organisation of the Caff and the Bespoke Tailor Shop. The layered drawings of these two spaces reveal the combination of public, semi-public and private spaces as a symbiotic arrangement of social life and work practices, where borders between public and private life were less overt.

Crucially, rhythmic time also has consequences for what the researcher sees, or does not see, during their research. My research time was almost entirely conducted within the stretch of the day, usually from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, as this was when most of the independent shops were open, and this was a daily research period that I could manage within the realities of my own family life. However, Reyd astutely pointed out to me that my daily research time would influence my findings, 'What you see is the daytime street. It's a different place at night, you'd see a different street if you used it at night.' The researcher's time availability and research rhythm therefore has a significant qualification for ethnographic research findings. There is much I have not seen; I have mostly bypassed the few all night food retailers on the Walworth Road; I have not attended to the club and pub venues that come alive towards the late evening; I have walked past the old and new religious spaces; and I have only briefly visited some of the public buildings.

Towards the end of my research period there was a gang-related killing on the Walworth Road. Ryan Bravo was shot inside Costcutters in August 2008, his nineteen-year-old life lost to the tragic consequence of mistaken identity (<http://news.sky.com/skynews/home/UK-News/Ryan-Bravo> 2008). This event was amongst the moments when my enthusiasm for the Walworth Road, my daily basic pleasure in using this street, waned. This murder was an urgent reminder of the increase in the number of violent deaths of young people emerging out of what has been broadly described as gang-related killings that was first recorded in Peckham in south London early in 2007. The crucial issue of the emergence of youth-related crime and gang activity, and its possible relationship with a perceived lack of social and economic inclusion, of which a lack of work prospects is only one feature, will be raised only fleetingly in my research. Reyd is correct; there are many important worlds that make up the life of the Walworth Road that I have not seen and that are not part of the body of my research. My account and research process is partial, shaped within the time period of four years, and within the ethnographic rhythm of my research days when I came across people and spaces, and stopped to get a closer view.

The plot

From my ethnographic process, I learnt that individuals tended to sequence or order time in their stories by following a key concern or theme, and by tracing it – most often in a non-chronological manner – through a mixture of personal episodes and collective events, where some components were prioritised to emphasise a key point or meaning. Ordering time through central themes, or narrative, was seldom expressed through a linear chronological sequence, but more through an ongoing or continuous reverberation between past and present. This sense of continuous time or temporality was an important dimension of constructing meaning – where present experiences, memory and nostalgia were merged. Ricouer (1981) proposes an alternative understanding of the meaning of time in narrativity, and challenges the explanatory

value of time as a chronological or linear sequence. He defines three alternative 'temporal structures': 'within-time-ness' relating to direct experiences or occurrences; 'historicality' as the primacy given to the past as expressed through different ways of recalling the past; and the 'plot' as the meaning that coordinates the range of events and experiences accumulated over time.

Analysing narratives equally involves the act of tracing, and in my fieldwork this involved the iterative process of going forward and back from the street to the archive and back to the street again. To understand the plot is to relate the 'why?' and 'how?' questions, by connecting the circumstances in which certain narratives or themes persist with how expression is anchored (Somers and Gibson 1994). In the last section in this chapter on 'place' I introduce a primary narrative that emerged during my research around the meaning of local place. In particular I explore methods for understanding how people use place to situate or orientate their affinities with certain ways of life, and their sense of how they belong.

Place, telling 'within' and telling 'across'

In many of the conversations during fieldwork, different individuals made reference to who they were by describing where they were from. The stories that followed these descriptions were often less explicitly to do with origin or birthplace than with ways of life within a particular place. When individuals described themselves as 'a south London person' or 'a south Londoner', or occasionally when even more localised qualifications were given, such as 'My grandfather was a Peckham person', individuals related their captioning of self and place to the repeated, daily acts of living in a local area over a period of time.

However, fieldwork conversations also revealed that ways of life and understanding of what 'local' means are constantly re-orientated with change. Local places played an important role in providing a physical orientation for people's stories as well as an allegory for change. During fieldwork the forms of orientation through place varied, from narratives of being embedded or even 'stuck' within a local area or within a particular time period, to connections across the local area or across time periods to other places. How people oriented themselves through different invocations of place was expressed through what I will refer to as 'within' place and 'across' place narratives. An exploration of these descriptions of self as defined through local place, or what Newman and Paasi (1998) articulate as 'territorial narratives', extended not only to individual and collective expressions of localised ways of life, but to expressions of belonging, of inclusions and exclusions.

To analyse 'within' and 'across' narratives of local place, I make connections between situated stories and experiences, and ideas of *bounded space* and *layered space*. The pursuits of methodological directions in ethnography that address questions of how to engage with the diverse and fluid nature of urban change incorporate these ideas. Marcus (1995) views cultural and social complexity through the adjustable lens of 'multi-sited ethnography', which incorporates views across places; Hannerz (1997) explores connections across global cultures through hybrid cultures that emerge out of flows across boundaries; and Burawoy *et al.* (2000) investigate the global impacts on local life through 'flows', 'imaginings' and 'forces', explicitly linking experience to power. Specifically, I explore boundaries as the numerous social and spatial edges experienced within local places that are resistant to and/or responsive to change.

I conflate Sennett's (2008a) distinction between 'boundaries' as impermeable and inflexible divisions, and 'borders' as porous and lively spaces, since many of the boundary–border effects I encountered were opaque and difficult to entirely distinguish

between: sometimes during the course of conversation or observed social interaction, rigid social boundaries were crossed, and an interactive border area was entered into – people’s narratives and actions were often not clear cut, and marked differences between saying and doing could be simultaneously observed. In addition, many of the customers and proprietors on the Walworth Road had strong connections with other places, not least because of the waves of different patterns of immigration into the Walworth area over time, the more particular features of which will be expanded on in the next chapter.

Adjacent to the idea of place described and experienced through a series of boundaries is also the idea of a juxtaposition of places: the overlapping fragments of place brought together over global distances as spatially and visually expressed in the collage of surfaces on the Walworth Road. To understand the peculiar combinations of place used in visual displays and verbal narratives, I began to work with a series of drawings that juxtaposed different places in order to explore their connections or contrasts. These drawings worked in two ways: the first was to parallel two different scales of place, for example the local scale of the Walworth Road with the scale of the city, or with the global scale of the world. In the latter case, I could visually trace something as seemingly simple as the proprietor’s place of origin in the world to the proprietor’s shop on the Walworth Road. The effect of combining these two entirely different scales yielded the immediate visual impact of the plethora of connections between the local and wider world. Second, I juxtaposed maps and drawings of one selected place over different periods of time. This visual effect revealed either the persistence or transformation of a spatial order over time, and generated questions around what is resistant or adaptive to change as well as the kinds of institutions and forms of urban fabric that symbolise certain time periods.

'Within place' narratives

Looking for the social and spatial techniques that individuals and groups used to turn boundaries into borders or vice versa became an important part of my analysis: the exploration of how people transgressed or reinforced boundaries between each other. This was prompted through the individual 'storying' of boundaries and the verbal and body language, imagery and recall processes used to express these social edges inscribed in space. To understand some of the causal roots of boundary effects I also look to how places are officially organised over time, and how social and spatial boundaries around places have been authorised through political and economic endeavour. While the lived and authorised qualities of boundaries is central to introducing the Walworth area in Chapter 3, the task of this section is to introduce the methodological significance of relating the experiences of boundaries as observed from the field, with the regulatory effects of official boundaries over time, as analysed primarily from official archival data.

De Certeau (1984) acutely qualifies place 'as a practised space', continually defined by the routines and habits of individuals and groups. Similarly Suttles describes 'territorial groupings' as 'practices within a given territory' (1968, p. 7). But during my research a key question emerged of how to analyse ways that spatial boundaries and social groupings alter in response to change. In Hobbs' (1988) ethnographic account of the working class in the East End of London, he describes boundaries as socially explicit processes refined within a local and common framework of meaning:

They are defined by the inhabitants as *an alignment of commonly held strategies* [...]. The boundaries of an area are to be identified by observing the indigenous culture, and by noting at what point *the problem-solving devices* are no longer appropriate to East London, one may say 'there stands the fence'. (1988, pp. 86-8, my emphasis)

De Certeau's 'practice', Suttles' 'territorial groupings' and Hobbs' 'problem solving devices' all give to place a particular locale, within which a set of social practices arise.

I developed questions of how local practices are subject to redefinition in response to change, and why some practices are adjusted and renewed while others disappear.

During fieldwork I became aware that 'within' place narratives were formed as much by ways of life within a place, as by the constructed symbolic order of urban space, an aspect of social order that I will focus on in Chapter 3. I adopted a method of juxtaposing places to explore boundary effects as the experience of boundaries mutually inscribed by official regulations and lived ones. While my research primarily emerged out of an ethnographic view of everyday life, I found it necessary to juxtapose different orders and senses of place: a lived sense of place informed by structural forces; a connected sense of place where global changes are related to local life; and an uneven sense of place that explores the tensions between urban centres and urban margins. Through these juxtapositions I could address the question of how ethnography can be used to research change within local places, and while my focus was fixed on the reorientation of local places as narrated by individuals, the meaning of these particular experiences could also be connected to wider urban relationships. I came to understand 'within place' narratives of local boundaries not simply by looking at the boundary as an object, but as a process, the symbolic effect or authority of which is both reinforced and challenged by local practices.

'Across place' narratives

In exploring the expressions of difference in the city, what do we learn from the intimacy and immediacy of local life, and what do we learn from traversing distances across places? Hannerz (1997) raises these questions in the context of contemporary globalisation and transnationality, asking us to consider what is distinctive about the contemporary flows between people and places that might require us to alter our ways of viewing local life. Hannerz's analysis of 'hybridity' encapsulates not only Bhabha's emphasis (2004 [1994]) of the differentiated expressions of 'personhood' but also the

accumulative exchange of ideas or mixed and overlapping forms of everyday life and culture. Sandhu's (2004) analysis of how Black and Asian writers have imagined London makes valuable connections between mixed modes of life and mixed modes of writing; between the authors' experiences of their own difference in the city, and their composite representations of life, told through collecting, combining, mixing and layering, 'juxtaposition and collage are the ideal aesthetic modes for incarnating this higgledy-piggledy commotion of a metropolis' (2004, p. 259).

Hybrid expressions were evident in the surfaces, spaces and social life of the Walworth Road: through the visual modes of eclectic signage and shop layouts; to economic modes of diverse retail activities within the shop spaces; to social modes of adaptive etiquette and engagement between diverse proprietors and customers. I found Sandhu's analytic reference to collage useful, as a way of both reading and, in turn, representing these layered and overlapping modes of expression. Collage also contains the idea of combinations of different things that compose some kind of a differentiated whole, potentially useful for thinking about the organisation of space and people within the small increments of shop space on the Walworth Road. The economic imperatives of staying in business seemed to demand combinations of entrepreneurial acumen and social skill where ways of life and livelihoods were intertwined: the Nigerian barber shop had carved out space from its male territory to include a nail bar run by an Asian woman; convenience stores and laundrettes let small areas within their shops fronts to offer telephone and mending services, respectively; the bakery aimed to sell bread to West Indian and English tastes; the regulars at Nick's Caff included a wide array of ages and ethnicities; and boxers, actors and assorted mod enthusiasts made their way across London to Reyd's for a sharp suit.

But Hannerz also points to other important readings of 'hybridity', where the global and urban flows that have resulted in the urban collage are often 'asymmetrical', and

produce an uneven urban landscape. I therefore also needed to question why certain individuals and groups had ended up in or had chosen to go a comparatively marginal area such as Walworth, as well as why they might remain there over long periods of time. The everyday collage of the Walworth Road needed to be seen in relation to its social and economic indices depicted by ward and borough, particularly its statistical representation as a London area that has a high crime rate, and a high level of welfare dependency.

Further, while the idea of a collage suggests a differentiated 'whole', everyday mixing was not always understood or felt by individuals on the Walworth Road as productive. When for example Mustafa, a local pensioner, positively claimed that 'Walworth Road is one of the best streets in Southwark – it's got all nationalities', Mike, also a local pensioner, gave a contrary perspective of the street, 'used to be our sort on the street, cockneys, most of them in the graveyard now'. To pursue an understanding of difference through the collage, it is not enough to explore the overlaps in the organisation of people and places. It is also necessary to pursue the different fragments, the array of histories and routes that individuals and groups have carried with them across places to arrive at the Walworth Road.

I worked with visual collage to explore ways of combining images, particularly the photographs of the Walworth Road that I gathered over my research. In January 2008, I photographed each shop front on the street, maintaining a set distance from each shop so that each front could be evenly and visually 'catalogued'. I resisted stitching these fronts together in two seamless elevations of the east and west sides of the street. This was largely because one never actually experienced the street in this way – it is inevitably experienced in small spatial portions or blocks, or as specific highlights or familiar destinations. Instead, I explored mixing the shop fronts, and rearranging them in a collage of sorts, a combination of pictures arranged by type, or use. This kind

of photographic collage of type allowed me to relate similar retail uses amongst the independent shops, but also allowed for a punctuated, regular visual rhythm, which expressed the significance of the repetition of these small increments of spaces along the Walworth Road.

Conclusions

As an architect, I have been compelled by the possibilities that belong to the act of making; how work habits oriented around the balance between time spent on the site and in the studio, and around preferred techniques or methods, all have consequences for how we see and what we make. This is no different from the ethnographer's conundrum of the balance between time spent in the field and time spent in the academy (Pearson 1993). Each stage, each process, has something to reveal, and has a deep bearing on 'the product'. Our substantive exploration is therefore always integral to our methodological one. As an architect I have also been intrigued by the relationship between maker and user. When users start to engage with the building, there are always surprises at what you as the architect could not predict: the ways that light transforms the space; where people gather; and how they value and appropriate spaces gives the building new meanings. My favourite buildings and spaces are ones where the imagination of the architect has not limited the imagination of the user. Becker's regard for the significance of the relationship between writer and reader, when 'telling about society', is one which insists on the value of interpretive space as crucial to obtaining a sense of the rich and complex layers that constitute social life.

The purpose of this chapter has been to ask what stories and 'storying' gives to our understanding of difference in the city. I have approached this question from two methodological perspectives: where the reciprocal process of telling, listening and retelling is central to the ethnographic method; and where stories and how people tell

them, through their voices, bodies and spaces, have primary explanatory value. However, in exploring the layers of experience, time and place, I have sought to show that while the microcosms of intimate expressions, small spaces and fleeting moments are central to my analysis, I have found it crucial to connect to how local practices emerge across time and place. The features of diversity and flux that encapsulate the contemporary city have driven my research, and are integral to the questions of how we come to see and explain difference through the social and spatial texture of the city.

My unit of analysis has become 'the everyday street', a phrase intended to incorporate the individual expressions of difference, as well as the aggregation of people and spaces along the Walworth Road. Undoubtedly, the ways of seeing developed as an architect have accompanied and informed me on what has been a journey into a new way of looking – the ethnographic view. Throughout my research process I have both consciously and inadvertently combined ethnographic and visual ways of exploring difference, focusing on how difference is manifested in social and spatial dimensions. In this chapter I have set out how to observe and represent complex social relationships, since the multi-ethnic street I have come to know is layered with multiple spaces and interactions. To see this differentiation, or to move away from or at least re-examine potentially static or homogenising categories such as 'community' or 'society', or public stereotypes like 'immigrant' or 'outsider', the individual voice is ultimately the base for my investigation.

A fine-grained approach such as ethnography questions the stereotype. But to know how differentiation occurs, where it emerges, and where it is celebrated or suppressed, one must follow the connections between individuals and their immediate lives to the range of places and processes that constitute the urban margin, in places such as the Walworth Road. Both the analytic and illustrative methods of juxtaposition, collage and layering have suggested following individual routines, rhythms and modes, through the

street, the neighbourhood, the city and the world. Because of the social and visual techniques of alignment, mixing and layering raised in this chapter, the representations that emerge in this thesis tend to be composite – they tend towards a differentiated view of the Walworth Road. Research inevitably presents a chosen or mediated view, and in no way can I separate my process of making, my selection of techniques and lenses, and my modes of representations from what I have found and what I have portrayed. The methodological significance of research, beyond the substantive findings, is to reveal a process of thinking or analysis, or, as Becker suggests, where the representation created by the writer raises questions and reveals varied and contingent forms of social expression.

In the following chapter, I expand on the narratives of place introduced in this discussion on methodology, and focus on how physical and perceptual boundaries become authorised. I explore the persistent boundary effects constructed over time by the mechanisms of power, and the transgression or re-inscription of these boundaries by individuals. The purpose of the following chapter is to establish a picture of the spatial and social context of the Walworth Road in relation to London, and to portray the diverse understanding of what constitutes local place.

Chapter 3

Boundaries and intersections on the Walworth Road

The street is typically an urban space for moving and stopping, a place to pass through in order to get to somewhere else, and a place to purposefully pause – to meet friends, to post a letter, to buy goods. In the overlaps between everyday life and livelihoods on the street, various social encounters are sustained. Patterns of street-oriented sociability emerge from the practices of different forms of moving and stopping: making, selling, shopping, walking, watching and sitting. In this chapter, I explore the Walworth Road as part of a macrocosm of global movement and intersections, as well as a microcosm of settlement within a local world.

To pursue the intersections of the experiences of both flux and stasis on the Walworth Road, I use a bifocal lens to view the street. The lens for distant viewing focuses on movement beyond the Walworth Road to observe the kind of street that emerges out of global patterns of mobility, displacement and connectivity. The lens for close viewing focuses on the Walworth neighbourhood to obtain a view of what it means to pause, settle or remain in a local place. I use both lenses because I suggest that social interactions and cultural expressions on the Walworth Road are related to the overlap of two essentially different urban experiences of movement and containment.

The demographic divisions drawn between Walworth's 'white, British persons' and what the UK national census data designates its 'ethnic minority groups' tells us little about the intersections between the processes of moving and remaining. Neither does it provide insight into the social interactions that emerge from the combinations of near

and far experiences of the world, nor the lived relationships between the local and global worlds. In this chapter I introduce the Walworth Road through an exploration of what it means for individuals to share street space, when some would have travelled distances across origins and nations to arrive at the Walworth Road, while others already living in proximity to the street may have seldom or never travelled. I investigate the Walworth Road as a frontier or a local borderline in which newcomers, travellers and established residents all confront the possibilities for and obstacles to engaging in a place of change.

There are two ways that I expand on the idea of a frontier with respect to the intersections of different individuals and groups on the Walworth Road. Through the *frontier as a space of change* I explore experiences of arrival and discovery as well as uncertainty. I trace Walworth Road's history as a transient retail space continually occupied and transformed by a range of newcomers since the 1800s. In researching the presence of migratory histories in shaping the street, I ask how difference is rendered visible or invisible. In particular I explore what visual skills are required to express and interpret cultural and social differences within the variegated display of spaces of the Walworth Road today. The frontier is seldom a *tabula rasa*; it is inevitably etched with histories, demarcations and ways of life. By contrasting transience with the *frontier as a space of boundaries*, I explore the idea of fixity in which there are spatial and social delineations that are historically pervasive and are therefore difficult to dismantle or penetrate. I focus on the persistence of historic symbolic boundaries in Walworth to raise questions around their impact on contemporary social interaction.

A key purpose of this chapter is to give shared analytic space to gathering as both a result of dispersal, such as migration or diaspora, and as a result of confinement, in the case of Walworth through the organisation of poverty. Although people living in contemporary cities may share everyday spaces in their neighbourhoods, including

schools, recreational areas, workplaces and streets, there is a tendency to research designated groups separately on the basis of race, ethnicity, class or migratory status. The intention of this introduction to the Walworth Road is to give emphasis to the intersections of individuals and groups (Brah 1996) who both move through and remain on this street.

Frontier as a space of change

There is a valuable body of literature that points us towards how to conceptualise difference in the context of a dynamic and disparate global world. In her essay 'The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier', Sassen (2001) emphasises the relationship between place, production and practice in the hierarchical organisation of space in the global economy. She identifies 'a new geography of centres and margins' (2001, p. 4), highlighting the centrality of global cities in the process of economic globalisation. Sassen also points to juxtapositions within global cities, of prestigious, service-oriented spaces of international finance, and marginal spaces occupied by those who have difficulty in accessing this formal sector. While the stratifications of urban economies, people and places are concentrated in global cities, Sassen argues for an understanding of the localisation of practices of production, moving away from the conceptualisation of 'otherness' (as immigration or ethnicity, for example) to 'newness'. Here the urban margin and its work environments potentially represent not only a diverse collection of entrepreneurial and cultural skills, but also the possibility for urban cultures to emerge through new work practices and forms of production.

How do we begin to observe or understand 'newness', and what methods of analysis and representation are able to capture the seemingly ephemeral experiences of arrival, discovery and transformation? During the course of my fieldwork, most particularly during the intense periods of observation, I came to think of the Walworth Road not as

an essentially linear place, but as a social and spatial labyrinth. The complexity of life on this street was initially obscured by my first impressions that had been informed largely by its visual surfaces; a one-dimensional reading of the street contained by my own aesthetic prejudice. The density of networks and connections, legitimate and illicit ways of being, entrepreneurial pursuits and the ongoing maintenance of a plethora of daily routines all happened behind the layer of what was apparent at first glance.

While these vital invisibilities are often obscure in any social space, they seemed increasingly significant for reaching an understanding of the Walworth Road, since its visual legibility is without the dominant repertoire of flagship stores, high street brand-names, or easily recognisable public spaces. On the basis of visual recognition or lack thereof, it is possible to overlook or dismiss the underlying value of apparently ordinary streets like the Walworth Road.

The confluence of origins and journeys

As an assemblage of small spaces adjacent to the public street, the range of independent shops along the Walworth Road provided a highly variegated research unit to observe not only the social forms of engagement between different individuals and groups, but also the responsive spatial modifications made by proprietors and customers over time. Questions that emerged early in my fieldwork related to who these proprietors and customers were, as well as how they might intersect on the Walworth Road. In spite of my ethnographic focus on individual experiences and small spaces, I found it necessary to juxtapose the Walworth Road with a larger context to begin to trace the variety of cultures brought to the street from across the world, as well as to picture the aggregation of multiple journeys that congregated on this street. Figure 3.1 is an analysis of the origins of the independent shop proprietors along the mile length of the Walworth Road. This drawing emerged after a face-to-face survey

that a colleague, Thresh, and I undertook a few months into my fieldwork in September 2006 (see Appendix 1 for details).

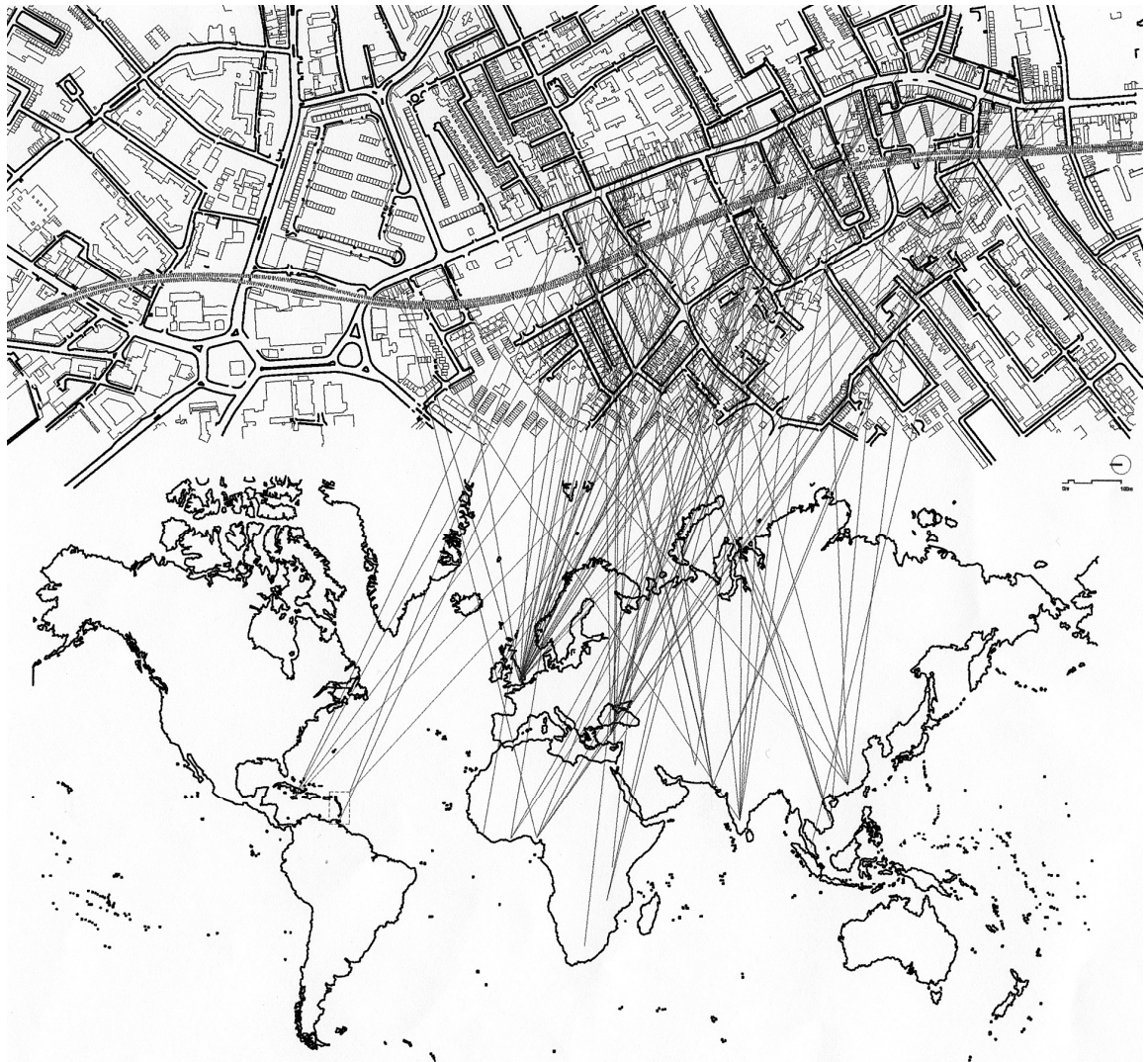


Figure 3.1 The juxtaposition of the global and local. A map of the Walworth Road is aligned with a map of the world, and shows the origins and journeys of the independent shop owners. (Fieldwork drawing 2006)

We spent two weeks walking the Walworth Road, I took the east side, Thresh took the west, and we recorded every unit along the street. We stepped into each independent shop to explain our task, and to ask three short questions of the respective proprietors: ‘How long has this shop been on the Walworth Road?’; ‘Is the shop owned or rented?’;

and 'What is the country that you were born in?'. Of the three questions, the one least readily answered related to ownership. To my surprise, there were only a few occasions when a proprietor was reluctant to answer any of the questions – either the proprietor was away or the proprietor or shop attendant was too busy or ill at ease to answer. In most instances, the proprietor, a family member or an associate was available, and we generally had a five-minute period of grace in which to interrupt the entrepreneurial rhythm.

From this initial survey we learnt that there were 227 units along the mile length of the street. Although these units were predominantly retail, they included a small scattering of public buildings and services, such as the Newington Public Library, the Cummings Museum and the Walworth Clinic. Most shop fronts ranged from approximately 4.5 metres for a single unit to approximately 9 metres for a double unit, indicating the density and comparatively small scale of the units that make up this retail strip. Over 60 per cent of the retail units were independent shops, neither belonging to a chain nor franchise, and in most cases during our survey the proprietor was directly engaged in the shop activities. Of the 133 independent shops we recorded on the street, we interviewed 105 of these, and discovered that there were over twenty different countries of origin amongst the proprietors, with no single place of origin predominating.

The subsequent drawing of our survey results intentionally juxtaposed the map of the Walworth Road with the map of the world, in order to emphasise the variety of connections between people and places and their convergence on a local street. Each of the proprietors' shop units on the Walworth Road was linked to her or his place of birth. Looking back on the drawing after the fieldwork period, a number of different relationships now seem more evident within this representation. I now see an image of classification, perhaps reflecting too much of a concern with where people have come

from. The more crucial research question that arose relates to how proprietors' origins or understandings of space, social etiquette and entrepreneurial skill are adapted to their lives within their respective places of work.

A map of the former British Empire is also evident, reflected in the high proportion of the proprietors' countries of origin being former colonies of Britain. Because this drawing has flattened out different time periods to equate to the present, it shows a singular or accumulative moment, and questions around the speed and scale of change, and what impetus this has on experiences of change, are not directly prompted. The two juxtaposed maps of Walworth Road and the World also connect the 'third world' or 'developing world' to the Walworth Road, by linking places in Africa, the Middle East and the East to microcosms on this London street. While South America would have featured prominently on this drawing should I have incorporated the Elephant and Castle proprietors in my survey, North America and Western Europe are largely absent from the pinpoint origins marked on this world map. This provokes questions of not only why certain individuals and groups end up in or go to certain places in the city, but also why they might remain there over long periods of time.

The confluence of origins, colonial pasts and disparate global development are some of the historic and contemporary themes of migration and diaspora that are evident when focusing on the places identified on the two maps. However, pinpointing fulfils only one convention of map reading, and involves locating and orienting oneself by finding markers on a map. If we were to read the map like a traveller, then our attention would shift to the distances between places, and the journey needed to undertake a particular route. By shifting focus to the plethora of orthogonal lines that criss-cross between the map of the Walworth Road and the world, questions emerge as to how these multiple crossings and connections of people are experienced. How do people manage their journeys between familiar and unfamiliar worlds, and develop their lives

and aspirations across these global and local 'scapes'? To focus on what kind of place and what kind of sociability emerges from these dense intersections of difference on the Walworth Road is to explore an interstitial urban landscape: the process of crossing; the convergence of the shared spaces of intersection; and the effort and imagination required to travel across geographic distance and personal familiarity.

My survey and ethnographic data suggested that the intertwined relationship between the practices of proprietors and customers on the Walworth Road is insufficiently captured by the idea of 'shopping' or consumption as a contemporary cultural and social activity. Rather, this relationship is revealed through a combination of everyday practices including the work practices of the proprietors and their respective acquisition of acumen and skill, and the habitual practices of the customers whose consumption is closely tied to day-to-day routines within a local place. Regularity is at the core of the social practices on the Walworth Road. Social interaction and the relationships between proprietors and customers inevitably vary, and my chapters on 'Nick's Caff' and 'Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop' deal with these differing relationships in detail.

In this section, I introduce the reader to a range of the small shops along the Walworth Road, and focus on the role of visual display as one primary dimension of how proprietors forge a balance between an entrepreneurial imperative for profit, and their social and cultural connections with their customers. The proprietors must employ their skills not only to entice their customers, but also to secure their return. Through an exploration of the spatial and visual arrangements of the shops, I explore the adaptation and invention of existing and new forms of display.

Spatial display as a form of sociability

In relating consumption practices and the modes of social participation on the part of the shopper, Glennie and Thrift (1996) take up the difficult task of articulating the basis

of social contact between strangers in contemporary shopping spaces. By emphasising the presentation of the social self in urban space through expressions that incorporate the use of speech, body and attire, they articulate the concept of 'sociality' as the tactile forms of display and encounter. They also suggest that although the momentary social exchange is a weak one, its significance lies in the maintenance of a basic social cooperation, 'an atmosphere of normality, even in the midst of antagonism based on gender, race, class or other social fractures' (1996, p. 225).

But to what extent is their sociality a limited social expression, which permits a fleeting form of self-expression, while preserving social distance? The risk, as Sennett (1996) points out, is that social exchange in public space is reduced to the 'visual gaze', where the appearance or preservation of normality is at the expense of productive interactions between different individuals and groups, contested or otherwise. Simmel (1949) also explored this 'light' mode of social exchange through his concept of 'sociability', and emphasised its inherent social and playful aspect by positioning the role of form over that of content. However, Simmel's sociability depends on the idea of reciprocal exchange or a basic level of social intimacy, for form is empty of meaning without someone to deliver it, and someone else to recognise it and to respond accordingly. Both concepts of 'sociality' and 'sociability' are useful for understanding how people use the Walworth Road as a promenade and space for display. In particular, the visual forms of self-expression in public and social exchange on the street prompt questions of how different individuals 'read' social situations differently. What are the available forms of social legibility, where places such as the Walworth Road are occupied and shaped by the presence of many cultures?

The visual sequence of display was a primary form used by proprietors on the Walworth Road to combine entrepreneurial and cultural expressions, where a combination of imagination and acumen was employed to attract a variegated

customer base. The ways in which individual, ethnic and cultural differences were choreographed within these visual and spatial displays distinguished not only the shop products, but also the identity of the proprietor and how he or she anticipated the needs and preferences of prospective customers. The particularity of each shop was defined by the arrangement of shop signage, shop front and public and personal items within the shop. In contrast, in many of the franchise or chain stores on the Walworth Road, which had a pre-established product and brand such as *Somerfield*, *Claire's Accessories* or *Boots*, the merchandise and brand established the prominent expression of the space. In these spaces, the arrangement reflected a standardised organisation of retail space by the familiarity of a brand-oriented shop identity.

In many of the independent shops the displays were shaped by a combination of cultural and personal affinities. In one Halal convenience shop, for example, the space was divided into two areas. The first, closest to the street, had a range of food products, including the meat counter, while the second space, further from the street, stocked food goods more oriented to North African and Muslim customers. In this second space there were pictures of Mecca and a small prayer area. The proprietor, who had recently arrived from Sudan, promoted his primary public display or his street frontage through signage in both Arabic and English, by using a selection of words aimed at including a wide customer base: 'Absar Food Store. Camberwell Halal Butchers and Grocery. Afro Caribbean and Mediterranean Fresh Fruit & Veg'. Other shop signage along the Walworth Road also represented a desire to reach a diverse customer base, sometimes with humour such as, 'Mixed Blessings Bakery. West Indian and English Bread'. Cultural amalgamation was not the only mode of hybridity represented, and signage such as 'Roze and Lawanson Nigerian Market. Money Transfer. Wedding Garments' and 'Afroworld Food Store. Cosmetics, wigs and fruit and veg' allude to the curious combinations of merchandise and services offered within these independent shops (figure 3.2).

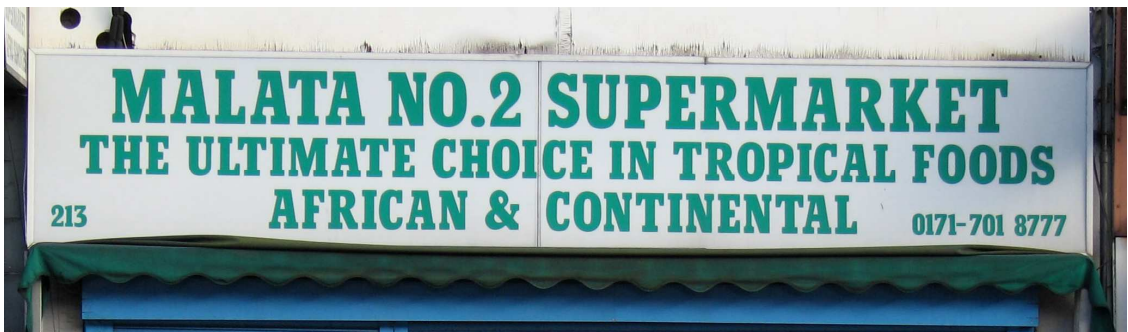


Figure 3.2 The hybrid shop signs on the Walworth Road (Fieldwork images 2006 and 2008)

Sometimes the space within the shop was explicitly divided into small areas used or rented out separately. It was not uncommon to see small spaces of approximately 1 metre by 2 metres within the shop front area, used for purposes such as tailoring or phone card sales (figure 3.3). The availability of small rental spaces within these shops was particularly apparent in barbers and salons, where seat spaces were rented out individually to cutters and stylists, as well as nail beauticians. This meant that many of the hair salons and barbers, while not explicitly offering unisex services, delineated shop space into male and female areas.



Figure 3.3 A small phone shop attached to a larger convenience shop (Author's photograph 2008)

The diversity of shops, surfaces and activities along the Walworth Road (figures 3.4 and 3.5) was further explored by combining and arranging photographs of the street that I took during my research. In this process of representation I faced the challenge of how to group shops or analyse their cultural significance, without reverting to

classification by origin of proprietor. It was difficult from my survey data, and from my use and observation of the street, to relate conclusively particular merchandise or services with particular ethnic groups. What was apparent was the predominance of food shops, both of the retail and restaurant type. Cheap or bargain merchandise, most evidently clothing, was the second most prominent form of retail, followed by assortments of inexpensive household goods, including charity shops. There were also a number of jewellery and pawnshops, as well as betting establishments and places to cash cheques and access quick loans. Since the period of my survey in 2006, there was a marked increase in shops dealing in beauty products, particularly in hair and nail products and services. Of the twelve existing shops oriented to beauty products and services surveyed in 2006, five new shops had emerged from November 2008 to May 2009, during the period of the official economic recession (Appendix 4).

What remained consistent is the spatial pattern of a retail street lined with small-scale increments of retail space, generally of narrow frontage, always limited to the ground floor, and with a visual and spatial identity revealed in the items and sequence of display. Significantly, this spatial pattern could be understood as a basic urban framework for subjectivity, or a collective pattern in which individual proprietors along this street made use of the opportunity for expression and engagement in the street society in which they are active citizens. The verbal and visual surveys that I undertook had allowed me to broadly understand the range of proprietors and the range of retail activity, and how visual displays were used to portray mixtures of personal and product identities. But the extent to which social interaction occurred in these retail spaces beyond the surfaces of cultural mix alluded to in the street signage and varieties of merchandise only became more evident through ethnographic observation.

