Inclusion and wellbeing through a shared sense of local belonging

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smell

My country there are lots of big rocks. People they used to climb them, sit up on them.

I feel like someone who is in Rwanda, you know when I went there...
when I want to feel like someone who is in Rwanda I can go there.

Firmina, Rwanda

recognition of connection

This view, reminds me of back home…

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

Camille, born and grew up in Jamaica.

performed memory aids a sense of normality

The main thing I miss when I go to Yemen... the one thing I miss about England is driving in the motorway... believe it or not, that bit of it. I'm into driving. Unless you driver you won't understand it, the snake pass to Liverpool I love it...
it reminds me of the Yemen's highways as well... near enough the same...
it's a driving way, a scenery...
especially the turning areas, going like snake, the curves, the turnings and the bends,
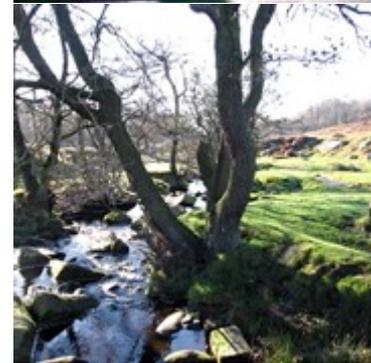the scenery, it's spectacular, like it's higher in Yemen. It's much higher, you talking three miles above the sea.

Ali, from the Yemen.

adjustment

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

"Overall, walking became a coping mechanism when I came to England when I was faced with racism... so I took up walking, there was no sea for me to go to." (Camille, Jamaica)

role of memory and imagination - expressed and experienced in place

what you see
how you relax
how you socialise

Often expressed with aspects of delight and feeling of 'fit'

