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## Emotion, location and urban regeneration: the resonance of marginalised cosmopolitanisms

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## **Emotion, Location and Urban Regeneration:**

### **The resonance of marginalised cosmopolitanisms**

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#### **Introduction: The emotional resonance of marginalised places**

What are the interplays between emotion, location and urban regeneration? I focus on a 'marginal' inner city area and connect the cultural resonance of location, with how emotions advance certain trajectories of urban renewal. The place in question is Walworth, an inner city south London neighbourhood described across official, media and on-the-ground sources as deprived and ethnically diverse. By contrasting the emotional registers of 'estate' and 'street' within the same place, I explore side-by-side forms of marginalisation and cosmopolitanism, where relegation *and* prospect, and containment *and* mixing abide together. While this paper acknowledges the intensely discriminatory processes of territorial stigmatisation through both ghettoization and marginalisation, it engages with the different spaces of 'estate' and 'street' to deviate from the discourse of absolute relegation and segregation. Rather, this paper engages emotion to explore the resonance between affect and effect: how feelings about places are proliferated between spheres of power and everyday life. I draw on Sarah Ahmed's (2004) essential conceptualisation of 'emotionality', tracing how emotions are circulated, accumulated and how they endure or 'stick'. My aim is to connect how the emotionality of stigmatised places secures distinctive paths for urban regeneration. In failing to consider the urban poor in visions of a prosperous urban future, regeneration by dispossession ultimately advances limited prospects for cosmopolitan belonging.

Walworth is an inner city place that is physically proximate yet culturally distanced to central London. It is a mark on the map of south London close enough to the centre to catch glimpses of the London Eye and to hear the chimes of Big Ben, while remaining distant from the cultural register of urban prestige and 'World Class' prospect to its immediate north. A ten-minute red double-decker bus journey from the north of Walworth takes you to the recently regenerated Southbank Centre, where festivals, skateboarding, Public Space and Public Art aggregate in the palpable presence of the successful, cosmopolitan city: 'The complex, one of the trendiest in London [...] is truly multicultural and cosmopolitan.' (tripadvisor.co.uk 2013). By contrast, Walworth offers a somewhat different trope of cosmopolitanism, an altogether different mix of class and ethnicity, with an emotional register of a more down-at-heel place. Despite Walworth's vast cultural distance from the Southbank Centre's orbit, Walworth is an extremely well located, inner city location with a number of sizeable, strategic pieces of publicly owned land. Large-scale regeneration is therefore on the cards for Walworth: two of its social housing estates, the Heygate and the Aylesbury, are being regenerated; and plans to transform the Elephant and Castle public transport interchange and its associated shopping centre are underway.

As regeneration efforts emerge in Walworth, it is instructive to explore the links between emotional affect and political effect: how the emotive impressions attributed to a place come to be shared, and how these feelings advance certain trajectories of urban regeneration. I use the two different spaces of the social housing estate and the high street to explore overlapping but different processes of urban renewal. Through the estate, I focus on the persistent relegation of Walworth through the emotionally charged trope of deprivation, and how this sponsors a morally charged trope of intervention and urban redevelopment. But the

narrative of urban marginality that I explore is arguably less predictable than the inevitable decline abetted by the advanced marginalisation attributed to the ghetto (Wacquant 2007). For Walworth has layers of life that lie below the radar of official scrutiny; a host of possibilities and animations that are able to exist precisely because they are rendered invisible by the authorised mask of 'deprivation'. Territorial stigmatisation frequently reveals a highly mediated process of relegation that coincides with processes of regeneration, displacement and gentrification (Smith 2002). Less visible in the gentrification literature however, is that the stigma-effect potentially also produces a mask whereby other processes of diversification emerge below the surface. In Walworth, this is particularly evident during fallow regeneration cycles, when there is limited interference from the market or state.

