In Place of Difference:
An Ethnography of Emplaced Care and Making the Other in Berlin

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I, Maayan Linglingai Ashkenazi, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis examines entangled practices of care and place in one Berlin district. Situated within broader Welcome Politics of care efforts and a reanimation of integration debates following 2015's migratory movements, I examine a number of integration projects which practised various forms of care for migrant women. Over eighteen months' ethnographic fieldwork between 2017-2018, I sought to learn from women what these efforts might reveal about relations of place, politics of difference and practices of care, when the relationship between people deemed 'Other' and a certain 'locality' were taken as an assumed site of intervention. I describe how a multiplicity of alternative spatialities were accomplished by care in these projects, even whilst these projects were often tacitly presupposed by nation-state bound imaginaries of space. I observe this in classrooms, streets, a town hall, a hairdresser's, homes, market squares, parks and gardens, to describe everyday instances in which the reconfiguration of space through care had implications for the way terms of difference were negotiated, practised and materialised. Yet, as often as such alternative spatialities unsettled terms of difference, they also sustained them. And I find that such multiplicity was achieved as much through care as through conflict. Here, the processual nature of such spaces' becoming and unravelling became a significant parameter for examining their politics and negotiated existence. I seek to add to critical conversations on care and migration in the context of complex urban environments. by proposing one way in which thinking through care and place together may serve as a useful optic for examining material dimensions of political inequity, and help render legible fleeting or under-articulated makings of alternative spatial possibility.

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A note on the text

I use an * to indicate a direct, word for word quote. The observations I made were not sound recorded other than by hand note taking. But occasionally, if a phrase, its syntax, its choice of words, seemed particularly curious or significant to me, I would write them verbatim in my notes, and mark their significance. Where I have included these in my write up, I indicate this with the *, to reflect both its literalness, as well as to record the significance I have attributed to it.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ambivalent Conversations

This thesis proceeds from a profound ambivalence towards categories of difference. But it takes these categories as its starting point and examines the way they come to have materialising effects.

Through this thesis, I seek to engage with re-emerging debates on integration, the role of place, and the making of difference, but I attempt to examine these wider processes through everyday practices of care. I describe a series of practices — broadly held under formal and informal integration agendas — which aimed to connect, assist and care for women with migration backgrounds in Berlin. In doing this, I sought to learn from women what these efforts might reveal about relations of place, politics of difference and practices of care, in situations where the relationship between people deemed 'Other' and a certain 'locality' are taken as an assumed site of intervention. The following ethnography describe the kinds of practices and relations which became implicated, as well as what happened to that assumed relation between certain categories of difference and certain categories of place. I seek to demonstrate how various practices of care unsettled and pluralised space, with implications for the ways in which underlying politics of difference played out.

Situated within broader Welcome Politics of care efforts and a reanimation of integration debates following 2015's migratory movements, these projects were often tacitly presupposed by nation-state bound imaginaries of space. The following analysis is framed by this vast, wide ranging, plural grassroots response: what has been termed *Willkommenskultur* — the welcome politics of care for refugees and migrants — which operated at the institutional and informal level and has been held as an "important if imperfect" model (Funk 2016, 289, also Easton-Calabria and Wood 2020). And over eighteen months' fieldwork, I sought to learn how certain categories of difference, and certain practices of care to relate women to a 'locality' were thus conceptualised and manifested.

Whilst operating within a contentious, ambiguous, often non-innocent landscape of power, the kinds of practices I observed within integration projects were often expressed and framed by statements of care: care for women living precariously, care for their ability to live well in a place where they were made outsiders and 'out of place', care for the results of the inequities of a political system, care between practitioners and participants whether acting as friends or colleagues, care as an injunction to listen, relate and understand in particular ways, care — expressed in its own way — by politicians for women's integration within the city, society or job market.

These expressions of care are full of ambivalence. But in order to remain close to such narratives, practices and sensibilities of care as they arose in these accounts — where reference to absolute moralities of care might hinder the attention we pay to their situated claims — I have turned to recent academic theorisations and descriptions of care as a deeply situated, ambivalent concept. I specifically draw on conceptualisations which have used care as a heuristic to examine interdependence as a 'parameter of existence', to use Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's evocative phrase (2017, 6), and in which particular attention has been placed on the everyday materiality and spatiality upon which relational acts of care depend (Mol, Moser and Pols 2010; Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015). I follow the much-quoted definition of care by Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, that encompasses the affective motivation to care combined with "everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible (Fisher and Tronto 1991, 40 in Tronto 1993, 103). And I adopt Puig de la Bellacasa's elaborations on this definition, in which she triangulates practices of care within three dimensions: affective, practical (including efforts, skills and labour), and ethical (2017). I have used these coordinates of care to hold together the broad range of care practices in this account, for example embodied attunements and practised sensibilities to care for another (Chapter 4), ethically motivated action and empathic understanding (Chapter 5), efforts to make and maintain material surroundings for an otherwise to happen; for care amongst friends (Chapter 7). This is not an exhaustive list of the practices of care I go on to narrate in this ethnography, but they are illustrative of the coordinates within which I plot their occurrences: affect, ethicality, labour.

My point with such an open triangulation of care, however, is not to argue that every instance of integration practice was, or is, *caring*, or in some way involved care.

Rather, my intention is to stay close to instances where care was mobilised within the projects I observed. In doing this however, I include instances where care cannot be equated simplistically with 'good'. In fact, I include instances where I have a profound ambivalence to the kinds of care marshalled: where actions of care deny plurality as much as create it; where efforts to care seeded conflict as much as they offered comfort, connection or solace. The broader theorisations of care thus help make sense of an oftentimes disparate, frequently conflicting range of practices, attitudes and sensibilities which arose – it is not a claim to their 'goodness'.

Within this framing, the specificity and situatedness of care rises to the fore. Space, in this reckoning is not merely the background against which care 'got done', but rather became one of the constitutive elements of care's practices and effects. Space, in other words, features as a key player in this story about care.

In this telling, both care and space are equal in their heterogeneity. As often as practices of care were plural and diverse, so were the practices and relations by which space was constituted. And so, I should flag my use of terms: taking the plurality of space seriously, I have rendered no separation between 'space' and 'place' (I go into much further detail about this in the next chapter). Because material *space* in this account is a product of relations, just as much as any notions of 'place', I have not found a division between them useful. I use them interchangeably because both space and place conceptually arise here as momentarily cohering patterns of socio-material relations. Each of my data chapters is about the negotiations which produce space, and I describe ways in which care became an integral feature of those negotiations.

And so, in examining such projects' entanglements of place and care, and seeking to learn from women what these efforts might reveal about those very relations of place, politics of difference and practices of care, I was led by three broad questions:

1. **What kinds of care emerged in these projects?** How were they practised, expressed and experienced? and what was their significance for women I sought to learn from?
2. **What kinds of spatialities were implicated by care?** What happened to them and how were they 'done'? What kinds of relating were afforded by them?
3. **What was the effect of these care/space constellations on the ways categories and politics of difference played out?**

Care, space and politics, a three-pointed frame for the questions and the narrative that resulted. I narrate the way people cared for one another that reconfigured the space around them, as well as the way space played a role in shaping the kinds of care that got done. In both ways, care and space's entanglements of material relations were implicated in creating plural ethical and political possibilities.

In answering these questions, what I have found fascinating to observe is the kind of work that goes into acting upon a conceived relation (I have found the idea of working on *any* immaterial relation curious enough, but to reiterate, in this instance it is specifically the relation between a certain imaginary of place, and a certain categorisation of difference, as it is enacted within integration discourse). When space, as Doreen Massey argues, is "a practice of relationality" (2005, 147), how does this relationality become a site to be worked on? The questions above, therefore, were not merely about the kinds of happenings I wished to observe and participate in, they were also questions of methodology. What is it to observe a relation? To watch it being cared about? And *how* might it be possible to observe articulations and instantiations of difference when this is done?

Over eighteen months' fieldwork in one Berlin district, known as the 'migrant' district — Neukölln — I participated in and observed (although I used many other senses, as will later become important) a variety of (mostly) women-centred integration projects. I sought to learn from women's experiences and accounts what these practices of care and space do, and what they mean. Then, whilst attempting to corral my participant observer derived thoughts into linear form, Covid-19 struck, and place, and people, and care gained whole other meanings.

The first ambivalence that this thesis proceeds from, then, is towards categories of difference. The second regards care. The third and final is a familiar, though by no means universal, trope in anthropology of giving voice to the voiceless (Vargas-Cetina 2018 for a discussion). My interlocutors were not voiceless. Some made public speeches with a clarity, conviction and force I can only dream of. Some marched with placards written in their own hand, calling them out, with their own voice. Some have whole networks of family and supporters and friends (in which, for some, I now also include myself) with whom they are not 'voiceless'. Some wrote books, in their own

words. They sang songs voicing what they wanted to say, and did so in public. They had, have, and go on having a public audience.

This thesis is not about telling other people's stories and experiences of migration. Yet those stories are fundamental to it. This thesis seeks to interrogate the interrelation of practices of place and practices of care in narratives of integration, in one particular moment, when debates over integration, difference and care rose powerfully to the fore.

The sociologists Sabine Hark and Paule-Irene Villa begin their discussion of Germany's integration debate, *The Future of Difference* in the wake of the so-called 'migration crisis' with Cologne's New Year's Eve assaults in 2015, in which hundreds of women were sexually assaulted by groups of men (2020). Making international headlines, it stood for a crisis moment of 'integration', the supposed failure of multiculturalism, at a pivotal time shortly after 2015's so-dubbed 'long summer of migration', in which Germany took in over a million refugees, and the much celebrated, much debated Culture of Welcome evolved (*Willkommenskultur*) which combined both federal-level Politics of Welcome, and a range of grassroots and civil society-led initiatives (Hamann and Karakayali 2016). The events of that night were abhorrent. And then their abhorrence was instrumentalised. With claims that it was the 'Night That Changed Everything' both in the German daily *Welt am Sonntag* and then subsequently parroted in the international press, 'Cologne' became a byword for the failure of a certain integration rhetoric (ibid, 9; also Frey 2020). Hark and Villa use this moment to unpick not only the complex nature of the debate and its subsequent developments, but also to question its unsettling "widespread co-optation of feminist arguments in the service of Europe's border regime." (Ibid, 14). Complex entanglements of racism, sexism and feminism surfaced in these discussions of difference, in a debate, which more often than not was the mere semblance of debate. What was missing, they go on to argue "was and remains a certain quality of collective critical reflection that might enable a – controversial, yes, but deeply needful – series of debates about the practicalities of living alongside one another." (Ibid, 11).

That winter, as was the case most winters then, I was in the neighbouring city of Bonn visiting my parents. I had also made several visits to Berlin during that time. I was struck by the way living with difference was done differently — it was different to the way im/migration was discussed and responded to in the UK, it was different in the two German cities, it was even different between different districts in the same

city. It was a story about the way people *did* care differently. But it was also about the way lived space was inextricable from that picture, and its curious invisibilisation as the shape and form of those 'practicalities' of living with others.

The debates around integration in the wake of the 'long summer of migration' have been much reported (Hamann and Karakayali 2016; Gürer 2019; Brücker, Kosyakova and Vallizadeh 2020; Zill, Spierings and Van Liempt 2020), and I provide a more detailed discussion in the next chapter, but I seek in this introduction to elucidate why I took a different tack in this thesis, and to propose an alternative formulation of the debate's terms, in an effort to avoid reifying conceptualisations of place as a given and static entity.

When Hark and Villa draw our attention to the tension between the controversial nature of the debate and the inescapable need to have it, their comments, for me, point to issues of ambivalence, impurity and ethicality. These are issues firmly foregrounded in the theoretical landscape of care which has gained much traction over the last few years (Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015). Rather than locate the significance of an ethic of care to a set of normative obligations, Puig de la Bellacasa draws attention to its ability to make us think through, and with, 'impure involvements' when a marbled terrain of the 'good' does not invalidate that 'impure' questions of how to care still need to be posed (2017, 6).

Questions and debates of living with difference run the risk of instantiating those very categories of difference. Caring for what those categories of difference do, and their unequal effects upon people — as much integration work, especially at the grassroots level does — operates in an impure terrain of difference making, interconnected with wider 'impure' political framings and doings. It is within this impure ethic that Hark and Villa carve out a forum of debate. Beyond reifications of difference, beyond narratives that other, there is a different kind of conversation to be had. This thesis, being an empirical study, is not merely about the semantics of the integration debate (although it works within the premise that such representations have material effects), rather, it seeks to examine those 'practicalities of living with one another' when such presupposed terms of difference — a reliance on stasis, fixed notions of locality, nation-state derived identities — are not taken as given starting points.

As has been pointed out by others, place is often under-theorised in migration and integration discourse (Ivanova 2021), and implicitly manifests as a given, often passive backdrop. It often features as the tacit nation-state ground against which notions of identity are figured. In crossing a border, the act of movement thus materialises as categories of difference, categories of legality, and persons (Bauböck 2007). Inherent in these framings are notions of place as instantiations of 'origin' and 'heritage', as well as the place within which one is relationally positioned as somehow 'different'.

Such instantiations of place, however, enact a certain political imaginary. They are less about the variety of experiences, relations and materialities which constitute place, and more about notions of territoriality: a holding ground, a passive context within which things happen (Ingold 2010). And in this instantiation of place as a static container 'identity' is flattened into stasis and givenness too. It becomes an innate and inherent category of difference to demarcate 'other' people demarcated by 'their place' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). It is a narrative of the Other, and a narrative that others. It is part of what Lisa Malkki has termed a "sedentary bias" in everyday and academic discourse (1997). And beyond its everyday socio-political life, such imbrications of place and otherness — making people Other — also feature as central debates in anthropology (Low 2016).

In her plea for the 'de-migrantization' of research on migration and integration, Janine Dahinden argues that in cementing these categories as objects of analysis, researchers risk perpetuating the very migration knowledge apparatus which they aim to critique (2016). Nina Glick Schiller similarly calls for migration scholars to find ways to theorise their objects of examination without recourse to 'methodological nationalism' which remain inherent in migration categories, and are then perpetuated in migration research (2010). They both propose a move away from these terms, through repositioning the subject matter in broader debates of social theory, first in order to avoid reification of the categories (Dahinden 2016, 13) and second to find other methodological orientations to examine identity projects, in ways which do not reify nation-state epistemologies (Glick Schiller 2010, 117-118). In other words, as I read it, both the uncritical replication of the categories as they apply to people, and as they apply to conceptions of place respectively, deserve reformulation. The process of emplacing categories of people (as migrant or otherwise) in various ways comes under

scrutiny in these conceptualisations, paving the way to critically examine processes of *emplacement* within integration logics.

In trying to find ways to examine emplaced and emplacing projects of otherness — to have conversations on care, and inequity, and difference — I have turned to place itself, interrogating it within a processual and relational approach, in ways that cannot be disarticulated from the life lived through it. Moreover, I aim to do this in ways which remain agnostic to what arises and materialises by these relations. In trying to de-migrantise this research, this thesis therefore very deliberately attempts to move away from treating integration as a given 'object'.

Since my medium of expression is an ethnography, this conversation has proceeded as a story. With the imaginational, speculative tools of theory, place emerged as a central figure in ways that *did* unexpected things to the plot line of my theoretical argument; meaning and matter became intra-related (after Barad 2007). The observation of space in itself pluralised what was understood to constitute it. Falling into three broad and overlapping categories, this included (1) the embodied nature of space, (2) its representational and symbolic aspects which exist in a shared social imagination, and (3) its tangibility as configurations of textured matter, which altogether rendered an increasingly complex picture of the relations constituting place. These three dimensions — body/culture/space — compose Setha Low's conceptualisation of embodied space (2017), and her thinking has helped me structure the way space is handled ethnographically in this account. My data chapters mirror these three elements – embodied, representational, material – in chapter 4, 5 and 6 respectively. In observing place in this way, the division between space (as universal and abstract matter) and place (as that space imbued with meaning) became increasingly untenable. I followed Massey in resisting such a bifurcation (with its stubborn Cartesian heritage of bifurcating meaning and matter) to view both space and place as a result of temporarily cohering constellations of relations (including human, non- human and material relations in such an account) (Massey 2005). What this meant for the practices I observed, was that care gained increasing possibilities for its effects to become manifest. I have tried to render this process legible – an active observation that questions, theorises and thus pluralises what is seen. Firstly through the data chapters' foregrounding of different aspects of space. And secondly, I have also sought to illustrate this iterative process of observation/theorisation in the form of

interludes, which discuss observing/participating in space with methodological and empirical consequences in the following chapter's data. This interpenetration of perception and materialisation — the weave of intangible thought and tangible consequence — are central themes in this thesis, both theoretically and empirically, and so I briefly want to clarify my use of the term imaginational here. I am not using it as that which is 'not true', but, as the writer Ursula K. Le Guin describes it "the meeting place of the thinking mind with the sensing body" (1989, 196). I use this aspect of the imaginational tools of theory to foreground the speculative dimension of this thesis as I attempt to render visible under-articulated instances and situations of alternative spatialities. For it is in this coeval multiplicity that I locate alternative political possibilities.

I return to this notion of the meeting place between the thinking mind and the sensing body throughout the thesis. It is also where I lay the claims of affect which so inflect the writing — seeing affect as a sensation to which one responds, and which therefore places it in the realm of *sensorial encounter* (Massumi 1995), as well as a motivating force, a *thinking* precursor to action (McCormack 2020) — such as practices of care. But this notion of what occurs between (or rather in overlaps of) sensation and thought repeats throughout this thesis, as I seek to theorise the perception of, and the care for, difference, in ways which are as much practices of thinking, as they are tactile practices of doing. I seek to describe the spatial implication of these practices of care in ways that recognise them as instances of knowledge making as much as they are the very stuff of world making.

Chapter Outline

This project began as a project on refugee health, projects of care for them, and the role of the built environment in sustaining informal networks of support around migrant women, for physical, mental, social health and wellbeing. This literature forms the first half of my literature review in Chapter 2. It frames both the debates and milieu of thought and action in which I situated my research, and as such formed the wider discourse 'context' of my research. It also framed the mindset with which I approached the research. I was keenly interested in the links between friendship and wellbeing, the contact point between formal and informal care, the built environment as a shaper of

relations in ways that have implications for psycho-social health, the iniquitous politics of 'fitting-in' to an environment that itself makes people not fit, and its expression in health inequities. And finally, because the literature that frames the processual materialisation of bodies in clinical settings, eventually became the very same literature that helped frame the materialisation of bodies vis-a-vis an environment. I use the literature to think through the epistemological work by which matter is enacted unequally, whether of categories of identity or place. Public health has long ago taken conceptualisations of the body outside the clinic to account for 'environmental factors', and this thesis has co-opted the medical anthropology literature on the body to follow suit. The enactment of bodies is thus paralleled in this thesis with various enactments of the environment.

As such, elements of these conceptual orientations frame the subsequent ethnography (with a notable move away from an exclusive focus on forced migration) but they have taken unexpected reformulations. Those initial points of interest on informality, wellbeing, and connections do figure, but health is no longer the metric by which affectual encounters and the emotional experiences of inequity are foregrounded. Yet, stories of healing, of emotional crisis, of medical diagnoses and medical categories arise and have found their way into the empirical content of this thesis.

I go on to give an outline of integration policy and practice, situating its evolution and contestations in the German context, and specifically Berlin. I seek to critically frame this within wider debates regarding the use of integration and migration as analytical terms. Ultimately, in attempting not to perpetuate a series of inequalities sedimented in the terms 'integration' and 'migration', I seek alternative means of framing my questions regarding the practices I observed in 'integration' projects. I have sought inspiration from recent materialist theorisations in anthropology which I put in dialogue with theorisations on place and space. And it is here that I begin to situate my attentions on care through the mutually constitutive relation between people and place – the co-production of categories of difference and certain kinds of makings of space.

I start by looking at anthropological speculations on the body in order to conceptualise the relation between the self and the environment. Much of this draws on theorists associated with the material 'turn' in anthropology (and the social sciences more broadly). Far from presenting one unified 'materialist' theory, they present

overlapping yet distinct positions, which helps me foreground three different elements of a conceived relation between people and space. I attend to the affectability of the body through its senses, which in tow frames a conception of a 'lively' environment (Teil 2019, Latour 2005). I examine anthropological theorisations of embodiment in ways which speak to framings of lived space, drawing on Michael Taussig's ethnography of seeing, art making and the city (Taussig 1993). And I examine the dimension of skills and perception of the environment in ways which enliven and 'make' the environment of matter (drawing, amongst others, on Tim Ingold's writings). This ordering of the three elements – the body, representation and making – also track the three broad theoretical anchors of my data chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively), and frame the ways I have chosen to examine the role of the environment in theorisations of subjectivity, which I build on throughout this thesis' chapters.

Next, I turn to literature on place as a relational process, by which it has been conceptualised as materially and socially instantiated through the work of encounters by a number of theorists, notably in geography. I then narrow in on Doreen Massey's work, which has also been seminal in the materialist 'turn' in geography. I then drop any division in my analysis between space and place, through treating both as an ongoing product of ever-unfolding relations (2005).

I draw together my thinking on the body and on space through Setha Low's conceptualisations of 'embodied space' (2017), which she offers as a way of interrogating the materiality and sociality of space from an ethnographic point of view. I use her conceptualisation of embodied space as a disarticulable triad — body/culture/space — to foreground various elements of space in my analysis, and this framing then shapes the progression of my data chapters, as I elaborate further below.

Using this synthesised optic, I then turn to care, and offer ways in which practices of space and practices of care may be fruitfully brought together.

I aim to find a conceptualisation which allows me to pay better attention to the kinds of relations of spatiality through which care is done, and the kinds of spatial effects that caring relations might bring forth, I lean into the conceptual overlaps between theorisations of space and analyses of care. I attend to the conceptual use of care as a lens to foreground the ontological and ethical significance of interdependence as the prerequisites for life to be, and to persist. I examine the use of care as a particular 'modality' for handling questions to do with the 'good' (Mol, Moser and Pols 2010,

13), and such a modality's inseparability from the situatedness (including the material conditions) of care practice.

I thus tune my processual and relational approach to ask, what is actually acted and enacted in practices of care for difference? It becomes not merely a question of what it is to 'fit in', but what it is to be made to 'fit in' — to do 'integration', to be made a part and apart from place — when that very place is an occurrence that does not stay still.

After this, I move onto the practice and practicalities of the ethnographic research in Chapter 3. In a thesis that takes perception as one of its main parameters of investigation, observing observation became a significant point of analysis. This became a methodological factor not easily disarticulated from the analysis, or the empirical 'data' itself. Thus, Chapter 3 details my methodological approach, my positionality, questions of ethics and an outline of the field, but it only establishes the start of the ethnographic iteration. I use this chapter to position the ongoing methodological work and my ethnographic approach. The ongoing interrogation and iteration of the very premise of participant observation as it unfolded over the course of fieldwork is, however, then further reflected on in the final ethnography, folded into the data section itself in the form of two 'Interludes' (Interludes I and II).

The data in these chapters is an account of eighteen months' ethnographic fieldwork in which I paired participant observation with less directly conversational observations of the district as lived space. Primarily, I describe the work of an organisation that trains women with migrant backgrounds to conduct 'integration' work with other families with migrant backgrounds living within the formal boundary line of the district, which I have called the City Mothers Project. I supplement this account with descriptions of two other, smaller grassroots initiatives, in which logics of 'integration' featured differently, and I describe how the relation between categories of difference and place was instantiated differently therein. The first of these two is a pilot project, set up to help refugee women access apprenticeship schemes. The second is a co-housing, co-design project, that aimed to collectively design and then build a shared residence for newcomers to Germany (particularly those living with extreme precarity) along with more established Berlin residents. In this brief description, as in the rest of the thesis, in narrating the projects' missions or their own statements, I adopt the migration terms they self-describe by. In my own accounts, I aim to think of relations between categories of difference and place without recourse to migration and

integration categories in an effort not to perpetuate the normalisation work inherent in the terms — as far as I have found possible, at least.

Taken together, the chapters track the evolution of an argument that moves from a theorisation of difference to a theorisation of differentiation. In this evolving lens, I hone my attentions on care through descriptions of the co-production of categories of difference and certain kinds of makings of space.

I begin by foregrounding the sensoriality of the body in Chapter 4 through a moment in which women are asked to understand and 'listen with their care', in order to establish the role of perception, as a major methodological and empirical theme in the thesis. Here, perception is conceived as an active process, as an encounter with an environment, and it is conceived beyond merely its ocularcentric framings, to account for the full 'sensing body'. Thus, I look at embodied and disembodied practices of care as they take place through political ambitions of 'integration'. Acts of embodied and disembodied care, I argue, reconfigure spatial relations and conceptualisations of difference, such that the role of encounter, and the perceptual skills by which these encounters are made, becomes a primary optic through which to observe the way trust and support are are 'spatialised'.

In this chapter I look at a range of spatialities made through various political circulations of difference and affinity. These alternative spatialities sit in overlap with the kinds of hegemonic imaginaries of space upon which the projects implicitly depend, but such alternative multiplicity exists without unsettling those wider political imaginaries of space. I describe how otherness is instrumentalised, even whilst a space is made to build empathic affinities. Here, place is not merely the passive background to relations of care, it is itself generative of certain care relations.

I take a methodological interlude (Interlude I), to recalibrate my observational tools, as I take a non-chronological walk through the district's public spaces. I aim to introduce the district to the reader, in a tour that seeks to pose questions on the nature of representing place in a stable and knowable way. It thus engages with debates on the ethnographic process of place-making, as well as knowledge making. And I aim to do this in ways which prefigure the empirical content of the subsequent chapter, whereby the effects, stakes and processes of representation are examined. Through these brief encounters with the district as lived space across eighteen months of fieldwork, I aim to interrogate what constitutes place when moments of encounter are

foregrounded, such that any hard division between the 'social' and the 'physical' is questioned, and any stable and singular representation of place is 'troubled' (after Haraway 2016).

Chapter 5 looks at the mediating effect of care, in the way representations of space and representations of difference were circulated, debated and contested by women on the project. I follow one extended conflict of representations which emerged following an art course in the City Mothers project, and the subsequent display of photographs and commentaries on the district which were put up at an exhibition in the Museum of the City. The theoretical framing proceeds from two motives: the first is to describe a moment of conflict outside the usual framings of adversarial aggression, since this conflict proceeded largely through conflicting motives of care and concern, with multiway effects. Similar to the chapter that precedes it, this chapter points to the non-innocent, and plural dimensions of care, but it frames the more diffuse, unclear and confusing dimensions of people who were trying to 'understand with care'. The second theoretical framing attempts to find ways to engage with subjectivity, as a distributed kind of embodiment which takes place, amongst other things, through an urban environment replete with representations and images (Taussig 1993, 2007). I seek to provide this description through attending to what circulates 'between' — in this case, small works of art in an age of digital reproduction (after Benjamin 1935/1968). In this chapter, categories of difference were reinforced in tow with certain hegemonic representations of the district. Plurality did not disappear here, but unlike the previous chapter, different claims of space (and their imbrication with categories of difference) *did* come into conflict. And in coming into conflict, the incommensurate claims of space and the asymmetric terms by which they were negotiated, were made manifest. However, in this description, where colleagues and friends negotiated these representations, took efforts and care to understand different positions, and sought to protect and care for the risks they posed, no single narrative won out. Every bid for a single instantiation of what the district *is* was somehow tripped up. I analyse this thwarting of plans to examine the implications it suggests for the contingency and situatedness of place effects, and of care's effects too.

Between Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I once again take a methodological interlude to examine my observational tool kit. I ethnographically frame this speculative moment through an extended observation of a park on a sunny, summer afternoon. I look at the 'gap' maintained between different events in the park, trying

to see what lies 'between' them, and I argue that the gap is just as vital as the events themselves. I use this moment to talk about the imaginational work of making 'gaps', the fallacy of immaterialising the material contingencies of distance by which sociality proceeds. I seek to draw attention to boundaries, that in doing the work of differentiating allow objects to come into definition. This helps me frame an argument against certain assumptions of integration, resting on notions of commensurate difference lying on a given, passive universal plane; And I thus propose a different way to consider the 'practicalities of living with one another' that proceeds through greater attentions to the processuality and relationality of lived space. This Interlude (Interlude II) thus prefigures Chapter 6's focus on the textures, surfaces and acts of surfacing, which create differentiations for alternative spaces, where other political possibilities are made.

In Chapter 6 I discuss the making of embodied space as a processual encounter in which its significance lies more in its making by friends, colleagues, neighbours – than in its ability to constitute permanent space. I examine its enduring and durable (not immutable) patterning of space through the pace and tempo with which it is made. The focus of this chapter is the entanglement of friendships and space: how women sustained spaces for friendship, and how certain acts of care were enabled by particular spatialities. I describe their intersubjective significance, in ways which stay close to the textures and materials by which they were made meaningful and durable. I examine some of the implications that space is a product of affective relations as much as any other kind of relation. I seek to describe ways in which such affective force shapes knowledge as much as it shapes material worlds. Multiple possibilities for spatial politics were made here. They didn't all last. I pay attention to the rhythm of their becoming and unravelling. And I seek to show how such space's rhythmic possibility (and impossibility) is, in many ways, an expression of the unequal politics upon which it manifests.

Thus, I argue that inequities proceeding from the co-production of categories of difference and certain kinds of makings of space, in which notions of making people 'fit-in' abound, is a complex imbrication of knowledge making and world making. It begins when the active and ongoing making of place is obscured from view in a logic that already sees it as passive, as static — a perspective that immaterialises and invisibilises the socio-materialities by which place occurs (Casey 2009). This chapter aims to draw attention to the processes by which place occurs and proceeds through

relations of care, as well as the iniquitous access in the ability to make lived spaces of significance endure, from the specific perspective of friendship and informal kinds of care. The politics of difference come together with my speculations on perceptions of the environment, to argue for an attunement towards the significance of emplaced relations of care in everyday, mundane and ubiquitous constellations. I argue that an attunement towards enduring socio-material patterns rather than spatial fixity, offers a lens onto patterns of inequality that inhere in the pace of movement – in space understood as 'an encounter on the move' (Massey 2003). In this realm where space moves, inequity, conflict and care shape and reshape space in significant ways, and their effects inhere in the kinds of caring and careful relations of informal support and close friendships that take place.

Finally I bring the arguments of these individual chapters together in the final discussion chapter. I argue that various practices of care shaped spatial relation in ways that had consequences for the way categories of difference were negotiated, practised and materialised. I seek to draw attention to this process in the inexhaustible multiplicity of everyday, quotidian interactions. Yet, I argue, as often as such alternative spatialities unsettled terms of difference, they also sustained them, and I emphasise that such multiplicity was achieved as much through care as through conflict. I discuss the significance of the temporal in this optic on space and care, where the rhythm of the fleeting spatialities described in the final data chapter – both their durability and dissolvability – can be read effects of uneven power. And I seek to discuss the value of such an optic in relation to critical conversations on migration and integration, where thinking through care and place together may serve as a useful lens for examining material dimensions of political inequity in complex urban environments. I argue that such a lens may help render fleeting or under-articulated makings of alternative spatial possibility legible.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMINGS

In this chapter I outline the literature on integration, migration and health in order to set out the context and debates which situate this research. This facilitates the second half of the chapter in which I seek to question the very terms and vocabulary of the debate, challenging their reification of difference. I therefore borrow from literature on the body, place and care, seeking to position this thesis' approach in a processual and relational mode that questions static, given categories of difference.

PART I: AN OVERVIEW OF THE TERMS

Migration has a compelling geography of movement and borders; it is testament to the politics of the motion of people through space. In arguing for a different way of conceiving of the relation between people and space, and unpacking the terms of migrant 'integration', I want to draw attention to the political life of the term migration as one that is constituted through a particular reading of the physical movement of people through environments. It is through the life of the terms of integration that I examine certain imaginaries and practices of place. Whilst I go on to argue that the linked terms of migration and integration have their limits in the following thesis, what follows is a brief overview of many of the issues which stand as background to this study, as they are momentarily framed by these concepts.

In addition to migration, I examine a parallel narrative that connects people and environment through notions of health. Framings of non-communicable diseases associated with 'lifestyle', 'social determinants' and 'environmental factors' equally rely on conceptualisations of a certain relationship between people and environment, in ways which are complex and interrelating (McKeown 2009, Mercer 2018, Sander et al. 2008). At the heart of this public health model is a particular medical paradigm of people as bounded, individualised units, where the environment often forms an important context, but a passive one nonetheless: an inherited Cartesian bifurcation between mind and body, and bodies and their environment (Latour 1999). Much of this leads to a conceptualisation of interrelated but discrete parts, such that attempts to model pathways of causation are rendered increasingly complex, and its effect on bodies

remains stubbornly elusive (Bind 2019, Olvera Alvarez et al. 2018, see Yates-Doerr 2020 for a critical evaluation).

In discussions of migrant health these two narratives collide: conceptualisations of place and of people's relationship to space. The notion of how the environment becomes a determinant of health, naturally presupposes models of how people and the environment are deemed to relate. It is a premise of this thesis that there is something to learn about the ways people and the environment are made related and deemed relatable.

In what follows I outline the significance and presence of migrant integration and health as related narratives, since they infuse many of the practices taking place in Berlin. These narratives are formed in critical dialogue with the so-called 'migration crisis' of 2015, and they set the initial imperatives of this research. Whilst I eventually do away with the term migration in my observational remarks and analysis, this is not to underplay the significance of migration-related health inequalities. These remain globally persistent and enduring, operating through a vast array of contexts. I do not prune my vocabulary in order to turn away from these issues. Rather, I seek to turn towards the inequalities which persist through them, and to examine the taken-for-granted dynamics which perpetuate them.

Cities and Migration

Following the variously called 'migration-', 'asylum-' or 'refugee crisis', deemed to peak in Germany around 2015 (Crawley and Skleparis 2018 for a critical discussion, also Brücker, Kosyakova and Vallizadeh 2020), forced migration gained particular purchase in Berlin's political life, being at the centre of a country whose comparatively welcoming policy rendered it one of the main European destinations (Holmes and Castañeda 2016, critical discussion). As follows many instances of crisis, health featured as a particularly ubiquitous optic, and it is against this background that much of present research into migration (the relation between bodies, movement and political space) can be usefully understood.

Whilst forced migration, is a particularly acute example of spatial rupture, change and contestation, most pressingly represented in crisis images of camps and

large-scale temporary shelter, its presence as an urban phenomenon is key. It is estimated that cities are home to over half of the world's refugees (UNHCR 2016). The lack of research on this group in comparison to research conducted on 'camp-based' refugees, has been highlighted as a notable omission, in part due to its complexity (Sanyal 2012; Amara and Aljunid 2014). But beyond the greater logistical problems of conducting research in fast-paced, complex, urban environments — the camp, for example, has its theoretically demarcated edges, and its more formal obstructions to movement — what it means to conduct research with the city is a theoretically obscure issue: at once both a context of urban migration and an active parameter in the unfolding dynamics (Doomernik and Ardon 2018). It is within this context that the issue of spatial scale is not just methodologically challenging, but it poses theoretical quandaries; the global geopolitical scale is enfolded at the level of individualised status (Dekker et al. 2015). It is also an issue at the heart of anthropological speculations on place, in which a phenomenology of everyday encounters, such as statehood-derived status, is fundamentally an articulation of processes at the global scale (Gupta and Ferguson 2002). Shifts at the global level are also entangled with day to day interactions in people's material, social and legal standings, with direct results on bodies, conceived through the optic of health (Rechel et al. 2013), Berlin being no exception in this global debate (Mladovsky et al. 2012, Wilcke and Manoim 2019).

Women and Migration

A rising number of women migrants worldwide ushered a debate into whether what was being witnessed was a 'feminisation of migration' or merely the increasing attention to women's migration (De Haas, Castles and Miller 2020).

In addition to the risks and challenges asylum-seeking women face as a consequence of forced migration (especially violence and trauma), there are the added issues involved with settlement in a new and unfamiliar place. Zimmerman et al. classify five migrant phases - pre-departure, travel, destination, interception, and return — noting that "Health intervention opportunities exist at each stage" (Zimmerman et al. 2011, 2). In this model, this project can be situated in the 'destination' phase, in which migrant women in Europe have been found to be more

at risk of reproductive health problems (Reeves et al. 2013; Papadopoulos et al. 2004), as well as at risk of poorer mental health outcomes than native born populations (Gerritsen 2006, Aspinall 2018). Many of the risks associated with poorer mental health are related to women's specific experience of forced migration including gender-based violence (Gerritson 2006), separation from their children (Hilfinger Messias 2011), a difference in employment opportunities and devaluation of their skills (Dumitru 2014), and distress experienced from compromised abilities to care for their families (Bottorff, Johnson and Venables 2001). As the Global Migration Group has commented, "migration is not a gender neutral phenomenon: men and women display differences in their migratory behaviours and face different opportunities, risks and challenges […including…] vulnerability to human rights abuses, exploitation, and discrimination; and health issues. The experience of female migrants differs from that of men's from the moment women decide to migrate" (2010, 45).

Both in academic literature and policy a high currency has been placed on migrant integration in relation to employment (e.g. Hansen 2012 for a review; Hooper, Desiderio and Salant 2017). Yet much of this research fails to disaggregate the experiences of men and women, as well as the differing effect of the labour market on them. Women migrants typically find it harder to secure work, are subject to different pressures in managing paid and unpaid labour (such as family care), and even once they do secure work often suffer greater deflation of their qualification and lower pay than their male counterparts, both in severity and extending over a longer time period (Meleis et al. 2011). Under gender-blind employment programmes and policies women's particular challenges remain unaddressed and ill-understood, both in policy and academia (Ballarino and Panichella 2017), an issue which is further exemplified by the higher prevalence of studies promoting employment as a channel through which to promote social integration. In other words, integration understood through male-centric possibilities and challenges have often been staged as a universal experience of integration trajectories.

The emphasis on employment also casts integration within a narrower set of social priorities — typically around resources and income — relinquishing the importance of 'place', removing and disassociating the importance of where one lives for those workers who inevitably work elsewhere. Yet women migrants often experience the effects of the neighbourhood more acutely — both typically spending

more time in their immediate vicinity, and usually taking a more primary role in negotiating its social infrastructure of schools, childcare and health services, using its amenities and resources, and its social support networks, whether formal or informal (Meleis 2011). Such an observation is not merely an oversight as to the role of place, it is the consequences of an over identification with a particular kind of integration, more available to a particular subset of the migrant population than others. If migration's effects are not gender neutral, nor is its investigation.

But in considering the role of 'place' or women's immediate lived environment, there is the risk of uncritically replicating assumptions about women's tighter embeddedness within family structures and social obligations, a highly charged debate in the German policy context (Hannover et al. 2018). A key consideration here is therefore to critically consider the kinds of integration we might understand in relation to place — what interactions and what resources, material or otherwise, come to be involved in the process.

To elaborate on this position I draw on Wise and Velayutham's conceptual toolkit on everyday 'convivial multiculture' (2013), in which interactions are bound up inextricably with the socio-spatial environment in which they are taking place. To analyse interactions effectively, they argue, one must bring in the environment not merely as background but as an active part in triggering and shaping interactions. They work to establish the notion of conviviality in the city to argue for its ability to afford an attunement to the shifting affective negotiations, and ephemeral aspect of sociality, as well as bring the physicality of the city in (ibid., 407). They use the term to explore the various ways in which a number of elements play a part in shaping everyday interactions, the physical place which shapes our 'encounters with difference' — doors, street corners, shops — and the types of exchange conduits (social, material and emotional) we participate in, as well as recognising the overlap and ability to develop multiple cultural competences, or 'intercultural habitus' (ibid., 415). These elements are important because it takes us away from policy and discourse analysis, floating 'up there' and brings the issue of spatially contingent processes back in.

Integration in a Different Mode: Links with Health

In order to analyse the spatially contingent processes at hand, I am briefly going to turn to integration understood in a different mode: healthcare. But I wish to read it in a slightly different vein than the one intended. I am reading it here for the politics of attentions which go into theorising connections, and the kind of work, practice and knowledge that is marshalled by this thinking. I seek to interrogate the terms of integration and health to make visible some of the implicit conceptualisations regarding people, society and place, and the ways in which they are deemed relatable.

The notion of integration within health discourse, pertaining to social connectivity, sits in fuzzy overlap with the terms of 'migrant integration'. A large body of literature has analysed integration as a way of relating social ties and their impact on health (for reviews Kemp et al. 2017; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2010; Uchino 2013); integration as a socio-political concept that affects migrant health (Warfa et al. 2006, Marquez et al. 2014), and, in mirror image, health as a measure of migrant integration (for the Berlin context Bach et al. 2017; Brücker et al. 2016). Broadly speaking, a large body of health literature around integration — understood both as social ties and as a dimension of migrant health — suggests that deeper, extended, and more diverse integration has a positive impact on health outcomes.

Heide Castañeda's study of migrant patients in a Berlin clinic, found that illegality increased health risks and disparities in four major areas: lower quality of care, delayed presentation or interrupted treatment, difficulties in accessing emergency care, and a lack of mental health provision (Castañeda 2009). For Susann Huschke, the 'inevitable power inequalities' that arise out of providing humanitarian aid in a situation of unclear legality (her study examined specifically South American migrants in Berlin without formal access to care), forces patients to "perform their deservingness" through gratitude and humility, or risk losing good-will based care (Huschke 2014). Debates regarding the effect that nationally set categories have on personal health is strongly present in both studies. Both these researchers focus on the perspective from the clinic but point to the ways informal care plays a key part — for example informal social connections are often the link through which referrals arrive at the clinic, and they are vital to patients in terms of interim care — altogether forming an invisible but significant aspect of migrant care strategies.

Additionally, for both these researchers, national narratives of 'integration' are played out in health care settings. A review of European wide policy similarly found that states' health-care policies often played out their politico-cultural concerns (Mladovsky et al. 2014), thus for example an overarching health policy in Germany regards the integration of women, seen to extend from long standing anxieties regarding the status of Muslim women in German culture (Melchiors 2014). More specifically for Castañeda, concerns over 'cultural competence', 'transcultural care' and 'health disparities' narratives in the German context, refract a wider political debate over inclusion and exclusion, which set the terms by which selective investment in migrant health depends on concepts of 'deservingness' to emerge out of national identity narratives (Castañeda 2011). Her research was based on 'unauthorised' migrants, (often used interchangeably with 'undocumented') prior to 2015's rise in newcomers, but revisiting these concepts with Holmes in 2016, to examine the 'war of positions' over representations of 2015's summer, they find that similar tensions over 'deservingness' carry a strong currency in the ability to marshal and access services for and by refugees. In the highly charged political and media debate they find there is "no unified Germany in response to the crisis" (Holmes and Castañeda 2016, 14; also Hamann and Karakayali 2016; Selim et al. 2018), public attitudes were not merely reflective of wider narratives but frequently resistant; a careful and ongoing evaluation of positions in a highly fluid landscape of moral symbols (also Bhimji 2016). The political landscape against which these study play, the authors argue, has direct material consequences on multiple aspects of migrant health, yet what might still be escaping the wider picture is the consequences and opportunities — access to material resources, social connections, living conditions etc. — which remain ill-understood when considered in purely discursive terms. The socio-spatial landscape against which opportunities and challenges play out have a particular urban character which remains hidden when we abstract the political beyond its immediate socio-spatial environment (Darling 2016). Once more, the registers by which place can be deemed to relate to people, health and wider social inequalities necessitates rendering otherwise implicit ideas about place and space explicit, which otherwise remain implicit givens . Ideas of the global and local are not entities that merely sit 'out there' but are manifested in both discursive and material ways to frame the socio-spatial politics of difference.

For example, in their investigation of migrant integration projects in east Berlin's Marzahn district, Matejskova and Leitner (2011) similarly contest methodological lenses on social integration which would reify the process beyond the day to day interactions on the ground. For them the 'micro-geography' scale of community centres (down to the scale of the room and kitchen) in which people interact are important to view the often contradictory processes — both negative and positive — arising in cross-cultural city integration programmes. Through numerous observations, they question the 'contact hypothesis' which proposes that increased exposure to the Other can break down prejudice, instead suggesting that superficial contact — without more meaningful social interaction — can often entrench stereotyping. What this calls into question is the inherent assumption, both political and academic, that the diverse city by virtue of mixed co-presence alone might lead to its arising as a site of cosmopolitan solidarity (e.g. Pullan 2013). Space in other words underpins sociality (Massey 2005), but it does not imply well-being or solidarities in sociability (Amin 2002, Sennet 2012, Hillier and Hanson 1989, Hanson 2000 for discussions on both sides of the debate). And in pushing for the complex ways space is implicated in sociality, the fine grained attention to spaces of interaction, at the ground level — ambiguous, conflicting and unstable — is an important methodological turn.

To reiterate my approach, the attention on integration is not a neutral one politically and its broad, shifting definitions are usually more informative as to the state of the debate in the cultural politics of difference than substantive claims 'on the ground'. Thus, much of the analytical utility of 'integration' shifts between observing two poles: policies that are more or less accepting of plurality on the one hand, and anxieties of alterity on the other. Respectively, such 'diversity' versus 'assimilationist' approaches to integration are reflected in these studies' definitions of integration. In part, moving away from the idea of integration and towards the effects of social connection and isolation, is a broader issue at the heart of urban sociality and wellbeing for all city residents, which whilst specifically relevant to migration studies, opens up the ability to take a more encompassing view of the properties of a 'place' as a socio-spatial object. In this broader view, 'integration' might be taken as an object which emerges in everyday practice and experience, without being adopted as an analytical parameter in itself.

This is particularly important in the German context as integration policy has undergone a number of significant shifts.

‘Migrant Integration’ in Germany

Public debates in Germany regarding issues of migration and integration rose steeply with the rising number of refugee arrivals, which peaked in 2015, following the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War. The events reanimated a debate long entrenched in ‘multiculturalist’ versus ‘assimilationist’ paradigms of integration (Ambrosini and Boccagni 2015). In addition to debating the city’s response to the unprecedented number of refugee arrivals from ethical, logistical and administrative positions, the debates also shed light on Berlin’s long-standing failures to achieve socio-economic equity between people with and without migration backgrounds (OECD 2018). The public discourse around duty, obligation and welcome, both at the level of national politics and of civil society took on the moral proportion and anxious optimism of redemption (Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir 2017, also Hann 2015, Braun 2017, Laubenthal 2019, Sutter 2019, Perron 2020). And a wide sphere of grassroots solidarity and civic volunteer action sprung up, broadly held under the much celebrated ‘Culture of Welcome’ (*Willkommenskultur*). This work was mirrored at the level of governance by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s ‘refugee welcome’ (*Flüchtlinge Willkommen*) stance, and her slogan ‘We can do it’ (*Wir schaffen das*) on 5th September 2015, setting the tone for a national politics of welcome (*Willkommenspolitik*) and care for refugees (Funk 2016). The temporary suspension of the EU Dublin III Agreement in 2015 (requiring that refugees apply for asylum at first EU country of arrival) enabled an estimated million people to enter Germany, though many are thought to have travelled onwards to Scandinavian countries, leaving around 800,000, about 1% of the German population (ibid). In Berlin, a city of 3.7 million residents, 33,000 refugees arrived in 2015, and a further 27,000 in 2016, adding to the city’s diverse makeup, in which around 30% already had a migration background (OECD 2018).

However, whilst the summer of 2015 marks the acute trigger for the reanimation of Germany’s public debates around migrant integration, the context of the response lies in complex national and local migration histories. The response is underpinned by two long-standing confrontations with racializing policy: the historic legacy of the Holocaust -- ever-present in public discourse regarding racism, fascism and asylum -- and a more recent history of ethnicity-based exclusions, which is explicitly called forth in contemporary integration debates. This recent history largely

revolves around the consequences of a post-war labour scheme in which millions of so-called "Guest Workers" were recruited to plug a low-skilled labour shortage.

Between 1955 and 1973, millions of workers were recruited for industrial jobs from a number of targeted countries, including Spain, Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslavia, and Turkey. Little attention was paid to workers' long-term rights. And as arrivals from Turkey became the largest group, and began to establish lives in Germany, many were caught in the liminal and precarious status of 'Guests'. Faced with a series of restrictive citizenship laws dating to 1913, in which dual citizenship was not permitted and application for naturalisation required 15 years' residency, few of the 14 million workers who arrived under the scheme succeeded in staying. A recruitment ban during the 1973 Oil Crisis shifted immigration dynamics from labour to family reunification, and by the 1990s three million workers and their families were left in the extended, uncertain, stigmatised status of 'guests', with a host of consequent socio-economic inequalities compared to native born Germans including worse outcomes in health, political participation, educational attainment, child poverty and unemployment levels (Model et al. 2019; Castro Varela 2014).