May or may not include aspects of loss

Loss can also be a reflection of the paucity of the new environment

Connected to passage of time

Ahmed

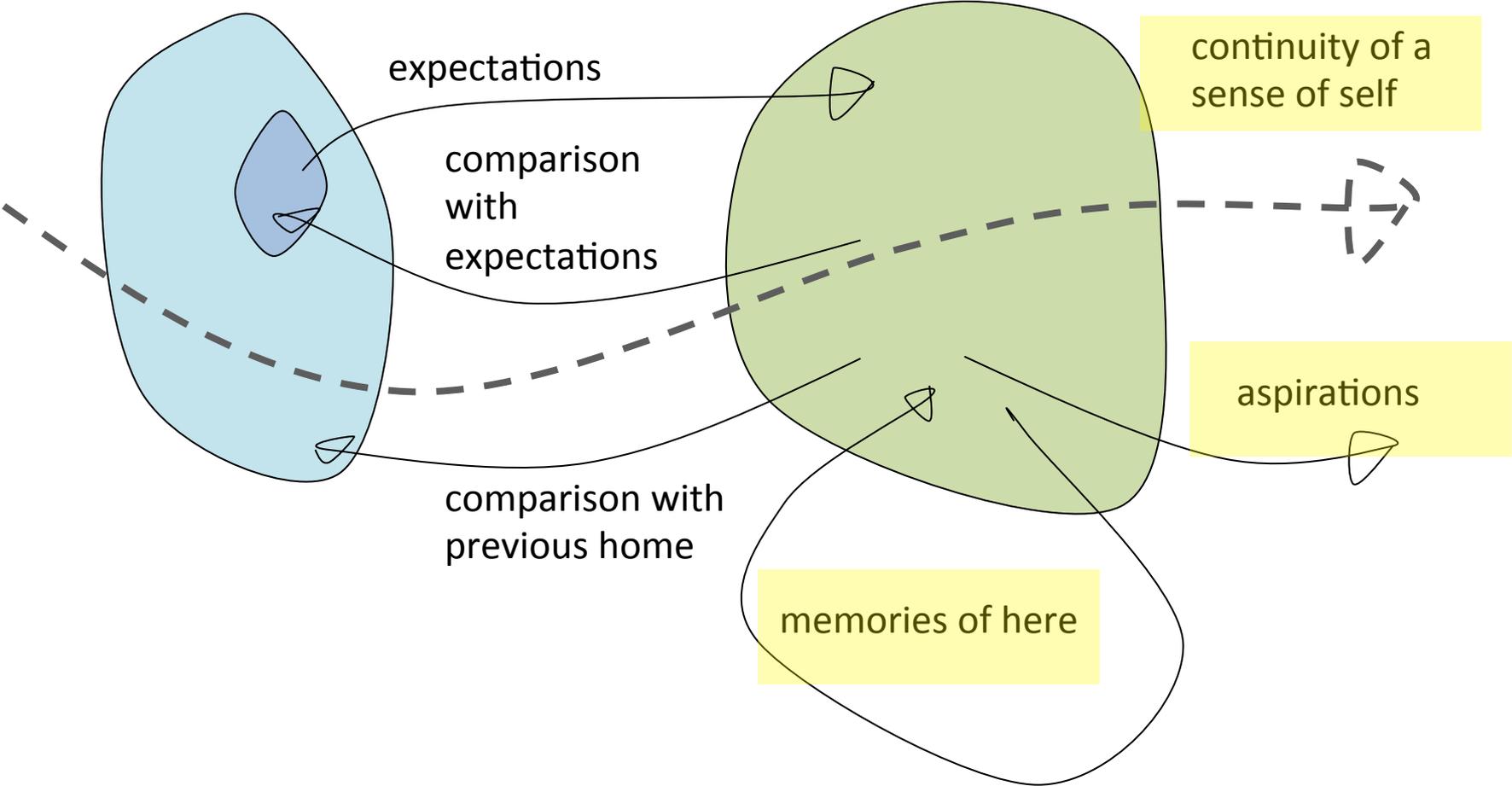A Kurdish man seeking asylum
from Iraq

Expectations: Burngreave 'not my kind of
England places'.

Continuities: playing backgammon,
affiliations within Kurdish community,
still feelings of fear and impermanence.

Aspirations: moving to different parts of
the city, new friends and connections.

Country of origin

New location of residence

expectations

comparison with expectations

comparison with previous home

continuity of a sense of self

aspirations

memories of here

"By 'city life' I mean a form of social relations which I define as the being together of strangers".
Iris Marion Young (1990)

connections and fit

Memory connections, between migrants and outdoor places.
> An emotional sensory connection can be one part of supporting a sense of local belonging, and a sense of 'fit'.

Inter-personal connections in a city of strangers.
> The visibility of migrants; the relevance of viewing and being viewed

Public space as **connecting locations**
> What's special about (urban) public space?
> How do we collectively 'fit' here when our society is (increasingly?) different?

visibility and participation

In diverse communities, what ways does being outdoors in the urban public realm reflect and shape a sense of shared belonging?

…. and /or reinforce exclusion and notions of 'the other'?

being thoughtful about normality

'Normal' can be very persuasive way of operation. Tendency to see people from non-majority backgrounds only in contrast to a tacit norm (especially given predominantly white profile of environmental sector profession).

being able to 'fit' / be ourselves in place?

In practice (and in research) stereotypes and bounded identities are commonplace.

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (author)

TED global 2009.

Exclusion is played out in the everyday life of public spaces

Idealised vs non-idealised perceptions of open space users can mirror and exacerbate patterns of broader marginalisation.

THE LUXURY OF CHOICE

WORK IN THE CITY
Liverpool Street
14 min by Crossrail

reinforcing notions of 'the other'

- Territories and practices often defined by gender and ethnicity
- 'friendliness' culturally defined
  "In Jamaica this would be seen as not having any manners" Camille.
- Poverty of environment, less choice in terms of more convivial locations.

"When you sometimes handshake, we do kiss, sometimes kiss boys on hands, that's in our culture and when people see these things and they just, it's a bit awkward and they say things to you, you know what I mean".
Khaled a Kurdish asylum seeker from Iraq

"Everything in this area is…. low level… so why would I be living in an area with low level? Sometimes… because my community live here, my people, you cannot associate with other people, and if you want to go to [a predominantly white community], you get yourself isolated and lonely… lot of people, don't think of this area as bad…. They enjoy the area, they want to be here".
Osman from Somalia.

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

Shireen from the Yemen

'who you are, who you are seen to be, how you see and how you are seen' (Rose 2003).

Being aware of hate crime, we are differently vulnerable in public space.

"It's not safe because there aren't many people around... anyone can do anything and just put you in the bush.. and people wouldn't know... I would not go there on my own". (Lamin, Liberia)

Long term residents have strong attachments to local places.
Demographic change can unsettle this.
We are often comfortable with what is familiar.

