Community in the consumptionscape?

Exploring social relations of spaces of consumption in Bristol (United Kingdom) and the West Bank (occupied Palestinian territory, oPt)

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Award date:
2022

Awarding institution:
Coventry University

Community in the consumptionscape? Exploring social relations *of* spaces of consumption in Bristol (United Kingdom) and the West Bank (occupied Palestinian territory, oPt)

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2022

For my dad. I would have loved you here for this.
And for Max and Hannah. You hold the future.

ABSTRACT

This research explores how we live together in heterogeneous societies. Despite a call to recognise the economic, political, and social structures that influence lived experiences, analyses of social relations have often situated heterogeneity at the micro-level of everyday encounters, with research presenting the contexts of everyday life and spaces of consumption as a background to social relations. Such a stance can be summarised as positioning social relations *in* spaces of consumption. This dissertation builds on and complements previous research by positioning these everyday spaces as social actors with a prefigurative and productive role in shaping how social relations develop and unfold within them. The dissertation seeks to explore the role of spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations. Here I explore the nature and types of social relations that become mediated via spaces of consumption using a qualitative critical research approach across two case studies: Bristol in the United Kingdom (UK) and the West Bank in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). These form the basis from which I explore and critically contextualise social relations against their settings of consumption, via processes of meaning-making and contestation. The findings of this dissertation show that spaces of consumption act as spaces of opportunity, as spaces of marginalisation or alienation, and as spaces of exclusion, translating into a multi-faceted and contradictory mosaic of what I refer to as the social relations *of* spaces of consumption. A critique is offered of how social relations emerge and unfold in everyday spaces and how consumption practices signify (as well as create) divergent lived experiences. The lens of the consumptionscape has allowed me to consider the horizontal axes of connection and encounters, as well as the vertical axes of differentiation and power that prefigure and produce social relations. The dissertation thus offers a critical lens for understanding how people coexist in heterogeneous societies in the contexts of their everyday lives.

FUNDING AND PUBLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> Worauf es mir ankommt, ist der Denkprozess selber. Wenn ich das habe, bin ich persönlich ganz zufrieden. (What is important to me is the thinking process itself. If I have that, then I feel contented.) – Hannah Arendt (1964)

To the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University. Thank you for funding my dissertation, and for granting me study periods alongside my work.

The fieldwork of the Palestinian case study was funded through the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme. Thank you to Chuck Thiessen, Alp Özerdem and Mufid Qassoum for involving me in their project 'Perspectives of Conflict Transformation from the Middle East and Europe' (CTMEE, project identifier: 295036).

In the early days of the PhD, I received Erasmus funding through Coventry University's international mobility scheme to visit Stockholm University. During that time, I was able to attend a workshop "Geographies of Consumption: on spaces and places of consumption' that have deeply shaped my thinking. Thank you to Andrea Lucarelli, Massimo Giovarnardi and Maira Lopes, then at Stockholm Business School, for making my attendance possible. I also received CTPSR funding to attend three doctoral workshops: 'Introduction to Consumer Research' (The European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management, Brussels), 'The Politics of Consumption' (University of London, Royal Holloway), and 'Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis' (University of Birmingham). I am grateful to have attended these as they temporarily gave me a flair of a more traditional PhD journey. This was alongside the vast amount of learning that they facilitated.

The reflections on positionality in chapter 3, section 3.9 partially build on two of my publications: Bröckerhoff & Kipnis (2014) and Kipnis, Bebek & Bröckerhoff (2021). The West Bank case study in chapter 5 partially builds on two of my publications: Bröckerhoff & Qassoum (2021) and Bröckerhoff (2017)[1].

[1] My original surname is spelt Bröckerhoff. Given the lack of umlauts in the English language, I have in the early days published both under the names of Broeckerhoff and Bröckerhoff. While the latter represents the original, German spelling of my name, the former is common when the umlaut option is not available. In such instances, it is conventional of extending umlauts, whereby 'ö' becomes 'oe'. More recently, I felt that original name spellings are important even when less accessible. I wanted to publish under the German 'ö' spelling of my name, rather than the more accessible 'oe' version which I had sometimes previously adopted. As such, I have adopted the 'Bröckerhoff' spelling throughout the dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research is not only a product of its time, it is also in parts a document of the researcher's journey. In this sense, a doctoral journey is at the same time contribution to knowledge, and to its time, as well as a personal growth process (Reason and Marshall, 1987). I have worked on my dissertation for nearly a decade. In that decade, I became a mother to two children, my biggest life transition and 'accomplishment' yet. I have also travelled to 19 countries, sometimes repeatedly, sometimes for extended periods. Each journey opened new lenses of and in the world, before that travel became virtual during the pandemic. The critical theorist Walter Benjamin (1892 - 1940) once said about his seminal decade-long *Passagenewerk* (Arcades Project) that it was the theatre of all his struggles and all his ideas. This sentiment of research being the site of endless creativity, effort, care and despair resonates with my own PhD journey. I would not have gotten to this point were it not for the support of those around me.

Heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors (present and past): Mike Hardy and Eva Kipnis, you have supported me personally and professionally throughout. You have always encouraged me to think more deeply and creatively. Eva, I would not be on this journey had you not encouraged me to give it a go. Mike, I thank you for always reminding me of the grounding 'so what?' of my research. Catherine Demangeot and Marylyn Carrigan, your structured minds and clarity of thought remain an inspiration. Thank you to my examiners, Professor Suzi Hall and Professor Jim Berry for their valuable contribution.

Thank you to the colleagues at CTPSR who have journeyed with me. Special shout out to Dan, Laura and Tom – I have lost count of the times you have brought me back on track. I hope we continue PhD Writing together well beyond the PhD journey. Mahmoud, Marwan and Patricia – I have been so grateful for your guidance, inspiration and support. My academic peers have repeatedly reignited my passions and motivations, not least because they finished their PhDs before me! Maira Lopes, my academic soul mate, so glad we've journeyed together since the start; Usva Inei (Seregina), Cristina Galalae and Mikko Laamanen: thank you for the fun, the intellectual stimulus, the side projects! I owe you much.

The people in Bristol and in the West Bank who so generously shared their spaces, their time, their experiences, their thoughts, their networks. You have inspired me in so many ways, and I hope to have done your generosity and experiences justice!

To keep going through difficult patches would not have been possible without the love of friends and family. Talking, walking, wild swimming, drinking tea & wine, making music and dancing in kitchens (when that was allowed) & (Zoom) hangouts… They all have filled my cup so many times. Thank you, Bristol friends, (ex)-London friends, Germany friends and friends further afield. Special thanks to Jana & Mona, Jess & Mel, the Prosecco Friday crew, the Friendsmas gang & Luke, Sören & Lisa, Si & Chloë & kids, Kate & Yoli & families, the Kortmanns & Kortmeiers. You are a wonderful lot!

To all the Froglets, thank you for listening to or distracting me from my dissertation, for holidays and hot tubs, yoga (acrobatics), late nights, and general fun and games. I am so lucky, you are special! A special thank you to Mo ("nannie") and Pete ("grandpa") for all the child-free time, and for all the moral support.

Mama, Gix & his crew Lena, Leo, Bela, Greta, Janne, Jona…– merci merci, danke danke. Ihr habt mich immer unterstützt und wusstet auch, wenn es einfach mal besser war, keine Fragen zur Doktorarbeit zu stellen. Papa, auf der Strecke war ich doch häufiger unorganisiert und verwirrt ohne dich. Ich bin mir sicher du wärst in diesem Moment ziemlich stolz!

Richard, you deserve all the thank yous in the world, for everything. Child-free hours, an ear for ideas and rants; a cheerleader, sounding board, proofreader, IT service, and provider of musical relaxation… Your portfolio of support skills and patience has grown considerably these past few years! Needless to say, I wouldn't have made it without you.

Max and Hannah – you bring so much joy (and noise) into our lives every day! Maybe one day, you will want to read this dissertation. Hopefully, you'll be positively surprised at how far we have come in creating a more just world in that time. When it's your time for your own adventures, I'll share some of my doctoral experiences that have taught me that trying things on unfamiliar ground is hard, but that perseverance makes you feel strong and grounded. Also, you are never alone in your journey. Your people will love and support you when you reach your limits!

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAUJ	Arab American University Jenin
ATG	Alternative Tourism Group
BDS	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
CTPSR	Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations
EU	European Union
EU-EEAS	European Union – European External Action (Diplomatic) Service
ICD	Intercultural dialogue
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ippr	Institute of Public Policy Research
JIFZ	Jenin Industrial Free Zone
oPt	Occupied Palestinian territory
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PRSC	People's Republic of Stokes Croft
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USA	United States of America

LIST OF IMAGES

All pictures were taken during the fieldwork for each case study. Pictures in the West Bank were taken in May and June 2015. Pictures in Bristol were taken between September 2015 and March 2017.

LIST OF FIGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

> After hearing quite different accounts of people's experiences at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank, I am unsure what to expect as my friends' car snakes its way out of heavy Ramallah traffic towards the West Bank's Qalandia checkpoint just outside Jerusalem. As we get close, I am surprised to see a huge advertising billboard, towering over the gridlocked traffic. I notice street vendors offering their wares to people waiting in queues, in cars, or on foot. People are getting in and out of the queuing cars, taxis, and buses, or walking along the street in between idling vehicles. Some are buying fruit, coffee, or ingredients for a meal.
>
> Alongside this everyday activity, there is a security barrier, about three metres high, with its watchtowers, armed guards, and security contractors surveying and patrolling the area; there are long metal tunnels and gateways in which people are queueing for their papers to be checked by Israeli border officials. Were it not for this visible heightened security presence amidst the commercial bustle, I might think I was approaching a busy train station, airport, or even market.
>
> (Bröckerhoff, 2017, p.166)

Qalandia checkpoint is an Israeli military checkpoint that separates Ramallah from Palestinian territory in Jerusalem and further south of the West Bank. It is surrounded by military walls and towers that imposingly surround the street and its main approach. Qalandia requires people to wait in queues, so that they can show their identification and travel papers to Israeli border officials before they can continue their journey. While they are waiting, people are engaging in everyday shopping activities, such as buying ingredients for a meal or purchasing a hot drink or a snack from a multitude of street vendors. Alongside its designed purpose, Qalandia checkpoint has a thriving micro-economy for consumption (Tawil-Souri, 2009). Considering its wider context, it is one of the more unexpected spaces of consumption I have encountered. What this example from Qalandia checkpoint shows is that spaces of consumption can, and do, crop up everywhere.

Spaces of consumption are spaces that are destined for consumption (Costa, 2009, p.181). They are first and foremost economic spaces in which monetary and goods exchanges and transactions take place. To facilitate this economic exchange, spaces of consumption bring people into contact. This makes them also social spaces. They provide opportunities to bring people together in a shared space. This can happen across social differences, because people join that space for a shared purpose. Glennie and Thrift (1996) describe spaces of consumption as

> basic everyday ways in which people relate to one another and maintain an atmosphere of normality, even in the midst of antagonisms based on gender, race, class or other social fractures ... it consists of a 'contact' or tactile community built up from the solidarity and reciprocity of everyday life (pp. 226-227)

Qalandia's micro-economy is an example of this bringing together of heterogeneous people into a shared physical space, and for the shared purposes of crossing the checkpoint and organising daily life. Because of their dual economic as well as social dimensions, spaces of consumption are important to urban life. They supply, as well as produce value, experiences and meaning to those who engage in them.

Spaces of consumption are also spaces of global capitalism (Harvey, 2006) that manifest and reproduce a neoliberal logic into everyday life (Miles, 2012). Neoliberalism is at the same time a project of political economy and of ideology: it expands market structures and mechanisms into all areas of society, executing the cultural power of market rationality in areas way beyond the economic realm (Wilson, 2018). Spaces of consumption replicate and manifest this market rationality at the everyday level and they to a certain degree institutionalise a neoliberal social order (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018). Spaces of consumption thus render neoliberal capitalism meaningful to how people experience their everyday lives.

To complicate matters, across these three dimensions, spaces of consumption also have different manifestations: physical, symbolic and lived (Soja, 1996). In their physical manifestation, they are the places we go shopping (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013), they are buildings and streets, bricks and mortar, the material culture and material realities of the space. In their symbolic manifestation, they are the systems of signification, of imaginations and symbols, of meaning-making and social productions as well as their contestations. In their lived manifestation, these processes of social representation, production and

contestation are interpreted and enacted against the everyday unfolding of life in spaces of consumption (Miles, 2010; Wrigley & Lowe, 2014). As a result of their dimensions and manifestations (Fig. 1), spaces of consumption create boundaries of how people experience and live in the spaces of their everyday lives (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013). They are thus central to the emergence and unfolding of social relations.

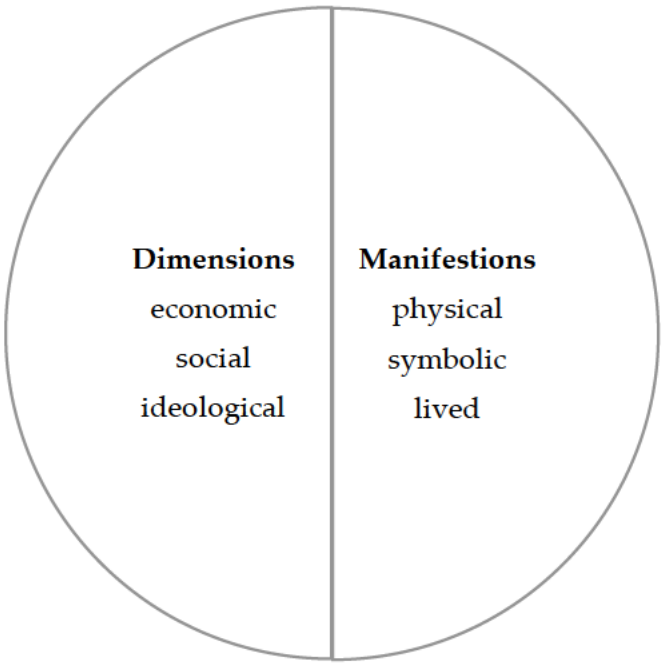


Figure 1: Dimensions and manifestations of spaces of consumption in social life

In sum, consumption spaces contain three important interconnected dimensions – economic, social and ideological – that matter to social relations. Combined with their different manifestations, consumption spaces can reflect and make visible how people in local geographies relate to each other across everyday encounters, but also how people are situated within systems of power and differentiation in a society. Across this complex matrix of dimensions and manifestations, consumption spaces have a role in creating and producing social relations. Social relations are made up of the horizontal connections and relationships between people, as well as the vertical emplacements of people in the wider structures of society. Spaces of consumption and their role in producing and framing social relations are the topic of this dissertation.

Again, the micro-economy at Qalandia represents this. It highlights the entrepreneurialism of Palestinians to utilise the traffic that the checkpoint generates to develop a new centre for commerce and consumption (Tawil-Souri, 2009). Yet, the micro-economy of Qalandia checkpoint also represents how far-reaching market rationality has come in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt[2]). After all, Qalandia is still a space of the military occupation. As a space of consumption, however, Qalandia also provides a space that facilitates local economic and social life to take place. This latter role may obscure the control that emanates from this space of the occupation, thus also giving the space a political dimension (Bröckerhoff, 2017).

Finally, and as my reflection of visiting Qalandia checkpoint at the start of this section indicates, spaces of consumption emerge wherever people come together, even if it happens against a backdrop of disparity, conflict and occupation. Alongside their societal relevance, the ubiquitousness of spaces of consumption makes them pertinent to research that seeks to explore how people in heterogeneous societies coexist in the spaces of their everyday lives.

1.1 Consumptionscapes, collective spaces of consumption

Studying spaces of consumption offers opportunities to explore experiences of belonging via the heterogeneous encounters that they facilitate, while also considering the way in which people are vertically embedded in and through spaces of everyday life.

Spaces of consumption come in many shapes and sizes. At times, they consist of individual retail units, such as shops, boutiques, supermarkets, cafés, restaurants. These retail units are important spaces for local communities (Wrigley & Lowe, 2014). They provide livelihoods and satisfy everyday needs for local communities. They also act as third

[2] I have chosen to adopt 'occupied Palestinian territory', or short 'oPt', a commonly used terminology in academic and policy fields, which specifically denotes the geographical areas of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. All three areas are classified as 'occupied' in international law. Whether or not, and to what extent Palestinians or Israelis have a right to the geography that encompasses historical Palestine is one of the main fault lines of the conflict. The choice of oPt over other names thus draws attention the ongoing tensions underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinian geography has been contested – and fragmented – over the course of the occupation. This fragmentation frequently operates through the building of Israeli settlements in parts of Palestinian territory. Settlements are considered illegal under international law. The use of the singular 'territory', rather than 'territories' thus represents a partially political choice that references this ongoing fragmentation of Palestinian geography and seeks to contribute to a more cohesive understanding of Palestinians. Occupied Palestinian territory is also commonly used by international bodies, such as the UN, UNOCHA, UNRWA, EU- EEAS, and the ICJ.

places – away from home and from work – in which people may meet (Ferreira et al., 2021). Such meetings can constitute fleeting encounters with others that don't equate to any in depth or meaningful engagements, but rather (or still) make us aware of the people with whom we share our everyday spaces (Blokland, 2017). Individual units such as these, come and go, sometimes ephemerally, sometimes longitudinally inscribing themselves onto the fabric of local communities.