As a local resident of Walworth from 2004 to 2010, during which time I undertook an ethnography of the Walworth Road (2012), I became aware of a *complex urban marginality*, where historic cycles of limited economic growth were iteratively followed by economic booms and targeted regeneration. These cyclical economic periods have led to an urban landscape of complex marginality, where relegation intersects with prospect, and where class intersects with pronounced ethnic diversity sustained by periods of urban migration. In the last half century Walworth has incurred two large-scale processes of regeneration with no significant state-led redevelopment between the two periods. Authorised regeneration in the 1960s and 70s took the form of *en masse* social housing provision together with the rationalisation of the Elephant and Castle transport interchange. State-facilitated regeneration since 2008 involves a process of dismantling the same *en masse* housing estates and over-determined transport interchange, in the process releasing substantial redevelopment opportunities to the open market. However, state-led or state-facilitated regeneration endeavours co-exist, even if uncomfortably, with much smaller, much more diverse acts and on-going acts of urban renewal. The exploration of a complex urban marginality through the spaces of 'estate' and 'street' arguably leads to a more cluttered view of urban marginalisation. It is therefore possible to trace the registers of relegation imposed on the urban poor in Walworth, alongside

practices of border crossings across containments of class, ethnicity and demotion, where alternative, albeit less visible, cultural registers emerge.

To explore how the spaces of 'estate' and 'street' are rendered culturally visible, I directly draw on Ahmed's three processes by which emotions are socially produced. Emotions *circulate* by moving 'outside in': meanings are impressed from the outside onto objects and texts, and buildings and places, gradually acquiring and resonating a social measure of value. Individuals read the social 'worth' of these symbols, interpreting and responding to their social value. Emotions *accumulate*, their increase in shared impact secured through the distribution, repetition and subsequent inflation of affect or cultural reach. Emotions *endure*, they 'stick', creating a shared, intractable response to objects, people and places. Through tracing the circulation, accumulation and endurance of collectively shared emotions, Ahmed shows that the power of emotion in making and securing collective meaning, is that it is evoked, before it is rationalised. To add to Ahmed's 'emotionality' I trace the role of emotions in the *transformation* of buildings and places, and how the power of emotion is used to gain cultural momentum for political traction. The collective feelings associated with the scale, shape, mass and texture of built form is used to project an attitude to objects, people and places, thereby procuring legitimation for intervention or regeneration.

This chapter focuses on the work that emotion does in defining place, by tracing the circulation, accumulation, endurance and transformative potential of affect in the making and remaking of Walworth. Two related questions guide the analysis: First, how do the attributes of a place socially circulate; 'what sticks' in the shared impressions of a place? And second, what modes of urban transformation do the place-oriented impressions of deprivation and diversity sponsor? Emotionality, I argue, allows us to see the 'social syntax' of place: the emotive political and cultural constructions of territories, people and objects that come to register a public or shared sense of place. The register opens up fertile ground for further emotive claims as to how and why certain places require 'fixing'. Regeneration claims often

result in further withdrawals of state investment from a place, thereby compounding segregation by class and race. However, in the seemingly simplistic analogy of cheek-by-jowl 'estate' and 'street' the significant narrative of a complex urban marginality emerges. The histories of urban poverty formation intersect with those of urban migration and the cultural diversification of the city, arguably most pronounced in London's most deprived areas. In the two sections that follow I focus on the cultural resonance of estate and street, to trace varied forms of belonging alongside varied practices of urban renewal.

## **The registers of relegation: estate**

We lived in Peckham, in a council house my family, big family. We had a garden, we had a dog, and then when I was five years old the council decided to regenerate Peckham and they tore all those houses down. I mean it was miles and miles of, of, council housing, and destroyed the communities that lived there and built the notorious North Peckham Estate, which was opened in the 70s. So what really happened was the tight-knit kind of community that I first lived in was just literally destroyed overnight. I mean it was a terrible, terrible thing that happened to the area. I don't think the area ever recovered, because since then, as you know, they have regenerated Peckham again, by tearing down the North Peckham Estate. So what I say is, 'What Hitler failed to do during the Blitz, Southwark Council have done twice in my life-time.' (laughs) [...] My grandparents ended up in Wood Dene in Peckham, which is now about to be, at last, demolished. We called it 'The Kremlin', and in fact the bus conductor used to say, 'anyone for the Kremlin?' and we used to jump off the bus. It was awful. A horror estate [...] Big double page spread in 'The South London Press' about horror estates. (John, self-proclaimed 'social housing tenant', Interview 2007).

There is surely no form of architectural invention in the UK so intensely the object of heart-felt grievance (Hanley 2007), literary degradation (Amis 1989), social analysis (Power 1987) and on-going official intervention than the modernist social housing estate. The cultural notoriety of this singularly symbolic spatial and social form has, as John's words above show, subjected the diverse inhabitants of *en mass* housing estates to repetitive iterations of displacement, demolition and renewal. How are these disruptive repetitions justified as 'regeneration'? Ahmed refers to 'processes of intensification' (2004: 45) where the emotive currency of an object or issue is publicly heightened, even exaggerated, to induce pronounced, shared emotional reactions. Although these reactions may be individually felt,

they are widely procured, circulated and maintained through highly emotive symbols. John refers to his grandparents' fortification in Wood Dene through the symbol of 'The Kremlin', whilst other council inhabitants in an east London housing estate refer to their place of residence as 'Alcatraz', evoking imprisonment rather than residence (Foster 1995). As Ahmed suggests, highly emotive symbols – in this case fortification and imprisonment – travel 'outside in' through permeating broader societal registers, acquiring widespread connotations, and resonating in the perceptions of housing estate residents. Finally, emotive symbols serve to justify targeted political interventions. It is instructive to trace the emergence of stigma or what Goffman aptly refers to as 'the management of spoiled identity' (1963) through spatial symbols, and to connect stigma to Ahmed's 'emotionality' through how emotions are socially produced in the mass and materiality of social housing estates.

Until recently, there were three large-scale social housing estates adjacent to Walworth Road that together provided some 5,000 social housing units. The diverse individuals and families of the Heygate, Aylesbury and Brandon Estates were able to benefit from comparatively affordable housing within close proximity to good public transportation links, an array of public amenities, and inner city work opportunities. To deflate the overextended association of 'sink' estates with 'low life' inhabitants (Haylett 2001), it is important to note that social housing estates in London typically aggregate a comparatively wide economic mix of inhabitants, and historically have provided state-subsidised and affordable housing opportunities in a city where property values continue to dramatically increase, despite the current impact of the global economic crisis. Substantial proportions of Great Britain's twentieth-century housing were provided through publicly rented housing stock, reaching a climax in 1979 where 32 per cent of housing was publicly rented (Stone 2003:14). A significant number of highly diverse individuals lived, and continue to live, in social housing.

But well outside of this sanguine perspective, two of the three social housing estates within Walworth - the Aylesbury and Heygate estates – are recipients of heightened stigmata. The

Aylesbury, located half way down the Walworth Road, was described in the press on the dawn of its recent regeneration, as 'hell's waiting room', a literal demonization that in an evocative swipe denigrates the diverse residents of the Aylesbury (Muir 2005). How is it that the monolithic forms of the estate are all too readily translatable into reductive social monoliths? Built in 1963 and comprising 2,700 units, the Aylesbury was the largest housing estate in Europe within one contained area. The sheer scale of the development was matched with individual building mass, and the 120 meter block of housing along Thurlow Street has the dubious honour of being the longest prefabricated stretch of housing (Boast 2005). The Heygate Estate, located to the north of the Walworth Road and adjacent to the strategic public transport interchange at the Elephant and Castle, was built between 1970 and 1974 and comprised of 1,194 units. Providing well-located inner city housing to diverse individuals, this estate too is relegated in the media as 'a concrete warren [...] with a grim reputation for crime, poverty and dilapidation [...] a monument to the failure of post-war mass housing.' ('Daily Mail Reporter' 2013).