Let's not pretend this is always easy

"Complexities exist both within and between cultures. One issue for planning in culturally diverse contexts is that different cultures, sub-cultures, and generations have different assumptions and conventions about who uses public space, with whom, how, and when. Older women can feel intimidated by young people publicly socialising in large groups."
(Sofoulis *et al.* 2008, p. 79).

Planners and designers have a responsibility for "managing our co-existence in shared space" (Healey 1997, p.3) – in an era of increasing diversity this requires an agility to understand and work within divergent ideas of what constitutes 'common culture'.

Landscape Architects need to engage creatively with ethnic and cultural difference.

What's special about (urban) public space as a connecting location?

This place is absolutely marvellous. **It really gives you hope for the future.** Just look around, how many different cultures you see here. I think it's brilliant. People actually mix - you see them in their little groups and you see them saying 'hi' and 'hi' to people walking past. It's a start.

Madge (born in Scotland, living in Woolwich over 20 years).

General Gordon Square, Woolwich
Designed Gustafson Porter (2011)

it's a lot more pleasant
it's nature
and I like to look at nature

There are no such
places in Nepal.
If there is empty land
then people talk
about farming there.

While roaming
around
this park,
if you see a thousand
faces then it is good
for you.

Just enjoying the sun
and watching everyone,
being happy,
… the children are out
playing, and,
you can tell everyone is
having a good time

Wellbeing

Inclusion

Micheal (born in UK to Jamaican parents), Till Sana Rana and
Chali Kumari Thapa (Nepali), Lauren (Woolwich Albanian),
Roy (born in Trinidad and Tobago)

Your mind free… you don't try and think about any problems or
anything. You try and keep your mind occupied by looking around –
you might see somebody running, or playing or maybe some other
bits and pieces…

Shared existence

Visibility of residents

Civic, freely provided

Restorative
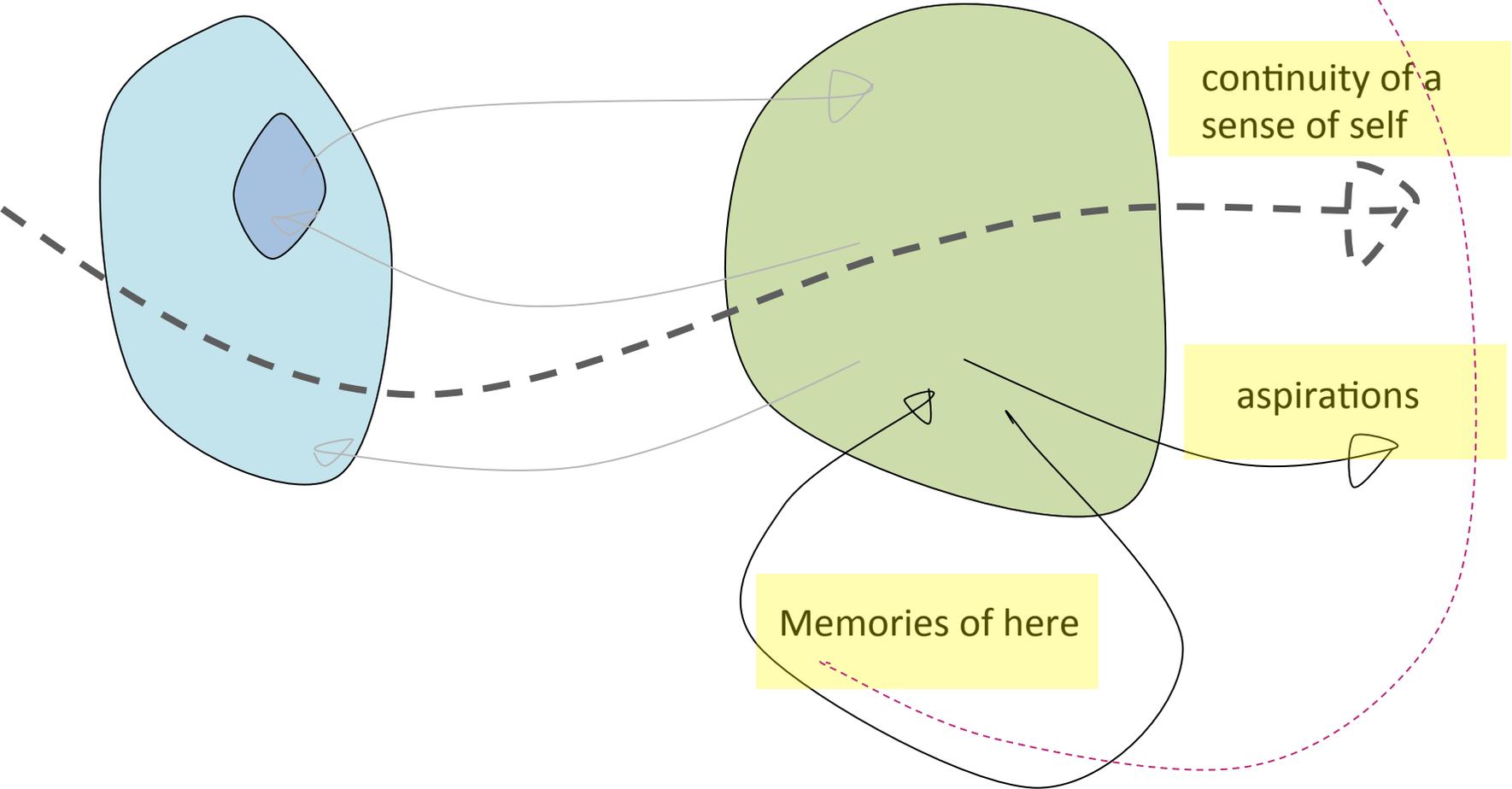
Multi-functional (adaptable to different extents)