At the federal level, the term 'integration' began to be used by the newly elected centre left government during the 1990s, as a corrective to previous American-informed assimilationist policies, and a recognition of their concomitant social disparities (Hamann and Karakayali 2016). Much of this came to a head in the early 2000s with the publishing of a report by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2001 that revealed students' attainment was largely dependent on their origin (and that of their parents). In the aftermath of what came to be known as the 'PISA shock', integration framed discussions around the need to confront wide inequalities in education, employment and political participation between populations with and without migrant backgrounds.

During this time, the term 'integration' acquired diverse and multiple meanings. The sphere of discourse around 'Integration' opened by the move away from assimilationist approaches, reflects changing understandings of civic membership at the time (Hinze 2013). In a recently re-unified Germany, an emphasis on equal opportunities and participation, marked a move away from the 'deficit' narrative present in assimilationist discourse (Hess and Moser 2009). Yet, both policies' ostensibly different theoretical positionings hid many of the practical continuities between them (Ehrkamp 2006). The underlying logic of 'integration' – the idea of

fitting into a pre-defined, largely homogenous imaginary of a central society – perpetuated an ordering of dominance, in which a subset of the social fabric decides 'who becomes German and when' (Czollek 2020). It was still, in many ways, an affirmation of an outsider status through a formalisation of 'missing' capabilities, including language acquisition and acculturation into 'social norms'. The first National Integration Summit held in 2004 formalised many of the conceptual terms, leading to the National Integration Plan in 2007. Its revised version, the 2012 National Action Plan for Integration – a document that serves as a framework for state-level policies, and which called upon the involvement of civil society to deliver many of its objectives – included missions for education, labour market, sports, arts, media and regional integration.

A framework of over forty Integration Indicators guides state level (Länder) monitoring and priority setting, including: educational attainment, legal, cultural and social integration, health, crime, housing and livelihood. But such attempts to pin down integration often expose its ambiguity. Many indicators, such as language acquisition, livelihood accessibility, legal rights, serve in the literature both as prerequisites *for* integration, as well as outcomes *of* being integrated, leaving the concept of 'integration' itself, or what would constitute being 'integrated', in an ambiguous state that is locally variable in terms of definition, use and understanding (Reid 2021); a term which, from the start, has often served as a 'chaotic concept', highly contested in its use and impact (Robinson 1998).

It is useful therefore to note that Berlin forms a unique case. As a city which is also one of Germany's 16 federated states (Länder), granting it some flexibility to define its policy priorities, Berlin pre-empted much of the federal-level integration policy making by around twenty years (a report by the OECD 2018 writes that national policy may have in fact drawn on Berlin's early integration policies). In 1981 Berlin created the position of Commissioner for Foreigners, a position which was renamed the Commissioner for Migration and Integration in 2003, a role established to develop comprehensive integration policies, especially regarding the high number of so-called 'Guest Worker' family reunifications. With the ostensible aim of combating discrimination, it provided social counselling and established a central platform to coordinate social initiatives, calling upon civil society's support in delivering its objectives. In 2005 the Berlin Senate developed its own integration concept, which eventually became Berlin's 2010 Participation and Integration Act, which centred

around greater political participation and representation, establishing an advisory panel to aid its work.

Berlin also presents a special case in Germany, frequently drawing on an image of diversity in its self-presentations (two recent city promotional slogans include 'Berlin: City of Diversity', and 'Be Berlin, Be Diverse'). Whilst the anti-immigration party AfD (Alternative for Germany) party entered the Berlin Parliament for the first time in 2016, Germany's Welcome Politics of care for refugees was locally inflected with Berlin's own brand of anti-fascist and grassroots politics, with acts of refugee support often taking the form of counter-protests against anti-immigration sentiments. Whilst this is not a thesis on the particular enactments and interpretations of the term integration which abounded at the time, and over which much has been written (e.g. Hann 2015, Braun 2017, Laubenthal 2019, Sutter 2019, Perron 2020), I mean to point out that the kinds of practices of care which I observed at this time were shaped by a city highly attuned to both current and historic narratives of racialisation, responsibility and political ethics, both at the informal grassroots level, and at its state-level policymaking capacity.

And so, as the number of refugee arrivals rose sharply, culminating in 2015, Berlin may not have been the state to receive the most people, but it was uniquely positioned to respond with its own legal, social and political particularity.

In 2016 the German Integration Act was passed. It included the removal of an unpopular restriction which required employers to prove that no qualified German citizen (or naturalised resident) had applied for a position they were offering to foreign-born applicants. And in the same year, Berlin published its own Masterplan for Integration and Security (updated 2018). It included city districts' participation in developing the Care and Integration Concept for People Seeking Asylum and Refugees (2015); it heavily relied on volunteer initiatives and civil society; and defined a concept of integration and participation the "Berlin way: [in which] Newly arrived persons should gain a foothold in Berlin as quickly as possible and lead the most independent and self-determined life that they are able to." (2018, 8).

It is important to note the scale of the 'Welcome Culture' response, which was "vast, polyphonic and everywhere" (Funk 2016, 292), that worked to plug the gap in refugee services which the state struggled to provide alone. Volunteer programmes, social initiatives, and individual acts of care operated at both the structural and interpersonal level, as well as provided a public counter to anti-immigration sentiments

(ibid). They included volunteers befriending, teaching German, accompanying arrivals to appointments and visits, helping them navigate the often confusing bureaucratic system, translating, assisting with housing, volunteering accommodation, running mother-child groups, running cultural, sporting, art and social activities, assistance with medical care, health and wellbeing programmes, employment assistance, legal support, child-care support, cycle projects, dinner clubs, refugee-led refugee support and more. Much of this voluntary response also worked to provide a human face; motivated to ease arrivals' "pain, isolation and confusion" in ways that formal state services would have been unable to do (ibid, 292).

Thus, while 'integration' may be a term that is highly contingent on institutional narratives (McDermott Reid 2021), much of the volunteer led, polyphonic Culture of Welcome played a role in shaping alternative understandings of 'integration' through dispersed, negotiated, everyday enactments. It is the state's deliberate involvement of the voluntary sector in such institutional objectives which has drawn attention to its Politics of Welcome as an "important but imperfect" model (Funk 2016, 289, also see Easton-Calabria and Wood 2020).

Yet, the imperfections are significant. Especially since many of the volunteer initiatives established themselves to address the kinds of obstacles put in place by the state' 'integration' system itself, such as the restrictive and fragmented qualification system which is highly inaccessible to newcomers; the restriction on region of residence, enforced with the risk to welfare support; and many of the language and acculturation courses for 'integration', for which the course is often a requirement for receipt of welfare support (Hillmann and Togral Koca 2021).

This plurality of positions is also reflected in the scholarship. In critique of restrictive and narrow understandings of integration, such as those manifest in policy objectives, many have sought to broaden the definition and understanding of integration (Seethaler-Wari 2018, Gürer 2019). For example Easton-Calabria and Wood call for a wider understanding of integration as a non-binary and multi-faceted process, encompassing the variety of connections which in aggregate create feelings of belonging (2020, 2). But for many, the very logic of integration -- by which people are expected to adapt in pre-defined ways in order to 'fit in' -- is the very framework by which the terminology and terms of the 'other' are constructed and institutionalised. The conceptualisation of 'integration' thus becomes a practice which defines migrants as the 'other' and locates them as the problem, whilst perpetuating nation-state

imaginaries of uniformity, a central society, and a cultural hierarchy of dominance (McPherson 2010, Schinkel 2017, Czollek 2020). Where the term 'integration' is used, a fundamental question always remains, as Adrian Favell puts it, "the integration of whom into what?" (2019, 2).

At stake in Favell's question above is the essentialising work that the term integration does, as well as the implicit imaginaries of place which are perpetuated by the term. Favell's 'into what' is crucial in plural discourses of integration where the notion of a *local* culture, the place into which one integrates, is often left as an unproblematised given. There is need, in other words, to interrogate the taken for granted conceptualisations of place contained and perpetuated by the discourse of migrant integration itself (Ivanova 2021). More broadly, this critique also applies in equal measure to the very term 'migration', Whilst I have found it useful to give a sense of the life of these concepts, as well as the issues they marshal around them (such as care, health and gender), my primary aim is to explore the different imbrications of place and care which arise through practices broadly held under objectives for integration. I aim to explore the way notions of difference are acted on, and made, as well as the multiple ways in which the relationship between people and place is made and conceptualised through a variety of acts of care, which gain traction in integration projects. People, place and care are refracted multiply through these examinations. But such an examination rests on uneasy ground if I take the terms of migration or integration to be my analytical terms; as assumed given entities, rather than as 'objects' in the field which in themselves demand examination.

De-migrantising the research

As Janine Dahinden has argued in her 'plea' to 'de-migrantise' research, the very categories of migration assume a range of ethnicity-centred exclusions founded on nation-state logics of territoriality (2016). She calls into question the normalisation of nation-state logics through these cross-border categories, which in assuming a given divisiveness, normalises the sovereign violence upon which they rest. The emergence of these categories therefore -- their reliance on specific infrastructures of power and border regimes -- should be the object of investigation rather than form the tools of

analysis. Nina Glick Schiller has similarly critiqued a reliance on nation-state parameters within analysis (2009). In what she terms 'methodological nationalism' she argues that research on migration needs to move away from a reliance on the terms of migration which, she argues, perpetuate the very processes such research aims to critique (Glick Schiller 2009). Much of the bureaucratic apparatus within which the terms are included thus normalise exclusion (Crawley and Skleparis 2018) and render cross-border differences as natural givens along with their concomitant inequalities (Soysal and Soyland 1994, Bauböck 2007). Even if it were possible to conduct critical research through drawing *more* attention to the categories of migration and integration rather than doing without them altogether – something Fraser and Honneth have termed 'strategic positive essentialism' (2003) – still, such analyses run the risk of naturalising the kinds of paradigmatic bias in which movement and mobility come to be seen as divisive actions with moral ambiguities (Crul 2015). Such acceptance of movement and mobility as divisive exceptionalism to a status quo, is what Liisa Malkki has dubbed the 'sedentarist bias' (Malkki 1992). Something she sees arising both in everyday politics and scholarly analysis. And it is within such bias that the uncritical static linking of 'locality' and 'identity' become so suspect; they become the result of particular instantiations of border-bound epistemologies of exclusion (ibid).

A distinction can thus be made between these concepts as they emerge in the field, as objects to be examined, and taking these concepts to be the given units of analysis. Both Glick Schiller (2009) and Dahinden (2016) have separately argued for migration and integration to be more broadly encompassed within the theorisation of social issues in ways which do not cast migration as a point of exceptionalism, but as perspectives into wider socio-political realities (also Castles 2010), such as the normalisation of nation-state derived inequalities (Wimmer 2013, Lamont and Molnar 2002, Pachucki, Pendergrass and Lamont 2007), how the global and local are manifested in new territorialisations (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Englund 2002, Philips and Robinson 2015), mobility as an inherent feature of life, and as a resource with unequal access and unequal effects (Ohnmacht, Maksim and Bergman 2009, Sheller and Urry 2006, Castles 2010).

This literature suggests that the term 'migration' and associated concepts like migrant integration, might be examined in themselves as indexes of political power. When it comes to 'migration' specifically as a term that does the work of Othering through a definition based on exclusionary conceptualisations of place, then power's

combination of sociality and materiality comes palpably to the fore. The emergence of these terms in the 'field' might thus be a lens through which to view the constituting effect of power, by which movement and place become defining elements of people, along with making them Other.

Instead we might ask about ways in which movement and space adhere to people's life course and personal identity via the political? Then, the value of 'integration' as an object and concept in the field remains valuable so long as it is taken as a contingent product of relations. I therefore use integration in this account to explore the ways relationships between people and place are *done* and conceived. I follow integration as a way of observing work on relations defined by otherness. What is the nature of practices which work to make connections between people who are deemed Other and a wider socio-political environment? What is the shifting role of care in such work? What is constituted and prefigured — whether of persons or environments or the relation so conceived — by this particular practice, and what actors, institutions, ideas and materials are drawn together in its wake?

PART II

Taking a Processual and Relational Approach

The call to de-migrantise research can also be read as a much broader epistemological point; it is a call to be critical towards the way descriptions of processes often become the very means by which such processes are made and sustained. As Karen Barad notes, this is simultaneously an epistemological and ontological issue — the terms by which concepts are conceptualised affects what we see, and ultimately 'find', to be there (Barad 2003) What is at stake in 'integration' is the way the term covers a range of assumptions and registers by which people and place are conceptually related, as well as concomitant assumptions as to how that relation can be 'acted' upon. Integration, in other words, is here a lens onto a range of assumptions involving practices and processes which link people and place through conceptualisations of global cross-border difference. That much of the imperative to act on this relation (the nature of this relation being still unclear) is couched in terms of care, wellbeing, an ethic of obligation to others, is stranger still. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to theoretical framing which might afford different ways to examine place, people and the kinds of practices which are deemed to act on the relation between them.

I thus wish to use 'integration' practices as a holding ground, within which to view how the relation between people and certain conceptions of place become a site of action. Furthermore, I seek to examine how people deemed Other and place come to be framed in ways that afford acts of care to take shape upon them. As outlined, this sphere of action sits against a background of long standing exclusions, and historically contingent practices of othering. Many of these practices, I argue rest on constellations of power, categorisation of difference and place. But it is the very conceptualisations of people and place which I wish to examine, as a prior step. How are they made separate, how are they made connectable? It is these terms which underly socio-material practices and inequalities which I believe need an examination.

In using 'integration' as a methodological holding ground, I am trying to scrutinise instances by which the relation between people deemed Other and place takes on a moral imperative for practices of care. And I wish to stay close to ways in which this relation thus becomes an object that is made visible by such activity These actions and

practices are not just about making 'objects' to act on in a neutral material sense; they arise within the moral ambiguities of integration discourse. An alternative set of analytic tools, which do not take 'integration' as an analytical given, are thus required. I focus below on recent scholarship on care, which expand on the ethical, affective and material dimensions of such everyday practice. And I seek to elaborate on theoretical framings of place, practice and matter, in order to explore alternative conceptualisations of the relationship between people and place to those implicit in predominant integration discourse, specifically, the 'givenness' of place. I do this though an engagement with literature on the processual making of matter – whether of people or place.

I draw on literature that has sought to frame the relation between people and place in ways that problematise any simple division between lively human action and static materiality. I include scholarship on embodiment, place and care to elaborate on ways in which the relation between people and place can be examined as a socio-material process. And I specifically focus on the implications of *perception* in those accounts, both as a doing and making activity that straddles sociality and materiality, deeply contingent on a lively material environment, as well as an action that emplaces the ethnographer herself.

Thinking through Matter: Conceptualising Connections Between People, Place and Care

In an attempt to avoid perpetuating implicit imaginaries of place, or divisions between the material and the social, inherent in 'integration' narratives, I seek to frame the three broad coordinates of my argument — place, people, care — through a processual and relational lens. As a thorny conceptual binary, I draw on literature that challenges socio-material dualism, first from the side of people (particularly attending to literature on the objective and subjective body as it is affected by space), and then the side of place (as it is conversely affected by, and situated within, notions of sociality) before synthesising their relevance to conceptualisations of care.

I begin with three overlapping approaches to conceptualisations of the body. A number of theorists, often associated with the material 'turn' (or, by many accounts 'return') in the humanities, have laid the conceptual groundwork for an examination

of the 'liveliness' of matter as a kind of corrective to analyses of sociality rendered down to pure 'textualism' or abstract representation (Forman 2020). Much of the recent turn to materialism does not represent one unified approach, but I draw on three approaches which form a spectrum of overlapping concerns with the body yet foreground different aspects regarding the relationship between bodies and environments in their conceptualisations. The first foregrounds attention to the body's affectability; its sensuous, material exchange with a lively environment. The second pertains to the body as a site of interplay between symbolic and material domains of lived space. And the third relates to the phenomenological aspects of the body's perception of its environment, with implications that space is not an object to find, but a relation that is *done*. I outline these three perspectives in turn, mirroring the order in which I adopt them sequentially in each of my three data chapters.

I then attend to literature which questions socio-material separation through conversely foregrounding space and place in their analysis. I trace a genealogy by which theorisations of place as inherently social phenomena question taken-for-granted assumptions of an inert, physical environment. Many of these important positionings, by which place has been opened to social inquiry, rely on making a distinction between space (passive, 'universal' matter) and place (that which is locally imbued with meaning). But I land on Doreen Massey's rejection of any space/place counterposition, as she dismantles abstract imaginaries of 'fixed' space and their reliance on fictions of disembodied information (Massey 2005, 185): an argument which has had significant influence on the material 'turn' in geography (Forman 2020). In Massey's relational articulation of the world, space is conceptualised as trajectories (2005), an encounter with something on the move (2003, 108), with a number of political implications relevant to this thesis' framing. I then adopt Setha Low's conceptualisation of 'embodied space' to frame how such ongoing, processual makings of space can be examined from an ethnographic point of view, leaning particularly into the embodied nature of those accounts. Thus, I establish the conceptual grounds by which I examine embodied spatialities of care, as they emerge differently in each chapter — commenting on the situated, emplaced nature of care practices, in ways which render it a practice that is as much about acting on relations in the world, as it is in itself an active part of the world's ongoing making.

Three approaches to the body — Part 1

The question regarding what we understand by a relation — whether it is itself of a material or social order — is a question which goes to the very heart of much anthropological speculation (Strathern 2020, also 1993). And whilst its theoretical debate in anthropology is very broad, it has often played out in specificity through discussions of the body. Much of this debate has taken the form of attempts to unsettle any assumed physical 'givenness' of physical bodies versus 'social' persons. The division that splits 'material' bodies from 'social' persons, is also echoed in discussions of place, in which space is often taken as that which defines a given, physical plane, and the use of 'place' is evoked to describe its symbolic, social making. The similarity, in other words, between both these examples is the common-place and stubborn dualism which happens between the social and the physical, rooted in a Cartesian legacy that classically divides mind from body, and cascades into a broader division between meaning and matter, emotion and reason.

Before I proceed with a discussion of the 'body', it is important to note that such separation between the social and the material is not politically innocent, and is not 'mere' abstract speculation. The ability to render reality in half — one half negotiable, the other half an immutable 'given' — serves certain socio-political interests over others. In Judith Butler's words, 'sedimented histories' of power are locked in this bifurcation which places certain kinds of matter outside of discourse (Butler 1993). What is considered 'given', physical or immutable is itself historically contingent, and is itself the result of a discursive process, in which certain claims have been made non-negotiable, or 'irreducibles' (Butler 1993). Challenging this binary in my account is not removed from this thesis' political dimension of equity and otherness, it is rather its underpinnings.

I therefore turn to discussions on the body both to explore possibilities for socio-material description, but also to remain close to the political implications inherent in unsettling such material 'irreducibles', like the 'givenness' of the body. The politics of integration — in which a logic of making people 'fit' into an assumed, 'given' place occurs — is a logic bound up with these same dualisms, where 'locality' is immutably given, whilst sociality is that which can be negotiated and altered, and according to which people should adapt themselves. But descriptions of the body often question this division through unsettling any assumptions of inert matter — whether

of bodies or environment. Concomitantly, the 'social' is no longer relegated to the domain of the immaterial. Objects, things and matter are afforded a part in the sphere of the social too.

In 'How to Talk About the Body?', Bruno Latour questions the normative dimension of scientific description of the body (2004). In an argument whose intention is to avoid the dualism-holism debate, he describes the body not as an animated 'residence' of mind, but rather as an *'interface' of sensitivity with a material environment*. He illustrates how descriptions of the body rest on its affectability. The ability for the body to be affected — to be in dynamic interaction with its environment — is what makes the body knowable in this account. By this reckoning, the body does not prefigure what it senses, rather the body as an object is knowable by virtue of being a dynamic site of sensorial interchange with a material world (2004, 206). His is a description in which individuals are disarticulable from their wider surroundings. To make his point, Latour begins with an ethnography of becoming a 'nose' in the perfume industry by Geneviève Teil by which the body is trained to be affected (Teil 1998 in Latour 2004, 207). Who knows how to talk about the body? Teil nose.

Teil questions anthropological descriptions of embodiment which too narrowly focus on 'cultural determination', arguing that such an attention leaves the actual sensuous act of *perceiving* unproblematised (2019, 331). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, she describes perception as an 'event' of *contact between senses and world* (2019, 332), in which greater sensitivity is developed not by refining one's perception (in her example it is novice perfumers in the French perfume industry), but by consciously learning to doubt one' initial sensory impressions (2019, 330). This seems a long detour from discussions of people and place, but there are several things I wish to draw from this example. One: this is a description of a relationship between people and environment which is predicated on dynamic exchange. That is, the boundaries of the body are not prefigured, but rather they come into being through an exchange (an event) with the environment, which demarcates the point of interface; the boundary at which an environment becomes embodied perception. Neither bodies nor environment in this account are 'given' or prefigured — or more specifically, the boundary between them does not pre-exist their encounter — but rather mutually arise through processual encounters. Two: this description is not merely 'material'. There is no separation between a 'thinking mind' and a 'sensing body'. The dynamic exchange is about

senses, but not as something passively received — there is thought, doubt, learning — a range of actions and practices which render the relationship between bodies and environment a relational occurrence. It is a processual event, in other words, which can be subjected to a description of action and practice. Three: these descriptions offer a non-ocularcentric view of perception. Multiple senses are involved. Recognising an environment — perceiving place — includes, but is not limited to, seeing. Perception — the very sensory, cognitive apprehension of the environment — in this account is neither passive nor disembodied, rather it is an action in the world, intimately entangled with its making. There is no 'pre-given' external place. Merely to apprehend it, in this account, is an active engagement with the environment.

I draw on these accounts because they offer a two-pronged critique. On the one hand, they question fictions of disembodied knowledge. And then, their analysis of the mutually constituted boundary between bodies and environment, also leads to a critique of certain framings of embodiment where bodies represent the locus of lively subjectivity vis-a-vis a passive, inert environment of inactive 'things'. In these accounts, the cartesian mind-body divide, which methodologies of embodiment are often positioned against, is not strictly the problem; rather it is the underlying fiction of any divide separating an 'active' agent, from a 'passive' material world. What is being proposed instead is that it is precisely the 'liveliness' of the material world through which bodies come to be sites of experience in the first place (Latour 2005). The analytic of embodiment is a wide and indeterminate field, containing a range of methodological paradigms by which the experiential quality of being is opened to social analysis (Csordas 1990) — for example Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological attention on the body's sensory perceptions (1962), or Bourdieu's use of habitus to analyse the embodiment of class status in everyday life (1972). Nonetheless, both Teil and Latour question embodiment's conflation with the subjective feeling of the body. Embodied action, such as learning to smell skilfully, is not rooted purely within the subject, but rather in the exchange with an environment. As discussed above, these analytics trouble the notion of a 'given' environment, but in so doing, the corollary of any 'givenness' of subjectivity or perception is also questioned. The implication I wish to draw is both a theoretical one — pertaining to the conceptualising of a relationship between people and environment — as well as a methodological point — if people and environments are mutually constituted (if they arise by a relational process) what is the nature of perceiving, observing and participating in (and then narrating) such a

socio-material process ethnographically? How can the experiential quality of practices that care for difference — through efforts, sensibilities and concern for a relation between people and place — be usefully opened to ethnographic analysis? I later return to this question as I elaborate on ways in which those practices which are at once about accounts of embodiment and space, can be interrogated through a concept of embodied spatialities of care.

Three approaches to the body — Part 2

A related dismantling of the body's 'givenness' is Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock's now landmark prolegomenon, *The Mindful Body* (1987), an anthropological touchstone in discussions of the body's socio-material registers. They offer three overlapping concepts for how bodies may be conceived in medical anthropology: individual (as phenomenological self), social (representational and symbolic), and the body politic (derived from discipline, surveillance and control). By expanding the category of the body, they attempt to break any simple divide between social and material descriptions of bodies, suggesting different ways in which the experiential quality of being and having a body (of being embodied beings) can be opened to anthropological enquiry. But in their three registers of bodies, the 'individual' body is nonetheless more easily rendered symbolic, than the 'social' and 'political' body are ever made equally material. I use this to outline the difficulty in bringing the symbolic and the material together from an ethnographic point of view. There is a parallel here in the difficulty of rendering the ongoing, processual nature of matter an object of enquiry, despite its clear involvement in the constitution of social worlds.

Lock herself addresses this tension years later alongside Judith Farquhar, commenting that despite the recognition that the 'classic dualism' requires dismantling, still there are "few respectable analytic concepts" (2007, 245) to do so. They note the risks: a kind of reductive Marxist material determinism on the one hand, and 'idealist transcendence' on the other (2007, 246). Lock and Farquhar argue that despite numerous efforts, difficulties remain for the tactile and concrete dailiness of experience to be analytically rendered, even whilst it promises theoretical innovation,

where "a theory of lived space is […arguably…] no different from an anthropology of the body" (2007, 243).

I lean into this theoretical space in an effort to resist any simple division between place that is symbolic, or 'cultural' and a locality, territoriality that is physical, or 'immutable'. Arguably an understanding of practices which aim to work on the relation between people and locality is not merely a question regarding representations and practices of place, but also perhaps a fleshy question, rooted in the concrete dailiness of bodies; a sensuous question regarding lived space as an embodied experience with a world that is at once symbolic and material.

Avoiding both material determinism and 'idealist transcendence', Lock and Farquhar cite Michael Taussig's ethnographic essay on everyday acts of seeing and producing art in New York (by school children), by which he explores "disseminated carnal existence" (2007, 245), and perceptions of the environment, with relevance to the discussion above. Taussig describes processes of production and processes of seeing as paired activities. In his analysis, the act of seeing and then reproducing the world in sculptural objects, including children's art works, speaks of seeing as an extension of 'having' the world. He elaborates an argument in which much of the perceived 'have-ability' of the world is contingent on the particular socio-economic historic moment of production and consumption. Seeing here is not neutral, it is a historically contingent action. Taussig draws on Walter Benjamin to examine how seeing and reproducing the world come couched in specific historical moments of material production, which shape the symbolic effects of images in ways that are disarticulable from the physical and sensuous experiences of having, seeing. In this account, subjectivity is produced through a certain possession of the world (also Stengers 2011, 81). Taussig analyses the 'carnality' of seeing, through a historically contingent encounter between an environment and a sensing person, such that 'seeing' involves a kind of tactility with the world (Taussig 2007, 265). Importantly in this framing, the 'immaterial', imaginational aspects of life are contingent on a material encounter within a historically specific world. In this reading therefore, though the act of perception is deeply sensuous, tactile and 'carnal', there is no universal phenomenological experience of seeing. The symbolic effects of images are inseparable from the form in which they circulate. Thus, the sensuality of seeing is socially and historically contingent, and offers itself up to anthropological speculation. The very act of

perceiving the material solidity of the urban environment, that feels so immutable, is in itself a situated kind of knowledge.

Three approaches to the body — Part 3

Whilst much of the above argument hinges on making and seeing the environment, along with the relational aspects of inhabiting it, I offer one further perspective to elaborate on the environment's processuality: the ways it is made by practice, as well as co-constituted by perception. I draw on Tim Ingold's extensive writings on embodied skills of perception as a way of conceptualising the social and physical environment (Ingold 2000). Drawing upon James Gibson's notion of affordance, the environment in Ingold's analyses is an object without *a priori* substance, rather it is constituted by the living perceptions made by movement conducted through it (ibid). The materiality of the environment, in this account, is thus a kind of act of perception (perception not being limited to seeing) (Ingold 2010). In this account, the seeming solidity of the material world is only rendered so by movements and perceptions occupying the same temporality of the environment's change (Ingold 2018). Indeed, in this reading, material solidity is a function of the pace through which one moves through, experiences, and interacts with, an environment. Thus, temporality and spatiality are co-constitutive in his analyses, where time *is* the flow of materials (Ingold 2012, also Barad 2007, Röck 2019) (and whilst I am fully on board, one can see why such radical processuality trips off Lock and Farquhar's transcendentalist anxieties).

Tim Ingold's extended writings on perception and environment (starting with *Perceptions of the Environment* 2000), suggest that in conceiving of the mutual constitution of environment (or lived space) and people, attention must be drawn not to any 'givenness' of objects but to the perceptual work of *differentiation* in bringing 'things' about as seemingly bounded objects (Ingold 2010). Thus, the relevant boundary, he argues, is not the one between material and immaterial aspects of lived worlds, but the boundaries which are made between different kinds of materials (Ingold 2018). If we think through Ingold's arguments through the earlier example of the nose: the 'subjective experience' of the nose skilfully scenting, inheres in the lively exchange by which particles move through the nose — it is an iterative and active exchange with an environment: no environment, no experience. The relevant boundary of that experience (in this reading) is not, therefore, between the materiality of the

nose/air/scent and the *immateriality* of the experience. Rather, it is by noticing the constructed boundary placed between noses and the 'environment', that we can start to examine how 'subjectivity' is produced as an imaginary of a particular kind of immateriality, carved out of a lively material world.

This is where I am drawing a divide between the kind of scholarship in which objects and persons are placed on a level plane by attributing agency to objects (e.g. Henare et al. 2007), and the kind of scholarship which has attempted to render parity between materiality and sociality through an attention to the processual nature of materials. The quality of being related to an environment, by Ingold's argument, is the result of being enmeshed in the changing flow of materials, which temporarily endure with the seeming boundedness of entities (Ingold 2012). Here, my emphasis is on the kinds of actions in the world, perception included, by which materials are co-opted into social practice, thus resisting any simple division between material space and immaterial sociality. Drawing attention to the temporality — or rather the processual nature — by which such practices make enduring (or fleeting) relations between people and place might be one such way to resist such a binary.

Ingold's argument is about bringing the liveliness of place into view as a dense meshwork of lines of life, in a way that centres experiential, embodied capacities in constant interaction with an environment (Ingold 2000). It is a proposed lens to render the environment legible as a co-constitutive element (as the very substance) of social life, and thus open to anthropological analysis (Ingold 2018). I thus draw on his processual lens to frame my examination of practices aiming to make relations between people and place in several ways. The first, is an attention towards the diversity of sensuous acts, like perception, by which intersubjective practices might be analysed as simultaneously social and material. Secondly, such a processual lens also opens analysis towards the diversity of materials which go into such practices, and their way of rendering durability (not immutability) to conceived relations between people and place in this context. Finally, Ingold's processual lens frames a way to examine the seeming boundedness and 'givenness' of spaces through the practices that perpetuate such an imaginary (whether that be mapped countries and urban districts, or rooms and city squares). And so, it is to the practice of space that I now turn.

Space and Place

In seeking to frame my examination through a processual lens, I draw on a number of theorists who have challenged an assumed static, passive imaginary of place. I focus particularly on such analytical framings' implication for everydayness, and the specific attention paid to lived space as it manifests in quotidian spaces of urban environments.

Challenging prevailing notions of space as the mere 'geometric' backdrop of social processes, Henri Lefebvre articulated the importance of space as an object of social enquiry and as a product of social relations. Applying a Marxist lens in The Production of Space (1991 [1974]), Lefebvre articulated the process by which space is socially produced. Setting this process within the broader sociological cloth of power relations, Lefebvre outlined the everyday and mundane ways by which space's production is contested, and by which contemporary hegemonies of capitalist relations of production are sustained. He articulated the transformation of 'natural' space to complex forms of 'social' space along three dimensions (he used this triad to theorise about the evolution of spatial paradigms, an aspect I leave out of my current argument). The first is perceived space, as that function of space which is experienced in everyday practices. Then, conceived space, or representations of space, refers to the kind of space which arises through theorisation or representations. And representational space refers to the unique spatial imaginary pertaining to each particular time, or 'society'. His arguments hinge on a conceptualisation of space that is relationally produced and contingent on its historic moment. Socially specific spatial practices (such as capitalism), in other words, produce unique kinds of space. For example, the urban spatialities produced in late-industrial capitalism are not the same urban spatialities that existed before capitalism — something which is visible in the way (1) everyday life proceeds within them and makes them (2) in the way they are represented, for example in maps, and (3) in the spatial narrative of what a city is deemed to be. His, is an attention to the situated production of space, one that cannot be disarticulated from its socio-political context, and it opens the 'givenness' of space into a plane of social effects, which can be thus subject to examination. In its attention to the role of the everyday and mundane instantiations of wider regimes of power; in its articulations of spatial (in)justice; and in its opening up of the assumed immutable, 'givenness' of space to sociological scrutiny, his work has been seminal, and its effects wide ranging.

David Harvey for example, examines the geography of capitalism in the context of complex urban environments and social justice (1973). He analyses the political processes involved along with the complex subjectivities which arise in material productions of capitalist urban space. Examining these urban processes on symbolic, physical and perceptual levels, he brings to light the spatial dispossession of urban space that results from capitalist logics of accumulation. Tim Edensor draws on Lefebvre to develop the concept of 'banal nationality', in examining the production of state-centred spatial imaginaries, which proceeds through everyday routines and quotidian spaces (2002 and 2004). With Shanti Sumartojo, this analysis extends into an examination of Australian nationhood as it inheres in the habituated and embodied practices of the everyday. They draw on taken-for-granted aspect of quotidian lived space — food preparation, shopping, the home, the local neighbourhood — to describe the way "modest everyday arrangements merge a sense of the local with national belonging" (2012, 555), such that ubiquitous instantiations of nationhood in embodied knowledge are often more powerful than the symbolic and representational makings of national spatial imaginaries present in iconic national sites or ceremonial spaces. Nigel Thrift draws on non-representational theory to similarly examine the embodied aspects of the urban landscape, taking it as a political landscape suffused with, and animated by, affect (2008). Such urban landscapes shape everyday political possibilities of collective life beyond the individual, calling for a recognition of quotidian interactions, including friendships and the anonymous, 'shoulder-rubbing' quality of sharing space with strangers. All three perspectives on complex urban spaces, nationhood building and quotidian interactions of conviviality are of particular relevance to my study.

In anthropology, Margaret C. Rodman drew on field research in Vanuatu to problematise the notion of place as mere 'location' in anthropological analysis. Arguing that "the social landscape is both context and content" (1992, 650), she calls for the examinations of place as 'lived experience', that takes place both through 'words' and embodied experiences of the senses. She illustrates the way everyday practices — to inhabit, to grow food, to build — by which place enters a circulation of use value, is dependent on local power relations, and articulates with broader understandings of belonging. She thus argues for anthropological analysis to encompass the role of power in the social construction of space, and for anthropology to attend to space's 'multilocality' as much as it has attuned itself to social

'multivocality'. Steven Feld and Keith Basso take a similar approach in adding, and calling for greater attention, to ethnographies of place (1996). They elaborate on the notion of 'sense of place' to outline the broad experiential and expressive dimensions by which place is imbued with intimate and collective meaning, and by which it can be rendered open to anthropological analysis. Both these examples expand on Lefebvre's social production approach, describing with ethnographic specificity the diversity of ways by which experiences and understandings of place are situated in everyday subjectivities and meaningful, affective encounters.

Alongside Lefebvre's analysis of space's social production, the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan outlined the conceptual basis for the subfield of humanistic geography in a now seminal essay: *Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective* (1976, redacted 1979). In his descriptions, space as an abstract entity cannot be taken for granted. Rather, the human apprehension of space is a function of being embodied. In Tuan's conceptualisation, to have a body — the fact of embodiment — is to deal with objects, which thereby implicates space — distance, intervals, dimension. It is this observation, Tuan argues, which thus renders studies of geographical 'space', a study of the immanence of space through people's spatial feelings. Space, by this account, is not merely perceived; it is in itself a category of perception. And thus, in this conceptualisation, there is no disembodied, unsituated knowledge of space, there is rather a study of the human perception of it. It is this observation which opens new ethnographic possibilities.

For example, in her study of South Asian diaspora women in England, geographer Divya Tolia-Kelly draws on phenomenological and humanist geography to challenge bounded, nation-state spatial imaginaries by reframing British heritage through a post-colonial 'lens of mobility' (2010). She includes participants' memories, sensory engagement with their environments, and 'everyday cultural practices' to uncover the "geographical coordinates through which identity is constituted" (2010, 285) and by which diasporic geographies of belonging are achieved. Describing ways in which "Britishness is a mobile nationalism" (2010, 277) she examines the multi-located making of 'Britishness' that is irreducible to territorial bounds, questioning the distinction between native and non-native, and between state-bordered space and practiced place, ultimately arguing that *material* geography is not given but made.

Yet, whilst Lefebvre and Tuan render space an object of social enquiry, the stubborn dualism between a space that is a given universal (what Lefebvre terms

'geometric' space) and a kind of space that is subject to social relations, still persists in their theories. Doreen Massey calls attention to this separation, as it is perpetuated in political discourse as much as academic writing, as an *effect* of the presence of power in spatial relations. She argues against the counterposition of space and place, for example in Tuan's reference to space as more 'abstract' than place (Tuan 1977, 6 in Massey 2005, 183), and the confounding of space/place with other stubborn couplets: global/local and abstract/concrete. She writes "The global is just as concrete as local place. If space is really to be thought relationally then it is no more than the sum of our relations and interconnections, and the lack of them; it too is utterly 'concrete'." (Massey 2005, 184). I draw extensively on Massey's relational conceptualisation of space in my study, attempting to think through its durable materialities in ways which are a product, and thus a lens onto relations, not the passive 'context' of those relations.

Space/Place

In her groundbreaking work *for space* (2005), Massey calls for scholarship to take account of the ongoing, processual nature of space, and offers an alternative to the kinds of hegemonic imaginaries of space in which it is rendered a static, 'given' surface. Such 'givenness', she argues, deprives space of its liveliness, as well as its politics. Her alternative approach follows three propositions: one, that space is the product of relations and interactions; two, that it is the sphere in which plural simultaneity (contra sequential time) is possible (and thereby the very possibility of sociality is afforded too); and finally, that it is always in process, always under construction (2005, 9). Her emphasis is that space is not an abstractable 'given', but rather happens through the specificity of interactions, whether global or intimate. It is, she writes, "a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (ibid); a result of intersecting 'trajectories'. In this lens, the occurrence of space becomes an accomplishment of practice, a dimension alive with social and political interrelations.

Massey's conceptualisation is a processual rendering of space; it "is an encounter with something on the move" (2003, 119). She critiques hegemonic imaginaries persistent in political and academic discourse that conflate snapshot representations (e.g. maps) of space with space itself, "It is not just that representation

is equated with spatialisation but that the characteristics thus derived (fixation, stabilisation) have come to be attributed to space itself. […] the old equation of representation with spatialisation has taken the life out of space." (ibid, 120). An implication of this processual approach, in which there is no 'fixed' point, but rather ongoing constellations of connection which momentarily cohere into spatial arrangement, is its open-endedness, as well as the recognition of plurality. Spatial arrangements are open to change, and open to being made differently at each moment. Thus, simultaneous and heterogenous makings of space contain the possibility of becoming as much as not becoming. Connections can stabilise into spatial configurations, as much as they risk falling apart. I seek to draw on this open possibility of both connection and disconnection, which Massey's outlines, by which the terms of sociability are thus negotiated, and by which the *politics* of space-making play out. In framing space alongside its political potential — the "ever-contested question of our being together" (2005, 142) — Massey locates space as the dimension of the social: "Space presents us with the social in the widest sense: the challenge of our constitutive interrelatedness […] the ever-specific project of the practices through which that sociability is to be configured." (ibid, 195). It is a lens which opens the possibility of observing the process of making space as a plethora of ongoing, contingent, but open negotiations.

I draw heavily on Massey's conceptualisation of relational and processual space to frame this thesis, and attempt to remain close to both its heuristic and speculative potential — a heuristic by which processual and relational aspects of socio-materiality can be made visible, and political speculation by way of drawing attention to under-articulated plurality. It is the possibility of recognising an otherwise, which is derived through rendering heterogenous makings of space (and plural claims upon it) legible. In her account, the persistence or falling away of spatial arrangements is testament to the terms by which space — as living matter in flow —is subject to multiple interconnections under negotiation. This recognition of plurality and negotiation, she argues, implicates the full ethics of living together to "raise the question of the spatiality (or spatialities) *of* politics, and the spatialities *of* responsibility, loyalty, care." (2005, 189 emphasis in original). Thus, an examination of politics, responsibilities and care, which I have proposed in this thesis, is not an adjunct to spatial considerations in this framing; they inhere in space's very making.

In seeking a means to apply her conceptualisation of relational space ethnographically, I turn to Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga's methodological concept of 'embodied space' (2003), which they articulate as a means to bridge the social production and the social construction framings of space from an ethnographic point of view (Low 2017), and which ties in my discussion on bodies above. Arguing that much spatial analysis often neglects the body due to the difficulties in resolving the objective and subjective body dualism (Low 2017, 117), Low elaborates on the notion of embodied space as an alternative lens to ethnographies of space and place, by considering the body as both a product and producer of space. In this conceptualisation, embodied space offers one possibility of understanding of 'body/culture/space' as mutually constitutive elements. In framing space through the experiential body, she argues, embodied space becomes the "location where human experience, consciousness and political subjectivity take on material and spatial form." (Low 2017, 95). It is this pivot point — the materialisation of practice into form — located in the subjective and objective body (narratives and imaginaries, as much as senses and movements) that I seek to draw from such a lens. In other words, Massey sets the frame by which space is conceived in this account, in order to examine this from an ethnographic point of view, my attention is set on the embodied experiences and narratives of my interlocutors. I seek to stay close the way in which interrelations *spatialise* into various constellations — the contouring of space that occurs through the playing out of care. And so, taking up Massey's proposition by seeking to describe spatialities *of* politics, and spatialities *of* care, I add that my focus is to describe the *embodied* spatialities of politics, and the embodied spatialities of care. In other words, I seek to examine what practices of care *do* in this context to relations of body/culture/space (drawing on Low's triad). In this regard, this proposed conceptualisation is therefore as much about paying attention to the effects of certain practices of care *in and on* the world, as much as care in itself being an active part of world-making.

Spatialities of Care

The injunction to think through space relationally, as Massey herself comments, opens a plethora of analytical possibilities (2004), often applying it herself to concepts of

political responsibility (2002, 2003, 2005). It is a theme which I read as intimately related to feminist philosophers' recent political arguments on care. I read her evocation of the political and ethical significance of space's 'constitutive interrelatedness' (Massey 2005, 189) through care scholarship's attending to relations of interdependence as the ontological state by which life proceeds (Mol, Moser and Pols 2010), and the under-articulated efforts required to sustain life (ibid, also Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015).

In an oft quoted definition, which I too adopt here, Joan Tronto and Bernice Fischer have described care as "a species of activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible." (Tronto 1993, 103). It is a definition of care deeply situated in the actualising work of everyday material practices, and it pairs the vital politics of everyday togetherness with its hands-on practicalities. To this Tronto also elaborates on the affective dimension of care, that demarcates such 'species' of activities distinct in their effects and relations. By this, practices of care are rendered as much about the politics and practicalities of care work (care-taking, giving, receiving), as the attitudes and ethics of 'caring about' and 'caring for'. Science and Technology scholar, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, stakes these three dimensions — labour, affect, ethics/politics — as the analytic coordinates of care, in ways which do not necessarily require equal weighting between them (which even recognises tensions and contradiction among them), but which serves to triangulate an analytical optic of care.

Massey's framings of space as a product of relations, where 'human and non-human bodies' are constitutively interconnected — where their very subjectivity is so relationally constituted as to implicate an outwardlooking ethics (2005, 56-59 and 188-189) — sits closely (as I read it) with Puig de la Bellacasa's elaborations. Taking care as a 'parameter of existence' (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 6) and a lens onto such existence's relationality, she writes that "for interdependent beings in more than human entanglements, there has to be some form of care going on somewhere in the substrate of their world for living to be possible. And *this is one way of looking at relations, not the only one*." (ibid, 5, emphasis added). This particular way of looking at relations hones my examination of embodied space. I seek to pay particular attention to care practices as relations which sustain and maintain our 'world' as best as possible in affectively motivated ways, paying particular attention to the 'world' that is made. In doing this, I follow Schillmeier and Domenèch's claim that "thinking about care

practices entails a reflection concerning practices of space" (2009, 288). It is not that I take every spatial relation to be a caring one by virtue of being part of a web of interdependence. What I aim to achieve from thinking through space and care together is a lens attuned to instances in which they come into mutual implication in one another's effects. I aim to find a conceptualisation which allows me to pay better attention to the kinds of relations of spatiality through which care is done, and the kinds of spatial effects that caring relations might bring forth,

One aspect of seeking to read relations of space through an optic of care means that – in a Masseynian vein – I seek to attend to their political significance and implications for the possibilities of living together. Importantly, this lens onto the ethicality of care is about the kinds of political possibilities which are inherent in the everyday, the mundane and the particular. Such a scale situates enquiry into such ethics in very particular ways. A number of recent academic examinations of care have critically attuned themselves to care's contingency on everyday particularities and the very material conditions that afford such practices (Mol 2008). As Annemarie Mol, Ingunn Moser and Jeanette Pols argue, an understanding of care resides in its situated complexities and everyday ambivalences; the 'best as possible' solution making in the face of unpredictability; the 'tinkering' specificity of the negotiated relations through which 'we make each other be' (Mol, Moser and Pols 2010, 15). In contrast to general moral prescriptions predefining values of care, it is only through attending to this practised aspect of care in interaction with a dynamic environment that care emerges as a unique *heuristic* for "handling questions to do with the good." (ibid, 13). Equally, in observing relations of space through optics of care, it is this attention to 'good' as it emerges in the specificity of encounters, in everyday doings of space that I wish to adopt in my enquiry. To be clear, this framing of care is not without ambivalence and tension. But it sits in contrast to such framings of care that *do* utilise more general moral prescriptions for their analysis. Of particular relevance to this thesis are a number of studies which have examined the co-option of practices of care with neoliberal agendas and state political structures, especially as regards enforcing ideologies of autonomy and individualism through care (e.g. Stevenson 2014), the perpetuation of gendered and racializing inequalities through care structures (e.g. Glenn 2010), and the use of care narratives in state border regimes (e.g. Ticktin 2011). These lucid examinations have been vital in articulating wider inequities. My particular framing of care in this thesis is not about avoiding articulations or observations of wider state inequity, but

rather on the contrary, in seeking to avoid 'methodological nationalism' (Schiller 2003) as outlined above, I aim to provide a critical account of inequity's effects and alternative political possibilities as they emerge in everyday plural makings and intimately negotiated multiplicity, in an effort not to rely on those same nationalist imaginaries in my analysis,

In her centring of the very possibility of understanding care through its *doings* and effects in interaction with a dynamic environment, care is rendered, in Puig de la Bellacasa's words "unthinkable as something abstracted from its situatedness." (2017, 6). It is this framing of care, in which the very terms of understanding care are inseparable from its environment that links my thinking of spatial relations and care relations, in this thesis.

Thus, in addition to reading space through relations of care, I am also reading practices of care — *the affects, ethics and efforts* involved in 'caring about' and 'caring for' — through an optic of space: What are some of the effects of care on embodied spatiality? What are some of the implications and effects of caring practices on the relations — the body/culture/space arrangements (Low 2017) — by which space is composed?

Forging new links between theorisations of care and theorisations of the built environment, Rob Imrie and Kim Kullman anchor this situated aspect of care, inviting us to consider the "shifting environments and embodied encounters that enable practices of care in the first place." (2017, 3). In an edited volume on care and design (of the built environment), they offer a range of examples by which fragile interdependencies between bodies and built environments are indexical of relations of care somewhere in their substrate: from the maintenance and repair work of material infrastructures and urban space, to affective attunements and ethical sensibilities by which spaces for care — informal, institutional, private and public — are negotiated, designed and accomplished (Bates, Imrie and Kullman 2017). And in leaning into the speculative — the inherent future-orientation of design — they bring such examples together in fostering a similar disposition within conceptualisation of care, where "every moment of caring contains a possible future in the making" (Bates and Kullman 2017, 236), a sentiment in close affinity with Massey's attentions on space as the dimension of plurality alive with alternative political possibilities.