Spaces of consumption also come in larger units. These collective spaces of consumption can take the shape of shopping streets, malls, markets, and so on. So long as they hold multiple retail units of potentially differential purposes – for example, shops and boutiques coexist with cafés and restaurants – they play a significant role in local communities (Hall, 2021; Miles, 2012; Zukin et al., 2016b). These more large-scale groupings of consumption spaces encourage people to spend more time in them and to consume more, turning city spaces into 'landscapes of consumption' (Zukin, 1991). The relevance of spaces of consumption increases, when they coalesce into larger units, as these landscapes of consumption provide more opportunities to develop the three dimensions – economic, social and ideological – in the local settings in which they operate.

What comes together in these landscapes of consumption consists of material and immaterial aspects, cutting across all three manifestations and dimensions of spaces of consumption, but operating at a larger scale (Miles, 2010; Ryan, 2015). As economic spaces, they provide more livelihoods and generate more economic value in local communities. As social spaces, they bring more people together across their differences and for various shared purposes. And as ideological spaces, they make meaningful the values of entrepreneurialism, market rationality and consumption to the social fabric of communities, and to the production and unfolding of everyday life (Ger & Belk, 1996). They do this at a larger scale than the individual spaces of consumption, which means their significance also increases with their growing size and expansion.

The collective arrangement of consumption spaces has been referred to as the 'consumptionscape'. Consumptionscapes are assemblages of consumption – meaning they bring together, practices, materials and discourses of markets and consumption (Canniford & Bajde, 2015). They are assemblages of structures, behaviours and meanings that frame everyday spaces of consumption (Ger & Belk, 1996). They become the local nexus of global

flows, a space where people, practices, material objects and ideas merge within local neighbourhoods, towns and cities (Urry, 2007). As assemblages of consumption, they are "temporary amalgamations of heterogeneous material and semiotic elements, amongst which capacities and actions emerge not as properties of individual elements, but through the relationships established between them" (Canniford & Bajde, 2015, p.1).

Conceiving them as assemblages means that the boundaries of consumptionscapes are fluid and constructed. Their fluidity and negotiated character means that despite their transnational character as spaces of global capitalism, they manifest in ways that reflect the local places in which they emerge, as well as the institutional settings of those places (Eckhart & Mahi, 2004). Within those places, consumptionscapes produce and reflect vectors of connection and discontinuity across time and space (Kärrholm, 2012). While consumptionscapes are at the same time a transnationally embedded phenomenon, their manifestations are also hyper local and embedded in everyday lived realities.

In their localised and everyday manifestations, people are more easily encouraged to experience consumptionscapes as coherent (Canniford & Bajde, 2015; Kärrholm, 2012). Besides the local logics that embed consumptionscapes into everyday life, their individual parts are also held together by a logic of consumption that transcends their localised character (Ger & Belk, 1996). Cycles of adaptation, re-appropriation and interpretation within local consumptionscapes enhance the opportunity of the consumption logic to either act as a glue that holds them together or to open up opportunities for meaning-making and contestation (Eckhard & Mahi, 2004). As a result, consumptionscapes can appear as cohesive to lived experiences, while also disrupting the processes and dynamics that manifest the role of consumption practices and spaces into everyday life.

This focus on the processes and dynamics opens up opportunities for research into how social relations unfold in the spaces of consumption of heterogeneous societies. Framing spaces of consumption as dynamic and procedural, means they allow to consider how social relations emerge and unfold within them, rather than seeing social relations as relatively static and given. The focus on consumptionscapes for an understanding of social relations allows to consider experiences of belonging via the heterogeneous encounters that they facilitate, while at the same time considering how lived experiences become vertically embedded through these spaces of everyday life. This focuses research on belonging and

cohesion as it emerges from encounters in everyday spaces, while also considering the systems and structures of power and differentiation that shape them. The social relations that emerge within consumptionscapes are in a dynamic relationship with the production of social relations emanating from them as a result of these processes of meaning-making and contestation. How people experience this dynamic relationship creates the foundations for understanding the social relations of spaces of consumption[3] in this dissertation.

1.2 Significance of the research

Consumptionscapes as assemblages thus reflect and produce horizontal and vertical entanglements of people with each other and in their everyday spaces. They are pertinent to the study of social relations because they are implicated in increasing the exposure to difference and creating spaces in which people come together across differences. Difference has often been considered as a coming together of people across divergent backgrounds, experiences and identity markers. But difference need not be restricted to that. It can also consider the coming together of material things, images, ideas and discourses, alongside the coming together of people (Appadurai, 1990). This exposure to difference has increased significantly in recent years against a backdrop of global flows (Appadurai, 1996) and mobilities (Urry, 2007). As a result, spaces of consumption around the world are heterogeneous amalgamations of people, discourses and things (Demangeot et al., 2015).

Research engagement has taken differential stances towards the impact of difference on how people experience community and belonging. While some academic debates have focused on the potential opportunities and conflicts that emerge from diverse others sharing everyday spaces of social life, other academic work has attempted to show how people in their everyday lives are able to navigate such increased exposure to ethnic, cultural and racial diversity unceremoniously and successfully by placing research in the everyday spaces of urban social life. I discuss these stances in chapter 2.

This latter work has focused especially on places of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007) – where levels of population heterogeneity have not only increased, but forms of differences, and processes of differentiation have also multiplied. In these places, people encounter

[3] Unless otherwise specified, throughout the dissertation, 'spaces of consumption', 'consumption space' and 'consumptionscape' are used interchangeably to denote this collective manifestation.

difference as a regular aspect of their everyday lives (e.g., Neal et al., 2019a; Wise, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009). Often this work has specifically focused on the role of ethnic, racial and cultural markers in understanding experiences of community and belonging, and how ethnic, racial and cultural diversity shapes the overall emergence of social cohesion. Research into everyday encounters with ethnic, cultural and racial difference in everyday spaces has illustrated the many ways in which people are successfully able to negotiate social relations across lines of difference, often in banal and proficient ways within their everyday spaces.

Spaces of consumption have constituted an important aspect of this research that seeks to understand better how people experience community and belonging (e.g., Zukin, 1991; Zukin et al., 2016a). Much of this research presents consumption spaces as opportunity structures for intercultural exchanges, because of their bringing together of people across differences for a shared purpose. In this work, spaces such as shopping streets and shops (e.g., Hall, 2012, 2015; Zukin et al., 2016a), markets (e.g., Hiebert et al., 2014; Rhys-Taylor, 2013;), pubs (Thurnell-Read, 2021) and coffee shops (Ferreira et al., 2021) are all important contexts in which encounters take place. Interactions in spaces of consumption are explored for how they can aggregate up to how people experience community and belonging (McNeil & Cherti, 2012). This body of research has studied the emergence and unfolding of social relations that take place in these spaces of consumption, at times presenting the spaces of consumption as backdrops to the research.

Critics of this work have highlighted the lack of engagement with structural issues that frame and shape social relations (Sealy, 2018; Valentine, 2008) and their lack of engagement with vertical lines of differentiation (Valluvan, 2016; Yuval-Davies, 2006). In this research, the spaces of consumption are not critically engaged beyond them forming a context for social relations. This research does not question the role that consumptionscapes play in framing and facilitating the nature and type of social relations that emerge within them. As a result, so far, this work has produced limited analysis and findings that speak to the way in which horizontal and vertical dynamics that constitute social relations become embedded in spaces of consumption, and how conversely, consumptionscapes produce social relations that manifest those dynamics into everyday life, via experiences of belonging and exclusion.

Framing studies solely in everyday lived experiences without considering how these experiences have come about risks underplaying not only the politics that underpin experiences of belonging and cohesion (Sealy, 2018; Yuval-Davies, 2006). They also risk downplaying the politics that are embedded in spaces of consumption (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011; *ephemera,* 2013). Research – to which I am contributing – is beginning to show how spaces of consumption create normativities that shape lived experiences (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Varman & Vijay, 2018; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018) and that these are important considerations in understanding their importance to the fabric of society (e.g., Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015; Grier & Perry, 2018; Hall, 2021; Kennedy, 2020).

The dissertation contributes to such work by exploring how consumptionscapes produce vertical entanglements. Especially those that emanate from the neoliberal underpinnings that shape the emergence of modern consumptionscapes, and a result manifest the core tenets of neoliberal rationality into everyday life (Graeber, 2011). In neoliberal capitalist rationality, contributions to the economy are both practically and ideologically elevated over other valuable input into society (Brown, 2005). This risks subjugating social formations to the structures, roles and practices of market-mediation, thus elevating the perpetuation of consumption systems and practices above the maintenance of social bonds. As a result of such complexities, researchers have long called for studying the impact of neoliberal capitalism on social relations and cohesiveness in heterogeneous societies (Duggan, 2003; Lentin & Titley, 2011).

My research responds to such calls and considers the consumptionscape as a lynchpin from which to explore neoliberal social relations. I consider consumptionscapes as spaces that reflect the institutionalised social order of neoliberal capitalism and manifest it into everyday life. At the same time, they are also everyday spaces in which horizontal encounters between people emerge.

One of the reasons that research in this area has been limited to date is that many of the studies have separated out the social and cultural dimensions of 'community' and social relations from the economic or political dimensions. Meaning that they have considered one or the other, rather than combining analyses of both (e.g., Dinesen et al., 2020). Consumptionscapes offer research settings in which these economic and political contributions to society can mingle with the social and cultural dimensions that these spaces

also represent. Consumptionscapes may thus provide linkages between these dimensions, that may even allow researchers to transcend the dichotomies of the economic/political and cultural/social dimensions of social relations (Granovetter, 2017; Jackson, 2002; McDowell, 2000). Viewing consumptionscapes as assemblages that reflect and produce vertical and horizontal entanglements and experiences of social relations allows an engagement with both the experiences as well as the politics of belonging and cohesion that constitute social relations.

1.3 Background to the research

In 2012 – the year I began my doctoral journey – the Institute of Public Policy Research (ippr) in the UK launched a report outlining the contours of 'everyday integration' (McNeil & Cherti, 2012). It was launched at a time when social policy approaches to managing social life in heterogeneous societies addressed the impact of increased migration and diversification in society and considered to mitigate their respective impacts (e.g., Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007; Council of Europe, 2008; Modood, 2007; Neal et al., 2013, 2018; Sealy, 2018).

Frequently, the focus for policy at the time was on managing ethnic, racial and cultural differences, by focusing on the promotion of (structured) contact to avoid social tensions and conflict (Sealy, 2018). Against this background, the *Rethinking Integration* report presented a marked shift away from such thinking and focus. By presenting areas of everyday life as opportunity structures for fostering spontaneous, informal social exchange, the authors argued that policy attention should shift towards encouraging these everyday encounters that were a by-product of people going about their everyday lives. These informal exchanges were already happening in everyday life and did not need to be created.

This shift from concerted or coordinated forms of contact to spontaneous informal contact that is already happening in the contexts of everyday life gave rise to another change: the idea that social relations are not something that results from people's individual or collective identities, but that social relations emerge as people go about their everyday tasks. Community is not something given, but something that is practiced or performed (Blokland, 2017). This is in line with the more dynamic conceptualisation of social relations, that break with the idea that social life is constituted of (relatively fixed) ethnic, racial and

cultural groups in a mostly static way. Instead, it focuses on an understanding of social connections that emerge between people as a result of daily encounters.

Moving away from these relatively fixed identities also extends the gaze of social relations beyond the assumed strong bonds that have been suggested to exist between people who share ethnic, racial or cultural identity markers and kinship (Granovetter, 1973; Tönnies, [1887]2005;). This is a view that has underpinned diversity studies for a very long time (Dinnie & Fischer, 2019). Instead, social relations become about looser arrangements of people who are connected and interdependent as they share everyday spaces with each other.

The report was representative of a wider shift that was happening at academic and policy levels at that time and its core messages were transformative in the context of this dissertation. It inspired my own shift away from research focused on ethnic, racial and cultural identity and the roles and opportunities for intercultural exchange or contact interventions. It moved me closer to the focus on social relations and everyday spaces (Neal et al., 2013, 2018). This was a body of work that I was yet to become familiar with at the start of the dissertation.

While the report was incredibly influential to me, I now, at the end of my research, also consider its arguments limited. First, the authors still give prevalence to the role of ethnicity, race and culture in social relations. In the context of consumption, they also only highlight people's consumption practices, without considering the spaces in which such practices take place. The report presents these consumption practices as what Colic-Peisker and Robertson (2015) have termed 'multicultural connectors' (p.80), meaning it positioned them as opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to learn about each other and to bridge their cultural differences. To me, the report did not go far enough in proposing to explore how differences – ethnic, cultural, racial, and other – become meaningful and lived in systems of differentiation in the first place, as it lacked critical engagement with spaces of consumption.

It focused on the opportunities for horizontal encounters between people mediated via consumption, without necessarily proposing to explore how everyday spaces in general, and consumption spaces more specifically, embed people vertically in society. Ethnic, racial and cultural identities are just one aspect of a person's situatedness in society. A focus on

social relations considers the entanglements of people more holistically across a range of experiences in and *of* everyday spaces of consumption (Demangeot et al., 2015; Hall & Lamont, 2013), allowing to explore the vertical and horizontal components that make for a cohesive society (Baylis et al., 2019). Addressing this limitation of existing academic and policy work became a foundational motivation for this research.

1.4 Motivation for the research

My research was, and continues to be, motivated by my personal and professional experiences that have built towards an interest of how people coexist across differences, and of what makes for positive experiences of belonging and social cohesion. I am interested in understanding the way in which social relations emerge when they are mediated via consumptionscapes. I want to explore how those social relations are social formations *of* spaces of consumption as much as they are social formations *in* spaces of consumption. Over the course of my journey, this desire has brought me to analyse social relations in everyday spaces of consumption.

As a result of this interest, over the years, the importance of consumptionscapes in my thinking grew. I increasingly saw them as producing the ground rules and boundaries for experiences of community and belonging. I wanted to show that consumptionscapes were not merely passive containers or backdrops for social relations, but rather actively involved in staking out the ground on which social relations unfold. I wanted to explore their productive and prefigurative role in social relations.

But this is not where I began. Initially, my aim was to conduct an ethnographic study into the experiences of ethnic, racial and cultural difference in a consumptionscape at a point in time when it was undergoing rapid urban change. Specifically, I wanted to understand how people experienced community and belonging amid the change, focusing on how the pace of the urban change itself was affecting social relations in a heterogeneous consumption space. Yet, as I began research in Bristol asking questions about social cohesion and change, people did not want to talk to me about diversity. They wanted to talk about 'gentrification'.

This came alongside some of my own experiences of working in diversity policy. Our team would support local governments in the UK in developing their social cohesion and

integration strategies. As part of that work, we would hold meetings and focus groups with local government and community representatives to discuss community tensions or 'diversity problems' in the local area. Once, such work took me to a town in Lincolnshire for a week. The town had been repeatedly in the news because of its rapid diversification and influx of migrant workers. The local council were seeking expert input on the management of this change, with the dual goal of restoring cohesive social relations and remedying the city's image.

During one of the discussions with this local council and its partners, I experienced what might be described as a eureka moment, a pertinent point of learning that shaped the future of my academic practice (Cunliffe, 2016). The town was situated in a deprived and agricultural area. The farming sector relied heavily on seasonal work and, by consequence, on seasonal workers to support the local economy. While, according to our discussants, such seasonal work might have fallen to people in the local area or British seasonal workers in the past, now migrant workers were making up a large part of the labour force. Yet, during the whole time we were in the city, the agribusinesses, who were relying on and thus bringing seasonal workers into the town, were not part of the discussions. How could a town that seemingly struggled to come to grips with the rapid diversification not include the actors that had created its necessity? Was the crisis maybe not a crisis of social cohesion in the first place, but rather a crisis of (local) economic labour markets with impacts on the local community? I was considering this the whole time we were there, as the local agricultural businesses and the wider business community continued to be missing from the social cohesion focus groups and meetings that took place, as if they were a separate, unrelated entity.

I then had the opportunity to go to the West Bank in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to conduct research into the consumer boycott as part of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. The BDS is a Palestinian economic resistance movement that calls, amongst other things, for the boycott of Israeli goods and services as a means for expressing opposition to the Israeli military occupation of Palestinians. At the time that I went, the BDS movement was heavily invested not only in campaigns to boycott the occupier, but also in campaigns for economic sovereignty, justice, and empowerment (Qmsiyeh, 2017). At the same time as extending its remit and scope, the BDS movement was

struggling to recruit Palestinian people to take part in their campaigns (Darweish & Rigby, 2015).

In that research, I was trying to understand why people were not participating in the consumer actions of the BDS boycotts. In my conversations in the West Bank, people were not only sharing their stories and thoughts on consumer activism. They were often talking about the type of society that they now lived in following the liberalisation of the Palestinian economy with the Oslo Accords peace negotiations in the early 1990s. They talked about social solidarity and togetherness, and about the growing role of consumption phenomena and spaces in their daily lives, and about a sense of power and agency (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021). What emerged was that liberalisation had not only transformed attitudes and behaviours towards consumer activism, but also experiences of community and belonging in the marketising West Bank (Bröckerhoff, 2017).

It is at this point that I was beginning to make links between the stories I was hearing in the West Bank, with the conversations I had been having to date in Bristol. Both cases also resonated with my assessment of the literature to date, where studies had often discussed the cultural dimensions of social cohesion, while being much more limited in considerations of its economic dimensions (Baylis et al., 2019). This in turn matched my own experiences of advising the local government of the town relying on the agricultural sector and migrant workers, where businesses were not involved in discussing the social life and social cohesion of the town. I realised I was becoming interested in what some scholars have called the 'awkward relationship' between the economic and the cultural dimensions of social relations (McDowell, 2000, p.15). And that's when I decided that I would like to unpack people's experiences of community and belonging in the consumptionscapes across the two settings of Bristol and the West Bank. More specifically, I wanted to understand how consumptionscapes as economic, social and ideological spaces were mediators as well as spaces of convergence and transcendence of these two spheres (Jackson, 2002).

This then motivated me to explore experiences of community and belonging across the two very different contexts of Bristol in the United Kingdom (UK) and two cities – Jenin and Beit Sahour – of the West Bank in West Bank. At the beginning of my PhD journey, I was more interested in encounters with cultural difference per se, and the opportunities that emerged from intercultural exchanges in spaces of consumption for fostering belonging and

social cohesion. Yet, as my journey progressed and my experience grew, my motivations had changed.

Bringing these two case study sites into conversation with each other, I wanted my research to speak to two interrelated points: how social relations are reflected in the configuration of consumption practices and spaces and how spaces of consumption not only frame, but potentially also write people's experiences of community and belonging. As such, I wanted spaces of consumption to not only be the context or background against which social relations play out, but rather the active focus of my research. I wanted to explore their involvement and role in the production and experience of social relations. This pushed the lens from experiences in space to experiences of space, resulting in a focus on what I felt was the more fitting conception of social relations *of* spaces of consumption (contrasting with the social relations *in* spaces of consumption of previous approaches).

Partly because of the empirical contexts of my research, I became particularly interested to explore how social relations play out in contexts marked by inequality and disparity. To me, disparity highlighted the vertical situatedness of people in society. This interest was further developed from my readings, which were inconclusive as to whether inequality and disparity created additional barriers to positive experiences of belonging and cohesion that could emerge in these everyday spaces. I was thus interested to explore whether contexts of disparity challenged the conceptualisation of everyday spaces as spaces of opportunity for social relations (Saatciolgu & Ozanne, 2013).

In response to my empirical settings in contexts of disparity, a further motivation was understanding the shifting roles of consumption spaces as not only spaces of opportunity, but also, concomitantly, as the sources of spatial (in)justices (Soja, 2010). Increasingly, and as my research progressed, I wanted to illustrate how spaces of consumption are producers of experiences of belonging and cohesion, but conversely also of alienation, marginalisation, focusing on the normativities that are produced in those spaces (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018). I wanted to explore how the experiences of (in)justice attached to people who might choose or be pushed to inhabit the normativities of those everyday spaces differently (Ahmed, 2014). I also wanted to explore them as spaces of exclusion, which combined these factors, but also included barriers that would inhibit people to participate in them.

The motivation to critique spaces of consumption in this way has elevated their role. They have become more than neutral containers for everyday social relations. They have become the focus of my research, which has analysed how they inscribe and produce the social relations that emerge within them, and how they frame and shape that way that social relations continue to unfold. This motivation brought the dissertation into its present shape.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

My research considers social relations in, but more importantly, of spaces of consumption. It seeks to explore the role of spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations. Within this, my main aim is to analyse how consumption spaces inscribe social relations, positioning spaces of consumption as social actors that are actively involved in the emergence and unfolding of social relations. I aim to show that consumptionscapes are connected to the way in which people experience belonging and social cohesion, not just as backdrops or passive containers, but as producers of those experiences.

My research explores social relations in everyday consumptionscapes and, specifically, in consumptionscapes that are situated in contexts of inequality and disparity. Specifically, the dissertation illustrates how people's experiences of consumption spaces and their consumption practices make visible these social relations of spaces of consumption and how therefore people's experiences of belonging and social cohesion can be illustrated through them. My stated objectives outline how I have gone about achieving this aim.

Objective One. Bringing the literature on everyday spaces and social relations into explicit conversation with consumption scholarship to review the role of consumption spaces in everyday life. The following questions underpinned the analysis and presentation of the existing literature in chapter 2:

> How do people experience community and belonging in their everyday lives?
>
> What roles do consumption spaces play in this?
>
> How do people relate to one another through the lens of everyday spaces (of consumption)?

Objective Two. Analysing empirical data of people's lived experiences in and of everyday spaces of consumption, specifically drawing these experiences out in contexts of inequality

and disparity. The following questions guided the research design in chapter 3 and data analyses of the case studies in chapters 4 and 5:

How do people experience consumptionscapes?

How do consumption spaces and practices make visible horizontal and vertical forms of difference and differentiation in society?

What experiences of belonging and cohesion emerge in consumptionscapes?

Objective Three. Explore the way in which social relations emerge in different consumptionscapes by comparing how experiences of community and belonging converge and diverge across the two case studies and by using this insight for exploring the contours of social relations of spaces of consumption. The following questions guided the discussions across the case studies in chapters 4, 5 and 6:

What role do consumptionscapes play in producing social relations in everyday life?

How do they manifest the horizontal and vertical vectors of social relations?

What do the differences and synergies between the two very different settings of the case studies tell us about social relations *of* spaces of consumption more generally?

In order to address these objectives, I conducted empirical research and subsequent analysis in the critical paradigm to explore how engagements in consumptionscapes reflect as well as produce social relations.

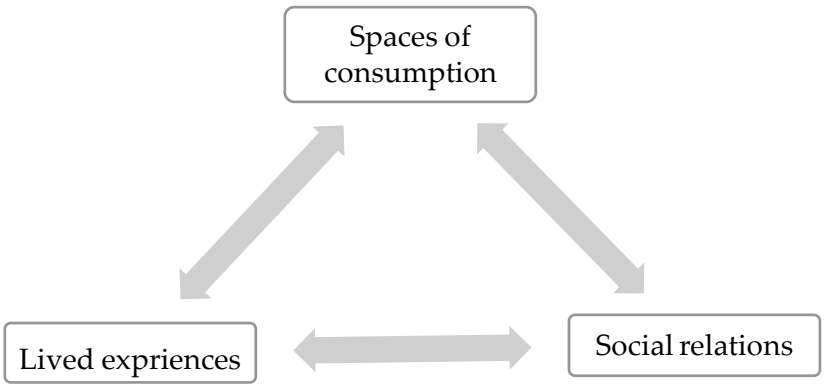


Figure 2: Relationships that are explored in this dissertation

1.6 The selection of the two case studies

To respond to these research questions, I drew on empirical research conducted across the two case study locations of Bristol in the UK and the West Bank in the oPt. The former case

study was the original research for this dissertation. The second case study was brought into the frame along the way. It enhanced the ability of the findings to speak to the overarching aims of the dissertation, giving them more depth, breadth and relevance by being able to draw insights from across two case studies, instead of one (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

In both case studies, research took place in urban neighbourhoods. Cities and urban neighbourhoods are of interest to studies on social cohesion (Dinesen & Sonderskov, 2015; Koopmans & Schaeffer, 2015; Marshall & Stolle, 2004) as much as they are relevant to studies in consumption spaces (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015). In Bristol, gentrification brought into relief the disadvantages and the privileges experienced by some in the changing consumptionscape. In the West Bank, the more recently emerging consumptionscapes were experienced as external impositions that were rewriting the social formations of people's everyday lives. Both cases spoke to the changing role of consumption spaces in transforming social relations in urban life.

My research initially focused on the inner-city neighbourhood of Stokes Croft just north of the city centre of Bristol, in the South West of England. In Stokes Croft, I was hoping to explore how participants were experiencing difference in an urban consumptionscape in flux. Stokes Croft had received much scholarly and media attention for its rapid gentrification, which was met by strong local opposition of activists and community collectives (Dyckhoff, 2012; Harris, 2015; Kingsley, 2011). The area had experienced periods of social unrest – the 'Tesco Riots' in 2011 – sparked by the opening of an outlet of the supermarket chain in the area (Clement, 2011; Mizon, 2021). The Tesco Riots were just one manifestation of how the consumptionscapes became a vehicle through which people reflected on experiences of belonging and social cohesion during my field work. The granularity with which these experiences were recollected reflected the relatively advanced neoliberalisation of social relations (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

Research for the West Bank case study took place in the towns of Beit Sahour in the south and Jenin in the north of the West Bank. The West Bank had experienced a rapid period of urbanisation and developments towards a consumer economy, following the liberal peacebuilding programme of the 1990s (Hanieh, 2013; Samara, 2000; Shikaki & Springer, 2015). I conducted research in a smaller town consumptionscape, consisting of a shopping street and adjacent mall in Beit Sahour, and in a shopping precinct in the city-

centre area of Jenin. Due to the nature of the initial research, and these recent transformations, I engaged with the advancement of consumption at a societal level in this case study, in order to understand its impact on social relations. Participants also reflected on consumption more conceptually, as a more recent economic, social and political development. This engagement with consumption was necessary because spaces and practices of consumption were changing fundamentally in the West Bank and were comprehensively transforming people's sense of social relations at the time my fieldwork. This focus on consumption allowed me to draw out the meanings and contestations Palestinians saw in their changing role in society.

Further, both case studies are set in contexts marked by inequality and disparity. In diversity research, many studies operate with the implicit assumption, or propose the finding, that increasing ethnic, racial and cultural heterogeneity leads to a reduction in social cohesion and belonging (e.g., Dinesen et al., 2020; Hewstone, 2015; Laurence & Bentley, 2016). In this research, the coexistence of diverse others is considered a barrier to the emergence of positive social relations. Yet, researchers also highlight the negative influence of deprivation and inequality on social relations (e.g., Laurence, 2011; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Some studies even suggest that the role of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity in the emergence (or not) of social cohesion or social trust is merely a placeholder for other factors, such as disparity and inequality that are considered much more influential (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015; Sturgis et al., 2011).

Despite its contradictory findings, this body of work still suggests that in city and neighbourhood spaces, experiences of social differentiation across ethnic, racial and cultural lines, as well as experiences of inequality and disparity overlay. I considered that embedding social relations through the lens of the consumptionscape would allow me to explore both heterogeneity and inequality and disparity in the context of social relations, focusing on the processes and dynamics that shape them, and how they come together in creating lived experiences in the spaces of everyday life.

Focusing on case studies that incorporate both heterogeneity as well as disparity thus allowed me to consider their influences on how people experience belonging and cohesion in them. The consumptionscapes in Bristol and in the West Bank would thus help build an understanding of how spaces of consumption are implicated in experiences of community

and belonging when places find themselves at the interface between simultaneously rising heterogeneity and disparity. Their economic, social, and ideological dimensions, as well as the horizontal and vertical entanglements that are manifested into everyday life through the physical, symbolic and lived dimensions of consumption spaces, are all important considerations in the emergence and unfolding of social relations within them.

1.7 Introducing the research contexts

I now introduce the context for social relations in each of the case studies. The different settings, different scales, and different research processes for each case study, as well as the critical bricolage framing of the research are discussed throughout chapter 3. I specifically discuss in more detail how I incorporated the two case studies conceptually and methodologically in sections 3.2 and 3.6, showing how as a result of their differences, the case studies could become illustrative of different facets of the aim and objectives of the dissertation. The profiles for the two case studies presented in the next two sections already speak to and reflect the different political, economic, and sociocultural settings of each research site, providing the necessary background to understanding how these settings were able to make their contribution to this research.

1.7.1 The context for social relations in Bristol

Bristol is a city in the South West of England that has the reputation of being a liberal city with an active civil society campaigning for alternative politics, such as a more equitable political economy, focusing on issues of ecological and social sustainability (Ersoy & Larner, 2020). In line with this liberal outlook, Bristol hosts many civil society, community and political organisations that seek to engage the world not as it is, but as it could be, enacting both utopian and prefigurative forms of bottom-up politics (Monticello, 2022). These include, for example, the Bristol Cable, a citizen-led media organisation, the Bristol Food Union which campaigned for and provided accessible and sustainable food networks across the city during the pandemic or the Schumacher Institute which is a think tank that seeks solutions to economic, social and environmental crises. One could argue that such institutions and initiatives enact the city's reputation and image towards transformational politics (Frenzel & Beverungen, 2015). Most recently, the toppling of the statue depicting

Bristolian slave trader Edward Colston (1636-1721) highlighted Bristol's role in activism and politics and brought the city's activism and politics to international attention (Moody, 2021).

Bristol is known for being a city of entrepreneurialism and experimentation. Through the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership that emerged in the 1990s, Bristol launched an arts and cultural policy that would regenerate and renew urban areas surrounding some of the city's cultural hubs, such as the Watershed, the Old Vic theatre and the Arnolfini art gallery, all located near the Harbourside (Griffiths et al., 1999). While such arts-led forms of regeneration are often considered problematic in producing social exclusions, Bristol may be delivering more hybrid implications and outcomes of such developments (Ersoy & Larner, 2020). Frenzel and Beverungen (2015), for example, identify Stokes Croft – the neighbourhood in which data collection for the Bristol case study took place – as an example of the coexistence of heterogeneous values, outlooks and practices within the city.

Bristol's economic performance compared to other core cities is strong. Its economic strength can be partly attributed to its proximity to London; to being a centre for aerospace engineering, information and communication technologies and financial services; to benefitting from access to a wide labour pool; and to the reputation of its quality of life (Meegam et al., 2014). The picture that emerges is that in Bristol, the economic and the social/cultural dimensions of the urban fabric have developed somewhat symbiotically. This has led to Bristol's local economy appearing more diverse and resilient in the face of crisis.

In terms of diversity, despite its long history of ethnic and cultural diversity (Bristol was a main hub for the slave trade), the ethnic minority population of Bristol only increased significantly after World War II, when people arriving from (former) colonies began to settle in Britain. At the last Census in 2011[4], 77.9% came from a white and British background. Further, the profile of Bristol's ethnic minority population is 56% for under 16s, predicting significant change in the adult population structure over the coming years (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Despite its significant ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, Bristol has been reviewed as a place of missed opportunities for fostering positive multiculture (Comedia, 2006). Measuring among other things lived experience of diversity, this review found that Bristol showed significant inequality of opportunities and access between people

[4] Census 2021 data will only be made available beginning in October 2022, as such, this research still uses the 2011 data. This is also the data used by Bristol City Council (2022).

of different ethnic groups and lacked institutionalised support to ethnic, racial and cultural minorities.

According to the Indices of Deprivation, Bristol has lower levels of deprivation compared to other 'core cities' (Bristol City Council, 2019). Still, the report highlights some key issues surrounding deprivation that are relevant to this dissertation. First, Bristol's most diverse areas are also its most deprived. Second, Bristol's most deprived neighbourhoods are often adjacent to its most affluent neighbourhoods. The implication of this is that inequality is likely to be visible and experienced within close geographic proximity. Third, when I began research, large parts of Stokes Croft were in the most deprived areas not only of Bristol but also in all of England. However, at the time of my data collection, things were changing rapidly in the area. Between the 2015 Indices of Deprivation and the more recent 2019 ones, large parts of Stokes Croft had moved out of the most deprived areas in Bristol and England (ibid.). In terms of diversity and disparity then, an image of a changing, or dynamic, city emerges.