These things are valued by most people, but may be especially important to people who are less able to access other collective spaces, have limited funds, have specific mental health challenges, are finding their own way of belonging
– intersections with (diverse) migrant experiences.

Image: Bus stop japan @popupcity

Country of origin

New location of residence

Significance of physical design and management, role of Landscape Architects

continuity of a sense of self

aspirations

Memories of here

Places of elective leisure (Neal et al, 2015) can give a sense of commonality through mutual choice... we all choose to be here.
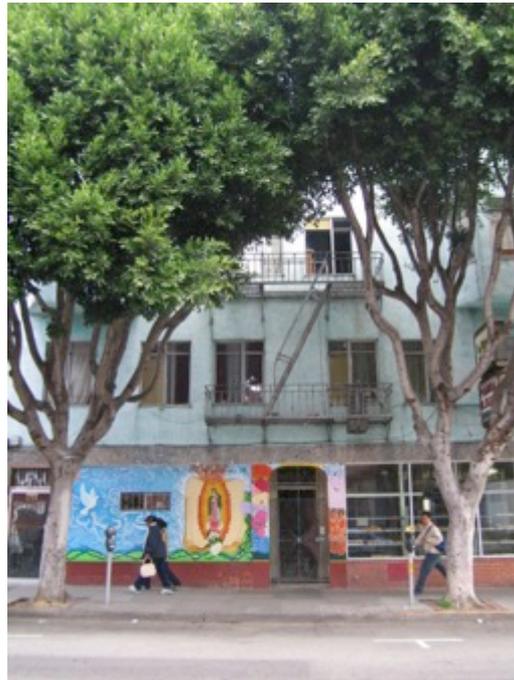- Where participation is straightforward (and comfortable)
- That are robust and 'clean enough' so it's easier to be tolerant of less usual behaviours
- Where there is a basic level of safety

Landscape Architects can design places people want to spent time: legible, comfortable, hospitable, robust.

aspirations

That allow people to try out different ways of 'fitting'

Landscape Architects can design and manage outdoor places to be activity rich: adaptable, accommodating diverse activities, flexible over time, responsive rather than prescriptive.

continuity of a sense of self

That are experientially rich, that provide new layers of memories, and 'ways in' to developing a sense of local belonging.

Landscape Architecture commits to the 'here' – the distinctive sensory and experiential qualities of each place. But we also understand that cultural landscapes are many-layered and engage with multiple stories, different representations and interpretations. Times of change are opportunities to refresh and expand our engagement with places... if we listen carefully.

memories of here

Thank you!

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Research related websites:
The Bench Project: www.the-bench-project.weebly.com
Walking Voices: www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk