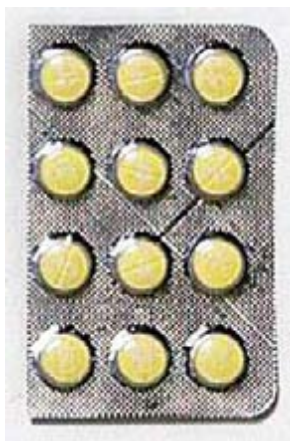


Walking talking urban life: real time roving recordings by first generation migrants

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what is this plant and what is important about it?



if you needed some anti-histamine tablets at 3pm on a Sunday where would you go?

what would you do if you lost your cat?



do you need a ticket before you get on?



can you walk here?



what was your favourite place when you were younger?

Research Context

- Diverse aspects of place attachment (Altman and Low, 1992) in particular issues of settlement and belonging with regard to people who have migrated to UK.



Research Context

- Superdiversity: neighbourhood qualities. (Vertovec, 2007)
- Issues of community cohesion and quality of life in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.
- Sandercock: Towards Cosmopolis II: mongrel cities of the 21st Century (2003).
- Amin. Ethnicity and the multicultural city. (2002)
- Dines et al. Public Spaces, social relations and well-being in East London. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation research). (2006)



UK Context

- Long history of immigration and settlement in UK.
- UK population is 8% non-white (2001 census).
However, ethnic communities are not evenly distributed, mostly more concentrated in some urban neighbourhoods.
- The most numerically significant ethnic communities in UK identified themselves as Indian / Pakistani / Afro-Caribbean / African / Bangladeshi. Increasing migrants from within European Community (esp. Polish).
- Some more recent flashpoints:
 - + Disturbances in northern UK cities 2001
 - + London bombings in 2005
 - + Discussion of wearing of the hijab in public positions.

Research Context

- Experiential qualities of being outdoors.
- Massey, Ingold, Edensor: geographers exploring qualities of being immersed in environment, walking practices.



Challenge for professionals

- How well do you know your clients?
- how do places reflect plurality of the population?
- what should be the priorities of inclusive design with regard to ethnicity?



Research aims

- To understand how first generation migrants feel walking around their neighbourhood; issues of belonging, safety, pleasure, worry.
- To record normal patterns of use and habits of the participants in terms of everyday use, formal and informal recreation.
- To understand how places may remind them of home, or are particularly different, and how this relates to their thoughts about moving to the UK.
- To look at the relationship between individual experiences and values and that of communities located in the same neighbourhood.
- To relate these findings to current policies and initiatives regarding living active lifestyles, cohesive communities and regeneration projects.

Focused on place: Burngreave Sheffield.

- High level of unemployment (post industrial)
- Generally poorly maintained environment
- Range of shops, often look quite tatty
- People from diverse ethnic groups
(56% white, 19% Pakistani, 6% Caribbean, 5% African).
- Established communities and recently arrived refugees. (22% born overseas)
- Limited green space, hilly.
- Regeneration target
- Community groups and organisations



Methodology: principles

- Emphasis on experiential and narrative qualities of place
(Sandercock, 2003)
- Longitudinal and qualitative
- Diverse participants
- Shared benefit



Methodology: practice

- Eleven participants were loaned mini-disc recorders for a three month period, spanning from late summer to early winter and supported by training from BBC Radio Sheffield.
- Broad ethnographic approach: informal interviews, chats, observations around Burngreave.
- Interviews with organisations (both local and national remits) who undertake neighbourhood and environmental initiatives within ethnically diverse communities.
- Dissemination includes academic publications, a policy note publication, radio coverage on BBC Radio Sheffield, website with audio clips.



Methodology: people

- 6 men, 5 women
- Home countries: Jamaica, Somalia, the Yemen, Pakistan and Iraq. Most moved to UK less than 8 years ago, but a couple decades ago.
- Different employment status, family networks, physical abilities and access to transport.
- Got to know: through places of meeting (mosque, library, community centre), on park bench, doing 'healthy walks', exercise classes, at allotments, through existing participants.