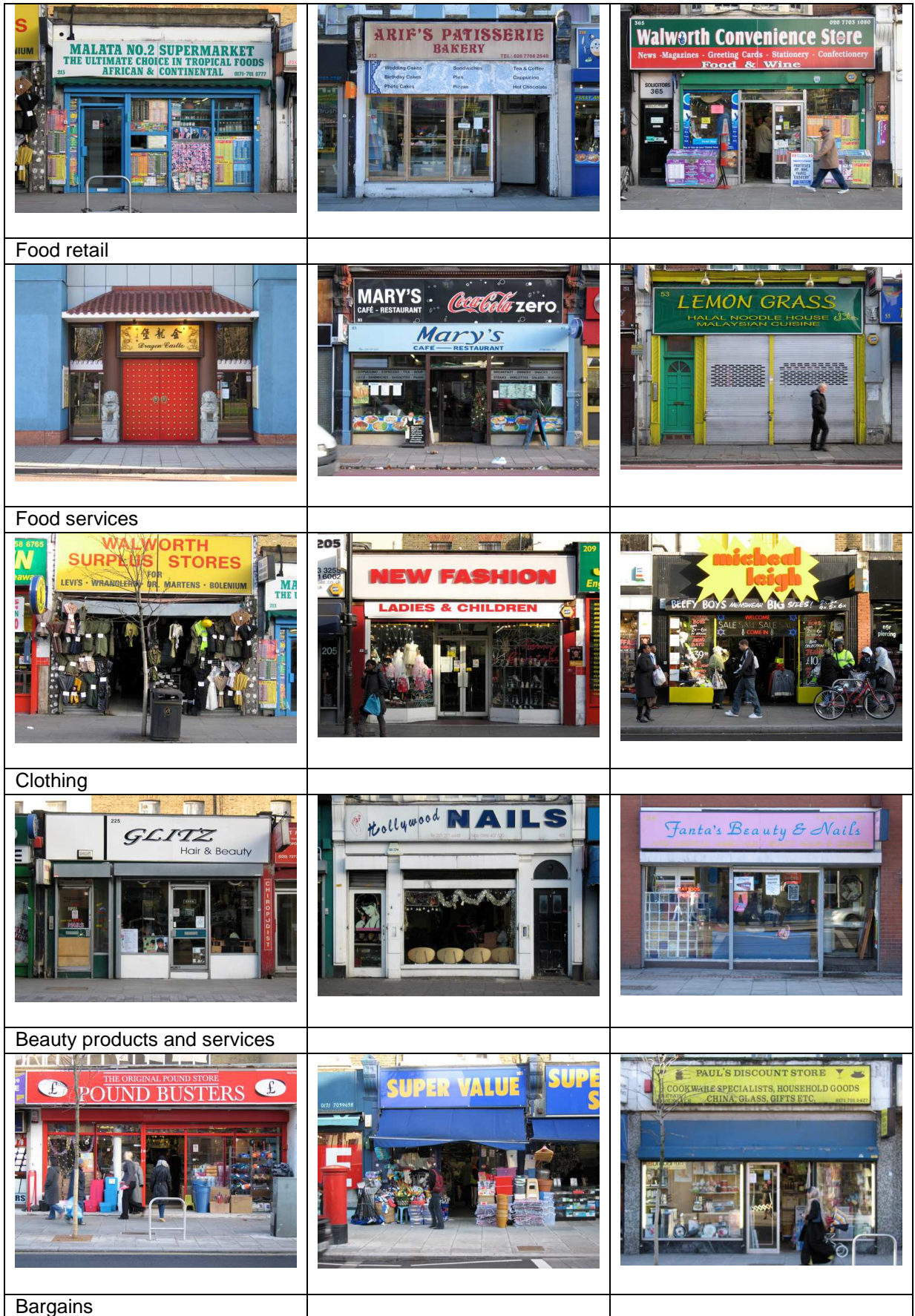


Figure 3.4 Retail groupings of the independent shops on the Walworth Road. (Fieldwork 2008)

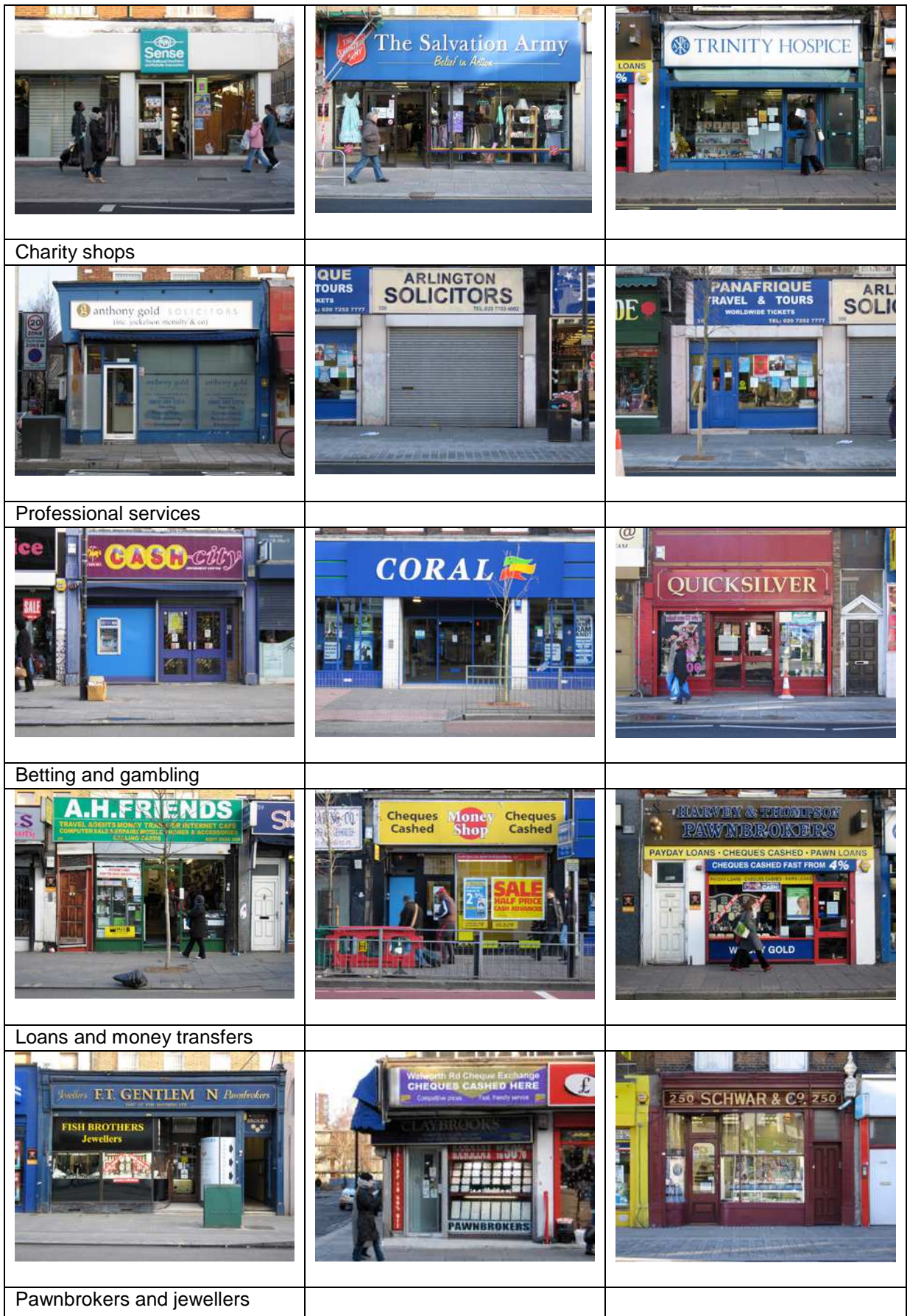


Figure 3.5 Shop activities on the Walworth Road. (Fieldwork 2008)

Narratives of uncertainty

Just as the frontier is a space of exploration full of the potential of 'newness', so too is it an uncertain terrain. In contrast to the hybrid visual displays on the Walworth Road, narratives of place reflected a different sense of how people order and make sense of change. In the case of the Walworth Road, the range of individuals that I spoke to used very different markers of change to encapsulate a sense of the street as shaped by the people who lived there and their associated ways of life. The processes of remembering, naming and identifying marked how individuals and groups gave meaning to past and present, through the associations attached to their descriptions of place. Changes to ways of life were highlighted by references to particular cultural and social spaces, work practices, changing patterns of affordability as well as associations of ethnicity and race with place.

While individual narratives signalled different markers of change it is worth noting that many of the memories of the Walworth Road were caught between fairly recent markers of a 'white' and 'working-class' street and its present associations with a far more diverse one. Mike, who was in his seventies and who moved to Walworth from the East End in the late 1980s, remembered the Walworth Road as 'ordinary, cockney-type society'. However, the *Post Office London Directories*, published annually from 1841 to 1950, provide us with an alternative historic account of the street. The directories provide records of the rapid expansion of retail streets in London such as the Walworth Road, and reflect the increasing variety of retail activities along these streets, particularly during the period of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century urban growth. The names of the proprietors of the shops as well as the primary shop activity are listed in the directories, and from the fairly innocent register of a name connected to a postal address we are able to access a chronological record of who the proprietors of the London streets were, and what services they were engaged in.

Contrary to Mike's perception, the directory records for the Walworth Road indicate that this shop-lined street was occupied and transformed by both English residents and a host of 'newcomers'. From the 1880s to the 1950s, there is evidence of a densely occupied retail street activated by numerous small, independent shops. Records of tailors, clothiers, proprietors of refreshments rooms, cheesemongers and jellied eel caterers are tabulated alongside a mix of proprietors who emigrated from different places including Greece, Turkey, Italy, Ireland and Eastern Europe. Of broader significance is that with increased industrialisation and urbanisation, the quantity and diversity of cultures participating in the retail life of Walworth increased. This is important not only for an understanding of how local areas change and diversify during dramatic periods of economic and social restructuring, but also because records like the census data render a far more homogenous representation of who was occupying space in Walworth at that time. The census exclusively records a representation of the local population on the basis of place of residence rather than place of work, and therefore the mixture of proprietors on the Walworth Road is not captured. In the 1861 census, for example, only 468 residents named as 'foreigners' were registered out of a total of 44 463 persons in the district of Newington (in which Walworth is incorporated).

Unlike Mike, Gary, who grew up in post-war Walworth and who was now in his fifties, highlighted the significance of special places and related activities off the Walworth Road: 'East Street market was the main thing, people came for miles, that's the only thing that's really changed. There used to be a flea market, with medals and bullets and anything from the army. And everybody knew one another. Just like a village.' Gary moved out to the suburbs as an adult and returns to the Walworth Road every day for work, where a microcosm of the village he remembers is sustained by the daily meeting of his close network of friends in their local caff. He talked about a slow process of transformation driven by economic change, 'Change happened slowly. I suppose 80s, 90s it changed, when the prices of the houses started going up... My

friends are all over the world now. You can't change things, it's like a river, you just go and go.' Jack, who is not much older than Gary and who lives in Camberwell, a few bus stops to the south of Walworth, referred to the process of change as one marked by a lack of interpersonal familiarity on the street: 'I can walk up the Walworth Road today and I might not see a single person I know. When I was young, I'd walk up and know everybody. Your mates, their friends, our friends, relatives.'

What Mike, Gary and Jack's descriptions broadly chart is a perceived shift from a familiar to an unfamiliar world. The frontier as a space of change as encapsulated by the Walworth Road is simultaneously a place of newness and uncertainty. The imaginative and agile entrepreneurial practices represented in the visual displays of the independent shops is as much a part of this newness as are the hesitant or even resistant expressions of those for whom change is synonymous with uncertainty. For the remainder of this chapter I explore the persistence of historic boundaries within the frontier that individuals either reinforce or transgress in engaging in the challenges and possibilities of change.

Frontier as a space of boundaries

Through the idea of the frontier as a series of established boundaries I review the official mechanisms by which places and spaces are historically ordered and regulated. I explore the boundary effects on how people view Walworth, and how people in Walworth see themselves today. This leads to the question of whether historic boundaries impact on contemporary interaction, and whether forms of exclusion, such as the regulation of the poor in Walworth over time, affect individual capacities for social inclusion. Although my focus is on the contemporary experiences of difference and change on the Walworth Road, it became clear during fieldwork that it would be analytically short sighted to disconnect everyday interactions from underlying social

and spatial boundaries. Lamont and Molnar (2002) define boundaries as a framework for studying 'relational processes' between prescriptive structures and lived experiences, and emphasise the need to research how 'widely available schemas shape the drawing of boundaries within face-to-face communities' (2002, p. 183).

By contrasting archival and ethnographic data, I analyse the relationships between historic spatial and social boundaries and their impact on how Walworth is both spatially read and socially ranked today. Boundaries reflect patterns of distinguishing between things such as a 'here and there' or a 'them and us'. For boundaries to have a presence or a life in the face of change, they need to be continually enforced and vitalised, either by systems such as the law, or by experiences such as identifying with a place or a people. Boundaries are seldom static; they may persist over time or be transgressed, and it is this dynamic process of how boundaries endure symbolically in Walworth that is the focus of this section. By merging historic and contemporary data I relate the presence of Walworth's past to how the sediments of historic boundaries reappear as emblematic in contemporary narratives of who people say they are and on what basis they feel they belong. I focus on the *symbolic spatial order*, as a form of authority asserted in space by the endurance of spatial hierarchies, territorial divisions and public institutions in the urban landscape.

Symbolic spatial order

Walworth is located in South London, and while it is a place from which one can hear the chimes of Big Ben or catch glimpses of the London Eye, it remains detached from the perceived centre of London, only a mile and a half to the north of it. The Walworth Road is a primary route by which people pass through Walworth, a linear journey in which the urban landscape is read and appraised by the passer-by. During my fieldwork I became aware that the Walworth Road seemed to elicit very different

resonances for a cross-section of Londoners, as highlighted in the following selected quotes:

In its way, Dragon Castle's presence in so dispiritingly hideous a centre of urban deprivation is just as incongruous as finding Jim's sitcom crumpet on the bridge of the USS Enterprise. Certainly, it's a shock to walk through a door on such a gruesome main road and be greeted by a gently splashing fountain, and to find an ocular feast of red paper dragons, tassel-strewn lanterns and golden chandeliers so luminescently vulgar, they'd be asked to leave a Las Vegas casino on the grounds of taste. Myself, I liked this retro gaudiness, and loved how it was framed, through smeary windows, by dirty red buses trundling down a filthy road on a dank, drizzly day.
(Norman 2008, Restaurant review of Dragon Castle on the Walworth Road)

Cab driver: Oh yeah, so what are you studying?
Suzi: How different people meet and mix on the Walworth Road.
Cab driver: The Walworth Road? *(Pause)*
I'm stumped, I am. *(Pause)*
If you'd said Brick Lane, I'd understand.
(London cab driver, fieldnotes 2007)

I like the Walworth Road very much. One of the best roads in Southwark, got all nationalities... and everyone's doing what they want to do.
(Mustafa, who is in his seventies and who grew up in Brixton, fieldnotes 2006)

These comments, however fragmented, serve to illustrate a divergent range of perceptions about the Walworth Road that I encountered in the course of fieldwork conversations. While views between outsiders, passers-by and locals are bound to differ, I raise the question of how the Walworth Road 'fits' in the symbolic spatial order of London. The symbolic order of a place is rendered legible through visual codes and images that are often mediated through a pre-ordained system of ranking. Keith (2005) refers to how signs inform or prompt what we think we see and how we evaluate the visual landscape. His focus points to how difference is seen and measured: 'If certain kinds of multi-culture are allowed to become visible, then perhaps other kinds are not [...] the organisation of the visual order of the city curates permissible multiculturalism in this way' (2005, p. 125). The reviewer of the restaurant on the Walworth Road combines caricatures of exoticism with 'filth' and 'dirt' to describe and rank the

Walworth Road. The cab driver's measure of what he considers a more appropriately representative cosmopolitan mix of people and spaces is represented by Brick Lane. However, for Mustafa, a local south London resident, the mess and mix of the Walworth Road is both tangible and pleasurable.

Suttles (1972) described individual readings of the city as integral to a collectively assigned 'cognitive map' or a framework of knowledge of people and places accumulated through the social ranking of place. The connection between visual knowledge and how social differentiation is simultaneously seen and constructed is more recently explored by Sampson (2009) through an interpretation of visual symbols or 'signs of disorder'. His 'visual clues' or examples of disorder combine social signs such as 'verbal harassment' or 'public intoxication' and physical signs such as 'graffiti on buildings' and 'garbage on the streets'. However, Sampson's analysis of visual disorder is essentially understood through the agency of those who perceive disorder, without reference to the systems of power that designate order through the construction and regulation of the physical landscape over time. Through the notion of *symbolic spatial order* I explore how values are ascribed to places through spatial symbols such as landmarks, icons and territorial markings. By contrasting archival and ethnographic data, I trace how symbolic forms permeate both external and internal perceptions of what a place is like and who is deemed to belong in such a locale.

The River Thames

In researching the historic emergence of a 'South-East London habitus', Robson (2000) relates ways of seeing people and places through representations of local culture generally formed by outside perspectives: 'They express ways of thinking about the area which I suggest informs both external attributive representations of it by the symbolic repertoire of cultural identifications subscribed to and utilised by sections of its

population' (2000, pp. 40-43). His reference to a south-east London cultural disposition emerges out of the characterisations of what he refers to as the 'unruly' south, in part related to the location of South London on the *other side* of the River Thames. The impetus of the boundary effect of the Thames is culturally cumulative, incorporating both physical and perceptual divisions.

In exploring the boundary as a symbolic division between a London to the north and south of the River Thames, I relate its boundary effect as a physical entity, a series of representations, and a set of experiences (figure 3.6). The River Thames is a physical fact, a sufficiently broad and fast-moving current of water to make the ease of crossing from its north to south edges difficult without bridges. Even today, with numerous bridges spanning between north and south, the physical and mental process of crossing the River features prominently in individual narratives that combine the effects of division and distance. In *Soft City*, Raban's book about London in the 1970s, he describes his experience of having to overcome his perceptual distance to reach South London: 'I have friends who live in Clapham, only three miles away, but to visit them is a definite journey, for it involves crossing the river' (1974, p. 163). In my conversations with local Walworth residents over a two-year period, the Thames was often used to frame local ways of life as distinctly divided from the north of the River, and describing oneself as a 'south Londoner' was a popular construction.

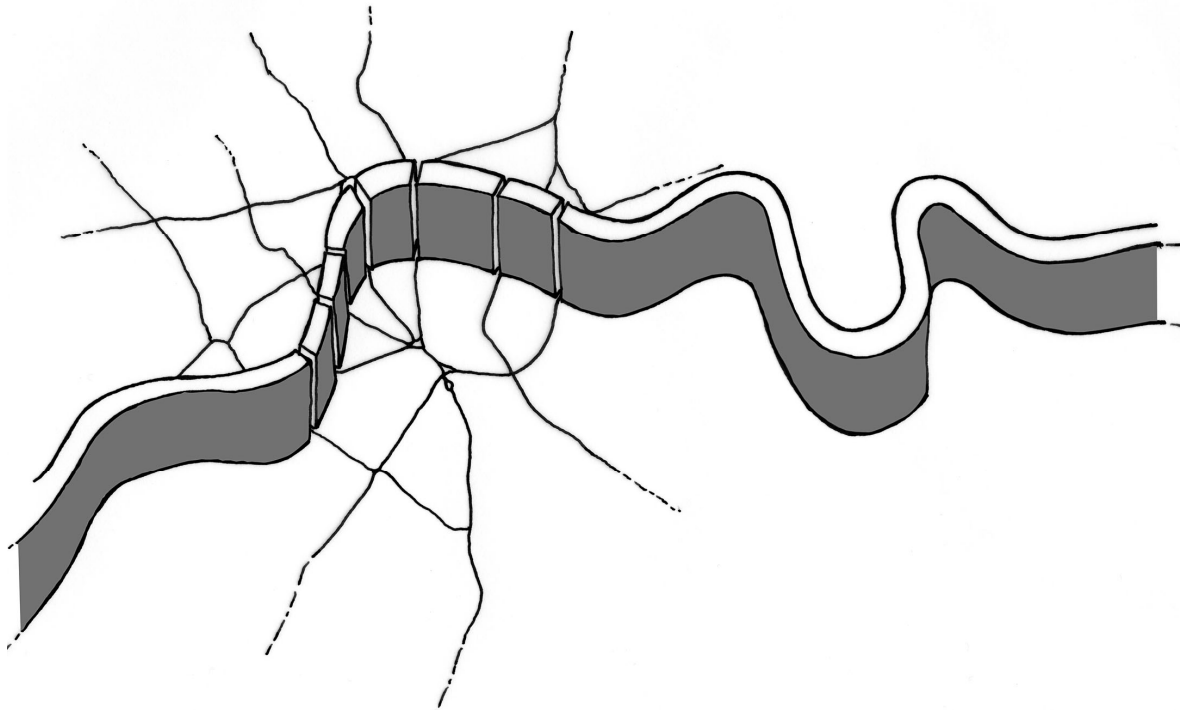


Figure 3.6 The physical and perceptual boundary effect of the River Thames. (Fieldwork drawing 2008)

The Thames as a physical boundary, narrated as division, distance and differentiation, is historically emphasised by the divergent form and pace of urban development across London that emerged over time. The morphological and economic disparities between the two areas broadly described as north and south of the River Thames is acutely described by Ackroyd as an enduring ‘urban discrimination’ (2001, p. 692). In my time at the Southwark Local History Library, I worked my way through their collection of historic maps, and was particularly struck by the persistence of the north–south urban distinction evident in various maps of London commissioned up to the industrial period.

I have selected three of these maps to illustrate not only the chronological persistence of London’s north–south divide, but also its morphological disparities, which I argue contain the symbolic connections between spatial and social form. In working with these historic maps I was challenged by the importance of not only tracing the

changing form of urban development over time, but also of searching for cartographic clues or cultural symbols that pointed to ways of life. I began by relating symbolic patterns of urban form including territorial demarcations, patterns of land ownership and the distribution of particular public and social institutions, to the emergence of ways of life and associated cultural references within a local place.

While it may seem incongruous in an ethnography of contemporary life to refer back almost five centuries to Hogenburg's map of London (1553) (figure 3.7), I was struck in this early representation by a city formed with two distinct sides. To the north of the River Thames is a city of impressive walls, great streets and prominent public spaces and institutions. Only one bridge extends southwards; where London Bridge touches the South Bank, a comparatively diminutive cluster of urban development is shown. Routes appear as a primary feature of the pattern of development in the south, as the relationship of London to the hinterland in the south was established via connections that had not only practical but also spiritual significance.

Two Roman roads, later referred to as Kennington Park Road and Newington Causeway, served to connect 'Londinium' with Canterbury in the south, and bordered the area of Walworth. While comparatively little built form is shown south of the Thames, there are large tracts of land, including gardens and fields. Of enduring significance are two persistent qualities, of a subsidiary area south of the river, and of an area connected to the city and to hinterland via critical through routes. These spatial qualities continue to define the relationship of the Walworth area and the Walworth Road to London today.



Figure 3.7 Hogenberg's map (1553–1559). (By kind permission of the Southwark Local History Library)

The organisation of poverty

An excerpt of Roque's map of London (1769) (figure 3.8) reveals the small cluster of development adjacent to the Walworth Road constituted by the territory of Walworth Manor and the manor house. The village is surrounded by extensive portions of open land, predominantly held in church ownership or designated as public commonage. The comparatively small domain of Walworth Manor designates the sense of a local boundary established through small territories that were contained by the scale of the authority of the manor house and parish, as well as a degree of self-sufficiency sustained by village life. Evans (2006) describes the persistent experience of London as a city of villages in her ethnography based on a white working-class community in Bermondsey, which neighbours Walworth to the east. She points to the historic

development of London through the constellation of local territories that were individually regulated and that are often experienced today as separate from one another:

My assumption about white working class homogeneity quickly dissolved and I learned what anyone moving through working class London ought to know: the city is historically divided into manors, which were, and sometimes continue to be, closely defined territories about which people are often fiercely proud and protective. (2006, p. 19)



Figure 3.8 Excerpt of Roque's map (1769). (By kind permission of the Southwark Local History Library)

Some of the locals I spoke to on the Walworth Road still referred to Walworth as their 'manor', encapsulating their sense of place as a small, locally regulated territory. But

how were these 'closely defined territories' that Evans described regulated, and why does this scale of territory persist in terms of how locals understand their local domains today? One crucial connection can be traced to how the parish administered its authority during the exponential population growth during the industrial era. I focus on urban poverty as a major aspect of industrial urbanisation, and draw links to the endurance of high indices of deprivation in Walworth today by following the strand of how poverty was historically regulated in Walworth. The 1801 census for Walworth, designated then as the 'Parish of St Mary Newington', indicates there was a population of 14,847 people. Eighty years later the exponential pace of growth is reflected in the population figure for 1881 of 107,850. The urban poverty that expanded alongside this growth was officially recorded and managed, and from Himmelfarb's thesis in *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (1984), we are directed towards the crucial analytical connection between the way in which not only poverty, but also relief was conceptualised and administered.

The entry for 1770 in the *Poor Rate Book* from the Parish of St Mary Newington (Walworth) described the parish as being, 'burdened with numerous and expensive poor' (cited in Boast 2005, p. 6). The characterisation of the urban poor as burden reflects the patriarchal relationship between pauper and parish as defined by the Old Poor Law of 1601. The Old Poor Law was established through the mechanisms of the law and its institutional partnership with local parishes, where charity was parish-centred and locally administered. Poor rates were raised from local taxes on property, and a classification system was developed to define whether the potential recipient would qualify for relief. The enduring identification of 'the worthy' versus 'the unworthy' poor was defined through official terms of categorisation based on the ideology and organisation of charity.

The purpose of briefly introducing the profound effect of the Poor Laws on the structure of English society is to highlight not only the way the poor were viewed and controlled, but to consider the impact of the institutionalisation of poverty on spatial and social boundaries in Walworth today. Haylett (2001) draws on the enduring legacy of the organisation of the poverty and its affect on the current discourse of 'welfare' in the UK. By tracing back to the reform measures defined and regulated by 'a post-World-War-2 welfare state' (201, p. 354), Haylett's research shows how the categorisation of 'the unworthy poor' has been replaced by that of the 'underclass'. Haylett focuses on welfare policies since 1997 and representations of the poor in the press and academy, and argues that it is notably the white working-class poor that is portrayed as 'socially excluded', 'welfare dependent', 'lowlife', 'losers' and 'yobs' (2001, p. 354). Both Himmelfarb's and Haylett's theses reveal how the understanding of poverty itself is replaced by the qualification of relief. In the process of administering relief, the underlying conditions and complexity of poverty are reduced to the categorisation and regulation of 'the poor'.

Similarly Lawler's (2005) recent research into representations of the white working class across a range of media points to the caricatures of decline attached to working-class bodies, their appearances, gestures and forms of attire. Similarly I argue that the stigmas attached to bodies as symbols of decline and disorder are also effectively attached to 'underclass' spaces. The explicit spatial forms of political control can be seen as symbolic codes that influence ways that people and places are collectively viewed, as well as the ways individuals in these places come to view themselves. This is historically evident in the types of institutions that emerged to both provide for and control the poor during periods of heightened change.

The area to the south of the Thames remained comparatively undeveloped until the early 1800s, when contrasted with the north. Greenwood's map (1824) (figure 3.9)

shows development in the south clustered around the intersections and edges of the primary routes. A node of public facilities had developed at the Elephant and Castle, which Dickens referred to in *Bleak House* as ‘a street of little shops lying somewhere in that ganglion of roads from Kent to Surrey... centring at the far-famed Elephant’ (cited in Young 1930). With the Elephant and Castle acting as the nerve centre for the south it was increasingly encircled by successive waves of transport ushered in by technological innovations, from the horse-drawn buses (1829) and trams (1852), to the railway and station (1862) and tube stop (1890).



Figure 3.9 Excerpt of Greenwood's map (1824). (By kind permission of the Southwark Local History Library)

With modes of transport assisting the north–south connection, streets like the Walworth Road became main roads in every sense of the word – pulsating with activity and central to the life and livelihoods of the diverse communities that formed adjacent to its edges. This quality of the urban street, as a vibrant connector, located within an area but also linking to other areas, served partially to expand the sense of the Walworth Manor boundary as a small and contained territory. However, in contrast with the emergence of an active retail strip along the Walworth Road, Greenwood’s map also reveals the new kinds of institutions that had emerged to cater for the rescaling of the city under the forces of urbanisation. On it Bedlam Hospital (1815), infamous for its incarceration of ‘the insane’, marks the current location of the Imperial War Museum and Walworth Manor has expanded into Walworth New Town. Only a few decades on, Collins’ *Standard Map of London* (1870) shows a number of workhouses within or in proximity to Walworth New Town.

I return to the scale of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation in the nineteenth century, which exacerbated the scale of poverty, and outline how new systems of order to survey and control the poor were imagined. Jeremy Bentham’s published scheme for pauper management (1796) exemplifies the shift in sentiment from locally administered charity on the part of the parish to a centralised regime of management oriented around large-scale, privately operated institutions. Scrutiny (Bentham used the term ‘inspection’) was coupled with profitability, rendering the poor as productive inmates. The New Poor Law (1834) introduced the legal articulation of a new view of poverty and relief, one that reclassified the poor on the principle of ‘less-eligibility’ thereby limiting relief for ‘the able-bodied’ (Himmelfarb 1984); and one that reconceptualised relief on the basis of publicly administered, centralised management and supervision.

The Consolidated General Order (1847) established the rules for the organisation of the workhouse, and the procedure for defining the ‘inmate’ through systematic

regulation dependent on classification and spatial segregation: the *admission* of pauper, subject to examination in an examination room, cleansing and dressing in a uniform; the *classification* of the pauper into one of seven classes and the assignment of a corresponding ward within the workhouse; the *division* of the pauper's day into intervals for sleep, work and eating, signalled by the ringing of a bell; the *direction* of the diet of the pauper; and the *punishment* of the pauper on the qualification of 'disorderly' or 'refractory' conduct.

What was the symbolic impact of such a profound regime of surveillance, classification and control, and how did this affect the individual and collective sense of working-class identity in Walworth? Institutions like the workhouse served as spaces to exert authority over citizens within its walled interiors through the sense of perpetual observation as the ultimate form of control (Foucault 1977). The symbolic effect of power also transcended outside the walls of the institution, imposing on the institutionalised individual the label of shame, and imposing on the non-institutionalised poor the visible threat of the workhouse. Institutions such as the workhouse also shaped the particularity of the working-class landscape at the turn of the nineteenth century, and although the physical presence of workhouses continued into the early twentieth century, their symbolic endurance is inscribed in memories of the past.

It is easy to overlook the dark workhouse institutions on the map, without regard for their impact on the collective memory of the working class today. The places and institutions that were central to how working-class life was lived are embedded in personal memories, as revealed in Michael Collins' *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class* (2004), where Collins traces his family's past in Southwark and Walworth across generations. Amongst his descriptions of the cultural spaces claimed by the Walworth working class, such as the music halls, gin palaces and penny gaffs, are his descriptions of the spaces imposed on the working class, exemplified by the

workhouse. Collins' story, although contentious in his description of the working class in Walworth today as essentially white victims entrapped by the forces of change, reveals the historic accumulation of the regulation and confinement of poverty and class. The symbolic impact of the institutions in which both poverty and relief were organised saturates the sense of an area over time and plays an enduring role in how people and places are viewed from both the inside and the outside.

The emblematic impact of institutions serves not only to inculcate power, but to visually portray a social ranking of people and spaces through the cognitive maps that Suttles described, in which spatial symbols are key. The complexity of life in a local place is easily reduced to caricatures and stereotypes, which can be sustained long past the existence of the actual institution. Bhabha (2004 [1994]) contributes to our understanding of the work that stereotypes do in the context of colonial discourse, specifically through how otherness is constructed. His definition of a threefold process of how the stereotype is authorised can be applied to the organisation of poverty and relief in places like Walworth: the creation of a 'subject people'; the validation of their subjugation; and the institution and maintenance of regimes of control.

Stereotypical representations that are assigned to people and places serve to create boundaries by containing individuals or spaces within homogenous characterisations. Williams (2001 [1958]) referred to this form of homogenisation as 'the "masses" formula', arguing that 'there are in fact no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses' (2001 [1958], p. 18). Although caricature (based on exaggeration) and standardisation (based on simplification) are both forms of generalisation they rely, as Bhabha suggests, on pre-established systems of regulation. I have argued that the organisation of poverty through the ongoing creation and administration of institutions in Walworth has a residual impact on how Walworth is remembered and viewed. Earlier in this chapter I referred to Haylett's emphasis on the language of decline as applied to

the poor, specifically the abject, white, working-class poor. A primary symbol of this decline is the Aylesbury Estate in Walworth, the place Tony Blair selected to underscore Labour's promise to defeat poverty and overcome social exclusion at the start of Labour's election victory in 1997.

Significantly there are a number of large-scale social housing estates in proximity to the Walworth Road, the largest of which are the Heygate Estate (1970-1974), comprising 1194 units, and the Aylesbury Estate (1963), comprising 2700 units, making it the largest estate in Europe within one contained area. Although the social housing projects were envisaged as a modern solution for replacing derelict housing, one of the most significant consequences of this conception is extreme polarisation, most evident in large-scale, inner city estates of 500 units or more (Power 1996). Power's research (1987, 1996) and that of Power and Tunstall (1991) and Power and Wilson (2000) has analysed the cumulative effects of spatial and social exclusion, or 'area-based poverty' within such housing estates in England and Wales. Her work shows how 'estate stigma' is attached to places and people as forms of social labelling that have enormous resilience and are extremely difficult to alter. Stigmas operate simultaneously as reflective and predictive; that is they perpetuate a reputation gained over time, and they project that reputation into the present and future, as enduring symbols of people and place.

John, who described himself as 'a local council tenant', recalled the stigmatisation of living in a large social housing estate to the south of Walworth:

We lived in Peckham, in a council house my family, big family. We had a garden, we had a dog, and then when I was five years old the council decided to regenerate Peckham and they tore all those houses down. I mean it was miles and miles of, of, council housing, and destroyed the communities that lived there and built the notorious North Peckham Estate, which was opened in the 70s. So what really happened was the tight-knit kind of community that I first lived in was just literally destroyed overnight. I mean it was a terrible, terrible thing that happened to the area. I don't think the area ever recovered, because since then, as you know, they have regenerated Peckham again, by

tearing down the North Peckham Estate. So what I say is, 'What Hitler failed to do during the Blitz, Southwark Council have done twice in my life-time.' (laughs) [...] My grandparents ended up in Wood Dene in Peckham, which is now about to be, at last, demolished. We called it 'The Kremlin', and in fact the bus conductor used to say, 'anyone for Kremlin?' and we used to jump off the bus. It was awful. A horror estate. (Interview 2007).

John's powerful memory of the metaphor of fortification and imprisonment attached to people's living environments echoes with other descriptions of other estates. One resident likened the isolation of her estate to, 'being on a desert island' (Power and Tunstall 1991), while Foster's (1995) residents in an east London housing estate associate the containment of their estate with 'Alcatraz', and go on to relate the concrete form with 'a *prison*'. In these cases the sense of stigma is strongly characterised by combined effects of spatial segregation, scale, form and materiality.

John also talked about the contemporary social implications of large-scale physical segregation:

Each council estate is territorial, we don't talk to each other, we don't mix with each other. It's not that we don't like each other. It's just that we're so overpopulated, so many tower blocks and concrete buildings, we become very insular on our estates and very protective. There is communication at some levels. We do have the local forum where the representatives from each estate are elected to talk about funding – you know, which estate needs new lifts, or whatever. But other than that we don't socialise or integrate. And then you've got the class division. (Interview 2007)

John's narrative of territoriality coupled with insularity is at one level an individual perception, but it raises the question of how to penetrate the symbolic and social boundaries around the monolithic housing estate structures that feature prominently in Walworth's urban landscape. It is a crucial consideration, pointing in part to the need for other kinds of spaces and meeting grounds, and in part to Southwark Council's contemporary legacy as 'the largest social landlord in London, with nearly 40,000 tenants and 14,000 leaseholders' (Thompson & Abery 2006, p. 5).

However, it is not only the effects of stigma that feature in narratives of post-war regeneration, but also the expression of loss. The impetus of marginalisation is revealed in the expressions of how ordinary people in Walworth have been separated from their past: 'I have been astonished at the extent to which things, once commonplace, have now vanished... Redevelopment struck the final blow at the pre-war communities so, in just a few decades, a way of life practically vanished' (Carter 1985, preface). Carter's observation of profound change in Southwark is of redevelopment processes eradicating particular communities and their associated ways of life. Regeneration can be indiscriminate in its eradication; places that are valued, rituals and events that are enacted, simply disappear.

Boast's (2005) and Bourne's (2005) books deal with the local history of Walworth and Southwark, respectively, describing how much has been lost. Their historic accounts refer to the institutions and destinations within Southwark that belong to bygone eras: the Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens, which attracted a staggering 8,000 visitors a day; the Royal Surrey Music Hall and its great glass construction predating the Crystal Palace; and the sturdy Metropolitan Tabernacle hosting acclaimed evangelical and musical performances. But the gardens, entertainment halls and movie houses are no longer evident on current cartography, and many of Southwark's historic institutions have disappeared from the map. In the Walworth area, however, this is the consequence not substantially or solely of war damage suffered in the Blitz, but of a persistent cycle of regeneration programmes, named by one local historian in a conversation with me as 'the dead hand of official intervention'.

The theme of large-scale regeneration in Southwark is ongoing and the Elephant and Castle, and the Heygate and Aylesbury estates are part of Southwark's regeneration plans. I turn to an image of regeneration that re-asserts the value of the north over the south. The bird's-eye image of the proposed regeneration of the Elephant and Castle

area (2005) (figure 3.10) is a view orientated northwards to St Paul's Cathedral, Tate Modern and the London Eye, and emphasises the proximity of the city as key to the area's potential regeneration. While the connection to the north is undoubtedly important, the fading out of the perspective to the south and the omission of existing, locally significant landmarks, suggests the propensity for this regeneration initiative to look towards the symbolic confidence captured by the image of London to the north of the Thames. The cluster of tall buildings at the heart of the image aligns with a form of city development supported by policy, a period of high speculative confidence, and the prominence of iconic projects like 'the Gherkin' in the visual branding of London.



Figure 3.10 The bird's eye image of the proposed regeneration of the Elephant and Castle.

(Elephant and Castle Regeneration Newsletter, Issue 07, Autumn 2005)

It is not yet possible to evaluate whether the regeneration process will be able to reconcile the diverse cultures along the Walworth Road with new urban forms that symbolise greater affluence and new ways of life in the local area. Parts of the regeneration project are currently under construction, while parts have been delayed by the current economic crisis. De Certeau (1984) suggested that the quintessential bird's eye perspective of the city, as portrayed in this image of regeneration, represents a conception of order that is separate from the lived realities of the city. The image of symbolic spatial order in figure 3.10 also represents an official understanding of the city as distinct from the mess and mix of everyday life apparent on the Walworth Road.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored how urban frontiers such as the Walworth Road are places of cultural vitality as well as marginalised territories encumbered with historic boundaries. The frontier is a space of inclusion and exclusion, and social life on the Walworth Road relates in part to the possibilities of 'newness', in part to the constraints of the past. My focus in this chapter is how the space of the frontier becomes legible, in particular how the visual content of its urban landscape is 'read' and evaluated. In exploring the intersections of new and established residents on the Walworth Road, I have contrasted two different forms of visual display.

The first is exemplified by the hybrid shop displays along the Walworth Road that are central to how the independent shops wish to be seen. Displays are generally temporary, and signs, products and spatial arrangements are regularly adapted to the aspirations of the proprietor and the anticipated needs of the client. These displays, in comparison with the high street branded shops, are eclectic and ephemeral, and possibly portray a messy and temporary streetscape to the passer-by. The second is evident in the symbolic spatial order of Walworth, captured by the historic boundaries

of the Thames and the parish, and in institutions such as the workhouse and the monolithic housing estates that have emblematic endurance. Although many of the historic boundaries and institutions are no longer visible, their symbolic impact persists through the memories and 'cognitive maps' in which rank is assigned to places and people.