Such theorisation on the relationship between built environment and care allows us to think expansively about different modalities of care — encompassing

skills, sensibilities, attunements — *alongside* an expanded idea of what constitutes space. For example, anchoring his analysis through Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium, architectural theorist and architect Juhani Pallasmaa discusses the role of the empathic imagination in practices of architecture and practices of care. Twinned in the design of health care facilities, both practices call for engagement with sensorial relations and "an understanding of the self in the world" (2017, 139). Pallasmaa's argument that sensory integration with a social and physical environment is a crucial parameter and measure of healing, expands conceptualisations of care, *as well as* conceptualisations of space; his argument lends situated specificity to Massey's spatial observations regarding the spatial terms by which subjectivity may be relationally constructed (Massey 2005, 58). Pallasmaa writes: "As we exist in the world, the qualities of the surrounding world are seminal; they are secretly also qualities of our extended self." (2017, 146). Such an observation draws attention to the material conditions of a relational self, *alongside* the material conditions of 'outwardlooking ethics' (Massey 2005, 58). Moreover, of particular relevance to my framing, he does so in ways that combine the sensing and the knowing body together, in ways that sit with Low's conceptualisations of embodied space (2017). The precarious attachments by which life is sustained, supported and healed, encompass architectural processes in this account. And it is an observation in which the relational and ethical possibilities of an *empathic space* are accommodated within a conception of care, and the kinds of socio-material relations which may constitute it.

In a different context, Dara Ivanova's (2021) ethnography of transmigrant women working as live-in caregivers in Italy, similarly draws attention to the co-production of place with subjectivities. Her interlocutors practice transnational motherhood to create 'home' in ways which bridge and fold together discontinuities of distance between them and their families — what she terms 'dwelling in folds'. Arguing that place is under-theorised in analyses of integration and migration (2021, 11) she draws on Latimer and Monro's concept of dwelling (via Heidegger) — a state of home born through care relations — to argue that dwelling in folds allows women to 'live complexity through placemaking' (2021, 2). Through mobile technologies, messaging and video calls, and providing financial support for their children, women sustain home through practices of care, overriding the 'boundedness of space' to 'be there' for their families and construct shared spaces of belonging, which may have been "partial and incomplete in terms of space" Ivanova argues "[…but] fuller and

satisfying in terms of place (the experience of being emplaced)." (2021, 12). Though I choose not to follow the same division between space 'as reality' and place 'as experience', Ivanova's description of an ontology of place accomplished by practices of care is a deft example of the world-making capacity of care, and its contingency on everyday, mundane practicalities for its accomplishment.

I have used these final examples to illustrate the way care and space might be theorised together. Care practices materialise environments through skills, sensibilities and attunements, but they are also in turn contingent on material conditions in the world. Relational situations of care — in their affective, labour and ethical dimensions — can in many ways, I argue, be thought through relations of spatiality. And so using the concept of embodied space — Low's body/culture/space triad — I seek to describe spatialities of care by foregrounding each element in turn. In chapter 4 I foreground aspects of the sensual body to examine the kinds of embodied spatialities that were made by women's skills and attunements of care, as well as the way they made spaces for caring encounters. In chapter 5's attention on women's works of art, I lean into culture (in both senses of the term — museum 'culture' and the realm of symbolic representation), to discuss embodied spatialities of the neighbourhood and its representation. I look at the practices and attunements of empathy which affected such representations' circulation, production and interpretation, as well as the fall outs and alliances that formed among interlocutors, as these negotiations of space and care played out. Finally, in chapter 6 I foreground space-making; the attunements, sensibilities and materialities of making walled spaces. I examine these makings — friends' therapeutic space, a women's space, a hairdresser's — in ways that the temporary durability of such embodied spaces of care, their ability to stabilise or fall away, were indexical of the terms of negotiation by which the politics of space played out.

CHAPTER 3: PRACTICE AND PRACTICALITIES

INTRODUCTION

Before I begin with a description of my methodology, I would like to offer a scene from the 'field', by way of situating this chapter's themes. The ongoing process of methodology, as a dynamic response to a shifting environment is a crucial part of ethnographic fieldwork and fieldwork ethics. During my fieldwork, as is frequently the case, the tools by which observation and participation proceed and the ongoing ethical reflexivity participant observation demands are intimately bound (Bernard 2006). It is an iterative critical process which, although aims for the ethicality of field research to be continually assessed, nonetheless comes with its own problematics regarding ongoing 'negotiational' approaches to consent (Parker 2007). In this example, I describe a scene of one of the many ethico-methodological quandaries I encountered in research (this example being a very soft one).

Halfway through my field research, I ran free English lessons in one of the projects I observed, upon popular request by many of the project's participants. A firm believer in the power of song in language learning, I rewrote lyrics to popular tunes using vocabulary we'd covered in class in sentences that might be relevant, or at least familiar to their work. This last element had precedence. I had attended a choir performance by the project's participants in which they had already done this, rewriting pop tunes to promote their work at a public fair. I cribbed many of the lines. Other lines I adapted from a recent exhibition the project participated in, for which photos and commentary had been submitted (I go into some detail over this exhibition in Chapter 5). One of the songs I chose was ABBA's smash hit Mamma Mia. It went like this:

I know this is a woman. I know this is a man.
I know this is a cat. I know this is a van.

I live, you live, we live in Neukölln. The mother lives in a very big neighbourhood. A neighbourhood with good food.

I Can See
I can see, I can see you.
I Can Help
I can help, I can help you
oh oo oh oh. (Mamma Mia chorus)

I brought pictures, modern illustrations, nostalgic photograph postcards of Turkish life in the district (these postcards have a bit part in Chapter 5 too), with double sided sticky tape on the back, pasting them up on the flipchart, swapping them in for words so we could see the permutations of a sentence within one grammatical structure. But the thing was: I *don't know* that anyone is a woman. In fact, many of the postcards and images I had were purposely ambiguous so that we could have a discussion in class, use the flexibility of image to stand in for a range of gender and age categories ('maybe she is a mother, maybe a grandmother too? Maybe someone's daughter' … 'and the baby, could be he or she'…'maybe this grandmother is a grandfather' and so on, and so forth).

And I don't *know* that material life is as straightforward and knowable as the simple-structured, present-tense, beginner-level sentences we're working through. And I don't like the conflation of this 'given' rendering of knowable materiality of something like a van so close to gender categorisation (*literally* in the same breath). I also take issue with the notion of help, the essentialisation of the neighbourhood to its food. I agonise over whether this gesture of reciprocity is enough, why *English* of all things — in fact, almost everything, other than possibly the cat, triggered some reflection, anxiety, doubt, pang or other hesitation. But there I am, singing along, guitar in hand, truly having a lovely time, agreeing to secret out-of-hour rehearsals and a music video so they can wow their colleagues.

I have revisited this scene multiple times in my head: its practicalities and compromises in the service of clarity; the anxieties of fieldwork reciprocity; the nature of research access and research power; positionality, subjectivity, complicity; the unexpected joys of fieldwork. Often, when considering questions regarding the ongoing micro and macro scales of fieldwork ethics, I go here.

I also bring in this scene as an example of some of the ambiguities and tensions of relational research as they transpired in my fieldwork: was this participation? *When I've written the script.*

The scene above is less illustrative of methodological tools per se, as it is of the doubt — laying out a whole array of registers by which the methodological process proceeded by iteration and reflexivity. It is these very registers of doubt and questioning that I wish to emphasise in describing my methodology, as lines of enquiry and decision making, which became so integral to the selection and observation of life in ways which produce an account. The following chapter is about these questions of observation, analysis and representation — a triangulation of issues by which eighteen months' fieldwork was navigated, thought through, and then manifested as ethnographic knowledge. But this description of my methodological approach is only a starting point. I revisit questions of methodology and the tools of participant observation throughout the thesis in the form of interludes (Interlude I and II), which attempt to articulate the ongoing and iterative ethnographic process. Following the processual and relational approach of the literature cited in the previous chapter, and its conceptualisations of seeing and materialising, the ongoing work of adapting the process of observation thus threads through my ethnography, setting up questions and interrogations in the interludes which then have effects on the ethnographic contents of the chapters that follow.

OVERVIEW

Between February 2017 and October 2018, I lived in Berlin, volunteering with a range of organisations, from grassroots groups who would meet up once a month to more established full-time, formally-funded institutions. I initially started very broad, following questions regarding how the spaces of the district and a grassroots Culture of Welcome came together in establishing networks of relations and support for newcomer women in precarious positions. I followed projects who stated aims to support newcomers, or people with migrant backgrounds in Berlin's Neukölln district, eventually selecting a few for greater detail, and finally honing in on one primary organisation for nine months of detailed participant observation. Throughout, I also

carried out numerous (at first systematic and then more open-ended) extended observations of the district's lived space, across its various seasons, making notes of socio-spatial relations of its public spaces, including streets, pavements, parks and market squares.

I gained ethical approval for my research protocol from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and in Berlin, after registering as an affiliate researcher at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin, I received approval for my research to proceed. For participant observation, I introduced myself and explained my research in every project, and for specific projects, like my primary site, this was repeated frequently as reminder, across the time I was there, and for every new group I encountered. Recorded consent was sought for formal, one-on-one interviews, following prior detailed discussions within the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, in which given the potential precarious positions of my research participants, the signing of paper documents might seem intrusive, compromising or threatening. Interviews would take place at least several days after I had explained the research to the participants, and they had agreed, to allow them time to consider and change their mind. Then prior to interviews, I would explain the research again, measures I was taking for confidentiality, and what might happen with the results. As I detail below — this encompasses only a tiny fraction of the multitude of ethical processes and decisions taken over the course of research, analysis and write-up. For in the end, the majority of discursive content was derived from informal chats, simply being around, meeting for coffee, walking to or from other moments, visiting families, dawdling tea breaks, long meals.

Prior to fieldwork, I undertook language training in German and Arabic. This built on some prior knowledge of German, as my parents lived in Germany. I had a foundation in Arabic having taken classes on and off for several years, and having worked in an Israeli-Palestinian news agency in Jerusalem several years prior. With the original thought I would be conducting research mainly with Syrian women, I lived with a Druze family for two months in Dalyiat el Karmel in the Galilee hills in Israel-Palestine, a village which still speaks Syrian dialect Arabic. I then began intensive German language training in a school in Berlin for four months.

I began participatory observation shortly after language training, initially with an organisation that operated with the aim of training mothers with migrant backgrounds to do integration work across the district. This was my primary site (having already established a connection whilst still in London), which I used as my initial base whilst exploring the wider landscape of integration-focused activities across the district. I volunteered with a magazine run for and by migrant women, a local campaign group for women with migrant backgrounds, a bike cycling scheme for refugee women and girls, a cultural arts centre and shared-living refugee hub, the design of a women's room project for a refugee shelter, an organisation that sought to skill refugees to secure apprenticeships in Germany, and an architectural co-design project or a shared house for recently arrived refugees and more established Berlin residents (here I am using the migration terms as used by the organisations themselves to describe their work).

As my research questions evolved, I eventually honed in on three specific projects: the co-design housing project, which met collectively on average one Sunday every month, the apprenticeships project for women, with whom I followed two full time courses altogether lasting three months, and I stayed with the Mothers Project throughout, before returning to it as my primary focus, dedicating nine months of largely full time observation.

The ethnographic process, being by definition relational and open-ended does not lend itself easily to quantification of its sample. But here is a brief attempt to give a rough idea of scale. As regards interlocutors — only counting the three organisations I eventually wrote up ethnographically — I had regular daily interactions with at least seventy people over the course of fieldwork, but within this number were varying degrees of intimacy — from some who I simply knew by name and would exchange a quick hello, to others I consider to be friends, as well as a range of coffee-break acquaintances in between.

I initially conducted around fifteen formal interviews, which played an important role, but which I eventually de-emphasised in favour of the actual time I spent in more casual, happenstance and long-term interactions and extended conversations during fieldwork — long afternoon visits, the extended dawdling walking chats from one project site to another, on the way home, meeting for coffee, joining participants in various engagements, going on lunch breaks, sharing a joke in

class, extended topics which unfolded over weeks. And in saving most of my formal interviews until I had already been in Berlin for a year — planning for the time my German would be most fluent — it also coincided with the time I felt most familiar and most at ease with my interlocutors, such that the odd contrivance of the interview seemed strangely formal, acutely thin, and I stopped actively pursuing these detailed chats in a formal interview set-up. The bulk of my discursive data thus comes from these informal encounters, and interviews take a background, supporting role in the ethnography overall.

These forms of data collection were in addition to daily field notes, participating in each of the organisations' everyday proceedings (which I shall go into greater depth in the next section), as well as various related events they would put on, and side shoot happenings related to simply being a pestering, curious, hanger-on to so many people over eighteen months. I collected notes 'in-situ' in field notebooks which I eventually took to displaying prominently, encouraging people to ask and see what was in them, by way of dispelling the feeling (and the frequent good-natured jokes that were often made regarding my presence) that I was 'spying' on their doings. Where 'live' fieldnotes were not possible, for example, during long happenstance, casual conversations, I would make voice recordings into my phone as soon afterwards as possible, for later transcription.

In addition to my participation-weighted field notes, I collected, what I would describe as observer-weighted field notes, composed of watching lived space as a stranger — observations of space, of others, sometimes in usual locations I would regularly return to, and sometimes prompted to specific locations and events by interlocutors.

I also collected images. I took photographs and drew pictures, and sketched spaces — but I eventually made the decision to leave all images out of the final write-up, for reasons I detail below where I discuss representations. In order to protect the identities and privacy of my interlocutors, I have used English pseudonyms, changing small details where necessary. I have not used names derived more closely from interlocutors' backgrounds. Given how relatively small the district is, for anyone with familiarity of the district or the city's integration projects' landscape, working out the exact organisations I worked with would not be difficult; they are fairly well known in the district. I use these organisations' tag-lines, and their names have not been so far

altered from their original, being so closely aligned to what they do. And so, since the projects involve relatively high numbers of frequently changing people, it seemed possible that a culturally specific pseudonym used now might coincide with some future or past participant's actual name. Then, in several instances choosing a name specific to participants' backgrounds made it too easy to deduce who they were, which left me with using culturally relevant names for some and not for others. I initially wrote using initials only, but very soon there were duplicates, and in writing about people I had come to know well, the stories with endless initials seemed oddly distancing, as though I was representing interchangeability. I compromised in using imported (stereotypical) English names but this odd solution serves as a reminder that this *was* an artificially imposed result of writing — serving as an index of some of the constant decision making of composing text, which eventually felt truer and more satisfying than attempting to erase the seams of its construction.

Yet this forms a tiny fraction of the kinds of ongoing ethical decision taken during fieldwork and then beyond. More broadly, as stated in the introduction, is the larger issue of using other people's stories and a constant interrogation of its purpose and value. Then there is also the issue of forming close intimacies, the ambiguous nature of ethnographic research that proceeds through the formation of friendship. For whilst this is a thesis deeply committed to the affectual registers of life — indeed it argues for its primacy, its existence as a prerequisite to the very understanding of emplaced life and lived space — it hopes to make broader space for it than a narrative re-telling of the stories I was told (often in moments of intimacy). The ethical deliberations and positioning of these stories is therefore an attempt to respect many of these stories as moments of privacy, whilst simultaneously give full credence to their emotional weight and personal significance; it is the attempt to provide an account that proceeds by stories but is not reducible to them, nor a mere appropriation of them. It seeks to follow them as the imperative and drive to elucidate an account of the meaning, and affectual substrate of relating, both spatially and socially conceived, as they emerged in the practices I saw; the stakes and processes of these practices being not mere abstractions of 'social process' but expressions of deep personal significance.

In addition to drawing attention to the construction of the text, I also want to draw attention to the ongoing, and open-ended work of methods in order to take seriously the arguments outlined in the previous chapter. This iterative process of

methodological refinement is based on ongoing critical analysis both of the unfolding material, or 'data', and the tools this research has adopted to perceive and collect it. The tools of perceiving, the discursive tools of writing and representing, and the tools of analysis or thinking material through, are here enfolded. This is what makes the process iterative and open-ended, unfolding in response and in relation to the material world it interrogates. In attempting to engage with the proposition that methodological "apparatus are open-ended practices" (Barad 2003, 817) I revisit questions of method and observation throughout this thesis. In between my data chapters I revisit methodological questions in the form of interludes, thinking through data in different ways, playing with a recalibration, or adjustment of the tools this study has adopted. Observation and perception form such integral parts of the research questions that issues of theory, method and write-up could not be usefully held apart. The form of this thesis therefore follows the argument, taking seriously the notion that to perceive is an active process with material implications.

THE PROJECTS IN DETAIL

City Mothers

The project was set up in 2004 as a small grass-roots initiative with EU funding, adapting a similar model from a Dutch project involving migrant women reaching out to other migrant women. The co-founder explained to me that it was in response to what she saw in the district not merely as a lack of integration but of "mis-integration", attempting to describe the district services' active exclusion of families with migrant backgrounds, which led to what she saw as cumulative and entrenched isolation, especially around the issues of children's schooling and German language acquisition. Since the initial success of the pilot, the project secured more permanent funds from a range of official bodies including the Jobcentre, Neukölln District and broadly sits within a large national charitable umbrella organisation that operates a range of social care programmes across the country. It has become highly lauded in the local political sphere as one of the district's star programmes (which did not strictly translate to stable funding), and over the course of my fieldwork it was in the early planned stages of being expanded to the rest of the city. I made contact with the project whilst still preparing for fieldwork in the UK, having heard of it in advance through contacts in Berlin.

Ostensibly, the project operates around three themes — health, child care and the education system, which are then sub-divided into ten distinct topics which participants then relate in their mother tongue to other families with migrant backgrounds living in the district —but as I detail later, a whole range of other themes are incorporated, with staff discussing the relevance and desire for different topics in great detail in their regular, often day-long staff meetings (such as women's rights, domestic abuse, environmental sustainability, history, democracy and more). Contract lengths vary between two and three years and generally consist of thirty-hour working weeks, which include group meetings, some office administration work, ongoing training, attending related events and at least ten hours a week of family visits, in which topics are related. Finding new families, I was told by participants, is a frequent source of stress, and after tapping into their immediate social network of family, friends and neighbours, participants often find novel ways to approach new families — sometimes attending events, making links with local schools, day-care centres, or generally being around other play facilities. Though there is a fair amount of training, and some inertia

from already established links across the district, nonetheless the task is one which takes substantial social confidence, and in-built to the structure of the programme is the assumption of a certain critical mass of shared linguistic backgrounds. In the district this means that Turkish and Arabic speakers have a larger pool of families to approach (and are indeed the majority of women hired on the programme) although the question of how to diversify the languages represented came up frequently in staff meetings I attended, leaving them in the tricky bind of targeting the hard-to-reach, and then hiring City Mothers who then have fewer families to approach to complete their contracted hours.

Training in the themes lasts six months, after which participants are given the project's distinctive red scarf, branded satchel filled with topic-specific, multi-lingual flyers, and name badges, which they wear to mark them out as 'City Mothers' on family visits and events. Whilst a substantial amount of information is covered in the training, City Mothers are strongly discouraged from offering advice, with an emphasis on referrals to local advice centres being promoted instead. It is a source of some frustration which I return to in later chapters. A new cohort is recruited every six months (of usually around twenty women), and after completion of the training, women are allocated to one of five teams corresponding to neighbourhoods across the district, such that they usually meet, work and visit families close to where they live.

After the contract ends, the project aims to support women with future employment, an ambition with mixed success. It is not unusual for women to return to start another contract (and this is precisely what many of my interlocutors longed to do, choosing this work over other work), but since some of the project's funding comes from the Jobcentre, which sees this project as a stepping stone to further paid employment, rather than permanent employment in itself, women sometimes have to wait a minimum of several years to be considered long-term unemployed, in such a way that renders them officially eligible for referral by the Jobcentre once more.

In addition to following a cohort through its six month training, I also joined neighbourhood teams for their weekly group meetings, and other specialised ongoing trainings for qualified City Mothers. I was able to shadow their visits to schools, events, community centres and after-school play groups. In addition, I was able to join the project's weekly, detailed staff meetings, as well as a range of official engagements, steering group meetings with the District Office of Neukölln, and other conferences and district events. I frequently agonised about how generous the project was in

welcoming me into so much of their operations, and my inability to reciprocate. There was the odd translation of documents, emails or enquiries from abroad, which I was able to help with, and a visitor from London who came to learn about the project. And then, during the summer term I was able to run an English course, by surprising request from women on the project (many were still attending German classes, and their efforts left me in deep admiration).

Over the course of my stay, this amounted to several hundred hours of observation, and many more hundreds of pages of field-notes. But given that during my time there I encountered at least four other academic researchers who came, or who had come previously to learn from the project, these hours pale in comparison to the number of hours the project has accumulated in turn, observing its own visiting researchers over the years.

Foundations

The Foundations project was much newer, having formed to assist new arrivals in the recent so-called migration 'crisis'. And although I describe projects it ran for women mostly in or around the district, it was by no means limited to Neukölln, and the majority of those it worked with were in fact men. It ran under the tagline "Refugee is not a Profession", highlighting the need for more meaningful efforts in welcoming newcomers, than mere granting of status or accepting presence: to settle in a place meant to have purpose and independence.

The project ran vocational training programmes with the aim of serving as a steppingstone to help new arrivals secure places on formal apprenticeships. The project also offered support in terms of language learning, a team of social workers and ongoing administrative help with applications. The regular rounds of courses in carpentry, bike repair, and electrotechnical training, however, were often short on women participants, and the courses I followed were specifically tailored to address this.

I followed two of its courses, having met the organisers at an event for newly arrived women to the district, where absurdly the only people to attend were representatives of organisations seeking to help women, and a researcher looking for women to research. The first was a gardening course that took place in a grassroots

community garden that also came to be the centre of a nascent Syrian community, hosting regular Friday night parties in its makeshift community hall, as well as an arts summer camp for children. The second was a hairdressing course that took place across two different locations: a temporarily empty shop that was pressed into service as a classroom for initial training, and a formal hairdressing college.

My time with the project was spent in a combination of tasks, initially being an extra pair of hands looking after any children who had been brought along, and when no kids were around, simply joining in with classes. During the hairdressing course, by which time I was more familiar with the management of the project, I often served as the main point of contact, accompanying women to various locations, setting up the space, and

acted as a go-between, utilising brushed-up, crooked German, broken Arabic and slow English, by which translations were rippled collaborative-fashion, across the multilingual group.

Living Space

Living Space was a co-design project to build shared housing between recently arrived refugees and more established Berlin residents. Founded by a group of architecture students, again adapting a model taken from a similar project run in the south of Germany, their monthly meetings worked towards eventually creating a real community through the collaborative design process. I followed their activities for a year, during which time the constellation of participants greatly changed. The project's co-design ambitions were in the time scale of years. It was a hard time scale within which to coordinate a loose gathering of strangers into long-term commitment. Nonetheless the energy and verve of the organising team was staggering. They ran workshops right across the city, finding large meeting spaces where they could, for a proposed site they had secured in Neukölln. Workshops typically lasted a whole day, and iterated on various themes. There were visits to other shared housing projects, there were discussions to ascertain what kinds of spaces people wanted or expected and what their configuration might be, there were discussions of what constituted public-private space, imaginings of perfect communal living, and exercises geared towards understanding people's perception of the neighbourhood. Given the mixture

of languages, as well as the difficulty in drawing out the kinds of tacit and non-verbal knowledge people have of space anyway, their monthly meetings were an impressive result of continual reflection and iteration to find new ways to ask the same questions differently, and different questions in an accessible way.

As this project does not form a major part of my ethnography, and I go into greater detail later regarding its operations, I don't dwell too long on it here, but I wish to point out that of the three projects I describe in my ethnography, this was the only one that was not exclusively focused on women.

METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS IN DETAIL

Setting out with the initial aim of pursuing a mixed methods approach, I gained ethical approval from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to carry out research with (what now seems a dizzying) proposed protocol that combined a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. With the aim of anchoring the research primarily in the explorative, iterative approach of ethnographic inquiry (Emerson 1995), but maintaining the ability to ask socio-spatial questions, I gained approval for a range of additional methods — a methodological 'tool bag' of qualitative and quantitative methods — to dip into as fieldwork unfolded. Thus in addition to a proposed ethnographic approach involving semi-structured interviews, walking interviews, group interviews and participant observation, I also included the possibility of carrying out a photo elicitation technique known as PhotoVoice (which, as I go on to write, I went on to encounter 'in the field' as another researcher adopted the tool in her research whilst I was observing the same project), as well as tools intended to put some of my previous experience of spatial analysis to use, including statistical analysis of spatial networks (the Space Syntax approach) and systematic observations of the built environment.

Virtually all these approaches other than those that were classically ethnographic, fell away in the first few months of testing questions 'in the field'. And yet many of the preparations for such research and analysis proved invaluable. I mapped and walked the district's network of spaces, familiarising myself with the socio-spatial nature, dimensions and feel of different streets, comparing them at different times, mapping locations and trying to trace connections and relationships. I collected

endless maps of the district. From hand-drawn maps of neighbourhood festivals to institutional find-us-here maps for health, support groups or other assistance. I chose selected spots — observed them for hours, over different days, notebook in hand, tracking the movements of the space — that is, in systematic mode but in qualitative reflection. Many of these observations find their way into my ethnographic material and methodological reflections. Gradually, a certain unintended conflation of quantitative and systematic tools with space, and qualitative with the social, seemed a restriction on observation rather than an invitation to perceive more. And so, the status of the district changed, it settled in my field notebooks less as object to be known and more as one additional interlocutor in the story. Such walks and extended observations certainly still intended to ask spatially inflected questions, but the now established habit of observing streets in a research mode became more significant for collecting material for thought than any specific numbers or quantities attached to them. It became in other words less of a structured cross-examination and more of an ethnographic conversation, exploring the proposition and effects of emplaced life.

As fieldwork progressed, these more spatially weighted notes came into conversation with the notes I took during participant observations of the organisations I was following. And much of this to and fro formed the iterative process of methodological refinement. There were several layers to the notes, the first being as purely descriptive as possible, and the second forming a sort of running commentary of reflections over the material, to allow easy reference to questions that emerged. This second layer formed the basis for further enquiry. Many of these notes then received a further level of annotation. I either scanned these hand-written notes to make typed annotations around their edges or rewrote scenes with a side bar of meta comments. I liked to think of the notes as loosely spiralling, with subsequent interpretations forming nested layers of text. Thus, much of this process enfolded data collection, writing and analysis throughout fieldwork.

Back in London, I started another round of analysis, following a more detailed approach. I read through my notes with tracing paper laid on top. This way I was able to make a separate series of annotations, colour coded by different kinds of points: observational, theoretical, context, links to further theorists, emerging argument, and on layered tracing paper, one could see their relative accumulation. A separate list was

compiled of key words and themes that were merging — in essence, a coding process. For me, writing, drawing and mark making form a key part of the thinking process. Having utilised (and been frustrated by the distancing quality of) qualitative coding software in the past, I found this approach facilitated a better overview of the material, in which thematic orientation was pegged to a tangible distance of pages, which for me, formed a better mental topography of its issues and its unfoldings. Whilst this follows a fairly standard process of coding, following the steps of most standard coding software, this process' main deviation is in consciously making this an analogue process rather than a digital one.

Later as themes clarified, I was able to annotate the remaining notes by reference to the broad structure of the emerging argument, without the detailed use of trace. Writing then took on an additional iterative process combining comparisons of scenes, pursuing emerging themes in other theorists, and the kind of reflective analysis that unfolds by wrestling experience into written form. It was at around this stage that I consciously decided not to use any images.

Representations of space took on a very specific role in this thesis. Either this was to be an ethnography in which visual methods were fundamentally part of the analysis and description, in fixed space as something to observe, or it was about the processual, fluid quality of perception and observation itself. To use images anywhere between, as say, illustrative examples, seemed not to take this seriously — as though it were to default to a certain habit of seeing. The aim was precisely to question the processes around how place becomes knowable, passive, static background — I found myself resisting images for their locking of space into stasis. At any rate, this provocation to presenting lived space differently, this limit as a creative constraint, proved fruitful and useful in reflecting on the material. With my current overview of the thesis — whilst I still wonder if this thesis could have been written *with* images — I am not sure the underlying argument would have remained the same.

REPRESENTATIONS: FOUR THORNY ISSUES

There are many tricky issues of representations to contend with in this thesis. And it forms both a methodological and a theoretical point. Indeed, much of the argument of this thesis emerges from trying to engage with representations differently, or at least to destabilise the kind of work they do. This begins with the representation of my field site.

Visiting over the winter of 2015/2016, I found the atmosphere in Berlin — the outpouring of grassroots-level support — both electrifying and deeply moving. Histories collided — I had never seen so many swastikas — though they were painted on the walls with a big cross over them to say such racism was not welcome. The street was a visible forum for these public-political debates and the multifarious responses of civil society. With former airports and abandoned shopping malls pressed into service as emergency shelters, the fabric of the city itself played out these new relations. In the same trip I had the chance to visit Copenhagen. Denmark itself being similarly lauded in Europe for having opened its borders in welcome. But the story of the city was a different one.

Definitions of integration in policy terms often have an abstract existence, but as is the case more generally, there is a gap between conceptualisations of social processes and their everyday mundane unfolding in social practice — an action which inherently unfolds through encounters in lived space. In the political framing of social realities, space itself and social practice are indissolubly related, something which is inherent to an understanding of Germany's histories of migration, which have played out at the micro level of the neighbourhood (Hinze 2013). I was drawn to the typological difference of these cities, the kinds of lived spaces they afforded for these encounters with others, understood in the very literal sense of 'outdoor rooms' of walls, benches, courtyards and street life. And this is where my thinking eye went. In Copenhagen, new arrivals were primarily housed in the isolated urban outskirts, in Berlin (though Berlin had its fair share of outskirt, isolated shelters, but there were *also*) chances for living, connecting and engaging within the social and economic life of the busiest neighbourhoods, in ways which brought the wider issues into the level of everyday street encounter.

In the context of asking how life can be lived in mixed, vibrant, equitable, convivial cities, I was drawn to the question of what space can do. Under national policies of exclusion, such as those encountered in much of the rest of Europe, my UK home included, it seemed obvious that the chances any city can afford are limited by these

political exclusions. Under spatial policies of exclusion and isolation, within a relatively more welcoming atmosphere such as the Danish example, it also seemed obvious that such a question was relatively easily answered — spatial isolation has a hard time leading to social connection (as indeed a scan of the Danish-based literature revealed). But the collaborative potential of socio-spatiality in rendering meaningful connections seemed an unanswered question.

The district in which I described the struck-through swastikas, the former airport and shopping mall turned emergency shelters, along with a range of other make-do sites, is Berlin's district of Neukölln, which sits in the wider homonymous borough of Neukölln, one of twelve boroughs across the city. Located in the southeast of the city, it once edged the western side of the former wall within the American sector and came to be known as a majority working class area during this time. These days the borough has a population of 329,000 (District Office of Neukölln 2018) and is one of the poorest in the country, but my focus is specifically on its more densely, and diversely populated, and poorer northern district, also sometimes referred to as Nord-Neukölln. Here comes my second thorny issue of representation.

The district has also long been characterised as the 'migrant' district (Holm 2013 for a critical discussion), and both in terms of political attention and the wider popular imaginary of the city, this representation references more its sizeable Turkish and Lebanese population than its equally high number of other non-German European born residents, many of whom came following the so-called 'guest worker' programme, I referred to in the previous chapter. The social fallout in terms of long-term discrimination, high rates of unemployment, low education attainment rates, widespread poverty, high social welfare dependence, together form the notable backdrop against which programmes such as the City Mothers exist, along with a wide ranging number of other 'integration' initiatives prevalent in Neukölln, which simultaneously address but stand as testament to long standing and entrenched exclusions (Ibid. and Council of Europe 2011).

The district is also the heart of the city's Arab community, with one of its three major boulevards, Sonnenallee, commonly referred to as the 'Arab Street' due to its Middle-Eastern restaurants, book shops, grocery stores and cafes. Since the late 2000's, the district's central location and bustling creative scene made it one of the fastest gentrifying

areas of an already fast gentrifying city, attracting artists, well-heeled anglophone and European immigrants, as well as speculative foreign investors. Many have commented on the resulting tensions, the rise in rents, the displacement of established populations, the changing face of the district and character but such tensions are complex, and are not without celebrated acts of solidarity, care and unexpected alliances, such that the representations themselves have circulated in contradictory ways within political, academic and public debate (Huning and Schuster 2015), merging with shifting understandings of the terms of migration and integration.

And so to the third thorny issue of representation, and my own positionality. I am not a big fan of this question, but when asked where I am from, I used to ask people what they meant — my Canadian-inflected accent, my non-white appearance, or my non-British name. These days, I trace backwards to cover all the bases. When pressed, I say I consider myself British, though, it's only in certain respects that I do. I say my mother is from the Philippines, but that my father is as uncomfortable with the question, and often as facetious with his answers as me. His father was German-French born to Polish parents, and his mother was born in Palestine, but was raised in South Africa. I spent my formative years living in Israel-Palestine for six years, Canada for two and the rest in the UK. But I have a very distinctive Israeli name (that it is a surname neither of my parents was born with is part of the reason I am in the process of changing it, but that change is unlikely to come into effect at this thesis' time of writing).

My reticence with the terms of migration is not just a theoretical stance, it is a personal one, built on living in a society with a sedentary bias that I have not shared. Many of my interlocutors were interested to hear my mother was not British, that I recognised the isolation, frustration and difficulties of finding one's feet in a context of prejudice. But we did not necessarily share what we thought an otherwise might look like — my parents have never been of one place. I have a love of places, but not of that kind.

In recent years I have taken the name Maayan in more professional contexts. In the past, it was always a source of fun for me to see the trajectories of nicknames my name would take — Maya and May featuring frequently. But in this research, I have had to take a deliberate stance towards my name in a way I have never previously had to.

It became a significant part of the study's ethics, discussed internally at various stages prior to embarking on fieldwork, with researchers at the London School of Hygiene and

Tropical Medicine, and my supervisory and advisory team. Whilst still in London, with a plan to work with refugees in precarious and vulnerable settings, there was the worry that my name might place persons at risk. I could not guarantee women would not be accused of participating with 'Israeli research', and there was a distinct worry of the dangers that might put anyone in. I often go by Maya, and if able, I often shorten my surname to Ash, and so this seemed a reasonable precaution to take, and it became the name I presented myself with. Early on in fieldwork, I also quickly discovered Ashkenazi had other uncomfortable disadvantages in Germany, when the few times I formally had to use it were met with incredulity, embarrassment or annoyance — I was glad to be spared the ordeal of having to explain why my name ended in "-nazi", surely, I had got the spelling wrong? In the field as I got to know interlocutors more personally, many came to know — and we often spoke of — my Jewish background. But this always proceeded from the ability to have intimate conversation established after some acquaintance — much as any other intimate questions of belonging and identity proceeded in my research. This was as much to stay true to the ethics protocol agreed prior, so that I was critical as regards any possible risk posed to my interlocutors through various interpretations of my research purposes, as to the desire to be reflexively in dialogue with regards my own relationships and positionality established in the field, without the name as a fixed point of difference. But the theme of Judaism was a difficult one in this context and appeared several times — especially in a history course run for the City Mothers, which included confrontations with Germany's history of genocide. It was a difficult and fraught theme for the staff. Many of the participants on the course had a very different political, historical relation with Israel; and Judaism was clearly wrapped within that. These moments brought acute questions of refuge, exclusion and belonging to the fore. Given my positionality, I have chosen not to write in detail about these moments — there was of course enough material already to write about as it stood, but the inability to include these moments, to engage with them on a personal and theoretical level, stands for me as a point of regret. Nonetheless, writing of them simply did not seem fair. Many of these moments however were fundamental — forcing a deep, ongoing reflection of the use of representations in this research, questioning their use on myself and others, in ways which forged iterative and exploratory engagements with place, categories of identity and their connections in meaningful terms. Which leads me to the final thorny issue of representation, which is to the representation of the debate of belonging, fitting in and 'integration' itself.

This ethnography leans on a distinct body of literature for the purposes of going beyond 'methodological nationalism' (Glick Schiller 2011). The literature cited has therefore given a snapshot view of the discursive landscape and history of integration in Germany. I have borrowed from processual and relational approaches to bodies, place and practice in order to find a conceptual toolkit that remains agnostic to the relations formed and the 'entities' worked on. But the methodological implication extends to the status of fixed positions in general. To this end, I seek for my methodological examination to proceed without recourse to a fixed notion of 'locality', and its concomitant relation with territorial 'identity'.

Moreover, the processual and relational approach which I adopt is an iterative one: it unfolded in tow with moments of participant observation and was calibrated in response to attempts to think through the empirical observations in the 'field' analytically. To reflect this process, and its inherent resistance to a simple bifurcation between 'tools' of observation and the objects observed, I revisit methodological points in greater detail regularly and iteratively with the ethnographic account, in recurring intervals in the data chapters themselves, in the form of 'Interludes'.

My aim is not to present an account of 'integration' in this ethnography, but rather to stay close to it as a point of purchase; the linear anchor by which a variety of relations have taken hold. I follow it not as an object in itself, but as a guide rope through a series of disparate relations and practices, by which a series of categories of difference have been drawn into connection (as well as contestation) and have thus momentarily materialised.

CHAPTER 4: ANATOMIES OF CARE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe instances in which practices of care made different spatialities possible. I examine how practices of care done to relate with others, and relate with people deemed Other, became one important part of making different trajectories of place. Practices of care altered the way space was conceived, it had effects on the quality and kinds of relations that were temporarily held in place, and it directly impacted material arrangements. I fix my lens on different kinds of space: spaces of trusted encounter, street vs private space, the bureaucratic imaginary of the district, a garden and memories of home. Paying particular attention to the body and its senses, I describe the way embodied capacities such as perception, touch, smell, listening — marshalled as skills and sensibilities of care — came to have spatial implications in these situations. Care as an effect on people, and care as an effect on place are here thought together: I thus seek to describe the *practices* of such spaces of care — the making of such different spatial constellations in embodied and sometimes deliberately disembodied ways — through encompassing multiple dimensions of care, including the practiced skills it involves, emotional sensibilities and ethical orientations.

Initially I draw on Latour's theorisations on bodies to adjust the lens of this chapter onto perception, as a capacity of exchange with a 'lively' environment. I examine situations of care in which the body's perceptions made different kinds of spaces of care. First, notions of intimate spaces of encounter were reconfigured by injunctions to 'listen with care'; an example of one of many instances of communication training I observed. In its twin scene on gambling addiction, I examine the way different imaginaries of the urban environment and its effects, played a part in the way different possibilities of care were conceptualised and discussed. Aspects such as negotiating the locus of individual responsibility and control, discussing strategies and skills of offering support, all articulated with differing conceptions of place's effects.

I then go to the town hall where a certain kind of care is shown for the women I accompanied, and a stated care for 'integration'. There are the sensibilities, the

efforts and the political ethics but care arises as a very different relation in this administrative view. I question how concomitantly, a 'lively' environment in which the women I sought to learn from worked, is deadened in this framing. The administrative gaze celebrates the women at the same time as it renders a kind of interchangeability. And as we go up the clock tower to survey the district from above, I discuss embodied and disembodied effects of seeing place asymmetrically. But on leaving the town hall, a conversation with Rowena, alters my terms: practising care is as much about attending to the relations made, as it is about attending to how relations of care endure.

And it is this aspect of care that I explore in the final section located in a garden project, and in a conversation with Iris about the remembered scents of a ruined city. I examine what a spatiality of care means when we take seriously the notion that space, in Massey's words, is an encounter with something on the move (Massey 2003).

CLASSROOM

A Four-Eared Anatomy of Care

It's a bright winter's day, but the light that enters the room through the tall, generous windows is weak, coming filtered through the trees in the narrow walkway outside. Inside the room are around twenty five women, sat snuggly around one long central island of wooden desks. A flipchart stands at the far end of the room, and wooden cupboards line the walls. Posters of a confident girl with the slogan, no one chooses who I should marry but me, a district map of the health centres, and assorted labels are taped to the cupboard doors—a sure indication we are in a classroom. But unlike the institutional white plastic and strip-lighting feel of other cash-strapped social organisations I know, this place has a cosy feel, the wood has a warmth, and the air, coming through the much debated open-again, close-again window, has a freshness. Against expectations, I realised early on, I like this place.

I am sitting with the new cohort of City Mothers. They seem shy and quiet. They're looking attentively at the coordinator, and the coordinator is looking attentively at them. There is silence. It is hard to tell if it is one of nervousness or confusion, but the coordinator is clearly in a state of slight frustration, and I, for one, count myself amongst the confused.

"You did this yesterday, right?" the coordinator asks, and some women nod. "Well then what does it mean? Why did we show you this picture?"

She is holding a drawing, not unlike a child's line drawing. It is of a man's face. He has four ears. They point to the four corners of the A4 page, and they're in bright primary colours.

"Come on, who remembers? It was just yesterday. What did Cathy, explain?" (Cathy is the second coordinator who shares the training of the new cohort along with Nina, today's coordinator).

"Is it that we listen in lots of ways?" A brave soul ventures. There is a flurry of attention. Someone hasn't heard, they ask their neighbour. The neighbour replies in Arabic. They in turn pass it on to their neighbour on the other side. And Nina encourages a slight further rippling out of the translation with an ushering hand gesture. Someone else across the table says they haven't understood the question. They ask Nina in Turkish. Nina replies, and suddenly across the whole table is a bloom of noise, an exchange of translations, by which the nascent group dynamics reveal an early topography of mother-tongue association which I only see cement and strengthen over the coming months. Thus emboldened, the room quietens down.

"Go on."

"We are mothers. But we are also wives, and we are friends. And we listen to people in different ways?" a class-member states. I scribble this down furiously. The variable relationality of the women manifest in a four-eared anatomy, I love it, Mead, Taylor, here I come.

"No." Nina replies.

The man stares out of the page inscrutably.

Nina gives in. She delivers the class again. There is a wave of relief. The lesson is about Active Listening—how one "tries to understand others".

I had already been a regular visitor of the project for four months by the time this scene took place, but as training takes six months, this was the first time I'd seen a new cohort from the start. One of the distinctive features of this programme, as previously mentioned, is its training of women to carry out 'integration' work with other families in the district, that is, to *do* it, not necessarily *receive* it, though in a great many ways, this line between whether they are the executors of integration work or the recipients

is purposefully and consciously blurred by the project. Ostensibly though, the target of integration work is not them, but those they will visit—other families who might otherwise be cut off from formal services. Over the course of the six months' training, and then the next two to three years in which they work as City Mothers, they will cover ten basic topics under the three main project themes of education, childrearing and health. As City Mothers, their task is to find families who might like to hear about these topics (given that they are trained to dedicate an hour to each topic, over the course of ten visits, finding families, especially ones who have not been approached by previous City Mothers, is no easy undertaking), and then to pass on their knowledge in their shared mother tongue. Given the demographics of the district this is mainly Arabic and Turkish, though in any given cohort there are handfuls of other mother-tongues spoken (at a staff meeting, the area's rapid gentrification prompted the coordinators to joke that they would need to target Hipster English in their future recruitment). With the translational emphasis on being a link between German speaking services and non-German speaking families, it's no surprise so much of the project's training is devoted to skills of communication.

Yet, during my time with the project, its ability to make communication and forms of careful relating active sites of intervention was one of its most intriguing aspects. As training in a certain kind of practice, it went far beyond the ten 'integration' topics. As women often told me, and as I observed over the course of a year, this communication aspect of the project was intimately entwined with acts of care, for those they were supposed to meet, for those on the project and for their families. It was notable in the way many of the women changed the way they engaged with one another, even outside formal classes. And I was frequently told how their communication with friends and family changed since becoming a City Mother. The most frequent refrains came in the form of how to deal with one's children "patience, patience", "keep speaking…" and strikingly, often as interjections to gossip — "wait, but we don't know their reasons!" said in genuine protest, that the contexts of people's actions can be so unknown. These common appeals to empathy, patience and non-judgement were notable aspects of the project's collective feel.

Whilst much of this was a gradual process, in this class it seemed to happen as one, sudden, logic shaking moment—a chance to see in microcosm how a training in relating differently was *done*.

Nina went on with her explanations. The four ears represent different kinds of listening: facts, relationships, self-disclosure, taking action. With one ear we hear words and think— 'what is this person telling me to do?' This is our action ear. She explains it's the listening we do with the thinking that we must do something about it. With another ear we hear facts. We're shown an example picture.

A man and a woman are sitting on a bench looking at the stars.

Isn't their twinkling beautiful? The woman's caption reads.

That is merely an effect created by our perception of their refracting light through the atmosphere, goes the man's.

"Ah," someone says, "she is trying to be romantic."

"And he is trying to explain something," someone else says.

Nina sighs, "yes, but with what *ear* did he hear it?"

There is the self-disclosure ear with which we hear self-revelations, and there is the particular ear with which we hear those we are in close relationships with: 'What are these green bits in the soup?' 'Why don't you go eat at your mother's?'

"The ear with which I hear all depends on whom I'm talking to — the question is, with which ear do I hear my conversation partner" Nina says. "Communication is hard because I don't always know with which ear the other person is listening."

For a moment the room is silent.

"Hard," someone says, neither with complaint nor resignation, simply a nod of confirmation.

"Very hard," Nina says.

I am amazed by the lesson. I am amazed by its complexity and its subtlety, and I am amazed by the ambition to teach it to a room of people, who are still in the uphill, daily struggle of learning German, some after half a lifetime in the country and some after only a few years. I am also amazed by its theoretical content, its ontological implications, that there is no standalone utterance. There is no telling what was said in the abstract, only what is made by the listening, by the relation of those listening to each other at the moment of encounter. We are far from the kind of knowledge gleaned by the disembodied observer (or listener), in this model of communication, there is no position of exteriority from which to understand what's going on.

She writes Active Listening on the flipchart, and elaborates on some of its tenets — respect, empathy, sincerity, attention, courtesy.

"Try to understand your conversation partner using your care (*Sorgen*)." 'Trust is not automatic; it comes with time'. And she repeats over and over (for this becomes a repeating source of contention) that their task is not to find a solution, it is to try and *understand*.

Connecting with other parents (though in reality mostly mothers), relating to them "at eye level" (a key ambition of the project), maintaining confidentiality, trust and care, is the bulk of the work, despite the terms of the project's funds resting on more formal 'factual' based training. They will meet with families, communicate with other parents in their mother tongue, explain the project's themes often in intimate one to one meetings with the aid of flyers, always with the emphasis that they are not the experts, their task — should such help be needed — is to connect families with official resources and professional advice centres. Through guided walks, maps and classroom discussions, women learn to map the district by its sites of formal assistance.

As a model of a certain kind of 'integration' instantiated by the project's notional structure, it is a fairly bureaucratic imaginary of what good integration might mean — in this case connection with formal district services. Its relationship with the kind of in-depth communication training the women receive, is therefore not a straightforward one. These are two different models of connection and affinity. Whilst the structure inculcates a view of integration premised strongly on a service-based topography of the district, the kinds of connections established by the training went far beyond this goal, and as I will go one to elaborate, rendered a host of different kinds of belonging, senses of purpose, and connections with place.

So the frustration of receiving training in topics — with all the hallmarks of advice — whilst effectively being denied the ability to give advice oneself, and merely being the person that says, "well, here's a flyer, did you know there's an advice centre for that…" is a real and constant one. For inherent in their communication training are all the subtleties of listening as attention, an act and art of empathic care, a skill of relating well, which in practice is frustratingly being delimited to acting as a good address book.

No wonder Nina labours this point. She is well aware and has witnessed the consequences of the frustration involved.

It's time to try it out. First Nina explains about body language. It's not just about one's choice of words, she says, it's about eye contact, about the way you sit, whether it's closed or open, doubtful or non-judgemental. "One cannot, not communicate." And I am reminded of the maxim attributed to Bateson that one cannot not relate (e.g. Strathern 2020, 13).

"For example, folded arms — like so — can look like disinterest…" A woman sitting across the table from me unfolds her arms and places them under the table.

Someone says, "But, Nina, when I was at school that was a sign that you were attentive, that you were listening," The woman opposite folds her arms back as they were.

"Yes, but you know people can look aggressive when they do that." Someone else proposes. She momentarily looks worried, unfolds and clasps her hands.

"It's less about the gesture itself," Nina explains, "it's about being aware of how you're coming across to the person in front of you." After moving to fold her arms, the woman ahead (who I eventually come to know as Laura) hesitates, lowers them, and finally folds her hands in front of her with a small shrug. She looks resigned to the idea that there's no right answer, that, or perhaps that there's no scolding lurking anywhere.

It's time for the role play. Two chairs are laid out at the front of the class. What follows, safe to say, like almost all classroom role play, is awkward.

"But Nina—what should I say?' asks the woman charged with playing the role of a mother receiving a visit. The role-playing duo, shuffled for a while, giggled a bit, struggled to come up with a complaint, and are now a little stumped and exposed.

"Anything. Make it up."

"I have a problem."

"Yes."

"My husband doesn't help. I've got too much to do."

"Have you tried talking to him?"

"Yes."

I sense there is a shared understanding in the group as they wait to hear the resolution of the familiar micro drama. A pause as the new City Mother in training thinks of a solution. And is defeated.

"Nina — but what can I say?"

There is another short attempt. This one has many asides; the woman is keen to point out that she has made up these problems. 'Obviously, obviously…' and it ends in awkward defeat, much like the first.

Eventually, Nina takes the role of the City Mother. She seats herself down and casts around for a volunteer. She calls out to where I've tucked myself into a corner and invites me to play a mother. Oh god. I cannot refuse. I'm not even a mother. Pointless to do the asides. I must play as participant (hah) and chalk up the thought for methodological analysis later. I walk the length of the room past the waiting crowd, many of whom have only first learned of my existence for the first time today.

I take my seat.

"I have a problem," I begin. "I have too much to do. I've got two little kids. Twins, in fact. Very young."

"And your husband doesn't help?"

"He wants to, no he's good, but he has to go to work. I don't want to ask him to do too much, he's tired. And he has to work."

"Go on," she listens, she keeps eye contact. It's sympathetic and open.

"I'm all on my own. My family isn't here. I don't have my mother, or sisters. I don't know anyone. I'm completely alone, and this place is new…" I am frightened to find my voice is breaking. This is all made up. I thought I was merely amalgamating everything I'd learned, and heard and saw, during my time with the project thus far. Who am I channelling that I'm welling up so? My mother, presumably.

I'm scared to say anything more.

"That sounds really hard."

"Yes," I reply, staring at my hands.

And there is silence. And it ends.

This is to listen without judgment, without action, without telling the other person what they ought to do, or what you can do. It is to listen so they can be heard. So she explains, and the day's training is over.

Listen with Your Care

Many of the elements of this session were building blocks for the kinds of listening, communicating and relating practices which were frequently revisited throughout the many classroom sessions I observed. They were introduced as a key topic early in the training but were continually developed thereafter — active listening, the role of body language, empathy without judgement, and how to be a resource of support but refrain from giving advice. Much of this rests on the project's particular enactment of integration work, its aim to tackle the disconnecting consequences of discrimination through an emphasis on relating at 'eye level'; its maxim for relational work between peers. These peer to peer relationships were by no means straightforward. During classroom sessions, many said that they were suspected of acting in partnership with social services, and the project's close links with the political life of the district only served to reinforce this idea. But if they were sometimes seen to represent an outside, they were also expected to tap into an 'insider' status, building upon shared affinities. For example, it was a given that, at least to start off with, the main families City Mothers visited were not in fact strangers, but friends, family and neighbours. Then, the locality further complicated these relationships. Their work and the families they were able to visit was strictly defined by the district boundary line. And this locality, with all its representations as a 'migrant district', was also supposed to be used as further affinity. In one class in which we role-played approaching other mothers, a series of opening lines was workshopped: 'I think our kids are in the same class', 'doesn't your son play football with my son?' 'Have I seen you here before?' (which was followed by a roll of laughter across the class). Their work occupied the difficult middle ground in which their skill was honed towards neither total strangers nor acquaintances, but people with whom you shared a home district; to err here was to err where you live.

The stakes were high, and the relations it tapped into, deeply entangled. It is no wonder many of the women I spoke to described how the work never stops — you can't clock off if your workspace is your home space — with sentiments varying from a feeling of purpose that transcended the prescribed working day, to pointing out the exploitation therein. The work proceeded therefore through actively tapping into these entangled relationships, and its training honed in on the kinds of skills which *do* relational entanglement: listening, speaking, body language — a range of senses by

which one perceives and is perceived (perception in its full sensory capacity beyond just the sense of sight).

What I am interested in examining are the kinds of complexities that unfold in this training. In focusing so much attention on the encounter — what one perceives in it, and how one should engage in it — an intriguing space opens up in which care, perception and embodied skill are brought together in an instance of 'integration' training, in order to skill women into rendering certain kinds of connection. Yet against the broader political narrative of integration in which the project is enmeshed, in which connection is a matter of quantity and extent (the 'address-book' style connection), the bulk of the class session was devoted to making the *quality and specificity* of that relation count. It is not merely that one is 'rightly' connected with the relevant services, rather acts of relating become a site of intervention in themselves, and through this a sphere of action is opened in which relating comes to be deliberately acted on as skill. Within this sphere, and well beyond the tactics of the opening one-liner, was a proposition which fundamentally challenged the role of care and perception (and what ears do). I seek to remain curious with what has momentarily been achieved when embodied practices of care have been worked on to shape certain kinds of *encounter*, examining how a particular spatiality of care was made through reconceptualising what listening *does* (or how one does it), and inculcating a practice of listening *differently*. Listening with care may have been an injunction to relate differently, but such relating had effects on the spatiality achieved. There are several aspects I wish to remain curious towards. One is the use of care as an instrument of listening. The second is the placing of an everyday encounter, with all the trappings of friendship (the kind that frequently and informally occurs in the everyday life of the district), within a sphere of exception such that it is not an everyday encounter but one that enacts 'integration' work. And the third is the counterintuitive use of the four ears. That is, I am looking at practices of care, practices of place and practices of the body, respectively.

First to care. In this encounter, care has been instrumentalised — "listen with your care" — I imagine a heart shaped ear-horn. But unlike an ear-horn it is not passive, it is not about amplifying what is there as given, but rather it directs a choice between different ways of hearing the same thing. The choice of the 'ear' does not alter the words said, but rather their sense and meaning. In this regard sense making

— the sense of hearing, and the sense of the words — is a collaborative process, a result of encounter, the activation of both sides in producing sense.

Part of the ability to render this encounter as more than friendship — despite all its semblance of a casual, friendly chat — rests on this deliberate repositioning of listening through the instrumentalisation of care *as a quality of listening*. But beyond this role of the person enskilled in listening-in-the-service-of-integration, is also the emplacement of the activity as something which stands outside of an everyday chat, the making of a certain space around the encounter. Operating on the notion of a shared affinity at being somehow Other (conceived through a shared experience of migration, or a shared mother tongue), the project reframes the encounter as a site of work, or active doing, on the logic that it is being made in the service of wider connections with the district. The project attempts to counter the power asymmetries of Othering through connections of affinity 'at eye level', but the demarcation of Other is only temporarily suspended, pushed beyond the individual towards the edges of that encounter — the practice forms a space in which caring and careful listening marshal affinities of otherness as a resource.

Yet, there is something else to be said about spatialities of care in this moment, which is linked to explaining why the proposition of the four ears should have been so counter-intuitive, so confusing to the class (including me), so '*hard*'. What kind of proposition was being made by the anatomical metaphor that made the act of listening something so momentarily confusing?

The women in the class came to a session as part of training in how to *do* integration work, and yet the terms of relating here reconfigure assumptions of how the body perceives, communicates and cares. I want to explore the image of the four ears as a proposition about a certain kind of embodied action, with implications for the ways we might conceptualise embodied spaces of care achieved in this moment.

The different ways in which body language is read was discussed. In the role-play there was the notion that your body is always communicating simply by being perceived, and the four ears image presented the 'ears' as an active organ in conversation making. To be seen now gains an active dimension in encounter, and to hear is now an active dimension of encounter too. Whilst the picture of the ears is a metaphor, it also says something literal about the reconfiguration of the body. I draw on Latour (2005) in this argument to conceptualise the body not in terms of a bounded

entity of matter, but in terms of its ongoing and unfolding capacity to be affected by its environment. The counterintuitive feel of the class seemed partially due to rendering aspects of the body that had hitherto been considered passive, into something actively involved in its environment, and actively involved in the process of making what *is*. That is, to actively listen had material effects — for instance the making of what was said and what was shared, the emotional force and effectual contact of embodied attention (as I attempted to illustrate in my mini auto-ethnographic moment). In this processual and relational view of listening, the proposition that different ears make different senses of what is said positions sense to the moment of encounter, between the persons and what is made between them — it is in other words a necessarily emplaced action; it is something afforded by the space in-between. It reconfigures care as an action with ontological effects, and it points to the spatial relations that allow such a subjectivity to be formed relationally.

In this sense the value of this practice and skill cannot be isolated from its emplacement. In rendering the perceiving body active, the connection itself cannot be abstracted nor the knowledge derived from it disembodied — there is an attention on what you hear being dependent on the encounter — the facility of the senses to make sense extends into the environment in which things happen. In a soft interpretation, it implies that senses which were formerly conceived as passive can be instrumentalised through care to be rendered as something active. In a more extended interpretation, it implicates a fierce ontological proposition — that what *is*, is the result of encounter and can be changed according to the ways we shift perception, *as an active skill of care*. 'Hard' indeed.

In this account in which care and perception are mutually implicated, in which both are required for understanding or relating to another, there is an embodied subjectivity, one which is reliant on an outwardlooking relation for its accomplishment. It proceeds through the use of the body (its senses) and a particular way of spatialising the encounter. The body (its ears and cares) is here a perceptual-feeling tool that makes knowledge through the encounter, and the substance of what is known is the result of an involvement in the world through an active perception and an active use of care. The embodied space for care in this encounter is thus constituted by several spatial imaginaries in this classroom session. There is the district boundary line defining the meetings that 'count', enacting a certain boundedness of the district. There is also the space of the district as the space in which one is familiar and 'at home', which in being

considered the space of the Other, renders an (assumed) affinity that is strategically deployed in this work. And finally, this particular training in encounter is also about the ways in which 'listening with care' might accomplish a certain constellation of space; one that is momentary held in tension, just long enough for a different kind of encounter to take place, where the act of care makes room for different kinds of statements to count and for someone to be heard.

Pacifying Place

During my time with the project, whilst the 'district' was ever present in women's job description, its presence as lived space was constantly disappearing from view. It is not that it was not there but rather that it was curiously easy to bat away as an irrelevance; a ubiquitous, everyday feature of common sense that could so easily be detached from the kinds of activities which were so central to the women's work.

Yet, the district as physical, material, tangible space *did* feature in much of the work, and constantly threatened to break through. My focus in the following is to illustrate processes by which the environment and people were curiously not connected but rendered apart. This act is of course a kind of spatial relation too. In illustrating this, my intention is not merely to point out this connection but to highlight the extent to which these acts of surfacing took shape on narratives of individual agency.

The environment here formed a foil against which narratives of *agency* took shape, which at the same time as casting the district as the substance and purpose of their roles, rendered passive its many effect and dulled the lived space by which women carried out their work.

The environment was rendered passive in such casual ways that I wish briefly to give a broad-brush sketch of a series of everyday ways in which it was raised as a factor before being dismissed. For instance, in a class on healthy nutrition for children's diets many protested 'knowing these things was all very well and good, but we have no control over what our kids buy in the street'. It appeared on topics regarding environmental sustainability in which the women were told by an external trainer that they were a political role model so they should take up cycling. They told him the roads were simply not safe enough. They said they would get abuse in the street for cycling and wearing a headscarf, they worried it looked unusual (they were told, even more

reason they should be in the vanguard). And, painfully, one woman told me privately "we are *Asyl* (refugees), we will never feel safe in the streets the way the Germans do, with their kids in a trolley on the bike. No way." But this 'context' failed to gain traction in discussions. It featured in topics regarding neighbours — how you approach them (again, neighbours are often a good source of families one can visit to make up one's hours), and whether it's the kind of building where neighbours know each other, or the kind where people go up the lift and never see another soul. And these were often brushed over as anecdotes rather than enter the many workshops in which strategies for approaching strangers and new families were discussed. One of the coordinators even joked to me that there was an apartment building in the street around the corner known as City Mothers house. Almost every woman in the building had gone through the project. And indeed, when I went to see it, it was one of the typical perimeter block, turn of the century, courtyard buildings, which many of the women preferred for being more sociable than the more modern apartment buildings or estates. Yet in discussions these protestations gained little purchase.

My aim in placing these seeming incidentals next to one another is to draw attention to the ubiquity by which powerful elements of everyday lived space were dismissed, that women's activities and relations took shape through and with an environment that exerted its own influence — as evidenced in their protestations in these accounts — yet it was an easily discounted factor. The district featured powerfully as a demarcation, the boundary line within which their work counted, but its effects as a factor in social life was easily rendered passive and excluded. Or rather, to put it another way, it was by excluding it as a cause that in itself rendered the environment as 'passive', and mere 'context'.

At stake, I argue, is a line that renders people and certain imaginaries of an environments apart through narratives of control. This division is an important one in making material divisions and making moral claims about politics of relating well, and politics of belonging. I use narratives of agency in this regard to examine how certain material exclusions are made. In this account, the ability to render certain things outside of narratives of action, and to render their effects negligible, became the practice of making the environment 'passive' and demarcating where ethical responsibilities to others lay. If it weren't for the fact that the women in this instance were specifically here for their 'migrant' status — in which notions of place are very much implicated in definitions of them — this simple narrative by which people and

place are rendered separate entities might have appeared less incongruous. As it is, there was a fluidity and an inconsistency to where the division was placed between people and place. It is the movement between the solubility and indissolubility of people and place which I draw attention to through the efforts that were required. Here, ethical narratives of personal responsibility feature heavily in these materialising practices out of which 'active' people and 'passive' environments were precipitated.

Control Illusion

I have pulled out a pair of black, thick rimmed sunglasses. My neighbour to my left reaches into the bag and pulls out a plastic toy horse. Next along it's a mobile phone, then a poker set, a small pink pig, dice in a cup, bingo, a horseshoe and ribbon, a footballer made of Lego.

Two visitors from the gambling addiction advice centre have come to talk to Maeve's group at her usual weekly group meeting held in the ground floor room of a leafy 70s housing estate with a large handsome play park at its centre. The weekly meeting is a chance to coordinate work, to discuss if anyone is having issues and for the women to receive ongoing professional development, such as today's visitors with the nice bit of theatricality.

The advisors, one man, one woman, try to break down the tricky issue of gambling addictions.

"Things are more addictive when people feel they can have some control over it. The pig is a talisman, something to help with an uncertain future."

Each object is a marker for a different aspect of gambling addiction, from the games themselves to some of the beliefs and superstitions that sustain them. Until Maeve interrupts.

"But ladies, who whistles in the evening? Who cuts their nails the day before?" she looks around the room at the handbags, "We almost always have some blue eyes [charms] in every class hanging off zippers." She casts around the room and finds none. Today, of all days, not. Coincidence.

"Superstitions are just when people have beliefs about influencing what can't be controlled." She says. And almost everyone in the room admits to believing in something or other.

"But what makes gambling so addictive?" she cues them. And then in unison several people say: "*Kontrolillusion!*" (as it sounds, control illusion). The theme, evidently, has come up before.

It's a thorny issue because as several women mention, it's *haram* (sinful, forbidden under Islam). You can't just bring it up casually. It's explained to the visitors that if the women were to bring up drinking or gambling with the families they visit they wouldn't be allowed in their homes.

"Gambling is an absolute taboo theme, so they have to trust you so much, it takes years to build that trust." Maeve and many others push back against the assumption that it's simply as easy as knowing the facts, telling hard truths and pointing in the direction of the nearest advice centre.

Many of the assumptions around the City Mothers' project — and this case was by no means an exception —is that women are on the inside. They can say things which formal organisations can't, can step into places they can't, and are able to see things which are easy to hide. In meetings with officials, coordinators often had to push back against these directions, overtones of a covert surveillance system, entry to the 'community' from the inside, as though they are all one group.

What these assumptions hide is that the work of gaining trust to which the women refer is precisely at odds with this closed, uniform, essentialism of a 'community'. Trust here is a practice, and their training is precisely about approaching people they *don't* know. (There are of course some visits which are based on connections of friends and family but given the number of visits they have to make, they very soon exhaust their known network).

His next slide says, "Gambling addiction is a disease", his reference, the DSM-5 (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, put out by the American Psychiatric Association, a touchstone of mental health classification and diagnosis).

This is his precursor to obviating the shame associated — something you need professional help for, like any other serious ailment.

Next slide: 'Gambling addiction and Migration'.

He tries switching to his childhood home-Arabic, hesitates, struggles and Maeve in exasperation says: "Just say it in German, the important thing is that we

understand, not that…" and she proceeds to arrange the group so his words can ripple out by collaborative group translations.

He says there is a higher risk of addiction. Why do they think that is?

"Because people are bored," someone says.

"Because people are stressed," says another.

"Because it's fun." And I wish I'd noted with what expression it was said.

He suggests: "unemployment, poverty…" as alternative suggestions. As though they are *alternative*. In another interpretation the collective class' point might have been that boredom and stress *are* experiences of unemployment and poverty. And, that his *Why* might be understood otherwise—why does anyone do anything? He draws on indicators of deprivation as an explanatory model: his audience on emotional states. Furthermore, in drawing a link between migration and gambling, it might also be that at this moment, the women presently at work might not want to be identified with unemployment and poverty. I wondered by what logic their different causal claims were precluded, and made him propose 'poverty' as an *alternative* to 'stress'.

After he explains about empathy, trust and listening, he said "you can help them, but they have to decide themselves," at which point Maeve takes over.

She says, "Yes, actually the City Mothers have much experience of that. They have a lot of communication training. The relationship, the interpersonal communication, the cultural logics all play a role. And of course, by way of tips she reminds them there is the use of the informal: "You said you had diabetes! What are you doing drinking that coke?!" she mock-scolds a friend. One needs to show interest in the person not just the problem. And you start with gateway subjects. Talking about alcohol and gambling usually takes two years at least of knowing a family. You can't start with those, but you can start with, say, *shisha*.

He tries another tack, "Can you introduce it as a disease? It can be treated just like any other addiction, even with health insurance."

Maeve ignores the comment. "Not only smoking cigarettes, or shisha, but also smaller, funny things, you know, TV, sports, games. […] And then also debt can be brought up. It's an indirect way. Does everyone know where the advice centre for debt is? ("Near the *Karstadt* [notable department store in the area]" "Ahhhh" a chorus replies) That's where the families are. Cooperate with them" (this last comment being directed at the gambling advice centre).

After they leave, we watch a video documentary about gambling. It is about how hard it was for someone with a gambling addiction to quit when he kept walking past gambling shops in the street. It made him have to take huge detours. The class discuss it. And as they do so many get more and more irritated.

"If this is such a problem, why does the city allow these shops in the first place?"

People say something about the fact it's not illegal.

"But in my street it's every fifteen metres another one. You can do something about that. It's obviously a problem."

The group discusses what can be done in the streets, the logic of rent, what the city authority can do, the fact this is more prevalent in migrant neighbourhoods — would planning authorities have let this happen elsewhere. But it remains a sticking point. It remains the thing that can't be influenced and is outside of their control, and to which they are not invited to respond.

What logics of control, responsibility and influence were entangled in this account? That one is responsible for one's gambling but not so clearly for one's addiction? That is a medical issue, for addiction is a disease, over which one has little conscious control. That as City Mother, one has influence over how one navigates and considers careful social environments, taboos, family relations, the use of trust, friendship and informality to affect motivations (e.g. diabetic Coke drinking, engaging with addiction services tangentially through debt), the ability to situate people in the context of their wider social relations, but then their wider physical context is a moot point. In short, who can influence disease? The medical system. Who can influence social relations? The City Mothers. Who can influence the street? (I would like to point out that a branch of the local planning office, with regular daily drop-in hours is located in the same building as this meeting is taking place)— an invisible force no one can approach.

In this logic, the street, the city through which you walk, is like an uncertain future; to imagine that one has influence over it is control illusion.

Placing Control

In this classroom setting, strategies to address a complicated issue were hashed out. The advisors from the gambling centre came specifically to the City Mothers project

in an attempt to engage with migration related dimensions of gambling addiction — they drew on narratives of socio-economic factors, and the language of medical diagnosis, offering it as a potential strategy in avoiding stigma or shame. But they faced different conceptualisations of the problem from their audience along with different proposed strategies, notably the notion of Control Illusion, and a strategy of long-term intimate relations of trust to address the taboo. What I want to discuss is the kind of imaginaries of people and place that emerge in these narratives. An agential self is framed by rendering a lively environment inert. This silenced environment becomes the passive ground against which such agency takes form.

I am interested in the way control is marshalled in these accounts as a framing device. The visitors place gambling within a medical rubric, its ability to function as a powerful ordering device that draws value from notions of expert authority, and demarcations of disease (after Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). Gambling is framed as an issue that would require professional attention, as something rendered apart from the control of the individual. The implication of the visitors' proposition being that once placed into this category of illness, one might accept aid without judgement, or blame. In addition, the visitors themselves cite a range of socio-economic factors — again stigma might be averted if the root causes were not conceived as 'individual' moral failing, or control, but as an expression of wider forces. So, what I point out is the strategic placing — identifying expressions of social inequity through the lens of the medical — as a strategy of reordering blame, stigma, and responsibility in ways which allow for care to proceed through a particular ordering of the surroundings too. Narratives of control involved a co-constituted ordering of people and certain renderings of an environment.

Against this is the notion of Control Illusion — a move by which a claim is made and a boundary positioned between those things over which you can affect, and things you can't. What is at stake here is again the category of things over which one can be said to have control, but more than this is the notion of *illusion* — the claim that one has a false understanding of where that control lies. That one does indeed *have* control though, at least in this framing, is a given.

The visitors make the appeal that in gambling's form as addiction, one has lost control over aspects of one's behaviour, now repositioned as 'disease'. In the second, it is false to believe one has control over chance events. But when pressed, where does this controlled self and the effects of the environment end? Both the visitors

and many within the classroom of City Mothers reference elements of their lived space. They point out the inequity inherent in a streetscape surrounding which is clearly a problem. From the socio-economic factors the advisors cite, to the issues of the streetscape, the prevalence of gambling shops, the habitual daily surroundings in which one lives one's life — the notion that control adequately demarcates the boundary between an active self and a passive, inert surroundings is continually interrogated and negotiated. What would it be to have an accurate view of one's control? What must be rendered outside of control, in order to have an accurate sense of one's volitional actions? In these discussions this surface boundary is a moveable line — it roams across the streetscape, life conceived as socio-economic factors, an addiction. What I am pointing out is the effect of this boundary in delineating responsibility and framing discussion, of making a certain notion of individuality, against the inequities of a surrounding environment. And the role of the environment thus shifts in relation to these discussions, it is not of given status — through these discussions the environment is at times animated or deadened. But *something* is rendered inert for agency to emerge.

The separation between the social and the material here has to be made for both these parallel claims to work. Gambling addiction as a disease, renders parts of the person outside of influence, inert, with all the biomedical authority over bodies and minds that a diagnosis of disease can confer. Then, too, the environment over which you have control is the one you can meet with over coffee, the family relations, the relations with services and the motivations conceived as emotions such as boredom, stress, fun, which can be brought into conversation, *not* an environment of built form, a streetscape of frequent gambling shops and an iniquitous planning context. In making this contrast though, what is viewed as the social and what is relegated to the physical, tells us less about the substance of each, and more about the narratives that allow a boundary to be formed between them. They are mutually constitutive and mutually implicated in forming that shifting boundary between active control, and passive matter. It is this bifurcation that I point out, in which one recedes into passivity for the other to emerge as locus of control, that serves as a powerful narrative device to render aspects of lived space passive, and to render a separation in lived space between 'social' and 'material'.

But against this particular imaginary of an environment, rendered mute by a certain conception of 'care' for addiction, another spatiality of care was created in this

interaction. In the strategy discussions regarding forming connections of trust amidst a taboo theme — one that shows 'interest for the person not just the problem' — there was the active instrumentalisation of private, domestic space.

In discussing this strategy, private space became a negotiated, active resource. It sat in contrast to the visitors' strategy which was more akin to public health messaging, which focused on pitching the message 'right' — the idea that if it is diagnosed as a disease, it no longer needs to remain a private shame but can be dealt with professionally. Against this 'public health' view, in which the message can take a disembodied stance — independent of the means by which it circulates — is the relational attitude to communication inherent in this classroom setting. Here was the notion that one earns access to private space, the ability to communicate rests on being able to be trusted enough to be invited into the home space, over time and through meaningfully relating. The importance of showing care to the person as opposed to reducing them to their problem, relies on the emplaced nature of this cultivated encounter. In this scenario, to follow the maxim, the medium is the message (after McLuhan 1964/1994), and the medium here is a constellation of spatial relations in which private space for relating with care is achieved. The ability to have the conversation in itself, to make the right connection, depended on the socio-spatialities of privacy. Communication is here envisioned to flow differently across public and private space, rendering space as a medium with its own social texture. The ability to be let in depends on this threshold between these socio-spatial textures. Space is proposed in such a way that it *modulates* the encounter, and modulates the knowledge and exchange able to occur therein.

The kind of spaces of trust which I elaborated in the previous section were brought to the fore once more. Here, the use of private spaces of trust was called up specifically as an alternative to a certain strategy of care for addiction. In this rendering, care proceeded differently, inherently dependent on the specificity of encounter — on the embodied skills and sensibilities of attuning to the encounter. I am not offering this analysis of care and space to argue that any constellation of care is more valid or 'good' in this instance, but rather, I point out how the imaginaries of space, and the relations of space made, shifted along with the kinds of practices of care proposed. Following the earlier scene, care in this context emerged as an encounter afforded by its emplacement.

TOWN HALL

The work of the City Mothers project, and the kind of training in integration work they deliver, has evolved over the years from its grassroots beginning to its current established status in the district. Much of its evolution is the result of detailed internal discussion by its coordinating staff. At their regular weekly staff meetings, many of these issues were interrogated and reflected upon from many directions, over a session that would normally last (incredibly) all day. But operating within a complex political and economic landscape, the direction of the project is only partially set from within. It receives funding from a range of different sources, including the Jobcentre, the District Office, and is now under the administration of one of the major charitable organisations that oversees a vast array of social welfare initiatives in Germany. Considered a successful model-project of 'integration' locally, nationally and internationally (in the time I was there, I met a range of visitors who came to learn about the project — a social worker from Paris, a campaigner from London, a charity organisation from the US, a group of urban planning students, one framed award certificate had been sent from Australia), it has a high-profile political presence with close ties to the District Office — an intimacy that does not readily translate to secure funding. Recurring funding-renewal battles are an almost annual event. From the meetings with the project's steering committee I attended at the District Office, the reactions of the project's leadership swung between annoyance at the elaborate political games they inevitably had to play under threat their funds wouldn't be renewed, and genuine worry that this time was not a bluff, and they were facing immanent existential threat — lending support to the idea that states of precarity are not merely issues of dependence on others but the coupling of dependence *and uncertainty* (Butler 2012).

It is in this shifting landscape that the operations of the project are shaped, and variations between classroom-facing and political-facing actions play out. In moving from the classroom context to the administrative, bureaucratic apparatus which sustained this project, I aim to draw attention to the concomitant shift in conceptualisations and practices of 'integration', which implicated a different series of place imaginaries too.

The earlier classroom scene attempted to illustrate how certain embodied practices of care came to make different kinds of space. Much of the care

to affect relations took place through certain embodiments of attention, as emplaced skills of relating. I bring in a shift in view to the bureaucratic to foreground acts of disembodying relations, in which the spatial work of *distance* came to have an effect. Here disembodied knowledge making and disembodied place making are taken as akin; they are the result of unequal positionalities of power, unequally enacted epistemologies. If power in the previous scene proceeded in a lateral diffuse way, here, as I move to the tower-perspective (my ethnographically informed panoptic view), the power to invoke tropes of disembodied knowledge, flattened a whole host of specificities of place, and specificities of care, which were so significant in the previous discussion.

In this disembodied stance, relations that 'integrate' are removed from the kinds of embodied acts of care and collaborative emplaced perceptions so necessary in the previous scene. It is not that place is rendered out of this account; it is rather that the spatiality made was of a different order, and it wielded its effect through an ability to distance. It is against this passive plane, that difference was affirmed.

The Eye in the Tower

This morning I've come to Neukölln's District Office town hall for the graduation ceremony. It's an imposing, turn of the century, voluminous grey-stoned building that takes up the whole block, with a tall clock tower, built at a time when it was fashionable to look older.

The ceremony marks the formal end of the City Mothers project's six months' training phase. For their efforts, the women will receive a certificate with which they will henceforth be recognised by the programme as official 'City Mothers'. From this point on, rather than remain in their training group, they will be assigned to one of five groups based on the neighbourhood they live in. They will be given a certificate, a name badge with the project logo, and a satchel in which they can keep their flyers. Most coveted however is the red scarf — a distinctive and highly visible sign of the City Mothers, which they are obliged to wear on family and school visits and other official work occasions. The mood in the hall is excited; they're quick to catch each other's eyes and smile.

As the 'Researcher from London' with the City Mothers project, I have been invited to several meetings in the town hall, and of all the rooms I've been to this is the grandest. Plenty of solid wood, leather, conspicuous flags by the high table and framed paintings; it has the impression of grandeur and important decisions. Integration in this room today is important. Later there will be photographs. The room comfortably fits around fifty of us in a horseshoe arrangement — this includes the full cohort of recently qualified City Mothers, as well as current ones who came to help, the coordinators of the programme, several local press journalists, as well as district civil servants and politicians, including the new mayor of Neukölln. The mayor, standing well over six feet and seemingly seven or eight, is a slim giant. Many of the women come to his waist. I come to his chest (I know this because it's not the first photo opportunity I've had with him and the City Mothers — during a refugee shelter opening over the summer, several long-term City Mothers insisted we all have a photo to prove he's twice our height. In the photo, everyone is laughing). His remarkable height belies an unassuming (almost shy) manner, which is useful since it might have otherwise brought the maxim of interaction 'at eye level' inconveniently into question.

The morning proceeded by officials' speeches in which each celebrated a different aspect of the project — one for its ability to get women into 'proper' employment, one for the women's ability to be a bridge with the otherwise unknown and cut-off 'migrant communities' of Neukölln and (chillingly) to be their 'eyes and ears', one for celebrating how it gave children better chances, and another for the fact refugees were now a part of the project. The speeches smoothly elided the issue of whether it was the City Mothers themselves who were the target of integration, or something they were being trained to go out and do. Perhaps all political ceremonies inevitably convey something of the tokenistic and inauthentic, but the contrast between the careful, slow use of clear German which the coordinators used in class, and showed a respect for linguistic plurality and ability (after all, the unique value of the project was its ability to convey information in families' mother tongues) and the convoluted grandeur of the speeches, jarred badly.

This change in language register is not a minor point. As previously mentioned, collaborative translations were part of the programme, every cohort had its established groupings for translations. The women on the programme do, of course, improve their German. But the fact that it is not the main focus of the programme is one of its strengths and deviations from many other 'integration' projects. The focus is on

forging relations — otherness is marshalled as a point of connection, not a point of sameness; something which comes with its own shortcomings and costs, as I discuss later. But for now, the assumption that elevated, elegant German was not in some way problematic for the women, set up an inevitable asymmetry of abilities that looked much like a lack of consideration for the people the ceremony was supposedly valuing and showing gratitude to.

Then, there were all the careless elisions mentioned earlier, coupled with the stark power asymmetry, referencing them as 'eyes and ears' in the service of 'bridging' to a preconceived 'community'. It repositioned their careful acts of relating and care (in which the whole anatomy of listening was carefully reconfigured) to an act of passive surveillance as the District Office's 'eyes and ears'. In referring to the project as 'bridging', it did the work of affirming a gulf between, of instating a difference; And finally, by assuming a 'community' it reduced a plurality of strangers into an Othering sameness. This was, in other words, the kind of epistemic violence of the surveillant, reductive, homogenising panoptic view. This was not a relation embodied 'at eye level', but a distancing and governance of certain kinds of knowledge carried out from above. The difference being that in disembodying the work of relations from their emplaced encounters, the work no longer became a practice of connection, but a practice of categories.

And yet, my notes are so mixed from the day. The grandeur gave the day importance. Almost everyone did seem truly excited to be there. Many did feel acknowledged and appreciated and that their work was being taken seriously — it was spoken of for weeks afterwards. Perhaps therein lies the double edge of ceremony — it entangles both the procedural and the celebratory, without apparent contradiction. And I couldn't help but follow both — as though one had to choose.

After the speeches the new graduates were given a chance to briefly express what they enjoyed most about the project, why they applied and what they hope to do. Many said how much they enjoyed learning, that their chances of education were or had been limited after they got married. And they repeated what I had often heard in the office when I asked the women about their experience of the project — they found it fun. When several women mentioned that they had found the health aspects of the course the most interesting, especially regarding addiction and drugs, the mayor was pleased to know this important issue was being addressed. Yet, he seemed less pleased when Alicia (a newly qualified City Mother with a degree in politics from the

University of Vienna) took the opportunity to mention to the mayor that there were problems along the canal that needed his attention. It was dangerous, and had worsened over the years, perhaps he could do something. Because of their work, he replied, many of the district's smaller problems can be more easily addressed — "Every problem is solvable" he said. In closing, the mayor reiterated that they were all Neuköllners. That they represent the district. And that it was good they bring these issues forward to his attention — addiction, child rearing, day-care centres. These were the collected experiences that they can bring forward. The canal was not mentioned again.

After the ceremony was over, we were invited on a tour of the town hall including a view from the top of the clock tower. It took over fifteen minutes to scale the steps, and at least a hundred exclamations that the stairs would never end. But they did, and we looked down at the district from the tower. The same district which the mayor said the City Mothers represented seemed strangely unfamiliar at this angle. It took a while to understand the view, people were slow dots in the streets below. We began tracing each other's journeys home, picking out routes from the dense, urban, perimeter-block fabric below, before helping others find where they lived, orienting themselves from the destabilising vantage point—something that took quite a bit of pointing and 'aha'ing to make sense of. There it was, all laid out, but hard to recognise. Many of the women were eager to point out to me where they lived, followed by where their kids went to school. It became the game for the next quarter of an hour.

The project was initially founded, as was explained to me one day by the co-founder of the project, through deep concern that migrant women were being let down by a lack of connection with local schools and childcare. The project was set up, she said, as an attempt to break the perpetuation and cementation of inequalities which took place through this cycle of isolation, that left even the next generation unable to benefit from the German education system, something she called active *misintegration.* As homes and school were spotted and pointed to, I was reminded that this concern is not peripheral to women's lives, worries and cares. However much it may express socio-political anxieties, securing a good education for one's children is still central to the concerns of many of the women on the project.

This view from the tower was interesting for other reasons too. For many women on the project this work was 'work of the heart' as I heard often repeated, in which one didn't clock off — not after the workday was done and the scarf was off,

and not when they eventually finished their contract, for, as I was told "once a City Mother, always a City Mother". At a conference, in which the project's achievements with integration were discussed, a long-term City Mother raised the fact that the work didn't stop at the official district boundary. Families came in and out to use services, the locality in the north of the district especially was a centre of gravity for Turkish and Arabic life in Neukölln, people were willing to volunteer but the funds weren't there to support their work and the expenses incurred—all this added up to "work that the district just doesn't see.*"

I was reminded of this at the tower, its encapsulation of the top-down administrative view, a disembodied perspective, the panoptic gaze. In comparison to the project's Active Listening training which proceeded through a particular spatiality of care rooted in embodied skills and attunements, this view of integration materialised a series of practices and consequences for these women's lives, precisely through its ability to present as a disembodied entity. The effects of the bureaucratic tower-view may have been mixed — it was celebratory and it was procedural — but in the asymmetry and the dominance of the view, I point to the fact that both these aspects affirmed and sustained the world according to its own viewpoint. The tower-view of integration is also a place maker. It defines what the district is, what its problems are, who is different in it, as well as the terms of its representation (speaking both in terms of its electoral and identity politics). The political sentiments may have expressed a kind of concern, attention, and care, but the spatiality achieved through disembodying practices was thus of a very different order. This kind of making of a place proceeds through a kind of perception, which whilst it may not depend on mutual, active encounter —whilst it need not *actively* see, nevertheless has active effects on the world it is seeing.

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I helped Rowena pack up the equipment from the day's ceremony. She had been with the project for two years. I asked her what she might want to do after the project ends.

"This question." She said. "I don't like it. It's like a wall. It separates you from the future. You have to let things take their course; you can't control everything. I've received so much from the project. It might not help me really get a job afterwards, or maybe it will. But I've learnt so much. It's opened my perspective. I've gotten so much that I would never have got otherwise. You don't get that from working in a factory." Her attitude to the unknown staggered me, her own pushing back against uncertainty.

In the face of an unknown future, she chose to relinquish control. What was unburdened in giving up the illusion of control?

I was cynical in my analysis of control illusion earlier, to point out that one's actions are constantly unfolding with one's environment, and that notions of control reify an agential self, dismissing the processual interplay with an environment. But I want to return to the notion of control illusion from a more generous perspective — for it may just be a much more productive space, than mere foil to my theorisations. Much easier to dismiss a self-locus-of-control individual, than to practice it — for her relinquishing of control was staggering (to me). The affectual dimension of control and relinquishing it, was a key one here — it was the source of reconfiguring the effects of precarity through an active confrontation with, (or at least holding space for) uncertainty. The question that is like a wall, that separates you from the future — the point being that the future never comes, to try and control it is to separate you from the temporal flow in which things happen, not bring you into it.

In arguing earlier that perceptual acts, like listening with care, made occurrences of place, I gave affectual life ontological effects. And I weighted it towards the socio-material side of things, rather than perhaps, the socio-meaning side of matter. I want to point out the opposite here. The small exchange with Rowena is not long enough to know everything, or even enough about her feelings regarding her future after the project. But in her comments was a conceptualisation which questions the frames of my analysis of lived space, and its weighting towards the perceptual, and abstractly ontological.

We make the present as it arrives, we are in flow with it, receiving and tapping into the unexpected things that happen in it as it goes on, just like place. This is how I read her comment. And this is how an orientation to time has an emotional effect. The processual flow of matter is not an ontological proposition alone, processuality is also the affectual terms of our attachments.

And with that in mind, I wish to return to the broader precarity in the project's set-up. The project's inability to secure long term employment for most women is one of the great challenges, concerns and ongoing occupations of the project's management. It is a constant worry that it reveals major cracks in the project's success. The short-term nature of the work is at odds with its emphasis on the particularities and nuances of skilful relations. What is the status and value of specificity within a

process which renders the people who made those specific connections interchangeable? What is a meaningful connection that does not endure?

Embodiments and Disembodiments of Care

Embodied practice and disembodied knowledge, these seemingly incommensurable entities, formed not only co-existing but co-constitutive elements of the project, as integration narratives framed a practice of rendering emplaced connections. In my juxtaposition I aimed to show the contrasting effects that result. In the first classroom setting, care is central, it is the ontological foundation through which relations are constituted and understood. In the second town hall setting, despite ambitions to support and encourage women, there is an inherent inability to deploy the kind of care the project itself cultivated. Whilst attitudes and ambitions for care are not entirely absent (in the high-level notion of social-care), acts of specificity, in which place is an encounter, become acts of distance and difference, in which place is prefigured as a knowable, fixed entity — which under a panoptic view becomes the passive 'universal' against which 'difference' can appear as a given rather than an occurrence.

In these ethnographic moments, I tried to juxtapose twin facets of integration as knowledge/place production: that is, as embodied practices of people relating to, and knowing another that formed place as encounter, and as seemingly disembodied knowledge, as practiced by a bureaucratic, district authority system. Both of these facets played a part in the women's training in 'integration', by which the district became a site within which and on which these women were supposed to work.

The life of the district emerging in these practices and narratives was one in which entities could be connected in certain ways. What I wish to highlight is the range of practices that linked practices, people and environment in distinct constellations. Perception done through care, mappings of state services, disembodied power that defined valuable connections, all came together as circulating elements joining to make connections between people and place within logics of integration. These practices are not merely the means by which these entities are made connected, rather they are the terms by which they are also conceived as relatable things, that is, by which they are held as distinct entities (through, for example notions of control), and which require connecting in particular ways (bridging, understanding, talking, trust, listening). They

are not, in other words merely epistemic knowledge practices, they have ontological consequences in making a district a particular entity, and in making certain of its residents Other. These practices set the terms — the background against which — imaginings of certain affinities or differences can play out. These narratives then set the terms by which environments and connections gain purchase as sites which can be intervened *on*.

GARDEN

The Growth of the Soil

We actually don't do that much touching of the soil, strangely. We can't grow vegetables, the soil's contaminated with heavy metals. This is strange because it's very beautiful, and the garden's thriving. Instead, we weed, rake leaves, pick flowers, collect seed heads, learn about the gardener's year, and have home-cosmetics sessions with calendula and other scented herbs.

This is a different project altogether. It is taking place twenty minutes' walk away from the City Mothers' office, at the other end of the locality. This one is targeted at women who have more recently arrived in Germany, who are living with precarious status. The project operates under its direct action tagline, 'Refugee is not a profession' composed in response to an essentialising status that is seen to cut off newcomers from further life chances in the new system in which they find themselves. The project runs training courses as apprenticeship 'taster' courses to let women discover what they might want to do, but it is a side project of a much larger initiative. There is a separate aim at work here, which is that under the local system, acceptance onto an official apprenticeship scheme is one way to challenge a negative decision on one's application to remain. The broader initiative started with the kinds of courses more likely to lead to apprenticeships — as mechanics, electricians, carpenters, plumbers — but the organisers, noticing that the number of women who applied was low, decided to try an alternative. Sally is in charge of the spinoff project aimed specifically at women. The project has not been running long, this is its first year, and today it is taking place in a community garden as a meanwhile space that hosts the gardening, horticulture, floristry course.

The garden is a small cooperative project based behind an old cemetery. You'd never know it was there from the street. One has to go through a tall manicured tree avenue leading to a Bulgarian Orthodox Chapel, then past more plots, many of which are by now overgrown, and only then where it seems the cemetery dissolves into field, does one come across allotment plots, art installations from the trees, and DIY wooden structures in various states of completion or experimentation. It's about a ten minute walk through what looks like an old country estate gone to seed. Being so hidden is also one of its strengths, having been informally adopted. And if its informality leaves it in an uncertain, precarious state, its aims are both open, participatory and public serving. At its street facing side is a kind of community centre with an airy and bright teaching room, an office and at its centre, both physically and socially, a large open kitchen where many of the projects coming to use the space overlap.

Surrounding the low building is a colourfully dishevelled garden, which by this stage of the summer is so engulfed by tall sunflowers that it's hard to know this is the place, or any kind of training place at all. Yet for all its concealment, right outside is one of the busiest traffic streets in Neukölln. And this connection often draws curious passers-by into the space, those drawn in by catching a glimpse of the Arabic signs, evening visitors drawn by the sound of the weekly Friday-night, Syrian parties, anthropologists, and other hapless walk-ins.

Iris is from Aleppo. She has a handsome grown up son in Sweden who "refuses to shave his beard though it would suit him better", with whom she has not been granted reunification, and she herself is threatened with being sent back to Greece, having arrived after the reinstatement of the Dublin Regulation (it was temporarily suspended in 2015 by Germany, which meant asylum claims were temporarily *not* required to be processed in the EU country of first arrival). In Syria she taught English Literature, she loves Shakespeare, and has an unashamed fondness for Romance novels. She smokes. And she is usually smiling and laughing, with a running joke that whatever new skill we learn will impress her fictitious 'boyfriend'. She knows her Qur'an well, wears a hijab, and is slightly perturbed that other women tend to wear it as a fashion accessory. "If you use it to make yourself attractive, what is the *point*?" She gives helpful home remedy advice, and like almost all the other women, during the calendula skin-cream session, she knew of its beneficial properties; this tenacious flowering weed, good

for the face, which was recognised by almost all the women in the project regardless of background.

Often Iris draws out a cigarette break longer than planned and beyond the time other women are back, dawdling behind, rolling a second. She tells me she likes the project, especially work with the flowers—"not so much the vegetables" (since we never harvest or plant vegetables, I assume she's referring to the taught course content, and does *not* appreciate being taught to farm) — but in Syria she never did this. She had a girl 'of course' to do this work. She had a beautiful garden.

There is a gardening tutor who instructs us in the various tasks of the community garden. She is part of the informal community garden initiative, very much inflected by anti-fascist politics as is common in grass-roots, Neukölln-based projects. She is critical of the system that makes these women's stay precarious and which questions their belonging. She has a pragmatic approach to things, but gardening has a way, she explains, of being very therapeutic, it's literally grounding. With the range of refugee initiatives happening in the garden, by sideways steps, the women become part of a wider nascent Culture of Welcome which has been posited as a kind of alternative to former 'integration' narratives.

Near the end of the course, on a wet day in September, we go on a class trip to a florist at the far northern, suburban end of Berlin. In order for women to challenge a negative decision on their applications through apprenticeships such placements must take place with a registered master craftsman — it is not so common in floristry as in other professions, so we travel for over an hour with two bus changes and a tube to get there. In the rain everything is packed.

The group is in high spirits. The day before was a trip to the landscape architect, and the heavy emphasis on concrete confirmed most of the women's conviction that they had always preferred floristry. So we arrive damp but enthusiastic. We walk into a shop with a pastoral seasonal aesthetic. It's an old neighbourhood. In fact, the site was used as a florist and flower grower since the 18th century. Behind, stretches the old garden, and still some small old warehouses remain, as well as ornate, mildewed glass houses and foliage patches (as bouquet fillers). The master florist is very polite, he congratulates the women on their German and takes an interest in their stories and even their children, which usually forms a standard part of their self-introductions. But as we are guided around, spirits start to sag. The women clearly stand out in a very

white, very middle class environment, both in terms of customers and workers - it's a far cry from Berlin's mixed interior. He still attends to customers, obvious regulars, with whom he has a close friendly relationship, chats which seem an important part of what sustains his business, conducted in polite, elegant German. He explains the process of apprenticeships, but when the women speak of their desire to join one, no suggestions are forthcoming. It's the last week of the project, it's the last visit, and one of the women has to find something quickly since her leave to remain runs out the very next day. Doubts are setting in and it's painful to watch.

Near the end of the visit, we are shown to the old flower growing fields. They're not profitable now for flowers. His flowers he explains come from Holland, Greece, and increasingly South Africa, Kenya - where it's cheaper. And I can't help thinking how much this dislocation is what sustains his business. I was in Kenya the summer before for research, I remember the rose farms were a public health scandal, as a local resident said: would people in Europe buy these roses if they knew working in these farms made you go blind after two years? He assumed that to know would be enough. The image won't leave my mind. The flowers come from far away, as do the women on the project. But the whole thing is a nexus of discontinuities of knowledge, alongside continuities of the flows of things and people. He needs the flowers lifted clear of their troublesome context in order to get them at a good price and remain attractive, whilst for the women on the course, their context is all too present — how would the elegant conversation with the customers go in their new German? Since the stakes of having come from outside the borders are so high for the women, I am momentarily floored by the kind of work which movement and distance do, and the kinds of sifting and purifying implicated in the maintenance of such polite, floral exchange.

The last glasshouse we come to stores the Mediterranean plants — the ornamental citrus, lemons, small clementine bushes. We spot two olive trees. Iris and Una are amazed. They rush over exclaiming in Arabic, marvelling at the tree, that any olive could grow here. This is a tree they recognise; its form is unmistakeable — something from home. And they are delighted and enthused to bursting. These familiar trees have made them livelier than I've seen them the whole project (and they were two of the liveliest).

On the way back, Una and I head south back to Neukölln, and even though Iris lives in north west Berlin, she comes with us back to the line which takes her to the community garden, so that from there she can catch the familiar route home. It will add at least another hour to her journey. She doesn't care. It's safer that way, she won't get lost.

On the long way back, Iris tells me about Aleppo. '"When you are there, you want to stay forever. Everyone who comes. It is so beautiful. People grow Jasmine in their gardens, so that when you walk through the streets, they come up over the walls and perfume the way. During the season it's always in the air.

"We have four seasons," she continues, "a hot summer, spring with flowers, autumn, proper autumn, not like this, a warm autumn, and a cold winter. You know it's built on seven cities? It is so beautiful." and after a pause "it *was* so beautiful."

"Things come back," I say. I still regret I did. It's limp, useless and a lie.

"No, things are gone forever. You cannot get it back. You can't. And now we have to go elsewhere, and we live like this, in *Heims* (dormitories), and people call this humanity. We can't work, we can't do anything — is this humanity? When people don't see you as a person, like you are dirt because you are a refugee — is this humanity? I ask you. This is humiliation, this is not humanity."

Ethical Encounters Emplaced

By what kinds of encounter do we meet ethical claims imbricated in relations between people and environment?

In the previous section, the environment as a plane of immanence, was mentioned for its constituting role in the life of encounters. As a plane of immanence from which life arises, a garden is an apt place to begin.

For all of the spatial, place-based metaphors implicated in narratives of national identity, land and soil are easy landing spots. Soil, with its sense of bringing forth and the thing to which things return, straddles both the material quality by which people and environment are placed in relation and dependence, as well as the symbolic reference to cyclical temporality. No wonder it features in accounts in which local memory is affiliated with national imaginaries of situated identities (Anderson

1983/2006). And this soil was a particularly mixed bag of identities: the Czech prisoners of war, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the airport field.

We did very little touching of soil. Truer to say perhaps that we were brought into extended carnal conversation and interaction with the life that emanated *from* it, rather than the soil itself, even if this statement crumbles at the edges, with every clomping through of muddy soil we made between garden and classroom. I'm not sure I, or any of my interlocutors, ever went home with soil under our nails. For all the presence of soil, of being it, and in the mottled gravestone reminders that we are the dust that will return to the dust, our emplaced actions in the garden were less about touching it, and more about the conversations between life and senses that unfolded through it.

The garden offers a kind of connection, even, in one imaginary, a healing, therapeutic connection — there is a kind of vitality in the encounter — but it is not limited to an interaction of direct contact, so much as one of unfolding with and through the garden as ground and soil.

The project described, engages with labour market and life-chances narratives of integration — it is framed as Welcome rather than integration, but it is in regular literal and notional conversation with labour-centred notions of integration. Therefore, whilst the 'place' to which it connects is the labour market, conceived on national terms, it is also in this instance, about more local enactments of place: this one particular garden plot. And I use this example here also to reference the sensorial quality of spatial life. In the ability of jasmine to call forth a place in which one felt joy and belonging is, to use the earlier instance, no standalone utterance, rather it is perceptual work of intimate knowledge, which if it were brought into conversation with the classroom session, might be conceived as the 'relationship nose'; the nose with which we perceive those we know well, and with whom we are intimate. The citrus and olive trees too. Their effect was in perceptual dialogue and recognition, to bring forth the familiar.

Jasmine grows back, walls are rebuilt, and streets come alive again, but when Iris said it's all gone, I regret telling her things return because what she said is true. Things do leak and age and change, their affectedness by time being the very stuff of what makes them living. So what is gone is not their solidity. The tragedy and horror of it might not lie there. Rather what is gone is the enfolded pattern of movement in

which people and environment flow, the rhythm of change by which places are made to endure.

It is through the notion of perdurance that I want to think through precarity and processuality (as raised in the moment with Rowena above) in relation to place. In a processual and relational view of place it is hard to maintain the idea that precarity might be remedied either with certainty or independence; there is little certainty in an unfolding process of emergent change, and the very terms of life are relations of interdependence (Butler 2012). But the attachment and devotion which Iris describes are not those taken towards stasis, but towards emplaced process of change. A less precarious relation to place is not one free of dependence but one in which that dependence is part of the ongoing ability to be part of the patterns and actions by which places endure. It is an interdependence conceived beyond merely the notion of 'others' to encompass the shared socio-materiality of place.

This stands in contrast to concepts of integration read as a kind of 'stitching in' to a passive, pre-given social, economic or built environment. That people have differing abilities to make relations with environments endure, that there are not equal claims to acts of endurance *is* their politics. This is about looking at inequalities not merely as inequalities of access, but as inequalities in abilities to practise, to form and to maintain the patterns by which lived space proceeds.

CONCLUSION

The classrooms, the tower and the garden — three broad frameworks to examine manifestations of place. The classroom setting explored embodied practices of care, done through presence, attuned sensorial engagement, and empathetic encounter. The District Office's celebration and showing it valued 'integration' at the town hall examined disembodied knowledge practices (at least the attempt to make them so) by which place was made through distance, a panoptic view and epistemic dominance. And finally, I go to a garden, and discuss place making through cultivation, care and memory — to look at the ever-emergent unfolding quality of space.

Through these moments, I have attempted to describe how practices of care created a variety of unique spatialities: fleeting, contested, hard-won, carefully wrought, administratively-enacted, incommensurate and negotiated, but all, at times, coeval nonetheless. Space, the very environment in which women I sought to learn from worked, and were in some ways tasked to work upon, was reconfigured uniquely through the multiple forms of care which took place: care as practiced attention for another, care in its configuration of providing family support for an addiction, as a skill of gaining and maintaining trust, care as a political ethic. Attention to these contested coeval trajectories is important for an understanding of the politics of space, and the politics which emplaces 'otherness'. Thus, for example, whilst the work of the City Mothers project was often framed by the static, plane-based model of space in both implicit and explicit ways (what I elaborated as the 'Town-Hall imaginary'), nonetheless multiple and alternative trajectories of place were made by the project's practices. The welcome politics of care frames a space in which the politics of spatial claims, imaginaries of otherness, and a variety of practices of care remake and pluralise place in everyday, material ways.

I also described acts of caring attention and perception as embodied practices. That I take this as an emplaced practice — that I frame it as a practice which depends on a particular physical arrangement in space — is, of course, an implicit given. All practices which happen through the body, happen through space (in some capacity). But in this description, I aim to examine some of the implications of this act of listening with care in terms of the kind of space that is made thereby. In other words, I am asking, what kind of space is accomplished by this practice?

In this account, a certain space of trust accomplished by perceiving another with care is predicated on a unique constellation between people, physical space and a particular kind of attentive, *caring* listening. This demarcated space of trust is one that makes room for things that are said to be understood as a collaborative endeavour. Crucially, this is a space which emerges as a unique, momentary meeting. It emerges as a transient encounter. It is a space in which things that are said might hold true in ways they might not outside that encounter. And whilst this observation might be filled with open-ended possibility, it also speaks to the temporary nature of that meeting; it is a kind of space which proceeds just so long as the practice that constitutes it carries forth. In this constellation, people, space and a particular practice of care as attention, all play a role in reconfiguring the kind of place that happens. One that is an emergent process, and one fundamentally constituted by its relations.

Place, as Latimer and Munro argue (2009) is produced through affective relations. I am in agreement with this point (insofar as I don't treat space and place to be different in this regard), but in my 'tower view' example, I also try to show that it is produced through relationships of *detachment*. The place of the district gained force as a place as much through relationships of affective attachment — of shared belonging as an 'outsider', of home — as much as it gained substance through the mundane force of the administratively given; a product of epistemic power to render the district a bounded 'fact'; a kind of *disembodiment* imaginary.

Through the garden, I discuss memory, senses, attachment, care for things absent, and care as ethical sensibility within the broader Welcome politics of care discourse, through notions of growth, plurality and change to argue that inequalities of place were not merely about how place occurred, but also the terms by which they endured.

Ultimately, however I seek to show how all the spatialities were in processual flow, and variously affected by different practices of care. I argue that many of the caring practices offered alternative socio-political spatialities. These different practices of space offered different ways of configuring imaginaries of place-connectedness by which otherness was done in this account, but I have attempted to describe how these possibilities were able to sit as incommensurate but non-threatening possibilities to the terms of the wider, static, given imaginary of the district within which women were expected to fit.

INTERLUDE I

A Non-Chronological Walk Through the District

The previous chapter's settings — a classroom, a town hall, a garden — attempted to outline different spaces made by encounters of care. It aimed to show the materialising work that encounters do — the ways care, perception and space are variously implicated in making relations of affinity and difference. They aimed to illustrate the environment both as something that shaped encounter, as well as a place that is in itself made through these interactions. Place in this representation was not a holding ground for practice, rather it was made by it.

Sarah Pink has called attention to the emplaced nature of ethnographic knowledge (Pink 2015). Arguing that the lived experiences we try to render into ethnographic form are by their very nature emplaced, unfolding in correspondence with their spatial environment (Pink 2015, also Ingold 2016), she furthers this thinking into the realm of ethnographic practice itself as a place-making activity. To render human activity and experience is to render its place too, whether overtly as an active dynamic force, or implicitly, in its passive form as 'context'. She calls for an attention on the perceptual instruments of the ethnographer in producing knowledge and in making place in research in ways which critically engage with the fact that producing knowledge, as well as the act of *perceiving* itself, is never politically neutral. A phenomenological attention on processes is not, in this rendering, something outside of culture — her methodological stance proceeds by way of combined sensuous and political engagement, asking "What is our sensory engagement with power-imbued environments?" (Pink 2015, 37).

This is the question I wish to pursue in this interlude. How do I look at, engage with, listen to, taste, touch and move through the district, which I wish to describe as place and as environment in this research?

This question forms an interlude because it is not quite an ethnographic description of the district — although in form it heavily borrows from the mode of

auto-ethnography — so much as an attempt to bring into focus the ethnographic instruments by which I render a power-imbued environment into some kind of knowledge. This is an attempt to engage with the methodological provocation Pink has set.

The district which I attempt to bring into focus is therefore not a kind of *a priori* place-as-holding-ground, but rather something which is continually, dynamically made through a range of encounters. And in a context in which representations of the district as an Other migrant space abounds, this is an attempt to think through the way it might be described and 'represented' otherwise. In this, I attempt to move from the 'tower perspective' to the street level, to examine the multiform of everyday life, and actively stick with what resists examination in the messy everyday (De Certeau 1984).

The scenes that follow are not tidy; they spill and question, and their form (bracketed by their 'interlude' status) is written against the grain of the kinds of continuous, knowable descriptions of social life I attempt in my full 'data' chapters (4, 5 and 6). But that is also a reflection of the urban character of this research. The multiple, diffuse encounters which make up the bulk of public urban life, the character of the streets, is one in which participation for the most part does proceed by anonymity. And yet this is the very lived space which I wish to bring into analysis as playing a fundamental role in understandings of place. The tension is in rendering this anonymous environment against the grain of the kinds of long-term relationships which is ethnography's great advantage. Yet, this district's lived space, this collection of messy, indeterminate, ongoing street life *is* part of the very place which comes to be represented, worked on, and marshalled as an entity in many of the events I describe. How to capture this anonymous, messy, overspilling part of place as knowledge?

In this, I take lived space as my interlocutor. In form, I borrow from the concept of the Flaneur — the anonymous stroller observing the urban street-scape, keenly associated with Walter Benjamin's theorisations of modernity (Benjamin 1968), yet for now, I resist theorisation on the occurrences themselves. To use Benjamin's vocabulary — I am not using these images for their prognostic value on everyday life, or modernity (ibid.), rather I mean to make a point about the methods of their apprehension: How one goes about looking. And it is also from the dandy heuristic, the wanderings of the detached flaneur, with a distracted, leisurely, pleasure-selecting, male gaze, that I

distance myself. In this attempt to describe a sensuous engagement with place and its goings on I have taken its sensorial images as fleeting, situated conversations — including both the constellations of activity, and the material surfaces by which encounters with difference proceed. Remaining agnostic towards which materials count as 'district' and which do not (does the dirt at the back of the fridge within the boundary line of the district count?) I have included their dense polyphony — infrastructural surfaces: roads, streets, a rail line, cobble stones, junctions, corners, parks, railings; as well as street furniture: streetlamps, wooden crates, benches, statues, temporary stalls; the vertical surfaces by which the walls of the outdoor rooms of public space are made: the edge and window of a shop, concrete balls that demarcate a space, trees, a games court, a warm brick wall, and the active edge of a shop-lined street. I have also included a range of senses by which this knowledge making of the place proceeds — seeing, tasting, moving, hearing. And I have included a range of textures and registers by which lived space occurs, and by which contact with, and conceptualisations of difference proceed: in delight, frustration, humour, as language confusion and language hybrids, as conviviality, play, inclusions and separations. I offer these as a picture of the variegated participation in public life of which the lived urban space is composed, the implausibility of its reduction to one narrative, and as the simultaneous overlap of multiple positions. In style, I have tried to stay as close to the original field-notes as possible, to show this process of methodological iteration and refinement as it unfolded.

I present these instantiations of lived space as a walk through the district. They start at its southern end and move across it in a loose northwards direction. But this is not a consecutive sketch. It's not even chronological. This is a collaged map of the district, with attempts to describe it by its enfolded sociality and materiality, by way of a walk taken across eighteen months of fieldwork, to record not merely the differences I saw, but my attempts to see differently.

1. Recycling, exclusion and a railway ring

The City Mothers office sits just outside the railway ring. It is the hard, fare-boundary between transport Zone A and B, and the soft, conceived boundary between the centre

and the periphery of Berlin. Administratively, it also marks the southern edge of North Neukölln. I live just off the ring. Ten minutes' walk, tracing the line anti-clockwise, is the project's office. Ten minutes' walk in the opposite direction is the famous former airport turned park — Tempelhofer Feld — popular leisure destination and much publicised for its use as temporary emergency shelter for refugees.

When I moved in, I was told by my housemates that basically to be outside the ring (I'm on its outside edge) is to be outside Berlin: "there's not even recycling out here". We're in no-man's land.

Except that it's not true. Recycling does extend this far, naturally, but not to the building itself, for it's a kind of collective punishment for not abiding (or having been seen to not abide) by the garbage-separation, recycling rules and being required as a building to pay additional non-recycled waste charges as forfeit. Suspicious given the former council flats building is composed almost entirely of Turkish and Arab families. To me it seems obviously racialising.

But the joke only works as a joke if you believe the ring marks the outskirts of civilisation.

2. Corner One: Cars and words

I walk past this play park almost every day, sometimes several times a day. It's on the corner of a cobbled junction and in my first few months I mull over the possibilities of making this park a key observation point. There are lots of women in headscarves watching their children. How convivial is it? Who is using it? How do they negotiate this use? I agonise about the politics and ethics of choosing a site with the obvious profiling involved in my headscarf geography. Largely discomforting because I can't even hear what language anyone's speaking.

Then one day, two cars driving into the unmarked junction bordering the play park, crash. There's a bang. A light's smashed in. No one is hurt. At least not visibly, and they're all well enough to have it out in shouts and hand gestures.

People leave the park to watch. They stand on the metal railing of the street barriers to get a better look. People are talking to each other. Kids are being told not to run into the street for a closer look and become a second accident. People passing

by stop for a gawp. Many people stop to ask what happened. Because the railings at the edge of the street line everyone up, as they lean over it to prop up a chin, or lift children on the bar halfway up it, so that they can get a better look, there's the distinct impression of a street performance put on for the crowd. I decide not to focus on the play park. I like that we're all looking at the same thing. But I don't want to look like the person staring at people's kids, eavesdropping to their conversations. That seems distinctly weird. But the incident stays with me: the serendipities of space, the moments of chance encounter that bring everyone together, and suddenly there's a voice.

3. A market plaza, sculptures, no words

Roughly five minutes' walk away, and you get to a wedge shaped plaza with a dry water feature at its centre. Modernist, long-fingered bronze statues populate the space. One lone figure stands sheltered by the tarp of a stall, when the twice-weekly vegetable market takes over the 'square' (very much a triangle).

The stall holder jokes about his assistant. Sometimes he gives him a hat. A bronze centaur is just tall enough to serve as anchor for a guide rope, and is wide-stanced enough for kids to run under him. As the kids do with all the statues, playing on, with and around the figures. Their arms are held out invitingly at just the right height.

They may not be sentient, or alive as people, but they are personable. Their mute convivial contribution to the market seems difficult to discount. This is not quite the radical association of humans and non-humans I was looking to describe in my hard matter-oriented account of city life. They are being related to as sort of personalities, after all. And they so obviously form social life around them.

This is where I shop. Mostly, the vegetables and fruit are cheap, piled high and just shy of expiring. As is typical of the week markets in the district, there is a lot of Arabic and Turkish spoken, both by sellers and customers. Those in the know head to a Polish man in the corner. He is often mentioned by the women in the City Mothers project. Word is he grows organic but doesn't have certification. And so he is a touchstone in the frequent food ethics discussions, because he is a 'useful' counter to the healthy-food-is-expensive narrative.

This is where I met an older Iraqi lady with whom I am unable to speak in German, Arabic or English. Instead, we sometimes exchange a piece of fruit. This is the extent of it. A Wednesday afternoon habit. We say hello, share a bench for a bit and stare at other people.

4. Gardens as informal meanwhile spaces, a party, and learning new words

I discovered the garden by chance (this is the setting of the gardening course described in the previous chapter). You have to go through a gate and it's not clear whether you should, but there is a hand-painted sign giving the impression it's a friendly place. I stepped in one evening and was invited to join a party. A small outdoor room had been set up. Speakers, chairs and small plastic tables were being brought in, unsettling a newly laid floor of packing-crate slats. It became a regular venue of Friday night parties, put on by and for the new local Syrian residents. But people joined from off the street all the time.

I watch a man chat to a small group who also followed the sound of Arabic music to the friendly evening party. They all stand about smiling, beers in hand, and talk about language. He wants to learn German, they Arabic. But he says to them (in English), Arabic is so much easier to learn than German. Because in Arabic the words *do* actually sound like their meaning. Here, listen: *Bassam.* He says. *Bassam.* They shake their heads smiling. *Bassam,* he repeats slowly and lyrically. He helps them out by gesturing a dance with his hand. Nothing. It's a tough crowd. They're not trying hard enough. *Perfume,* he says. 'Ahhh' they reply. Ok, try this one…

5. Lamplight sociality

I'm on the edge of a late sixties, early seventies social housing estate (the same estate where the gambling addiction session took place). In my notes I write that the air was warmer than at Körnerpark (the park bordering the scene of the crash). It must have seemed significant — it certainly made it much more pleasant. I also noted that there were no groups of men, as there were a moment ago in Körnerpark.

The residential council blocks are between five to six storeys high and they frame a central park, divided into play areas, lined with leafy walkways. Its ground floor is lined with meeting rooms, offices and community spaces. In terms of spontaneous social activity, it's one of the most successful council housing estates I've ever seen — a range of ages use the space to play, chat, hang out, sit with their dog, walk through, put on street parties.

Right now it's evening, long turned dark. I'm sitting on a bench, in front of me is a pedestrianised way with its steady flow of the occasional cyclist and passer-by, and in front of that, bordered by knee high concrete balls, is a roughly twenty by ten metre square paved surface. It's another kind of living room, and it seems obvious that for me to enter it, would be an intrusion. Here on my bench, I've seen other people on their phones, with their dogs, staring at others. So aside from the clear intimacy formed by the balls, the defined room, it is also a stage. In it, kids are pushing a plastic toy car at high speed for a toddler to chase. Some older kids are cycling in rounds about them. And there's a group of teenage boys smoking in the shadows about thirty metres away, shielded by the trees.

My attention is on a lamp-post in the middle of the ball-lined space, illuminating activity underneath it like a stage light. There is a concrete ring bench at its base. And a group of women have brought out plastic chairs, and colourful insulated coffee cups. So, inside the paved living room is another more intimate space, in a cone of streetlight. Rooms nested within rooms. A continuous open space that is nonetheless articulated by a variety of edges — demarcations that proceed by concrete, trees and light.

Of all the pocket spaces this outdoor living room affords this top-lit scene is the most socially sticky: people keep stopping for a cigarette and end up joining the chat; kids come by, have a look, and wander off again; someone comes to hand over a set of house-keys and stays to be shown off by their mother (at least the person who seems to be). It's a shifting, fluid grouping of around a dozen women of various ages from teenagers to late middle age in a pyramid of convivial exchange that appears to expand both vertically up the back-rest of concrete bench if needs be, and horizontally with additional plastic chairs. In a stock motion capture of the scene, I am sure some algorithm of critical weight, rising and falling, relative to the number of people in the grouping would emerge. Occasionally the whole group is in on the same conversation

but on the whole, there are about three different conversations going on. It sounds stressful. It sounds supportive. It sounds funny. Bilingual snippets carry over to me across the way *Gemüse* (vegetables [German]), *matbach* (kitchen [Arabic]), *Körper* (body [German]), *Kinder* (kids [German]), *Kul Ishi* (everything [Arabic]), *Mit Jozha* (with [German] her husband [Arabic]).

6. Outdoor ball court, commensality

I have this event written in reminder form, long before it's taken place, as "the best day in the world because today is soup festival". It's a joke because no festival could ever live up to the soup festival in my head. And yet, against all the odds it does. There are stalls lining the games court pressed into service as a village green. Beer garden style tables and benches are full with soup revellers at the centre. There, I discover the City Mothers have a stall too, of course, though how it didn't occur to me before I do not know. I've come prepared to spend forty euros to try every soup there is, but it's exceeded my wildest dreams because in soup festival — the best day in the world — every soup is only one euro. You even get a proper china bowl and a metal spoon for a small deposit. The festival is organised under the name *Soups of the World*. And I add, unite, in my head, because that's what soup can do. I later discover it's all been designed by the local planning office to encourage people to share stories from their different places. It's mad how effective it was. Next to each soup pot is a flag of origin, and at the end after the votes there'll be a prize.

Portuguese chestnut soup wins. And the band begins to play.

7. A knight's move between streets, coffee, variegated intimacies

Sonnenallee has been dubbed Berlin's 'Arab Street' due to its Middle Eastern speciality shops, restaurants and eateries, and the prevalence of Arabic spoken by the lively crowd it attracts. To be here, I am told by many interlocutors, is to feel at home.

Most mornings, when the weather permits, I see groups of men sitting with their early coffee, out on the pavement, facing the road, its noise and its crowds. It's

not an unusual scene but I eventually gave up trying to find women who were doing the same, whether on the street or inside the cafes themselves. They weren't there.

And then one day I did find them — in the side streets. A morning coffee and plenty of chat. I wondered about the sociality of semi-public life. These side streets, being a chess knight's move away from the main action. That is, just out of the main lines of sight, but distance-wise, still within the centre's sphere. It's not just that it's around the corner, it plays with sidestepping lines of common site. As a model, this might not be the ideal form of participation — the distribution is gendered and (by my initial impressions) unequal, the marginality being spatial and social. But this centre's ability to hold a lively periphery around it, carries with it a certain social stickiness which catches more than merely those most dominant. The centre may not be equally shared but it carries a trail of mixed participation in its wake.

And perhaps too, this is what makes the centre feel authentic and stitched in. Its lively in-between spaces, creating a variegated ability to occupy a centre with simultaneous, maybe even opposing uses, that is, those who meet for contact with the public stream, to be seen and to see, and those who meet for intimacy, but for whom the *proximity to the centre* works as an event, and meeting spot anyway.

Besides which, side spaces *are* the fun spaces. It's how you feel you've discovered a place and discover it as a local (speaking of myself). Why do I feel the central spaces *should* be shared by everyone, simply because they feel like the *main* space?

But I'm still fixated on the spatial hierarchy, in which the street that serves as a better connector garners more movement and becomes stickier with socio-economic activity. Why should some people move to the less convenient periphery of that? Beyond these musings is the paired occurrence of spatial and social life — the street's spatial configuration forms a hierarchy in which this distribution of social life takes place. The social calculus of 'Oh wouldn't it be nicer to sit away from the throng?', or 'what would they say if they found me sitting *there*?' is also a spatial calculus. I question whether to write of the hierarchy of streets becoming meaningful in this account (imbued with notions of public and private space), or to write of the spatial hierarchy as being the condition and affordance of meaning.

8. Corner Two: a window, cobbles, more coffee, point scoring

It's an unexpectedly warm autumn morning, probably the last of the season. I'm sitting outside with a coffee, at a corner of the 'Arab Street', five metres out of the main flow, but within its view (i.e. I am not the chess-knight's move away, since I've not broken the sightline connection).

The coffee shop is a makeshift espresso coffee cart parked inside a flower shop, trading through the shop's window onto its quieter edge, a short side street connecting the 'Arab Street' with one of the most 'hipster' streets of the neighbourhood by a two minute walk — where one is just as likely to hear (and be spoken to in) English, as one is to hear Arabic in its parallel neighbour. Customers of the coffee shop line the narrow pavement on unsteady up-turned wooden crates, and so far — being an almost daily observer of the place for the last three weeks — the clientele has seemed decidedly mixed. Despite lending a decorated festive air, the plants in the shop don't tend to harvest that much business, but the large, Arabic speaking greengrocer's on the opposite side of the narrow street and their pot of sweetcorn boiling away, seems a boon to the coffee stall, making its seats in the sun seem all the more appealing for customers' arms weary of heavy, loaded shopping bags. Also, there are the cobbles. They too do their bit. They slow down cars, bikes and lorries as they bump along the uneven surface between the greengrocer's and the coffee shop seating, in contrast to the smooth tarmac rapid flow of four lane traffic just in front of us — and so another theatre, or street living room is formed, an eddy just off to the side of the main flow, afforded by this comfortable collection of sensualities.

On almost every morning that I have been here, I overhear conversations in Arabic, I see regulars reading German papers, and every so often a coffee is ordered in English to the consternation of the seller, who has explained that while she knows German is hard, one has to make an effort, it's rude not to — how can you get to know a place otherwise?

Because I am sitting and watching and look as though I have nothing better to do (and quite frankly, I don't. This — I want to tell everyone — is exactly why I'm here), I have had chats with Arabic, German and English speakers in more accents than I can count. And whilst I have not seen many kids, there are many babies, young

people and, to my surprise, given the unstable construction of the crates, a fair number of older coffee drinkers, walking sticks perched against the warm brick wall.

This morning, being only a few weeks after the national elections, there is a debate going on, the coffee seller frequently leaving her post from behind the window to join an impromptu conversation between five other customers. Tensions run high. Two men come and order coffee. Something about it has unsettled her. They leave to sit at the far end, away from the service window. After a few minutes, she's finished the coffee, she leans out the window and shouts an aggressive "*Yalla!*" (In Arabic: Come on!). Her shout has ruffled the debate into confused stares to try and understand at whom, and why such a shout was given. She slams the coffee on the window ledge and walks out again to join the pavement debate. She's making a point — she's not to be ordered around. But she's learned and understands the Arabic term and is not afraid to use it.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I have often been told the old adage that integration is a two way process. Both sides have to learn about the other, both sides are asked to adapt, in theory anyway. But an assumption inherent in this idea of integration is that such adaptations are a part of making good connections, that mutual understanding is the bedrock of relating. Would we think of interaction and connection the same way if we included the idea that the two-way street of integration contains learning about the other for the purpose of curb-side micro-aggressions, a daily run of intersectional point-scoring?

Perhaps the two-way street is paved *because* of these public theatres of unclear exchange, not in spite of them.

9. Corner three: lamplight as limelight, a piano, sequins, desire lines, a football and a doll way up in the air

The night air is warm. People are spilling out of every bar, shop and restaurant. They're sitting on chairs at tables laid out with white linen and wine, or on the curb-side, lounging in loose huddles with off-licence beers, or standing askew, perched hips

and wine glasses in hand, outside the opening of a shop, small gallery or bar. If I didn't know better, I'd think there was a festival on, but there isn't: it's summer. And it's hip. A bit beyond the affluent waddle, the street is quieter, but the foot traffic to and fro is steady. The bars are further apart, interspersed by roller-shut storefronts. It makes the street that bit darker, the street-lamp illumination more spot like.

It's where the man sings. In the limelight of the streetlamp, it's a perfect performance corner. He is dancing. He jumps up and down, as though the black keyboard he plays won't contain him. He is singing in English, with (what transpires to be) a Canadian accent. He's wearing a bright electric pink sequin vest and his catchy self-penned pop numbers have so much verve and good cheer, that a small crowd has formed. At the front of the crowd are two women chatting to each other, holding their matching prams, both of them in black hijabs, smiling away at five young kids so excited by the music that they are alternately dancing, prancing or throwing up a football or doll high into the air, mixing-up their toys between them. Every so often the women try to shuffle them on, and the kids protest in Arabic to be allowed to stay a little longer, perhaps to many people's delight, since the kids, as is often the case, have become the show's main attraction.

A couple from the opposite corner of the junction are watching them intently. Groups of leisurely observers bump into the couple and stop to watch. And an anthropologist and her friend are watching the kids, the passers-by, and the observers. There is also another man standing next to the musician, clearly impressed, watching the whole scene, so close to the singer, that at first I thought he was his agent. He wears a wool Pakol, they bid farewell in Arabic, as in time, he moves along like the rest. It's a highly curious scene, and it gathers many more passers-by.

This momentary disturbance to the flow of the street at this junction makes well-worn desire lines within the neighbourhood manifest. Usually there is something anonymous and democratising about desire lines. Those worn down, convenient channels of foot-stamped earth running diagonally across an otherwise perfect bit of grass (often mere metres away from the main path). People mean to get from one destination to another, and their accumulated footfall is the residue of intention. However minor the intention of getting from point A to point B seemed, they take on substance as congregates of

past action. It is a firm belief of mine that urban space should be designed to follow existing desire lines.

But desire lines are usually the marks of flattened anonymity. You can't tell who walked there, just that they wanted to. It is the low-key ideal of anonymous and uniform democratic participation made manifest on the dust. And so this junction is interesting for not anonymising that flow. This junction marks the bisection of different distinct intentions: the north south axial flow — between the canal and the 'Arab Street', and the east-west march of the late night bars.

Whilst the majority of such crossing traffic remains unmarked and unremarked, at this moment the corner has become socially 'sticky'. In a cultural moment where *Willkommenskultur* (Culture of Welcome) has been raised to a popular virtue, this reads like a pamphlet for multiculturalism, to see women in hijabs and men in sequins having fun in the same neighbourhood. Everyone who is observing the scene seems enamoured by it. But it also operates on the simpler level — people love to watch other people. And here is a show put on for free (or at least for one of the star performers, by donation), with each observer seemingly watching something else, being intrigued or entertained by a different part of the scene, taking something else about what it is to be Other.

It makes me think of the detailed attention paid to corners in writings on city life: they join far more than the streets themselves.

What Counts?

What counts in a description of lived space – what relation between life and the materials through which it unfolds? The moments outlined above attempt to draw attention to the constitution of that relation, describing a lived environment through a mutuality between activity and materials. In this alternative ethnographic mode, I propose not a narrative argument exactly, but a juxtaposition. Through these juxtapositions of varying relations between materials and action I try to raise questions about *how* one sees the occurrence of place, and beyond — *what* can be seen to constitute place. Within this processual and relational mode, I ask what of the material should be brought into the frame for a description of lived space? Part of this exercise

is about resisting the separation between the material and the social. I aim for an account in which the material and the social are not *in* relation as separate things in making place, rather their enfolded occurrences in these accounts *are* the unfolding of space. Then space enters analysis as a way of perceiving social relations. That is, sociality itself is not reduced to the immaterialities of life, or somehow outside of matter; its realm is patterned movements of matter. In this attempt to render space socially legible, I am leaning on Massey's theorisations of space as a product of practised relations and as the very dimension of the social (2005, 99).

I have tried to render overt the senses by which this perception of place proceeded, and by this to remain *situated* in this description, and thus draw attention to the *situatedness* of this knowledge (Haraway 1988) — this is no disembodied district. It sounds and tastes and appears and has texture and temperature in a multitude of ways. These are descriptions of place as *events* (following Casey 2009). But beyond outlining this embodied perception as it proceeded through the senses is also one other faculty by which place perception happened in this account, and it was through the work of the imagination as a perceptual tool — or embodied imaginings, as Vincent Crapanzano writes of imagining that proceeds through the senses (2004). This is not to make a claim for imagination that speaks of what is not there, but imagination as shared imagery, the perception of what is there, by the selection and expectation of what is collectively acknowledged to be there. The selection of encounters and occurrences by which place can 'count' in this description is part of the story in which selective representations of the district become part of what is shared and circulated in the political.

What does it mean for the City Mothers in the previous chapter's account to represent the district? What does it mean to be integrated into this place of ongoing process and materials — to belong to this plurality that resists the singular narrative?

To work the imagination in political terms is not always to imbue it with emotional significance — in the way of Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' and the co-opting of personal sentiment for nationalistic projects (1983). It might work by doing just the opposite. By rendering something like a district into representations, the space full of polyphonous, emplaced and contingent practices becomes a flat object. And it is a kind of act which calls for the imagination to render that image passive, inert, or merely administratively 'neutral'.

In this Interlude, I try to make alternative descriptions of the district — at least a collage sketch of its happenings — and the lived spaces by which it is composed. I have aimed to draw different registers of materiality into relation in order to make explicit the entangled effects of a variety of relations— those relations and effect on one another being part of the sociality of place. In this socio-material description of the district's spaces, I also make a claim about perceiving the (built) environment, and the kind of work required to order and know a world through faculties of the imagination. I will return to the themes of immateriality, perception and imagination in my second interlude, but for now, I turn in the following chapter to its cousin — art. I ask what happens when the act of perceiving — manifested in small works of art — an act so intimately entwined with the faculty of the imagination, is applied by the women themselves to represent, describe and comment on their own surroundings? If attachments to place are as much collective as personal endeavours (Degnen 2015), what happens when shared images of a place break down?

CHAPTER 5: SOLACE, PROMISE, BOOM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the way care became an important dimension in making images and conflicting representations of place. To explore this, I 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway 2016) of one single, extended conflict of representations. I look at the kinds of trajectories of place that emerged in images of the district, made by women in the City Mothers project for an exhibition at the Museum of the City. I describe how many of these images and representations of place came into negotiation. And, as negotiations of space played out, a multiplicity of spatial imaginaries unfurled along with political subjectivities related to them, regarding notions of belonging and notions of being Other. I point out that the terms of those negotiations were often (unexpectedly) ones of care — the imperative to understand, the desire to empathise, to pay attention to difference, to listen, to protect, to show that one is a source of support — a whole host of sensibilities, attunements, ethics and skills of care. But I argue that practices of care in this account, in themselves, were not a safeguard for many of those fragile multiplicities. I point out that in this account, trajectories of place were entangled with care, but practices of care proceeded in multiple ways which were not innocent of power inequalities. The result being a multiplicity of spatial imaginaries which gained or lost purchase not necessarily by the care with which they were sustained, but by the constellations of relations — powerful, unequal and caring — by which they were made. The result being an uneven landscape of spatial happenings.

In examining the embodied spaces of care that arose, I turn to Taussig's (1993) theorisations (via Walter Benjamin) on seeing and making images, as an aspect of lived urban space. Within Low's triad of embodied space therefore — body/culture/space — this chapter foregrounds culture: the realm of contested representations and shared imaginaries.

I remain close in this respect to the theme of perception established in the previous chapter — in this case the role of the image, imagination and

photography. However unlike the previous chapter, whilst power asymmetries had effects on space in this conflict, they cannot be reduced to the disembodied view outlined in the previous chapter's 'tower view', nor can they be untangled from care. In this battle of representations no single narrative wins out — I describe a stalemate of sorts. It is a stalemate that arises not through an equality of positions, but rather through a broad set of situational factors that don't necessarily allow one imperative to dominate for long. I dub the situational factors that take their role in the foiling of plans, the slapstick mode: a modality to view the effects of a material realm that becomes part of practices of care with no clear 'good', with no villains and no heroes, in which unexpected, everyday, material features of banana-peel life are king.

PART I: I'M PROUD TO BE A NEUKÖLLNER

We've gathered in the vaults of the Museum of the City. As I read it, the mood is one of excited togetherness. We've just been shown around the museum's current temporary exhibition; a photography exhibition of Turkish life in Berlin's streets, caught before the fall of the wall, by the former lawyer turned photographer, Ergun Çagatay, with a loving eye for people, their lives and the everyday activities that held a constellation of city spaces together in some form of outsider belonging.

Mostly it shows people striving together in low key, unglamorous settings: the greengrocer's and the whole extended family posing for the photo in the street's afternoon sun against a backdrop of vegetables as colourful and clashing as the 80s geometric jumpers; an intercultural evening at the university, samovars and street food on fold-out tables; men playing cards amongst their cigarettes and teacups ('And where are the women? Someone asks. 'At home cooking,' a chorus replies); a young mother and her pram outside the glittering arcade. It's a nostalgic view. No one looks bad, or unfriendly, or alone. And the women reminisce as they're shown around.

Some had lived in Berlin a long time and recognised the images and locations. For others, it was things they had been told about by family members and had always wanted to see, they said. Some people recognised the shops and the people in the shops, others recognised locations they had once lived in.

So when we come to the vaults, coolly lit in the underbelly of the building, the mood is full of anticipation. We're presented with piles of photos scattered over several tables, neat printed paragraphs of compact text commenting on the photos, blank labels, pens and markers. These are the products of half a term's worth of the art group's participation with a researcher's investigation into the neighbourhood's points of tension, using the Photovoice method. There are also two large boards to which we're invited to pin photos, paragraphs and labels we can write on. Amongst all those who have come to the museum are of course those who participated in the art group, but also many other participants of the City Mothers project who were unaware of the art project group and are now being led by the researcher in the extended exercise to comment on the district via the collected photos.

The exercise does not benefit from the comparison with the tour of the exhibition which proceeded it. It's hard to put a positive spin on it: the women have been presented with photos of Neukölln — a district many have come to view with pride — and here on the table, with the knowledge that it will be on display to the public as the City Mothers' contribution, is a series of photos documenting in unflinching low-resolution, grey-lit detail, what can only be described as garbage: a mattress left outside to rot; a dog-eared rug; plastic bags, overflowing skips and tangled wire hangers on an empty rail; an abandoned Christmas tree next to a half sawn log. Amongst these, are pictures of blank un-peopled facades in the damp, and icy empty lots behind wire fencing. The pictures were taken in winter and it shows.

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I don't think anyone expected the workshop to proceed in this way. The criminology researcher was keen to discover more about how tensions developed in Neukölln and what women's insider perspective was. And whilst the City Mothers project's curriculum includes a variety of courses run by third parties, this does not seem to have been within their idea of what an art project would look like. For many of the women who participated this was also the case, having taken part because they wanted to do something creative, and because the idea of an art course seemed more appealing than the German language course or the computer course, and many of them, whilst allowing their photos to be used for the exhibition, preferred not to have their names included. As I spoke to them at the end of the course (this being only the first half of

the art term, the second half was a standalone project with a pair of artists) many were surprised that this was art and had not found it so creative. For their colleagues who joined later and came across the photos for the first time at the exhibition, the whole collection of photos seemed an affront.

It was certainly not the only time I had seen the women called upon to make representations of the district and their sense of belonging in it during my time of research. They were often called upon as the 'migrant voice' of Neukölln in numerous local and city wide events. They joined the mayor during numerous photo opportunities, they were called upon to be seen as the 'women of Neukölln' during the launch of the district's Woman's Network. There was the time that they were encouraged to participate in the "Indivisible" demo and had spent the afternoon making banners and placards. And then, just as now, there was editing — such as when Denise proposed powerfully "Our blood runs the same colour!" and Cathy the coordinator said it sounded a bit militant. In short, representations of the women of the project and the district were often intertwined, so discussions of their experiences within it were not unusual, and this was not the only time I saw these debates of representations happen, but this time was the most explosive.

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Back at the museum, the photos were arranged under two titles, on two separate boards — "Life in Neukölln" and "Streets in Neukölln" — though one would be hard pressed to distinguish why one set of photographs would fit better under one title over the other. The 'artist's statement' by the researcher, explaining that this was a project focused on tension later appeared as the exhibition opened to the public, but for now this aspect of the project was not clear to many of those participating. And the impression is ludicrously, and not without anguish, that both life and the streets in Neukölln can be summarised into piles of garbage. The result, to say the least, makes for a depressing display. I overheard both the coordinators and City Mothers coming up to the researcher (those who had not been in the workshops) and ask why she chose only to show the negative aspects of Neukölln? Why couldn't she show more positive sides? Perhaps she could run the workshop again?

It is a difficult thing to be so intimately tied to a locality, when that locality is loaded with stereotypes. Partially, this is the very thing the City Mothers project relies on. The project is able to run so long as those who participate in it, not only represent the district but also the women they can go out and help. No representation could be neutral, but in this sphere the images, taken by a camera to inspect one's surroundings, constantly pointed the scrutiny back on the photographer herself, as well as all the people she was deemed to represent. And in this context the mood quickly became charged.

Many of the women who had not taken part in the workshop expressed confusion as to what the task was and why they had been invited — they had not taken these photographs, they had not written the text — why were they being asked to stick these photos up? They did not want to implicate themselves in this interpretation of the district. Why should their current experience of the district, their representation of its life and their place in it, be any less beautiful and soft and endearing than the images they saw moments ago in the main exhibition? Blank postcards were brought. A renegade interpretational faction sprung up with a rebellious air. They wrote or got others to write for them (and the coordinators with equal zeal) — "I am happy to live in Neukölln" "There are also nice places in Neukölln" "There are plenty of things to do and things on offer in Neukölln" "Körnerpark is lovely" "Britzgarten is beautiful". Images were missing. If only there were photos of all the parks. I am drafted in to draw Körnerpark, with available materials. The trees come out in lurid highlighter pink, the fountains in jubilant blue. A scribble and paste war ensued. A battle of representations over the local district.

Faye, who participated in the workshop, said that the garbage images were a case of lack of integration. That people behaved as if they were still in their countries. It's not all about language learning. There are still forced marriages - they don't know women have rights. They don't care about the environment - part of the whole thing is learning that they have to change.

The confusion is not only vocal. The terms of the exercise are to write and pin; and so will its criticisms be. *What are we supposed to do here?* is written in blue felt tip on a fresh piece of card and stabbed to the board.

Factions form: those who took the photos, those who are becoming increasingly opposed, and those, amongst them art group veterans as well as others who are trying to maintain a low profile and stay out of the trouble. Some leave early.

"*Don't just look, also READ!*" One label by an art group participant pleads.

The paragraphs of typed text which are paired with the photos, transcribed from the workshop discussion, are indeed very beautiful. What is written speaks of sympathy, pity and loss — the atmospheres of the district in its wintery state. They speak of isolation and tiny moments of care and connection. Many of them were even quite funny, imagining black humour in the incongruous objects — an abandoned toilet for a barbershop. Or where an old knotted rug is left out with a clothes wrack, and it seems someone simply made themselves at home on the pavement.

Yet even these fragments of text were a rewrite, a reinterpretation of the women's narratives, grammatically tidied up certainly, but also aestheticised, an accentuation of the emotional timbre. It imbued them with pathos. It left out the awkward bits about the women being ashamed of other migrants not knowing how to behave, that it reflected badly on them, of how they saw the police as a threatening figure — these new typed narratives instead were placed in the anonymous world of a landscape of sorrow with tumbled objects standing in as metaphors for discrimination, abjection and disappointment.

Later, the museum director starts the group discussion with "Well, it is also good that there were these photos. It's served as a kind of provocation, no?

Conflicts of Representation

Clearly much is at stake in narrating one's experience of the district in winter. These high stakes and the processes which bring about a particular type of being and belonging in the district are a part of the representational terms of 'integration' described in the previous chapter, in which the women find themselves entangled. In this particular constellation though, involving an art exhibition that straddled both the political and creative spheres, these high stakes manifested in a curious conflict in which 'to belong' or 'be a Neuköllner' came to stand as refutation against wintery

images of a district. For some at least, to belong was to rejoice. To be a Neuköllner was to be a proud Neuköllner. And that meant a certain attitude and responsibility towards the representations one made of the district.

In the age of mechanical reproduction, as Walter Benjamin writes, the work of art stands in particular relation with the material world it is drawn from — no longer a unique event, it stands in assumed mimetic relation with its environment; it is seen according to the terms by which a material environment has been made consumable, appropriable — *replicable* (Benjamin 1935/1968). The act of seeing therefore comes with a certain tactility — the qualities of seeing are a tactile apprehension of a 'have'-able environment. In his self-declared idiosyncratic reading of Benjamin, Michael Taussig extends this analysis to lived space and anthropological speculations on the body (Taussig 1993, 23). The act of perceiving our environment — our very relation with representations and images — proceeds through a historically and culturally contingent tactile knowledge; it proceeds according to a world rendered consumable and the images of replicability that circulate thereby (ibid., 21). This relation with lived space — our socio-material environment — based on assumed 'have'-ability is what renders the act of seeing, an action that does not sit outside of culture; seeing is rather emplaced and contingent on socio-material modes of production (Ibid). The major shift in this view is in its positioning of our analysis of 'subjective experience' away from an exclusive focus on the subject, to encompass the occurrences and objects in a historically contingent material environment (ibid., 24).

I argue that the conflict that morning at the museum can be read not merely as a classic battle of representations — who gets to say what about the district — but as a conflict over different ways those images were seen to represent the relationship between one's-self and one's environment.

I interrogate the conflict as much according to the status of those representations in relation to the women's lived space of the district and a socio-material environment more generally, as according to the kinds of subjective belongings and affectual positions which came into conflict that morning. Both these elements are entangled in this account.

Going back to Benjamin's framings, much of this rests on notions of reproducibility. On the one hand, photos by the art course participants were produced not to stand as *representations* of the district specifically, but as events. They came with their own story, their own first person narrative, they were a description of a

momentary encounter in time with place (in turn, they were collected together for the conceit of the display as a representation of 'migrant women's experiences'). They were in other words, singular events between observer and place: *here is what I saw on this day, and it made me think of…* the barbershop toilet, the home on the pavement.

But although events may be to an extent repeatable, they are not *reproducible*. On the other side of the conflict, the threat of the images was in their assumed status as representations of the district, that they somehow reproduce the place: that if another were to go there, that is what they would find, for that is what the district *is*.

The threat of the images as representations is in entering a circulation with a public who would link these women with place, and a context in which they have been instrumentalised as representations of migration within a district itself represented as a 'migrant district'.

The strident moves taken to correct these images addressed both sides of this relationship — both the women and the district — 'I'm proud to be a Neuköllner' and 'There are also nice places in Neukölln'. But to keep a steady representation is an act of maintenance and effort. I read the write-and-paste battle of counter images as an effort to maintain a certain prescribed representation of the district — which may have been 'positive' but nonetheless acted to shore up essentialising narratives. The narrative being maintained is one in which the representation of the women and the representation of the district are locked together. Within an economy of otherness in which the project's representations circulate, an active act of maintenance applied to both sides. This maintenance of representations of people and place thus indexes asymmetries of power in this account. If politics of representations are about contestations to define the knowledge of what *is* (as well as who gets to do the definition), in this account, the forging of representations, the drive to essentialise in the direction of more 'acceptable' representations, tracks the asymmetries of the disembodied town-hall tower view. To be able to render flat is an act from above. But in this instance, the application of it came from colleagues and friends 'at eye level', who enforced a certain representation of the district as much from fear and trepidation of the risk such images posed, as from care, belonging, devotion and (professed) love of their lived environment, their work, and their wider relations. The perceived threat of the images thus brought into focus much of the unspoken representation upon which the project's work relied — its careful representation of a relation between a group of people and a certain image of the district framed by a narrative of

improvement, devotion and belonging. Under this threat of toppling a carefully balanced representation, other ways of relating to place found awkward purchase.

Six Months Previously: Field-Notes from an Arts Workshop

The researcher wanted to bring in more hand-drawing to the project to keep it on the art theme, though I remember the sessions being far less about drawing and the photos and more about women sharing stories, whether related to the photos or not (mostly not). The question the women were asked to answer with the photos was 'what areas in the neighbourhood cause tension?'

There were photographs of fences and police obstructions and torn apart phone booths and overwhelmingly — an endless stream of garbage. The discussions were, for me, difficult to write. First, there were long discussions rebuking other 'migrant' families for littering, their perceived 'bad' behaviour and its use as an indication of a 'lack of integration'. There were the calls for solutions from organising community clear-ups to fines and security measures, and glances in my direction when someone pointed out that in London there are cameras everywhere to stop people offending the streetscape with their garbage. In contribution I said I thought London was dirtier than Berlin. It was difficult because as with many such workshops, in the absence of tight reining-in, personal stories took centre stage, with long non-sequiturs and incommensurable trajectories. Such as stories of one's uncle, and the neighbour that fed his baby red-bull.

The whole session took place in a community centre in which a temporary planning office was located in the floor above. Most of the pictures were recognisably within a hundred metres of the room in which the workshop was taking place. And indeed, the researcher said as much — she thought the women would go out (she explained to me one morning) and capture the rich texture of their everyday lives, taking their cameras into the meaty interior of their street experience — but that instead she got photos in the immediate surroundings of the community centre, where she assumed they took them the same afternoon as she had set the task.

A local planning team had been in the previous session to ask about littering and how to control it. They had asked about the new development happening all

around the community centre, a school campus, part of a plan to regenerate a school once synonymous with low attainment, school violence and a generation of students let down by structures of racialising discrimination and exclusion. An open letter by the teachers damning the students caused a national scandal in 2006, and since 2007 a 32 million euro improvement plan was launched across the whole site with designs to reform the school and develop its links with the neighbourhood through new social space for the neighbourhood. Much of the site was currently a wide levelled building site that sprawled across the majority of the block. Also, with the ground already broken and presumably the plans in place, the extent to which the women's comments about the new proposal could actually have affected the plans at this stage sounded minimal. But perhaps this consultation with planning is what set off the women's thinking along those tracks in many of the photos and in much of the Photovoice discussion: racism, greening and rubbish, for these were the topics of the consultation. Either way, the art group were dubious as regards the claim that they were truly being consulted. And in the absence of the planning team, and in response to not one, but two researchers present in the room, who have stated racism as an aspect of their research, Phoebe said:

"You think it's not racist here, but it is. It's just silent. You're told you have rights; you can do this, that and the other, but in reality you can't. We don't really have opportunities. Why do they ask us [for our opinion] now? Because they need us, but really the decisions have been made; they won't listen to us. There is discrimination. Lots. On the surface it's different but on a deeper level it's the same. Dig deep and all racism is the same."

The conversation is derailed to the perceived problem of littering in the district. Who is causing it? Is it a migrant problem? Tourists, locals, children?

One solution to littering proposed to the planning team (who are no longer in attendance but have formed a useful straw man) is security cameras. They talk about its increasing use in Turkey, notionally to tackle terrorism, and a back and forth ensues.

"If you've not done anything wrong then you have nothing to worry about".

"Even if I'm not doing anything, I still have this feeling. I don't feel free. People should be free. We are born free; we should live free. Feeling watched — it's not a good feeling. We have worth." Faye said. And gradually her calm, heartfelt view of

things gained support, and a few who were quiet before nod along, murmuring agreement.

"It's useful but it doesn't work" someone else chips in.

"Well, that's in the reinforcement, not the cameras!" added to which was, "the cameras don't lie. Not like people."

"What about tourists? How can you chase them down? You're going to run after them after they've peed on the side of the building?"

"But it's the people who live here doing it!"

A plan is hatched where school kids can take it in shifts to tidy up the area.

And the conversation moves to the differences between Berlin and other German cities, perhaps this is just the more urban character of Berlin, it is suggested.

"I went to Essen" Janelle says in defence, "it wasn't as green as Berlin."

Yet she's told it's considered the greenest city in Germany.

"Well, I didn't go everywhere," she clarifies. "But here I know where to go. I can get to the park in one minute, I can go to the canal, it's nice, you feel good." And other women chip in with where they like to go, especially with their kids, a compilation of the parks in the area.

"But it's also frightening." Faye says.

"Why?" a chorus asks.

"Because it's like a forest. My sister lives in Brits [the southern, more suburban, part of the wider district], she's new to the place and she's frightened. I have to take her back home. 'Please don't let me walk alone' she says. So I take her through the woods. Maybe I see too many films, but we are worried; you don't know what's there. So I have to walk her."

"And then she has to walk you!" and the room laughs about the absurdity of each sister walking the other back and forth until day-break.

"I like nature" Faye says. "But when there are too many trees, it's like a forest. I'm frightened."

We've talked through around five photos at this point. The women joke that here is yet another picture of rubbish (later, the researcher tells me she worries that maybe the visit of the planning officer made littering too prominent a topic). And here, was seemingly another. Projected on the screen was a picture of an old log, lying on its

side, and next to it, a small Christmas tree tipped beside it. Lyse says she took the photo right here, just on the corner. The women start to discuss the custom of Christmas trees and the associated street collection schedule, whilst a moment before the women relived the discussion they had with the planners regarding fly-tipping. And so I am surprised to notice the disparity between the way fly-tipping was seen as a mark of not understanding the system and should therefore fall to the community to organise a self-clean up, and the acceptance that the council will take care of sanctioned seasonal tree littering.

"Why don't they use plastic trees?" Someone asks. "It's so wasteful. If you have a plastic tree there's no mess, and it's cheaper, and you can pack it away in the cupboard until next year. Simple"

"No, it's not environmentally friendly. Actually it's better with the real trees."

"A friend of mine told me that it's for the smell. It fills the living room with a nice smell."

"Really? I don't think so."

"But then it makes such a mess! and they're in the street outside all January..."

"Ikea gives you a discount if you bring the tree in to them."

The discussion goes on, mostly in circles. But Lyse, the young participant who took the photo, a quiet woman with uncertain German, remains reticent during these discussions, and eventually explains.

"Actually, that was not what I meant with the picture. I saw a small child. Thrown out. Nowhere to go. And there [pointing at the lying log] is an old person lying next to it. The young and the old - a whole life. Some of us are thrown out onto the street. You are never sure that you are completely safe. We could all be on the street, at the next moment. Thrown out. In life, there's—how to say it—no guarantee."

There is a pause, the longest silence of any session. Eventually someone speaks.

"But why can't they have plastic, I mean..."

Representations, Story Telling, Solace

Moments of personal reflection and challenging narratives of living as a migrant in the district and Germany were familiar to those who participated in the City Mothers

project, as was the knowledge of the wide diversity and unexpectedness of many of the stories. That many City Mothers' sessions proceeded in such zigzagging ways with forays into story telling often only tangentially related to the matters at hand was one of my favourite aspects of observing this project. And for many women it was a major way that friendships were formed. Amongst the humour and small details of daily life it was not unusual to hear through these stories often difficult experiences, or personal, deeply emotional revelations, often told light heartedly as a casual or even humorous anecdote. Many of the coordinators recognised this as a vital part of the project itself, and they took care to promote a non-judgemental atmosphere in the sessions. Partly it was a way to practice the kinds of communication they sought in training sessions, to develop an open attitude with patience where listening was the action. Partly, as Zara, a long-standing coordinator on the project, explained to me, the ability to share these stories also acted as a kind of informal, soft-touch therapeutic moment. To be heard and understood was a kind of solace.

That is, during sessions these stories which appear not to fit in the usual order of the day, in actuality do. They are given space to be slightly at odds with the expected. So what was curious about the exhibition morning was how little patience there was for these vulnerable acts of revelation.

All the Photovoice workshops contained multiple and conflicted narratives of relationships with place. And this workshop was no exception. There was the ambiguous relationship with the authorities over the space, the frustration with tokenistic consultation, the latent racism, even whilst also trying to engage helpfully and seriously with the planning authorities' concerns with littering. There was the fear of green space, in contradiction to the accepted view of it being a source of pride and comfort. There were multiple ways to depict and engage with garbage — to see it is a 'problem of integration', to see it as the humorous remnants of an imagined scene, to read the sorrow of life's precarity in a discarded log. It's not so much that the images and narratives could never have followed the joyful representation of Neukölln which other colleagues expected —it was that they could never have followed *one* representation. And in the absence of a clear read that morning at the museum, for many, the default landed on the stereotype of migrant deprivation and abjection.

But this erasure of other possibilities of relating to space was not merely a function of the gallery space, as I show in the workshop scene above. How can someone's reading

of the sorrow and vulnerabilities of life in two discarded logs, ever be made to fit within the terms established by the exercise, even before it ever reached the gallery's collective workshopping moment? It simply did not fit within the push and pull of the Photovoice discussion's flow. This was an image of emplaced life through a momentary fragment of the environment, yet in drawing attention to this live, endlessly interpretational engagement with one's surroundings, this unique moment does not find traction. The genre doesn't *fit*. As I argued in the preceding Interlude, the imaginational aspects of perception — which sit between the faculties of understanding and sensibility — do not have to act by adding to or amplifying affectual sensibility, sometimes collective imagination is a selective process of editing the full range of affectual sensibilities out.

Whilst the terms of fitting in, of belonging here, may be emotional ones, it doesn't mean that a full affective-environment depiction finds ready purchase, even in a context in which personal stories and plurality can exist. The unique solace of finding recognition in happenstance assemblages of things in one's environment speaks to a relationship with place which has an awkward existence in a circulation of representations, where representations of space *as a slice in time*, are taken as space itself. For such was the story involving the strewn tree stumps, a unique, momentarily cohering spatial moment full perceived as an affectual encounter — not inappropriate, not wrong, simply an awkward story to engage with as a group workshop. And, within this context of representations, in which the default is that the environment and one's internal life are separate (that space, in other words, is a thing to find 'out there', rather than something generated by the encounter itself), a narrative that challenges it by linking the two in all its delicate perception — whereby one's internal subjective life *occurs* through an encounter with its environment — finds silent, awkward reception. In a sense locating this moment of meaning to the point of *encounter* between perception and the environment, echoes the four eared anatomy model of sense making outlined in the previous chapter; Joanna was looking at it with the eye that might be self-disclosure, the workshop participants perhaps with the eye by which you see facts, and the museum session participants perhaps with the relationship eye — the one by which you read for others' ways of seeing you. To follow Nina the coordinator's conclusions, understanding one's perception and representations of the world might be hard because we don't always know with which eye the person is seeing it. Both the solace of being understood and the understanding of solace were tripped up here —

not by any overt confrontation, but lightly and awkwardly, having seen what was there differently.

PART II: THE PROMISE OF BETTER

The conflict of representations by which the display's images were challenged, as well as the careful attempts to understand the different positions did not end with the write-and-pin battle. In the immediate aftermath and then over the following weeks, various iterations of the bust-up as well as attempts to think through it resurfaced. Most notably a variety of careful acts of understanding — listening with care — ensued. In this next section I shift my attention to the staff, both of the museum and the City Mothers project who attempted with so much care to understand and grapple with the variety of positions, as well as their various attempts to resolve them.

A kind of provocation, no?

We'd been led out of the vaults and into a granite faced courtyard with gothic, stone statues of armoured knights and droopy damsels standing in a funk at the corners. Plastic chairs were arranged in a large circle enough for everyone to fit — thirty seven City Mothers, the coordinators, two researchers, and three members of the museum staff, among them the director, who started by commenting on the rift. She had noticed the big internal debate and commented on how much the women said they enjoyed living in Neukölln, but here were these photos put up by the women themselves.

Sat in the round, every participant visible, the women were clearly reluctant to enter into confrontation. No one directly challenged the photos nor why the women took them. The comments which flowed so freely on paper, still pinned to the board, are not as forthcoming in person. Someone said that no one engaged with the text, and someone again asked, but why so much litter, but vaguely into the ether, and so the provocation petered out.

Having sat in the arts workshop, and then observed the bust-up, I longed to clarify. Ergun Çagatay captured the soft solace of a subaltern conviviality. He wasn't

asked to document the tension of the city, only for his images (responding to the call to document tensions) to be thereafter labelled 'neutrally' as 'Streets' and 'Life' — without trace of the original question of 'tensions' which sparked them. Part of this framing was at the heart of the conflict, without this context it made it seem as though these images were the only familiarity of streets and life that the women knew —as though they were attempting the same thing as Cagatay's images, but this is what they came up with. Furthermore, in many ways, by insisting on enlivening the images with creativity, humour and a variety of nuanced feelings in the everyday, they *had* resisted the narrow brief. Yet this wasn't clarified.

The director said they had put this exhibition together about migration and the city in the hope that they would attract a more diverse audience, something she admitted, they had struggled to do as a museum. She wondered why this was: did they not feel the museum represented them? Did they know it existed? Had they ever considered it as a destination, and being as the City Mothers knew migrant families in their district best, what advice could they give to help the museum attract them?

And the proposed conclusion was rather dissatisfying — it was simply not on people's radar. Maybe if people knew there were things on like this they would come. Many of the women would now certainly be bringing their kids, they said.

Perhaps exhibitions like this one could help, they hazarded. The director asked them about Ergun Çagatay's photos. To which all the comments were in agreement: they were joyful to look at. The museum offered free postcards of some of the photos, and having left a ransacked, empty swivel stand, many of the women were still holding their trophies in their lap, as I was. Weeks later, these were the precise images I used in the English language class I ran for the project (the one where we sang *I know this is a woman*) in attempting not to conflate English with England and to choose words relevant to their work — a young woman in an arcade with a pram (Mother), the shop with the colourful vegetables and colourful jumpers (Shop, Family), a market stall with hands reaching across at small glass tumblers (Coffee) — representations upon representations.

They repeated how these were things they had heard about from family but had never seen themselves. Many shared stories of how their relatives were the first to arrive and the difficult early years. For many it was a pleasant memory of what things were like.

"That's how it is, in the end, one only remembers the good things." Someone says.

And someone cynically whispers near me "In the end, one only wants to remember the good things."

But at least this question has made the stories flow. Stories about how people celebrated weddings, taking over the whole courtyard because everyone in the block was a migrant too. How they lived near the greengrocer in the picture, how they *knew* the greengrocer, how one block became all Turkish and how they would share food and childcare. Someone said, sure this is a picture of Turkish life in Berlin, but it was exactly the same for the Lebanese community too.

The museum is of course aware that multiple perspectives exist in the city. This tension between the unique perspective and the sense of collective belonging is acknowledged. The cards on which the women have been writing, each have a circle at its corner with the museum's current slogan: 'Our City, My History' and it is written in both Turkish and German.

Cathy, a City Mothers coordinator, commented on how interesting it was to share all these experiences of migration. Wasn't it fascinating, especially now, during the football world cup to watch these things.

"Wasn't it great," she found, "how football and pride in it, has enabled everyone to take pride in being German, to participate, to carry the flags to cheer along with everybody else."

And again I hear, not as audibly someone saying, yes, but for a month — then we'll go back to not belonging.

As it so happened, that very afternoon — and unbeknownst to me, who found myself cycling happily around deserted streets with the atmosphere of mourning — Germany was knocked out of the world cup at the group stage.

Punching a Hole

"I feel bad for the fans, I feel bad for the team, but it's good to punch a hole in all of that." Olivia said.

"In what?" Patricia pressed.

"Oh Germany the master of the world. Germany, stronger than the rest. All those nationalist tropes. It's good they've been taken down a peg."

Cathy protested how wrong it was that people had been equating Merkel's leadership with the football team's supremacy, and then downfall.

It's the warm-up to the weekly staff meeting of the City Mothers project. And a warm-up is indeed needed. I am always amazed at how long they last. Often from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon. It is a feat of concentration for the five coordinators and the project leader and co-founder, Patricia, who discuss the sessions, the women in the project, and the weeks ahead in great detail. They know who amongst the women is going through a hard time, who might need help (and they discuss what they can do to offer it), and how they're all getting along.

It was here that the day at the museum was carefully discussed and mulled over.

Cathy said that the photos left the women baffled. It simply reinforced prejudices — this negative view of the district, as if to show a parallel society.

But it wasn't just an attempt to highlight the issue of littering — the text was the creative part of the whole thing —Nina reminded people. Due to where the art workshops were held it fell within the boundary of Nina's group and there were many more of her cohort participating who pointed out to her that no-one engaged properly with the text.

Yet, still, the discussion focused once again on the effect and implication of having so many pictures of garbage as the chosen representation of the district.

"But it's precisely these things that need highlighting" Olivia said. She stressed that actually that *was* what people from outside the district saw. It was a picture of something which doesn't actually happen in other districts. She said that the recent statistics, from that local government document *Healthy Neukölln* (a document which was passed around that very morning), kept linking social deprivation, poor health and migrant background — something like, she'd been reading, 28 percent of those with one parent with a migrant background is deprived, while it's 51 percent for those with two. And so on. This is a problem. What chance do people have who grow up here? She said it was precisely things like this which were important for people like the urban development students, who came to visit the office a few months ago, to understand.

"There is litter, and there are emotions*" she said. "Perhaps we don't see the litter anymore because we know the families and the people here and the histories — but this is objectively what you would see from the outside. You would see the litter. Perhaps we've simply grown accustomed to it."

But as Cathy pointed out, much of what this exercise was about wasn't explained to them. No wonder they left early. No wonder so many didn't want to have their names attached to the photos.

Then Olivia offered another interpretation — she said how often people ask her how many of the women she works with wear headscarves. And then the next thing that sets alarm bells ringing is that in the next breath they ask about their work on *inklusion* (whilst this term has a similar political life to 'inclusion' in the British context, its overlap with disability discourse is more overt in the German context, most commonly deployed in Special Educational Needs schooling debates). "As though," she said, "it is only Muslim women who have children with disabilities."

Cathy sighed audibly — she herself wears a headscarf — Germany is going through a hard time at the moment. To which several other coordinators around the table replied — "Europe is going through a hard time at the moment!"

A Better Fit

In my previous interlude I introduced the methodological issue of how to make sense of place when the very perceptions of place are forever partial, relational and plural. It is a theoretical ethnographic quandary to be sure, but here it becomes the very ethnographic object itself as people wrestle with it in everyday settings. Here, making sense of the different ways in which place is perceived itself takes the form of concerted efforts of listening, understanding and debate. Much of this sits within various practices of care: taking care to understand different sides, caring about the consequences of prejudice and how to shield from or battle it, caring about social determinants of health inequalities that affect the district.

But thinking this through was no simple matter, complicated as it was by different ways of conceiving what representations do. And between the collection of

images, the write-and-pin battle, and the round circle discussion, emerged various ways of conceiving of one's relation with place, like plotted points of a variety of experiences, through which the museum director and the project's staff attempted to recover narrative lines of 'best fit'.

And in these lines of 'best fit' are nested trajectories by which a certain imaginary of place is conceived — by which the representations of women and the representation of the district have been made to mutually affect each other.

Olivia's points speak to this in two ways. One, in her comment, 'there is litter and there are emotions' is a division between the kinds of things which recede to the background when seen through the perspective of familiarity, the 'emotional' view of family histories, and the kinds of things which come to the foreground through the perspective of the outsider — litter. To occupy a different affective space in the district, to be related to it through the stories of families one cares about, is to *see* that district and of what it is composed differently. Yet Olivia criticises these normalisations in which litter and dumping recede with familiarity. Perceiving or ignoring these issues is linked with being able to perceive or ignore wider issues of deprivation. In drawing a link between photographs of litter — images of the place 'as you would see from the outside' — and statistics of deprivation, she recasts what the images can do — they act not merely to 'reinforce prejudice', but act as a call to action.

The actions of representation and perception of place here rely on their ability to draw on both currencies of meaning (need, prejudice, deprivation, health) and circulations of things (photos, litter, gallery space). And in the staff's attempts to resolve the hypotheticals of what these images might do as representations, understandings of the women and place remain constantly and actively enfolded.

Hence, to the museum director's comment. Placing these two things together — both stories and image representations — *is* a kind of provocation; in being coupled, they risk being linked in meaning. These are the risks negotiated in the meeting — to negotiate the risk that a headscarf might represent child disability, to negotiate the risk of attaching one's name to one's photo, to negotiate the risk of reducing an experience of place to pictures of litter, to have the wherewithal to resist the suggestion and foresee the precarity of attaching one's belonging to representations of football success, as though victory, belonging, and the flag were one.

In trying to think through the wider circulations of representations, the assumed audience was never stable. To the museum director, the missing audience is Berlin's migrant population, whom the museum fails to attract. To the staff of the project, it is an audience with prejudices that need to be broken or challenged (Cathy's worry), or they might be an audience who need to be informed in order to consider how to improve on things in the future (Olivia's urban development students).

What is being negotiated is the kinds of things which are included as representative of place, but the moving pieces in this dynamic are not just circulations of materials and meanings, but the assumed audience who will be doing the perceiving, whose means of perceiving change.

These negotiations of the images and their display, as seen through the staff discussions, suggest that these acts of perception are never self-evident. How we perceive place is opened up for discussion, how the circulation of materials and meanings are linked enters discussion and debate. As the project staff, the museum director and the women themselves challenge the terms by which this linkage proceeds, they outline how perception is collectively done, and is relationally affected. That is, being perceived is never a neutral nor passive process, it has effects and can be affected. In this, the personal capacity for seeing is rendered a collective endeavour. Perception might not offer enormous room for malleability, but it offers some. And it is there, in the narrow space for impact that is opened between what is chosen to be shown, how perception selects what it sees, and the possibility for changing perceptions, that the stakes of the bust-up were made so evident.

PART III: THE RIVAL FACTION

I enjoyed the art group, but it's hard to deny that the second time around is much more fun.

For starters it's summer, it's warm and we're on a mission. At the helm is Lisa, an Integration Leader, a much-coveted, permanent position of which the project has only ten. She was also one of the most vociferous that morning at the museum in proclaiming herself as a proud Neuköllner.

The day started in one of Cathy's weekly group meeting. There, they discussed the shortcomings of the exhibition workshop, and decided that they needed to do something about it. Nice pictures of Neukölln was the order of the day. The group discussed locations. We were to go out, take photos, and rendezvous at the nearest photo development place.

It's a ten minute walk away but a whole excited bunch of us were bundled into Lisa's red hatchback. It's an excursion after all, with all the air of a day out. The car's not made for five adults, and between us folding in and us inelegantly tumbling out, and despite Lisa's purposeful, on-a-mission driving and her search for some appropriate music, it feels less like we're on some heist and more like I've joined the show in the clown car.

Two minutes later we're in the sun again. It's Karl Marx Platz, the mid-week market is on, and it's exactly the same location at which a round of photos was taken and put up in the exhibition by one of the women in the art group. Except this time, it's not grey. It's the one with the modernist sculptures, dry water feature and the stall-holder whose non-certified organic vegetables feature as the women's top tip in food discussions. I wonder if he knows the deep word-of-mouth network behind his afternoon queues.

The piles of shining, colourful peppers make for a highly photogenic first stab. There we lose Jo who reappears after much group scatter and searching, carrying two heavy plastic bags full of vegetables for which she's teased for going off-mission. She has to go back to the car. In the meantime, we stop by a female-owned Turkish baker that edges the plaza where the clientele knows them so well they haven't needed to update the previous owner's fast food menu of chips, burgers and kebabs lit up on the wall above them: everyone knows what they sell — fresh stuffed flat breads and dumplings. Who cares what the sign says. And we load ourselves with flat breads.

Next up is the frustrating and anachronistic hands-off culinary garden, set up like an old market garden with abundant fruit trees, vegetable patches, and a team of sun-shaded attendants telling people "No". Also tutting. It's a strict stick-to-the-path policy.

There we see a tufty-eared red squirrel. Everyone rushes to capture it.

A decidedly different crowd to the market is there. Young middle-class families, babies rolling in the shade. There is a path at the far end of the garden, away from the

main manicured part, it tends to a sort of loose, faux wilderness — raspberries, grasses and overflowing rhododendrons obscure a small path that's not overlooked and in all the times I've been there, is hardly ever used, at the end of which is a wooden gate which separates this garden from a popular park, where one often sees large groups of families, and hears much Turkish and Arabic spoken. This popular park's opposite edge borders the street of the market. Such that everyone knows of the market, and everyone knew of the park, but the five minute walk around the corner, and through the wealthier part of this once former village to access the culinary garden by its main entrance, meant that half the women didn't know it existed. That, and the fact that whilst the garden is public, one has to find the small unlabelled metal button, smaller than a bellybutton, nothing more than a rivet on a wooden post, to the side of the locked gate. You have to know. And it's only a small gesture but it means that most of the time you'd believe the garden to be locked. Lots more photos are taken, even more than the number of times I hear it said by someone "How did I not know this was here?".

Lisa approaches the main inspector, an older man, who seems a permanent feature of the garden, to tell him they are part of the City Mothers project. Bearded, bespectacled, he is picture book perfect as the old, stooped giant of the garden; his stern demeanour belied by the way the kids don't actually keep their distance. She tells us that the City Mothers have a special privilege here, one which she says not all migrant families share. She has picked an unripe hazelnut. It's excellent cooked. We all notice the broken rule. The women look worried. She says the City Mothers are trusted here. They don't litter. And they run projects to make sure people know how to behave in the space, that's why, she explains, "if you say you're a City Mother, you'll be welcomed here." The statement unsettles me — does she mean if you wore a headscarf but weren't a City Mother, you wouldn't be?

I chat to Natalie who has never been to the garden. She tells me this is her second time round as a City Mother, not an unusual situation for many of the women on the project. I asked her how she finds it. And she said it was hard work finding enough women to visit in order to meet her weekly hours, but she says, as she became better known it was easier. But this time round she was assigned to a neighbourhood she doesn't live in, it's obviously harder. She used to go to the kindergartens and schools, but now she recognises women who look lost in the supermarket, and often

it's done simply by approaching other women in headscarves. You have to be bold to do that, we both agree.

The project's work is premised on this long-term familiarity and knowledge of the neighbourhood, but that's not to say it's tied to it — strangers are met in the supermarket and strange, unfamiliar parks which no one has been to are drawn in its orbit too. Familiarity and affinity are just starting points.

After the culinary garden, we walked another ten minutes to another small garden that was used for community vegetable growing. A hidden space to the back of a number of blocks, where in contrast to the edible garden, there were no fences but it was accessible only through long winding paths that one had to know, and again, for many of the women this was their first time seeing it. It was part of Neukölln's old village centre from its time as a haven for Bohemian refugees in the eighteenth century, and many of the old timber framed cottages and former warehouses are still there. Then, out on the main road, there is a woman's centre where we informally chat to one of the women who helps run the place and who is pleased we've come and praises the City Mother's project — 'because it encourages women to get out and about'. She is also five minutes' walk from the market and the park where many women with a migrant background are 'out and about', so perhaps she didn't want to add 'alone' or doing something other than family related tasks. And yet, the whole project focuses on the family. The statement sticks with me as I'm pulled away to our next destination.

At the photo development place the women choose the best photos from the screen. Cathy is nearby and everyone stands around admiring the images.

Shining peppers, flat breads being piles up by experienced, wrinkled feminine hands, the red squirrel clutching the trunk, the statue of Comenius after whom the hands-off garden is named, the old timber warehouses, and a log with planted posies are amongst the nice images to make the final cut.

In due course short pieces of text are added. "This small, sheltered space is in the centre of the old "Rixdorf" village. It has a nostalgic feel, as though one were in the eighteenth century." And over a picture of the gated garden: "This garden is for everyone … One can forget all one's problems here." And over a picture of an inviting plate of kebabs, salad and rice "the food here is really good … It's not like in any other district."

And whilst the photos are colourful and bright, and undoubtedly a pretty depiction of this neighbourhood, there aren't any people in the photos. It is a display of all the things one can do and consume and enjoy in the neighbourhood without the hassle of a social landscape where one might encounter anyone.

But of course, most people know that. That the neighbourhood is one of the fastest gentrifying areas in the whole of Berlin attests to its attractiveness. Also, in this former village, rents are high — it's a desirable place to live.

This is not the insider's view by the women of their part of the district, for as many of them said — many of these spaces were unfamiliar to them. What the photos showed is that Neukölln was desirable, and the women were showing that they knew and appreciated it too — they didn't have to be lumped with any negative stereotypes of it.

Next to the previous round of photos the whole thing seemed incongruous. But of course, these were two very different assignments. The first was about one's unique perspective of one's place, the tensions the social knots one finds oneself in, the other a different sort of public relations exercise — a collection of images to promote the district as a destination.

There were even fewer depictions of people this time round than the last, that is, if the image of the hands counts as showing a person, there was precisely one. This was a concerted representation of the neighbourhood in which the salient relationship was not the one between the photographer and what they saw, but rather between the representation of the district and its status as a commodity. An anonymous landscape of pleasantness where anyone can fit in.

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I returned to the exhibition near the end of its run in September. The attractive photos had been put up too. The boards had been retitled and the images reshuffled. There is a board that contains pleasant photos and the quirkier images of the winter batch under the title 'Life in Neukölln'. Then, there are the collected images of litter, which are now grouped under the title 'For a positive change'. There, on the board is a card that explains it all: 'The City Mothers are working for a better Neukölln.'

Boom

Slapstick might be a good heuristic for the incongruous, the awkward and the thwarted in social life. But it is also about the interplay between that which is planned, and its inevitable rub against a universe that just won't play ball. In this scene there was a mission, a plan and an unspoken leader directing things, but its consequences were incongruous, awkward and softly redirected not by outright conflict, so much as by its unfolding upon the wayward contingencies of place. Slapstick sociality in this account is about temporarily making a brief, arbitrary separation between the two to conceptualise social congregates that happen by plan and congregates that happen by the belligerent insistence of contingent place. It is close to a structure/agency division, except for the fact that there are no agents conceived against a passive background, and there are no structures, there are unfolding encounters animated by plans and foils, in which timing is everything and the affectual quality arises from the slippery moment of encounter.

The hatchback bundled with excited adults, Jo disappearing despite the gravity of the mission, the fact that we were out to capture the unique perspective of Neukölln to reflect the women's pleasure and pride in their locality, and we end up with locations most of the women have never been to, let alone knew existed — staying close to these soft incongruities says something about the nature of place of course, but it also says something about the nature of plans. Why did it not end up going quite to plan? Were we (to refer to the previous chapter) under an illusion of control?

Even if the hatchback, the disappearing Jo, the squirrel, the 'tut tut' vegetable garden are far from direct foils of the plan, there is still the results of the mission to consider. In a conflict in which photographs of one's lived space in a district gained such high stakes, the counter attempt to rectify — its aim to deliberately send the message that one belonged, and fitted in, and took pride in *one's* district — resulted in an erasure of a personal perspective and the women themselves from the picture altogether. To show some kind of fitting-in, they have fallen-out (here, in both senses of that term). The wider, insistent contingency by which representations of the women (as outsider or other) and the place are tightly bound are not unsettled here — they are in many ways reinforced.

It is hard to avoid the feeling that this is an echo of the kind of processes of exchangeability and equivalence by which I argued they were included and

'integrated' in the panoptic tower-view description. Here, it is reinforced through the message that in order not to cause waves, the district that they 'represent' must also be cast in the guise of non-offensive replicability. It reads like a tourism pamphlet because it specifically makes the locality a commodity, one that can engage with and enter into circulations of economic and political equivalence. This is a market-norms directed form of belonging, with all its playing on desires of inclusion as much as being directed by regimens of control (Ong 1996:737). But in direct engagement with our experience of place, Benjamin helps us view this process of seeing and representing themselves as contingent on this power-imbued mode of reproducibility. To represent and to be represented takes shape in an economy of images that trucks with replicability and consumability, and the act of *seeing* is itself an emplaced encounter with this socio-material environment.

The slapstick boom-fall to which I refer is not about laughing at those involved. It is about drawing attention to the encounter with a not easily budgeable socio-material environment, the feeling of repeating inevitability, the incompleteness of it all. The women are swept up in all sorts of missions, whether by the researcher to find out about tensions, the museum to represent them, their colleagues to correct a perceived damning representation — and still the directions those missions take are never fully realised, they have their own unexpected trajectories. Each set-up has its own small down-falls. And this is especially true in the final attempts to correct. Were most of the women swept up in the mission to correct the exhibition? Not really. Did that make them engage differently to present their own perspectives of care and pride and life in the district in the way they found so charming in Çagatay's work — no. They took pictures of squirrels and did their shopping and took the chance to have a day out. The aim to show the positive side of this 'migrant district' in summery Neukölln doesn't fail to outdo the personal images of the previous round in winter nor does it succeed, it just rubs along, having awkwardly shown up with a slightly different memo.
And they don't speak to each other as images because they are effectively speaking to different sides of the representation. If in the first part of this chapter women were made too visible through their making of personal reflections and images of their district, here, in making a representation of the district in ways which efface any political challenge, the specificity of the encounter with place and the women in that encounter wholly disappear from view.

Conclusion -- Staying with the Bust-Up

Controversy or 'trouble' so it is said is good to think with and good to stay with (Haraway 2016) — even bust-ups. This wasn't the only one I witnessed but it was one of the more notable ones. They are good to think with for bringing out the fault lines of sociality, and they are good to stay with because therein lie the make-do allies and unexpected alliances of which the everyday is composed (Haraway 2016, 4).

This bust-up was no exception. In it, as I saw it, much of the City Mothers project's tensions played out in microcosm: the tension between belonging to one's district as 'home' and belonging within an administrative boundary; tensions of representing and being represented; tensions between engaging in dialogues of otherness and the role of care in building mutuality, understanding and perceiving another. In other words, a whole host of tensions that circulate in an economy where representations of belonging gain currency, and become inflected with all the dense socio-political histories sedimented in the term 'integration'.

I use this moment to examine some of the moral stakes of representing and being seen to belong in Neukölln, which at this moment came together. Moral stakes played out at the public level, articulating with the high-stakes integration discourse (the imagined or real threat to the project's image from this public facing exhibition), but then they also played out through colleague bust-ups, in a project in which most of the women see many of their colleagues as friends. I explore these themes through their manifestation in the creation of small contentious works of art which triggered a debate, at once as much about belonging, as it was about place representation. What I flagged was the swell such photographs created in relation to integration work, and the much debated threats and risks which, in some accounts, they were deemed to pose. The moral stakes of fitting-in became curiously hinged to narrating one's experience of the district in winter. In this particular constellation, involving an art exhibition that straddled both the political and creative spheres, these high stakes held a curious unease with a temporary, wintery, melancholic state. For some at least, to belong was to rejoice. To be a Neuköllner was to enjoy being a Neuköllner. And representations contrary to this position were threatening certain aspects of the City Mothers project's work.

The issue of seasonality, I argue, is not tangential to an understanding of this moment. I mention the winteriness to highlight the broader issue of change. The bust-

up was not merely a question of what it is to fit in, but what it is to fit in to a constantly shifting environment. Winter in the cold climate of Berlin can be a dark and bleak time, its streetscape inhospitable. It is not the time to celebrate its green spaces, its friendly neighbourhood vibe, its rich street life. So, I asked here, what made capturing this state — a fairly honest depiction — such a loaded act?

Critiquing the way representations of space are conflated for space itself, what she terms succinctly space-representationstasis, Massey writes "the real trouble is that the old equation of representation with spatialisation has taken the life out of space." (2003, 110). Part of this trouble is evident here. The 'old equation' really did play a part in causing some interpersonal trouble. In this extended moment, I argue, several different kinds of equations with space were made. Attempts to understand these positions with care, empathy, patience only revealed these different imaginaries of space which might have remained implicit otherwise. For the Art Group's winter photographs, these images captured 'life' — as lived, embodied, affective, daily space. In other words, these were temporary constellations they happened to catch. They were capturing *moments*, more often better expressed in narrative than image ('read the words' went the appeal), to convey the terms of an affective encounter – these were *moments of space*. For others however, it was a *representation* of the district. It was space that was not merely held in stasis for the duration of the camera shot, but something which stood in for the district beyond that moment of lived encounter. Having taken the life out of the encounter of space, what was left was a space-representationstasis – a shot of a moment as though it *were* the space of the district itself. The 'trouble' was that these different equations of space – the ways in which perceptions, image and space, were deemed to be related – were thrown together.

That different equations of space might ordinarily rub along without apparent contradiction (such as in the previous chapter) reveals the value of staying with 'trouble'. It provides one optic onto plurality, because it reveals the conditions under which such plurality becomes divisive. In this case, I describe how the conditions to bring out the trouble was the threat of public gaze – in this gaze lay the risk that others might also equate representations with space, but other troubling equations also lurk: the conflation of being 'proud' in a place and belonging to it, and the reduction of one's experience to a narrative of grouped 'otherness'.

In this view, both the specificity and the universality of the space rendered in the image spoke to two very different imaginaries of space. And the conflict between

the two exposed the varying relations of power by which spatial imaginaries gain hold and are sustained. Neither spatiality was a prefigured 'given' in this account, they were both made, fought over and debated. They emerged as products of particular relations. The fact that such a perceived representation of the district could trigger a bust up -- that it could be seen to pose such a risk – is indexical of the kinds of relations of power, by which the district, as a particular spatial imaginary, is composed. The Town Hall may have been far away, but the relations by which such administrative space is sustained were present and were entangled with the political subjectivities upon which the project relies.

It was also in response to such relations of power, to which so much ethical effort, concern and care was directed. And so *in addition* to the terms of negotiated space being revealed through conflict, they were *also* revealed through care, and they were also made through efforts, sensibilities and ethicalities of care. I described how the summer faction felt the need to protect the project, the women's work, and perhaps the district too. I describe the staff's concern, their attempts to understand, and their consideration of the photographs via a debate that acknowledged and discussed responses to persistent inequalities and spatial injustice. I include the museum staff's attempts to acknowledge plurality, to hold room for discord. And I narrate how the winter faction captured a plurality of moments of daily experience with tenderness, empathy and affection. In all these situations, the terms by which the district was negotiated and cast into various spatial imaginaries, exposed the relations of power by which its spatiality is composed, but much of this would not have come about without situational relations of care: empathy, understanding, patience, purposeful attunement to other perspectives.

That this multiplicity came into negotiation; that it coiled around questions of belonging, representation and otherness, *is* the very sign of space's politics in this account. But whereas in the previous chapter, this coeval multiplicity could overlap and juxtapose in non-threatening ways, in this moment, such multiplicity of space was momentarily made visible through the 'trouble'. In a rare moment, this multiplicity of embodied space was exposed. And what the temporary fixings of space in these images revealed — pinned to the wall in inescapable juxtaposition — was not in fact a unitary, disembodied representation of a district. If the 'old equation' risks taking the life out of space, then the trouble caused by a series of images of living in relation — in

sympathy, solace, affection, frustration — with space's flows, may, in many ways, have put the life back in.

Epilogue

It's curious that during the visit to the museum very few people commented on the giant tapestry hanging just behind the women, facing the contentious photos of the district. The tapestry was composed of (to my mind, astoundingly) beautiful canvas wood block prints of about A3 size, stitched together between ornate pieces of fabric making a giant quilt hung from the ceiling at least three metres high, spot lit from above like a dramatic theatre backdrop. It was the result of the second half of the art group's term, made with a pair of artists, and that the artist couple managed to work together surprised the art group since, they marvelled, they were even married.

It was dubbed the Grandmother Project. Each wood block print depicted a participant's grandmother with much attention on the details of their clothing, as well as an assortment of surrounding objects which served as symbols relating to some remembered aspect of them. There were keys. Keys to homes fled and left but to which they would one day return. There were lemon trees, and flowers and wheat for the labours they put into everything whilst remaining cheery. There were birds. And buckets. And aprons, head-dresses, smoking pipes, embroidery painstakingly embellished, long plaited hair, fruits and gardens with distinct, meticulously drawn foliage: indications of a different climate.

As many of the participants told me, this was the more creative half of the art term; this is more what they understood by art.

Though the piece now hung in the Museum of the City, it had its grand unveiling at a gallery, tucked into the sunk sides of a former pit now converted to a popular neighbourhood park with formal garden layout — tumbling water feature and box hedges — in the residential heartlands of Neukölln (bordering the site of the crash in the previous interlude). Despite the gallery's position, sunk lower than the street level, it is a generous, bright, airy turn of the century space built by a local wealthy industrialist as his orangery, as the old sepia photographs on the plaques surrounding the park attest.

I remember there was almost the feel of a party that evening of the unveiling. It was a warm, summer Sunday, a busy, happy time for the park anyway, and the audience swelled with passers-by.

We shuffled into the gallery space until there was barely space to move, as the tapestry lay on the ground, ready to be hooked onto its wires and drawn up the orangery's high ceiling. Both artists stood either side of it, the hooks clipped down next to them, the City Mothers around the tapestry, and gathered neighbourhood residents radiating out from them, and spilling out the door.

There was a short speech, then the artist unclipped the hook as it slowly rose against its counterweight, floated up past her head, higher than an arm's reach, and accelerated up to the ceiling with a zip till it snapped with finality against the small pulley. For a moment the crowd looked at the hook, and then down to the artist. Her husband silently gave her what seemed like an 'I *did* tell you' look. She stared back at him. Clasped her hands in front of her and turned to the crowd.

"Ladies and gentlemen, due to a technical error, we shall be moving to display the tapestry outside."

Out on the grass, I actually thought it allowed for the crowd to mingle better, to study and speak to the City Mother artists who collectively made the piece, which was part of the artist couple's intentions in the first place.

I asked many of them what they thought of the process of making it, and how they felt about the piece now it was on display. Many spoke of how they had thought they wouldn't be able to draw well, but then they did. How surprised they were by how beautiful it turned out. How simple it was, in the end, to do a wood block print. They explained the keys and the buckets and the baking their grandmothers would do to show their constant care and love. And many spoke of their strength.

Naomi said to me "She was so strong. That's what I realised. It made me think differently of everything she went through. If she can be that strong, so can I."

INTERLUDE II

What a Difference a Stay Makes

"We are the homosexual women" (*Wir sind die Homosexuellen Frauen*) they sing. And repeat, in multi-part harmony. The choir go through their repertoire, singing lines like, whether you love women or men, want kids or not, and then satirical numbers re-appropriating the terms of oppression, chanting: homosexuality is the worst disease.

They're a big group in a circle of about thirty people, they're singing in front of the Orangery gallery, the same gallery where the tapestry had its unveiling, on a slightly raised plane with views across the entire neighbourhood park.

That very same moment, the park is alive with the sound of other music. There's a boom box playing techno. It doesn't overwhelm the choir, but nonetheless it's certainly a presence, and the teenage boys playing it don't seem too impressed with the choir. They're at least forty metres away.

In equal distance from both the teenage boys and the choir is a guitar being strummed on a wide lawn which is the park's centrepiece. At the entrance of the lawn, in front of a gap in the shin height fence, is a sign which says, "No walking on the lawn", either side of which, desire lines have formed because the sign also marks the easiest point from which to get on the lawn. It's a sunny afternoon in late summer and the lawn is filled with people.

Over the course of an hour, I try to capture the scene. There are plenty of lovers. A passer-by stops to stroke a person's dog. A woman is talking loudly on the phone. A group of middle aged men are watching the choir from the tall plane-tree shaded side-lines. There is a large multigenerational group speaking Arabic in their usual spot by the grassy incline — largely women and children. There is a group of men, higher up the incline about twenty five metres away, out of earshot, and the kids run between these two poles. At the opposite end where the gallery is located are spectators watching from street level, about ten metres above, because this whole neighbourhood park, being a former quarry pit, is sunk such that the roof is on the same level as the

street above, forming a wide balcony from which to overlook the park. There are people drinking wine sat below on the delicate chairs and tables laid out by the Orangery Cafe gallery. There is the strong smell of cannabis in sporadic patches all around the park. There's a young teenage couple kissing, not quite on the open path, but not entirely hidden by the trees in the wilderness edge. There's a fair bit going on — a diversity of simultaneous activities co-located across this one park. The park's design plays a part in much of this differentiation. It has a variety of level changes which articulate the large sunken space into a collection of overlapping spaces that are differentiated but not cut off from one another — grassy slopes, raised areas from which to observe, wide zigzagging staircases with lots of nooks, veranda-like platforms. It has a mixture of open spaces and secluded spots — the wide lawn at its centre, a wilderness strip either side shaded by mature trees. And there are a range of material surface textures, both planted and hard — light gravel for cafe furniture, soft grass to lounge on, a stepped fountain for perching, and manicured, formal garden alcove to sit in. But this interlude is not strictly about the socio-spatial interplays by which place proceeds.

This interlude, similar to the first, elaborates on the iterative methodological process in this research, and interrogates observation in itself as a mode and means of making-place. In addition, in both these interludes the method and mode by which observation proceeds is not separate from the political — both knowledge production and place production in these accounts proceed as one; both are manifestations of power-imbued environments. But unlike the first interlude which tried to engage with issues of singularity and plurality, this interlude's questioning of observation proceeds by engaging with debates regarding differentiation and diversity.

For this methodological interlude, like the previous chapter, I take one extended scene, rather than the first interlude's hopscotch form — I park myself in the park — to think through the multitude of differentiations within one place-event as a way to be in dialogue both with the process of seeing place and with seeing difference. I propose that methodologically, attending to the process by which observation proceeds by acts of differentiation, may open in turn an interrogation of concepts of diversity premised on notions of essentialised, fixed entities. I am using the process of ongoing differentiation to question static notions of difference, presupposed in categories of place identity. And I contend that whilst processes of differentiation feel abstract and conceptual, they have a perceptual life, they are observable even in as

mundane and everyday a setting as a lively park in summer. And one way to think through the methodological implications of this observational process is to draw attention to acts of differentiation, proceeding through the relationship between figure and ground.

Grounding the Lawn

Even taking only the roughly football pitched size lawn in the centre of the park, an array of differentiated, and diverse stranger activities is happening. This is not conviviality of the talking sort, it's a sociability without saying hello that exists somewhere between acknowledging and ignoring, whereby one takes care to show that one *does not* care about what your neighbour is doing in order to allow some semi privacy in public — a careful performance of civic indifference through deliberate inattention which Stefan Hirschauer has termed, 'the sociality of strangers' (2005).

But it's not only the strangers I'm interested in, it's also the gap. Not just the figures, but the ground. Between a lounging reader, and a pair of lounging lovers and the man with a guitar, there is the space that allows them to have distance from one another to carry out this stranger choreography. And the gap is clearly important. The distances are never just random, there's a sort of even spacing which people achieve. It's never less than three and a half metres, though on less busy days, I've noticed people aim for seven until they're forced to bunch up. Whilst there is anthropological theory regarding the spacings of these maintained social distances notably in the field of proxemics (Hall 1966), my concern here is not with the exact margin maintained.

The exact distances don't matter, what matters here is merely that there's *regular* distance — people are participating in this act of regular spacing between unknown strangers. They make a gap between each other, in response and receptivity to each other's presence. That is, the distance *matters* a kind of relation. This negative space is not actually void, it merely relies on the enacted imaginary of it, it is the as-though there were void, which is the affordance of a certain kind of relation of stranger sociality. Loungers here mutually hold a suspended gap between them, and this is the term of the park's co-presence — it is a relational practice made visible in the *gap*.

I call upon the imagination again, as an element of image and an element of perception itself.

In this interlude I wish to draw attention to the imagination of the void, the imaginational action that makes the apprehension of things possible — the perceptual *making* of a relationship between figure and ground; the differentiation between space and objects, which makes seeing objects possible; the boundary that brings things into perceptual presence. One of the difficulties of applying the perspective of environment as affordance (Gibson 1986) to the method of observation is that the figures of things, as they run, lie, breath, grow, move, sway, rustle, sing, speak, get squashed, trampled, or strewn, constantly win our attention over the ground, the plane against which things happen. The active grabs us as figure, whilst the passive recedes as ground. And it is not strictly that I wish to bring the park, as affordance, as active process to the fore, so much as point out the work of some *imagined* passivity. I wish to show that its materiality has been made immaterial, and the purposes this serves.

First to elaborate on the process by which perceiving the contour between things and their environment is not a passive discovery but an active process of differentiation, an action of seeing, which allows for things to come to our attention. Drawing on Gestalt theory, philosopher of art Graham Collier writes,

> "At any moment in perception there is a figure on a ground — *whether it be a twig against a sky or a line on a piece of paper […] It is the void which starts where the twig stops and, as such, plays a vital role in our perception of the twig. Space acts as the surrounding "cradling" matrix, thus allowing the twig itself to be seen clearly in relief. Visual perception is thus dependent on our ability to mentally utilise this dual nature of the world outside ourselves: to comprehend space as an element without apparent substance, and then to attribute some measure of materiality—or "thingness"—to whatever we discern as possessing shape and standing in light or dark contrast against space.*"
>
> (Collier 1985, 57 emphasis original)

In this practice-based example, Collier draws our attention to the action of perceiving in order to better apprehend what is being seen (and thus draw it). To perceive the contour between things and their environment is not a passive perception but an active process of differentiation, an action of seeing, which allows for things to come to our

attention. And it is this void-making — the void-that-is-not-really-void — which not only allows us to apprehend these separate activities but is also part of the spatial practice of these activities themselves. Even at the wider scale, these groups of people and single loungers have formed themselves as separate events through this not-so-happenstance distance, and what makes it work is the space between them. Even the sound leaking between choir, techno boombox, guitar strumming, the woman on the phone or loudly to herself — they hold a suspended gap between them, and this is the term of the park's present co-presence. Each person in response and receptivity to the practicalities of sharing space with one another – a concerted response-ability (Barad 2014), and a kind of ethics of space that "demands an awareness of others" (Massey 2005, 188). So the void needs to be accounted for as part of the diverse events, and the sociality that unfolds. These events are not a collection of things through which I can hopscotch as I did in the first interlude, because what is between them is part of how they come to be. The space allows them to relationally differentiate, the space between is what shapes their co-occupation. This void-that-is-not-void makes the leakages of these events palpable. It is in response to their leaking — sound, eye contact, details, the 'vibe' of wanting some privacy in public space — that the distance is maintained, that their spaced formation is about the collective holding of an enacted void between. In this, sound, light, 'vibes' are no longer immaterial; they are given material berth, for they were never immaterial to begin with. Whilst I argue that the conceptual tools I adopted in this thesis regarding the body help us interrogate processes of materialisation, in this interlude I want to use the same theories to draw attention to processes of *im*materialisation.

To describe these events in the language of diversity as separate activities on a passive, universal plane is to discount the role of the void-that-is-not-void as an active medium through which these events differentiate themselves and by which they come to be; it is to take their material leakages — sound, light, 'vibes' — to which people in this place-event are in response and receptivity, and to render them immaterial, null and void.

In this account the events that arise are not separate, rather they continually *become* differentiated from one another. In this, I draw heavily on Tim Ingold's 'One World Anthropology' (2018) argument regarding life as correspondence with the world but press it slightly outside its ontological discussion of soul-life, and into the political realm of making 'Others'. Against the notion of multiple, different worlds contained

in the recent 'ontological turn', often pluralised to ontologies, to denote that the material world may not be simply 'one' (for a discussion of the ontological turn Mol 2008 and Carrithers et al. 2010), Ingold argues instead for an ontogenetic approach, in which the condition of being is, in itself, based on ongoing, ever emergent, multiple differentiations. Following this argument "the universal, then, is not a lowest common denominator but a field of continuous variation; not a plane of indifference upon which diversity is overlain, but a plane of immanence from which difference is ever emergent" (Ingold 2018, 165). His is a critique of the notion of diversity conceived as a set of *a priori* and innate differences, collected upon a universal, passive plane.

His is not a critique of socio-political manifestations of 'cultural diversity': I press his argument outside of its primary intention for its side-step relevance here. My argument is precisely that the perception and figuration of the spatial world is *not* divorced from the political. Ingold's argument regarding ever-emergent differentiation is firmly rooted in *material* processes of being — it is an argument for the expansion of sociality into the processuality of material life. So, how does the *im*material notion of political 'diversity' apply here?

My argument is precisely that discourse around diversity, difference and otherness, is not purely an epistemological debate. I am trying to trace an approach through debates regarding diversity against a view that would frame it as some 'social immateriality' laid over ontological material realities. My argument is that even down to the act of perception there is no material-meaning divide: sociality is a spatial, political act. Notions of 'cultural difference' are often cast as an epistemological argument, free floating of material structures of difference — and along with the notion that cultural difference is 'culturally constructed' often lurks the idea that it is an elected, optional performance against a possible universal (Rottenburg 2015); it ascribes a status of exception to the condition of difference. I do not mean that cultural difference is therefore tied to an innate, material feature, I mean rather the opposite, that the *process* of differentiation is not an optional event against a universal plane of *sameness* — differentiation is cast here as a condition of life itself. Like the convivial, differentiated stranger events in the park —there are no events without differentiation, differentiation is the very condition of becoming — spatially and politically — and in it there is no passive, universal plane, there is a teeming plane of immanence as alive, and particular as a lawn one sunny afternoon, through which the leakages of life are maintained as distance for a void-that-is-not-void.

Political notions of diversity often proceed along a similar conceptualisation — in which differences may present as unique characteristics but remain commensurate across a level, universal plane (Ingold 2018), in such a way that renders cultural 'difference' into uncontroversial and politically safe 'diversity' championing (Eriksen 2006). Much of this political 'championing of diversity' casts cultural differences in the mould of interchangeable difference and market-norm led identities (Ong 1996), such as food, traditional dress, rituals, arts. It means that the more politically thorny issues of differences in socio-political values and socio-economic structures can be left untouched. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues it allows diversity to remain in its exclusive, and non-threatening domain of 'creative difference', leaving broader socio-political structures and resource distribution to recede as an untouched, universal, given background, in which differences like political equity, rules of inheritance, rights to education, gender equity, age of marriage, kinship laws and practice, are outside of 'diversity' (Eriksen 2006, 14). But neither in the park, nor in public life is the plane against which this happens neutral and passive, it sets the terms by which events are brought into relation and by which they differentiate — it is not an inert context but the loam by which these relations occur, and in turn textures them.

My point in bringing this into methodological discussion is to take seriously the premise that observation, as perception, is not a passive act, it produces knowledge. Yet, I argue, the kinds of obligations to become aware of epistemological violence does not start with the output of that knowledge — I seek to discuss how such obligations might begin with the initial act of perceiving in itself. The imaginings of void, the imaginings of figures are not merely the bare mechanics by which perception is possible, rather by pointing out its partnering with political terms of difference making, it is also the active processes of selection, informed by and informative of sedimented political histories. Perceiving (observing and listening) in this account has a politics, and this is what makes the methodological interrogation something which is not strictly isolable from my analysis or narration. And so I argue, following the previous Interlude's aim to see differently, that again, it is not about learning how *not* to perceive difference, it is about observing moments of differentiation, seeing the role of difference a little differently.

Conclusion

Many of the instances of integration narrated in the preceding chapters, such as the panoptic District Office 'town hall' scene, relied on discursive imaginaries of separation and isolation, *a priori* differences that might exist 'out there' — an imaginary of big gaps with big imagined voids in between, as though the solution were to draw already prefigured difference together in a kind of diversity salad (or 'bridging' it, staying true to the words of the scene I reference). A slightly mechanical vision of plural intermixing that rests on an imaginary of agential figures on passive grounds.

But in this interlude, following Ingold's call, I take an ontogenetic mode to place-making, knowledge-making, being and difference, in order to pay attention to the momentary contingency by which place events come to be, and are brought into being by relation. I draw attention to productive differentiations by which entities mutually materialise. In playing with an optic to make differentiation visible, I aim to engage with those living tensions afforded by the void-that-is-not-void, which draw life into spatial relations with momentary stability. In the former interlude — resisting the totalising view — a plurality of events rub along together as a mixed picture of a district because these different scenes can occur independently, and in defiance of one representation of place. But what is rendered invisible through such a sequence of pictures, or what happens when they are made so independent, is the tensions — both the tensions that negate and the tensions that create. When they are conceived as actively differentiating from one another, therein lies their politics; this is politics conceived both in its manifestations as 'power over' as well as the 'power to'; the power to negate and the power to bring forth. The next and final data chapter attends to place, again, as a processual event — and I attempt to examine the implications of viewing its very matter as a product of practised relations. I try to show the political implications of seeing materialisations of spaces of care not a static objects but as enduring patterns of socio-material practice. I attempt to follow political and perceptual processes by which materialisation and immaterialisation occurred in making these spaces, in order to interrogate the temporal politics of place, by asking what patterns of place endure, and which ones are left to fall away.

CHAPTER 6: MAKING SPACE FOR FRIENDS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I seek to describe a variety of embodied spaces of care, made by, and for, friends. I describe these spaces through their material, practised, intersubjective, imaginational, and storied aspects, to examine the plurality that emerges under a specific kind of care. In these descriptions I attend specifically to such spatial relations' becoming and undoing; to the pace and tempo of the coming together or dissolution of such emplaced situations of care, and attempt to stay close to their significance, meaning and moral stakes.

In this final data chapter, many of the instances I describe are neither rigidly stabilised nor in pure flow, rather I examine the accomplishment of these temporary emplacements as partial and provisional cohesions of practice. I describe a woman's room, a peripatetic friend's therapy space, the changing nature of a street, a hairdresser. And I describe the kinds of practices of care they held and the alternative political possibilities they temporarily manifested. In their relative abilities to endure the terms through which they were negotiated is revealed. And therein I locate and examine their politics. I examine such relative provisionality to describe ways in which such practices took place along unequal relations of power, with varying abilities to emplace resources, imaginations, and stories. But I seek to bring the aspects of care and the aspect of their politics together. I tell these narratives of spatial politics alongside the kinds of practices of care which made the spaces (recognition, imagination, attunement, empathy, sympathy), and I tell the narrative of the spaces for the kinds of practices of care and friendship they sustained.

I draw extensively on Janelle Taylor's (2005) concept of 'surfacing' to describe the process of such embodied space's materialisation. Her use of the term plays with both meanings of the word. She speaks of practices which bring something to the surface – like a bubble surfacing through water – ideas 'surface' into collective meaning and collective practice in ways which can fix them with substance and matter. And she describes the act of 'surfacing' — laying down a surface, like tarmac — another kind

of act of materialisation, to describe practices that enact a physical edge, and imbue it with the significance of a 'boundary'. For example, the way the symbolic boundary of the body might be demarcated by the surface of skin, or hair, or a scarf.

I examine such surfaces and their implication in embodied spaces of care: hard surfaces like walls, moveable surfaces like a roller-blind, soft surfaces like hair, a scarf. They feature in my analysis in ways that their tangible texture is inseparable from their workings as boundaries of significance; both of these aspects are disarticulable in their power to create space.

Thus, my intention with the term 'surface' is not to point to a flatness of space, but rather to speak of a kind of doing, a momentary suspension of an ensemble that creates a tangible demarcation, however provisional. I use it as a way to speak of the surfacing and presencing of 'ideas', as much as of practiced making of a tangible boundary. I seek to pay attention to the *texture and significance* of such surfaces – in ways that material tangibility is seen to give them durability, not *immutability*. The emplacement of this boundary is important because I seek to describe the creative possibility of this boundary, a selective exchange in order for certain relations to take hold. I aim to draw attention to the making of different spatialities of care, not merely through the idea of 'making room' but through the boundedness, the demarcation, the line within which alternative spatialities are able to take hold, and through which alternative political possibilities play out.

In this I lean into the 'negative space' discussion I introduced in the previous interlude. I aim to draw attention to the line, the surface boundary of separation, not to show a separateness from an outside but to describe the constitutedness of these spaces by a *relation and a differentiation* to multiple other spatialities. The surfaces I describe — being both tangibly made and relationally practiced — become in this analysis, a way to draw attention to the negotiation; the carving out of particular spatialities from amongst other possibilities.

Through this, I seek to lend ethnographic detail to an understanding of the coevalness and multiplicity of space, as a parameter of care and a function of politics. I lean on Massey (2005) in framing these descriptions, because these descriptions take seriously the idea that the multiplicity of space is not about "that completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established […] This is a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be open too." (2005, 11-12). In the careful and caring ongoing negotiations that made the spaces I

describe, both their persistent connections *and* their painful missed links, speak to a collection of alternative political futures, made for, and by friendships of care.

ENDURING PATTERNS

She sees that the women around the table, assembled to what they thought was going to be a talk about the dangers of baby shaking are not understanding her explanations. She slows down. She takes her scarf and bundles it so that it fits snugly, cradled into the crook of her left arm. Now she makes a head with her right hand. She traces a curved spine in the scarf, a rounded small bottom, and the feet last. It's such a masterful manifestation of a baby that the room goes silent in awe of the show. Next, she warns of not cradling well. She says the baby will flail for anchor, "it's instinctual" — she flails as the baby might and the room gasps in shock as the scarf unravels itself from its baby form and dangles awkwardly in her flapping hand.

A small shock of unexpected concern for a scarf-made baby.

This chapter is about collaborative processes by which materials are temporarily held in place, and by which they come to matter. It is also about unfolding, careful acts of relatedness — friendships and motherhood — and the unexpected places that sustain them.

This thesis hinges on the idea that place is in process; whatever material solidity is held in place, it is a temporary solidity, and it is sustained, maintained, concretised or snuffed by action. Everything that matters, in other words, is a matter of time. From the perspective in which mountains are liquid if only we were patient enough to watch them (Whitehead 1929/1978, 104), this argument may appear hopelessly esoteric, but consider the scarf-baby being done and undone in one minute — the making and unmaking of our built environment, its material processual flow is not far off the scarf temporality. Picking up where Chapter 4 left off, it is this enduring, patterned state of change that I wish to focus on here, at the mundane scale of everyday encounter. But this chapter attempts to focus less on the ways in which things change, than on the ways in which they are made to endure. I am interested in these acts of patterned continuity as emplaced and emplacing acts of care. This final chapter attempts to bring into focus the work of relatedness in the manifestation of matter and space.

Drawing on the processual in Janelle Taylor's work, I use the concept of surfacing — the means by which entities are held apart in suspended differentiation, and by which they come to be 'surfaced' as 'objects' (2005). Whilst her discussion on processual acts of surfacing details the surfacing of bodies, her argument pertains to the central role of processuality in anthropological enquiry in general: how objects are surfaced into states of being, how objects cannot be presupposed, and what values and power serve as ordering devices to enable acts and processes by which objects are surfaced.

I first look at the district itself: the interplay between a district conceived as a space of anonymity, versus its animation as a site of care. I look at what it is envisioned to replace, and how this speaks to the central premise of the City Mothers project as the formalisation of connections of care which already take place, but in this formalisation, so these relations of care also enact the administratively bounded district as a place.

I then take the temporal view. In one extended arc of a story, I look at feeling alone in public, anonymous space, and how over time it changed into a space of familiarity, a surfeit of connections and social obligations. This is the public space of a district transformed.

These paired scenes are about affective emplacement. I look at the affective surfacing of public space, and track its gradual change and unfolding in relation to conceptualisations of care. I use this to think through the unexpected ways in which meaningful relations are emplaced — and to extend the argument that if place is an event then a fundamental dimension is not just its relationality but its temporality.

In this chapter's second section I explore a mutuality between the built environment and unfolding relations of care. It is about kinds of space and kinds of friendships, and their interdependence. It interrogates emplaced relations to further expand the conceptualisation of the social to encompass the spatial environment that is its affordance (Gibson 1986).

I look at alternative means by which spaces for care were made, renegade fashion. I look at relations of care through their co-constitutedness with particular spatial configurations — their way of surfacing an enfolded boundary, of dynamically differentiating, between public and private space, that question universalistic assumptions of 'public' space in European-derived notions of the 'public'. I look at their spatiality in ways which are not fixed to location, furthering the argument that

place is an encounter and an event, and care is one of its makers. In this guerrilla structure of care, alternative friend-led advice centres are established with no fixed place, they are peripatetic, and by that they endure, and in their durability is their significance.

Through a co-design project of a women's room, I discuss the manifold and unexpected conceptualisations involved in thinking through space as a site of care, and the range of issues which were brought to its design — notions of relating with friends, of visibility, of public and private space, of health and care and protection — as these issues were surfaced by a deliberate process to bring such a physical space into being.

And finally, I go to the hairdressers to talk politics. Public and private space in this account are not fixed, but plural and relational — they become poles through which to talk of the boundary and contouring effect of relations of care, as they materialise and demarcate space. Conceptualisations of the gendered dimensions of public and private space have a lively and contentious history in anthropological enquiry (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Reiter 1975, Bourdieu 1984, Butler 1993, Moore 1994) charting the association and dissociation of the domestic, the private and the feminine. My unsettling of these terms and their associations proceeds by interrogating universalistic assumptions of the plane through which such boundaries between private and public are made. I question the actions and practices by which they are enfolded and differentiated in a process that is never complete and never stable, yet their contouring into being is an effect, a co-constitutive relation with actions of care through which they materialise.

The viewing of issues through the pluralistic and relational mode is sometimes criticised for its unhingement from material barriers (Mol 2014 for a discussion) — but in this account what is at stake is the politics of place through the inequities of their durability. The halting of enduring patterns of socio-material practice is the index of power and unequal effects. Instances where alternative makings of place falter *are* their politics, it indexes forces stronger than acts of care that sustain place, and analysis of this proceeds by an attunement to which patterns of change fall away, and which are left to endure.

PART I: STREET SCALE

Screaming Baby

Back to the scarf baby. The visitor has come from Shreibaby-Ambulanz — a programme that provides a free service in the district to take the pressure off mothers with chronically shrieking babies through a mobile unit which drives over to mothers' homes and cares for the mother and the baby. It's a service set up to alleviate mothers with babies who have been crying for over fifteen hours, when the self-soothing mechanism has for whatever reason gone awry, she explains. It's not the first service of its kind, but this one is the first city-wide, free initiative that she knows of.

The group weighs up the need for such a service. One of the women says no matter what her baby just cries on public transport — she hates it. She feels that people are looking at her hijab and judging her as a bad mother, an 'Arabic mother who doesn't know how to look after her baby'. They ask her whether the baby's hungry or needs changing, 'why doesn't she hold her', they enquire. So she pretends she just doesn't understand German. She's had enough.

But Shreibaby-Ambulanz is for a different sort of crying, the officer explains, this shrieking — it's not the usual five or ten minute cry — it's fifteen hours or more, when mothers are desperate and don't know what to do. It's at this time that the organisation puts the mothers central. "If she's not calm, the baby can't be calm" we are told. It's especially difficult these days, she explains. Every person has to develop their own connections and friends to help now that the extended family isn't there.

Vera is this group's coordinator today and we're in the central classroom of the City Mothers' project. She emphasises that there's a greater role for the neighbourhood now especially when many mothers lack their extended family. And I wonder whether Vera too is making reference to our earlier conversation in which she explained that much of the work of the City Mothers project bridges the professionalisation of care around women for things like pregnancy where they are used to having close family support, but who have come to a country for other reasons, as Vera put it, "than to find friends".

Sam, a City Mother-in-training on the project agrees that there's so much post-natal depression especially for young mothers — "they don't have anyone" and it's

hard. And there's general agreement that every person has to develop their own connections and friends in the absence of the extended family.

As was explained, it is not unusual for such chronic crying to follow a stressful pregnancy. If the mother has been subject to extreme or persistent emotional distress, the baby's ability to self-sooth is affected already in the womb. Yet women often told me that their pregnancies were the most stressful time for them in Germany — they narrated being refused urgent help, dealing with racialising practices in various government offices. On another project, Quinn told me how she secured her right to remain and receive medical assistance by simply not leaving, and by knowing the law. But then she had worked as a lawyer in Kenya. Others she knows in her women's shelter aren't so lucky. One, after having to struggle for access to health care, and only being given leave to remain for one month at a time, eventually lost her baby. There were several women from the same shelter in the room as I was told this story — they nodded in sympathy, it's a terrible story, and they all agreed that although she's now been granted leave to remain, "what good is it now to her? She's in a terrible place."

Months later at a steering committee meeting for the City Mothers at Neukölln town hall, the subject of pregnancies is flagged up by the project's leadership. Many migrant women encountered through the City Mothers project are being subject to the most intense stress during their pregnancies - precarity, uncertainty, discrimination and a lack of appropriate access to care — the subject is brought up with some distress and is spoken of passionately as a plea to the local government official working in the department for Labour, Integration and Women. The official does not dismiss the issue, but nor does it seem she agrees about its importance. Other issues are more important to her — the ability for women to divorce their husbands when they arrive, the democracy course, refugee women finding employment in local government offices. And usually these were followed by a statement such as — people tend to think refugees are beholden to their husbands, people assume they are all criminals, that they don't understand the system, and this will help to show people otherwise. That they need more access to the health system and are having babies, that just won't play well. The officer is surprisingly frank about the politics she's engaged in. And it seemed the pregnancy problem simply didn't catch. The invisibility of the stress taking hold in the dark, with its post-birth manifestations being long-lasting and destructive, transferred to an inconsolable infant. Whilst connections are often perceived as the visible part of relatedness, and disconnection the invisible, I find it difficult not to see

the insistent wail of baby as an extreme instance of the consequences of disconnection forcing their way to visibility.

Connections and disconnections of distress

The previous interlude's discussion of the lawn-loungers referred to the productive work at play in negative space; the void-that-is-not-void, by which differentiation and thus *being* unfolds. Here, the screaming baby service, acknowledging the isolation of mothers in the neighbourhood, points to a void that is not a void either. For between an isolated mother and a screaming baby service is not a void of nothing. The sound of a fifteen hour long distress call, one which to a certain extent manifests feelings of a mother's dislocation, surfaces that gap. The scream connects with a service that reorients what that 'outside' neighbourhood is for, a potentiality of care, a surrogate extended family, a re-mapping of the neighbourhood as an extension of care around a family. The neighbourhood — its public space and sociality — is surfaced as a potentiality of care in this account.

There is, however, another act of surfacing, such that indifference gains substance in the surfacing of a public that does not care. It is this act of surfacing which occurs in the District Office. In Chapter 4 I spoke of the terms by which particular notions of individuality are enacted in reference to a spatial imaginary of the district — as a surface of connections with state services, and as a mute, anonymous background which one cannot affect. These were the terms by which a certain relationship between conceived individuals and their environment is inculcated under narratives of 'integration'. But here, to be integrated is *not* to treat that relationship with the neighbourhood as a reciprocal one. The neighbourhood's potentiality to form a meaningful connection back is surfaced away as a 'public' with whom such messages of care obligation towards distressed mothers, will not play well. This is the wider social environment of the district imagined once again as one of atomised individuals, where to be properly related to the place is, in this instance, to be disconnected from it in your needs and integrated into it by your independence.

Street Life

"The first few years were terrible. Terrible." Naomi started, a City Mother who had participated in the project before. She first recounted the story on a long bus ride through a miserable drizzle, on our way to the art project, but it carried on, revisited multiple times over the course of several months.

She had moved from Lebanon with her husband and two young children. One was constantly in and out of hospital. She had come to Germany specifically to get treatment for her heart condition. She repeats several times that she didn't have her parents around. When she would speak to them back home, she didn't want to tell them how hard it was. She told them she was fine. But sometimes she felt so alone she would just sit in the park on a bench and cry.

She told me that she made her first friend at her local play park, and then they would arrange to meet every day at four, because they lived on the same street.

"Another friend, if it wasn't for her…"

As a family they used to shuttle back and forth between the hospital and home, there was never enough time to cook. On days they had been to hospital, her friend would come and would've cooked her something, left it on the doorstep. There would be something there for her, always. "Without this friend… I would have left; I wouldn't have been able to stay." She explained this all with tears in her eyes. Her friend had said she did it because she had also come all alone, with no one. They still meet now and can share anything.

And this friend, she's brought up again and again between us. Naomi mentions her so much, the benevolence that got her through.

"And now?" I ask her.

This time, we're walking on a tree lined cobbled street, the sun's out, and a group of us are headed altogether towards the nearby main street to get Arabic-style lunch. We're relocating the day's peer-led session to a nicer location. It's ever so slightly on the naughty side, there are no coordinators to supervise, and it's not quite the agreed upon format they had with the project, so it's injected the excursion with the slight edge of the mildly illicit.

"And now I have lots of friends. I can't walk in the street without saying hello to someone or other. But you can't invite everyone back to your house. I mean, really.

You feel bad… It's so different now." She recreates stopping and having a gentle hello with everyone, the street we're on is so leafy and beautiful, that as scenery, it makes the imagined street she invokes suddenly seem like a lovely, intimate, common room stuffed with passing acquaintances and friends.

And we really are constantly stopping in this street. The incidental chats really do take forever. I can imagine that she really is inundated with people fishing for an invitation back. She has a calm, wise presence, and she's one of the best storytellers around.

"You learn to have patience. It's like I said last week, you learn with time."

She tells me about a book she was reading. This relationship councillor discussing marriage and the dynamics of long-term partnership, but he does it through interpretations of the Qur'an. It's a sort of Islamic take on marriage counselling "which, you know, it's different. It makes more sense to me."

And does it help? "Well, what can you cover in a book? Life is so different. It's better and worse," she says.

And she shares its advice with her friends. And I see her as another conduit of reinterpretation too —doing the connecting work to make it make sense. It's the ambitions of the City Mothers project — speaking, listening, patience — pressed into other service, and reinterpreted to give marriage advice that actually makes sense, through the channel of friends.

I can't walk in the street without saying hello to someone or other

This is the delightful space of friendship obligation established after many years of feeling isolated. And the delightful irony of the plot twist is not lost on her, because this scene tracks a long transition between the neighbourhood's outdoor spaces being spaces of loneliness, to spaces of tentative early connections, to a space of mildly irritating sociability — a surfeit of friendship connections.

The affectual texture of the street, as one that is socially sticky or one that lets you walk unhindered through as an anonymous stranger, is part and parcel of the temporality and spatiality by which people and place are enfolded. And if in the previous scene certain imaginaries of the neighbourhood surfaced an anonymous 'outside' as a landscape of potential family care, in this scene, that 'outside' space — as a site of connection where one feels obliged to invite people back home — is a site of care-*annoyance*.

Notions of public and private space are often conflated with inside and outside — an act of surfacing an inside through its juxtaposition, or contouring against, an 'out there', the passive, anonymous outside. The street is often an easy stand-in for this negative space, the ground against which the private is prefigured. But much as the previous interlude illustrated, it is important to note the imaginaries upon which this is built. The sociality of strangers is a maintained relation. In both these scenes, the street as a site of friendship obligation, of extending care, is not a space of disconnection between inside and outside, it is rather the negative space held only temporarily in place. And its unfolding imaginaries over time track changing textures of care and careful acts of relatedness.

The central premise of the City Mothers project — its operations bounded to a certain representation of the district and the district's population — is about mobilising a district socio-spatially conceived into connectedness. The terms of this mobilisation rest on the kind of care which often happens throughout the district anyway in slow acts of unfolding friendship and support, and formalising them towards specific connections conceived in integration logics. That these acts of care do indeed happen (Naomi's example), that they are called for and necessary to make up for kinds of isolation (the Screaming Baby service scene), is the subject of the above, but they enact different trajectories of what care and support are for, and the kinds of isolation

and its consequences they are addressing. The surfacing of the neighbourhood, in its potentiality as a family *in situ* for isolated mothers made structurally vulnerable, was not a call for greater connection with services in general, it was a call for missing kinds of acts of care: long term, meaningful, and sustained.

The district is animated by the City Mother's project in particular ways, but here the 'lived' quality of one's lived space is brought to the fore. The status of the 'outside' vis-a-vis domestic privacy, its imaginary of anonymity, is undone in both these accounts — both the affective dimensions and the spatial are enfolded in this rendering of emplaced sociality. And as Naomi's account illustrates, place is a changing encounter, and it is an encounter altered by acts of care.

PART II: ROOM SCALE

Friendship Therapeutics — the Peripatetic Advice Centre

> *"I think I'm writing about my mother."*
> *"We're all writing about our mothers." My supervisor replies.*

Rose's smooth cadence brings out the passage's lyricism to full effect. What's more, her headscarf is knotted at her nape Diana Ross style, as is her usual chic way but today it comes into its own, giving the full flair to the performance. Three women, not knowing Arabic, having politely paid attention for the first half gradually lose interest, the rest are enraptured, some have tears in their eyes. There are eleven of us sitting in the early autumn sunlight; the flowers are in bloom and we're shaded overhead. We're in the cobbled courtyard, the former blacksmith's, now turned women's centre at the heart of the old Rixdorf village.

This women's centre is spatially very particular. It is right in the heart of the old Bohemian village, it sits in the centre of the main square which itself is surrounded by generous cobbled streets, so that the whole thing is somewhere between a major avenue of calmed traffic and a pedestrian urban village haven. At any rate, it's a remarkably private space, right in the busy heart of a key public space. The courtyard is open-air but we're sheltered by a vine covered wall. It's a delightful folding of a

private pocket that creates a selective island of sociability in a sea of daily neighbourhood hubbub.

This women's centre was one of many which operated this way — pockets of sociability a hand's breath away from the busy streetscape. Many of these spaces were cultural centres, community halls, and craft rooms that were frequented exclusively by women, sometimes by prior design and sometimes purely by self-selecting consequence. It seemed that at least part of its selective sociability operated through this condition, this extroversion carried out in the one-step-remove. This was neither fully public nor fully private, it was an enfolded interaction of both. And such enfolding said less about the substance of the space itself, and more about the demarcation, the differentiation, by which it gained intimate form.

But I've focused on this scene for three reasons, one, for the particularly close friendships the group contained, two, as mentioned, for the unique sheltered-garden loveliness, and three, since the scene pertains to absent connections and distant family, explored in the earlier scenes, as a way to explore extended family disconnections with a different texture.

This is the self-initiated, peer-led City Mothers' Literature group. The theme of this week is *Children's Care for Their Parents*. Prior to this was divorce, forced marriage, child labour and work.

What do children owe their parents?

We proceed by stories.

A man who fed his dying father with a wooden spoon, caring for him tirelessly as his father turned into a child. After the father died, the man's own son, on seeing him wrap the spoon and put it back in the drawer asked his father why he kept it. The father said — because one day you will use it to feed me. "We must tell our kids these stories so that they learn." Naomi concludes.

There is the story of Pharaoh's mother. Even Pharaoh was good to his mother. "Come on, let's not talk of religion."

There is the story of the father who had no time for his kids and only got to know them once he came to Germany and discovered he had time outside of work.

There is the story of the woman who left her kids. It is discussed in great detail. "But wait," someone says, "we can't judge, we don't know the reasons behind it." So then starts the discussion around whether it is or is not ok to judge.

My favourites are Naomi's apologues, but they're clearly not the ones that catch; the exciting ones are the ones where people get to pick a side and argue it out. It's not that this is unusual, proceeding by stories seems to be the default form of discussion in the City Mothers project, it is rather that usually there's some other purpose, so that in the Literature Course it's hard to tell what that is, and whether this is it.

Rose says she was writing about her mother until three in the morning and cried. "How can someone have so much imagination, so much creative flow," her friends marvel. Though the three non-Arabic speakers drily explain that it's rather hard to tell. The text receives a sketch translation. We owe so much to our mothers; how can we pay it back?

So who was to blame for ingratitude?

The media was first culprit. Though the media could "also be good" in that respect. "Society" followed, with "friends" close behind. "When men beat their wives, it creates a kind of psychic illness."

"What is the relationship with mothers like in your country? Do you love your mother?"

Am I on the block, is the UK, are ingrate millennial Europeans? I don't know. "I find this love for the mother very beautiful, it's very poetic. I suppose, in the UK, maybe elsewhere, it's not always so. I think, it's different. It's where we learn love *and* pain. I mumble something about Freud, isolation, that it's often the first go-to in mental health discussions. Each relationship is different, so I'm not sure. And what about fathers? When mothers are isolated, what then? I start to waffle about the other half of the equation, when someone says,

"My neighbours, they are like the help I would have had from my parents."

They talk about how special it is to have daughters, even when Naomi says it's actually her son who helps her out more.

And then Rose turns to me and addresses me directly — "Yes, ok," mulling my take on it, "so what's better?"

I don't know what's better. I only have the one mother. And it's a constantly changing relationship.

We are Each Other's Advice Centre

The group may be called the Literature Group, but it is, without wanting to dob anyone in, the informal therapeutics group, as far as I've worked out.

A theme is proposed, and sometimes people have written a bit on the topic, and then it serves as the catalyst for discussions adjacent to it, however far. There is something both intimate and validating about the centre giving over its garden courtyard for the purpose.

After many a tip, consoling line and sympathetic ear, I was told, "We are each other's advice centre* (*Beratungsstelle*)". An adapted purpose of the City Mothers project.

One morning with the Literature Group, Rose, who is usually the Master of Ceremonies, and without whom proceedings will not start, was running late. They asked me about my research and then remembered we had an interview due. They asked to do it there. But group interviews are interesting, unpredictable affairs. They told me about their early experiences in Germany.

"What was it like? Stress. Lots of stress. Depression."

One by one, stories of isolation, desperation and loneliness were shared. And then, as is the case with the group anyway, the discussion found its groove in discussing friends. What friends do.

Tabitha points to Tanya and Rose (who had arrived by this point) "They're true friends — you know what that means? They're friends in happiness and sadness*. Not all friends are like that. So many women are Yak-yak women (*Quatch Frauen)*. They just want to talk about other people. It's not that what you're saying is anything top secret, but it's between us, and these women will go yakking to everyone straight away."

Tina adds to the discussion, referencing a thread that I'm aware began long before this 'group interview'. "It's important to live in this life. Not in our dreams.

Between her and her husband there is a good relationship, they can get along, but it's not love. It's fine. You have to learn, with time." Tabitha nods. And I know, I am missing all the unsaid things lying silently between them.

Tabitha says she loves Tina because she makes her laugh. One word and she's laughing. And god knows, she needs it — to forget her worries and her stress. So much stress. She says how much she loves this group. They're there for each other. It lets her forget things a bit.

Tina points to Tabitha, but tells me "You know, her name, Tabitha is always the name of the beloved one in the family, the most loved child of the family. I've noticed with this name. They're always the happy one."

"Yes, I used to be like that." Tabitha says. And I have noticed she is always laughing and smiling. She is also always immaculately dressed, inch-long eye lashes, and a glamorous outfit. So I'm surprised by the past tense and tell them so.

"As a child I was always laughing so much, my mother would constantly be shouting at me 'Hold your mouth!'"

It's so different now, her father says "It's not Tabitha. This is a different person." A complete 180 turn.

I ask her when it happened.

"When I got married."

She leaves before we all decamp for an Arabic breakfast. She has a wide smile as she leaves accentuated by the make-up — how could one know that she only *used* to be happy.

"*Yalla bye Habibtini* (ok, bye, my beloveds [Arabic]), I love each one of you!"

The Treasured Specificity of Friends

Before I contrast this alternative advice centre of friends with the kinds of wider formal integration logics upon which the City Mothers project is premised, it is important to note that the formality of the integration narrative in itself, in its City Mothers' form, is not uniform. The City Mothers project, as described, pulls together a variety of conceptualisations of relating and connecting, and is, after all, a bottom-up integration project, with the project having been proposed to the district authorities and having

secured its own independent EU funding, rather than the other way around. And so, here is an additional bottom-up growth from an already bottom-up project. The alternative rendering is not a direct critique of the project (although I critique many of the broader integration logics in which it is enmeshed), and in many ways it speaks to many of the successes of the project. But the differences are nonetheless illuminating.

Significant and meaningful long-term friendship are at play — they both manifest a place and are sustained by the properties of that place — that is, these close relations are emplaced and *emplacing*. The scene speaks to the acute and chronic distresses of long-term disconnections and isolation, as well as the kinds of acts of relatedness which help and heal, the quality of friendships as relations of belonging. The friend advice centre is a real one, in the sense of it affecting the kinds of connections by which the effects of long term isolation are partly addressed — the very terms of the City Mothers project. But the form of this friendship advice centre is one that cannot be presupposed; it emerges by a practice of care, attention and being between friends. The relations may be emplaced, and having the place to relate is key, but it is not fixed to a pre-existing location, it is an encounter with a practice of care.

In this particular instance and in the context of the ongoing Literature Group context, this 'advice centre' framing was particularly notable, given the group's setting in a women's centre. The validation the central setting afforded to the group cannot be discounted. And I return to the interplay of public and private space in formations of spaces for relating later in the chapter. But for now, I wish to speak to its ability to establish an enduring pattern that is recognised as some form of 'advice centre'.

As I argued in Chapter 4, part of the City Mother's training involves a particular relationship to an environment uniformly conceived. I described a key part of the training resting on a mapping of the district in terms of its advice centres. The bulk work of integration in this model is the task of connecting other women with formal district services of support. It was a protocol of integration work that mapped a district by its advice centres based on an imaginary of what it was to be properly connected to a state. It rests on the idea of 'integrating' people into a given, pre-existing context.

And here — in the informal spaces of friendship connection, often taking the same form as the advice centres as locations of support distributed across various

neighbourhoods — they were able to offer up what was frustratingly denied. These spaces then challenge the view of a static environment, as a pre-existing and passive ground on which these relations happen, rather the spaces themselves require ongoing acts of surfacing by which places and relating are co-constituted.

What I contrast here on the one side is the reckoning of 'proper' and pre-existing spatial connection through a geography of formal services which led to an attitude in which women in the project were ultimately made interchangeable and replaceable, in a way which continually undermined the logic of integration, as the establishment of long term, meaningful connections, and these irreplaceable friendship groups on the other.

Thus, in the friendship group, in its support and in its ability to act as a resource of solace to individualised stress, is a complexity of temporal and spatial factors which make its social potential unique and cherished. The significance is in its arising as an event — at once repeatable as a pattern of action but not replicable. The specificity itself forming the terms of its significance and value.

Designing a Women's Room

I had followed this co-design group for a year — their workshops and meetings took me all over the city — the top floor of a central hotel which had been turned into a makeshift refugee shelter, a shared house which had been designed by an anarchist architect on a shoelace budget for a collective of families who wanted to live communally, a swanky media centre, the cemetery garden community hall, the same space where the refugee women's garden project took place, as well as the Friday night Syrian music parties — where, in fact, the project had secured land to eventually build.

Founded by a group of architecture students, it was a co-design project to build shared housing between recently arrived refugees and longer established Berlin residents. Their monthly workshops were nuanced and reflexive, adopting a multitude of inclusive engagement techniques, from the careful and slow way they found to translate discussions, to the techniques they used to elicit conversations and allow for conflicting opinions. They also worked to de-prioritise the verbal. There was frequent use of

images and icons, open ended approaches to asking people their desires and needs of space, from their sense of the right dimension to their sense of the right atmosphere, topics were revisited over and over from different angles. Given the mixture of languages, as well as the difficulty in drawing out the kinds of tacit and non-verbal knowledge people have of space anyway, this was no small feat of energy, creative thinking and commitment.

The questions and tasks they brought to workshops were attempts to illicit the mundane, the everyday uses of space — the ordinary kind one carries out without thinking. And therein lay all the knots. None of the questions, nor their answers were easy, and it was a dilemma with which (and I told them as much) I had endless sympathy.

How did you want to use space? What should be communal? What did you regard as the meaning of communal? How should spaces and amenities sit within a public/private hierarchy? How should these spaces relate? How did people want to relate? How did people want to *live*?

Frequently overlapping was the issue of public and private space in relation to gender. I remember the problem early on. We were in small discussion groups of between four and six people — this project was not solely women focused, and the groups were mixed. In one of the exercises we were asked to draw the floor layout of the favourite place we've ever lived in. A retirement-age, long-time Berlin resident, drew his student flat in Hamburg, and said he had come to realise later in life how much communal living, with all its stresses, might have still been one of the most fulfilling living arrangements he'd ever found. This is what he sought again, this time with a few deliberate and conscious adaptations. Another man of similar age, an engineer from Aleppo, drew his flat and compared its merits to the flat he currently has in Berlin.

It was a big space, especially the living space, which was shared with the kitchen, similar to the student flat sketched out before. And this was significant, because he had designed it, and for him, there was no separate woman's space in the house, the kitchen was not separate and sequestered (as in other homes in the city). He had loved the flat. And bringing friends into his home, indicating his political stance of gender equality in his family through the space he'd designed, was an important part of that. There was a balcony that wrapped around the whole flat. It was green and lush. It sounded lovely. But while guests were a treasured part of the flows running

through the house, the bedrooms were — of course — he clarified, away from the front door, to the rear of the flat. It wasn't just a case of keeping things private, you also don't want to embarrass the guest.

"These German houses, they don't make sense. There are bedrooms right next to the front door. Why do they do that?" And I want to point out that to me, this seemed a genuine question. And that those around the table took it as a serious question too. Not simply — 'that's crazy', but genuinely, why? Is there a cultural reason for this arrangement?

To which several things were proposed. This was not intentional; it was simply not a thing to consider. Or perhaps there was not enough space in Berlin flats so some strange layouts emerged. But for him this was a genuine puzzle. Because the flat would have been large enough to simply change the order. There is the public front of the house, and the private domestic part, so you can't just see into it from the front door.

These were the kinds of feelings which were hard to render into design points in discussions. Awareness of what arrangements lend comfort and ease are not readily available on the surface, they require the jarring moment of incongruity to show up as assumed expectations. The expectation is surfaced by being thwarted. But such thwarting requires a 'difference' to come up against. To call up the previous interlude — it does not prefigure without its contrast. And the open, non-conflict dialogue of the workshops (which I admired) seldom attempted to prefigure difference.

Over the course of a year's meetings the question of public-private delineation emerged repeatedly, and regularly touched upon women's spaces in the house — it was a recurring puzzle with no clear resolve.

It wasn't clear for example what the prerequisites for a women's room would be. All that was understood was that mostly it was considered a necessary thing, even if the team had to be the one to keep putting it on the agenda. Some women I asked didn't know what the women's room would be for, but knew it was significant to the project, and had a broad sense that this project was about plurality, working with vulnerabilities, and this was part of it. There were discussions around whether it needed to be a separate room, what its status was, configurationally speaking, with a kids space, whether it could be a separation through scheduling, whether it needed a kitchen, whether this was stereotyping, for a long time this was known euphemistically as a safe space, which may also have been something which added to the confusion (though its icon was a big, purple female symbol). And for a while it was associated

with health — giving a strange, silent delicacy around the issue, as though this might be a space to talk about vague, female 'unmentionables', like menstruation or vaginas.

In addition to the kinds of slow, careful discussion outlined above where people became aware that space meant and did different things to different people, there was the added complication of the fact that throughout the whole process, there was a constant changing array of people involved. They came in and out, mostly in groups. People brought their friends, people stopped coming, new groups appeared.

One day, in one of many hierarchy-of-space-use exercises, the set-up had been simplified. We had a range of room uses — these had been developed in previous sessions, along with trying to gauge the priority of need from desirable to essential — a library, kitchen, bedrooms, guest bedrooms, garden, gym, a workshop, a kids room, a woman's room, an event space and so on (my order does not reflect the priority established, which at any rate was mixed and fluid looking). Then we were asked to rank these on a bull's eye circle diagram with the outer rings being most public and the inner ones more private. In almost all the groups, the women's room was placed out in the far circle, the public sphere, it stood out suddenly, its 'universal' female, circle-cross symbol, sticking out like a big, purple thumb. People started to ask about the room.

So you don't want the women's room to be private?

No, how can we invite our friends if it's private?

Oh. What needs to be there? Health stuff?

Tea, some food. Places to sit. Somewhere nice.

I spoke to one of the architect organisers about this. About how tricky it is to get these things right. And I told her about another shelter I was involved with where it took exactly two months for a woman's room to be envisioned, set up and fall apart.

"Yes! The woman's room. God, you know this whole thing constantly surprises me. There are so many things… It took me so long to get it about the women's room. We had it so much in our heads — safe space, safe space — it's got to be private, in the heart of the whole thing. But they don't want it for that. We just got it. They want a space to meet their friends, to invite people *from the outside*. A place they can take their headscarves off, and drink and eat, and invite their friends. That's what it's for!"

What Does It Take for a Women's Room to Surface?

Whilst the preceding scenes did not take the outdoors as their starting place as the previous chapters do (streets, gardens, markets, parks, corners), they are about what happens when the outside is a factor in internal space — the practices of managing, understanding, designing and creating a private space, within which relations with an 'outside' can happen. In other words, it is about what you do with those liminal persons of outside and inside — guests.

The women's room was only one recurring example of the kinds of typical discussions regarding how space should be used and what relation it had to people's different notions of privacy, which I watched this group have over the course of a year. Not only was the divide between public and private conceived unevenly across the group, but the means it took to bring the conception of this divide to the surface was no straightforward process.

In relation to this, the vignette above throws up two particular 'knots'. The first concerns the organisation of a living space, or the configurational hierarchy of its rooms by which one moves through the space, specifically as it relates to guests. In the instance illustrated above, the relation of these spaces to one another does not merely indicate a kind of 'sense', or communicate one's stance regarding gender politics, it was *also* about the surfaces which afford sight, all the things an arriving (and potentially embarrassed) guest *can't help* but see. The relational texture of embarrassment takes hold on the tangible and intangible orderings which surface public views into private space. The second knot was the slow unravelling of the assumptions around what a women's room is. Thrashing out its purpose meant that as discussions progressed, it slowly edged further and further away from a hidden interior sphere, and closer and closer to an outer public ring, until it finally popped like a bubble on the surface.

In a project whose ideology rests on mixing people up, a philosophy of integration by co-habitation, it was the division between public and private space which became the knottiest issue. And so long as space and relations are mutually constituted, a certain gendering of space is a reflection of that mutual enfolding. Yet whilst we tend to think of the gendering of space happening invariably around the domestic, the women's room knot challenges that assumption. It is in the operation against the conflation of external/internal, public/private, man/woman assumptions, that the surfacing of the

women's room made such a 'pop', an aha moment of realisation for a group often wading in confusion. The gendering of space was *not* made here in invariable ways.

And it was not made in invariable ways, in relation to the careful textures of those conversations, more a slow reveal than a head-on confrontation, with all the steady, soft persistence of a rising bubble.

The slow reveal of these assumptions is important. There is differentiation but not conflict — differentiation here is not the default of conflict, it is the default of becoming. This is a politics of space done in a slow mode, by which different kinds of knowledge were brought into contact and gradually discussed, adjusted and worked into spatial form. But the slow reveal is also important because amongst the various patterning of space which arose in the various discussions, this one pattern gradually settled, and it points to the making of place not as a thing to be found but an encounter that unfolds. The previous example of the friends advice centre was about the mutual imaginary of a space of support and care which made a significant place — in other words, care and friendship emplaced the encounter in the previous example. In this example, encounters of friendship — the logics by which they occur through an environment that affords them adequately — were gradually emplaced.

More Informal Therapeutics — At the Hairdresser's

I spent a term with the Foundations project's make-up art and hairdressing course — it ran a few months after the gardening course and took place in two separate locations. There was a room that served as a gallery/pop up shop/community space for rent that fronted the street at the base of a turn of the century residential block, typical all over Berlin. It was around seven metres wide and thirty metres long, and would fit the whole group, which, depending on the day, was between twenty five and ten of us. Next to it was a hairdresser's, a small clothes shop, a shop that always had its rollers down, a bakery — in other words, it sat nestled in a small scale, modest, local street economy.

The other space, half an hour away, was the professional hairdressing college, but I'll come to that later.

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Today we're in the empty shop. The course has run every weekday for a month. We're halfway through the term, and there are about twenty of us today. There's the large group of Iranian women, among them two tattoo artists and a historian. None of them wears a headscarf, and the whole practice of make-up art in this session takes on a particular feminist radicality. As I was told by some — it's about feeling stronger, more powerful, to be able to do this and not have to hide anymore or be told how to look.

Yet, being on the ground floor, facing onto a busy street with a constant stream of passers' by, when we get to the practicals which often involve some work on the hair, the rollers come down in order to allow other women to be able to take their headscarves off.

But there is also a childminder for women with childcare commitments to be able to attend the course. This childminder is a man. With a light-touch, it also does some of the work of breaking the child-care equals women's work equation. But, crucially, being a man, when the rollers come down, he has to stay in the room so as not to intrude on the other women. During practicals he is therefore consigned to the toy room. The toy room is at the back of the shop. So there's a man in a room, in a shop with the blinds down, facing a major public street. When a child wants to leave the room to see their mother, it's a real pickle.

Sometimes she returns and sometimes not. Sometimes she's the only child present (if the other kids have not turned up), so there's the women with the child in the main space, and a man in the playroom; a bubble of 'public' gaze inside a bubble of 'private' space, nestled in the wider, local street economy.

The whole space is flexibly set up. We spend the mornings with some theory, like basic German language teaching, or someone comes in to help with work applications, explains CVs, basic form-filling vocabulary, around an island of desks pushed to the centre, looking at a flipchart. Then, in the afternoon we have practicals. Desks are arranged at the edge with large mirrors propped against the wall. I'm used as face mannequin, having endless makeovers, and regardless of the lesson, done up in 'Lebanese' style — that is, smokey eyes, ready to party — much to the teacher's despair who is trying (she tells me) to teach them other techniques like feature sculpting.

Halfway through the term we move to the second part of the course, taught at the hairdresser college. There's a dedicated hairdressing room, a mirrored station for each pair, a head and shoulder mannequins (real mannequins) to practise on, and we're on the second floor, there's no one to see in and there are no men around. When there are enough kids, they get taken to a children's playroom nearby.

Not an insignificant amount of the time is dedicated to the etiquette of it all. The instructor explains how you move around your customers, your own appearance and stress, how you hold the scissors and lean over and brush across their face so you're not brandishing a blade in their eyes, how you make sure they feel cared for and at ease. Sometimes, you are after all, "your clients' psychologist*". For this is "a kind of therapy." Those attending the course come from a range of backgrounds. This time round my hair is done is all kinds of styles. It's put into curling irons for loose 'party' hair, it's made into tight braids, I have a headscarf and headdress tied around in West African and new Lebanese style. This is in addition to the techniques formally taught to us by the college instructor. And I like to think of it as a partial expression, a view into, different experiences of visiting the hairdresser, represented by the diversity of women on the course. But to the statement that one's hairdresser is also one's 'sort of' therapist, there are nods all around. The hairdresser, as a site of care, in this room, is a kind of universal.

This patient attitude, where informal care is carried through under the guise of some other service, is enfolded in the project itself. Clarissa who leads the course set it up as an alternative to the organisation's other projects, deliberately to suit women. The project received accolade for serving as a sort of steppingstone into training schemes and apprenticeships, largely for manual work. Since access into these jobs in Germany (and the ability to be formally paid at the correct level) requires formal qualifications, recognised and validated within the German system, the project addresses a particular barrier to entry for many newcomers.

Having run a range of successful courses, as already mentioned — an electricians course, mechanics, bike mechanics, and carpentry -- the project was considered a success, on the back of which they received more funding, but whilst they were able to attract some women, they were always the minority. One of the problems was the mixing with men, the other was the fact that they had child-care responsibilities (which they specifically tried to address in this iteration), another was the anxiety of husbands — so that Clarissa, though she doesn't like it, will often speak to the husbands directly, reassuring them of the intentions of the project, seeking their permission for their wives to attend, if that is what's needed, often having to assure husbands that the course does not involve covert women's rights 'indoctrination'. It pains her, but she also takes the pragmatic stance that the women are often unable to come to the locations unaccompanied, they do need their male support, whether that's partners or sons or whatever.

She feels strongly about the project, though it is constantly under threat of being axed by the programme's overall leadership. She met a woman who spent twenty years in Germany and never learnt German. When she finally started a course after her kids were grown up, she said — 'now, I get to do something for me'. Clarissa tells me this story repeatedly. She has designed the course around this premise, that the women here are not merely trying to enter formal apprenticeships, rather this "may be one of the first times they've thought about who they are and what they want to do". These courses are as much about getting them to try what's out there, to have space to explore themselves, as it is about finding a way in. And this is partially what puts her at odds with the programme's higher leadership who are not sure the women's course is necessary, or that it represents success. To them, their irregular attendance (often due to child-care), and their trying out of several different courses, is a sign of their non-commitment. And whilst many of the women very much enjoy the chance

to explore, there were many on the beauty course for whom the course didn't do enough to actually better their professional prospects. In an uncertain environment — where long term relationships were not necessarily being established, despite the facilitators reassurances that they were always on hand to help people with applications, regardless of how long ago they participated in the project — the consequences, benefits or otherwise of the project's vocational tasting sessions, were unclear, open-ended and non-linear. A difficult thing to justify in the recurring funding bids.

Aside from the Iranian tattooists, who were highly skilled, permanent make-up artists, and who were disappointed that the course didn't qualify them for any further work, there was Mona. Mona was a professional hairdresser. She had a salon in Damascus. She showed us its three abandoned stations, empty seashell-pink chairs, freestanding hairdryers, standing by like sentinels with their tulip helmets bowed over no-one. The roof was caved in, there was explosion debris, and the once glossy interior was covered over in thick, grey dust.

Mona said she knew things would be alright. It took time, and she trusted God. One day they would go back. What got her through was her faith. She had started regularly doing her daily prayers on the journey over. Now, she couldn't get by without it. Next to the main classroom, was a second spill out room which she would use, excusing herself a few times a day, taking her prayer mat with her.

She was by far the most qualified, as well as highly experienced, and would have been the most likely to be able to go through the prerequisite apprenticeship or training which would allow her to formally practice in Germany. But the topic of exams featured again and again with the college teacher. She would have to show she could cut men's hair to gain the qualification. And for that, whilst she might not ever have to take on men customers, she would have to show someone in an exam setting that she was capable of it.

"It can't be on a male head and shoulders hairdressing doll?" No. The subject was revisited, several times, from different angles, and eventually the teacher proposed that Mona might be able to find an examiner who would be happy for her to take her exam on a male relative. But it wasn't up to her, and it felt more like a concession to keep Mona from losing hope. The whole point, really, as she explained, was to show

that she could theoretically cut anyone's hair, that you don't choose who enters off the street.

It was an extremely difficult thing to see. The tension between a faith that got her through, and a bureaucratically ascribed vision of the wider street and its public; a boundary which might have been malleably made and unmade during the project, but which can surface in the form of one potential man's hair, and it is a surface with the power to seep into examination, qualification, and work, and make irreconcilable conflicts of one's profession, faith and future.

Snipping the Surface

Another space, another image of informal therapeutics. Once more, this takes place in a pocket of privacy, a hand's breadth away from public activity. And this time, quite literally — for at the hairdresser, who knows what stranger might be sat right next to you having their own private micro therapeutic snip session, or even, come to your workstation?

In the previous examples I focused on specific surface textures as they did the work of demarcating public and private spheres, at a particular and significant instance. I described the texturing of space by relations, in ways which are less about establishing fixed spatial containers, and more about the kinds of differentiations which afford spaces to come into being, and adequately afford intimate relations.

Here, that act of surfacing also takes on different *material* textures, along with different surfaces — the room with the blinds closed to the street, the room within a room where the man's told not to leave as people remove their headscarves, headscarves, hair — and those acts of surfacing overlap. Multiple instances of contested surfacings between categories of gender, and categories of public and private, are at play. Indeed, it is the work of these surfacings that brings the categories to the fore, as we see the relevance of the categories in the timing of the blind, the inability for the child minder to leave the room, Mona's dilemma. These are not surfaces as they might demarcate a boundary on a map, they are made in the present, their work is ongoing. What's at stake in this scene is the powerful effect of these acts of surfacing, and the ongoing effort required to maintain them.

In the previous scenes, the informal network of women's advice centres, another space, another image of informal therapeutics, I challenged the view of a static environment, as a pre-existing space into which one fits, and proposed that acts of relating both required and created the places by which they occurred.

But another model of integration relies on the idea of one's connection and integration within a labour market. The conflicting terms of this labour market, predicated on a specific series of categorical socio-material surfacings between public and private, are brought to the fore. The 'plane' from which these categories arise, in other words, is not a neutral, passive plane.

Mona comes up against a particular conception of her relation as an employee to a specific imaginary of a 'public'. The ability to cut hair (attached to a person who comes off the street) a surface which can at once be read as, at once, both highly private and highly public, throws up the problematics of 'integration' as a kind of 'fitting-in' as it occurs at a range of scales across a city's spaces. Falling somewhere between being an extension of life and body, and a thing that needs to be managed, snipped and swept up, through an engagement with public processes of a city, hair is here my synecdoche for the stakes of ongoing acts of surfacing between public and private as they apply in acts of relating.

The extent to which our extension into space gains substance and meaning is through these acts of surfacing categories that are never discrete and never stable. There are multiple ways in which substance and meaning come together in these acts of surfacing: dialogues and logics of integration, ways of inviting guests in, networks of advice centre friendships, cutting hair, they all happen upon a patterning of boundaries of exchange as enduring sites of relation, connection, and care.

This chapter illustrates ways in which the surfacing of place is an ongoing encounter, it is part of how relating happens, but it is a dimension often lacking from conceptions of 'integration' whether the kinds that emphasise social connection and shared 'values', or the kinds that emphasise integration into a labour market – what are often termed 'cultural' or 'economic' integration respectively. But this is where, I argue, the durability of socio-materiality comes to the fore. And it is a dimension that vanishes under a rubric that separates the social from the physical, the texture of meaning from the texture of touch, the politics of difference from the life process of differentiation.

The not quite living, not quite dead quality of hair (and in specific its management routine), contains this theoretical tension between life understood mechanistically and understood as meaningful experience. Multiple stakes of relating across a divide between public and private are held in overlapping tension as this becomes a surface that's snipped. Its politics do not lie in its material permanence — the hair is after all snipped away — its politics lies as it comes into conflict with wider forces than everyday and ongoing care, and its temporary holding pattern of carefully constructed, maintained and enfolded matter that falls away.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I sought to draw attention to the emplaced and emplacing nature of care. I explored place not through its material durabilities but through the perdurance of socio-material practice, in ways which articulate with broader relations of power. It is these over-time, multiple interweavings between space, practice and power through which I question the narrative of integration. The discourse of integration abounds with notions of rupture and connection, with difference conceived as bridgeable by certain acts of relation – whether that be relations to sociality or locality. But in this account, acts of relation make, and by making they also differentiate. Surface boundaries emerge not as instances of separation, but inversely as productive sites of relation.

This enduring pattern, a temporal materiality of friendship, in this reckoning, is an important aspect of its complexity, uniqueness and therefore irreplaceable significance. I describe multiple acts of making place, from the literal design of a women's room, to the advice centre of friends. I also illustrate the multiple surfaces on which they depend, and the various qualities their textures imbue those relations — scarf, hair, wall, roller-blind, garden, street. In this chapter, I explore friendships to show that the parallel, mutual processes of making space and making interpersonal relations is about an interplay. These are the terms of the texture of relating, at once both tangible and intangible. Since in this account, durability is not the same as *tangibility*. Here, place is the productive surface by which these relations come to be. And the relations of friendship, in turn, make different kinds of place. These parallel, mutual processes of making place and making relations rests on a conceptualisation of

space in which it is not an inert 'background' on which things take place. Space, the process of contouring it for encounters, of drawing lines of demarcation by which relations can happen, is part of the materialising effect of care. In this account differentiations are an affordance of being in place, and being related, and being with friends, but not every kind of differentiation hangs together, and this not-hanging-together is their politics. The surfaces by which specificities and significance of relation are afforded — relations of care, friendship, informal therapeutics, communicating advice, practising one's profession — come up against other surface makings in ways which mean that some remain, recur, and perdure and some are left to fall away.

Integration narratives are not one narrative, but they abound with notions of making meaningful connections of belonging, the exchange of difference, the politics of difference, access to support services, connections with a labour market, addressing 'isolation'. What does it mean to care in this loaded Othering context of difference — a "thick, impure, involvement in a world" as María Puig de la Bellacasa puts it "where the question of how to care needs to be posed" (2017, 6). This is an engagement with those questions by way of the processual — by exposing the ineffable and the significant through a lens that makes material room for their occurrence. By the surfacing of a neighbourhood, a street, a friends advice centre, a women's room, a hairdresser's, care is enacted in issues of family health, support services, communicating advice, belonging, health, healing and getting through, 'stitching-in' to a new neighbourhood, practising a profession. These are not peripheral but central to the debates. I am not arguing that these are the solutions, this is *not* a point about 'integration', because I argue that the terms of difference by which notions of migration proceed are flawed from the get-go, and set up a flawed, Othering politics of care.

Instead, I am arguing for a reformulation of the terms of the issues beyond a zero sum game of fixed 'difference' and fixed 'locality', played out in stasis upon a non-static world. I am arguing for a surfacing of the ephemeral and the significant in the careful flows by which place is made. A different kind of perception and attitude — a speculative opening towards emplaced possibilities.

CHAPTER 7: IN PLACE OF DIFFERENCE — A DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

In the preceding chapters, I sought to present an ethnographic account of how space, as an event and encounter, cohered in practices of everyday care. In my ongoing analysis, space and care were thought together and I attend to instances of their co-production. Through a description of various moments within projects' practices, I illustrate the ways relations of care made space, observing instances where women I sought to learn from made different trajectories of place through a variety of caring practices (affective, ethical, practical). And conversely, I describe the way space shaped relations of care; examining the way interlocutors' affective encounters, ethical sensibilities, material makings and practical skills done to care for, and care about others, were afforded through spatial relations.

As projects framed by wider discourses of integration, place (in its manifestation of a certain 'locality' to be 'integrated' into) was of course present as an implicit (and often explicit) given in their work. I aimed to tease out the implications of seeing many of the efforts and practices which took place within these projects as emplaced. Through examining the negotiations, makings and imaginaries of space that presupposed and were borne out of these projects, I aimed to narrate the political implications of these spatialities– that is, for what they might tell us about the everyday negotiation and heterogeneity of living together. In this, I aim to take up Massey's proposition that seeing space as *a relational construction of ourselves, of the everyday, and of places* "raises the question of the spatiality (or spatialities) *of* politics, and the spatialities *of* responsibility, loyalty, care" (2005, 189). What spatialities do we owe relations of care?

In seeking to follow this question, I have attended with ethnographic detail to the flow, multiplicity, making and meanings of spatialities of care, as they were done, experienced and narrated by women in these projects. Following Low's (2017)

conceptualisation of space, I have followed embodied, imaginational and material dimensions of spatiality. Thus, in ways that foregrounded each dimension in turn, I explored the embodied (and disembodied) dimensions of such spaces, as they implicated sensorial encounters of care (Chapter 4); then their symbolic dimensions — the representations by which empathic understanding, attunements, obligations and recognition of others shaped imaginaries of space (Chapter 5), and finally the material making of such spaces — the textures, rhythms and flows by which spatial arrangements cohered through efforts to find alternative spaces for care (Chapter 6).

Spatialities of care were done multiply and resulted in coeval heterogeneity. And such, I argue, multiplicity had a number of political implications. Through these chapters, I have attempted to narrate the terms of engagement and political implications of such multiplicity. In Chapter 4 for example, alternative spatialities sat in overlap with other dominant imaginaries without unsettling them. In Chapter 5 they came into contestation with one another, unsettling them, without any one imaginary winning out. In Chapter 6, unique spatialities with heterogenous political possibilities emerged. I go on to discuss their wider implications on terms of difference in the conclusion.

Part of attending to the coeval multiplicity of spatialities made was also to examine the terms of engagement and negotiation by which such spaces were accomplished. Many of these negotiations were conducted through care as much as through conflict, in ways that are not easily disarticulable from one another. Some of these contestations were visible (e.g. Chapter 5's representation crisis), whilst others less so, but present nonetheless. The becoming and dissolving of alternative spatialities presented in Chapter 6, for instance, shows no overt conflict, but the varying spatialities attest to uneven abilities to emplace resources, fixity, recognition. Here, the effects of power relations on alternative spatial possibilities were not to be seen necessarily in active contestation but were rendered legible through the pace and duration of these temporarily cohering arrangements.

These unique emplacements and collectively made trajectories of space, I argue, did more than temporarily reconfigure dominant terms of space which tacitly presupposed the projects, they also opened up alternative socio-political imaginaries of belonging and connecting, in ways which were accomplished by and for meaningful relations of care. Through this, theoretical conceptualisations of care also provided one crucial lens to think through such spaces' situated relations of interdependence –

the ethical, affective and practical dimensions through which such practised makings of space rendered fleeting possibilities of a more liveable world.

Against more persistent representations of passive, static space, these descriptions of place, as a relational and processual accomplishment of practice thus sought to include temporality as a valuable parameter to view the materiality of meaningful relations of care. Through the ephemeral spaces of trust of Chapter 4, but especially the numerous spatialities described in Chapter 6 (the friends peripatetic 'advice centre', the roller-blind hairdresser's), I propose that spaces made by and for meaningful relations of care have an existence that is analysable as enduring patterns of matter in ways that their perdurance does not have to be equated with 'fixity', spatiality need not be reduced to stasis, and spaces of flow offer more possibilities than instability.

CHAPTER DISCUSSION IN DETAIL

Before I go into a detailed discussion of each chapter, there is one point of broad contrast between them. The three chapters track an argument about the making of difference. How do we attempt to relate through affinities or difference (Chapter 4)? How do we try to understand and 'sort out' affinities and differences of perspective on, and relations with, place (Chapter 5)? What is the role of differentiation — perceptual or physical — in the happening of emplaced relations (Chapter 6)? These questions are as much about the descriptive content of emplaced and emplacing acts of care present in the ethnography, and negotiated by interlocutors in everyday life, as they are methodological issues for an emplaced ethnographer. Many of the opening vignettes thus attempt to set the methodological ground. The four eared anatomy of perception (Chapter 4) was a description of the act of pluralising listening, rendering it an active and collective endeavour of knowledge making through care, and it also served as a reminder about taking care ethnographically to see, perhaps, with the perception of more than one set of eyes, to allow for an active perception of different kinds of place being made in different emplaced encounters. Then, efforts to understand a plurality of image-making motives, and questioning ways of seeing, led to ethnographically trying to do just that in Chapter 5's analysis of the affectual life and force of representations. And finally, Chapter 6 starts with the affective claim on

a neighbourhood. Such becomes my claim for all space — a materialisation that proceeds by affectual relations.

And so, I began with the four ears.

Chapter 4: Perceiving Place, Person and Difference

Foremost in the four ears scene was the role of emplaced encounters. In a very everyday sense, an endeavour that looks much like a friendly neighbour chat, questioned what encounter can do. It called for active listening — an active participation in making knowledge. The knowledge of what was, could have gone in multiple directions, but it was the work of an emplaced encounter in bringing it forth.

This thesis, as mentioned early on, proceeds from a profound ambivalence with categories of difference. Especially within the context of migration, processes of difference-making are tied up with processes of place making — normalised state-centred logics — against which notions of belonging, fitting in or integrating are prefigured. Notions of place, whether latent or overt, become a part of the difference attributed. The four ears scene however challenges the idea of place as a given entity, stable in its knowability — and it was done through a claim on the body's sensoriality.

It was the first of several instances in which emplaced relations reconfigured the terms of what was being related.

Starting with the active-listening, four-ears scene, perception extended into space. The encounter actively made what became known of another. But in this encounter, the anatomy of the four ears reconfigured notions of the affectability of the body. Perceiving — listening — was an active process of contact with one's surroundings. And listening — active perception — became something to be worked on. In other words, perception-as-active-contact became the surface of intervention. Each trainee City Mother's ability to relate and make relations, to understand through care, was surfaced as a site of encounter with persons seen in affinity to them (with other parents sharing a mother tongue or simply living in the same neighbourhood), ensconced and given bureaucratic legitimacy within broader political framings of the Other. It is this wider political framing by which work on a perceived 'migrant district' gained currencies of action.

In addition to a proposition about extending forth into the surroundings, however, people were also divided from it. In 'Control Illusion' the urban environment was rendered passive and mute — the foil against people's actions. By this, personal autonomy, an individualised self was surfaced as the locus of action. The point here being that the environment in which these actions occur is implicated in the spatial possibilities of care, relating and support, and yet, the environment being made by these practices does not stay still.

In both these instances, places of encounter were neither neutral nor passive — a role was given to intimate space, domestic spaces of the home, of trust, of familiarity, such that place actively afforded qualities of relating. Encounters of care, and relations built with care were variously emplaced in contexts where one's ability to relate became a site of intervention. As often as one's surroundings were rendered mute and passive, so were they animated.

In contrast to this view of embodied encounters by which relations with people gained surface as a site of intervention, stood the disembodied view. The eye at the tower sought to engage with the ambiguities of care, playing with notions of seeing, and the politics of making things visible. Although the tower view played a role in a certain kind of care in which the new cohort was celebrated, in ways which showed appreciation and value, it also rendered their work unfamiliar, unacknowledged, unseen. In its ability to speak for the district, and what it was, through this totalising panoptic view from above, the life of the interstices — in which specificities of place and encounter play a role — was obliterated from view. The epistemic force and violence of this view was in shearing off the embodied work of careful relating, leaving a care for categories in its stead, in which the persons viewed from above were rendered dots on a flattened, commensurate plane. In this moment, it was rather notions of sameness, and interchangeability, rather than difference, which skimmed over the specificities of encounter, and the value of the work. The new cohort of women were made 'bridges' and 'eyes and ears' and 'representatives of the district'. They were, in other words, made to be all kinds of things, but different kinds of things *altogether* — interchangeably so. The specificity, the uniqueness of encounter, the 'understanding with care' by which knowledge of another proceeded were flattened out. For those kinds of relations, as one of the City Mothers pointed out was 'work the politicians don't see'. It is hard to see specificity and its significance from the tower view. In this

rendering, the disembodied perception by which an 'overview' proceeds is a narrowly selective making of equivalence. Following others therefore (Puig de la Bellacasa 2011), I find that care is not an innocent endeavour — it is afforded by relations, and it takes on the textures, stakes and power inequalities of those relations.

I next turned to the growth and change of place, as well as a different figuration of what 'integration' meant, this time, integration in the labour market. I wanted to talk of the literal touching of place — through the curiosity that we never really touched it. For what would that have meant? The flowers, or the actual soil, or the apprentice opportunities themselves? Place was never really touched. But then the tactility of place emerged as a 'red herring' anyway. Whilst things can be rebuilt, as Iris painfully described, they are not replaceable. Here, patterns of lived space are about constellations of action, instantiated to the semblance of solidity. Attachments to place were ones that took hold within patterns of material temporality, not 'brute' materiality alone (indeed, there is no 'brute' materiality shorn of 'sociality' in this account). This affectual relationship with our surroundings, though I am jumping the order of scenes here, is at the heart of Rowena's remarks about the future becoming a wall through my asking 'what next?' In her statements, in choosing to relate to the future in a different way, is the reminder that a relation with the temporal, like a relation with place, is not outside of the affectual — it is the affectual that gives it force and form. So, Rowena's positioning with regards her future makes this relationship to the temporal a site of action too. It is in positioning one's place in the future as a relation to the present that such affectual action is possible, upon which intervention itself is possible.

In these scenes, more often than a question of who is being made different, is a question of who is being made similar. In the practices described, there is, in fact, constant play on affinity — how to draw relations of similarity as a tactic of relating, as a logic of a district programme, as a way to communicate messaging about addiction. What emerges is a play of similarity-making in which 'sameness' instantiates narratives of the Other. Yet, these narratives of Other, depend on the making of a passive background. Once the role of encounter was foregrounded the affordance of place, as an active medium of relations, was brought back to life.

Chapter 5 — Representing

Chapter 5's focus on representations is inflected by the methodological interlude preceding it. In a nod to Michel de Certeau's *Walking in the City* essay (1984), the first Interlude moved from the tower perspective to the experience of walking at street level to question what it is to represent everyday life, the multiform that resists the tidy or singular narrative. It sought to make an observation on observation itself in order to question how observation and representation of place can be done in multiple ways, thus setting the scene for the extended analysis of one particular conflict of representations. In focusing on what the representations 'troubled' (after Haraway 2016) I sought to focus my analysis on the stakes of narratives that linked representations of place, with categories of difference.

The chapter picks up on the previous chapter's thread regarding 'understanding with care' — the careful acts of thinking through other perspectives, an imperative that was variously adopted, abandoned or challenged. A series of conflicting kinds of cares emerged between taking care to understand others and taking care to protect an image on which the work of the City Mothers project to a certain extent depended. So I used the conflict to 'sound the depths' of this murky moral topography of fitting in, of relating 'appropriately' to the district. What the chapter seeks to point out is the moral stakes of these representations by which the women on the project and the district were made related, the co-constitutedness of this representation by which women's photographs of their lived space became locked to an identity of the district. In this dynamic, this chapter's fall-out reflects similar tensions to those in the previous chapter: the tension between the specificity of encounter, and the reproducible: the particularities and specificities of *knowing another*, and the reductions to sameness by which knowledge making is used *to Other*.

I used two ways to think through this dynamic as my analysis progressed. The first was through Michael Taussig's reading of Walter Benjamin's writings on mimesis and representation (Taussig 1993). Beyond the typical reading of Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in which a claim is made that the 'aura' of a work of art is erased by modernity's mode of production, Taussig reads theorisations of the tactility of perception inherent in Benjamin's writing to elaborate on the way object and subject are confounded in historically contingent acts of perception (Taussig 1993, 144). When forms of perception are framed by their political moments,

so analysis of subjectivity is not merely the work of the subject, but the tactile perceptual contact with a material world with its own sensorial history (ibid.). I used this to think through the various means of perceiving the environment by which different sides of the bust-up might be understood. On the one hand, these images by the art course participants were made as unique expressions, as storytelling, as moments of encounter, they were not an attempt to represent a district but to show an encounter. In contrast, as the bust-up unfolded, these images were taken as representations of the district, in metonymic relation with the women, and taken for space itself. They took the ever unfolding life out of the district, and instead, to use Massey's words, rendered a 'space-representationstasis' (2003) of it instead. A snapshot of the district frozen in time was conflated for the district itself. As the counter-plan was hatched, counter photographs taken, and an image of a tourism-pamphlet district emerged, various subjectivities were also brought more palpably to the fore, along with the 'tactilities' of the environment; what is deemed extractable from a perceived environment — a moment of recognition, solace, humour, or a consumable landscape. My point being that these were not just differences of what was seen, these were differences of seeing differently, which came head to head, ensconced as they were by another optic in which these women and their lived space were locked together, and gained currency in wider political circulations of difference. Many of the positions described were about trying to understand difference, in situations where narratives of the Other already prefigured the terms of that understanding.

As I tried to think through the various positions, the stakes these representations took on, their unfolding progress, their uneven trajectories and uncertain affectual registers — was it serious, silly, mundane, delightful, poignant, disciplinary, cathartic — I used the notion of a slapstick heuristic, in deliberate counterpoise to the vocabulary of the combative, the 'power-over' instantiation of power, the aggressive and warlike representation of different positionalities in the everyday. There were the knots that proceeded by care and trying to understand (the women on the art course, the wider group of women at the museum workshop, the project staff, the museum director), and concern for different parties (the staff meeting, the concern for the representations of not belonging on the part of the counter group), there were the awkward silences (the revelation that in life there's 'no guarantee', and the provocation that petered out), the false starts, plans thwarted or redirected, the *avoidance* of confrontation — for this, I argued, was conflict carried out mostly by conflicting acts

of care. There were of course some elements of high tension verging on the hostile, there were high stakes, but these never spilled over into antagonism. But nor could the final events be characterised as conciliatory. Somewhere between discord and accord, people tried to work out where to fit all the off-notes.

Then, in addition to thinking through the subjectivities involved was the role of the environment. This is not the dehumanising, churning Chaplin production line, but a Keaton style animated environment, marshalled in cahoots with protagonist ambitions as often as it appears in ill-timed challenge. In this approach, I recruit a more-than-human environment in the schemes of my interlocutors, chiming with other theorists in regarding human actions and ethics as co-extensive with their material environments (notably Haraway 1988, also Tsing 2014). But my aim in this approach, is not to de-centre the affectual register, nor to de-centre my subjects in favour of an agential landscape in the mode of Actor Network Theory by which the agency of people and objects are placed on a commensurate plane (Latour 2005). Rather I seek to adopt the slapstick mode for its foregrounding of the affectual, in ways which do not foreclose the involvement of the material in the frame, and in ways which remain agnostic to what is social or material in this account. Themes common in Actor Network Theory thus silently and tangentially prefigure in this account, but in keeping with others who are inspired by its attention on the material but distance from its removal of the subject (Blok, Farías and Roberts 2020), the theory silently prefigures not so much in its drawing attention to "a heightened role for the technical capacity of objects but to the possibility of re-enchanting the world with a sense that there [are] more things animating it than the modern constitution allow[s]." (McCormack 2020, 181). In these accounts I attempt to bring forth that environment's animation along with its pacified representation in a 'modern constitution'.

Then, in the slapstick heuristic there is the issue of timing.

I further the argument regarding the inclusion of the temporal in analysis of the spatial, by drawing attention to the dependency on timing in this account, in three different ways. One, in the historic sense, the tactility of perception is given a socio-material history — both object and subject are historically contingent, and the images and representations made are inflected by this history. Two, the incidental. Jo disappearing for her shopping, the happenstance assemblage of junk objects on the street — in other words the mundane happenings which are so resistant to theorisation,

and which could so easily be overlooked, but which I argue in Interlude I are the stuff of urban place. Three, the processual nature of place was inseparable from the affectual in this account. The district is in a permanent state of change — it feels different in winter as it does in summer, which would seem a fairly obvious point. But this very everydayness is what became so charged — the mundane realities of a district in winter could not be isolated from its drab melancholia and what it said about the perceiver, nor could the sunny images of summer blooms not stand for pride. Representations of the district came to be managed in the counter wave, but the winter images were not just countered in their affectual quality but stoppered in their temporal flow. To maintain an image of the district *and* the women, was the work of stabilising its change *as well as* its affectual register. I call attention to the management of the district's representations into stasis by way of the pathetic fallacy to argue that the stabilising of both the mood, and the depictions of a district in its weathered states, proceeded by conceiving of perception as a collective activity in which categories of difference and representations of place came to be read together, selectively maintaining the representations of the state of that place thus became a site of active effort.

This chapter's analysis theorised the socio-material dimension of taking care to understand different perspectives. The City Mothers, the project staff, the museum director all tried to understand — but none of these things necessarily meant that more room was made for plurality. Then in the counter effort's concern, in their taking care to protect an image made in the disembodied, static view, care's role was not innocent — it negated as much as it supported, it sustained tropes of the Other as much as tried to show understandings of others. Taking care to understand another was a promise of doing better, and it appeared as kinds of solace, but it also tripped up, held things back, and brought about unexpected moments of explosion.

Chapter 6 — Making

Chapter 6 furthers the analysis of betweenness on slightly altered terms. It picks up two threads, the first from the end of Chapter 4 regarding enduring patterns of place, and the second, the methodological 'recalibration' proceeding from the park observation in Interlude II. Drawing on drawing practice in the textbook of the

philosopher of art Graham Collier, Interlude II makes the case for betweenness as 'negative space', as a temporarily made background, a suspended optical 'conceit' of passivity, against which lines of form can be apprehended. He himself draws on Gestalt theory regarding figure-ground perceptions, but the case I make with drawing practice is precisely a practical one. I use it to think through consciously drawing different lines of contour against which the form of place, the making of space, emplaced relations of care in their materialising effects, might be apprehended.

I follow Tim Ingold's work on the perception of the environment (2000), as well as his theories of processual materiality (2010, 2012) which lead on to his framing of differentiation rather than notions of difference by which the politics of being and the politics of diversity take form (2018). I too draw attention to the fallacy of a 'passive' ground against which 'difference' may appear as commensurate 'diversity', to argue that the space in between, the background, is never neutral but rather sets the texture and terms of relating. I also use this argument to argue that whilst difference is never static and never inherent, differentiation is the productive plane by which relating takes place. I use these points to offer alternative conceptualisations of the kinds of practices of care I observe, practices that work upon perceived 'difference' and certain practices of care for the Other.

The temporarily held 'conceit' of empty betweenness — what I dub the void-that-is-not-void — was significant here in drawing attention to the primacy of the temporal in this chapter. The suspended gap between loungers in the park may have been ephemeral and short lived, but as a practice of space it held again and again, one sunny afternoon after the next. In Chapter 6 I sought to describe these perduring patterns as an instantiation of socio-material practice in the making of place, and by this to make analytical room for an apprehension of meaningful and significant relational acts of care, that may also ordinarily be relegated to the immaterial and ephemeral but which in these moments surface, take place on, and also emplace, lived space. In arguing that interpersonal relations have a material life, I proposed that 'significance' is not just an immaterial happening. It is analysable in the temporal patterning of space. Interpersonal relations, I argue, have socio-material surface that occur in temporal patterns, not just *stases* of matter.

Chapter 6's argument thus engages with both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5's points regarding perception. But in this instance, perception of place proceeds by the making and apprehension of different spaces by which different kinds of encounter take place.

And I argue that this takes place at various scales. For example, at the level of surfacing the neighbourhood as a site of surrogate familial relations of care (Screaming Baby Ambulance), the changing nature of a district's public space, from that of anonymity to the level of a street filled with social obligation (Naomi's account), the scale of emplaced moments of friend therapeutics and its play on the spatiality, effect and reliability of the 'advice centres's' distributed network form, the negotiations and co-design of a women's room (the co-housing project). This patterning of space also takes form on different temporal scales. The street as forum of social obligation took almost a whole adult life, the friendship advice centre borrows from work conducted over several years, and the hairdressing course's rooms within rooms, its affordance of practice, took place in the weeks' long scale of drawn roller-blinds.

In these instances, I drew attention to the negative space — the contour by which demarcated space proceeds. And it was here that the void-that-is-not-void gained a multifariously textured surface, in which notions of public and private space were made, remade and unmade upon a wrinkled plane from which relations took shape. It followed a thread tentatively proposed in Chapter 4 regarding private, domestic, intimate space affording certain kinds of encounter, and certain kinds of knowledge (Gambling addiction and strategies for discussing the taboo in spaces of trust). In Chapter 6's accounts these textures of space are critical for enabling and sustaining various kinds of encounter. The women's room discussion (co-housing scene) — against European derived notions of 'privacy' with which women were conflated — involved the slow unveiling of the desire for the room not for its seclusion potential but for its ability to afford connection, sociality with an outside, a whole network of friends. The hairdressing course' relational potentialities rested on the folding and unfolding of logics of space, its nested demarcations and the creation of its spaces in the service of connecting with future employment possibilities, to practice one's profession, or even once again, to engage with the soft therapeutics of a visit to the hairdresser. And then the material temporality of the hairdresser is significant for other reasons. I end on hair for its strange positioning, perfectly poised between vital and passive materiality, its ability to be so inherently a part of the moral and affectual terms of life, but so easily snipped, shorn and swept away. This mutability of hair felt an apt image for the thesis' attention on emplaced relations that have their material effects but are not reducible to fixed matter, and are not of fixed place.

In drawing on the hairdresser's, I argue that whilst the significance and affective salience of these moments may lie in their temporal patterns of socio-materiality, that is, just because I point to the ephemeral, does not mean that room was thus made for their existence in *multiplicity*. The fact that different instantiations of boundaried space did not hold, that they came into conflict with other ways of doing, perceiving and engaging with space, *was* their politics. In this politics of space-making, patterned inequalities prefigure in the inability to make these patterned contours endure. Yet, it also speaks to the power to do otherwise. That within the politics of care is the generative capacity to make "'alternative liveable relationalities' within otherwise dominant configurations" (Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015, 634).

Following on from Interlude II, I draw attention not to affinities and differences per se, but differentiations by which things come to be, and by which things come to relate. These ways of relating were never neutral — they took place on a plane already wrinkled by wider notions and instantiations of difference. These acts of care, the relations that manifested, are emplaced within an already inflected landscape in which migration narratives structure the terms of these practices' work. But these significant acts of care — that speak of finding one's feet, fitting in, connecting, relating, belonging, healing, working — they were not outside the terms of integration discourse' concern. These were relations by which knowledge was translated (the street scene), by which one could connect with one's future profession and financial 'integration' (Mona), by which belonging and making a home could make sense (the women's room) and the terms by which relations of friendship had the power to heal and help.

This was not an argument for solutions, but an argument for a reformulation of the terms. I argue that the optic of the relational gap in between, and an attunement to the processual does not sit in the abstract — neither methodologically nor empirically. Process is often thought of as intangible and immaterial — but in this view, it gives materiality and tangibility to an aspect of relations typically thought of as immaterial and intangible; their meaning and significance, has material form that is physically, if briefly instantiated, and which does not resist theorisation, not even down to the shifting scale of the elusive everyday, the vital but ephemeral level of friends that get you through.

FORM MAKING, KNOWLEDGE MAKING

Like a refrain, the notion of observation repeats in my form and argument: one chapter attends to the experience of participation followed by an interlude that attends to the experience of observation: participant, observation — participant observation.

Beyond a method, participant observation much like other empirical tools is also a proposition about what can be made knowable (Ingold 2014, Shah 2017), and I have sought to draw attention to its simultaneous world finding and world making function by showing the effects that recalibrating the observational-conceptual tools have had on the account that follows. As Barad has written "Theories are living and breathing reconfigurings of the world" (Barad 2014, 154). I use these theorists to argue that the ways that we do indeed participate, and to interrogate the ways that we do indeed observe, is not just a methodological point, it cascades a series of propositions and findings regarding perception (the focus of Chapter 4), representation (the focus of Chapter 5) and place making (the focus of Chapter 6). This point about materialising different kinds of knowledge has become especially salient in this thesis as I ask what part of materiality counts in the relations that make up the social and which do not? And in a processual and relational mode, I find that the tangibility of matter is not synonymous with its perdurance, which allows an opening up of *observing* material life as instantiation, as the unfolding, of action.

This thesis' pendulum form is therefore a small, dense instance of the ways the processual approach has manifested in my argument — the indissolubility of epistemology and ontology has (in the final analysis) convoluted the usual ordering of events; the means of observing has not been easily abstracted from the making of the thing observed.

The structure's focus on observation — and its proposition — is however only one part of a broader point regarding perception more generally in my arguments. In this, I seek to make room for an interrogation of perception beyond its conceptualisation as a passive faculty, and beyond an ocularcentric framing. It is an active faculty, and it is a sensory all-rounder — as much about listening, moving, making, touching, feeling, as it is about seeing. Indeed, the focus on the sensoriality of perception has become a central pivot by which relations between persons and place have been conceptualised in this account. And its processual and relational nature, which opened an exploration of connections and differentiation as they occur both

politically and materially, was fundamental to thinking beyond the assumed starting points of 'identity' and 'locality'. In other words, it is through the processual nature of perception, as a faculty of sensing, being and making, that notions of difference have been recast in this account as emplaced processes of differentiation. This has formed my processually driven efforts to 'demigrantise' the research (Dahinden 2016). And through it, I argue that the notion of difference arises as a 'red herring' in debates of inequality, where processes of differentiation are inherent to the very process of being.

Perception became my heuristic for thinking of 'sociality in microcosm' (after Noë and Thompson 2002). As a point of contact between a person perceiving and a material world perceived, it helped conceptualise the unfolding, and ever ongoing process of relating. This conceptualisation of relationality which is not just immaterial but materially affected and materially afforded, is what, for me, gave purchase on the sociality of lived space. I began deploying perception as an analytic of sociality, as it emerged in the ongoing field research, borrowing from notions like the four ears. In attuning to the specifics of lived space as an engagement of sensorial choice and selection, perception became both an emplaced and an emplacing process. In keeping with the idea that inherent to the experience of the ethnographic encounter is the process of learning to think differently of the world, not just record different kinds of thought, I have sought for my interrogations to proceed by many of the provocations to perception, and practices of perceiving relations which thus arose in the field itself.

And so, once again, I begin with the four ears.

CARE AND PERCEPTION

In the ethnography's opening vignette, caring and perceiving proceed as paired actions. As people were invited to 'listen with their care' I described a process in which care was both a practice, or a 'doing' with material effects, and it was also a means of thinking through, an affectively animated means of producing knowledge. I found it proceeded through relations, taking on asymmetrical power relations as much as it materialised alternatives, and to reconstitute relations in fundamental ways. Many of the subsequent moments are informed by this view, focusing on care's "everyday affective making of our relationships, our encounters, our place" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2011, 100).

This trajectory in which knowledge making was seen as an adjunct to place making through care and perception was thus followed throughout. It began with the four-eared scene in which the relation between person and material environment was reconfigured in the service of understanding and relating to another, and was brought to a close in the final chapter by approaching it from acts of making place in order for caring relations with others to happen. I start in other words with reconfigurations of bodies — ears, senses, the bodies' affectability in relation with their material environment — and end on reconfigurations of space.

Throughout, the affective forces underlying perceptions and care, their manifestation as both skill and makers of the material world, their mobilisation in power-imbued ways as actions used to work upon instantiations of difference, is what linked my analytics of perception indissolubly from my analytics of care.

But care in this account was by no means an 'innocent' endeavour — care was not followed as a normative claim of ethicality. Proceeding through relations, it took on their texture. Rather than stand as a clear ethical foil to power, care appeared in these accounts textured by the ambivalent relations upon which it took hold. In the extended battle of place representations (Chapter 5), care's multiform effects were brought to the fore; care brought positions into contestation as much as into accord, it served to regulate and discipline, as much as to empathise and understand. Thus, it appears as taking care to understand various positions, the extension of empathy into a material environment, the concerned editing and counter measures of representation — care emerged here as an animating force with the power to engage

with ongoing material makings, but it was a force with no predetermined ethical directionality; it ranged all over.

In thinking through the processual and relational nature of place, the materialising effects of care and the tactility of perception were in my arguments conceptually linked. Chapter 4's main purpose was to establish a 'cast of characters' — the different character of place and the different *kinds* of place that are made; the *kinds* of persons enacted as 'individuals' or sites of relation, as similar or different or Other; and the character of the relations made between them, relations of connection, relations of separation, relations as sites of intervention. But throughout the ensuing chapters I lean further and further into betweenness (the void-that-is-not-void) to explore its indeterminacy and generativity, in ways which bring together care's materialising effects and perception's tactility. In thinking of these actions together, I was drawn to feminist theorist Karen Barad's lyrical and penetrating writing on touch, in which they elaborate on an ethicality of otherness (2014). In their paper, they argue that mattering, or coming into being, depends on "touch" with alterity. To touch 'otherness' is a precondition of being: the ethicality towards the Other here is not an elected obligation but one which prefigures being, for it is only through a relation with *otherness* that the self comes into being (ibid.). In this formulation matter comes into being through the *response* matter is *able* to perform with otherness, its *response-ability*, and thus "*In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense, touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of response-ability. Touching is a matter of response. Each of "us" is constituted in response-ability. Each of "us" is constituted as responsible for the other, as being in touch with the other*." (Barad 2014, 161 italics original). The ethicality of matter, of perceiving its immanence is in this account inseparable from our politics and ethicality towards the Other. Barad goes on to theorise the ethicality of touch through the relations that constitute it. Much like Puig de la Bellacasa's formulation of care as never impure in its relationality (2011); and Collier's formulation of perception as arising from the differentiation of a void to prefigure form; and Taussig's formulation of Benjamin's 'tactility' of sight that confounds a difference between object and subject, Barad speaks of what occurs by way of the relational in ways that confound the 'purity' of categories. They write "Touch is never pure or innocent. It is inseparable from the field of differential relations that constitute it." (Ibid.). And then referring to the field of indeterminacy by which matter comes into being as the *inhuman*, they ask "What if it is only in facing *the inhuman—the indeterminate non-being non-*

becoming of mattering and not mattering—that an ethics committed to the rupture of indifference can arise? […] How would we feel if it is by way of the inhuman that we come to feel, to care, to respond?" (Ibid.161-162 italics original).

Answering that question has been at this thesis' heart: formulating an attunement towards, and articulating the process of, indeterminate materialities by which care for one another matters.

CONCLUSION

I began this thesis (following others) by conceptualising place as a process, accomplished by everyday relational practices, materials, imaginaries, stories. I sought to describe everyday instances in which the reconfiguration of space through care had implications for the way terms of difference were negotiated, practised and materialised. I drew on eighteen months' participant observation of everyday practices of care which took place through projects of integration in Berlin's Neukölln district, in order to argue for an expanded awareness of the role of care in making place, especially as it intersected with migration narratives, where place was frequently taken as an implicit, static given.

At the outset of this thesis, I therefore posed the following questions to examine these interrelations between practices of care, relations of place and politics of difference as they affected women I came to know.
I asked:

1. **What kinds of care emerged in these projects?** How were they practised, expressed and experienced? and what was their significance for women I sought to learn from?
2. **What kinds of spatialities were implicated by care?** What happened to them and how were they 'done'? What kinds of relating were afforded by them?
3. **What was the effect of these care/space constellations on the ways categories and politics of difference played out?**

Through these chapters, I have sought to draw attention to a broad range of practices of care, where their 'doings' were as plural as their effects. I described a wide variety of practices, but I also anchored each empirical chapter's discussions through notable instances: sensorial attunements to care for another, such as listening with care, anchored Chapter 4. Empathic imagination, understanding, concern and attunement to other experiences, anchored Chapter 5. The careful shaping and reordering of matter for different kinds of relations to happen, especially the informal, treasured care of friends, anchored Chapter 6. I also sought to provide an account of the spatialities which materialised: embodied and ephemeral spaces of trust, disembodied fictions of a locality, a garden in autumn, the scent-memory of a ruined city, space-representationstasis of a district, images of lived space, a whole neighbourhood as a surrogate family resource of care, a street full of acquaintance obligations, a peripatetic 'advice centre' for friendship therapeutics, a woman's room, a roller-blind hairdresser's, and many others.

I argued that part of the multiplicity of such spatialities of care arose from care's implication in embodied, imaginational, and material dimensions of space, which I sought to narrate. But I also found that such multiplicity was made by care as much as by conflict. And that the terms of these negotiated spatial accomplishments was the mark of their politics, which became observable not merely through the spatial arrangements they stabilised, but in the rhythms by which they were practised and by which they endured. Whilst I described the moments in which spatialities of care offered alternatives to dominant imaginaries without unsettling them (Chapter 4), I also described moments in which they came into contestation (Chapter 5). But I argue for the value of a lens attuned to the processual and relational nature of space and care, as it renders the unique, ephemeral moments of alternative spatialities visible (Chapter 6). For I argue that it is within such a lens that care practices' generative capacity to make "'alternative liveable relationalities' within otherwise dominant configurations" (Martin, Myers and Viseu 2015, 634), can be read. I argue that the ways various relations and practices of care come together with the embodied, imaginational and material dimensions of space, might thus be rendered visible, with the implication that we might not have to speculate on alternative political spatialities and possibilities but observe and catch when they arise.

I seek to add to critical conversations on migration in the context of complex urban environments by proposing one way in which thinking through care and place

together may serve as a useful optic for examining material dimensions of political inequity, and help render legible fleeting or under-articulated makings of alternative spatial possibility, in shifting urban environments. I argue that these unique emplacements and collectively made trajectories of space did more than temporarily reconfigure dominant terms of space which tacitly presupposed the projects, they also opened up alternative socio-political imaginaries of belonging and connecting, in ways which were accomplished by and for meaningful relations of care.

EPILOGUE

This thesis was bookended by two significant, though by no means equivalent, events: the UK's EU referendum and the Covid-19 pandemic. Much of the first shaped by loaded debates of otherness and difference, and much of the second by social space, and touch, and unequal politics of care.

Yet, they are both about the practicalities of living with others.

Choosing a means to speak of the issues otherwise, I have chosen *not* to take categories of migration and integration as my given objects, *not* to take the usual starting positions of 'identity' and 'locality' as my referents, *not* to talk about objects themselves but their in-between intra-relations. An optimistic contrarian, I proceeded through the negative. The negative space of the debates, and the negative space of space itself.

There is a kind of symmetry in this thinking, and a kind of belief in nihility.

Sometimes when people ask what it means to be an anthropologist in urban design, I say it is about the stuff in-between being where life happens. And I have to convince people that shaping life through working with an eye to the in-between is possible. But I haven't had to make this case in any recent conversation, because this has become obvious.

As at no other time that I've known, it is this negative space which has suddenly, abruptly surfaced into the visible: the empty streets, the value of outdoor space, the

sociality and touch of others — those we know and those we don't. What is between us is now apparent, and not having it is now apparent too.

What is afforded by this negative space? What are the terms of connection for which we must care? Space — the practicalities through which these questions unfold — bears witness to these collective, uncountable, implausibly plural acts, ethics and questions of care.

Ambivalence only gets you so far. But I meant for it to take me far enough to conceptualise the issues otherwise, to offer other terms, to 'trouble' what was given, for it was in following the ethnographic data that a different conceptual tool kit emerged to make sense of those encounters.

I didn't mean to write implications for policy or action, because I thought it was important to dwell in the uncomfortable realm of the premise first — in other words, this was written for questioning, destabilising, unsettling the categories and the way they were replicated in debates.

Well, this was not to be. And ambivalences only got me so far. And my discomfort with the terms only secured the inevitabilities of my foiled plans.

During the writing of this thesis, I had the strange privilege to be asked to work with the Design Council for the Greater London Authority on an initiative which funded a variety of projects in London who had successfully bid for regeneration funding (read: built environment intervention) with the purpose of improving social integration 'outcomes'.

It was a co-design project, and it was a brief, contained piece of engagement, but there were ten different projects from grassroots arts organisations to whole town centre developments, and I spoke to them all via Zoom, often with lumps in my throat for what they were doing. It's hard not to care about care. Impurities and all.

As I said, I didn't mean for this thesis to propose policy or formulate intervention, and yet, here it is, elements of the thesis (though by no means all the measures and issues of social integration discussed in the above co-design project) translated into its applicability to built form, for a whole spectrum of different kinds of spaces.

In our co-design of principles sessions, I brought to the table several themes for discussion. I said true conversations go two ways, 'consultation' is about a

conversation that goes backwards and forwards a few times, with each side taking care to understand the other. I said, a focus on categories of difference only reifies those differences, instead, think of design for the relations between — relations of delight, of neighbourliness, of tension, of healing those tensions, of different ages, of gender, for example a grandmother who doesn't speak English and a granddaughter who wants an ice-cream, and the neighbours, teenage boys and streets they encounter on their way. These are relations of contact, of differences which aren't given before they meet, but the character of the encounter will set the quality of the relation. I leant on open-endedness; spaces need change. And they need to be tinkered with. This is how people, relations and spaces heal. I spoke about the distances which allow differentiation and different activities to occur simultaneously, so that they are distinct in their intimacy, but connected in their sociability. The polyvalence of place depends on it.

And I spoke about observing the signs of what's been. This is participation. And we must make room to notice it, and then treasure it. Not everyone speaks up because not everyone is heard the same, sometimes when people care about a space, they leave a mark of what they wanted from it, and got, and did to make it theirs, two chairs, outside a door, in the slice of space they've found, wooden crate upturned, two empty cups left behind.

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