Using the 'walking voices' method

- Strong in expressing immediacy, spontaneity, multi-sensory experience and social networks, and in recording everyday practice.
- Reduced impact of researcher, though still some 'observer effect'.
- Use over time and in discussion with and support from researchers important. Some more traditional interviews useful for developing themes. Need for flexibility of approach.
- Important to place in wider context of community contacts.
- Limited 'key participants' to people with reasonable levels of spoken English, and some confidence with learning new skills.

Unfamiliarity to familiarity: the potential of the local environment

disorientation

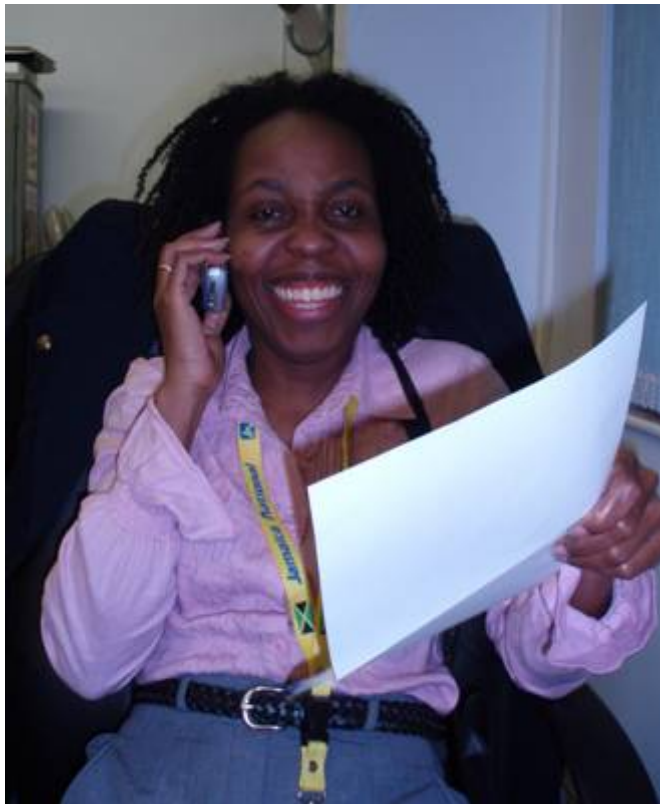
de-skilled





Why do I like these building sites – it's very nice to look at. And like... you mean these buildings – personally I get experience..... Things. I get things; I used to come on the other road, the police station way, I used to pick up the words on the signs. I used to go home [...] and I never used to know what this pedestrian mean – and I just came, I actually read that in college, and teacher says what does that mean – does anyone know what that mean? - I say yes She said "that's really amazing, how did you pick that up?" I said "I picked up words right outside my house". Oh that's good Sometimes I don't know wordsand I am like oh my god I don't know what that means and I write it down and find out what it means. ...

Memory - expressed and experienced in place



“The city I can see... ur...is it Park Hill? Looks like Park Hill, a horrible looking building that needs, demolishing! And some other apartments, is that Woodside? Yea that looks like Woodside, and that looks like the tram line after you pass Castle College, right.

This view, reminds me of back home, not far from where we used to live, a place called Red Hills, when you go up to the top and look down on the city and you see right across the city straight out to sea, and you see the hotels and all the lovely buildings, everything, all the nice houses, all around, especially in the night, when the lights are on, oh it's gorgeous! And this view reminds me of being, on top of the hills and looking across the city.”



what you see



how you relax



how you socialise

Memory: loss and connections in the context of neighbourhood space

- Prompted
- Utilised to negotiate new situations.
Doing, finding, resourcing, adapting in ways that re-enforces a sense of continuing identity.
(This may or may not be construed as defined by ethnicity)
- Performed
- Identifying difference / similarity, a means of understanding more about where you come and core values and identity.

Social expectations: outdoors as being in public



“Socialise is like you socialise back home. Place where everybody meets and everybody sits down, have a talk”. (Abdullah, The Yeman)



“I hated that road...I am very wary of going there because there are a lot of Arab men and women always looking at you and judging you, seeing what you’ve got on, seeing how you look, seeing if your scarf is on properly” (Shireen, The Yeman).



times and places of temporary escape



- “I used to spend all day in Meadowhall, I think it’s nice, beautiful! Have something to eat in there, watch the people in Meadowhall”
- “If I have to relax, believe it or not, I do motorways. When I want to relax and have a nice time, I make something to go somewhere, I just make it up, just to go and drive on the motorway... I love it.”
- “Overall, walking became a coping mechanism when I came to England when I was faced with racism... so I took up walking, there was no sea for me to go to.”

Movement through the city as reflecting and reshaping cultural identities.



finding space between /
around different cultures

Ahmed

- A man in the Burngreave Kurdish community
- A family member of the Hillsborough community

I usually get tram in Hillsborough corner or Hillsborough Park to college and I go to the restaurant. I don't like it, not in the way of relax. It's a place better than anywhere I go. For example If I go to town I don't have friends in town and I have to go to restaurant where I have friends and when I go and talk about things and I play black backgammon or something but if you say relax there's no relax. You know backgammon?

So why do you go there?

For company and for playing as well and have a tea...that's what people do when they go over there. [...] There's no where to go – you can't always go to barber shop because if you want too..... The shop will be empty if people want to go and sit in the queue. If you stay there, just chatting, Ahmed would you mind stand up this man this man is standing and he is in the queue... if you stay there, just chatting.



I don't want to even walk
in this road, now it's because of
something, this special thing I'm doing,
but I can't even walk on this street, I
don't really like this street... it's not
safe at all... but now at the moment it's
fine, you can walk because in the
morning, but... after four or five o'clock
in the evening
you can't even come here,
if you not recognisable they will hate
you.. hit you.. and ask you, 'Why you
here?'
'Do you want smoke or do you want...
something like... for... like special you
here? Why you here?' You have to buy
something off them or you have to...
say something to make them better, to let
you go, and it's not really nice,
this is not my kind of England...
type of England places...
I don't like it..."



Burngreave

- A place to eat Kurdish food and buy cheap clothes and cigarettes
- A place to socialise as part of a Kurdish community
but
- A place of expectation; having to help the 'Kurdish brothers' with English language.
- A place of which he associates with violence and insecurity reflecting something of unhappy times in Iraq:

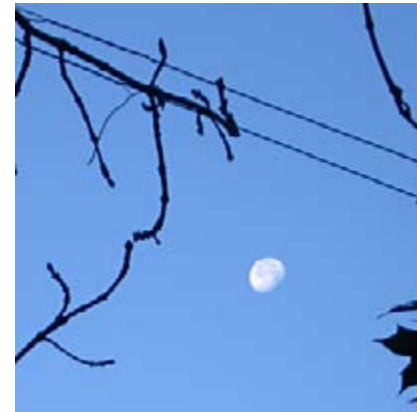
Hillsborough

- Feeling safe and secure, a place where his personal freedom is respected
- A place where he explores new kinship and friendship relationships

Places for personal shiftings

- Different places (and activities) represented different aspects of the participant's identities.
- Flexibility of movement and diversity of location could reflect choices of engagement with new activities and aspirations.
- On a longer term basis, some participants were considering moving out of Burngreave for a safer environment and better schools. However, they also recognised the potential for losing contact with existing social and religious networks.

Complexity of place attachment



Challenges for planners, architects, landscape architects.

1. Recognise diversity without re-enforcing stereotypes



2. Design places that can be flexible and allow for informal or formal appropriation at both micro and macro scales.



The pavement turned into a cafe

The derelict petrol station appropriated as a meeting place

The street into a mechanic's workshop.

The garage into a vegetable stall

Houses and pubs now used as mosques, shops, a crèche and a language school

How can these uses be legitimatised?

3. Recognise and respond to different patterns of sociability.



- Overlapping use of public space maintains existing relationships and can facilitate gradual informal contact. Safety, comfort & permeability are all important.
- Various aspects of identity (age, gender, ethnicity, religion) might define use of spaces at different times.

how do we invite people into the public realm?

4. Address social injustice and tackle issues of equality of provision.



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