The idea of visual ranking – how it occurs and how we research how it occurs – is key to the broader understandings reached in this chapter. I introduced this chapter by describing how easy it is, on the basis of our visual perceptions, to overlook or dismiss the underlying complexities of life and livelihoods on the Walworth Road. In contrast to Sampson's analytic use of 'signs of disorder', this chapter serves to suggest that symbolic orders can also be used as reductions of social and spatial complexity for the ease of perception, regulation and representation. Our understanding and analysis of symbolic orders can therefore readily re-inscribe the caricature, stigma or stereotype of a place. Yet, as this chapter reveals, symbols exist and endure, and with reference to Suttles' work on cognitive maps and Bhabha's work on the authorisation of stereotypes explored in this chapter, I have found it crucial to gain insight into the construction of a symbolic spatial order.

The cumulative effects of different forms of boundary in Walworth are densely cumulative. They include the cultural dominance signified strongly by the division between north and south London as marked by the Thames and disparate patterns of urban development, They are compounded by the rigorous classification of the urban poor and the organisation of the provision of relief, and the division of the population into separate categories for service provision evidenced in large, stigmatised social housing estates such as the Heygate and Aylesbury estates. These historic boundaries made by patterns of dominance, standardisation and fragmentation are resilient over extensive time periods, reinforced by the combined effects of controlling people within

the schemas of landscape, territory, law and access to resources. Classification appears as a consistent mechanism for supporting these schemas, and the way in which people and places are officially ordered tells us about how society and difference is conceptualised within particular time periods.

The presence of life on a multi-ethnic street such as the Walworth Road serves to challenge and complicate these constructed boundaries and symbols. The nuances, variability and intimacy by which different individuals meet and mix is not easily read through the visual displays or symbolic orders of the urban landscape. To reach these dimensions of social interaction requires other forms of sensory engagement and research, in particular talking and listening. The following two chapters engage with the ethnographic material obtained within two shop interiors on the Walworth Road.

Chapter 4

The art of sitting: Nick's Caff

Nick's Caff is a small meeting place in a large and rapidly changing city. Within the Caff, experiences of belonging span the vast distance of the global migration of diverse people into cities, down to which table regular customers feel comfortable to sit at. In covering this distance I explore the relationship between a global and local sense of place, and an intimate sense of place, the space in which different people come to know to one another. I address the crucial question, 'How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity?' (Massey 1994, p. 146). By focusing on the idea of shared social space, I explore how 'newcomers' and 'established residents' reconstitute their sense of identity and belonging to one another. I include how the remnants of a white, working-class community engage with urban change, how the composition of a Cypriot family has extended to include friends and regulars, and how three generations of Nick's and his wife Dorah's families have straddled being foreign and being local. The beginning of this story of the Caff emerges from investigating how a particular immigrant family arrived in London in the 1950s and gradually shaped a place in the city from the base of Nick's Caff, which since the 1960s has served as their home and workplace.

In this chapter I draw on ethnographic observations developed over a ten-month period to explore how diverse individuals and social groups interact in the Caff. I focus on how interaction in the Caff is organised by space, time and etiquette, allowing individuals to claim a place to sit within the rhythm of the day, while participating in the performances that regulate conversation, eye contact, distance and intimacy. I explore how narratives

of belonging fluctuate for both established residents and newcomers, all of whom, in the context of deep urban change, deal with experiences of being in place and at home and being misplaced and alienated. The experiences of being at home within the Caff are formed through an intimate sense of belonging that emerges out of sustained social interactions, regularly repeated as part of day-to-day and face-to-face meetings.

To relegate Nick's Caff solely to the status of an eating establishment would be to overlook its significant role as a local meeting place in the city. In its semi-public interior people converse and others watch, some congregate in groups, while others exercise their preference to remain on their own. Within the Caff there are differing expressions of belonging to and distinguishing from, and variable narratives of insiders and outsiders. The Caff provides a crucial base to consider the complexities of belonging in a local place like the Walworth Road; it is long established, it is used regularly by born-and-bred locals and by a range of newcomers; and its sociability extends from the solidarity of an extended family of relatives and friends to the more singular practices of diverse individuals. In this chapter I neither qualify the Walworth Road nor Nick's Caff as a community. Rather, I explore a located urban sociability, or an ordinary cosmopolitanism based on a congregation of difference where both conviviality and contestation are at hand.

In developing my account of belonging and urban change in Nick's Caff, I explore the diverse experiences of how people locate themselves in a changing city through three frames: *work*, *insiders* and *outsiders*. I relate the space and practice of *work* by drawing connections between the workplace and family, and relate the daily routines of the workplace to the rhythms of sociability in the Caff. Through *insiders* and *outsiders* I examine the role of Nick's Caff as a small, sociable space in a big city, and contrast the narratives of *being a local* (a sense of allegiance based on common origins, culture

and memories of place) and *being located* (a sense of association based on having a place or variety of places and people to relate to).

Work, space and time

The emergence of the London caff required the symbiosis of at least two cultures to forge its qualities for a particular kind of meeting and eating in the city. These included the initiation of a casual and affordable eating establishment brought largely by Italian immigrants to London in the 1950s, and the take-up of a local, sociable place by the urban working class to eat home-cooked food away from home (Heathcoate 2004). The London caff emerged across the imaginations of cultures, and across the Formica tabletops and accompaniments of malt vinegar and brown sauce it has come to encompass other migrant and minority groups, including Greek, Turkish and Cypriot proprietors, and a range of customers, including those from a changing working class.

Nick's Caff emerged as a social space on the Walworth Road out of the initial efforts of Nick's parents, who emigrated to London from Cyprus in the 1950s. Since then, the demographics of the local Walworth population have diversified considerably, and the Caff is a place in which contemporary experiences of difference can be observed. The loss of public meeting spaces for different people to engage beyond visual encounter features prominently in writing about the contemporary western city (Sennett 1992 [1977]; 1996). As highlighted in the introductory chapters, writers exploring the relationship between the public realm and the expression of difference have also pointed to the location of meeting places away from overt public spaces, to smaller spaces of regular engagement, including schools, workplaces and youth clubs (Amin 2002). It is in these interstitial spaces, Bhabha argues (2004 [1994]), that intercultural social life can be accommodated and experienced.

Workplace

Nick's Caff has a fairly old fashioned interior, and feels almost as if one is stepping into the 1960s, to the time when Nick's Dad first bought the cafe and named it *The Istanbul*. There are sixteen tables comprising four unequal rows, and a clear designation through routine and preference of who uses which table. Family and regulars sat up front closest to Nick at the counter. People who came to the Caff for a meal or for company, but preferred less engagement, tended to sit at the sides. This is where I sat, with my back to the street so that I had a full view of the Caff but from where, behind my book or cup of coffee I felt less conspicuous.



Figure 4.1 An image of standard caff fare in Nick's Caff (Author's photograph 2007)

Nick was usually at the front counter adjacent to the steps leading up to his family's home above the shop, while Dorah's presence in the Caff was more intermittent, as her time was divided between serving in the Caff, helping in the kitchen and being at home. Behind the counter was a hatch to the kitchen basement, and above it were the chalkboard menus of standard meals and daily specials. These included breakfast variations of egg and chips, and traditional English meals like steak and kidney pie, spotted dick and jam roly poly (figure 4.1). The cheapest item on the menu and one frequently ordered was a mug of tea, and for 50p a pensioner or those who popped in during the day had a local place to frequent.

Key to its appropriation by its customers, the Caff was a place to go to regularly, either spontaneously or as part of a routine. It was a place where one could do nothing much without any sense of being moved on; there was no formal membership required for being there. One may go through the formality of ordering a cup of tea, but more importantly the Caff was a place where one could spend time and take your time. Tables were solid-framed timber with easy-to-wipe Formica tops, set with the relatively standard collection of malt vinegar, brown sauce, tomato sauce, and salt and pepper (figure 4.2). Chairs were the same solid timber and were robust and comfortable. A large TV commanded prime position on one sidewall, where a poster of a Van Gogh painting had been demoted to make way for the TV screen.



Figure 4.2 Formica tabletops and standard accompaniments (Author's photograph 2007)

The shop window area was cluttered with plants, an ice-cream machine and the odd box, so the view from the street outside into the shop was partially obscured. On winter days, the combination of steam from the kitchen, body mass and cigarette smoke prior to the smoking ban rendered the shop interior invisible to the street. Front doors to the shop were set back into the Caff, and once you had stepped in off the street you were in the throng of the place. Nick's Caff was unimposing from the street outside. From the fairly conventional sign above the shop there was little to suggest a place out of the ordinary. Essentially the Caff appeared as a space off the street, between the stir of the adjacent public thoroughfare and the seclusion of the private home above (figure 4.3). The Caff's location between an overtly public and private realm was significant in how individuals appropriated space in the public interior off the street.

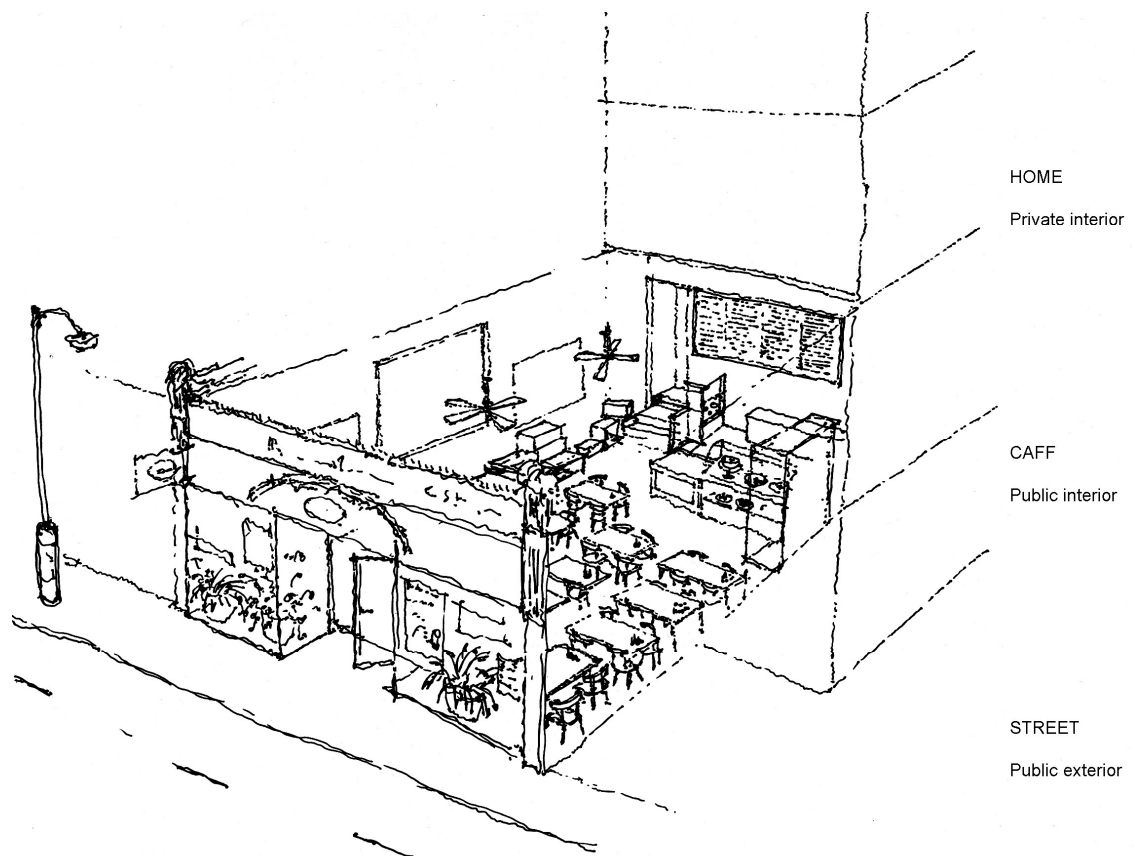


Figure 4.3 Sketch of Nick's Caff, between the public street and the domestic interior (Fieldwork drawing 2006)

Work rhythm

The rhythm within Nick's Caff was integral to its space, a central feature of which was the propinquity of work and home. The Caff opened between six thirty and seven in the morning and closed approximately twelve hours later. It was open seven days a week, but closed on Sundays before lunch. A few years ago Nick and his wife Dorah built a holiday home with their family in Cyprus and they took two weeks annual leave to visit their second home, closing the Caff over that period. From one perspective, Nick and Dorah's lives were arduous because their working hours were so extended. Their working life was not only demanding of time, but also required sustained interaction on a daily basis.

What was it that transformed Nick and Dorah's working lives beyond the limitations of a demanding working day? In my analysis I raise the issue of the proximity of work and home space and extend this to the interconnectedness of a working life with a way of life. To explore these spatial and practised relationships, I employ the notion of a daily rhythm within the Caff as an aspect of time that incorporates both routines and fluctuations. The rhythm of the Caff across the day brought moments of intensity and relative quiet. The space of the Caff was delineated not only by the physical layout of the tables, but also by the fluctuating patterns of use throughout the day, ushering in the waves of different kinds of clientele at particular time intervals (figure 4.4).

The first customers of the weekday were generally on their way to work, and either stopped in briefly for a takeaway or stayed for a quick breakfast. Around ten the Caff began to fill, mostly with construction workers from sites in the area as well as people from local workshops and small industries. At lunchtime the third set of regulars came in and included workers from local offices, shops and institutions. This time period also incorporated once-a-week groups such as the young mentally handicapped adults from Cambridge House, who helped themselves to drinks from the fridge and engaged Nick in jokes and banter. The frenzy subsided after lunch, and the odd person popped in for tea and late lunch or early dinner. Local shop workers came in and out during the day. Around five in the afternoon, the most persistent regulars settled in around the two family tables. They sat there until Nick and Dorah closed up at six thirty. Aside from Nick and Dorah's family, this group included Sonja, who was born and grew up in Walworth, and Sonja's daughter and grandson, who sometimes hauled his homework out onto the table as if it were an extension of his home. Mike, who was in his seventies, often strolled across from his flat in the sheltered housing for the elderly, accommodation that Nick had helped him to secure. He regularly joined this extended 'family', and dismissed the people at the sheltered housing with an irritated flick by asserting, 'This is where my friends are.'

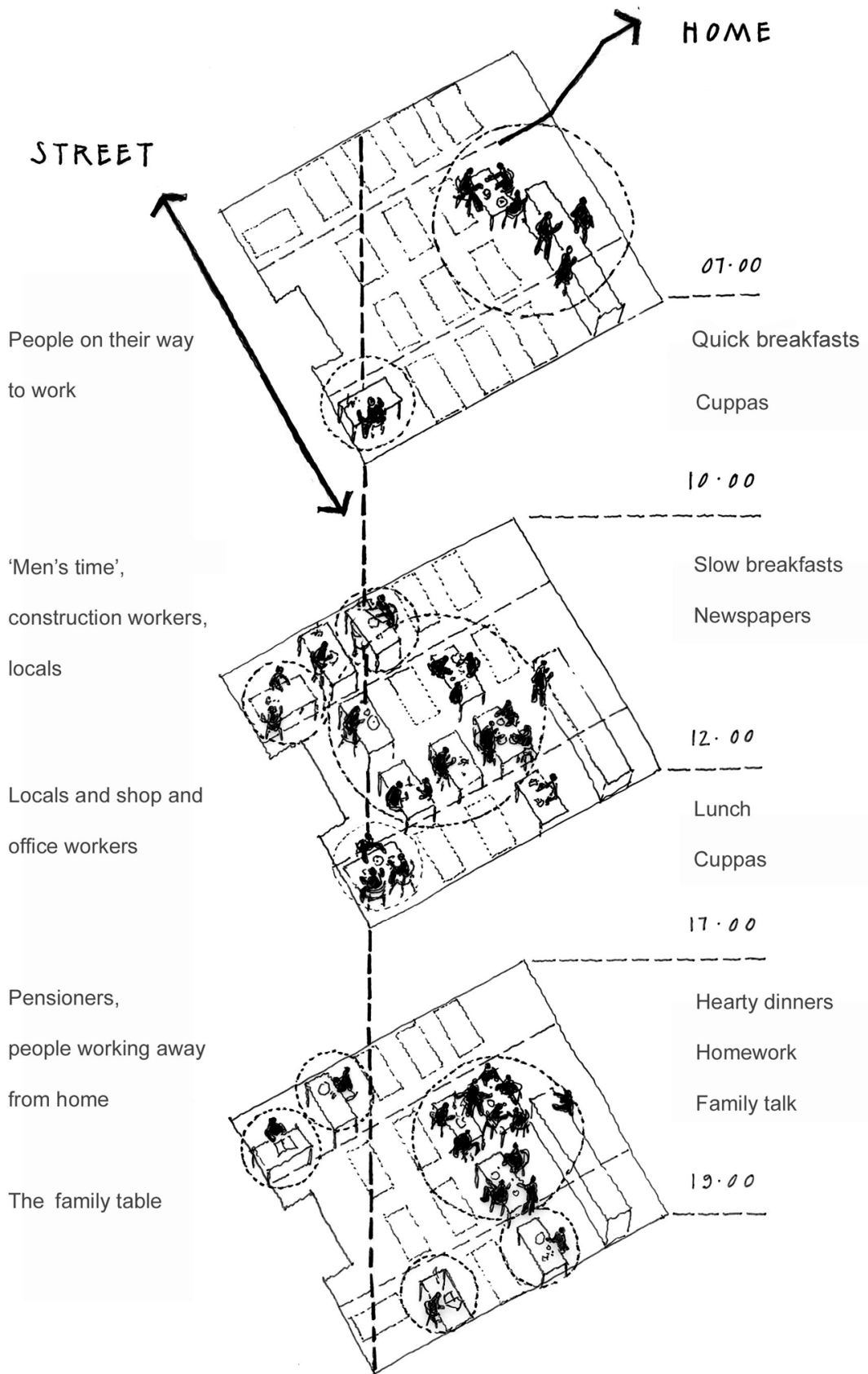


Figure 4.4 The fluctuating rhythms of the Caff during weekdays (Fieldwork drawing 2008)

Aside from the noticeable groups of regulars who used the Caff, there were individuals who frequented the Caff as part of their daily or weekly routine. People on shift work or piecework away from home, like Dave, used the Caff periodically when they worked in London; they knew they could be assured of a good home-cooked meal and the familiar comforts of a traditional Caff. Pensioners also had their regular slots, many coming in the morning for a cup of tea, some coming in for a hot meal at lunch or dinnertime. Mark, who was self-employed and a confessed late riser, generally came in around eleven in the morning, read a paper, did a bit of business, and usually ordered the same cooked breakfast. He mostly sat on his own, at a side table facing the street. He told me that the Caff was the place 'where I do my thinking'. Hinga, who left Sierra Leone twelve years ago during the height of the civil war, started coming to the Caff during my fieldwork. He quietly slipped in at the same time most mornings after the morning rush, and sat upfront, close to Nick. He usually ordered tea and toast, and glanced up at the television, never making eye contact. Hinga did not partake in any of the general conversations, and did not conform to any particular groups in the Caff. But Nick's Caff was one of Hinga's local places and he reserved his space through the regular act of sitting.

In Nick's Caff sitting was a social process tied to a local place, where regularity was an important dimension of a basic mode of belonging. Many customers claimed this belonging through regular time and place, sitting in the Caff more or less at the same time and mostly in the same place. Cavan (1966) described the sociability of sitting in the context of the public bar by explaining the seating choices that are exercised by position ('proximities and boundaries'), by posture ('display' and 'poise') and conduct ('characters' and 'behaviours'). Similarly, Laurier's research (2004) into the social life within coffee chains and cafés points to the connection between the semi-public interior of the café as an urban meeting ground for intellectual discussion as well as a place for doing work. In contrast to Nick's Caff, Laurier's café is the place to take 'a portable

office' (2004, p. 3) and his observations of office workers in London firms highlight how Wi Fi has allowed informal, collective workspaces to emerge in coffee shops. Although increasing mobility and technological advances have led to new modes of sociability, Laurier's empirical research suggests that place or actual meeting grounds retain value. Although Nick's Caff has no Wi Fi, the general forms of face-to-face sociability that Laurier describes are not dissimilar from the Caff, where the importance of timing, the reassurance of regularity and the role of seating and furniture are part of 'meeting up in a small-world way' (2004, p. 6).

While these social forms are all applicable to Nick's Caff, what was also significant was the selective use of time and space. Through understanding the predictable social routines in the Caff, individuals could exercise explicit choices about when to visit it. Once inside the Caff, the size of the table provided a small measure of social distance without entirely distancing anyone from the general activities around them. The positions of the tables, the defined area of the table as a personal space, and the fluctuating use of the space throughout the rhythm of the day assisted in defining personal territories within the larger space of the Caff. It took me a while to develop a simple drawing as shown in figure 4.4 to show this crucial combination of the small social increments of space and time. By compiling a series of layers, I could show the social nuances of how tables were claimed by different individuals and groups across the hourly intervals of the day.

Work identity

The integration of work, space and time in the Caff has accommodated and shaped the role and character of Nick and Dorah as working individuals. Both Nick and Dorah have strong 'work identities' or identities that Sennett (1999) relates to how directly individuals are attached to their work roles, tasks and responsibilities. Critically for Nick and Dorah, the Caff was a workplace in which there was sufficient space and time for

their personalities to be expressed. As interactive and responsible 'workers', their identities exemplified a synergy between who they are and what they do for a living. This was partly related to the rhythm of the Caff, where Nick and Dorah were able to respond to the fluctuating pace of the day, using quieter moments to eat in the Caff at the family table, to attend to other matters not always central to the Caff, and to talk to customers.

The Caff's significance as a distinctly personal place relates in part to the daily congregation of an extended family, to the propinquity of work and home and to the presence of Nick and Dorah's personalities in the Caff. Nick was in the Caff most, since Dorah moved between Caff, home and kitchen. His particular form of engagement explicitly involved the diverse individuals in the Caff. Nick was a 'public character' (Jacobs 1992 [1961]); he concerned himself with the people around him. This role was epitomised by a conversation we had one morning. I spoke to Nick about a regular customer, who was a patient at a local psychiatric hospital. Nick said, 'He's doing better. He comes in, talks about the football World Cup. At first I could see he didn't want to talk. Slowly I started to include him. I could see it's important, right. He needs to be included.'

In my case, a particular circumstance shifted Nick's remit of which of his customers 'needs to be included' beyond the realms of general Caff sociability. My relationship to the Caff and to Nick changed when, early in 2005, my son was born five weeks ahead of the expected date. Various factors increased the potential stress of this situation; my partner was away working in Japan under the assurances that 'all first babies come late'. I was still a newcomer to London, confined to hospital with no nearby family or local network to call on apart from my mum who fortuitously was visiting me. She was in a part of London unfamiliar to her, and so we agreed that she should pop in to Nick's Caff, to find out about bus passes, the laundromat and general neighbourhood

information. During the days that followed, my mum went on to Nick's Caff after hospital visits, for fags (or in her case 'cigarettes'), a chat and general contact and assurance. Nick gave us immeasurable support, while my mum – characteristically assertive in her gastronomic needs – asked Nick to have strong filter coffee available on the Caff's menu. The result is a friendship for which I am very grateful, and a great cup of Italian coffee now available at Nick's Caff.

During my fieldwork, Mark, a regular, pointed out that Nick was acting as a 'sponsor' for my research; he not only allowed me to sit in the Caff regularly, but he also introduced me to various people. With his permission I was offered an opening into the Caff and a small foothold of credibility. The benefits of Nick acting as my research sponsor were invaluable, and my access to the Caff and its personalities was speedily chaperoned in a way that I could not have accomplished on my own. But I was also aware that Nick's strong presence as a public personality could limit who I talked to.

Time proved of good assistance, and the more I spent of it in the Caff, the more I engaged directly with individuals, bumping into them both in the Caff and on the street. But Nick's role as a local public character in itself was interesting, as his work skills and social skills were inextricably linked. Nick had become more than adept at watching and engaging people. He had grown up with a few of his customers and he had come to know his regulars. He could astutely describe a person and the current circumstances they were in. For instance, he would mention that Gary was 'very laid back' and 'not good with too much stress'. Or, with characteristic humour, he described Jack's brother as being 'in the last chapter of his life, but he's so tight, he won't die – so he doesn't have to pay for the funeral, right!'

In the rhythm of the Caff, Nick and Dorah were able to be proprietor and person; they efficiently managed their responsibilities in the Caff, enacted daily habits and, in the

quieter spells, engaged with clientele, friends and family. As this was a local establishment, the local scene combined work, space and time in a particular manner. Work was structured by the repetitive tasks of running the Caff and serving within it. But work was also vitalised by the regular and spontaneous engagements between the local proprietors and local customers. Nick and Dorah's work identities were also established by the routes taken by their respective immigrant parents to secure their workplaces in London. This small shop provided a platform for Nick's parents to invest their entrepreneurial skills in their adopted city. Nick was five when his dad brought the shop: 'This place [the Caff] was owned by another Cypriot fella, one thing led to another. This one happened to fall in the right place probably because of it being a Cypriot fella.' Nick's Dad had come to London on his own, fifteen years before he had resources to buy the Caff. He was invited into the country on the basis of being granted a work permit:

When he first came he was in north London. The restaurant he was working for was in the area. He had a job in the Trocadero. He worked up to sous-chef. Then he got lots of jobs for the other Cypriots. That's what our boys did. All the foreigners nowadays work in the kitchens... In about 1963 it [the restaurant] closed. It was after that when we came here. We lived locally, and he knew it [the Caff] was for sale. (Fieldwork conversation 2006)

From kitchen to Caff, Nick's family made progress through taking menial jobs, establishing access to small entrepreneurial activities, and by working hard and engaging in ethnic and local networks. A line of social mobility had been forged within three generations, from kitchen, to Caff, to profession. Nick first went to college and then on to work in the Caff, together with his sister, whom I have never met, but whose voice I heard calling up orders from the kitchen, hinting at the presence of an unseen person working below in the basement. Dorah was married at eighteen and has worked in the Caff since then. Although Nick and Dorah claimed working-class affinities and identities, social mobility across the generations of their family will shift if not eradicate what it means for them to be working class. The Caff is both work and a way

of life that Nick and Dorah inherited, but it is an inheritance that they will not pass on to their children. Nick and Dorah have placed great value on education and both of their daughters were awarded scholarships towards private education for their secondary schooling. Their children are currently pursuing qualifications at tertiary institutions. Having discussed the Caff as a workspace, I now turn towards the narratives of belonging in the Caff, paying particular attention to how notions of insiders and outsiders were constructed.

Insiders

Families and habitués

Nick's Caff was personified by the presence of Nick, Dorah, their teenage daughters and their extended family of relatives and local friends. It was difficult to separate the daily congregation and conversations of this extended family from the nature of the Caff interior. The front door to the Caff was off the street and was also the front door to Nick and Dorah's home above the shop. At the family tables, there was a mix of ages, of locals and of first, second and third generation immigrants. This daily gathering of friends and family around shared tables had permeated the sense of place and had permitted a certain accommodation of different people. Mark, a local who generally sat at a side table on his own, commented, 'The mix of ages is really good – it's one of the reasons this place [Nick's Caff] feels good – the mix of ages, the associations with family... It's a family place. Nick's family are around.' Although Mark had children, they no longer lived with him. On many occasions, I had seen Mark's two children meet him at the Caff, a place they seem comfortable to meet in together.

The sense of Nick's Caff being *a place to be at home outside home* is underpinned by different modes of belonging in the city, by different experiences of home and different experiences of family. The potential for belonging in the Caff was reinforced by the

constant presence of Nick and Dorah, and by the family-like relationships Nick and Dorah have developed with their some of their regulars. As I was leaving one evening, Dorah was chatting with the evening regulars at the family table about closing the Caff for the family's two-week annual holiday. Dorah mentioned her concern for one of the regulars, Freddie: 'He's the only one I worry about when we go away... when he walks out of this door every evening, there's no one to go to. That's it.' They carried on chatting and when Freddie walked in Sonja called out, 'You're late, where you been?' and Cathy, Sonja's daughter, added, 'You've got detention!' There were many individuals who used the Caff who no longer had an immediate family to socialise with daily. The Caff provided an alternative 'family' for them both by being a place to go to and by giving them contact with people to whom they feel they belong. Jack, who was in his sixties, had been coming regularly to Nick's Caff for 'Years, years. Since my divorce, I come here for supper on my way home. It's very much like a social club. What you'd call "caff society" – know what I mean. Once you've been coming long enough you almost become Nick's family.'

Gary was also a long-time regular at the Caff. He was born in the area but no longer lived in Walworth. He commuted in from the suburbs everyday where he lived with his wife and children. He came in for business and popped in and out of the Caff often during the day. In the evening he was usually at the 'family' table, where he ate his dinner, away from his immediate family but with his brother and local friends. Gary said, 'I've always used the Caff. They treat me like family... if I don't come in he [Nick] phones me... All my friends come to eat here.' I asked Gary if his own family ate at the Caff and he replied, 'They have done', implying that they seldom do, and that Nick's table of regulars were 'family' outside of family and quite literally 'at home' outside home. Sonja, like Gary, was born in the area. She came to the Caff every morning before work and sat at the family table. She often met her daughter and a friend and was sometimes joined by Dorah and her sister. Sonja also had her dinner or evening

coffee in the Caff, usually joined by her daughter and teenage grandson. Sonja met her late partner in the Caff. It felt as if Nick's Caff, or the front table at least, was Sonja's extended living room, the place where she socialised with family and friends.

Locals and small localities

The people in the Caff who were born in the area and who grew up there during the 1950s and 60s, prior to what they described as a period of noticeable change, came to know Walworth as a local place, partly defined by the parameters of a predominantly white working-class community. This sense of community was qualified by these locals through certain criteria: being born in the area (originating in the local place), growing up in the area (sharing common experiences) and often by remaining in the area (preserving common experiences and culture). Today the Walworth Road is epitomised by diverse ethnicities and transforming cultures; it is a place where old and new adapt to substantial urban change. Part of how the different people within the Caff identified themselves and others reflected how they viewed and dealt with change. Many of the Caff's born-and-bred locals remembered the Walworth Road as a local place that was substantially reinforced by knowing one another. Sonja simply stated, 'If you walked down the street you knew people.'

Mike further defined the criteria of knowing each other, or belonging to a local area, through a narrative of sameness, where origin, ethnicity and a working-class way of life constituted his idea of a society: '[Walworth Road] was ordinary Cockney-type society. Most of 'em all in the graveyard now... There was big changes when the migrants came here, 50s onwards... There was small shops, no supermarkets... run by English people.' As highlighted in Chapter 3, the information about the ownership and commercial activities along the Walworth Road given in the *Post Office London Directories* makes clear that Mike's nostalgic recollections are inaccurate. The records

of proprietors in the Walworth Road between 1841 and 1950 belie his memory that the road was made up only of 'English people', and show that there was a mix of people living there who came from various places including Greece, Turkey, eastern Europe, Italy and Ireland.

Sonja, Jack and Mike's sense of place and belonging within the local area has been dramatically disrupted by the pace of change within their lifetimes. According to Evans (2006), places like Bermondsey, to the east of Walworth, remained socially contained because of factors such as the local working-class relationships to the docks. This included the preservation of work on the docks maintained through a closed network of family and friends, as confirmed in Willmott and Young's (2007 [1957], p. 100) reference to the practice of 'family succession' for the recruitment of work in the London Docks. By contrast the Walworth Road is and always has been a through route, contesting outright physical containment as a local area. This is not to undermine its distinctive local qualities, but the small retail opportunities along the street have historically accommodated a range of independent entrepreneurs over a long period.

In addition, the combined proximity of social housing, followed later in the 1960s and 70s by extensive housing estates, gradually added to a concentration of different people. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, it was only after a revision to the policy for the allocation of social housing in 1977, where housing is allocated on the basis of need rather than the length of time applicants had spent in the area, that immigrants began to have more rapid access to social housing in Walworth. Mark described the role of the Walworth Road as a place for insiders and outsiders, for people staying and others moving on: 'Although it's a shopping area, it's very much a thoroughfare and that is really important to the way it develops... There is some tension and some synthesis between people who live here and people passing through.'

While the Walworth Road may once have been a place where people knew each other, places like the Caff now represent the *small localities* in the city that Simmel (1903) had associated more specifically with life in villages and small towns. Simmel had associated the interaction within small localities as dependent on the individual being known, and thereby located. By contrast, the urban role of such small localities is highlighted in an account of local life in Bethnal Green in the East End in the late 1950s, where the pub and the shop are described as the two significant local meeting places: 'The pubs and shops in Bethnal Green serve so well as "neighbourhood centres" because there are so many of them: they provide the same small face-to-face groups with continual opportunities to meet' (Willmott and Young 2007 [1957], p. 153). The pub exemplifies an historic feature of local community life in working-class London, but few pubs remain on the Walworth Road today. Jack described the changing role of the local pub:

There's been subtle changes. Take the closing down of the pubs. Every street had a pub, and that was like a community centre. You could come home of an evening, take off your working-class clothes, get your newspaper, go down to the pub. That was before television... When I was young you could literally drink seven days a week and it wouldn't make a dent in your pocket (I'm talking about when I was single, of course). It wasn't just a question of drinking, it was a social club. The way I got to know people was the pub... a kind of drinking school developed. (Fieldwork conversation 2006)

Haine's (1992) social history of the role of the Parisian working-class café defines how these drinking establishments and meeting places provided a local base for social and political organisation. In describing the particular social role of small-scale meeting spaces, he emphasises both the repetition and the informal structure afforded by these local establishments. Haine points to the social relations in the café, and the types of friendship or 'casual closeness' that were 'simultaneously intimate and anonymous' (1992, p. 607). The English working-class social establishments, including the pub and the caff, have provided a base for such informal meeting grounds. However, these

social institutions are subject to economic and cultural change, just as the sense of what it means to be a 'local' is subject to transformation. Being a 'local' was diversely interpreted in Nick's Caff and shifted between understandings of *being local* and practices of *being located*. These ranged from a perceived commonality of origin (English) and culture (working class), to living life more or less within the confines of a local neighbourhood (territory). It also included using the city more extensively while returning regularly to a series of local places to reinforce contact between people, including one's residential neighbourhood (networks and localities).

Entrepreneurs and sub-cultures

In the Caff the collisions of quite different individuals within the same locale depends partially on sharing affinities, but also on sharing a particular sense of time. *Shared time* allowed individuals and groups to congregate in Nick's Caff throughout the varied rhythms of the Walworth day, where many local practices were independent of the regular working day of the City. In Wallman's study *Eight London Households* (1984) she observes and interviews households with different demographic, ethnic and class profiles all living within the same area of the Louvaine Area Residents' Association (LARA) housing project in South London. Wallman's empiric analyses point to how individuals create and use different forms of networks at different stages in their lives as a means of getting on in the city.

In developing an understanding of an 'urban resource network', Wallman defines resources as more 'to do with organisation', including the organisation of 'time, information and identity' (1984, p. 29), than to do with the bonds of ethnicity or kinship. In his ethnographic account of football hooligans, Armstrong (1998) also effectively analyses the resource of time above class to challenge the stereotypical association of class with football hooliganism. He articulates shared time as a mode of belonging: 'In

terms of participation, the most essential requirement for being a Blade was free time...’ (1998, p. 169).

Many of the regulars who used Nick’s Caff frequented the Caff during formal ‘office hours’. The time that structured their routines, practices and everyday culture was quite different from the organisation of time by those who were clocking in for a nine-to-five day. The Caff regulars largely consisted of people who no longer worked, including pensioners, as well as those who worked outside of regular, formal employment. In the Caff there were also people who worked within the realm of what Hobbs (1988) described as a particular ‘entrepreneurial’ culture, outside the structure of the law. One such entrepreneurial practice was referred to in the Caff as being ‘on the fiddle’.

Downes (1966, p. 204) offers a definition of fiddling as both sub-cultural practice and shared cultural understanding: “Fiddling” is the adult practice of enlarging income tax-free by theft from one’s work-place [...] the justification being that “Everybody does it”. Nick reported that these illegal activities were common practice when he was growing up in Walworth: ‘Tell you what, so many of the blokes were duckin’ and divin’, doin’ a bit of time. But that’s how it’s done, wasn’t nothin’ unusual or anythin’. Like Mike, he was a bit of a crook. But it’s just how it was done.’ Mike had mentioned to me months earlier that he had had high earnings when he was a dustman and Dan, sitting at the same table, replied, ‘but you were on the fiddle’.

For those in the Caff engaged in these kinds of entrepreneurial activities there seemed to be a hierarchy or social ranking. Gary was what Nick referred to with tongue in cheek as ‘an innocent crook’, and on the lower rungs of the local ‘entrepreneurial’ hierarchy, or what Foster’s (1990) interviewees described as ‘sprats and mackerels’ in her book *Villains*, which was based in an inner-city south London area. Gary did a bit of maintenance and repair work for one of the local churches and generally popped in

and out of the Caff throughout the day. He was initially reluctant to talk to me as he thought I might be a policewoman. But after my interview with his friends, Mike and Dan, he was always polite, and used occasional small talk to ask what else I had found out about the street.

My contact with the range of 'entrepreneurs' in the Caff remained at the lower level of the hierarchy with Gary. The middle section of rank was epitomised by Joe who, according to Nick, 'wasn't a criminal or anything' but who 'did some duckin' and divin''. Joe watched me come in and out of the Caff with the faintest gesture of disapproval, and never acknowledged my presence. Then there was the upper rank. As a regular succinctly put it, 'See those two boys sitting over there? They are the "Xs". Have you heard of them? They're a well-known gangster family, notorious. But they won't speak to you, and you don't want to speak to them.' As a local resident, I was more than happy to leave it at that. The social and spatial organisation of the Caff allowed me to use the Caff regularly, to form relationships with some other customers, and never to make eye contact with others. There was no obligation to participate and joining in simply meant sitting down.

Outsiders

In exploring the aspects of difference and sociability within Nick's Caff and the Walworth Road, it became necessary to evaluate who socialised in the Caff, who was there and who was absent and how individuals expressed on what basis 'others' should belong. Amongst some of the regulars, these expressions straddled the exterior generalisations around race, class and culture, and the more intimate interactions in the Caff interior. Although there was a core group of regulars who had frequented the Caff for years, it was difficult to describe the Caff clientele by way of any singular social group or designation on the basis of gender, class or ethnicity. This may be related to

the relatively undemanding nature of Nick's Caff, where there were few formal regulations beyond the rudimentary contract of paying for what you order. Rather, its social regulations emerged from the practices of proprietor and customers – where regulars sat, where the loner sat, who talked to whom, and what people talked about.

The customers in the Caff included people who may not have much to spend, who may have ample time or a different sense of time, or who may need a relaxed atmosphere to retreat to outside the confines of their own home or their own company. Mustafa described the underlying informality of Nick's Caff: 'Cafes are better than restaurants. Restaurants are very formal. You can take time, eat, have a cigarette. Restaurants you got to eat your food and get out.' This is not to say that the Caff was a place without tensions. These were often presented through perceptions about different people that were informed by the separations between groups. Various people in the Caff talked in general terms about 'the Conservatives', 'the middle-class wankers' or 'the immigrants'. But the daily life in Nick's Caff revealed forms of engagement that differed from these generalisations. What permeated throughout the Caff was a mixing through a variety of personal relationships with overlaps of race, culture, age and personalities.

Caff culture for the most part was convivial in its nature. Different people entered a local establishment to eat, talk or observe; there was very little conflict in its inherent sociability. Conviviality was at its peak when events or circumstances contrived to encourage different people to meet over common ground. One such event was the Football World Cup in 2006, which, as good fortune would have it, more or less coincided with the beginning of my fieldwork in the Caff. During this period individuals and groups talked over tables and counters and Nick and Dorah initiated a draw where various customers were allotted teams. Appropriate levels of jubilation or despondence were enacted when the name of a team was drawn out of a bag and assigned to a customer. This event seemed to bring people together effortlessly over a brief period.

In general, being able to talk about football matches was a good way for people to have easy social entry into the Caff.

But there were also counter events, or situations and occasions that brought out hostile or alienating experiences. Oddly enough, it was another large sporting event that effectively brought on one such adverse encounter for Nick. I popped into the Caff one afternoon to see how Dorah had done in the London Marathon. After Nick had sung her praises he said, 'Of course it didn't go so well for me, someone called me a "bloody foreigner"!' On the day that Dorah was running in the Marathon Nick had stood in the crowd trying to get a view of the race. At one point, as he told it, a young woman pushed him out of the way to see the race better. Apparently her quick glance at Nick's skin and hair had induced her retort of 'bloody foreigner'. The following sections explore how individuals in the Caff configure 'otherness'.

Race

At times, the overlaps of different cultures, or of the familiar and unfamiliar in the Caff, produced contradictions for the individuals involved. It is how these contradictions were dealt with that exposed how the sense of 'who belongs' and 'on what basis' fluctuated. One evening, early in my fieldwork, I was telephoned by Nick to come to the Caff to meet Mike, who reportedly had some 'strong views' about the immigrants to the area. When I got to the Caff, Mike was sitting at one of the family tables upfront. Mike was born in London and was now in his seventies. His father emigrated from southern Italy to London. Mike was white, and heavily set with an unruly beard. In contrast, Dan, who sat opposite Mike, was a thirty-something black man, immaculately dressed in a suit, with his hair in dreds. Dan met Mike at the Caff, and this was where they regularly met up. It seemed an unlikely friendship, and Mike mentioned twice in the conversation that the change in the area was down to 'the immigrants' and then later he said 'the Blacks'.

However, after seeing Mike and Dan on other occasions in the Caff, it appeared as if Mike saw Dan as Dan – a friend. Mike's close relationship with Dan suggested that racism or perceptions of race are situated; what one is familiar with or who one knows at an intimate level (in this case within the Caff) is very different from the broad generalisations of groups of unknown people 'out there', as informed by the media or the circulation of public fictions.

Months later I mentioned Dan and Mike's friendship to Nick, raising the marked distinction between Mike's racist generalisations and his close friendship with Dan. Nick promptly replied, 'Dan's not that black.' He went off to serve a few customers and returned to my table and said, 'Mike says you should put all the blacks in a boat out to sea, and burn it. And yet he's so close to Dan.' I was taken aback by this comment, and by the ease with which it was reported. It would have been easy to dismiss Mike as a racist, yet his friendship with Dan was more than simply contradictory: it revealed both the powerful role of racial stereotypes, and how through social interaction individuals transcend racism. Mike and Dan's friendship was based on a range of shared affinities like their mutual love of jazz and food. I did not observe any way in which Dan suppressed his identity in the Caff. Mike and Dan had come to enjoy a genuine friendship, which I found confounding. Mike's views reflected the powerful impact of racism, yet his friendship with Dan revealed how perceptions of race are distorted through experience.

In *Slim's Table* Duneier (1992) describes relationships amongst the 'habitués' that developed across overt racial and stereotypical barriers at the Valois Cafeteria. But unlike Duneier's description of 'sitting buddies' (1992, p. 35), Mike and Dan's friendship had surpassed the confinement of the Caff. Although their friendship was formed in Nick's Caff and was sustained by regularly meeting there, they also met outside the Caff to do things together. Dan took Mike shopping in his car, and they would also go

out to eat or have a drink. They shared important celebrations, and I was aware they had spent a Christmas Eve together.

The way that regulars in the Caff expressed their opinions about who belongs and under what conditions was often based on projected or externally formed identity and varied distinctly. Daily relations in the Caff were generally convivial and events like during the World Cup served to reinforce such conviviality. Sometimes events outside the Caff's intimacy served to denigrate identity, as was Nick's experience at the London Marathon. Impersonal relationships in the Caff were also contradictory, often founded on assumptions and generalisations used to explain the demographic changes in what were remembered as predominantly white working-class neighbourhoods. Stereotypes, particularly a combination of stereotypes around race and immigration, were exposed within the interior of the Caff in different ways. Sonja for instance made general reference to 'the ethnics' as an all-encompassing group of new migrants who represented for her one of the significant changes in the area. During my conversation with her, she mentioned that her daughter's mobile phone had been stolen that day. When her grandson asked who was responsible, Freddie looked up and said, 'one of those with a tan'.

Immigrants

Ironically, many of the regulars in the Caff who had negative views on more recent immigrants were second-generation immigrants themselves. Their parents came to London from places like Cyprus, Greece, Italy and the Caribbean. Part of a generalised distinction they made, as justification of their resentment of the more recent generation of immigrants, was around the perceived ease of the routes taken from arriving in the country to receiving public resources such as housing. These justifications were

shaped around narratives of who should be entitled to public resources, and on what basis.

The following conversation took place in Nick's Caff one morning:

Nick: Late 40s, Greek Cypriots started comin' over – economic reasons. Turks started comin' in the 50s. You had to have a sponsor of a job and somewhere to stay.

Nick asked Savvas when his dad came over. Savvas' dad is Greek Cypriot. Savvas was between forty and fifty, and raised his voice during the conversation, getting quite heated over his distinction between deserving and undeserving immigrants.

Savvas: My old dad came over in '53. Nowadays people come fresh off the boat and want it all... That's why this country's on its knees.

Nick: You had to have a job to come here. You had to have a guarantee of a job and accommodation. That meant you couldn't claim off the state. We were British citizens; Cyprus was a British colony until 1960.

Nick mentioned that his dad came over to London twice, once in 1950 and again in 1952.

You had to get permission from over there as well. You come through on a boat. 'Bout 5 pounds it was. My father was here for 'bout 6 years before my mum come over. There was no support, no interpreters, none of the support groups you have today.

Nick moved around the Caff while serving the mid-morning customers. A little later he came back to the table and talked about a different scale and rate of immigration, and his perceived difficulties with it.

We were assimilated into a system. Now there's so many. When they first come they have big families. They get the bigger accommodation and the places at the schools. The English resent that. That's how the English people see it, and I do too, to an extent.

(Fieldwork conversation 2007)

I was not entirely sure about where Nick and Savvas's assumptions about the immigration process being easy and uncomplicated had come from. Certainly they were not informed by the more recent legal requirements of immigration into the UK. Since 2004, I had personally entered into a lengthy and costly process of immigration

and my route into the UK first as a worker, then a resident and ultimately a dual nationality citizen, was an intimidating one. The immigration process has over recent years, particularly since 2006, become more stringent and expensive. Requirements for those applying for citizenship have multiplied, there has been an increase in the duration of stay required before one can apply for permanent residency (www.homeoffice.gov.uk 2006), and it is now necessary to pass a 'Life in the UK test' (www.homeoffice.gov.uk 2007).

Foreigners

In spite of Nick being a fully-fledged citizen and moreover one who was born and had grown up in the same local area, his own view of his status was complicated. One area in which Nick's determination to confront his vulnerability or 'foreignness' came to the fore was in establishing the future prospects for his and Dorah's daughters. Nick had often talked to me about tertiary education and job prospects for his youngest daughter, who was an excellent student. Nick had mentioned that she wanted to study business at one of the 'top universities'. His concern was not about his daughter's ability, but rather her social standing: 'She's small, she's a woman, plus she's foreign. She got a foreign surname. She has to have more to get where she wants.' Nick and Dorah were both born in London. They grew up in the same street, only a few blocks from the Caff, and their daughters were also born in London. In spite of Nick and Dorah and his daughters all being Londoners, Nick described his daughter as 'foreign', her name carrying her heritage, her foreignness.

Nick juggled being local and being foreign, a complex identity that Bhabha describes as 'the migrant's double vision' (2004 [1994], p. 5) or a dual frame of reference to where one has come from, and where one currently is. Nick expressed a strong sense of his Turkish heritage but also of his local, working-class sensibilities. But both of

these identities have increased his perceived vulnerability in relating to a London outside his local domains. He is concerned for his daughter's prospects in terms not only of her 'foreign' status, but also of her 'local' status, alluding in passing to his family's local working-class accents by saying, 'Our sorts give ourselves away with our mouths.' Hence Nick's absolute determination that his daughter '*has to have more to get where she wants*'.

Both Nick and Dorah were brought up in Muslim households. Although Dorah had mentioned that they did not eat pork at home, pork was cooked and served to customers, always a hot favourite on the breakfast menu. I had known Nick for two years prior to my fieldwork, but only well into it did I feel able to broach issues of his identity more directly. One morning, after six months in the field, I asked Nick what it was like growing up in the area with his Cypriot heritage:

Nick: I've never faced any racism on the whole, directly.

Suzi: *Why do you say you're foreign?*

Nick: Because of my colour. The English people are lovely, right. But the bottom line is I'm foreign. And what's worse, I'm a foreigner in my own country!

Suzi: *Do your girls feel English?*

Nick: I feel English in every way, except in some of our networks and family ways. We don't encourage our girls to go out like the English girls, you understand.

(Nick hops up to serve a customer and returns a little later.)

Suzi: *Did you have to let being a Muslim go when you came here?*

Nick: It was never an issue. It was more cultural. For instance I don't eat pork, don't let my children eat pork, because I've never had it cooked in the house.

In many ways our culture is like the 1950s. We've still got the traditional ways, like being in a time warp. We're old-fashioned, even our language has stayed the same. They [Cypriots in Cyprus] see you as English Turks!

(Fieldwork conversation 2007)

Nick partly managed his hybrid identity between place and time, between South London and Cyprus, between urban practices and old-fashioned traditions. Although Nick and Dorah have a second home in Cyprus, they had stated that Cyprus would not be their eventual retirement destination; London was not simply a means to an end. Within the Caff there was space for the coexistence of these different affinities. There were also particular identities that Nick, Dorah and others in the Caff explicitly related to as being more inclusive of managing these complexities. Defining oneself as 'working class' or 'a south Londoner' was separate from being an English national.

Being a Londoner or a south Londoner seemed partially to accommodate contradictions – you could live here, even be born here, and have strong connections to another place. Perhaps as a 'Londoner' you could be tied to individual sensibilities, occupations or preferences that are not constrained by nationality. Being working class tied people in the Caff to a cultural set of affinities and a sense of group heritage, even if the material definition of labour and capital no longer directly applied. But being a local seemed a far more complex identity for many 'locals' in the Caff since local life incorporated both the embodiment of past memories, as well as the direct experience of change. For some, being local depended on having explicit connections to origin, community and territory, demanding of a birth right, a group and a neighbourhood, a stability that is difficult to sustain in the face of profound urban change.

This leads me to the question of how well the Caff, as a local space, is able to respond to change over time. In relating the demise of the London caff in general, to the vitality of Nick's Caff in particular, I have found it valuable to consider measures of longevity alongside adaptability. In the first instance, the Caff has provided a work base within Nick's family for four decades and this is likely to continue at least until Nick and Dorah choose to retire. As Nick was approaching fifty, and Dorah was in her early forties, the

longevity of Nick and Dorah's working lineage is likely to extend at least for a decade if not two. The familial line of parent to child succession in the Caff is likely to stop at Nick and Dorah's daughters, exemplifying a familiar pattern of immigrant shopkeeper to professional within three generations.

At some later date the Caff may well be run by other members of the extended family, but in other instances on the Walworth Road, as in the Walworth Café, which was run by an Italian family, the family business closed in 2007 after the second generation decided to retire. Social mobility and economic pressures partially account for these changes. Heathcoate (2004) points to the rapid demise of the London caff, a factor he attributes, amongst other things, to the emergence of coffee franchises and chains across London. As an indication of the extent of this phenomenon, one only has to track the brief history of Starbucks in London; it started out in 1998, and rapidly expanded to 137 chains across London by 2007 (<http://www.starbucks.co.uk> 2007). Such coffee franchises or chains are now a notable feature on many London high streets, prominent for their ubiquitous prevalence and instantly recognisable by their global insignia.

Local caffs are also gradually being replaced by new forms of local eating establishments and meeting places that are not exemplified by global franchises. This is partly evidenced in the emergence of places such as the internet-coffee spaces, as well as the kebab shops on the Walworth Road. Although a 'traditional' caff opened in 2008 on the Walworth Road, new local eating and meeting places also include more culturally specific establishments such as the 'Somali Social Club' and the 'Sierra Hot Spot'. Nick's Caff itself has undergone its own transformations across time. Sonja remembered it in the 1950s, before it was owned by Nick's family, when it was open until late at night, frequented by youngsters who were out and about in the evening. It is this version of the London caff that Downes (1966) wrote about in the late 1960s,

and from his research base in the East End, he described a congregation of teenagers, mostly male, who met in the local caff between eight and eleven in the evenings.

It is perhaps naive to romanticise the longevity of the Caff in the face of urban change, in spite of how local establishments like the Caff are able to adapt as cultural practices shift. The adaptability of places like Nick's Caff will be pitted against more stringent economic realities, as reflected by the high rental, high rates and steady increases in retail property prices in London. These economic trajectories will also make it increasingly difficult for the small business person and the entrepreneurial immigrant to access retail space. When Nick's father first bought the Caff and subsequently the home above it in the 1960s, property prices were still depressed from the economic aftermath of the Second World War. The ownership of their working premises in Nick's family has played a critical part in its economic stability.

In 2007 the information from the Southwark Council Business Centre website indicates that there are rentals on the Walworth Road of around £25,000 per annum for 70 square metres of retail space, such that proprietors require a high monthly turnover to survive (www.southwark.gov.uk/businesscentre 2007). However, for people to *be* local in changing local worlds, and to form ways of life and association outside or in addition to the remits of origin, community or territory, they require a range of spaces in which to meet, to encounter difference, and to engage in informal memberships. As a local meeting space, Nick's Caff reveals the social value of spaces in which life and livelihoods are combined.

Conclusions

The primary question explored in this chapter has been: What accommodates a sense of belonging in a context of rapid change? The question has expanded within the

interior of Nick's Caff to how different people are able to belong differently. It is the differences or variations in belonging that possibly offer clarity in what can only be described as the complex and contradictory identities of the paradoxical London local. Nick's Caff is a local meeting place that hosts encounters for both proprietor and customers, where conventional understandings of what it means to belong are contested. In the context of profound urban change, verbal definitions of 'insider' and 'outsider' may be distinctive and clear, but experiences of insider and outsider seem far less so. Nick is simultaneously south Londoner and Cypriot, local and foreigner, his daughters will participate in working-class and professional cultures, and Mike will depend on his close friendship with Dan, in spite of his racist generalisations. The significance of the Caff as a local meeting place is not that these complexities are resolved. The value is that it is a place for face-to-face and day-to-day contact outside an overtly public or private domain where the public or private requirements for membership are likely to be more explicit and more regulated.

In Nick's Caff the contract of meeting is negotiated by the art of sitting, and may take the form of active or passive participation. The process of assigning who belongs may be already established by criteria such as broader societal values and rules set outside the Caff. Becker (1963) explains that the borders around the notion of the 'outsider' fluctuate because such categories are not 'factual', but are essentially externally constructed and socially created. The outsider is thus 'a double barrelled term' (1963, p. 1) dependent on values and rules, a process of jostling between those who make the rules and those who understand them, and those who break the rules or don't fit. But the enactment of intimate or partial belonging in the Caff's interior challenges some of the exterior labels of who belongs and on what basis. Having regular contact and a place to meet are critical to this challenge.

Within the context of Nick's Caff, local identity and local place exhibit multiple and inconsistent dimensions. But the commonly referred to indicators of people within a bounded place, such as the census data, segregate people through the application of gross descriptions of difference such as 'White', 'Other Black' or 'born in UK'. Although this numerate information is highly accessible and validated as authoritative, it is inadequate for developing a more complex understanding of how a mix of people within a local place interact. Equally, orthodoxies such as 'the working class' and social conventions such as 'family' and 'community' prove insufficient to explain the hybrid interactions between individuals in a rapidly changing city. Within their respective local domains of the city, individuals must grapple with change alongside their own shifts in status. The social formations between self and group or the local processes of belonging is revealed in the small localities of the city, where informal memberships are claimed and granted through the etiquette of action, language, timing and spatial positions. In these social spaces in the city individuals engage with the familiar and the unsettling, and where their local places are substantially changing, they confront their own social capacity to deal with change.

Chapter 5

The art of attire: Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop

Reyd bustled down the Walworth Road towards me. He was set slightly apart in the crowd, a middle-aged man wearing a loose-fit, tailored suit and what I came to recognise as a pork pie hat, a Ben Sherman shirt and Bass Weejun shoes. Reyd wore the subtle signs of Mod culture, an affinity for fashion and music that emerged most prominently through urban youth culture in working-class Britain in the 1960s, and which is sustained today through ongoing adaptations. He reached me outside his shop front, unlocked the grill, pushed open the glass door and flung the sign around, establishing through an old-fashioned custom that his shop was 'open'. We stepped into the front room, a small space just large enough to accommodate the tailor and his customer. We had met a number of times in this small shop over the course of two years, and each time Reyd had been both generous and measured in his expression. He was keen to talk about his relationship to his work, and between our conversations and his engagement with customers he revealed the connections between what he made and what he valued: between his sense of style as a bespoke tailor and Mod enthusiast, and his sense of society as a local, south London person.

This chapter explores style as a mode of sociability and unfolds from the perspective of the maker, specifically Reyd's practice of bespoke tailoring or what he defines as an art. Sociological perspectives that connect sartorial codes to society are framed through different lenses that include: the imitative role of *fashion* (Simmel 1957 [1904]); the performed formalities of *lifestyle* and gender (Spence-Smith 1974); and the subversive inferences of *style* (Hebdige 1979). What these lenses broadly share is a

focus on the relationships between garment, wearer and audience, and the staged, viewed and represented (Cohen 2002 [1972]) dimensions of display. The basic analytic framework for such display is generally developed through the symbolic value of attire, and the effect of aligning the individual to a group, while distinguishing one group from another. Perhaps the best introduction to this account of style as articulated through Reyd's practice as a tailor is to begin with Reyd's notes that he composed after listening to a recent Radio 4 programme on bespoke tailoring:

The Bespoke Suit is Made –
– To the Specific Requirements – for the Client
– Using the Traditional Hand Cutting technique
– Along with the traditional hand craft tailoring methods
– Then fitted and honed to the mind and body of the client
Fashion Labels dictate the styles and do not embrace the client's personality.
(Reyd's notes 8 January 2007)

Reyd's notes reflect the precision customary of a good tailor, and distil the purpose of his art as he has come to know it. Much like our discussions, he selected his words carefully and left little room for superfluous expressions. In his notes he relates the making of a bespoke garment to the affinity between the tailor and customer, where traditional methods are merged with creative spirit. He also positions his art between the process of making and imagining: between the conventions of tailoring and the inventions of personality. Averse to what he views as the limitations of fashion labels, Reyd distinguishes his art as a form of respect, or reciprocal social exchange. Acquiring the skill to make the bespoke garment, the making of the garment and the wearing of it are key to these exchanges.

This chapter explores the social meanings of style through Reyd's process of making, and his relationships with his diverse customer base. Clients ranged from south London locals to customers who traversed the city in pursuit of Reyd's acclaimed skill as a Mod tailor, and from 'ordinary' people to famous boxers, musicians and writers.

Their narratives are expanded through the three related themes of *work as art*, *respect* and *style*. I explore Reyd's claim for his *work as art* through the sensibilities of his shop space and shop display, his selection of images and the divisions of his workspace into a place for meeting and for thinking. The slow process of Reyd's acquisition of skill emerges out of the story of his apprenticeship, of how a black, working-class teenager from South London immersed himself in a well-established Jewish tailor shop in Fleet Street, north of the river in central London. I make connections between place and practice, and between Reyd's explicit choice to move out of Fleet Street and set up his own bespoke tailor shop on the Walworth Road. *Respect* for the craft of the bespoke garment is central to its social value and to the reciprocal recognition between the maker and wearer, and the wearer and an audience. I portray the establishment of respect through relationships of one-to-one respect, local codes of respect and self-respect. Lastly, I explore *style* as an intermingling of tradition and inspiration. This intermingling is developed through Reyd's accounts of the conventions and inventions of tailoring, told from the method of making, to the possibilities of interpretation, best expressed in Reyd's latest project for his 'Signature Suit'.

Work as art

Shop sensibility

Reyd's shop space off the Walworth Road is small but by no means insignificant. It served as a base to meet and make for his customers from all over London, who crossed the city in recognition of Reyd's skill as a bespoke tailor. The shop appeared essentially as a workspace, a place in which things were made as opposed to a space in which things were sold. The surfaces of his workspace had emerged over time, and while there was little sense of a space contrived in the foreshortened process of professional interior design and decoration, the shop was not without a strong visual sensibility – a selection and layering of items and images to support Reyd's affinities as

a tailor. From the street, the small shop front was raised to seat height, and upon it a headless mannequin and one or two jackets at most were on display. This minimal enticement indicated a concern for the garment above all else, and one could surmise that customers were more likely to be those 'in the know' than a casual passer-by. Stepping into the shop from the angled doorway, two rows of cloth flanked either side of the doorway area; mohair, wools, tweeds, two-tones and shiny inner linings are stacked in two seductive piles of cloth.

Reyd described the purposeful aesthetic of a traditional London tailor shop front, by ascribing to it the role of 'the silent salesman'. Although Reyd's front room was restricted by size, he has emulated the traditional and subtle principles of display to the street:

The concept of the window to the street, that 'step-in-window' or inverted window space of the traditional tailor – let's call it 'the silent salesman' – was to draw the customer into the shop premises with virtually one foot in the door, without being approached by the salesman.

There was also a 'foyer' window space. There was a small table with a number of cloth pattern bundles with various types of fabrics so that the potential customer could sieve through these patterns at their leisure. Prices for each fabric were individually priced so the customer could browse without being approached by the salesperson.

Once the potential customer had decided they wanted to purchase the product, he'll then step into the shop. He is obviously now approached by a salesperson who would try and accommodate the client's request. Hence the silent salesman (the table and the window), have done half the job.
(Fieldwork conversation 2006)

The front room of Reyd's shop was no more than 3.5 metres across by 4.5 metres deep, the two side walls pinching space for a measuring table on the one side and a row of suits in the making on the other. A collection of two different sets of images were carefully displayed on these two side walls. The framed images that sat above the measuring table related to the specifics of the suit – both how it is made and how it is worn. A picture that Reyd pointed out to me on more than one occasion as 'Bert, the

old soldier', a tailor who Reyd did his apprenticeship with in Fleet Street, had a prominent position (figure 5.1). Bert's poise combined the confidence in his skill as he stretched his hands between a pattern piece, and the elegance of his formal work attire of tie and tailored jacket.



Figure 5.1 'Bert, the old soldier' (Copy of the photograph from Reyd's shop)

Below Bert were style icons of their time: slim-suited gents and dandies, including Wilson Pickett in a double-breasted jacket, and Cassius Clay in spats, bowler hat and umbrella (figure 5.2). Reyd's selection of images revealed the circularity of style, from the adoption of formal English menswear from the nineteenth century by Black American jazz and soul musicians in the 1940s and 50s to the subsequent reinterpretations encapsulated in the minimalist, three-buttoned, two-toned suits of Mod culture worn in 1960s Britain.



Figure 5.2 The circularities of style exemplified in the parody of the English gentleman's attire, by Wilson Pickett (far left) and Cassius Clay (second right). (Photographs of Pickett and Clay were copied from Reyd's shop. Second left and far right images were copied from a book in Reyd's shop (Davis 1994))

Beyond the front room was the back room; heavy pairs of scissors, tape measures, reels of cotton, steam irons and an electric sewing machine were evidence that this was the place where the suits were made. This was Reyd's domain, the space where he cut and stitched the suits. At the back of the two large work surfaces was a collection of CDs and tapes; amongst these my eye picked out James Brown's *Funky Good Time* and Stevie Wonder's *A Time to Love?*. For Reyd was not only a bespoke tailor, but a Mod tailor or a 'Soul Stylist', who nurtured an inextricable link between 'British working-class fashion' and 'contemporary American black music' (Hewitt 2000, p. 15). This back-room space, barely visible from the street, was essential for Reyd's creativity as a place of retreat. He talked about the value of working on his own, and described the solitary space and the time it offered him to think: 'Sitting and thinking on certain things, working on my own, most of the time, I'm constantly talking' to myself. When you're talking to yourself, you're answering yourself. That's how you move from A to B. What am I looking for? A significance, a meaning.'

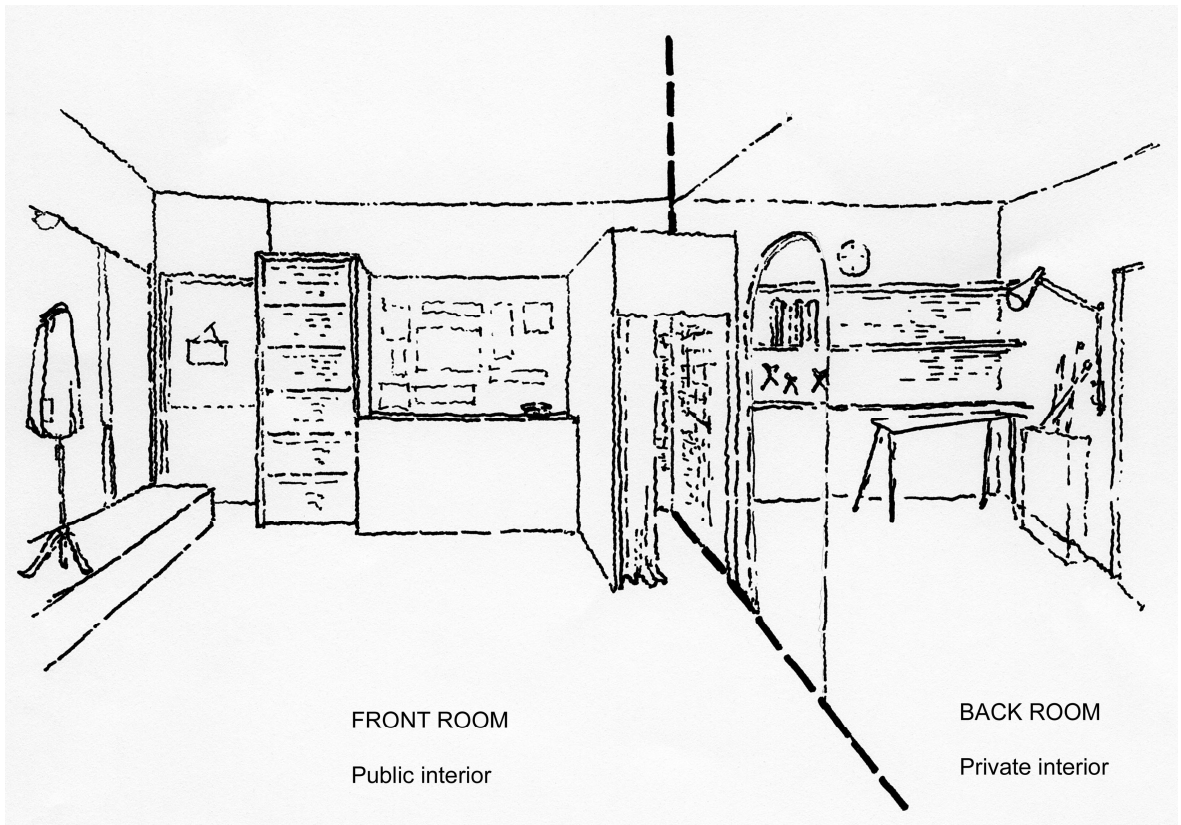


Figure 5.3 Reyd's shop combined a public interior for meeting and a private interior for making (Fieldwork drawing 2009)

Skill

Reyd affirmed that 'Skill is learnt'. His own routes to learning his skill as a bespoke tailor were those accumulated over a lifetime, honed through his association with diverse social groups. From the local domains of neighbourhood street fashion to his identification with soul music and Mod culture as a teenager, and through his apprenticeship in a Jewish tailor shop in Fleet Street, his social identity has emerged through a mosaic of experiences integral to his slow acquisition of skill. Reyd's identity has developed through his development of a sense of style, a deep affinity to a visual and auditory culture that combines his work and pleasure: 'I always wanted to be a tailor,' Reyd says, 'I grew up for the love of clothes.' Reyd expressed how his passion for his work was sustained by his ambitions and his origins: both what he grew up with and what he dreamed of.

Gilroy's work (1987) on race and racism highlights the varied sources of identity formation, and differentiates between an individual's inheritance received or imposed by group status, like ethnicity or race, versus an individual's process of self discovery that emerges out of affinities and ambitions. He privileges the importance of how individuals pursue their preferences and prospects, thereby developing cultural affinities outside the designated groupings of kin, nationality or class. The process by which Reyd's acquired skill – both a social and technical dexterity – indicates how affinities emerge out of both relationships to family, ethnicity and class, as well as the pursuits of pleasure, art and work. Reyd has had to navigate between the limited career trajectories for a black, working-class child growing up in Peckham in the 1960s and 70s, and it is his passions for music and clothes that sustained his ambitions. His pursuit of his practice as a tailor has been a primary steer in this negotiation. In this chapter I expand on the social significance of becoming highly skilled as a means of transcending sameness and engaging in difference. In other words I explore practice or

being skilled as a process of forming an identity or identifying *with*, but also as a process of participation and of belonging *amongst*.

If Reyd's skill emerged from the formal and informal learning processes exposed to him through interactions within diverse social groups, then his first lessons began at home. During our first meeting, Reyd told me that his father used to be a trouser-maker in Jamaica. When the family emigrated to London in the early 1960s, Reyd was almost five. The social and economic circumstances of post-war London in the 1950s forced Reyd's father into construction work. Glass's (1960) study of West Indian newcomers to London during the late 1950s by invitation of the British government suggests that racism during this period effectively masked skill. Her study highlights not only the general change in the work practice of these immigrants compared with their positions in the West Indies, but also the downgrading of their work status. Downgrading of expectations and prospects was apparently not something Reyd's father intended to pass onto his son. Reyd recalled a day when his father introduced him to manual labour, and made Reyd fetch and carry tiles to tile a roof. By the end of a day of manual labour Reyd's hands were raw, but the lesson was clear – there were preferable ways of making a living. On leaving school Reyd described his father's insistence, 'Boy, you better go out and get a trade, because I don't want no criminals in this house.'

Unlike his father, whose skill was not recognised in the climate of post-war Britain, Reyd was able to both pursue and sustain his ambition of being a tailor. He left school at sixteen to study tailoring at college and entered into the official apprenticeship system:

When I left school I worked for Fleet Street tailors, Dombey & Son. They put a broom in one hand and a tea pot in the other. After two to three months they saw I was able to take instructions. Within this shop was a basement – I call it 'the dungeon' – with rows and rows of ready-made suits and I had to brush them. After a month or two I was asked to come up. I learned to work with

clients, saw how to approach them. I worked with all their old soldiers, like cutters and fitters. I had experienced, senior people that I was able to work under. I was able to get the benefit of their experience. The apprenticeship was a three to five year course. By the time you passed that, there was an old soldier who was ready to move on, and you had a job. When the apprenticeships and industries were taken away, all that crashed with it. (Fieldwork conversation 2006)

The post-war apprenticeship mechanism offered Reyd not only direct exposure to a trade, where he started out with menial responsibilities, but also growth within the remit of the trade. After two months of sweeping and making the tea, Reyd was able 'to come up' and learn directly from skilled tailors. The apprenticeship had partly served as a mechanism for Reyd, as a young black man from South London, to participate in a well-established tailor shop in central London, an opportunity that probably would not have occurred without the official mechanism of the apprenticeship. Vickerstaff (2003) relates what is portrayed as the 'golden age' of apprenticeships, spanning the period from 1945 to 1975, to the structural trends of a positive labour market in the 1950s and 60s, as supported by a strong manufacturing base to the economy (Fainstein, Gordon and Harloe 1992).

Although Vickerstaff (2003) acknowledges the opportunities of mobility for working-class youth from school into workplaces within this period of apprenticeships, she also connects this apprenticeship system to a channelling of young people into labour niches, based on type of school attended as well as class background. The broader social issue of accessing a skill as opposed to a market-defined job relates to expanding individual capacities to participate in social and economic life, where work becomes a platform for learning, not simply for earning. In a few of our conversations, Reyd would at some point talk about the perceived lack of real work prospects, particularly for black youth:

The black youth in particular think, 'What is the use in studying, if when you do get the paper, you don't get the jobs anyway?' They are going to form their

own ways, their own system, they've got brains. When I left school, apprenticeships were available because the industries were here. Within thirty odd years they have gone, and everything is made abroad. People are going to create a situation where they can earn, not just the black kids.
(Fieldwork conversation 2007)

Individual mobility within the clothing industry at the turn of the twentieth century was partly assisted by the formal acquisition and recognition of a trade, which served both to skill the working class and also to contain their status within the stratified social ranks of the trade: 'Journeymen in Britain were craftsmen. Having served their apprenticeship they were highly skilled. Within the British working class to be called a journeyman was a sign of moderately high status, higher than the ordinary worker, but not as high as a master craftsman' (Godey 2000, p. 136). However, the development of a formal apprenticeship within the clothing trade had important consequences for the entry of Eastern European, Jewish emigrants to London at the turn of the twentieth century. In tracing the occupational structure of Jewish immigrants in the UK between 1880 and 1914, Godey (2000) highlights that two-thirds of Jewish immigrants in London were employed in the clothing industry.

Tailoring was not necessarily a skill that these immigrants had explicitly brought with them from Eastern Europe, where skills had oriented around the provision of trade and personal services within Jewish communities (Kahan 1978; Godey 2000). Access to the clothing industry for immigrants in London during this industrial period was partly aided by piecework – quite literally the small-scale, piece-by-piece organisation of work. Home industry was made possible by the ease of transportation of comparatively light-weight items of clothing and the mechanisation of the sewing machine, equally suited to factory or home. The exploitation within this fragmented structure of production, known as 'sweating', was also abetted by a large labour pool in general,

and specifically the Jewish immigrant labour pool in Whitechapel, who lived in proximity to the concentration of wholesale clothing manufacturing in London's East End.

It was for a subsequent generation of Jewish immigrant tailors that Reyd undertook and completed his apprenticeship. Having acquired his City & Guilds certificate for craft tailoring, Reyd went on to work for Sidney Fox in Peckham, where he remained for twelve years. Before reaching thirty, Reyd had a repertoire of good tailoring skills, coupled with an ambition to go out and make it on his own terms. He set up a partnership with two of his friends from college, and their theatrical tailoring company in Brixton Hill operated for eight years before Reyd left the partnership to set up his own shop on the Walworth Road. Here he formed a base through practising as a specialist on two fronts – a bespoke tailor in general, and the maker of Mod suits in particular. It is this absolute, stubborn regard for speciality, and for the time needed to attend to hand tailoring, that defines Reyd's work as an art. He makes almost every aspect of the suit, including cloth buttons, not only designing but also cutting the suit to his standards. Through his particularity, he has developed and sustained a reputation:

What am I doing to push it? I'm doing what I'm doing. Slow progression – is that what you'd call it? We've got this far because I didn't take the Savile Row route. I'm the salesman, the cutter, the fitter and the re-cutter. So I don't need three other people, to pay their salaries. (Fieldwork conversation 2007)

Reyd has managed to sustain his own measure of quality, of art, by avoiding high rents and additional salaries. Through his individual measures he has expanded his own possibilities for pursuing his skill on his own terms.

Place and practice of work

Reyd's journey into tailoring, and his location in South London, has deviated from the 'Savile Row route' that epitomises bespoke tailoring in the city. Savile Row exemplifies both the place and practice of bespoke tailoring in London, within the distinguished and exclusive arena of west London tailoring. In looking briefly at Savile Row, my purpose

is to understand how the distinctive location and reputation of Savile Row, as the epitome of British bespoke tailoring, has established a prestigious position in the city, and to question how this affects Reyd's alternative location and reputation in South London. Savile Row exemplifies a particular practice of tailoring and of consumption, which is significantly shaped by its strategic location in the city. Initially built in 1731 as a residential street within the Burlington Estate, the first tailors had occupied spaces in this street by the early 1800s.

Within the broader West End area of Mayfair, the associations of styles of life and style as social display in this part of the city were inscribed by performances of exclusivity, ceremony and theatricality. The sartorial and gendered elitism of Savile Row and Jermyn Street were closely associated with the social exclusivity of a West End address (Hall 1960). Social display extended to the ceremonial dandyism synonymous with 'Beau' Brummell in this area of London during the Regency period (Spence-Smith 1974), to the connections between avant-garde art and fashion, notable in the surrealist street displays and exhibitions in the Mayfair galleries of Cork Street, Upper Grovesnor Street and Burlington Gardens in the 1930s (O'Neill 2007). This compilation of layers of English sartorial tradition and invention, meshed with place, practice and performance, has come to signify Savile Row, promoted as a brand of London, and one closely vetted by the Savile Row Bespoke Association established in 2004. In a recent BBC Four documentary on Savile Row, the tailor Richard James defined the niche of bespoke tailoring as tied to the contemporary concept of value: 'The whole concept of luxury has moved on, everything is too available, we should go back to being less available.' (BBC Four 2008).

Pragmatic associations between the city and fashion and place and practice also relate to the particular, centralised locations of clothing manufacturing in London. Hall (1960) defined clothing manufacturing in the industrial period between 1861 and 1951 in

England and Wales as essentially a metropolitan production, moreover one most prominent in London. During a ninety-year period, Hall's analysis of census data revealed that clothing was ranked as the largest manufacturing trade in London in terms of numbers employed. Of the factors most significant to the location of this pre-eminent trade, Hall emphasised the role of the metropolitan market, and the need for the makers of clothes to be closely associated with the lifestyles and styles of a changing and unpredictable market. Hall's analysis of the *Post Office London Directories* confirmed that clothing manufacturing in London was explicitly localised and, significantly, concentration was most evident in two distinctly different agglomerations of a West End and an East End centre.

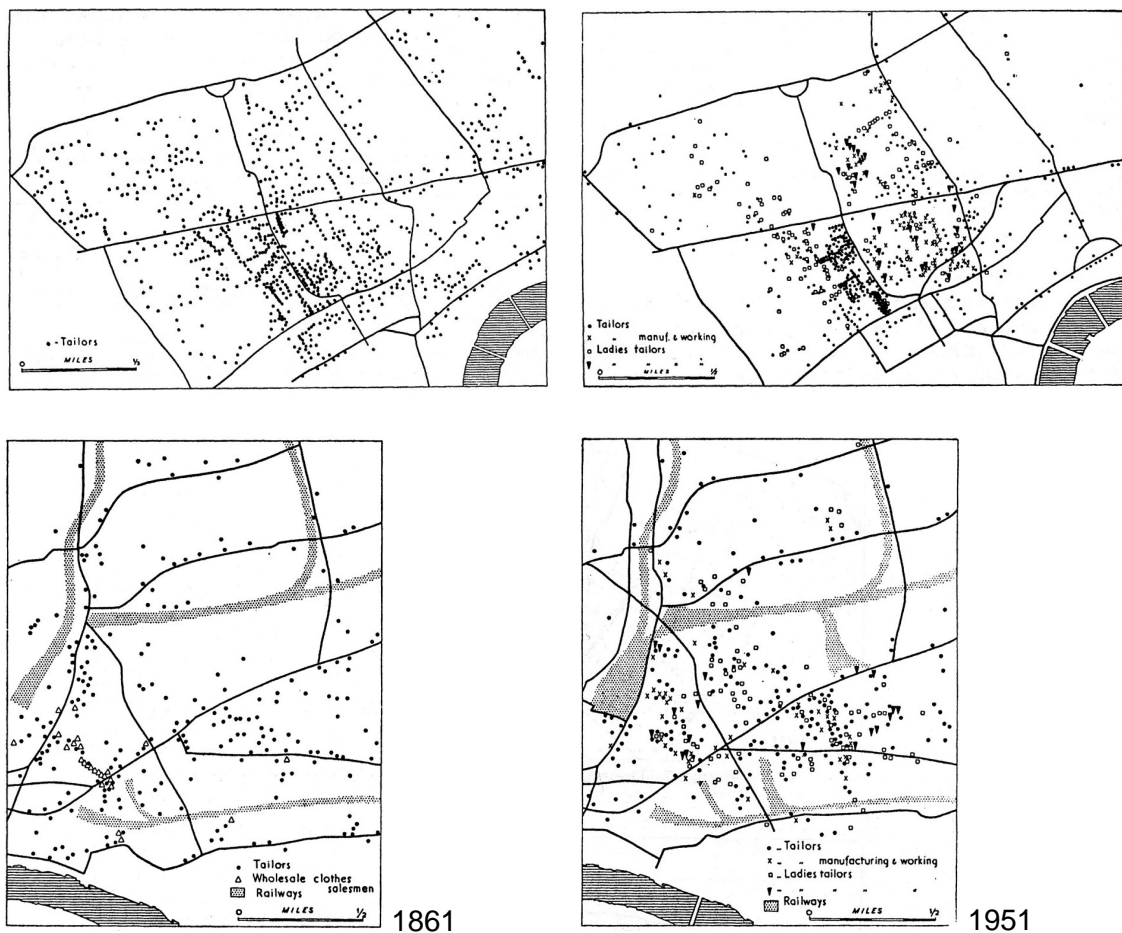


Figure 5.4 The primary locations of tailoring in London in 1861 and 1951. The West End (top two maps) and East End (bottom two maps). (Hall 1960)

Of interest in these two maps is how the West End location of tailoring concentrates over time into smaller urban enclaves with greater spatial proximity between tailors. In distinguishing between location and the different tailoring practices in these West End and East End concentrations, Hall described the development of those in West End practice as increasingly in contact with and responding to the proximity of wealthy customers, where bespoke tailors sought to preserve the tradition and craft of tailoring through the Amalgamated Society of Tailors. In contrast, tailors in the East End concentration were represented by the Association of Master Tailors, and generally expanded through wholesale production, assisted by the proximity of the docks, wholesale houses and a large, inexpensive labour pool. But crucially in both distinctive concentrations, the scale of the organisation of work and a system of production meant that sub-contracting through divisions of tasks and specialisation persisted in the work of the bespoke tailor as well as the wholesale clothier. Indeed it is a practice and scale of production that persists today, one that provided Reyd with access to highly skilled finishers and jacket-makers who work off site, generally either in their homes or in small spaces in larger workrooms.

As the tailoring workforce fragmented across the city, the increasingly unusual practice of bespoke tailoring and its particular market has meant there is a contraction and concentration in the location of bespoke tailors. This tendency is evident in Hall's maps that span ninety years of tailoring in London (figure 5.4), and also in my contemporary map of bespoke tailors in central London (figure 5.5). Unlike Hall's maps, which are configured by referring to the *Post Office London Directories*, this map shows the locations of 305 bespoke tailors in central London, accessed from Google (2009) by entering the search terms 'bespoke tailors London' and selecting 'local business results'. The map indicates two primary clusters of bespoke tailoring in central London, the largest in the W1 postcode, including Savile Row, and the second around the vicinity of the City.



Figure 5.5 The location of bespoke tailoring in central London in 2009 (Research drawing, 2009)

The list of London's tailor shops included in another online local business survey, touchlocal.com (www.touchlocal.com), accessed by myself in 2007 showed that the W1 postcode remains the area with the primary concentration of London bespoke tailoring in London: 53 per cent of tailors are located in the West End area of W1, including 15 per cent in Savile Row. Very few are located in South London, suggesting that tailors in Savile Row offer prospective customers a reputation established on tradition, location and agglomeration, while the City's major advantage is its proximity to London's primary business centre. The question remains then of how Reyd has built and sustained a bespoke tailor service without having the assets of location and agglomeration. Reyd's reputation cannot rely on the iconic brand of a street or district,

which his Walworth Road address fails to deliver. Equally, Reyd's local ties, according to a longstanding customer, 'are not enough to keep him making good money'.

At the same time that Savile Row was emerging as a tailoring street within an avant-garde district at the turn of the twentieth century, a tailor by the name of Norman Rose occupied the position of Reyd's current shop on the Walworth Road. The strong presence of *in situ* clothing manufacture and retail on the Walworth Road is recorded up to the 1950 *Post Office London Directory*, in which eight tailors are registered, as well as forty-six other clothing retailers including hatters, costumiers, bag and shoemakers and ladies outfitters. Also in this 1950 survey is the first record of a department store on the Walworth Road; Marks and Spencers Ltd is registered at numbers 311 to 315. Today, however, the tradition of tailoring is challenged by the availability of cheap clothes, and mass-produced, off-the-peg fashion is in abundance on the Walworth Road. In Reyd's terms, the culture of fashion has muscled in on the culture of bespoke style. 'Bespoke' and 'tailoring', once part of the working-class urban landscape in London, and historically evidenced in the number of tailors on the Walworth Road, have generally retreated from the experience of the urban high street.

However location has remained key for Reyd, as qualified by his references to his own roots and affinities as an 'everyday person, a south London person':

The reason why I wanted to come into this area was because the owner of Sidney Fox's had lived in Peckham, but his heart's desire was to be in the City – Suit Land. I didn't want to be in the City, I didn't like the politics, the static. Areas like this, these are my people. I am a local, I grew up in Peckham. Working in the City, there's a snootiness. Sometimes I need to remind people that I'm not guessing at this, I know my art. (Fieldwork conversation 2006)

Respect

One-to-one respect

Critical to Reyd's work was his one-to-one relationship with his customers, and the requirement for a mutual understanding on both of their parts of the skill involved in making a bespoke garment. This was a two-way process of showing respect – a social pact between the maker and the wearer. On the few occasions that I had watched a prospective client come into Reyd's shop, I was surprised at how formal Reyd was with establishing a certain propriety by clarifying the etiquette upfront. One morning a young man came in to have a formal coat altered so that he could wear it to a wedding. Reyd quoted £30 for the sleeves and £45 for the 'let'. The young man looked slightly taken aback at the cost, and this was how Reyd managed the situation:

Reyd: That's what it's going to cost you. You know why? 'Cos I work on £600 to £700 suits. So if it's a problem, then we can't do it.

(Pause)

Young man: OK sir. No problem. I'll take it.

Reyd: There's a drycleaner across the way. Go and ask him what he'll charge. I don't charge for pinning, so I don't mind.

Young man: No boss, I'll do it. I don't want him to do it. I want you.

Reyd: So, for my alterations, I'll charge you up front.

(The young man takes out £70, instead of £75, hoping for a reduction.)

You fell down at the last minute. I would have done it for £70, but you fell down.

(The young man hands over the full £75.)

So, it's two weeks.

Young man: You take your time. Give me a call. That's OK. No worries boss.

(Fieldwork notes 2006)

Reyd clarified his worth to the uninitiated client in straight financial terms, but also provided an exit for the young man should he wish to save face. Not only did Reyd ask for the fee upfront, but he also ensured he was in charge of the bargaining process. Reyd took charge to assert the value of his skill as well as the value of the relationship between the maker and the customer. In describing the core relationship between the maker and customer Reyd stated, 'What we're doing is moulding the jacket. And we're moulding it not just to the body but to the mind.' This form of respect – the reciprocal recognition between maker and wearer – of the skill involved in making a bespoke garment is not a social relation that can exist in off-the-peg fashion stores, where the product on display is separated from its process of making. The constitution of this respect is as much in the relationship between maker and wearer as in the relationship of process and product, and is crucial to the one-to-one space of bespoke tailoring.

Local codes of respect

So who were Reyd's clients, who were the people who participated on the other side of this social exchange, of this mutual establishment of respect? Part of the answer lay in Reyd's connection with his local clientele:

You get a different feeling from people in areas like this... they're my people, whatever colour they are. In the City I always felt like the boy. In an area like this you're allowed to grow, you can show what you can do.

Reyd suggested that local place was key to his success, because of the ease of establishing connections through common social codes that chaperone the budding relationship. However, Reyd's customer base was varied and included celebrities and 'ordinary' people, locals and people who traversed the city for specialist skills. In order to participate in the reciprocal act of respect, there needed to be a comfort level for both parties to engage with one another. Both parties needed to share common social codes, be they affinities with Mod culture that surpass south London neighbourhoods, or local codes based on shared memories and language.

The associations with a local place were one aspect of a common social code, where social connections were established not only by a shared sense of the past, but also by day-to-day experiences of the present. 'Rags' was a friend and customer of Reyd's, a retired Bermondsey boxer and former world welterweight champion. He no longer lived in the area, 'but I'm always down in the area. I grew up in the area. I love this area.' I asked him what he thought about the Walworth Road and he replied: 'The Walworth Road has changed dramatically. It's a really multicultural society, a multinational society. Put it this way, I don't feel racism around here, I don't think colour matters so much around here... only with the police.' Racism mattered a great deal to Rags; as an emerging boxing talent, he had forfeited his welterweight title, rather than defend it in the then apartheid South Africa.

Appearance mattered to Rags, too, and when I first saw him make an entrance into Reyd's shop, he looked nothing short of what Robert Elms (2006) articulates as, 'sartorial brilliance'. Rags' bold street style merged with his easy-to-like, extrovert personality; when he stepped into Reyd's on a mild winter's day, he was wearing a full length fur coat, accompanied by a large, matching fur hat. His accessories included dark glasses, a shiny black walking stick topped with a gold skull, a diamond studded ring and expensive black shoes gleaming beneath the fold of his grey trousers. He walked in and he had our attention. So did the current world cruiserweight champion who stared out at us from a poster on Reyd's wall – the raw and physical image of Nina Simone's soul song – 'Young, gifted and black'. The champion had scrawled a message below his picture for Reyd: 'Fuck Savile Row. Reyd's is the only place to go.' In another picture, a photograph on the opposite wall, the young boxer was dressed in one of Reyd's suits – minimal, light grey – immaculate. Both boxers mentioned here were locals who came from the Bermondsey boxing gyms to the east of Walworth, and they came to Reyd's for bespoke garments. Undoubtedly part of the mutual respect

between proprietor and customer was more easily forged because of their south London networks and shared local histories.

Stan, known simply as 'The Suit', was a local and a close friend of Reyd. I was greeted first by his laugh, an open hand, and a broad south London accent, 'Hallo! Pleased to meet you.' Stan liked to dress for an occasion every day, and at our first meeting he was wearing a three-quarter-length, navy, pin-striped Crombie coat. He was passionate about clothes, Mod culture and his local roots, and has written numerous books on these subjects. He described himself as 'a 1960s enthusiastic gentleman', and while patting his tummy he added, 'all right, an ageing Mod'. Although Stan described himself as 'comfortable in the West End and I'm open to ideas from over the river', he talked about his reluctance at getting a suit made in the West End. He emphasised this by saying, 'People don't realise how hard it is to walk into a place.' He went on to recall an uncomfortable experience he had walking in to a prestigious tailor shop in Jermyn Street, and contrasted this with the ease of walking into Reyd's shop for the first time: 'Reyd speaks the right language. We would be out of place in Savile Row. When I first came in here I thought, "I could talk to you, I could deal with you."' Entry points for talking to each other in this case included shared areas of affinity like football and clothes, while Reyd and Stan's more specific or more local affinity was their common language, shaped by accent, phrases and forms of delivery.

Language that has come from the urban working class in London and adapted through localised expressions is a mode of sociability still used on the Walworth Road today. Language shaped through what Stan described as 'banter' and what Reyd described as 'lyrics' is a linguistic performance, quite literally, a manner of speaking. Typically, banter allows for serious things to be said with humour, and obliges the response or retort to be equally quick-witted – sharp and funny. Stan described how as a teenager he worked in a factory with 'old geezers' who had been in the Second World War. They

bantered with him mercilessly, but Stan could hold his own as he had the gift of the gab: ‘You had to come back in cracks,’ he said, ‘then they would say, “You been brought up the right way mate.”’

Self-respect

The music critic and radio broadcaster Robert Elms (2006) tells us that there is a moment in wearing a bespoke garment, when you first put it on, that the garment is all yours. You see yourself as if for the first time, transformed by the promise of the suit. That moment remains yours on each subsequent occasion you wear the garment, before it is worn for a public audience. Reid referred to this moment as ‘preening’: the sensuality of putting the clothes on and enjoying a sense of transformation in front of the mirror, either at the tailor for the first time, or subsequently at home. He said, ‘I’ve seen people when they look in the mirror. I’ve seen city people drop expletives.’

In the case of a bespoke garment, the crafted item itself combined with the sense of wearing it potentially increases this personal sense of transformation. Stan commented that, unlike off-the-peg suits, the gratification from the bespoke suit is deferred until the end of the process, one in which ‘you must invest two months of your life’. At some point the individual act of preening shifts past the process of self-recognition, and is taken to a broader audience. The audience, incorporating both a social group and a given situation, enhances the opportunity for the recognition of a mark of status, and a sense of self-respect. Such a social exchange depends on the recognition of value, and an appreciation of the craft and the identification with what the suit represents. As an immediate experience the bespoke garment is a sensory object, tangibly and visibly crafted for the pleasure of the individual. But the value of the bespoke garment is only partly in the pleasure of wearing it, it is also in the pleasure of appearing in it, an appreciation between the wearer and the observer, and for those who can read the

nuances of the garment, there are the possibilities of connecting with the affinities of a refined group.

It is not only that the bespoke garment is worn for an occasion – typically weddings, funerals, rites of passage, celebrations – but also that wearing the suit helps assist in establishing a sense of occasion. An extract from Reyd's customer notebook described how a young recording producer felt when wearing his bespoke suit in recording sessions:

I found out about 'Reyd' through the New Untouchables Mag. I desperately needed some new clothes – didn't like anything available on the High St. 'Reyd' has a great understanding of the look I want to achieve and I was very happy with the finished results and am now going to get lots more suits made. In my job as recording producer of 'TR Studios' the sessions I enjoy the most are the ones where I am wearing a fine suit, from now on these will be by 'Walworth Tailors'. (Copied from Reyd's customer notebook 2006)

In a thankyou letter to Reyd, another customer described his joy at wearing his suit to a wedding, and emphasised his thrill at people 'in the know' congratulating him on his suit. But perhaps more pertinent was his account of having to attend a funeral, and how wearing the suit helped him through this difficult occasion. The suit, once worn for special occasions, acquires associations with important events, increasing its personal significance and raising its aesthetic value. When Elms states that 'Clothes tell stories' (2006, p. 2), it is not only collective stories of status and affinity that are told, but also an accumulation of individual memories, associations and transformation.

The suit, not unlike the caff, was an integral part of the 'working-man's life' and both were part of the everyday life of working-class culture in South London. While the caff was the place working men went to during the working week, generally with work mates to consume a substantial, hot plate of high-carbohydrate food to meet the demands of physical labour, the working-man's suit was reserved for Sundays, to be

worn down at the church or local pub. Stan recalled, with a measure of admiration, the stature of the suit in the 1960s:

The working-man's suit is his Sunday best. Starting with the shoes, they had to be highly polished. For Christmas day you get a new shirt, a new pair of shoes and a suit. Up until twenty, twenty-five years ago, you left school, you had a suit made. It was all about suiting and booting. I found those guys really inspiring. They could be the roughest dustman in the world, and then on a Sunday they'd be like Beau Brummel. (Fieldwork conversation 2008).

Social style

Intermingling

The working-class way of life was not altogether eradicated by fundamental changes to the structure and organisation of work, evidenced in London during the 1960s and 70s as a deep economic shift from a manufacturing to a service economy (Fainstein, Gordon and Harloe 1992). The working-class 'suiting and booting' sartorial tradition was adopted and adapted by post-war working-class youth across Britain and, notably from the 1960s onwards, new style repertoires emerged. An intermingling of inspiration fostered by 'links between British working class fashion and contemporary American black music' (Hewitt 2000 p. 16) resonated in London in the housing estates, football grounds, Soho jazz clubs, Carnaby Street boutiques and south London dance clubs:

As the soul man punched out his deep Memphis rhythms, so the boy in the suit did a slow-motion council-estate shuffle across the floral carpet we'd recently bought on HP from the Co-op. The music was his soundtrack; the dance was strictly for display. The shoes that shone out beneath this paragon of a two-piece were Royals [...] This was what you grew up for [...] Leave school at fifteen, save for a suit at sixteen. As I watched my eldest brother, ten years my senior, display the sweet fruits of the first year of his labours, with a shimmy and a show, parading his standing and his allegiance, his status and his taste, somehow I understood that this was a path, a lineage. My dad, a dapper man when he wasn't wearing overalls, nodded approval. (Elms 2006, pp. 1-2).



Figure 5.6 The Small Faces. This rock group from the working-class neighbourhoods of East London emerged in the 1960s, epitomised the Mod look, as well as Mod links to rhythm and blues and soul music. (Copy of photograph from Reyd's shop 2007)

The form and future of the working-man's suit, or the working-man's social style, has been altered by a number of changes, both structural and lived. The most obvious structural shift was the gradual decline of work in manufacturing and industries, accompanied by changes to livelihoods and lives. In addition, an increasing access to a far greater diversity of stylistic references was made available through an expanding

media, as well as through new settings for sartorial display. The Sunday suit-and-pub routine shifted to new venues for entertainment – from localised pubs to less restricted clubs. Further, the bespoke suit simply became less available, limited by the mass production of suits and clothing more generally, as well as by changing patterns of culture and consumption. Stan commented that his dad and his mates ‘would have had their own personal tailors. They’ve disappeared because of the expense and the waiting time.’ When I questioned Reyd about the comparable expense and waiting time in today’s terms, he answered, ‘So in those days it was two to three weeks, four top wack.’ Stan added, ‘In those days a suit was equivalent to a week’s wages, now it’s half a month’s at least. Now it’s a lifestyle, it has to mean the world to you.’

The narratives about style and lifestyle described in this chapter include the cultural connections between varied working-class ways of life and the emergence of street fashion and Mod culture celebrated by Reyd and many of his customers. But if the designation of class defined primarily in terms of work is no longer explicitly applicable, in what ways does ‘lifestyle’ accommodate an intermingling of working-class affinities with new ways of life? The way that Stan uses ‘lifestyle’ is not essentially aesthetic; it is about a process of associating with and relating to, in his narrative, a merging of past and present, expressed through shared sensibilities. Similarly, when I ask Reyd to explain Mod culture to me, before he described its aesthetics particularities, he offered a key description of interaction: ‘How can I put this? Through the style or through the concept, it brings people together, who are not thinking on race, but on the concept of the dress and the music.’

Mod culture, although resonant with English working-class youth culture of the 1960s, is part of a wider spectrum of social, cultural and aesthetic affinities. Hewitt (2000) describes the range of what he terms ‘Soul Stylists’ rooted in Soho jazz clubs in the 1950s, through to the ‘flash jewellery, white Bally shoes and Gabicci top’ gear donned

by the 'Casuals' in the 1980s and 90s. Equally, the minimalist Mod look of the 1960s – two-tone suit, slim fitted with three buttons on the jacket, epitomised by Sting in the film *Quadrophenia* – is under constant re-interpretation by a contemporary audience. Reyd showed me pictures of a 1960s 'Traditional Mod', and then a 'Skin Mod' from the 1970s wearing a suit with a row of buttons down the arm, 'for fighting', and then a 'Mod Mod' with the 1960s suit, but this time accessorised with a gelled, spiky-haircut. As Reyd commented, 'What I want to draw your attention to is how things move on.' Not only do things move on, but sources of inspiration and departure also vary. Mod looks have come from recording studios and LP covers, as well as the football terraces. Reyd's enduring source of inspiration has been from his neighbourhood experiences of socialising:

These fashions actually came from the street. For example – my mother used to take me to a shop in Rye Lane, Peckham. I would ask my mum to get a blue blazer, no splits. Once I was home, I would make a split. Us boys in Peckham had the longest split, the largest vent. That was the trend for us Peckham boys. The Brixton boys had side vents. This is documented. It wasn't spoken of. It was just done. (Fieldwork conversation 2006)

Conventions

In this chapter I have described the relationship between social affinities and aesthetic affinities through an exploration of 'style' and a focus on the practice of bespoke tailoring. At this point I return explicitly to the practice of tailoring to explore the crafting of an artefact as a technical and interpretive process, which is located between the conventions and inventions of tailoring. At one of our first meetings, I asked Reyd to describe the traditional process of making a suit. He spoke slowly, organising the sequence of his thoughts, and it was clear that he wanted the process to be documented exactly:

- The first person aside from the salesman would be the 'cutter-fitter', and would cut and fit the garment onto the client. Once the garment was fitted, any adjustments would be done by the cutter-fitter.
- You would then have a baste-maker who would make a baste or a fitting for the client.

- Once adjustments are made the garments would go into the various workrooms (trousers, jackets, etc). The jacket would always go to the jacket-maker who would then trim the jacket. He would cut the various parts for lining – pocket bags, body lining, sleeve lining – for the pocket-maker to machine pockets and sleeves.
 - Once the pockets are made and sleeve linings are made, the garment goes back to the jacket-maker for it to be assembled. Once the various parts are assembled into the jacket, the jacket is then given to the finisher.
 - The finisher will make the necessary buttonholes on the front and the cuffs of the sleeve. The finisher will also hand sew the lining inside the jacket around the armhole of the sleeves (it's actually called the scye hole) and hand sew the cuffs of the sleeves, and the side seams of the lining inside the jacket.
 - Once the finisher has done their job, the garment is given back to the jacket-maker who inspects the jacket. If the jacket-maker doesn't press the jacket himself, he will give it to a presser, who will then press the jacket.
 - The jacket is then given back to the jacket-maker to button the jacket.
- (Fieldwork conversation 2007)

What Reyd described as a traditional method and process incorporates the piece-by-piece production of a tailored garment, at once fragmented and specialised. Each individual involved in this process is designated a specific role and position relative to the explicit nature of their task or craft. This mode of tailoring was inculcated in the apprenticeship process and, as previously mentioned, was highly suitable for piecework and sub-contract work that arose in clothing manufacturing in England over the industrial period. I asked Reyd whether within this ongoing stratification of the work process the different tasks are done by different people, and he replied:

The finishers are usually women. I would say seven out of ten times; they would be middle-aged or senior. You won't find many young finishers today, 'cos they will be using machines. Jacket-makers, from what I've seen, I've seen very few women jacket-makers. Also middle-aged and senior – you won't find many young people in the bespoke end, maybe in theatre, but that's machining, it's a different trade. (Fieldwork conversation 2007).

The authorship of the 'signature suit'

After about nine months of having had no contact with Reyd other than quick hellos, I returned to his shop with new questions. Reyd was excited about the prospects of designing and developing what he called his 'signature suit'. Although he had been

adapting and creating suits for years, an inspirational moment came about when a customer of his brought a special cuff-link to Reyd, with a request to incorporate it into a suit. Working the suit out together to incorporate the 'zey link', Reyd and his customer formulated ideas for developing the suit as both an off-the-peg and a bespoke garment. Having operated as a sole proprietor Reyd was now entering into a venture where he had acquired new prospects, stating with unreserved ambition, 'I want to be the tailor that changes the face of the cuff on the high street.' Reyd described his 'signature suit'. It had diagonal button-holes, a slight flare on the sleeve, an open cuff, two high buttons on the jacket front, a fish-mouth lapel, cloth buttons and a frog-mouth pocket with a little split at the bottom. He concluded, 'It's all been done before, but not on one jacket.'

It was during this latter part of my fieldwork that I began to think of the issue of authorship, particularly with respect to Reyd's excitement over his signature suit. As mentioned, Reyd generally made every aspect of the garment, took responsibility for his shop display, and met with and worked with his customers. Yet Reyd made no sole claim to the conceptual aspect of this process. He defined it as collaboration across a number of levels, most notably for him a juxtaposition of his learned conventions of tailoring (technique), of the fashions he grew up with on the streets of Peckham (style) and of the contribution of the customer (personality):

If for example you got a jigsaw, you got the person who paints the picture, the person who cuts the jigsaw to the shapes, the person who puts it in the box, the person who buys it and reveals the jigsaw, [and] the person who puts it back together. (Fieldwork conversation 2007)

Within Reyd's concept of creating, there was reference to both solitary and collective processes of authorship, or what Becker (1982) defines as the 'co-operative joint activity' that serves to conceive, execute, manufacture, distribute, support and appreciate art. Becker's *Art Worlds* gives us an understanding of the social organisation of networks spanning artists, mobilisers and distributors of art works,

critics and audiences. But in describing social relations or culture primarily through the organisation of activity, we are left with less of a sense of the interactive experiences that make up these social relations. I interpret Reyd's own conceptualisation of the art of attire as the joining of skill, through mechanisms such as apprenticeships and social affinities. In Reyd's case the organisation and refinement of his art is developed through social and cultural networks and expressions galvanised by music and clothing.

Conclusions

Simmel's (1957 [1904]) analysis of fashion is of a process that creates a 'specialisation' symbolic of an immediate but all-too-fleeting sense of the present. The specialisation is adopted through 'imitation' on a large scale and is subsequently diluted as a 'generalisation'. The ethnographic material offered in this chapter suggests that style differs from this analysis of fashion in a number of key respects. Style is narrated as a process of cultural interpretation and a mode of social expression, one that emerges over time within an overarching aesthetic, which embraces ways of life. Because the relationship between aesthetic affinities and social affinities is not fleeting, developing a style can be both staking a position and expanding a personal sense of belonging, by associating with the affinities within a group. Thus social style, as experienced by Reyd, is a process of 'bringing people together'.

If style or the art of attire is a process of associating with groups and is expressed through a strong visual sensibility then it is central to how Reyd forms and refines his way of life. Reyd's stories and practice suggest that style is a consequence of multiple social relations and learning processes, and in Reyd's case home, street and shop as well as the medium of music and clothes are all different and integral sources for the constitution of his style. Because Reyd experiences style as a way of life, it is not only

invigorated by moments of inspiration, but by a sociability that is located in two primary venues – his local position and relationship with local customers on the Walworth Road, and his Mod affinities through which he transcends his local ties. Further, it is this aspect of sociability, of diverse individuals relating to one another through music or through clothes, that contributes to the transformation and ongoing interpretation of wearing style, so that the working-man's suit is by no means dead, it has simply been recast in other urban performances, in south London nightclubs, or football terraces, or whichever stage it will be suited to next. In this sense Simmel's (1949) articulation of sociability as the combination of art and play, 'where society is played', serves style well; style is essentially social, and depends on the serious artifice of display and etiquette, where the visible signs of social status and hierarchy are parodied, circulated and reinvented. Important to this account is how this sociability of style is located in everyday life and space.

Finally, in the process of making or crafting, the question of what it is that is ultimately made, or what the essential cultural artefact is, needs to be understood. In Reyd's practice as a bespoke tailor, the actual material garment is not the sole object or purpose of making. Bespoke garments are also the medium through which Reyd has created his way of life, and his set of social and business relationships with diverse customers. The measure of his success rests in both the skill honed in making a bespoke garment, and the skill demanded in sustaining a one-to-one respect between himself and his customer. This is a specialisation on two fronts, social and technical, and the peculiarity and longevity of his small, independent shop depends on it.

Chapter 6

The politics of nearness

In this chapter I explore whether local contact matters when learning to live with difference and change. I return to Williams' (2001 [1958]) premise, that learning is a shared process and a form of contact that happens within everyday life. In spite of the fluidity of economy, people and objects in a global world, physical contact essentially remains a face-to-face, regular and in place form of communication. I analyse how variable forms of physical contact that I observed on the Walworth Road inhibited or enhanced capacities for learning to live with difference, and seek to go a step further, by exploring the political significance of contact itself. In focusing on the ordinary and the everyday, I aim to move towards an understanding of the politics of nearness, and the need to recognise the role of spatial proximity and social propinquity in providing an elementary platform to develop the skills for learning to live with difference and change. This chapter focuses on the individual and particular forms of local contact. It interconnects with the following chapter, where I analyse the larger economic, policy and design discourses on high streets in Britain and address how value systems render ordinary streets either legible or invisible. The underlying question that links both of these chapters is: *How do we build on a multicultural society if we don't know how to recognise it?*

Amin's (2002) emphasis on everyday spaces in learning to live with ethnic diversity offers a crucial alternative to the term 'multiculturalism'. It suggests the value of situated social exploration rather than a definitive cultural concept or unified political goal. The current policy discourse on multiculturalism and related local government

programmes in London (LGA 2002) looks to the management of difference through the idea of community cohesion (Jones 2009). The paradox is twofold: the first assumption is that tolerance is the basis for experiencing ethnic or cultural differences; the second is that instituted programmes can formalise the contact that most readily emerges out of the spontaneity of everyday life. In focusing on the ordinary spaces and everyday practices in the small shops along the Walworth Road, I explore the nuanced ways in which spatial proximity either reinforces or undermines social propinquity.

I refer to the recent work on ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms (Pollock *et al.* 2000; Calhoun 2002; Lamont and Askartova 2002; Gilroy 2004), and its primary emphasis on the significance of social processes that emerge in the course of everyday life. This diverse body of work also challenges the ideals of cosmopolitanism as a common political project that spans across national territories (Beck and Sznaider 2006), or as shared ideology or cultural acquiescence. Rather, it refers to the dynamic social and cultural exchanges that emerge within an uneven and rapidly changing world. It is with reference to inequalities in the global context that I argue for regular, face-to-face contact within local areas as an essential conduit for social adaptation, renewal and exploration.

Space itself is not typically the focus of recent research on cosmopolitanisms. Rather analytic efforts have been oriented more towards the flows and transformations of ideas and affinities across time and space, as explored through the fluidity of language (Pollock 2000), literature (Bhabha 2004 [1994]) and music (Gilroy 2002 [1987]), for example. In particular, situated practices in local neighbourhoods have not received much attention, as cosmopolitan practices are often explored as cultural processes translated within place, but essentially disseminated across places. The departure in this thesis is the empirical exploration of social and spatial interactions between

individuals on a street, to understand the broader sociological and spatial significance of local and everyday life.

An ethnographic view of the Walworth Road has led me to respect the analytic value of the crucial distinctions between what people say and what people do. The way people verbally employ characterisations of race, class, insiders or outsiders is not always the same as how people socialise in their everyday life. Local social interactions can be understood through the complex and at times contradictory ways in which historic categorisations of people and places are paralleled with contingent experiences. Unlike Amin, who argues that we need to step out of our routines to learn about difference by engaging in common projects, I argue that it is precisely within the formats of routine, regularity and locality that the contradictions between our established knowledge of people and our emerging knowledge of individuals is tested and negotiated. In this chapter I argue for a knowledge of ordinary cosmopolitanisms grounded in an understanding of the small and complex ways that individuals actually engage or seek to disengage with difference and change.

My fieldwork raises the cautionary flag, that to understand the everyday experiences of belonging and social inclusion we also need to recognise exclusions. Similarly, the analytic frame of ordinary and vernacular cosmopolitanisms is necessarily cluttered, and incorporates the understanding that there are no actual experiences of belonging without boundaries; there is no ongoing contact without tension or contestation. Shared social codes and tacit forms of knowledge are as crucial to understanding the political significance of ordinary contact as are the impediments to contact.

In this chapter I use my empirical data to analyse the varied and multiple forms of social contact on the Walworth Road, where informal memberships offer a range of social possibilities. I focus on the forms of contact in the small urban interiors of the

independent shops, precisely because they are less visible from the outside, and in their smallness and intimacy different social interactions emerge and are refined. Equally, these spaces along the street offer a different research space from the state regulated housing estates, schools or libraries in which people are formally enrolled. While social memberships in the shop spaces are informal, they are socially regulated. By definition, shops are also spaces shaped by entrepreneurial agility, and a key question raised by my thesis is whether 'technical' skill and economic participation increases the capacity for social skill and social interaction.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how individuals develop and refine their social repertoires in the shop spaces along the Walworth Road, to engage or disengage in difference. Through the idea of *familiar space* I analyse how individuals use local place as a set of familiar coordinates to navigate their everyday world. I show how these coordinates of locality both orientate and limit social exploration. I go on to analyse the social significance of *intimate space* or personal space within group space and public life. I show how the smallness of social intimacy allows for personal and political forms of communication. Finally, through the idea of *skillful space* I argue for the role of individual imagination and acumen as primary social skills, and expand on the social value of the ordinary combinations of life and livelihood on the Walworth Road.

Familiar space

One of my interviewees spoke of a lack of spaces 'where we can mix and learn from each other'. The pattern of local convenience and small spatial distances on the Walworth Road supports the regular use of the street by its surrounding local population, and the regular use of the street contributes to the formation of local social connections. Regularity is therefore a component of sociability reliant on the relative fixity of local places and on repetition; of knowing and being known through returning to

the same spaces, engaging with familiar faces, and often buying more or less the same goods at the same shops. But what are the forms of social life that emerge out of local place that allow for social exploration, and does familiar space have a role to play in how people mix and learn on the Walworth Road?

Defining the local

The relationship of local place to interaction and integration is contested in the broad arena of urban studies and community studies. In his study of the inner city slums of Chicago in the 1960s, Suttles (1968) defined locality as a proper element of social structure and focused on the effect of spatial boundaries or what he termed the 'ordered segmentation' of ethnicity and territory (1968, p. 23). For Suttles (1972) the interrelationship between local neighbourhoods and local groupings was primarily a constructed one, and his empirical work explored the idea of community as ascribed racial and ethnic groupings within defended neighbourhoods.

Gans' research (1962) of Italian-Americans in New York's West End in the 1950s defined community as 'peer group society', or a process of social association that grows out of an economic and societal structure of which local place is a part. Gans emphasised the individual capacity to make choices within a range of available economic and social alternatives. He argued that class, as a lifestyle associated with occupational, educational and consumer distinctions, mattered more to the idea of a peer group society than ethnicity or territory. Across the Atlantic, race, ethnicity and class have been viewed as constitutive dimensions of social exclusion and ethnographies based on social life in Britain have shown how socialisation within spatially confined neighbourhoods has tended to reinforce not only local groupings but also segregated local groupings (Parker 1974; Alexander 2000).

What happens to territorial groupings when local areas are subject to profound change? The impact of change on the relationship of spatial and social enclaves is developed in a particular range of ethnographic studies that are embedded within local areas in London. Whether the emphasis is on how the white working class in Bermondsey fail to relate to educational structure (Evans 2006) or the collision of old and new cultures in the London Docklands redevelopment process (Foster 1999), there is a prominent narrative of communities that are bounded by place. These narratives reveal both a deep social investment in local networks of support (including class-based and/or ethnic-based networks), as well as the historic imposition of economic, social and spatial boundaries onto local groups.

In contrast, an area of urban studies that incorporates the impacts of capitalist globalisation has focused on questioning not only how fluid and mixed societies orientate in local space, but also whether local place is indeed fundamental to belonging. Massey's essay 'A Global Sense of Place' (1994) is set against the backdrop of profound economic change in the re-organisation of the economy that occurred in the 1970s, and questions what effect the globalisation of finance and communication has for the meaning of local place. In spite of the argued increase in a sense of placelessness or disorientation (Harvey 1989; Auge 1995), Massey emphasises the actual presence of local life, local relationships and local spaces, but rejects a conceptual definition of place that relies on drawing boundaries.

By taking us for a walk down Kilburn High Road in North London, Massey describes the very ordinary global-local connections between Kilburn High Road and the world, through the variegated sense of place carried in the diverse bodies, spaces and objects. She calls for 'an extroverted sense of place', or, more explicitly, 'a global sense of the local, a global sense of place' (1994, p. 156). But in seeking to conflate the conceptual binary between global and local, Massey eliminates the analytic

significance of local boundaries, and the real impact these have on how people participate in urban life. My fieldwork data suggests that Massey's 'extroverted' or connected idea of local place needs to be simultaneously explored with local place as an introverted or series of bounded spaces. My analytic stance is based on the varying ways that individuals and groups share or delimit local space and social life on the Walworth Road.

Tiered boundaries of the local

The diversity of local voices and interactions on the Walworth Road made apparent that the familiarity of the local was as much socially affirming as it was at times socially constraining. Many of the narratives of belonging were firmly rooted in a confined commitment to locality as expressed through a tiered sense of local boundaries. Narratives of boundaries explored throughout this thesis included the perceived parameters of the River Thames, the borough and the neighbourhood, as well as small territories within the neighbourhood. In these narratives place was invoked to position a sense of self with respect to locality, such as 'My grandfather was a Peckham person' or 'I was born on this side [the west side of the Walworth Road]. When we were kids we never went onto the other side. There [the other side] was a different gang.' Place was also used to define the limits of personal exploration as described by one local who claimed, 'Everything is here. For the last ten years I haven't moved much beyond the borough.'

These place-based narratives incorporated not only ways of life associated with particular places, but also a sense of separation from other places. John, who I introduced in Chapter 3, is between forty and fifty, and grew up in Peckham to the south of the Walworth Road. He recalled the day when he joined the National Film Theatre at the age of sixteen. Although the direct bus trip from Peckham to Waterloo

would only have involved forty minutes of travel, the journey represented a far greater sense of distance for John and his parents. John described it as travelling a cultural distance from his working-class roots in Peckham into a world of institutions, films and intellectualism, which he simultaneously felt an affinity for and a separation from:

So when I joined the National Film Theatre, it was this middle-class place on the South Bank – Festival Hall, National Theatre and all that. And to me it was, like, not so much for my father, but for my mother, it's like she's going to lose me. And metaphorically she did. Because, once I had joined that place, but... I never forgot she stood at the window and watched me walk to the bus stop. I think she was still probably standing there waiting for me to come home. But I was only going up the road to the National Film Theatre... she had the strange feeling that her son... But it was a big thing for a kid from a working-class family, from a council estate, to make that leap and it was a leap, a big leap. But then I discovered it was a very middle-class place and I didn't really feel comfortable, although I *loved* going to see the films. That was really my only motivation for going. I didn't really feel at ease with middle-class people. I never have, I still don't. I still don't. It's not a chip on my shoulder. Some of my best friends are middle class – know what I'm saying (*grins*). But I always seem to come back here, as long as I had here to come back to, I could spend as long as I like in the West End, in the cinema bookshop at the National Film Theatre. (Fieldwork interview 2007)

John's narrative exemplifies the experience of losing somebody by extending one's horizons. It encapsulates the difficulty of accessing broader opportunities, because of the confines of position, inscribed in society and space by both class and locality. The variability of the different kinds of local place narratives incorporated here suggests the need for analytic distinctions, since the comfort of local familiarity spanned a wide spectrum of social needs, which included convenience, security, sameness and affinity with ways of life. At a primary level, people associated with ways of life that had a local scale or everyday dimension in that they were regular, where familiarity contributed to the emergence of local social life and ultimately culture.

However, some of the place narratives suggested a commitment to locality, which deferred to or reinforced 'them and us' differentiations. While it seems obvious to state that local place has different meanings and uses to different locals, it is important to

clarify how locality is used as a reference point to orientate oneself within a wider spatial and social landscape. People used local places as coordinates for ways of life exemplified by everyday practices and associated spaces – such as going to the caff, the internet café or the pub. Within these local spaces, social life tended to emerge from a combination of different forms of ease: the convenience of place, the regularity of practice and the everyday or non-specific programmes within a space.

Cultural co-ordinates of place

Through the social and cultural process of a place becoming familiar, local social networks and local cultural institutions emerge. However, significant changes in the economic and social structure can alter the life and prevalence of these local institutions. Social institutions together with informal social memberships either adapt or disappear. There are far fewer pubs and caffs on the Walworth Road than there were in the 1950s when Walworth was largely a white working-class neighbourhood (*Post Office London Directory 1881-1950*). However, there are also new social proxies for the pub and the caff, as is evident in the growth of the independent kebab shops and internet cafés along the Walworth Road. New technical requirements such as Wi-Fi and computer stations give customers access to e-mail and the internet while sipping a cappuccino, where a new kind of sociability is sustained by locality, the regularity of the customer and the invested presence of the proprietor.

Passing by Eroma – an internet café on the Walworth Road – I am aware that a different generation of street clientele are using a different generation of meeting and eating establishments as everyday social spaces. Nick's Caff has no Wi-Fi access, and many of his customers have either not engaged in computer technology or associate the caff with other functions. There has been a rapid increase in the number of nail bars along the Walworth Road, as raised in Chapter 3, and these are places for women

to have their nails manicured, and spaces for women and children to socialise. While some spaces were gender specific, others were ethnically or culturally specific, such as the Somali Club, an eating establishment off the Walworth Road, frequented by individuals of Somali or East African connection. User groups fluctuated in the small spaces along the Walworth Road, in accordance with change. The street as a local place absorbs the locations of different people simultaneously in the same place at the same time.

Place was also used as a coordinate for the familiarity of the past, a reference to how things used to be and a physical and perceptual barometer of the extent to which things have changed. Surfacing in many of the conversations that I had with locals who were born in the area was the sense that as their local worlds became increasingly unfamiliar, familiar local remnants such as Nick's Caff became increasingly important. Some of these locals used the Caff every day, and referred to how they valued Nick's Caff as a place in which little seemed to change. The focus on familiarity in what was perceived as an increasingly unfamiliar world may seem fairly unremarkable – we all have places and spaces to which we wish to return, based on the comfort of knowing and being known. But there remains the important social question of the extent to which local people are captive to locality, and in particular the social consequences for those whose spatial and social confinement is exaggerated by vulnerability, such as the elderly or the poor. While ties to locality are reinforced by the daily use of local places, these same locality ties or local boundaries can also be asserted through urban economies, political systems and social structures that play a significant role in confining people to localities on the basis of class, income and ethnicity.

Local place or locality is therefore also part of a system of power and control, where vulnerability or social exclusion is rendered more prominent by social and spatial stigmatisation. In Chapter 3 I explored how the spatial and social boundaries around

Walworth had been authorised over time through official mechanisms such as the administration and allocation of public resources and the institutionalisation of welfare. These boundaries inscribed into the urban landscape through administrative divisions and physical forms had endured as spatial and social stigmas over time, long past the actual reconfiguration of territorial boundaries or the disappearance of physical structures. The double impetus of the stigma or the symbolic boundary is that it perceptually attaches to both place and people, not only relegating a negative value to a place, but also making it difficult for individuals to feel comfortable about leaving an area of familiarity to enter into new social worlds.

In Chapter 5, although Stan, the 'ageing Mod', described himself as 'comfortable in the West End and I'm open to ideas from over the River', he also highlighted how socially excruciating he found it going into a shop in Jermyn Street in the West End to enquire about a suit by saying, 'People don't realise how hard it is to walk into a place.' While it would probably be difficult for many people to walk confidently into a shop in Savile Row, Stan's point is explicitly one of disassociation on the basis of locality and class. Stan highlighted this by his contrasting experience of walking into Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop on the Walworth Road: 'Reyd speaks the right language. We would be out of place in Savile Row. When I first came in here I thought, "I could talk to you, I could deal with you."' Stigma binds individuals to locality or familiarity not simply through attachment to physical places or ways of life, but also as a form of detachment from other places and other people.

As is the case with the diversity of cultural life on Massey's Kilburn High Road (1994), my fieldwork data revealed that in many instances local people expressed more than one coordinate of orientation on their mental map of local place. Particularly for those locals who had more than one cultural inheritance, their local social worlds on the Walworth Road were navigated by combining it with other familiar worlds. Nick and

Dorah's socialisation at their regular 'family' table at the front of the Caff was not primarily shaped by an entrepreneurial inclination, but by a Cypriot familial and cultural inheritance of meeting around a table, and combining eating and talking as an essential part of everyday life. Around this table their local London world and Cypriot heritage effectively combined to make a social space for family, friends and locals. Familiarity is therefore not necessarily only an introverted social form. Through a sense of safety, convenience and everyday contact, familiarity can be used as an adaptive social form, to combine different traditions, people and places.

Local places are about finding and fixing coordinates of familiarity to navigate everyday life. The individual use of local coordinates varies considerably with differing processes of finding and fixing: from regularity and convenience to the effects of stigma and territory, and to inter-cultural combinations of social life. In a place like the Walworth Road, the contemporary dilemma of what it means to be a local is therefore not analytically resolved by separating fluidity from fixity, or cosmopolitanism from locality. Newcomers and established residents use local place to either narrow or expand their modes of belonging with respect to self and other. At times the sense of the local, or the everyday experience of belonging, constrains cosmopolitanism; at times it affords social connections within the apparently effortless acts of going about daily life. To reiterate, we need to understand the simultaneity of introverted and extroverted experiences of place in the context of global change.

Intimate space

If familiar space is formed out of the orientating processes of daily convenience and regularity within a local area, intimate space forms out of the personal space that individuals carve from larger society or group space. Social intimacy develops through small-scale associations, galvanised by shared social understandings such as etiquette

or discretion, or shared affinities as banal as meeting for a drink or as pointed as partaking in a political conversation. In his book *The Politics of Small Things* (2006), Goldfarb introduces the role of the kitchen table in the Eastern bloc during the Soviet period as a place to talk freely amongst equals without fear of recrimination. Goldfarb recalls from personal experience that it was within the collections of small, private spaces part of daily life that people met to discuss the party, poetry and culture. But as Goldfarb's analysis spans across other time periods and places, he shows that the need for small-scale meetings in which a public is constituted is not the preserve of explicitly repressive societies. In the context of the Walworth Road, I explore politics with a small 'p' to understand the significance of claiming intimate space within a group space, in which one can think, watch or communicate at a personal level without being detached from the group.

Small space

The small table in Nick's Caff is an increment of space no more than 1 metre by 1.5 metres, which allowed for both personal and intimate occupation of shared space within the hub of the Caff. At my table in the Caff I read, wrote and observed, the table providing me not only a personal domain, but also a spatial buffer from which I could elect to manage social distance without social exclusion from others in the Caff. I had explicitly selected a side table because I felt that it was a space from which I was less obtrusive and less likely to intrude or be required to join in with general conversations. Joining in could be negotiated by social nuances such as selecting a more central table, or making eye contact, or going up to the front counter, passing people at their tables on the way.

I noticed that the occupation of similar intimate territories within the Caff was undertaken with a level of precision, where social comfort was gained from the precise

occupation of time and place. In the mornings Mark opened his office mail at his seat at a side table, and occasionally met his children at the same table in the evening. Hinga regularly occupied a table that was close to Nick's counter, returning at the same time most mornings and generally ordering the same items on the menu. Our individual routines were central to our occupation of intimate space within the Caff. I noticed that we returned not only to our same tables, but almost always to the same seats at those respective tables. The occupation of personal or intimate spaces within a larger social space, akin to individuals claiming a bench in a park, requires a particular form of social membership. Informal social memberships depend on learning and respecting the social codes common to the larger space and group, as well as establishing the right to partially retreat or differentiate oneself from the larger whole.

Rykwert (2000, p. 133) emphasises the necessary smallness of spatial intimacy for 'semi-public, semi-private meeting'. By referring to 'places of tryst' he suggests that spatial intimacy is compatible with social discretion or secrecy within a group space. The scale of inclusion or social intimacy works precisely because of its smallness, and therefore while some are included on the basis of shared etiquette refined by regularity, others are informally excluded on the same grounds. There are many individuals on the Walworth Road who simply by-pass Nick's Caff, and others still who might feel uncomfortable about entering and using the space. At different stages of their lives, or from the base of different occupations or affinities, individuals select and occupy their regular places, their 'local'. In Chapter 4 I discussed Laurier's (2004) recent ethnographic analysis of the use of franchise coffee shops by London office workers, where the living-room arrangements of the coffee shops are found to be conducive for business meetings. However, what distinguishes the informal memberships in the Caff is that the proprietor is long standing and has fostered enduring relationships with regulars, that the entry level for membership is fairly low – a mug of tea can be bought for 50p, and that there is a correlation between regular customers and local residents.



Figure 6.1 The intimate realms of table space in Nick's Caff (Fieldwork photographs 2007)

'Intimate anonymity'

The idea of 'intimate anonymity' and the use of social etiquette to protect a personal preserve is key to small-scale sociability, as discussed in Chapter 4 where I introduced Haine's (1992) historic exploration of the Parisian working-class cafés during the period from 1850 to 1914. Haine's research offers two fascinating insights into the personal and political role of social intimacy within the Parisian cafés. He starts by tracing the historic location of cafés in working-class neighbourhoods, thereby emphasising their role as essentially local meeting places. He then scrutinised the archival records of marriage within these respective areas, revealing a fascinating social relationship. In France, marriage ceremonies require two witnesses, and the marriage certificates lodged in Parisian working-class areas during the late nineteenth century show the café proprietor as the most prominent profession represented in the position of witness. Haine also raised the issue of the organisational role of the café in worker politics, by asking how French workers could rapidly organise large-scale protests without a strong union infrastructure. His work highlights the role of 'café friendships' across locally distributed cafés in Paris, in which workers regularly met, attending to their social and consumption needs, as well as their political ones.

What is consequential about the individual occupation of group space is that personal or private lives are not necessarily separated from group or public life. Work, family relationships and political sentiments filter into public life through small-scale social practices, even if limited by the confines of small social groups. Because of the gradual process of becoming known in a local establishment, social intimacy may also allow for a decrease in social distance, or a shift from passive encounter to active forms of engagement. This means that congenial social spaces, as Haine's research suggests, can be experienced as places of personal and political contact, spaces to be known and looked out for, and spaces to express agreement and disagreement. Because of the informal nature of membership in establishments like the café or caff, the role of the

proprietor is pivotal to social interactions in these spaces. Nick's role as public character echoes the analogy of Haine's marriage witness, where Nick had taken on a caring role for his regulars, not only within the Caff but also in their lives outside it, as typified by his assistance in arranging Mike's access to sheltered housing for the elderly.

In general, conversations in Nick's Caff were convivial in nature, and often the social entrée was guided around football leagues and matches. There were also occasions in the Caff where conversations led to heated discussions. During the period of my observation political conversations focused on the Iraq occupation and war and the perceived let down of the Labour government in general and Tony Blair in particular. Immigrant rights were occasionally discussed, particularly the alleged discrepancies between those seen to be working or contributing to society and those claiming from it. When the subject of the Iraq war came up, Mike, who had himself spent time in prison, emphatically stated that 'Blair should be nicked for war crimes'.

Nick endorsed this sentiment and on another occasion spoke of his disappointment in changes to the Labour party. He drew a comparison between Tony Blair and Tony Benn to encapsulate the fundamental shift from Labour to New Labour: 'Tony Benn is by far the best leader for many, many years. He rips apart the Conservatives. He rips apart America. He tells it like it is, not as they want to see it.' Local election results from the neighbourhood wards around the Walworth Road suggest that the area has been a Labour stronghold for a long time. The Labour Party headquarters was until 1997 located at the northern end of the Walworth Road at John Smith House. Alan, the third of three generations of proprietors of the 'Walworth Health Store', talked about the symbolic relocation of Labour in 1997:

The Old Labour headquarters was something that people knew about. But the only time you thought about it was when you saw people going in for general

meetings. Of course New Labour didn't fit very well with its roots, and it changed to a council office. (Fieldwork conversation 2006).

The formal institutions of working-class life such as churches and working men's clubs provided a larger social and political structure to everyday life, as well as broader organisational frameworks to belong in, such as the unions and Labour Party. As the impetus and functions of these larger structures have altered alongside the reorganisation of work and the economy, the fora to collectively discuss and debate political, moral and ethical matters have eroded. Although spaces like the Caff allowed for political discussion, there was a sense in the Nick's Caff that the ability to act on discussions through larger representative structures that are part of social and cultural life had been lost.

Skilful space

In Calhoun's (2002) theoretical exploration of 'cosmopolitan democracy', he asks what the basis for collective membership is, and highlights the possible contemporary forms of participation and belonging. Although his is essentially a political pursuit, Calhoun challenges the view that emerged out of the theory of cosmopolitanism in the 1990s, where the primacy of a global democracy was thought to be vested in international forms of governance and global capitalism. Through reviewing the tensions between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism as 'abstract accounts of equality and rooted accounts of difference' (2002, p. 884), he calls for a more local understanding of social life, and a real sense of the obligations and commitments that tie individuals and groups. For Calhoun, locality, tradition, community and ethnicity are therefore essential to the cosmopolitan project, since participation or citizenship is ultimately layered, and consists of a range of small and large associations. Of significance for my thesis is Calhoun's emphasis on the combinations of social, cultural and economic ties in

addition to political ones, and hence the essential recognition of what Calhoun refers to as the 'life-world'.

Lives and livelihoods

I selected the 'life-world' of the Walworth Road because it is distinctive from the repetitive housing units that aggregate into the monolithic social housing blocks of the Heygate and Aylesbury estates off its eastern edges. The contrast between the street and the adjacent social housing suggested very different possibilities for viewing, understanding and representing the area. As highlighted in the introduction to my thesis, my intuitive attraction to the Walworth Road was the cheek-by-jowl arrangement of the independent shops, and the potential roles that individual imagination, agility and acumen play in how the small spaces of the city are shaped.

I was also interested in whether individual occupational skills would result in different kinds of sociability, and whether the social life within the independent shops off the street that were partly public, but not institutional, would engender different forms of belonging. What emerged out of my selection of both Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop were the forms of social contact within workspaces and social spaces. Entrepreneurial agility and social skill on the part of proprietors was often key to initiating and sustaining social relationships over long time periods. In these shops a combination of social skills and work skills had increased Nick's and Reyd's capacities to participate in urban change. The form of participation sustained through interactive work practices is not simply a form of engagement – it is ultimately a form of belonging.

In Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop, tacit understanding was the basis of social interaction, or in other words, shared affinity was more crucial to the social exchange than shared space. In Reyd's shop, proprietor and customers from across London met to share

cultural affinities as symbolised in the choice of cloth, cut of suit, and image of the sartorial London Mod. Developing an affinity requires skill, and Reyd's stories revealed the hours of investment in not only becoming a bespoke tailor, but also in learning about the lineage of American blues, jazz and soul in the evolution of the Mod culture. In Reyd's shop Coltrane, Pickett and Davis shared wall space with Sting in the cult Mod film *Quadrophenia* (1979) and the east London English rock group the Small Faces (1960s). These affinities extended to local associations like Reyd's picture of the south London Millwall football team, and his photographs of customers including boxers, actors and musicians. The combined effect of a collage (figure 6.2) of local culture and Mod culture in his shop was not simply aesthetic – it was cultural and social. Reyd's combination of images suggests that however socially or economically removed the Walworth Road is, its colours, textures, shapes and influences are also global.



Figure 6.2 The affinities of music and fashion in Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop. (Author's photographs 2008)

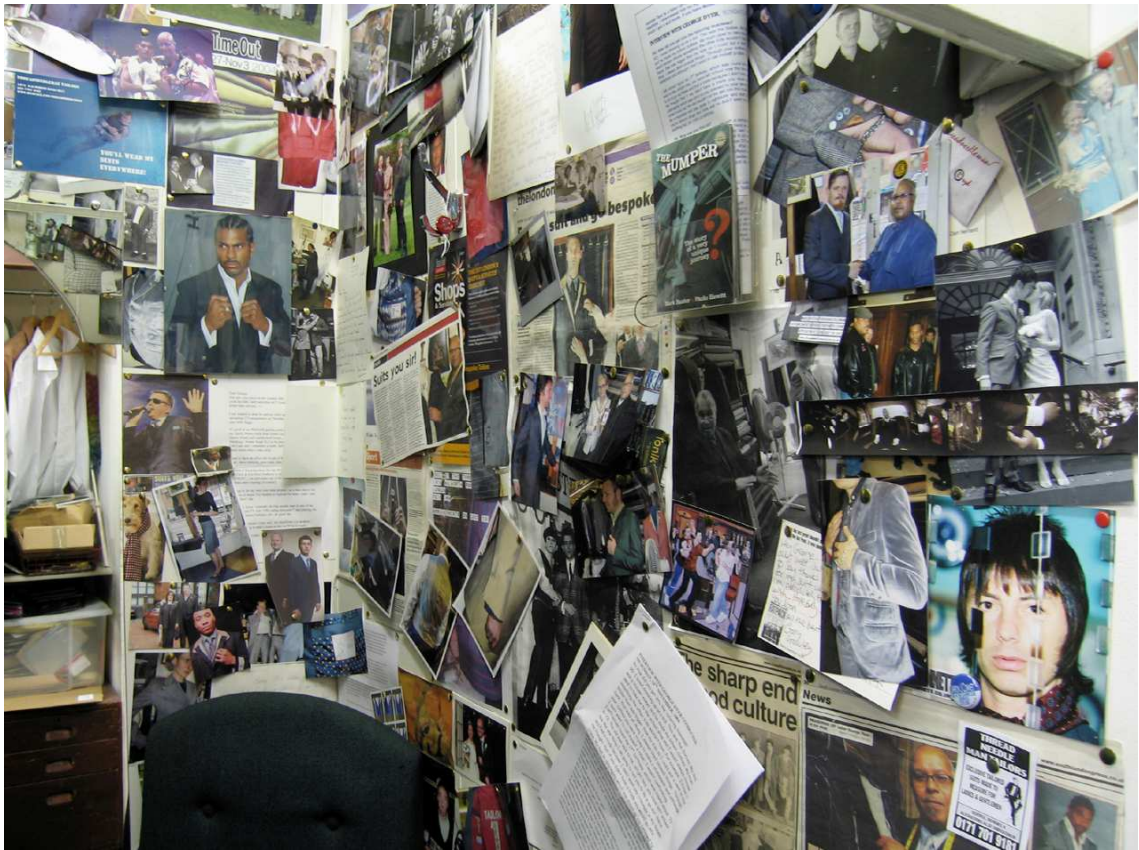


Figure 6.3 Shared wall space for Reyd's customers (Author's photographs 2008)

The social exchange of knowledge

Stepping into Reyd's shop off the street was about engaging in the shared affinities of music and clothing as well as social position and aspiration. Central to this tacit engagement between proprietor and customer was the highly personalised exchange of respect, negotiated on the basis of the recognition of skill – not only the technical skill of making the bespoke garment, but also the social skill of wearing it. Although Reyd had ultimately elected to position his tailor shop in South London, the exchange between tailor and customer rested primarily in a mutual regard for Mod culture and for bespoke tailoring. This form of social exchange based on the acquisition of knowledge transcends locality. The sociability in Reyd's shop was different from Nick's Caff, where social contact was formed and regulated out of the regularity of regulars from a shared local world. Whether spatial intimacy or social affinities are formed through the

mundane practice of occupying a table, or the more emblematic practice of commissioning and wearing a bespoke Mod suit, the small scale of these social interactions remains key to how differences are negotiated or shared. Both spaces are informally regulated by social codes of membership, and both spaces will include some and exclude others.

The focus of my thesis is the exploration of how inclusion and exclusion occurs, which is why I return to Simmel's (1949) idea of 'sociability', and the literal significance of social abilities in sharing knowledge, conversation, humour and gesture as part of regular, face-to-face engagement. If Simmel's idea of social reciprocity is extended to include the aggregation of culturally diverse individuals, then the art of sociability can be explored as a multi-lingual form of communication. In Reyd's shop, social understanding was essentially chaperoned by a shared regard for the art of attire, which was firmly founded in working-class cultural styles (Hebdige 1979). Those with an established knowledge and respect of tailoring therefore had access to this sociability. In Nick's Caff, social etiquette was governed by how individuals occupied space, where regularity enhanced the capacity for sociability. Both forms of sociability required social skills that were acquired over time. The knowledge required to walk into Reyd's shop was not dependent on local knowledge, and was inclusive of a wide array of individuals with a shared affinity. The knowledge required to use Nick's Caff regularly entailed local understandings of ways of life, but the form of inclusion was more wide ranging, allowing for secluded or central occupations of space.

The everyday interactions and the social engagements that are fostered in local contexts are regarded by Amin as crucial to learning about ethnic and cultural differences. Amin's research suggests that this learning occurs through habitual and prosaic social processes rather than explicitly public processes, and he therefore highlights the role of recreation and education environments as well as workplaces.

Amin's examples do not include more habitual sites where people meet, like caffs or retail outlets for example. However, the value of local place in learning to live with difference is about not necessarily a shared sense of what is local, but the ease of access and use of a variety of social spaces in which engagement ultimately occurs.

The binary distinctions that are historically drawn between the public and private domains as markedly different social, cultural and political realms support a tendency to 'collectivise' public space, or to represent it as an ideological or spatial whole. Through my research process, directed in many ways by the ethnographic act of walking and stopping, I came to experience and understand the Walworth Road as a highly individualised collection of parts. In hindsight, the emphasis on parts was crucial, not only because it allowed for the social and spatial differentiation of the street to reveal itself, but also because it allowed for the social value of smallness, or the role of personal units of space within a wider public realm, to become apparent. Through this smallness within the larger domain of the street, individuals were able to participate in some aspects of group life in mixed neighbourhoods. Claiming personal space, exercising personal preference, and developing shared expertise within a semi-public space were shown to be key social modes of participation and belonging. In the following interconnected chapter, I explore how an understanding of a small aggregation of parts on the Walworth Road connects with the broader issues of how ordinary high streets are measured and evaluated.

Conclusions

Ordinary cosmopolitanism is about diverse social forms of participation in local life, and not necessarily the political ideals of tolerance or unity. In this chapter, participation is explored through the social and spatial forms of interaction that allow individuals to experience cultural and ethnic diversity. I have also explored social interaction as a

process through which to register agreement and disagreement as part of daily life. Ordinary cosmopolitanism is an acknowledgment or recognition of difference without a convergence to sameness – without an insistence on cohesions such as ‘community’ and ‘ethnicity’ as exclusive or even primary forms of belonging. Sociability, or more precisely the ability to socialise, is a skill that forms out of being exposed to a variety of social situations, and in the context of rapid change it is a skill that requires continual renewal. The social skills needed to engage with difference and change require more rather than less exposure, and active participation over passive encounter.

I have argued that local place and local spaces are one crucial aspect of participation, since they offer the ease of regularity, convenience and spontaneity, which underpin much of social life. The local is also the urban realm in which the vulnerable and the less mobile – the very young, the old, the poor, the newcomer – coexist in an overlap of structural circumstances. The importance of the local is not as an exclusive form of territorial solidarity itself, but as a series of familiar and intimate spaces in which to engage in difference, particularly for those whose social mobility or global fluidity is less of a reality.

The analytic difficulty, as explored in this chapter and thesis, is that locality or territory is also a defensive strategy used to combat the effects of change or the perceived threats of difference. Place becomes a means for holding on to what is ‘ours’, an unchanging sense of boundary between past and present. In this chapter I analysed how individuals use *familiar space* as a form of attachment that provides orientation to local life, but that potentially also limits social exploration. In the context of Walworth Road and South London, I have referred to key factors that establish and reinforce physical and perceptual boundaries between people. The persistent categorisation of people by class, origin, ethnicity and area serves to construct and authorise physical and perceptual boundaries. These boundaries are persistent and limit capacities to

deal with cycles of change and frameworks of belonging beyond the familiar confines of sameness, be it kin, ethnicity or territory. Static boundaries such as those around stigmatised neighbourhoods or social housing estates, or those stereotypes that define racial and ethnic categories, may provide the illusion of a constant in the face of change, but in providing allegiance as a form of social bind, they both connect and restrict people as individuals, potentially incapacitating the ability to deal with change.

Through the dimensions of smallness and regularity, *intimate spaces* develop within the shop interiors along the street. Social intimacy allows for the individual occupation of group space, and the opportunity to momentarily belong, either as a witness to group activity, or as an active participant in general and political conversation. Shared social knowledge is key to the access and use of small space, and is as seemingly simple as where to sit in a caff, or as complex as commissioning and appreciating a bespoke Mod suit. These acts could be dismissed as banal acts of consumption, but my ethnographic data has revealed that they are far more than that. These everyday forms of local sociability allow people to participate in social life in varied ways.

I argue for the ordinary combinations of life and livelihoods in mixed neighbourhoods, as spaces of social value where individual imaginations and I skills are engaged in the routines of everyday life. Social interaction across the boundaries of class, race, ethnicity or territory requires active forms of engagement, and through the social processes of participation, ordinary forms of belonging are constituted. Contact refines our skills or capacities to socialise. The recognition of contact as a form of learning about difference requires a disaggregated view: a greater commitment to observing actual everyday life, and a willingness to acknowledge the variability that ultimately comes out of observing the individual occupation of the small spaces of the city.

Chapter 7

The measures of ordinariness

In this chapter I explore the question of how to recognise and value a multi-ethnic street by focusing on the 'ordinary' qualities of the Walworth Road. I compare the measures of value used by proprietors and customers on the street with planning and urban design discourse, using the themes of adaptability, longevity and vitality to structure the comparisons. A key question that arose during my research was whether lessons from the Walworth Road would be useful in informing architects and planners how to design a street more appropriately. Would what I was learning through my process of social and spatial research have consequences for how I would conceive of a street as an architect? This is a crucial question, and I address it in this chapter by relating the arguably narrow focus of design and planning analysis with a broader problem of cultural recognition. The Walworth Road reveals the intersections of life and livelihoods on the street that tell us about the experience of contemporary dilemmas and forces through ordinary social and spatial organisational forms. Yet the everyday qualities of spatial adaptability and social appropriation by individuals and groups on the Walworth Road can be easily overlooked or rendered invisible by other measures of urban value.

By contrasting ethnographic data with contemporary planning reports, I explore the diverse ways of valuing the social, economic and spatial qualities of the Walworth Road. I have explicitly sought to move away from the standard vocabulary of the 'high street' or 'main street', to develop the notion of a 'bread-and-butter street'. An alternative notation is necessary, since the life and livelihoods on the Walworth Road

differ in important ways from those that we may associate with a village high street or with a comparatively 'upmarket' London street like High Street Kensington, for example. However, economic and urban design reports in Britain have tended to use the general term 'high street' to describe these diverse places. Economic measures of value such as turnover and rental rates are a primary analytic tool used to establish a common denominator between high streets, irrespective of their particularities (New Economics Foundation (NEF) 2003; Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) 2007). The pursuit of defining the Walworth Road as a bread-and-butter street also relates to understanding other measures of value, including social vitality and economic longevity.

I argue that to understand or recognise lived experiences on a bread-and-butter street requires research methods that extend beyond the survey. While economic, social and cultural values feature in the literature on the role of high streets and small shops in Britain, these research findings are generally without ethnographic focus (Megicks 2001; NEF 2003, 2004; Coca-Stefaniak *et al.* 2005). The consequence for our understanding of bread-and-butter streets is that the complex social and economic networks and ways of life that are invisible to the passer-by or the overview of the survey are neither sufficiently registered nor adequately represented in how 'ordinary' streets are measured and evaluated.

Moving through London, one is aware of many such 'bread-and-butter' streets and a further purpose of this chapter is to address the question of what the core spatial and social qualities of the Walworth Road are. I expand on three primary ways of valuing the particular 'ordinariness' of this street. I explore the *adaptability* of shop space along the Walworth Road as an incremental condition related to the small scale of land-subdivision and ownership. I measure adaptability not only through the flexibility of the spaces along the street, but in terms of its social and economic complexity and

diversity. I contrast the measures of adaptability with those of *longevity* to consider what allows social relationships in the small shops to endure over time. Lastly, I align measures of social and economic liveliness to describe the *vitality* of the Walworth Road as a local place within walking distance of those who use and shape the street.

Adaptability

High streets are seldom static or singular in programme; they tend to be a linear collection of variegated spaces that are responsive to change. A casual conversation I had during my fieldwork with a woman who had lived for many years in Camberwell, to the south of the Walworth Road, emphasised just this quality: 'I tend to see the Walworth Road as a barometer of change.' She recalled her memories of the street during the 1980s as a mixture of pubs, caffs, independent shops, second-hand shops and charity shops, 'the kind of place you would go to if you needed something for an art project.' In this section I explore the 'barometer' of adaptability not simply as the capacity for spaces along a street to absorb new uses. The idea of adaptability incorporates morphological, social and economic capacities to respond to change.

Sennett's (2008a) interpretation of urban adaptability is based on the underlying principle that urban space should be able to absorb a variety of appropriations over time. His distinction between 'open' and 'closed' systems requires a paradigm shift towards an understanding of the value of 'unstable evolution' as opposed to 'harmonious equilibrium' (2008a, p. 1). In Sennett's open system, the unpredictable becomes a primary consideration for planning and urban design, and relies on the conceptualisation of space without determinate form or fixed programme. While the idea that urban space should be open to interpretation over time is not new, it is a concern, which jars with the underlying professional cultures of both formal planning and developer-driven urbanism. While planning seeks to provide certainty and control,

developers seek both certainty and brevity, limiting risks and minimising the turnover period of profit from built developments. How would one think then, in practical terms, about the street as an open system, in which certainty and regulation was to parallel adaptability and viability?

Complexity as an incremental process

Different articulations of how to think about the design of adaptability through the qualities of complexity, flexibility and diversity can be traced to architects, planners and urbanists who challenged the prescriptive form and function associated with modernist planning. In the 1960s Crane and his colleagues and students pursued the idea of urbanism as an unfolding process and explored the limited spatial frameworks or minimal design interventions required to support the notion of 'The Dynamic City' and 'The City of a Thousand Designers' (Crane 1960). The idea of an overarching spatial structure or urban system with clear but limited rules, which allowed for the flexibility or interpretation of the parts, also featured in the respective analyses of Greenwich Village, Savannah and Amsterdam, by Jacobs (1992 [1961]), Anderson (1978) and Habraken (1982).

This body of work emphasised the enduring impact of *urban grain* defined as the scale of the subdivision of land and ownership into block and plots, and a connection with the incremental transformation of the city. Habraken and Anderson particularly concentrated their analyses on the parallel effects of freedom and constraint within urban spatial frameworks. They explored where rules or spatial codes would have the most strategic impact, not simply to control development but also to release opportunities for individual interpretation. Their analyses of urban form also highlighted the value of a limited set of spatial rules that focus on how the spatial interface between public and private realms is defined.

Van Eyck (1962), whose architectural practice was renowned for the sympathetic design of public building and spaces in the Netherlands, understood the everyday experience of the city as lived through a series of complex and interconnected spaces. His qualification that 'The role of the architect is to make a network of crevices' (1991 [1962], p. 42) articulates a core design concern to create small spaces or opportunities in the city for self-determination. Self-expression is similarly a central concern in Sennett's exploration of the adaptability of an open system, but Sennett points more explicitly to the need for spaces that accommodate not only mixed use but also mixed users. The incorporation of a diversity of users links to Sennett's emphasis on the value of shared spaces that edge different areas, as opposed to the conventional planning logic, which has tended to emphasise the role of centres that are generally embedded within specific areas. The issue raised for planning and design is that primary spatial assets and places where individuals meet, such as market places and schools, have the potential to provide a platform for different individuals and groups to meet and mix. Similarly, the social potential of shared space may be constrained when spatial assets are accessible to limited neighbourhood groups.

A local librarian described the adaptability of the Walworth Road to me as reliant on its pattern of small-scale, private ownership: 'The whole of the Walworth Road was full of old Victorian property. While the damage wreaked by planning in the post-war period was colossal, Walworth Road was an exception, because it was not in the hands of the local authority.' The historical pattern of small-scale ownership along the street is corroborated in the *Post Office London Directory* surveys as well as in my own survey of the street in 2006 (see Chapter 3). Since the 1800s changes of use on the Walworth Road have been incremental, reflecting a plot-by-plot scale of flexibility (figure 7.1).

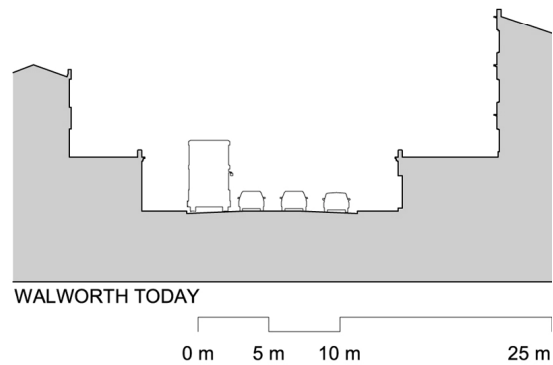
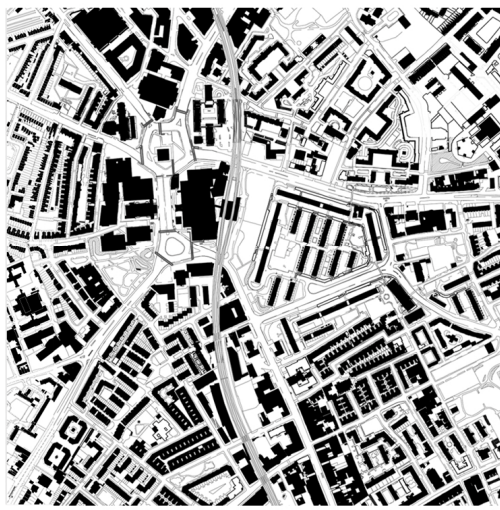
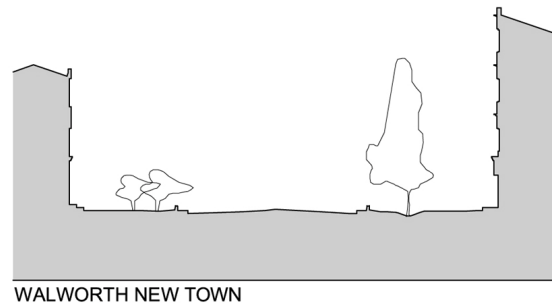
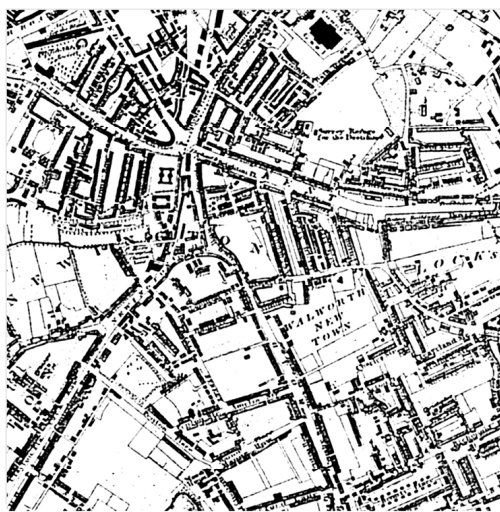
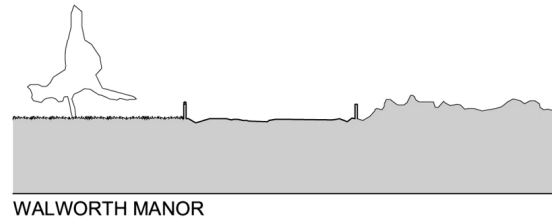


Figure 7.1 The incremental transformation of the Walworth Road over time (Research drawing 2008)

The diverse retail strip grew out of a terraced residential urban form, which was inherently adaptable to small and medium-scale activities. The street was occupied largely by middle-class residents up to the late 1800s, as evidenced on the Booth maps (1898). In response to the pressures of urbanisation and industrialisation, front gardens were gradually converted into shop extensions, which provided a scale of ownership and a street-oriented form suitable for small-scale retail. The basic typology of individually owned and occupied narrow fronted plots facing the high street remains more or less intact two centuries on, with three to four floors above the shops, which consist of a mixture of office and residential space.

Flexibility as clarity and simplicity

The small-scale incremental adaptability of the Walworth Road lies in stark contrast to the large-scale regeneration initiatives required to transform the Aylesbury and Heygate social housing estates off its eastern edge. As previously described, these estates were planned as highly programmed housing spaces, which are difficult to permeate because of a lack of through routes, and are explicitly detached from the Walworth Road. Because of their specific design, these spaces have been unable to meet a range of needs over time, and both estates are undergoing disruptive, costly and lengthy regeneration programmes.

In contrast, the shops along the Walworth Road are simply extensions to previous residential properties, where land subdivisions and small patterns of ownership have generated a street of 'front rooms'. Many of these spaces are between 4.5 and 6 metres wide, and few are over 12 metres wide. Crucially, the street is surrounded by comparatively densely occupied housing areas, allowing for a large population to be within close walking distance to the street. The street is also part of a strategic public transport network, which connects to other places and other people, and although the

Walworth Road is not embedded within any single local neighbourhood, it edges several residential areas. The aggregation of repetitive units along an important public transport and pedestrian route enhances the street's capacity to perform as an 'open system', incrementally adapting to change over time.