In 2007, clearance and regeneration programmes commenced on both estates. The stated objective from the London Borough of Southwark (LBS) - to regenerate poor quality housing stock - drew links between spatial and social degeneration to justify redevelopment. Who gained from the circulated notoriety of these estates? At the Aylesbury, the regeneration process has been led by a housing association, the Creation Trust, and has depended on an increase in housing density from 2,700 to 4,900 units. While 2,288 units are secured for social housing, the remainder will be sold on the open market to fund the regeneration project. The on-going densification process has resulted in limited demolition, as the new housing blocks are inserted amongst existing fabric, but has also yielded a housing mix with a shift in emphasis from public rental to private ownership. Arguably, the mass of the Aylesbury has been disaggregated in social mix, spatial form, and material textures, despite the increase in units (Lees 2013, provides an important, less sympathetic perspective of the process).



By contrast, the regeneration process at the Heygate Estate has been facilitated by the LBS and led by the private developer, Lend Lease. Regeneration commenced in 2008 with the eviction of all of the Heygate's residents. By 2012 a deal was struck for the balance of profit and populace to be feasible for the developers, where 75 per cent of the new housing would be released to the market and 25 per cent would be 'affordable housing' (for details: <http://londonist.com/2012/02/heygate-estate-residents-rebuff-lend-lease-masterplan.php>).

Five years on from the eviction of its residents, the vast estate remains boarded up, the tabula rasa development logic tampered by an economic recession in which it is increasingly difficult to rebuild housing, and particularly social housing, at scale without significant state intervention. In the context of substantial government cuts to public funds, and an increasing appetite to assist in the raising of urban land values, the state effectively withdrew from its holding at the Heygate. In April 2013 Southwark Council sold the estate and its land to Lend Lease for £50 million pounds. It has emerged that only 79 of the 2,535 new housing units will be available as rented public housing. While this process animates Smith's (2002) argument that economic globalisation has produced a revanchist urbanism where gentrification is a primary strategy, Ahmed's emotionality allows us to trace the historic and contemporary modes through which regeneration logics are publically secured.

The process of rupture – captured in the Heygate example as *en masse* social displacement, is integral to the *circulation* of estate stigma. During the post war period from 1950 to 1970, numerous large-scale territories of well-located inner city land became available for an accelerated, *en masse* social housing initiative, and some 2.9 million social housing units were built (Stone 2003). The production of large-scale social housing in London emerged from the intersections of post war rupture, a strong political commitment to house the working classes accelerated by the Wilson government between 1964 and 1979, and limited appetite for property speculation. The political production of housing was matched with an ideological commitment to find new spatial forms of living that would exemplify a modern age afforded by the new possibilities of industrial mass fabrication (Le Corbusier 1923). The commitment of

the international movement in architecture and its geographic spread perpetuated a widely shared vocabulary for social housing, thereby accelerating its insignia initially as modernity and subsequently of failure: 'Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but it is an effect of the circulation between objects and signs [...] the more signs circulate, the more affective they become' (Ahmed 2004: 45)

The stigma of failure was similarly internationalised through the symbolic forms of the demise of, for example, Cabrini Green in Chicago (1940), Pruitt Igoe in St Louis (1954), and Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam (1966). Despite the noble intentions behind the large-scale provision of well-located urban housing, a powerful perceptual paradigm of *en masse* urbanism came to negatively signify many of these social housing estates, including the Heygate and Aylesbury estates in Walworth. While the standardisation of built form, which relied on the homogenisation, repetition and geographic spread in the *accumulation* of estate stigma, the materiality and scale of these visibly monolithic, concrete social housing estates evoked overt characterisations of people and place. A standardisation of built form came to correspond with a standardisation of language reiterated in the media through the short hand of the 'sink' estate:

- '10 steps to turning around a sink estate: Graffiti. Muggings. Fly tipping. Drug taking. Vandalism. What to do when a housing estate is this blighted? (Megan Lane 1 April 2008: BBC news magazine, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7318556.stm>)
- 'The end of sink estates? Council to give more homes to those WITH jobs to help break the benefits culture: Council houses are to be set aside for people who work for a living [...] The aim is to stop the slide of social housing estates into benefit dependency and crime and restore their original status as decent places for respectable working families.' (Steve Doughty 3 November 2011: MailOnline, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2057183/>)
- 'North's sink estates are 'beyond saving': Crime, vandalism, chronic unemployment [...] Many rundown housing estates in northern England should be considered beyond redemption and demolished, according to a devastating report published yesterday. The report concluded that some neighbourhoods, particularly in the north-east and north-west, could not be saved because they suffered from insurmountable problems ranging from crime and heavy unemployment to a poor image. (Peter Hetherington 6 January 2000: The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/jan/06/britishidentity.peterhetherington>)

The emotive portrayal of 'sink' estates is strongly evoked through registers of disgust – 'drug taking, vandalism, muggings, crime, benefit dependency' - serve to secure the alterity of the estate as a flawed but isolated micro-world. But as Lawler shows (2005), 'disgust' is not simply 'the violation of taste in relation to class', it is also a means of preparing the grounds for the expulsion and exclusion of the working class, a regeneration rhetoric prompted in these media excerpts through reformation; 'turning around' and 'breaking the benefits culture' providing the antidote to the cause of disgust. The intentional physical detachment of the estates from their surrounds has assisted in the formation and *endurance* of estate stigma. The logic of containment insists that it is the 'sink' estate, and its 'low life' inhabitants that is the problem, where the 'cure' lies in estate regeneration (commensurate with profiteering), without the need for broader structural redress.

Who gains from the circulated notoriety of social housing estates, and why is social transformation so difficult to achieve once estate stigma has stuck? The regeneration of the Heygate and Aylesbury Estates including the eviction and displacement of thousands of diverse council tenants who lived in the Heygate Estate has been accompanied by the highly emotive, singular relegation of these estates and their inhabitants in both planning and media discourse. Pre 2008, these regeneration schemes were promoted as public-private partnerships, in which local people were to be central. The economic crisis has been used to tip the terms of the social compact in favour of profit. *En masse* making in the 1960s and 70s has heralded the follow up of *en masse* displacement post 2008, and social housing tenants will be forced further away from the prospects and conveniences of the city. In exploring the 'emotionality' of the estate as both the material and social production of relegation, we come to see the affect and effect of what Williams' (1958) described as 'the masses formulae'. If 'cosmopolitan' urbanism offers a more disaggregated, diverse antithesis to the *en masse* urbanism of the 1960s and the revanchist urbanism of the global era, it cannot be imagined simply as cultural diversity. Our framing of 'cosmopolitan belonging' must incorporate class diversity and recognise inequality, and it is arguably in the landscapes of well-located inner

city social housing that crucially diverse forms of cosmopolitan belonging are best secured (Hall 2013).

## **The registers of the everyday: street**

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

(Matthew Norman 8 November 2008: Guardian Weekend, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/nov/08/restaurant-review-dragon-castle>)

Matthew's brief sojourn to south London to dip in a bit of urban exotica-come-filth is lavish in its lack of restraint. Were he to brave it past the Dragon's Castle and the first hundred metres of the Walworth Road, he may have encountered a somewhat different ocular feast, albeit one that might be invisible to a stereotypical inclination. Here is a mile-stretch of street where 128 independent proprietors converge, their countries of origin spanning a global web of Afghanistan, China, Cyprus and Northern Cyprus, England, Ghana, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Sierre Leone and Trinidad, Turkey and Vietnam (Hall 2012). Unlike the explicit visibility of the 'estate' and its *en masse* insignia of physical and moral dereliction, the Walworth Road is a linear aggregation of parts, activated by the everyday pragmatisms of making do and getting by. The apparently banal activities of buying a lotto ticket, visiting the Council's One Stop Shop, returning a library DVD, or stopping off for milk and a paper on the way home, render an everyday, apparently unremarkable, urban collage.

For those who penetrate beyond the surface exteriors of the shop fronts, there are a collection of small interiors where bespoke suits, bacon-egg-and-chips, ornate furniture,

betting, legal claims, holidays to Nigeria, and hair and nails can all be acquired. It is not that the social housing estates adjacent to the street are without their intimacies and intricacies, but domestic etiquette on estates limits public access, while the street's everyday banality arguably reduces emotive hype and with it more totalising portrayals of relegation. (Although Jackson's portrayal in this book of a totalising and emotional reading of Rye Lane in Peckham as an 'African' street points to the contrary). While the housing estate is socially read through its static, monolithic exterior, it is the street's collection of dynamic interiors that allows for its legibility and its more diverse cultural *circulation*. Angela, an ex-art student comments, 'I used to go down to the Walworth Road whenever I needed something for an art project' reflecting on the street's array of cheap and peculiar assortment of goods.