Figure 7.2 The Walworth Road as an aggregation of individual adaptations (Author's photograph 2009)

For Habraken (1982) it is the lucid clarity and regularity of the spatial code of the street that enhances its capacity for individual adaptations. He argues that for individuals to appropriate a unit of collective space, such as a shop along a street, their efforts must be directed by the simplicity and legibility of the spatial organisation. In other words, individual subjectivity responds to the collective regulation and repetitive arrangement of the street. In exploring the individual occupation of the street he comments:

How to allow for a multitude of small territorial powers to exercise their right to build? The only way is to offer a clear context for action in such a way that the overall concept is understood by all concerned. Only when this understanding and acceptance is achieved can one expect people to invest in their life's saving and years of effort in a piece of common land. The street and the block are common knowledge. (Habraken 1982, p. 74)

'Common knowledge' amongst the diverse shop proprietors along the Walworth Road is readily acquired by the simple spatial logic of the street: minimal physical encroachment into the busy pavement space; the selective display of signs and products within the constraints of the shop front area; and the intricate and specific arrangement of space within the shop interiors.

Diversity as a social and spatial concern

While it is possible to establish design criteria to support mixed use, it is difficult to develop a design strategy to encourage mixed usership. This chasm between design objectives or guiding principles that define 'diversity' and their subsequent translation into built forms of development is depicted in the manual issued by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions called *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice* (CABE 2000). Diversity is defined as a spatial and social objective: 'To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs' (2000, p. 31).

Although this objective recognises the importance of local requirements, the toolkit to appraise diversity in the built environment is essentially spatial, and moreover morphological in focus. It includes patterns of distribution of land use, sub-division of urban blocks, the mix of private and social housing, and ownership and tenure patterns. However, what this urban design appraisal of spatial form effectively omits is a methodology to understand social forms and processes. Without a more interdisciplinary and fine-grained approach to understanding the dynamics of the built

environment, or space as process, the CAFE design principles for diversity are only a partial recognition of the diverse life of a local context. A spatial framework of analysis or toolkit that explicitly fails to integrate nuanced social and economic understandings has two primary weaknesses. First, it privileges the spatial form of development and regeneration without explicit connections made to existing, albeit complex social and economic processes. Second, it potentially excludes varied individual interactions in and appropriations of existing space, which are often invisible to digitised methods of mapping such as the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and use of secondary data sets (such as Census data and Ordnance Survey material) that enables much spatial analysis to be conducted away from the site and within the office.

Similarly, my argument developed in Chapter 3 was that perceptions of the Walworth Road, based on culturally dominant visual or aesthetic measures of urban form, may dismiss the appearance of the mess and mix of the Walworth Road. Although in his book *Great Streets* (1995) Jacobs acknowledges that 'the best streets encourage participation', his essential emphasis is on the form of the street and whether the space 'will have been put together well, artfully' (1993, p. 9). My research on the integral social and spatial life of the Walworth Road suggests that our understanding of artful space needs to expand to incorporate both the clarity of urban form and the mosaic of urban appropriations. If the primary measures of the adaptability of the open system include complexity, flexibility and diversity, then the capacity for space to include mixed users and mixed aesthetics is fundamental.

My research data reveals how the intense collection of small spaces along the edge of this street sustains not only social interaction between different individuals and groups, but also diverse individual expressions. Of primary significance is how these spaces have readily adapted to different uses and different user groups over the course of two centuries. Both my survey of the independent shops along the Walworth Road in 2006

and the census data for the Walworth neighbourhood (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk 2007) show that in the past few decades there has been a greater range of cultural diversity amongst proprietors of the small shops and local residents respectively. My survey revealed over twenty different places of origin amongst the proprietors, with no single place of origin predominating. However, my ethnographic research served to render these numeric indicators of difference in more nuanced terms and revealed the different forms of sociability, expression and subjectivity that emerged out of the overlap of cultures along the length of the street.

Longevity

In this section I focus on how proprietors and customers establish entrepreneurial and social continuities over extensive time periods. Longevity is a quality measured by endurance and I explore how longevity is sustained by the skills and services that nurture relationships in the face of change. Some of the proprietors of the independent shops perceived the changes in local retail patterns not in terms of incremental adaptability or longevity, but as dramatic shifts that impact on economic and social patterns of life. Pete, who has run a successful shop on the Walworth Road for over forty years, recalled: 'There were lots of street like the Walworth Road, but they gradually disappeared, like the Old Kent Road. The Walworth Road and the Old Kent Road were places to shop within walking distance of where people lived.'

Change as a function of scale

Pete's comment captures the force of a change in scale: from a small-scale retail street, which exemplified the Old Kent Road up to the 1990s, to a large-scale retail strip evident today, typified by internalised warehouse-like shops, fore-fronted by large parking areas between the street and the shop. The shift in the pattern of local, small-scale retail is marked by an increase in car ownership and by the economic dominance

of retail chains like Asda, Currys, B&Q and Tesco (NEF 2002). Pete's comment also relates to changes in the scale of production since the 1970s, from local patterns of urban manufacturing in London to the mass produced global brands:

We've had a lot of changes recently. There were lots of individual shops, now they've become all-in-ones [convenience stores]. We had a lot of made-to-measure tailors. From the sixties onwards this was a street for fashion, now you have it in a different way with Nike sports fashion. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

The 1950 *Post Office London Directory* corroborates Pete's recollection: eight tailors were registered on the Walworth Road, together with forty-seven specialist clothing makers and distributors including hatters, costumiers, clothiers, corset makers, outfitters, hosiers and boot makers.

The New Economics Foundation report *Ghost Town Britain* (2002) focuses on the impact of economic globalisation on small-scale retail livelihoods, and reveals that in the five-year period between 1995 and 2000, approximately one-fifth of all local shops and services were lost across Britain. Some 30,000 local economic outlets closed, with a substantial social loss of what the report refers to as 'vital institutions' or places that are not only integral to local economies, but also representative of 'an economics of nearness and human-scale in which people have more control over their lives' (2002, p. 6). Part of the role of this chapter is to explore how the small independent shops on the Walworth Road work as vital institutions. To avoid romanticising their role in a local community, I juxtapose viability as the economic bottom line for the small shop proprietor, with longevity that is sustained by customer–proprietor relationships over time. I focus on the integral role of the small independent shops as economic and social spaces.

The website for 'Walworth Health Store' claimed that the shop was 'London's oldest established herbalist' and 'the UK's leading herbalist and supplier of natural products

and remedies'. The shop was established in 1844, when the grandfather of the current proprietor, 'Alan', took the shop over from the originator for whom he had worked, and the shop has remained a family business for three successive generations. Alan talked about the shop identity as strongly tied to the particularity of place and product: 'We are uniquely associated with the Walworth Road. People associate us with the Walworth Road, or associate the Walworth Road with us. I think it's because we are a bit unusual. Unique.' I asked Alan what made his shop unique and he explained, 'These days it's the range of herbs, it's probably the biggest retail range of herbs in Europe.' The shop was also the original and once sole supplier of 'Sarsaparilla', a health drink that was made and sold exclusively from the shop premises. The drink is reputed to have permeated the smell of the shop, and the combined sensation of smell and taste featured prominently in local residents' childhood memories about the Walworth Road. One adult reminisced that 'Sarsaparilla' was gulped from glasses that 'made a child feel he was having a Guinness', while another recalled, 'We used to go to Walworth Health Store every Saturday morning after the pictures. Used to come out of the Elephant cinema, go around and have our Sarsaparilla and then go home.'

Alan travelled into Walworth from the suburbs each weekday, parked his car at the Elephant and Castle, and walked to his shop. He claimed to have little social connection to the street and drew strong contrasts with how he remembered the street as a child:

I have clear memories of the street. My grandfather used to make me go off on errands. The whole street was shops, and you knew everybody. I really don't know many people here now. My grandfather knew everyone on the street. There was longevity. That's the difference now. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

Alan's measure of longevity combines the endurance of his family's business enterprise with enduring relationships with other longstanding proprietors on the Walworth Road. Although Alan claimed to make little use of the street for shopping or

socialising nowadays, he was clear about his shop's enduring association with the Walworth Road locality: 'We've been here a long time. We don't envisage moving.' He also emphasised the importance of maintaining local, personal connections in the shop, 'We try to recruit local people and remain part of the community. This helps to give us a local identity.'

Reputation and personal service

When I asked Alan about his customer base, he distinguished between local and mail-order clientele. He described running 'two businesses': the local shop trade and the mail order trade, which started in 1992 and now accounts for 60 per cent of turnover:

I think it would be fair to say we have a mix of clientele. I dislike racial stereotyping but the West Indians could relate to what we sold, they were familiar with the herbs and roots we were selling. We've retained those people through the years. They're getting fairly old. Although we still get second and third generations, they're less – they're not quite so interested. The mail order customer base is far more diverse. But to develop the mail order we would need more space, and this location is too prime a location just for storage. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

'Mr Joffe' is an elderly proprietor and the only one amongst the proprietors I spoke to who asked to be named formally by surname. He opened his electrical store in 1948 at the Elephant and Castle with his wife and one engineer, and moved to his current position on the Walworth Road in the 1980s. Although he still visited the shop a few days a week, the business was run by his sons. Mr Joffe has always lived in North London, but he selected the Walworth Road near the Elephant and Castle as his preferred place of business, and confirmed that he expected it to remain in this location. He described how in the 1950s there were approximately twenty electrical stores between the Elephant and Camberwell, and claimed to be the only independent electrical store left in the vicinity. I asked him what he attributed the longevity of the store to:

Personal service, definitely. And it's nice that the customers know your first name, and they come in and ask for you by your first name... We have a large, local clientele and plenty of people from the outside who basically know our reputation. We're lucky enough to have grandchildren of original customers. It gives me great happiness that. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

Like Alan, he described the store's enduring success in terms of its uniqueness and believed that the shop's distinction rests on service above product: 'We are unique, we offer the lowest prices by purchasing from the biggest retailers in Europe, we offer sales and repairs, and we offer speedy delivery and immediate fitting'.

Another important mode of forging the proprietor–customer relationship was by understanding not simply the needs but also the aspirations of the local population, as explored in Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop in Chapter 5. 'Kid's Brand' is an upmarket clothing store for children, which was opened by the proprietor 'Sayeed' in 1993. Despite the shop appearing as an anomaly amongst one pound stores and other bargain-oriented retailers, an award in the shop window for 'Best Independent Children's Retailer' demonstrated its success. Sayeed's family had been trading in clothing retail on the Walworth Road since the late 1980s, but 'Kid's Brand' specialised in what he referred to as 'aspirational products'.

'Kid's Brand' supplied the upper end of children's clothes and stocked Armani Junior, DKNY kids and Baby Dior labels. Almost all of the clothes were externally labelled, to give a clear indication of brand and hence the related status and expense of the items. The shop window commissioned by Ralph Lauren for Christmas 2006 was dressed in cricket bats, wicker baskets and daguerreotype school photographs. When I went into the store before the Christmas period, Sayeed was busy advising a customer on suitable shoes for her son's new tan corduroy suit, bought to celebrate the festive season. While Sayeed recommended a pair of brogues to complete the outfit, 'Shahim', who had worked in the store for nine years, gave me a brief interview.

Shahim broadly described the shop clientele by coupling a particular type of income acquisition and consumption: 'It's high disposable income, no mortgage, no car payments, no private school fees. Sometimes it is black-market employment. We have high cash-to-credit ratios of around 65-to-35. In our other stores, this ratio is reversed.' He also mentioned that the 'lay-by' scheme whereby customers can make monthly pay-offs was well used. He estimated that between 40 and 50 per cent of the shop's customers probably had a low income, but placed high value on status items. Shahim located their other stores in what may be regarded as more affluent areas, but said that the Walworth Road store had the highest turnover. He also emphasised that all their stores were 'destination based' or stores that customers would go out of their way to visit. Shahim explained that for this reason they were less dependent on a high street location. Although the shop did approximately 12 per cent of its trade from its website, Shahim stressed the strong, local dimension of their customer base: 'We have a client database of around 4,000 customers, and I would say that 65 per cent are local', referring to their south-east London base.

Within these proprietors' narratives, the common theme of the 'local client' is strongly associated with the 'service-oriented' proprietor. While the emergence of web-based shopping has extended the customer base of the small shop, the extent of the change in shopping habits appears to vary with product type: internet shopping had brought an increase in the number of sales of herbal goods, for instance, but there had been less of an increase in designer clothing sales for children. Beyond the encompassing identity of the local client, it was less easy to classify the Walworth Road customer or the Walworth Road product. High-end, luxury goods that one may have assumed to be out of place on the Walworth Road were apparent retail success stories. There were strong references to longevity, and to the relationships sustained between generations of proprietors and customers that cut across class, race or ethnicity. It was the shared regard between proprietor and customer for a service, a particular product, or a way of

life associated with that product that appeared to underpin the longevity of these relationships.

Literature that focuses on the decline of the small shop (Coca-Stefaniak *et al.* 2005) or the role of the independent retail sector in Britain (Megicks 2001) broadly underscores the social role of small retail spaces. However, the research data focuses on the local and national economic role of these outlets. The significance of small-scale, non-affiliated retail is overshadowed by the growth of the large-scale corporate retailers such that, by 2001, '70 per cent of the UK's £32 billion convenience food retail sector was already being serviced by the multiple retailers.' Yet the importance of small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) retailers remains key, and 'SME retailers still employ 64 per cent of all employees in the retail sector' (Coca-Stefaniak *et al.* 2005, p. 359).

The economic debate around the growth of multiple retailers and the demise of small, independent retailers looms large, and is particularly relevant for the Walworth Road and its relationship to the redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle. One has to question whether the relative longevity of the Walworth Road has been sustained in part by its economically marginal location – there has been very little competition for retail space on the Walworth Road, and signs of gentrification, whether symbolised by the appearance of new local regeneration projects or high-street brand stores, has until 2005 been largely absent. However, a substantial regeneration programme is under construction at the Elephant and Castle, and it is therefore important, based on research data, to speculate on how the existing patterns of life and livelihoods on the street could be incorporated in large-scale urban change.

Compatibility

The Space Syntax report *Elephant and Castle Framework for Development* (2003) indicates that a previous regeneration proposal based on a shopping centre solution

had fallen short of the Institution of Civil Engineers' 1996 guidance for town centres and retail developments. *Planning Policy Guidance 6* (Institution of Civil Engineers 1996) promotes focused town centre development that is mixed use, accessible by public or pedestrian modes of transport, and compatible with the existing retail base. The Space Syntax report took an explicitly different stance on the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle, by emphasising the important economic and social role of the Walworth Road.

I met planners from Space Syntax in 2008 to discuss their research on the Walworth Road. We spoke in general about the challenges of broadening developer mindsets past the retail convention of the shopping centre model, and specifically about the 'perception shift' required to connect the potential retail relationship between the Walworth Road and Elephant and Castle. At this meeting, and with reference to their comparative analysis of the King's Road (Chelsea), High Street Kensington and the Walworth Road in their report, the Space Syntax team spoke of the concept of a 'spectral street', one which thrives off an interdependent spectrum of different scales of retail working in close proximity to one another.

My interpretation of the 'spectral street' (figure 7.3) draws on the principle outlined in the Space Syntax report, of three related retail zones each with broad characteristics that outline the scale of retail, associated uses, and physical patterns of accessibility. I align their analysis of the spectral street environment of the King's Road with the potential for a mix of land use and retail at the Walworth Road. The purpose is to suggest not only the need for an integral relationship between the Elephant and Castle and the Walworth Road (which was historically the case), but also to speculate on the capacity of the street to absorb a greater mix of retail and activities in the face of large-scale redevelopment to its northern end.

The Space Syntax report describes three broad zones along the King's Road: a zone of national multiples and large-scale franchise stores; a transition zone of medium- to small-scale stores; and a zone in which local independent stores are focused. While a relative mix of uses and retail activities may occur in any zone, the spatial and land-use groupings on the King's Road revealed certain characteristics. 'Zone 1' is close to the Sloane Square tube and the intersection of four major streets. A high public profile is established by the square and the Royal Theatre, and a collection of high-end chain stores including the recent development of the Duke of York Square, which sits opposite the large department store at Peter Jones. 'Zone 2' is a transition zone, with a mix of uses that include brand retail stores familiar on many London high streets. 'Zone 3' mostly comprises small independent retail shops that serve local residents.

The analogy with the Walworth Road seeks to value a compatible association of different retail activities and profiles, and to reinforce the pattern of uses already in place on the street. The small retail fabric at the south end of the street would typically relate to 'Zone 3' and consist of local independent shops. 'Zone 2' would incorporate important local institutions and destinations such as East Street Market and a collection of public buildings like the Newington Library and Cummings Museum in the central area, with a mix of retail that is already in place. The pressing spatial concern then is the connection at the northern end of the Walworth Road to the Elephant and Castle, an area currently severed by traffic roundabouts and the internalised nature of the Heygate Estate and the shopping centre. The key existing assets in this central master planning area relate to the interchange itself, and the collection of public resources such as Southbank University and the London College of Communication, and cultural resources such as the Metropolitan Tabernacle and the Coronet cinema.

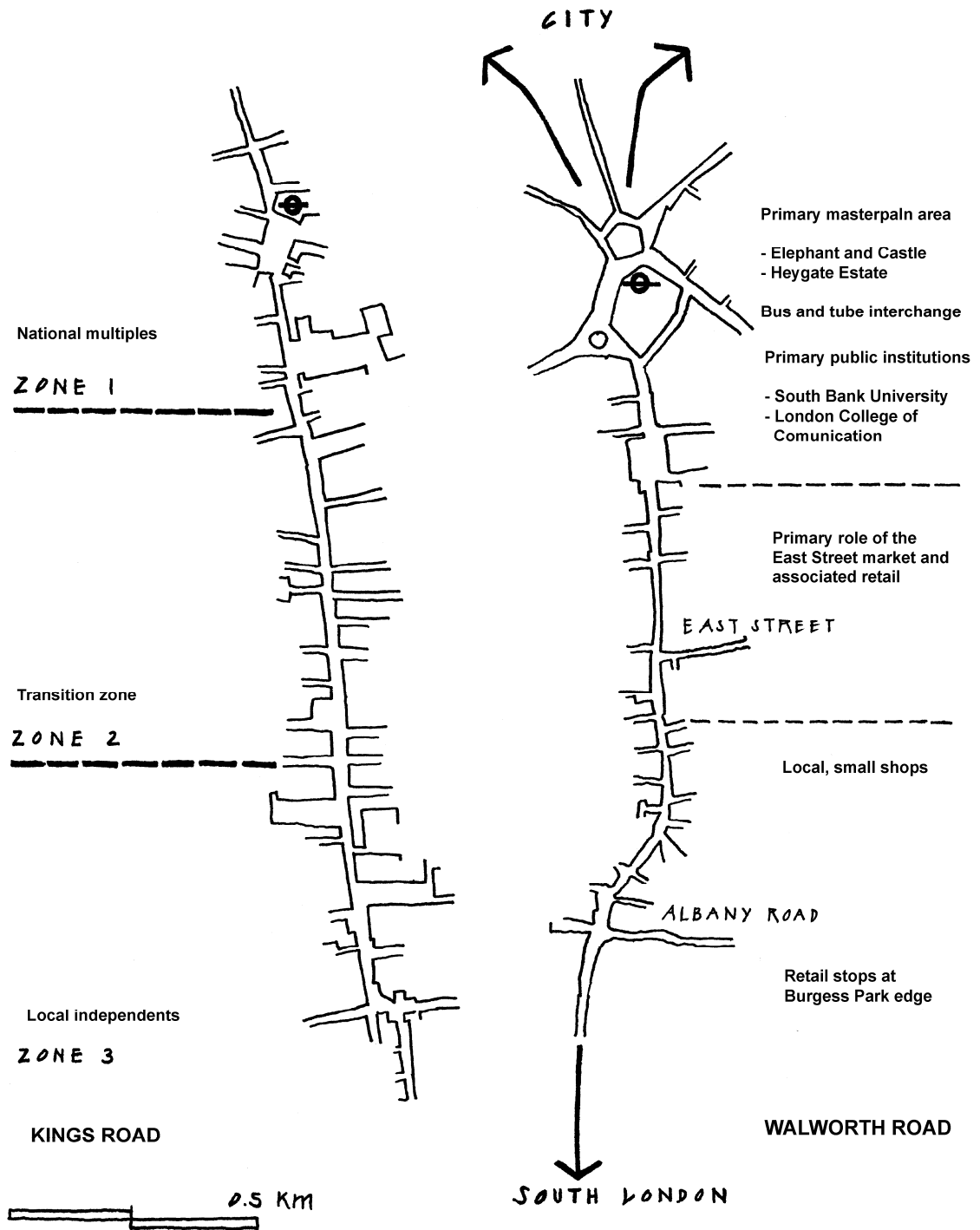


Figure 7.3 The 'spectral street' drawn as an interpretation of the analysis of high streets in the Space Syntax report (2003). (Fieldwork drawing 2008)

The important idea of a 'spectral street', as opposed to a designated 'town centre', is that it promotes an association of different retail profiles, land ownership structures, patterns of use and user groups. It incorporates existing local high points or destination areas such as East Street Market, without diminishing the role of the everyday convenience spaces. Because of the length of the Walworth Road, high profile investment and prime retail opportunities are likely to diminish the further the distance from the Elephant and Castle and East Street Market, as is already the case. Whether small, independent shops would be able to locate and thrive in 'Zone 3' in the face of regeneration and potential gentrification requires a balanced view of the forces of the market and the policy that addresses SMEs and local retail policy.

Almost all of the proprietors that I spoke to were positive about the prospects of the redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle, but uncertain as to how it would generally affect the Walworth Road. Pete emphasised the need for greater retail diversity:

As a general retailing street I think the Walworth Road is finished. We can't interest people coming from the outside to it. There's no retail parking. The market is not so unique anymore. People have become creatures of habit, and it's the one stop shop with car parking. But all around I think it needs to be re-presented, there's no attraction. There's no real selection. We were busier in this shop when there were six men's shops close by, because there was choice... I've seen the plans for the redevelopment of the Elephant... I think it might be a café, bar society, more than retail. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

My survey revealed that amongst the individual shops along the Walworth Road there are remarkable stories of longevity and entrepreneurial success, reinforced by the data that indicated that 47 per cent of the independent shops had been on the Walworth Road for ten years or more (Appendix 1). But many of the proprietors also talked of the difficulties of paying high business rates and high rental costs. As one proprietor explained, rentals are not simply a factor of area profile, but of changing retail cultures:

The rents are set by the fast-food shops and what they pay per square foot. They have quick turnover and are open until eleven at night. So it's difficult for

the small guy to reign. Their review is always to do with rent... The new shops are up against it in the rent. Like in the barber shop, they rent the chairs out, that's how they make it. (Fieldwork interview 2006)

Within the dense accumulation of small, independent shops along the Walworth Road, individual stories range from longevity and success to the precarious reality of change, associated with higher rents and rates and increasing competition from the large-scale retailers. The 'spectral street' offers one possible model of change: a potential balance between old and new, high-profile and ordinary, big and small. However it is a model that would require greater analytic depth to reach an understanding of the intricacy and complexity of the social and economic life and value of a local street.

Vitality

A walk down the Walworth Road, any time from nine in the morning to six in the evening on most weekdays, is a walk on a busy street. Street life fluctuates, from the early morning and afternoon activities of people going to school and to work, to elderly people and parents with babies and toddlers shopping around mid-morning, to pension and social benefits queues on pay-out days. Street activity appears to be most concentrated in the central vicinity of the street, at the entrance to East Street Market, and is particularly pronounced on Saturdays. Several sources describe the range of intensity of activities on the Walworth Road. The website of Southwark Council described the Walworth Road as an A road, qualifying it as part of London's bus priority network: 'It is also a thriving shopping area. More than 20,000 vehicles a day, and up to 80 buses an hour travel along the Walworth Road' (www.southwark.gov.uk/walworthproject 2008).

'Walkability' and 'accessibility'

Making London a Walkable City (2004), published by Transport for London, highlights 'walkability', or an environment easily and comfortably accessed on foot, as an essential aspect of town centre vitality. Two examples are referred to in the plan; the first, a study of 12 London town centres (Harris Research 1999), indicates that '44 per cent of all visitors to these town centres arrived by foot'. The second, a survey of shoppers on High Street Kensington (Colin Buchanan and Partners 2002), indicates that 49 per cent of shoppers walked to High Street Kensington on weekdays and 'walkers made a substantial contribution to total spend (35 per cent) whereas car drivers account for only 10 per cent'. These figures contrast with patterns of access in the shopping centre model, where 'three quarters of supermarket customers travel by car' (NEF 2001, p. 14).

One of the central qualities we expect from a high street is vitality, as a relative measure of social and economic intensity sustained by high thresholds of people using the street. Such thresholds in London's retail streets, as suggested in the reports outlined above, are typically supported by 'footfall' or high pedestrian flows, often correlating with areas that are well served by public transport systems, as well as the proximity of fairly densely occupied urban fabric within walking distance of the street. The Space Syntax accessibility mapping of London's streets tells us about the extent of vehicular and pedestrian activity on the Walworth Road, or its 'spatial accessibility', and how it compares with other London streets. In the report *Elephant and Castle Framework for Development* (Space Syntax 2003), the Walworth Road is represented as having a high level of accessibility compared with areas across London.

Two forms of accessibility are defined by Space Syntax to emphasise the distinctions between different scales of connectivity. The term 'global accessibility' is used to describe the spatial connection of a street with other streets in the urban system, and

gives an indication of spatial connections beyond the immediate vicinity of the street. In land-use terms, highly globally accessible streets or areas such as Oxford Street tend to attract high land-use profiles. The Walworth Road was amongst the top 10 per cent of London's most globally accessible streets, but fitted into the lower end of this spectrum. Using the Space Syntax logic, this suggests that the Walworth Road has less of a spatial predisposition for more regional land uses, as is attractive for national chain stores. 'Local accessibility' describes the local connections to the street. The Walworth Road was amongst the top 5 per cent of London's most locally accessible streets, fitting into the middle to upper end of the local spectrum in London, suggesting a pattern of retail more oriented to local needs (figures 7.4 and 7.5).

The spatial connectivity of the streets in the Space Syntax modelling is established through mathematical data and sophisticated software and has value and interest in broad comparative terms. However, my data pointed to contextual nuances, local particularities and variable individual choices that would not register in the quantitative databases that underpin the Space Syntax findings. This raises the question for the research of local streets as to the extent to which broad comparisons between streets are useful, since it is often the understanding of a particular context that provides insight into the interaction, networks, needs and uses of a local area. Is it valuable, for example, to compare high streets in prestigious and affluent London areas, such as a King's Road, Chelsea, or High Street Kensington, with the Walworth Road? Do they share inherent features of vitality or capacities for sustaining liveliness, despite their contextual differences, and in what way do they significantly differ?

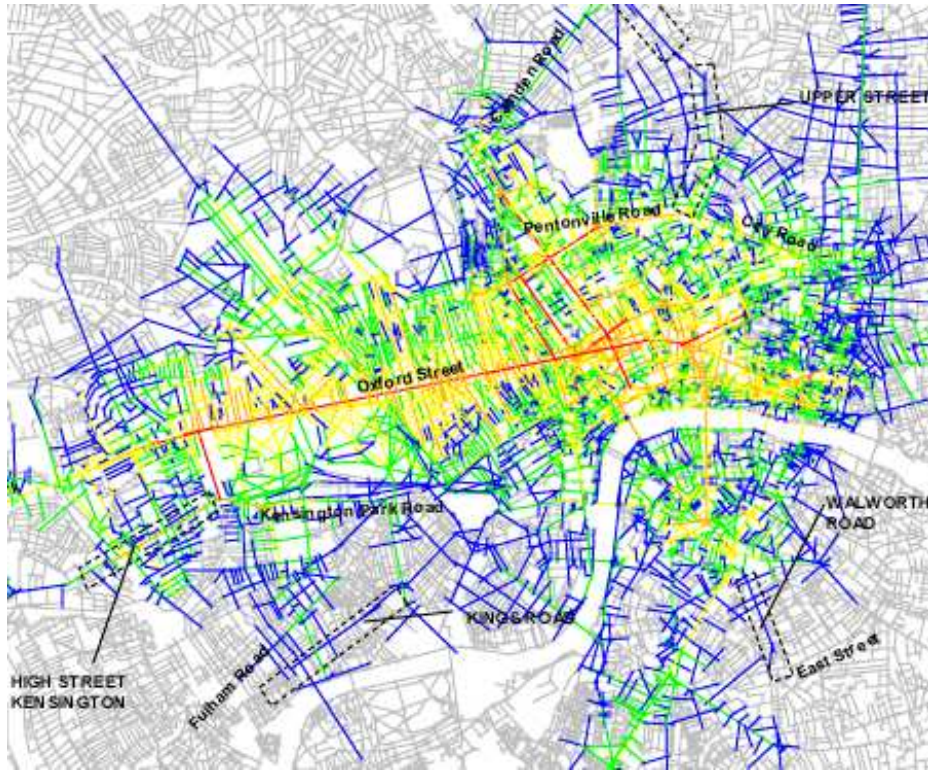


Figure 7.4 Global accessibility of streets in central London (with red, orange and yellow as highest global accessibility). (By kind permission, Space Syntax Limited 2008)

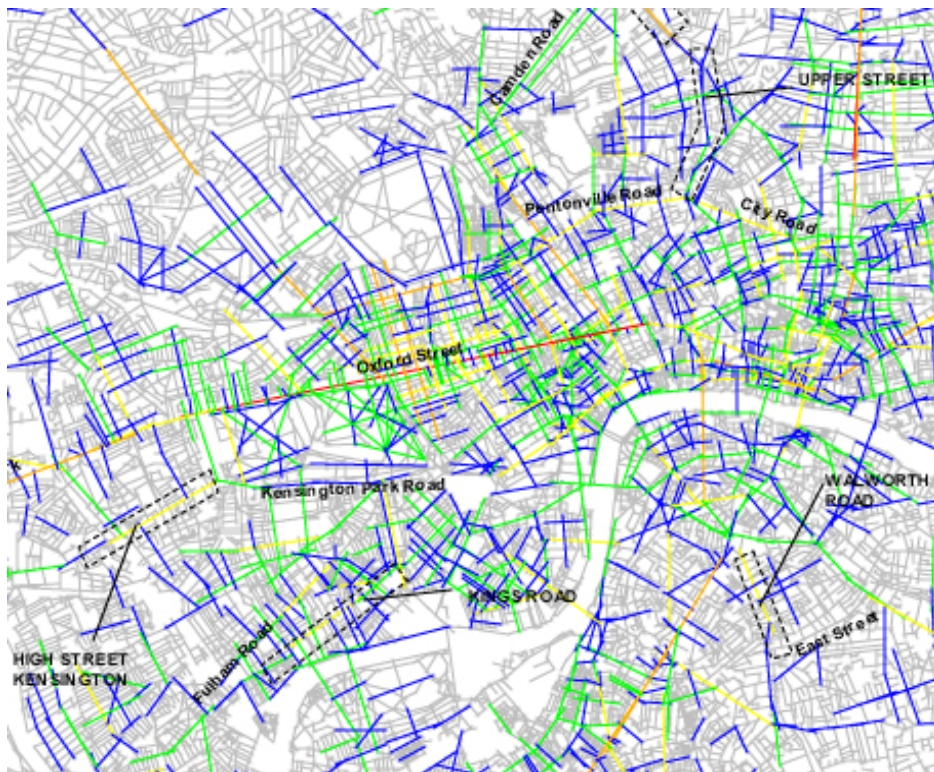


Figure 7.5 Local accessibility of street in central London (with red, orange and yellow as highest global accessibility). (By kind permission, Space Syntax Limited 2008)

'Liveability'

During 2007 and 2008, Southwark Council undertook the Walworth Project as one of ten local authorities improving the infrastructure of the public realm, and as part of Transport 2000's campaign Revitalising Communities on Main Roads. The remit of the project, as stated on the Southwark Council website, was to reduce collisions and to 'improve urban liveability' (www.southwark.gov.uk/walworthproject 2008). In this section I explore how 'liveability' is officially defined, and what impact the public realm improvements ultimately have on the street?

At the time of the implementation of the Walworth Project, CABI released the report *Paved with Gold: The Real Value of Good Street Design* (2007). The report provides a common basis for calculating the economic returns on good design, 'the extra financial value that good street design contributes' and the impact on property values and user values of streets in the ten London high streets selected as case studies (2007, p. 4). By ascertaining a link between street quality and retail and residential prices, the ultimate conclusion of the report states unequivocally, 'Better streets result in higher market prices' (2007, p. 7). The more difficult question of whether higher market prices are good for the vitality of high streets in general, and for the mix of proprietors and customers on the Walworth Road in particular, was not addressed. The measure of vitality as an increase in the economic returns on property investment was stressed in this report, while the measure of vitality as inclusive of a range of retailers was omitted.

The Walworth Road was the subject of one of the ten case studies included in *Paved with Gold*, where a detailed shopper survey as well as land value analysis provided the basis for the comparative data across these London streets. From the perspective of the survey, the Walworth Road vicinity is shown as the most multi-cultural and most densely occupied of the ten high streets. Further, the area within walking distance of the Walworth Road had a higher population and employment density than any of the

other areas studied, with approximately 12,000 people and 3,000 employees per square kilometre in walking distance of the street. The Walworth Road was amongst the streets with the fewest zone A shop rentals (based on 2005 figures), and lowest in total weekly expenditure per person within an 800-metre buffer of the street. But although there was great variance between the potential individual expenditure of a Walworth Road shopper and a Hampstead High Street shopper, for example, there was far less variance in the estimated total weekly expenditure on these streets. In comparative terms, the Walworth Road is surrounded by a less affluent population, but because of the population density in proximity to it, the total weekly expenditure estimated for the street area was £4.3 million compared with £4.8 million on High Street Hampstead.

Notwithstanding the useful range of comparative data within *Paved with Gold*, the focus of its executive summary and the central claim of relating spatial quality to an increase in property value is only one economic measure of urban value, leaving out for example either adaptability or longevity. This singular economic perspective dovetails with the report *Quality Streets*, which was commissioned by Central London Partnership (2003). In this report the case for correlating economic benefits with a quality public realm is made on the basis of London's attractiveness to a global market: 'The significance of the streetscape to London's continued competitiveness can't be underestimated' (2003, p. 1). The report refers to 'high profile' environments and high profile users and investors including 'the capital's business leaders', the increase in 'sophisticated and demanding consumers' and the significant role of 'overseas visitors' (2003, p. 2). The report finds that '85 per cent of respondents identified that quality of the streetscape as 'important' in the ability to attract customers and tenants' and '89 per cent of respondents feel that "*their front door is the street*" and critical to self-image' (2003, p. 6).

These research findings are based on survey interviews with landowners, developers, retailers and entertainment service providers, therefore prioritising a select group of customers and tenants and their respective understandings of what constitutes spatial quality. The narrow definition of value and valued users in these reports highlights the importance of expanding the value system beyond the emphasis on the premier user or flagship street. It also indicates the omission of a range of mixed users and mixed proprietors in the analysis of mixed-use streets in these reports developed for public agencies in London.

I watched the public realm improvements on the Walworth Road with a hint of cynicism. At the outset I wondered whether new trees, benches and paving materials would merely serve to decorate the street, without substantially affecting physical issues like pedestrian congestion or underlying economic indicators, like the high turnover of businesses and the shop vacancies evident in the southern area of the street during 2006 and 2007. To my surprise, the public realm improvements seemed to have a positive effect; the pavements were increased in width making it far easier to move up and down the street, and more benches were installed, which were well used, allowing people to sit and watch the local world go by. The actual road space was reduced and in many areas the kerbs were taken away, expanding the sense of public space over road space, without appearing to exacerbate vehicular congestion.

In January 2008, Holland and Barratt health store opened a branch on the Walworth Road, and although it hardly represents a premier 'flagship' store, it possibly indicates a shift in investor confidence in the street. A Tesco convenience store followed in December 2008. These incremental shifts in retail along the Walworth Road may relate to the public realm improvements and the predicted 5.2 per cent increase in residential properties, as well as to a 4.9 per cent increase in shop rents, as optimistically suggested in the report *Paved with Gold*. However, a mixture of new private and social

housing developments was also occurring in the area, as part of the Elephant and Castle regeneration process. A period of increased change brought about by large-scale regeneration is imminent in the Walworth area, challenging Walworth Road's existing capacities for the measures of adaptability, longevity and vitality explored in this chapter.



Figure 7.6 A view from the Walworth Road of a residential high-rise under construction at the Elephant and Castle (Author's photograph 2009)

Conclusions

The key question of how local streets like the Walworth Road 'fit' in a changing urban landscape and global economy remains one of how we come to see and measure value. The bread-and-butter street needs to be understood as another model of an urban high street, one where high profile spaces, high profile customers and high

property values are not the primary measures of 'urban success'. If the ordinariness of a street is to be understood through how social interaction is coupled with economic vitality in local areas, then the Walworth Road is a street we can learn from. I have used my data on the physical and experiential aspects of the Walworth Road to explore Sennett's notion of an 'open system' and applied adaptability, longevity and vitality as three core qualities or measures of ordinariness. This process of analysis has brought me back to the start of this chapter, and my underlying concern for the recognition of the Walworth Road not simply as one of a number of high streets across London, or as one compared against the more widely recognised economic value and aesthetics of Kensington High Street or the King's Road, Chelsea. Ordinariness ought neither to be measured as an average condition, nor as an unaccomplished one.

I have argued generally for more interdisciplinary research and particularly for more fine-grained research in understanding the everyday urban streetscape. In design and policy practices, a greater integration of spatial, social and economic understanding needs to be developed. My tools for measuring adaptability, longevity and vitality have depended on an overlap of social and spatial methods, as well as combinations of broad survey and detailed ethnographic data. These tools show the 'open system' of the Walworth Road as neither stable nor harmonious, but as shifting continually and incrementally in response to change. However, if the scale and pace of change becomes more dramatic, driven by large-scale regeneration, the Walworth Road and its historically incremental, small-scale capacity for change, may have reached the limits of its ability to adapt. The measures of ordinariness analysed in this chapter through values of adaptability, longevity and vitality require recognition and far more intricate attention by built environment professionals. They also require political support and policy articulation not just in terms of the high street as an average urban condition, but of the bread-and-butter street as a local and particular condition.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

My thesis has explored the question of whether everyday life is significant for how individuals develop and refine skills to live with urban change and cultural and ethnic diversity. From the base of an ethnographic approach I have focused on regular and face-to-face forms of interaction in the small shop spaces along the Walworth Road, to explore relationships between workspaces and work skills and social spaces and social skills. In the closing chapter of this thesis I emphasise the broader social and political significance of small spaces of contact in the everyday life and livelihoods of multicultural cities. I highlight why habitual practices, informal social memberships, and ordinary spaces matter for social exploration in a context of profound change and urban inequality. I also raise implications for the further research and political recognition of everyday life in contemporary cities, and briefly revisit my own methodology to consider what I have learnt and what I have omitted in my account of social interaction on the Walworth Road.

Out of the stories and spaces expanded on in the preceding chapters, I highlight the core findings that will underpin my conclusions: that ordinary space is key to social exploration; that local life is crucial to cosmopolitan formations; and that boundaries incapacitate individual abilities to engage with difference and change. In this chapter I connect these central research findings to the significance of the bread-and-butter street as an aggregation of ordinary work and social spaces in which individuals encounter difference, voice fears about change, and interact in ways that range from the mundane to the profound.

To draw out the broader lessons of my research, I structure the conclusions around two framings of the everyday: the local and the ordinary. In *the layers of the local* I focus on understanding the local as a social phenomenon, not so much as a singular or specific place, but as a densely acquired network of familiarity that spans across people and places. In the *recognition of the ordinary* I emphasise the integral social, cultural and economic roles of the bread-and-butter street, and stress the need for analytic methods to observe and interpret these interrelationships. Further, I reinforce the call for additional policy approaches to acknowledge the cultural and social role of small-scale entrepreneurial pursuits in the life and livelihoods of cities.

The layers of the local

My thesis has explored how diverse individuals orientate themselves in a context of rapid urban change, where both newcomers and established residents are all having to reconfigure their co-ordinates of familiarity. More specifically, I have focused on how individuals acquire spatial and social co-ordinates of orientation to locate themselves on a changing street such as the Walworth Road. But why do I emphasise the role of local life in the process of how individuals acquire familiarity? My research suggests that one important way individuals understand where they are, was by maintaining connections with where they are from. As explored through my analysis of 'within place' and 'across place' narratives in Chapter 2, the understanding of where one is from was seldom narrated through a singular sense of a birth place or origin, but rather through a sense of familiarity that combined cultural ways of life, memories, forms of sociability and collections of spaces.

The narratives and experiences of familiarity that feature so prominently in my fieldwork, tell us about how local life is a primary platform through which people are

known, and come to know others. These narratives also reveal that the need for familiarity is made more acute by the pace and scale of urban change. In the interiors of Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop, it was evident that sharing was one way that familiarity was sustained through day-to-day interactions; shared humour and shared colloquialisms for instance, were key to maintaining social etiquette and local culture. In the context of multi-cultural cities, where diverse individuals bring an array of cultural understandings and social forms to one place, how do we analyse the role of the local as a possible platform for maintaining and acquiring familiarity?

Palimpsest as the ontology of the local

In Chapter 6 I reviewed how urban ethnographers of contemporary London have worked with local groups who reside within a common local area to explore the relationships between community and place. Some of the seminal ethnographies have revealed the myriad of networks that expand local life across a dense proliferation of people and places (Wallman 1984; Back 1996; Alexander 2000). In contrast, ethnographers have also described group experiences and expectations of life within segregated neighbourhoods as evidenced in certain American cities for example, as a confinement established by the imposed constraints of race and poverty (Liebow 1967; Anderson 1999). In Chapter 3 I explored how individual experiences of a locale and individual capacities to interact and integrate are influenced by the presence of physical and perceptual boundaries. How individuals transgress or re-inscribe boundaries in local areas, and the diverse ways urban ethnographers analyse social interaction in local life, could in part be explained on the basis of contextual distinctions – different localities and different social groups yield different research findings.

Is local place, defined as Suttles' research (1968; 1972) suggested, a physical area and a boundary, externally delimited by power and internally re-inscribed by the ways

of life that emerge within regulated territories? Or is it, as Wallman's and Back's research shows, a collection of familiar reference points or networks that individuals carry with them as they move about the city, adding to and editing their spheres of intimate knowledge of people and places? Whether the local is analysed as a confined area and/or a collection of familiar reference points, is I argue, not simply a matter of contextual distinctions, but also based on an analytic or ontological framing of 'the local'. The analysis of social interaction in local life can be addressed through a structural frame, which emphasises the experience of a local area or 'setting' as conditioned by an individual's position and place in society. This structural perspective highlights how individuals know and define their local worlds on the basis of the opportunities and constraints available to their designation within a social group, be it a categorisation by class, race, ethnicity, gender or by residency such as citizen, immigrant or refugee.

The frame of agency emphasises how individual pursuits of knowing and defining local worlds make active use of imagination and communication to express, meet, engage and shape local places. My research suggests that while the frames of structure and agency are pertinent for understanding the complexity of local place both as a conditional setting and as situated forms of expression, neither is singularly sufficient. I argue that the conceptual merging of structure and agency is still only a partial analytic tool for understanding the local, on the basis that the ontological frame needs to be layered: there is no 'local', there is a layering and palimpsest of a multitude of 'locals'. I emphasise this point, as it is particularly crucial in the context of multi-cultural cities, to rethink the local from the variability of the aggregation of locals who inhabit any single urban area. The local is a tangible place for the convergence for a multitude of histories, trajectories and expressions, made more dense or more layered in cities like

London, by the historic processes of immigration, and by the speed, scale and diversity of immigration since the 1980s.

The local is social and spatial

My research of social contact on the Walworth Road reveals that the local is primarily social and emerges out of small-scale intimacies or relationships through which an individual comes to be known. The social intimacies in Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop were local in the sense that the process of acquiring a network of familiarity emerged out of regular and face-to-face contact. Within these two interiors, the local was also spatial, where familiarity was underpinned not only by the networks of who we know, but also by the spaces and spatial practices of where and how we meet. The semi-public interior of Nick's Caff revealed that congenial social spaces that are part of the routine of everyday life are places of personalised contact; spaces to be known in.

In Chapter 6 I analysed 'the politics of nearness' by establishing a counter-point to Amin's (2002) idea of 'micro-publics' as local spaces for social exploration that exist outside of habitual practice. By drawing on the rhythm of the use of street and small shop interiors, I argued that it is within local routines that our knowledge and understanding of different people is tested and negotiated. However, the social interactions in Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop often occurred outside of the daily routine, where individuals made a concerted and particular effort to cross London to visit Reyd. If Amin's idea of micro-publics is expanded to incorporate the more banal aspects of daily routine, the local can then be understood as small zones or spheres of familiarity and intimacy, starting with homes and connecting to streets, work places, schools, religious spaces and so on.

Proximity or propinquity is not necessarily only about a physical nearness, but expands to include a perceptual closeness. My interviews and conversations on the Walworth Road, as well as my visual analysis of the independent shop displays, show how the local is a personal or individual collection of intimate relations and familiar places that spans neighbourhoods, cities and even countries. In a layered framework of understanding the local, the social and the spatial are analysed as integral forms of interaction. In addition, near and far places are necessarily merged in the analysis of networks of familiarity, where minds, bodies and spaces are observed to understand how they respectively carry, enact and display references to many local places. The merging of more than one local world was repeatedly apparent in a variety of independent shops along the Walworth Road. Small shop interiors displayed an amalgamation of local references from one or more local worlds, as both a conscious effort to engage a diverse customer base, and as a subliminal combination of coordinates of familiarity that spanned any one location. The Walworth Road itself, as an aggregation of the small shop interiors, can be understood as a local street in which a multitude of local references from across the world abut, co-locate, mix and ultimately transform a sense of the local as being primarily embedded in any one location.

The local is bounded

In defining the layers of the local as a social and spatial palimpsest of near and far places, I move away from the terminology of *local place* as a singular, physical entity to *local worlds* as networks of familiarity or a collection of many local places to which an individual is accustomed. However, this is not to say that my definition of local worlds is without geography, or without the particularity of forces of power and regulations of territory and boundary that exert influence in time and space. If the individual accumulates a local world by being social, rather than simply inheriting a local place by virtue of birthright or social position, the conditions and circumstances in which

individuals are able to act, move and express are key. The related sociological question of how individuals belong through their local world, is then analysed through how individuals accumulate a broad, rather than a narrow local world. Reid's individual process of expanding his local world as relayed in Chapter 5 is instructive. Through refining his skill as a tailor, and through nurturing his passion for Mod culture, Reid could both venture beyond the place where he grew up to broaden his network, and return to his local area by electing to locate his shop in south London.

My ethnographic research of social contact between diverse individuals and groups on the Walworth Road also revealed individual difficulties with embracing difference and change in the context of a local area. I return to a seminal moment during fieldwork to a brief conversation I had in Nick's Caff that has repeated in my mind. I refer to the conversation again to provide a focus for how social and spatial boundaries influence everyday social contact. In Chapter 4, I described how one morning, about half way through my fieldwork period, I plucked up the courage to question Nick about the incongruity of Mike's expressed racism despite his well-established friendship with Dan. Mike's racism in the Caff, while never directed at individuals, took the form of general and derogatory references to 'the Blacks' and 'the immigrants'. He frequently asserted his prejudice during our conversations, in spite of me expressing my contrary views. That morning, Nick thought briefly about my question while serving other customers and returned to my table after a few minutes. While he acknowledged Mike's racism his explanation of the apparent contradiction was somewhat unsettling. Nick commented, 'Dan is not that black', and then returned to other customers, leaving me no opportunity to probe further.

Several pertinent issues were encapsulated in the perversity of that brief conversation. My question and Nick's reply came at a time in the fieldwork when I had gained confidence and in which Nick, although always honest and direct, had dropped his

guard. It was a conversation that emerged only after I had spent time in the Caff. My regular occupation of my side table over the course of a few months and our mutual respect had established an opening for frank conversation. But perhaps of greater relevance is what Nick's contradictory explanation tells us about the research of regular, face-to-face contact amongst individuals in everyday life. To my knowledge, Dan in no way suppressed any aspect of his identity in the Caff. He was also a respected figure, and Nick had once confirmed to me that other regulars in the Caff were willing to talk with me once they had seen Dan do so. Both Mike's racism and Nick's explanation of Mike and Dan's friendship points to the deep presence of racial bias in spite of their direct experiences or face-to-face contacts in the Caff that may provide them with alternative understandings.

The apparent ease of contact, and preservation of social etiquette in local life can also obscure prejudices that limit contact. The complexity of Nick's contradictory explanation supports the reasoning of Lamont and Askartova (2002) that if we are to understand cosmopolitan practices as lived processes, then we need to know about the causes and effects of boundaries: not only how boundaries are crossed but also how they are re-inscribed. In Chapter 3 I explored how divisions shaped by political, economic and administrative forces influence individual and collective perceptions of others, and affect individual capacities to participate in urban change and difference. I analysed two integral but distinct aspects of the frontier as a local borderline, to show relationships between global patterns of mobility, immigration and displacement and what it means to pause, settle or remain in a local place. The question of what it means to share street space, when some would have travelled across origins and nations to arrive at the Walworth Road, while others already living in proximity to the street may seldom or never have travelled provided the base of my exploration of the frontier. It was analytically important therefore, to align the idea of a local frontier as a space for

arrival, discovery and uncertainty, with the frontier as a boundary that is historically prevalent and difficult to penetrate.

My ethnographic data suggests that the presence of physical and perceptual boundaries means that learning to live with difference and change is as much a convivial process as it is a wrested-over one. Local frontiers are crucial to understanding individual capacities or inabilities to breach social and spatial divisions, to cross boundaries, and to establish modes of belonging in a highly variegated, fluctuating landscape. Without an understanding of historic boundaries and how they affect contemporary social expression, it would be all too easy to draw stereotypical conclusions about race, poverty and class in marginal urban locations such as the Walworth Road.

The local is individual and collective

The formation of local worlds relates as much to individual practices of social intimacy and familiarity, as to collective practices of political, cultural or spiritual solidarity that are shared through local ways of life. Many social intimacies are formed and refined collectively on the basis of shared experiences of time and place. Nick's Caff for example, was not only a shared contemporary space in which individuals went to eat and relax on a regular basis. It was also a social institution of sorts that had emerged out of the everyday working-class rituals of meeting and eating in the city, combined with the culinary skills brought by immigrant communities to cities like London from the 1950s onwards. Shared histories and collective memories allow individuals and groups to attach cultural depth to their sense of their local worlds. As my ethnographic data revealed, the past was crucial to the layering of the local that individuals used to evoke not simply nostalgia for times passed, but attachment to a collective sense of belonging. Traditions and customs (the working-man's suit worn on Sundays), sensory

experiences (drinking a glass of Sarsaparilla) and particular spaces or informal institutions (the pub, the caff), had local resonance because they were experiences and memories that were socially shared.

Because the everyday life of local worlds is essentially constituted through small increments of individual practices - a daily routine, a conversation, a sign above a shop front, a space in a caff the size of a table – local worlds require larger frameworks of organisation in order to connect to systems of influence or power. The fragility or resiliency of local worlds to adapt to change is dependent on a hierarchy of practices and institutions both inside and outside of local life. The local, as suggested by Haine's (1992) research of fraternity fostered in working-class cafés in Paris (see Chapter 6), potentially constitutes a significant tier in a hierarchy of collective memberships. The loss of collective assets from local places where individuals and groups can regularly assert opinion and register views therefore symbolises an erosion of the political significance of local life.

In my research, individuals referred to the loss of collective places and practices from the local landscape as primary markers of change. The impacts of economic change on the local landscape were captured, for example, through descriptions of the loss of pubs and tailors along the Walworth Road, and the disappearance of the Surrey Canal to the south of the Walworth Road in the 1970s, together with the building and timber yards that lined its edges. Further, the disappearance of work associated with the canal and the docks from the 1970s, and the loss of local assets such as the 'Old' Labour Party headquarters that had sat at the northern end of the Walworth Road up until 1997, marked the gradual disjuncture of a hierarchy of formal political institutions that were deeply connected to the organisation of work and labour, from local life.

Local institutions and workplaces symbolised political solidarity and actualised political influence, and their disappearance highlights the political fragility of life on the Walworth Road as increasingly separated from the tiers of collective political organisation and representation. While conversations about politics featured in both Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor shop, in both interiors there was a sense that there was limited opportunity to register these views more broadly; to be heard beyond the small circles of intimate social groups. However, other existing and emerging forms of civic and religious solidarity were visibly evident along the Walworth Road. As my focus was on the small independent shops, the increase in church spaces to the south of the Walworth Road during the period of my research for example, have not informed my understanding of formal collective practices in the local area.

Another emerging form of civic solidarity only just caught my eye by way of a small sticker in the window of some of the shops on the Walworth Road that read, 'Save Our Small Shops Campaign'. By typing the caption into the Internet I was exposed to a nation-wide campaign that focused on the social, economic and cultural contribution of small shops to local life. The emergence of the *Save Our Small Shops Campaign* launched by *The Evening Standard* in 2007 (<http://www.esadvertising.co.uk/en/1/shop.html> 2009) reveals the civic recognition of the economic and cultural consequences of the demise of the small shops across the UK. In the context of raising the significance of, and fighting for the political recognition of small-scale entrepreneurial endeavours that essentially exist within immanently local life, the individual or independent small operator is too minute an entity to be heard on a political platform. As one shop owner pointed out to me, those who run businesses in local areas like Walworth are not entitled to vote in local elections, as residency not occupancy is the basis of local enfranchisement.

The *Save Our Small Shops Campaign* represents another collective medium for local solidarity and civic protest, supported by a congregation of concerned individuals and groups widely disseminated across different places. However it is a form of collective representation that is not explicitly embedded in local life in the sense that it does not require social intimacy. As such it is a campaign or platform for diverse individuals to register opinion, and to be heard, but without the key aspects of social intimacy and face-to-face refinements of informal membership apparent in Nick's Caff or Haine's Parisian café for example: it is a solidarity shaped outside of local contact.

In exploring the layers of the local, I have focused on the processes of orientation that individuals and groups adopt and refine in the context of urban change. I have stressed the significant role of everyday, face-to-face contact as a primary mode through which individuals accumulate and edit their co-ordinates of social intimacy and spatial familiarity. Because local worlds emerge out of local ways of life, I have also raised the concern that the smallness of the local, while crucial to social contact and exploration, also relies on larger, or collective forms of social, cultural and political organisation. Without links to collective membership or external forms of recognition, it is difficult for the small forms of contact and informal memberships to claim status and assert influence; to be heard. The local therefore needs to be understood as an essential but also fragile world in which individuals are confronted with change.

The recognition of the ordinary

My research has highlighted the importance of analysing high streets or bread-and-butter streets as complex and relational places, integral to the social and cultural fabric of the surrounding context. The purpose of this section is to outline how the small-scale and ordinary assets of bread-and-butter streets can be better understood in terms of research, and more effectively supported in terms of policy and design intervention.

The recognition of small, local assets

Research into small and medium retail across Britain, and on high streets in particular, points to the significant economic and social role of small shops on the one hand, and the need for more empirical research to bolster inadequate policy frameworks on the other. In Chapter 7 I compared the contrasting measures of value applied by proprietors and customers who use the Walworth Road, and architects, planners and policy makers, who analyse and intervene from a relative distance. The stark differentiations in understanding or measuring the value of the street suggested that the intricacy of local life is invisible to the lens of power. Although the Walworth Road functions as a well connected street with a linear arrangement of adaptable, small spaces, the retail life along the Walworth Road would measure poorly against commonly held economic values that privilege large-scale turnover and profit of individual outlets. However, the findings of the *Paved With Gold* report (2007) published by CABI showed that the total weekly expenditure estimated for the Walworth Road was comparable to that of High Street Hampstead. Walworth Road's collective weekly retail income is partly explained by the density of the population within close walking distance of the street. In analytic terms, this example indicates the crucial importance of understanding economic practices as integral to social and cultural practices in a local area.

Against the trajectory of the dominance of large retailers and the demise of small retailers, the role of different scales of urban retail and the diversity of retail practices in the social and cultural life of the city, requires recognition in terms of policy. Research into the role of small and medium scale retail located on high streets across the UK reveals the economic significance of small and medium retailers in the retail economy, showing, amongst other economic factors, that small and medium retailers are still the

primary employers within the retail sector in the UK. However their contribution is far less significant in terms of annual turnover, where locally oriented and small-scale retailers fail to compete against the large-scale purchasing power and nation-wide distribution networks of the retail giants. Another strand of research has focused on the uneven nature of the free-market system, whereby retail giants are able to exercise large-scale purchasing and distribution power, as well as substantial political influence at the highest levels of political debate and policy formation (NEF 2002; 2003).

Research suggests that economic policy is enhanced by a broader framework of understanding that recognises the links between the social, cultural and economic strands of local livelihoods. In France and Spain for example, political recognition of the role of small and medium retail enterprise in sustaining economic, social and cultural life is inscribed in policy and regulation that seeks to balance the relationship between big and small retailers in high streets, towns and villages (Coca-Stefaniak *et al.* 2005). The researchers show that when policy defines a basic relationship between the permissible size of a national retail chain and its relative distance from smaller, independent retail within urban centres, a better balance between large, medium and small-scale retail activity is achieved.

The key point to be argued here is not whether small shops have local social and economic value – research, and our own intimate experience and knowledge of the city already tells us that they do. However, local worlds are vulnerable to the large-scale changes brought by external political and economic forces. The small shops along the Walworth Road have performed as highly adaptable spaces over time, responding to shifting production and consumption practices and the needs of newcomers and established residents. However, the small economic and social networks that comprise the Walworth Road may be overwhelmed by the scale of regeneration and investment planned in the large-scale projects in close proximity to the street. Supportive policy

that is based on detailed ethnographic research of the role of local economic practices and more intricate knowledge of the local impetus of these economies is required. The potential for a compatible balance between large, medium and small retail practices along streets also needs further exploration. In Chapter 7 I referred to the notion of the 'spectral street' briefly raised in the *Elephant and Castle Framework for Development* report (Space Syntax 2003). By analysing compatible retail activities, and how they relate to one another along the length of the street, we promote an understanding of the street as a system of parts, where large and small-scale enterprises co-exist.

The recognition of local skills

By focusing on skills, would it be possible to reveal an alternative view of comparatively marginal or deprived urban areas? In Chapter 3 I traced how poverty, or more specifically the urban poor, have been historically categorised. Both Himmelfarb's (1984) focus on 'the deserving and undeserving poor' in the Industrial period in England, and Haylett's (2001) focus on 'abject whites' in the post war period in the UK, make explicit connections between the categorisation of the poor and the social and spatial administration of relief or reform. Haylett's work in particular suggests that the governmental focus on deprivation and welfare has rendered an abject citizen, while Power's (1996) research similarly shows how area based poverty and stigmatised social housing has rendered abject areas.

Early on in my fieldwork, I focused in on the shop spaces along the Walworth Road precisely because I became interested in the relationship between social practices and work practices in a comparatively marginal or deprived area such as Walworth. My fieldwork exposed me to the important combination of local workspaces and social spaces in which proprietors and customers were engaged in social exploration. In Nick's Caff and Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop different forms of sociability arose from the two very different workspaces. Both Nick and Reyd's work skills were essentially

interactive, and depended on direct communication with customers in order to undertake their work. Reyd's customers were expected to have a knowledge of the value of bespoke tailoring, and a respect for skill was the underlying basis of the social contract between Reyd and his diverse customers. Reyd's workspace was clearly divided into two areas, a semi-public area in which to meet customers, and a back room away from the street, for Reyd to retreat from social contact and to focus on the practice of crafting the bespoke garment.

For Nick and Dorah, the connection of home and workspace was crucial to their work practices and to the way regulars occupied the Caff. Because Nick and Dorah's home was positioned above the Caff, their workspace and domestic space was connected, and allowed for a mix of family, regulars, Cypriot culture and local culture within the Caff. The quality of the home-cooked food in Nick's Caff was an important criterion for many of Nick and Dorah's customers, but as crucial was the underlying opportunity for social contact within the rhythm of the Caff. Nick's consummate work skill was his social role as public character and his capacity to make individuals feel at home by engaging them in conversation. The skill of the customer was a more watchful one, and generally required the assessment and acceptance of the social etiquette established as much by gestures, humour and points of entry to conversation, as by the layout and occupation of the small tables within the shop.

The architect Louis Kahn (1975) referred to places of meeting and exploration, or spaces where there is the potential to transcend the confines of the domestic realm, as human institutions. He defined the street as one such institution, by qualifying the street as a place, 'where a child can discover what he wants to be when he grows up.' (1996 [1975], p. 93). Kahn's definition of the street emphasises the role of visible places of exchange. The notion of work prospects made visible in the spaces and activities on the street is particularly pertinent in marginal urban contexts with high

indices of deprivation such as Walworth. My ethnographic research focused on two spaces along the Walworth Road that served as places to both make and to sell things, the kinds of work spaces in which one learns about work skills that are acquired and refined over time.

However, it is important to note in reference to the 1950 *Post Office Directory Survey* of the Walworth Road, how many more shops contained both activities of making and selling sixty years ago, as compared with my 2006 survey. The disappearance of words like hatter, boot maker and costumier from the high street lexicon points to the demise of the activity of making in the high streets. In Chapter 5 I outlined the historic location of high street tailors in London. My research pointed to the loss of small-scale urban activities of making on the Walworth Road as reflected not only in dramatic shifts in production and consumption, but also in changes in educational structure including the diminishing use of the apprenticeship system.

The recognition of local processes

In this chapter I have discussed the layering of the local as an essentially everyday practice sustained by remembering, exchanging, investing and adapting in local worlds, and as such it is a process of accumulation. Unlike regeneration, which often seeks to make anew by dismantling or clearing local spaces and ways of life, layering is a process of renewal in which more layers are added. What the growth and change of the Walworth Road over time shows, is that small increments of space, when set within a well-connected local street, are highly adaptable to change, and are readily appropriated and renewed by diverse individuals over time. Because local worlds such as the Walworth Road are the products of layering rather than the formal composition of architect or planner, they appear as messy and mixed aggregations of people, surfaces and spaces.

On the basis of an aesthetic reading, the cultural value of bread-and-butter environments can be rendered invisible to the outsider, passer-by or lens of power. In Chapter 3 I explored the application of social ranking on areas across the city, where the use of cognitive maps (Suttles 1972) or signs of disorder (Sampson 2008) assign value to places on the basis of appearance. In Chapter 7 I went on to argue, that formal design intervention or regeneration programmes in ordinary local areas, is not necessarily a problem of design conception, but essentially one of cultural recognition; quite literally of being able to see the ordinary or everyday. If local world are the products of layering then they are not spaces that can be explicitly delivered by architect, planner or local authority. However, designers and regulators can provide one layer of the local, as a planning framework in which the minimum but necessary spatial codes are made as clear, simple and limited as possible. Both design clarity and regulatory simplicity provide the legibility to a host of individuals who will subsequently layer urban space over time.

Observing local processes

The importance of recognising the complexity and intricacy of local worlds leads me to suggest that many of the lenses and tools used to provide an understanding of local worlds are inadequate, since they are largely based on aggregates or generalisations, rather than particularities. The common use of census data as a representation of a local area for example, is based on an analytic framework of categorisation and separation where individuals are made to fit designated profiles such as ethnicity or work status. I have made use of census data and local indices of deprivation in my thesis, to broadly understand how people and places are officially represented. But the dilemma of these quantitative data sources derived from scientific survey, is not necessarily what they render as visible, but what they omit - what remains invisible.

A large part of my thesis exploration has been methodologically driven, where I have engaged the questions of how we learn about complex objects of study, and how we capture complexity where existing notational systems are insufficient. By focusing on the smallest increment or unit of research – the individual, an experience, a conversation, the space the size of a table – ethnography learns from the variability of singular interactions and expressions. Through my ethnography I have developed an informed construction of the Walworth Road, one deeply influenced by the specifics and selective choices of the fieldwork process. My findings have been substantially influenced by the diversity of individual voices, and there are several ways I have sought to secure the richness and validity of the varied narratives and experiences.

A starting position I now claim for my research process is the inestimable value of placing the individual at the core of the unit of research, since the experience of the world and of difference and change, is expressed in individual words and actions that constitute and reveal social meaning. However, I have found it analytically crucial to juxtapose individual expressions with the urban and global forces that impact on local worlds. To achieve an adequate understanding of everyday life, the notion of the local needs to be temporally and geographically expanded. In my thesis, the analytic process of expanding everyday practices and ordinary spaces was developed through historic tracings of the physical and perceptual boundaries and institutions that add layers to the palimpsest of local life.

My understanding has benefited from using photographs and drawings during the research process. These visual formats allowed me to use different lenses to look at the street, as well as to consider how to represent the apposite image, by holding a chain of relationships and thoughts within one frame. However my use of varied data sets and different lenses was in no way a substitute for time. What has been elementary to my learning about local worlds is the commitment to spending time in the

field, allowing for the opportunity to add to and renew my research, by returning to individuals and spaces on more than one occasion.

In closing, I would like to restate that local worlds are collections of social intimacies and spatial familiarities, in which individuals become known to themselves and others. Through face-to-face and regular contact newcomers and established residents engage in the everyday process of sharing and learning. In the urban context of rapid change where structural inequality manifests in local marginality, the process of learning is complicated by the convergence of lack of resources, limited mobility and the historic effects of physical and perceptual boundaries. However, ordinary spaces and informal memberships that are neither explicitly public nor private, provide a place for spontaneous interactions between diverse individuals. The skill of interaction is in part intuitive, in part acquired, and my thesis highlights the local spaces along a street in which things are made and sold, as significant venues for refining social skill. The bread-and-butter street is an aggregation of small spaces in which boundaries are inscribed and transgressed, and through which work, skill and sociability are combined to provide space for belonging in a local world.

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Appendix 1:

The survey of the independent shops, September 2006

Note: Every unit along the east and west sides of the Walworth Road was counted, starting with number 1 at the northern most end of the street. In the table below, only the independent shops are listed. In the limited instances when the proprietor didn't want to be interviewed, NI is entered.

East Side

Unit	Shop name	Proprietor's origin	Period of occupation	Tenancy
05	Baldwins Health Store	England	Since 1844	owned
06 NI	Castle Laundrette	-	-	-
09	Home Suit Home (furniture)	Pakistan	7 years	-
10	Choices (pizza and sandwiches)	Iran	1.5 years	leased
11	Bantwa news (convenience)	Pakistan	6 years	leased
12	Threadneedleman (tailor)	Jamaica	12 years	leased
17	London Bride and Groom	England	26 years	-
18	Aksu (clothing)	Turkey	3.5	leased
20	Lydo (footwear)	Vietnam	2	leased
22	W. Surplus Stores (army surplus)	-	-	-
23	Malata No.2 Supermarket	Ghana	6 years	owned
24	Lilly's Nails	Vietnam	1 year	leased
25	A. H. Friends (travel, money transfers and internet)	Pakistan	1 year	leased

26	Shades of Fashion	“African”	6 years	-
27	£1 Store	Pakistan	4 years	owned
28	Hardy’s Wine Store	Pakistan	11 years	leased
29 NI	Rejoice Ladies Wear	-	-	-
30	Brown’s Clothing	-	3 years	-
32	The Works (hair salon)	Cyprus	6 years	leased
33	Hiep Phat (oriental supermarket)	Vietnam	7 years	leased
36	F.T. Gentleman’s Jewellers and Pawnbrokers	-	-	-
37	Risky (women’s clothing)	England	5 years	leased
41	Kander Chinese Herbal Medicine	China	1 year	-
44	Clothing Warehouse	“European”	2 years	leased
48 NI	Phoneshop	-	-	-
49	Clothing Club	Malawi	8 years	leased
50	A1 Stores (bric-a-brac)	England	94 years	owned
51	Michael Leigh Beefy Boys (clothes)	England	10 years	-
55 NI	Risky (clothing)	-	-	-
59	Panache Kids (clothing)	England	10 years	-
61	Kennedy’s (sausages and pies)	England	Since 1877	owned
63	Peppermint (children’s clothing)	Malawi	10 years	-
64	Super Value Store (household goods)	Afghanistan	9 years	leased
67	The Original Pound Store	England	10 years	-
68	Sam’s Butchery	Jamaica	4 years	-
69	Browns (men’s clothing)	Malawi	16 years	leased
71	Art and Magic	India	2.5 years	leased

76	Fads (carpets and furniture)	-	2 years	-
77	Walworth Convenience Store	India	20 years	owned
80	Panache (footwear)	England	25 years	-
83	Linetech Computers	"African"	11 years	-
85	Hollywood Nails	Vietnam	8 years	leased
86	South London Press Newsagents	England	23 years	leased
87 NI	The Red Lion Pub	-	-	-
88 NI	Samico Discount Trading (electrical goods) (CLOSED)	-	-	-
95 NI	Base Bar	-	-	-
96 NI	T Bar	-	-	-
97	Absar Food Store	Sudan	1 year	-
98	Andy & Macs (Caribbean restaurant)	Caribbean	4 years	leased
99	Lemon Grass (Malaysian restaurant)	Malaysia	1.5 years	leased
101	Night Rider Bar (CLOSED)	-	-	-
102	Seville Furniture Ltd	Turkey	3 years	leased
104	Whitehall Clothiers (school uniforms)	England	40 years	owned
105	M. Bridal Fashion House	Nigeria	> 1 year	leased
107	Mary's Café	Cyprus	Since 1965	owned
109	Laundromat	Italy	+ 30 years	-
110	Genesis (barber and hair salon)	Nigeria	+10 years	-
111 NI	Emukay (restaurant)	Nigeria	-	-

West side

Unit	Shop name	Proprietor's origin	Period of occupation	Tenancy
03	Chatkhara (Indian restaurant)	India	1.5	owned
06	Communication and transport services	Nigeria	15	owned
08	Dragon Castle (Chinese restaurant)	China	>1 year	leased
09	T Clarke (electrical contractors)	England	15	owned
15 NI	The tankard pub & restaurant	-	-	-
18	Afroworld Superstore	Pakistan	4 years	-
20	Walworth Pharmacy	India	23 years	leased
21	Fanta's Beauty and Nails	Sierra Leone	4 years	leased
25	Omar Dry Cleaning	Cyprus	40 years	lease
26 NI	Café Time	-	-	-
27	Arif's Patisserie	Turkish Cyprus	21 years	-
28	Vashti's Beauty Salon	Jamaica	20 years	-
29 NI	Hair Hunters (hair salon)	-	-	-
30	MCQ Entertainment	Trinidad	36 years	owned
32	Fads (decorating)	England	30 years	leased
35	Paul's Discount Store (household goods)	India	> 1 year	-
36	Champs Sports	England	15 years	-
38	Central Stationers	India	15 years	owned

39	Kodak Express	England	22 years	owned
41	Lynne's Electrical Store	England	+ 50 years	owned
42	Schwar & Co (jewellers)	England	Since 1838	-
43	Snappy Snaps	-	2 years	-
47	Chicken Cottage Fast Foods	Afghanistan	2 years	-
48	Bagel Store	Turkey	20 years	-
49	N.J. Newsagents	India	1 year	-
50	Temple Bar and Restaurant	Ireland	"a long time"	-
51	George's Barber Shop	"Multi-national"	-	-
53	The Best Kebabs	Turkey	45 years	-
54	Albone Jewellers	England	30 years	-
56 NI	Shoeholic	-	-	-
57 NI	Shoe repairs and key cutting	-	-	-
58	Eroma (internet café)	Turkey	2 years	-
59	Golden Palace Jewellery	Turkey	1 year	-
60	Baronjon (men's clothing)	England	20 years	leased
61	Dynamic sounds (car and audio)	England	14 years	-
62	Pamukkale Restaurant	Turkey	3 years	-
64 NI	STAR video (CLOSED)	-	-	-
65 NI	Samra Convenience Store	-	-	-
68	Air Choice Travel	"West African"	10 years	-
69 NI	Shoeholic Kids	-	-	-
70	Hong Ha Fast Foods	Vietnam	5 years	leased
72	Oli Food Centre	Turkey	10 years	-

75	Beaumont Beds	-	8 years	-
77	Pan Afrique Travel and Tours	Ghana	-	-
78	Cascade Florists	England	-	-
79 NI	Beauty Terrace	-	-	-
80	Akdeniz Jewellers	Turkey	5 years	-
81	Walworth Kebab House	Turkey	22 years	-
83	Jackson's Furniture	"Jewish-British"	21 years	-
84	Liam Og's Pub	Irish	-	-
87	T. D. Sports	England	22 years	-
88	La Luna Pizzeria	Italy	10 years	-
89	Beds 4U	England	3 years	leased
92	African Prices (clothing, tailors)	Ghana	14 years	-
93 NI	Shades Hair Salon	-	-	-
94	Chinese Medicine	China	-	-
95 NI	Ruskin Private Car Hire	-	-	-
96 NI	Salon De Te	-	-	-
98	Mixed Blessings Bakery	Jamaica	14 years	-
99	Rim World (barber and hats)	Nigeria	10 years	-
100 NI	Beauty Salon (CLOSED)	--	-	-
101 NI	Shoe Repairs (CLOSED)	-	-	-
102 NI	Ainra News	-	-	-
104	Sunlight Express Cleaners	Pakistan	20 years	-
105	Part 4U	Ghana	1 month	-

108	Autopoint Motor Spares (CLOSED)	-	-	-
109	Top Flooring	England	25 years	-
110 NI	Summy Fashions (children's clothes)	-	-	-
111 NI	The Clearance Shop (CLOSED)	-	-	-
116	Happy Bikes (motorcycles)	England	1 year	leased

Appendix 2

Recorded conversations and interviews

Note: This list does not include the dates and periods of observation in which no interviews or conversations were recorded. All individual names and shop names have been changed to preserve anonymity, other than Space Syntax, whose planning and research work I make direct reference to in this thesis.

Location	Individual	Date	Duration
1. Nicks Caff			
	Mark	5 June 2006	1 hour
	General conversations	6 June 2006	1.5 hours
	General conversations	12 June 2006	2 hours
	Mike and Dan	12 June 2006	1 hour
	General conversations	13 June 2006	4 hours
	General conversations	19 June 2006	2 hours
	Gary	19 June 2006	0.5 hour
	Sonja	19 June 2006	1 hour
	General conversations	26 June 2006	3 hours
	Mustafa	26 June 2006	0.5 hour
	General conversations	28 June 2006	2 hours
	General conversations	03 July 2006	1 hour
	Jack	03 July 2006	2 hours
	General conversations	06 July 2006	2 hours
	General conversations	11 July 2006	1 hour
	Nick and Gary	12 July 2006	1 hour
	Nick	17 July 2006	1 hour
	Jack	26 October 2006	1.5 hours
	Mike	27 October 2006	1 hour
	Dorah, Mike and Jack	08 November 2006	1.5 hours

	Nick General Conversations Nick and Savvas Nick	09 November 2006 18 November 2006 9 January 2007 15 January 2007	0.5 hour 1 hour 2.5 hours 1.5 hours
2. Reyd's Bespoke Tailor Shop			
	Reyd Reyd Reyd Reyd Reyd Reyd Reyd and Rags Reyd and Stan Reyd Reyd	14 July 2006 27 September 2006 8 November 2006 9 January 2007 12 January 2007 6 November 2007 27 November 2007 16 January 2008 17 January 2008 30 May 2008	3.5 hours 1.5 hours 0.5 hour 1 hour 1.5 hours 3.5 hours 2 hours 2 hours 0.5 hour 1 hour
3. Shops			
Walworth Uniforms Walworth Health Store Walworth Electricals Walworth Bakes Kid's Brands Glasses on Walworth	Pete Alan Mr Gordon Hassan Sayeed Barney	5 June 2006 20 June 2006 14 July 2006 13 September 2006 27 November 2006 12 January 2008	1 hour 1 hour 0.5 hour 1 hour 0.5 hour 0.5 hour
4. Methodist Church	Gary and Pete	19 June 2006	1 hour
5. John's home	John	5 February 2007	2 hours
6. Southwark Local History Library	Mr Best	30 January 2007	0.5 hour
7. Space Syntax			
	Tim Stonor, Alain Chiaradia, Christian Schwander	9 June 2008	1 hour

Appendix 3

Background Information Sheet 2006

I am registered as a PhD student in the 'Cities Programme' at the London School of Economics. The subject of my study is the Walworth Road including both its history and its current qualities. The study will emphasise the perspectives of the people who live and work in the local area, through looking at the individual stories and spaces of the Walworth Road.

At this stage the focus of my study and on local, everyday practices, are the shops along the Road. The aim is to gain an understanding of how small shops and businesses establish a local identity, and engage with customers. Early questions that are raised include:

- How and why did the shop proprietors come to Walworth Road in the first place?
- What are the special qualities that contribute to the identity of the shop and to the Road?
- How do locals and customers use the shop spaces?

My fieldwork follows the method of 'participant observation'. While this includes a number of unstructured interviews, it essentially relies on spending time in selected settings, allowing for informal conversations and everyday activities to inform the research.

All participants in the research will remain anonymous unless participants specifically request otherwise. If requested, personal information will remain confidential. The information generated by the study may be published. At any point in the study, participants have the right to ask for any of their details or accounts to be withdrawn. Should you need to confirm any of the information above please contact the Cities Programme. In addition my email address is s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk

Sincerely,
Suzanne Hall.

Appendix 4

Beauty services, September 2006 – May 2009

Existing Shops in September 2006	New Shops from November 2008
Fanta's Beauty	Figaro Barbers
Lilly's <i>Nails and Beauty</i>	Zara Hair and Cosmetics
Vashti's	Lemis <i>Gents and Ladies Salon</i>
Hair Hunters <i>Hair and Beauty</i>	Suta Beauty Centre <i>Hair Salon, Cosmetics, Perfumery</i>
Glitz <i>Hair and Beauty</i>	FloJoe <i>Unisex Boutique and Beauty Salon</i>
George's Barber Shop	
Bobby's Hair Salon	
Beauty Terrace <i>Salon and Cosmetics</i>	
Hollywood Nails	
Jenny Ping <i>Hair and Beauty Salon</i>	
Rimworld Barbers <i>& caps and hats</i>	
Genesis <i>The Beginning of Hair Trends</i>	