For others, it is the assortment of people that makes for its value. Mustafa, a pensioner who visits the Walworth Road a few times a week says, 'I like the Walworth Road very much. It's one of the best roads in Southwark. Got all nationalities, everyone's doing what they want to do.' Rags, a retired Bermondsey boxer and former welterweight champion who grew up in Walworth offers a more qualified affirmation, 'The Walworth Road has changed dramatically. It's a really multicultural society, a multinational society. Put it this way, I don't feel racism around here, I don't think colour matters so much around here...except with the police.' Rag's 'feel' for racism is an important navigator for his daily and life choices. While he chooses to regularly frequent the Walworth Road, as an emerging boxing talent he forfeited his welterweight title, rather than defend it in the then apartheid South Africa.

For others still, the street has altered in ways that 'feel' outside of their habitus. Mike who is in his seventies and moved to Walworth from east London comments, 'Walworth Road was ordinary Cockney-type society. Most of 'em in the graveyard now...There was big changes when the migrants came here, 50s onwards...There was small shops, no supermarkets, run by English people'. Rhys-Taylor captures these ways of emotionally navigating places and how they change through 'culturally bequeathed gut feelings for the boundaries of one's own

class' (2013: 237) as evoked by a 'sensoria' of sight, smell, touch. Jack, for example, feels change as more gradual, marked by the loss of shared cultural practices within a place:

There's been subtle changes. Take the changing role of the pubs. Every street had a pub, and that was like a community centre. You could come home of an evening, take off your working-class clothes, get your newspaper and go down to the pub...It wasn't just a question of drinking, it was a social club. The way I got to know people was the pub... (Fieldwork Interview, 2007).

But the street adapts, unlike the more brittle form of the estate, its physical architecture acquiring new social morphologies. Kebab shops and barbers offer a different clientele the social venues that are not unlike Jack's reference to the pub as shop-come-community centre. These street interiorities host opportunities for casual and habitual associations invisible to the passer-by. And while Jack has lost his regular pub, he still frequents Nick's Caff, 'I've been coming for years and years. Since my divorce, I come for supper on my way home. It's very much like a social club. What you'd call "caff society" – know what I mean?' The *accumulation* of the diverse cultural repertoires of the street that span Mustafa, Rags, Mike and Jack's associations are tied in part its disaggregated physical form and its incremental adaptability. But land values have also played a key role, and Walworth's comparatively deflated value from industrial to contemporary times has allowed for a host of newcomers to set up shop over the span of a century. The *Post Office London Street and Commercial Directory* (1881-1950) reflects waves of immigrants occupying the retail spaces along the length of the Walworth Road, from eastern European and Irish immigrants in the 1880s, to Greek, Italian and Cypriot immigrants in 1950, to the array of proprietors who occupy the interior edges of the Walworth Road today representing over twenty countries of origin.

The *endurance* of the street's actual and perceptual diversity is in part hardwired by its particular urban infrastructure, which has generated high levels of footfall and therefore good retail opportunity along the length of the street. There are some 15,000 people living and working in close walking distance the Walworth Road (CABE 2007), while some 180 buses

shift up and down the street per hour. These thresholds of support allow this street, located within a comparatively deprived urban area, to sustain an economic vitality largely based on convenience, and shaped by diverse small-scale entrepreneurial endeavours including those established by the waves of migrants from the late 1800s onwards. Indeed, the total estimated weekly expenditure for the residents in close proximity to the Walworth Road in 2007 was £4.3 million, as compared with £4.8 million on the far more affluent, 'upmarket' High Street Hampstead (CABE 2007). Although the Walworth Road is surrounded by a less affluent population, the population density in proximity to it sustains a diverse, small-scale retail economy that has fared comparatively well - 32 per cent of proprietors have been in place for 20 years or more, pointing to duration as an important measure of economic and social value (Hall 2011).

The *transformation* of the street has been incremental, driven largely by the small scales of individual property ownership, the range of proprietors along the street and the needs of ethnically diverse clientele. Design interventions by the LBS in through the 'Walworth Project' in 2010 (<http://www.nsl.co.uk/case-studies/transformation-of-walworth-road>) were low key attending to safer crossings and wider pavements together with fairly demure insertions of trees and benches. But with the imminent changes to the Heygate and Aylesbury estates it is likely that the pace of change on the Walworth Road will be increased. Will the LBS and its next cohort of development partners be able to recognise the diverse cultural, economic and social value of the street? Will their measures of 'successful' cosmopolitanism extend past places like the Southbank Centre, where retail chains that are familiar across the city prevail, and the public is largely constituted by a middle-to-upper-class presence?

## **Complex urban marginality and cosmopolitan belonging**

I am delighted to publish my spatial development strategy for London – a keystone in realising my vision for London as the best big city in the world [...] My vision for London embraces two objectives. London must retain and build upon its world city status as one of three business centres of global reach [...] London must also be among the best cities

in the world to live, whatever your age or background. We need enough homes, meeting a diversity of needs [...] We must close the unacceptable gaps in life chances, opportunities and quality of life between Londoners; tackle disadvantage and discrimination and ensure opportunities accessible to all [...] These objectives are not opposites. We can't achieve one without the other. But there can be tensions between them [...]. (Boris Johnson's introduction to the *London Plan*, GLA 2011).

Tensions between 'world city status' and increasing disadvantage and displacement abound in post 2008 London. As urban land values increase in London and as public resources decrease, 'the best big city in the world' appears to favour privilege. By exploring the role that emotion plays in urban regeneration processes, it is apparent that feelings are procured and heightened to rationalise the eviction of inhabitants in favour of profit-oriented redevelopment. Buildings and places, materiality and surface, are key to accumulating the symbols of decline. At the same time, the narrow narratives of 'cosmopolitan belonging' that circulate through the spaces and textures of the city present particular narrow views of cultural diversity, where architectural forms merge with social compositions. Social housing estates and everyday multi-ethnic streets don't fit with the aesthetics of cosmopolitanism promoted in places like the Southbank Centre, only a short bus ride from Walworth.

This chapter has contrasted the estate and street of Walworth's diverse and comparatively deprived urban landscape, directly challenging the singular narratives and images of 'cosmopolitanism' that essentially promotes middle-to-upper income mixing. But the contrast of estate and street also serves to reveal a complex urban marginality, as opposed to an advanced marginality, to show how Walworth exists as an inner city location with both relegation and prospect, and containment and mixing. The emotions that circulate, accumulate and endure across the microcosms of the Heygate and Aylesbury estates, and along the Walworth Road, are as varied as their material compositions. However, stigma tends to stick precisely where it is easier to procure a singular image, a standardised notation, so explicitly embodied in the form of the modernist housing estate.



Finally, there is a necessary response to the myopic and cynical act of decanting the Heygate estate and relinquishing it to the open market with the most cursory, minimal requirement for social housing. The prospects for 'cosmopolitan belonging' are substantially limited in a city that is becoming increasingly disparate, and where the dispossession of low-income individuals from well-located urban housing is being actively pursued. Dispossession will be further advanced with the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government's 2011 rearrangement of the terms of social housing rental through the 'Affordable Rent' scheme (<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/affordable-rent>), allowing for social housing rentals on new or re-let public property to be let at 80 per cent of market value. Low-income exclusion from well-located urban housing will therefore be particularly exaggerated in inner city areas such as London where market values are already inflated. Any prospect for a richly diverse and more equitable belonging cannot be left to the logics of revanchist urbanism. Securing and giving shape to a more diverse, more cosmopolitan future, that has more varied social and spatial form will require different social and architectural imaginaries. More explicitly, it will require state intervention of the sort that recognises that social housing, accessible education and a range of livelihoods are central to the diverse vitality of London's landscapes.

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