These changes alongside Bristol's liberal reputation and activism mean that Bristol is frequently the site of social and political struggles for equality and social justice (Frenzel & Beverungen, 2015). This means that the state of its social relations, as well as inequality, disparity and opportunities for belonging and cohesion are frequently debated across the city, or in relation to it. Using the example of Bristol's role as European Green Capital in 2015, Harper (2016) argues that activism for greater equality or social justice in the city normatively shapes the city within a privileged (white) middle-class ethic. This, according to the author, is aided by the multiple processes of consumption-mediated gentrification in the city, whereby the city's consumptionscapes are crafted in a way that communicates a particular image of Bristol – an image of "gritty, yet high, culture" (ibid, p.4). Harper concludes that Bristol's civil society fetishizes its own image, while glossing over the actual reality of its social problems that result in significantly diverse and divergent experiences across the city.

Harper is critical of any attempt at crafting an urban image, suggesting it is always likely to reflect the lives of few, over the experiences of the many. The entrepreneurial and activist development of the city risks using urban landscape, political economy and its people to normalise the exclusion of economically or socially deprived populations (e.g.,

Dooling, 2009; Rérat et al., 2010). In this way, spatial injustices may emerge in the changing urban spaces as a result of a heterogeneity of people coexisting, while also experiencing the normativities of these spaces differentially, either by choice, or by necessity. In this sense, the co-produced spaces of economic and social and cultural activism – including the city's consumptionscapes – risk producing the marginalisation of those who do not conform to the hegemonic discourses shaping the city.

Others have argued that Bristol's activism and entrepreneurialism are translated into the fabric of the city, not least via its consumptionscapes, to co-produce city governance in ways that respects the diversity and inclusiveness of the city's heterogeneity (Ersoy & Larner, 2020). Finding a balance between these two stances remains a challenge for Bristol.

1.7.2 The context for social relations in the West Bank

The context for social relations in the West Bank stands contrasts with the picture that emerges from Bristol. Palestinians in the West Bank have lived under Israeli occupation since 1967. Over the course of the long-term occupation physical boundaries such as checkpoints and the segregation wall[5], as well as restrictions on movements, such as curfews and permits for travel and transport, have increased. The West Bank is divided into three areas (Areas A, B and C) with differing levels of Israeli and Palestinian administrative powers. The destruction of a shared geographical and political space has contributed to the fragmentation of Palestinians (Qassoum, 2004, 2017).

Since the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, one document in particular – the Paris Protocol signed in 1994 between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) – has shaped the Palestinian economy, with extensive knock-on effects on society. The agreement emerged within a framework of liberal peace and set the parameters for liberalisation of the market economy (Gartzke, 2007; Tziarras 2012). The assumption of this

[5] Also 'Separation Barrier' or 'West Bank Barrier' or security barrier. The wall that the State of Israel has built on Palestinian land is one of the contested issues of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. It was built mostly during and in the aftermath of the second intifada, which lasted from 2000 – 2005. Supporters of the wall argue it is required to protect Israeli citizens from their Palestinian neighbours; its opponents state that it contributes to the racial oppression of Palestinians (giving it the name 'apartheid wall'). In practice, the wall frequently separates Palestinians from their agricultural land and from each other, at times running through the centre of communities and towns. Further, the International Court of Justice has considered the wall a violation of international law. See: Backmann (2010). I use the term 'segregation wall' as this was the term mostly used by the Palestinian participants of this research.

peacebuilding framework is that it creates peaceful social relations in conflict-affected societies (Wenar & Milanovic, 2008). This is controversial, as others see the structures and systems of capitalist peace as serving the pacification of populations, meaning they are hindered from creating their own paths out of conflict (Hanieh, 2013).

Especially the cities in the West Bank have seen comprehensive spatial transformations as a result of the marketisation, with the proliferation of new spaces of consumption, such as malls, shops, cafés and entertainment centres (Samara, 2000; Shikaki & Springer, 2015). Consumptionscapes of this ilk are still relatively new and associated with the (failed) peace agreements of the 90s. Different to the more free and creative engagement with space in Bristol, in the West Bank, these consumptionscapes are often considered a form of control or oppression that leaves Palestinians with little agency or influence (Hanieh, 2013; Thiessen, 2011; Tziarras, 2012).

The economic development of the oPt has been problematic. Unemployment and poverty continue to be high, drawing Palestinians further into economic dependency on Israel and on international aid (Merz, 2012; Nasser, 2011). Further, unemployment and poverty display large variations between different areas in the West Bank, in Gaza and in East Jerusalem, with increasing inequality and disparity between Palestinians. In 2017, 29.2 Palestinians across the oPt were living in poverty, and in the West Bank this figure was 13.9%.[6] According to the World Bank (2018), unemployment was 18% in the West Bank in 2017, and it predicts that both unemployment and poverty will continue to increase in the coming years.

Palestinians living in the West Bank in the post-Oslo years depend on Israel for many daily necessities, such as work opportunities, medicines, water and electricity (Farsakh, 2001; 2016). This is problematic when relationships with the occupier are the subject of much Palestinian political debate (Hever, 2009). The continued Israeli control makes independent development of the Palestinian economy and of society impossible (Shikaki & Springer, 2015; Samara, 2000), and significantly limits the agency of and opportunities for civil society to emerge independently (Hanieh, 2013; Nassar, 2011).

The Oslo years have also for the first time comprehensively introduced (neo)liberal values to the oPt, meaning that the transformations of daily spaces are economic, political as

[6] The poverty rate was over 50% in Gaza, and over 40% for people living in refugee camps anywhere in the oPt.

well as social and cultural. Against the backdrop of fragmentation and rupture and continued occupation, consumptionscapes are some of the few spaces that portray a sense of normalcy and freedom while also offering rare opportunities for Palestinians to get together at the societal level across social differences (McMahon, 2014; Taha & Hawker, 2020). This appeals especially to the emerging Palestinian middle classes and the younger generation. Many consider these changes as an 'illusion of development' (Nassar, 2011) pushing Palestinians further into destitution and disparity (Hanieh, 2013; Qassoum, 2004, 2017). This is supported by the World Bank (2018) predictions, which indicate that Palestinians will be worse off economically, despite increasing economic activities. These developments risk splitting Palestinians in how they perceive their situatedness in society and their relationships with others (Samara, 2000; Roy, 2016; Harker, 2020).

Against this backdrop, the Palestinian BDS movement is just one of many activist groups and organisations who seek to reverse the effects of the post-Oslo economic transformations. These groups and organisations generally believe that if Palestinians can reclaim the control of their economy and increase economic sovereignty, then this would not only enhance the livelihoods of Palestinians, but also support their ambitions to free themselves from the military occupation (Darweish & Rigby, 2015).

The first intifada (Arabic for 'uprising'), for example, is often invoked nostalgically as a period where great social cohesion existed between Palestinians. More recently, hope for more cohesion between Palestinians has emerged. In 2021, national protests took place in the West Bank when house evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem led to tensions between the Israeli government and Palestinians in all parts of the West Bank. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across all occupied territory participated in a national strike, in protest of the Israeli air strikes on Gaza, but also in response to their shared treatment by Israel (Kingsley & Nazzal, 2021). It was the first time in many years that Palestinians had joined nationally in strikes since the second intifada.

The ongoing pressures and violence emerging from the occupation remain the major factor shaping lived experiences in the West Bank. Palestinians' continued ability to come together across geographical, political, social and cultural differences will also determine the future of social relations.

1.8 Main findings

The aim of the dissertation was to provide an exploration of social relations of spaces of consumption. The dissertation provides a critique of social relations mediated via the consumptionscape. This critique is based in the experiences of the research participants, but contextualised within the setting of each case study, as well as within the underlying logics of consumption that are translated into everyday life via the consumptionscapes. Throughout the dissertation, I have critically engaged with the paradoxical forces of consumption in shaping and producing social relations. Viewing the role of consumption spaces not just as backdrops against which social relations play out, but as active producers of social relations has allowed me to illustrate how experiences of belonging and social cohesion unfold in everyday spaces of consumption. This has enabled me to take into consideration horizontal, people-to-people encounters with difference that occur in these spaces. It has also allowed me to consider the vertical axes of power and differentiation that consumption spaces reflect and construct.

My main finding is that the role of consumptionscapes in social relations is that they act as spaces of opportunity, as spaces of alienation/marginalisation and as spaces of exclusion for the lived experiences that are able to emerge within them, framing their role in the production and experiences of social relations. The social relations of spaces of consumption emerge and unfold against the different social, economic, and ideological dimensions and physical, symbolic, and lived manifestations of spaces, creating a multi-faceted and complex mosaic for and of social relations of spaces of consumption.

Against the backdrop of the consumptionscape, people's hopes and expectations, as well as their disappointments and disaffection play out. The consumptionscape provides an outlet and avenue for exploring people's experiences of belonging and cohesion. The consumptionscape makes visible the unfolding social relations via encounters, practices and connections that are made, or not made, within them. Consumptionscapes facilitate complex and contradictory meaning-making processes and contestations reflecting people's horizontal connections with each other, as well as their vertical emplacements as they become lived within these contexts of people's everyday lives.

Across both case studies, people experienced a reduction in social cohesion, more pertinently attached to the salience of consumption-led transformations of urban space, than to the existence of societal heterogeneity per se. Still, exposure to heterogeneous experiences

and set ups through consumptionscapes made visible people's differences and brought into relief people's social anxieties about their sense of belonging and situatedness towards others, while at the same time normalising such experiences within the logic of consumption. In Bristol, participants were concerned about inclusion in consumptionscapes, thus implicitly accepting the advancement of consumption spaces and practices as meaningful to everyday social life. In contrast, in the West Bank, the growing role of consumption spaces and practices in everyday life was evaluated as more contradictory and complicated, often positioned as something that could, or even, should be changed.

These findings highlight the often contradictory, conflicting, and contested roles and meanings for consumptionscapes in prefiguring and producing social relations. They show that an engagement with consumption is not just about the soft or fluffy aspects of its social and cultural dimensions (Evans, 2018). Rather, focusing research in consumptionscapes allows to explore some of the more hard-hitting aspects of power and differentiation that emerge within consumption systems. The findings also resonate with Miles' concept of the 'consuming paradox' (1998), which describes how consumption practices and spaces can be at the same time liberating as well as constraining manifestations of neoliberalism's social and cultural power.

The findings challenge research and policy approaches to lived experiences of social relations or social cohesion that have divided analyses into the economic/political and the social/cultural dimensions as if they were separate spheres. Consumptionscapes can offer a complex engagement with lived experiences that defies the dichotomies of economic/politics and cultural/social – they illustrate an analytical entry point for the transcendence of such dualism (Granovetter, 2017; Jackson, 2002). My research empirically illustrates how spaces of consumption may offer insights into the vertical and horizontal spheres of cohesion and belonging, not seeing them as separate, but as mutually constitutive and fundamentally inseparable from each other.

The findings support research that suggests that any dimension of people's experiences of belonging and social cohesion cannot be attributed to one factor, such as ethnic, racial, and cultural identity singled out for purposes of analysis (Woo, 2020). A focus on consumptionscapes for the study of social relations allows researchers to consider the processes and dynamics that produce and construct social relations, reflected in the lived

experiences of people across their multiple and complex vertical and horizontal entanglements with and in consumptionscapes. These, then, define the contours of the social relations *of* spaces of consumption.

1.9 Academic contributions

The dissertation builds on extant research into the role of consumptionscapes and its relationship with the social relations that unfold within them. Its distinctive contribution lies in its exploration of social relations in spaces of consumption that combines experiences of horizontal, people-to-people encounters, with experiences of vertical axes of power and differentiation. The analysis shows that these bear on experiences of belonging and cohesion. The findings focus on the processes and practices that produce social relations and speak to the active role that spaces of consumption play within them. My dissertation brings together an interdisciplinary body of research fields and disciplines and makes the following contributions in each of them.

Social relations. The dissertation extends insights gained in the everyday diversity paradigm through a specific engagement with spaces of consumption, thus positioning these not merely as backdrop against which social relations take place. Instead, spaces of consumption become part of the assemblage of social relations – with them, in them and through them, experiences of community and belonging unfold, shaped by the parameters that these spaces inscribe. With this, the dissertation responds to critiques that existing research has focused too much on the meaning of horizontal encounters between people, without emplacing these in vertical structures and processes of power and differentiation (Sealy, 2018; Valentine, 2008; Valluvan, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Taking this step frames spaces of consumption as more than the backdrop to social relations – they also become their producers.

Consumptionscapes. The findings from the two case studies highlight the constraints and opportunities for social relations that can emanate from consumptionscapes. Viewing consumptionscapes as dynamic assemblages challenges the narrow conceptualisation of consumptionscapes as passive and static containers that had given rise to their interpretation as spaces of opportunity. Through my empirical research, I was also able to consider them as spaces of marginalisation/alienation and exclusion. This was facilitated by

situating the research in contexts of disparity and inequality which provide new angles to consumption scholarship that has often focused on Western and affluent research contexts (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010; Jafari et al., 2012; Kravets & Varman, 2022). I was able to consider the opportunities of social relations of spaces of consumption alongside their more problematic aspects, thus contributing to consumption scholarship's emerging interest in the everyday politics of consumption systems and structures and advancing critical analyses of how consumption spaces become lived (Forno & Wahlen, 2022; Monticello, 2022).

Methodological. The critical philosophy and bricolage design have allowed me to incorporate theoretical and conceptual strands across two interdisciplinary fields and apply these in two distinctively different empirical contexts. This research approach has allowed me to provide an analysis of consumptionscapes that spans empirical data and findings and ties these to the wider logics and politics of consumption in each case study, as well as across them. In doing so, my research followed a research approach that could deep dive into the everyday detail of experiences of belonging and cohesion, while at the same time extrapolating out from the minutiae of everyday life and relating these to transnational flows and influences that constitute social relations, producing a multi-faceted approach to lived experiences (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019; Neal et al., 2019a; Rice et al., 2019). The research speaks to the value of uncovering processes in which structural change becomes manifest in everyday spaces and how lived experiences emerge and unfold against those spaces.

Policy. The findings of this research indicate that spaces of consumption offer a suitable entry point from which social relations can be considered. A research focus on consumptionscapes locates social relations at the interface and convergence of the economic and the social/cultural dimensions of social cohesion. This offers to broaden the scope of actors engaged in policy formulations. Further, building an understanding of social relations based on everyday experiences means approaches to social cohesion can be developed from the ground up, focusing on empirical analyses of the complex and contradictory nature of social relations, and how they play out in everyday spaces of consumption (Henriksen & Tjora, 2014). This gives lived experiences the potential to form the basis of social policy development (McIntosh & Wright, 2019), especially where such policymaking is proposing

more place-based approaches to fostering belonging and cohesion (e.g., UK Government, 2022).

1.10 Overview of the chapters

The dissertation is organised across five core chapters – the literature review (chapter 2), the methodology chapter (chapter 3) and three analysis and discussion chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6). These chapters speak to the research aims, objectives and core questions as follows:

In chapter 2, I introduce the relevant literature in two parts. Part I reviews the genealogy of research and policy that addresses life in heterogeneous societies. These approaches have ranged from promoting contact and exchange between ethnic, cultural, and racial groups towards an engagement with the spontaneous encounters across differences that happen in the spaces of everyday life. A key area of that work has introduced spaces of consumption to social relations and diversity research. I focus on these spaces of consumption in Part II. Drawing on consumption scholarship, I critique the assumptions of spaces of consumption as spaces of opportunity and review the literature on marketplace vulnerabilities and exclusion. I review the multi-faceted tapestry of lived experiences that unfolds in and via these spaces of consumption and conclude that they have the potential to be spaces of opportunity, of alienation/marginalisation and of exclusion. These three roles of spaces of consumption form the basis from which I explore the role of consumption spaces in the production and experience of social relations and how they are made visible via people's lived experiences.

In chapter 3, I introduce the critical qualitative research approach of this dissertation and outline its key philosophical underpinnings. As a result of the evolution of this dissertation project, this approach was necessarily creative and adaptive. I discuss the details of the methodological choices and data collection procedures in each case study location. I also reflect on my own positionality and on the challenges and opportunities that emerged from bringing together these two disparate research projects as two case studies under the same research frame.

In chapters 4 and 5, I introduce the findings from the two case studies of Bristol and the West Bank. In Bristol (chapter 4), consumption spaces and practices were experienced simultaneously as facilitators of and barriers to the emergence of positive social relations.

Participants experienced increased fragmentation as a result of their engagements in consumptionscapes, but they also saw opportunities for challenging experiences of disparity and inequality through the consumptionscape. Participants found that the consumptionscape offered them opportunities for action, or for making their voices heard. In the West Bank (chapter 5), consumptionscapes emerged as part of the large-scale economic, political, social, and cultural transformations emerging from the liberal peacebuilding and development initiatives of the 1990s. Through their experiential and affective engagements with consumptionscapes, participants were able to reflect on the societal changes they had witnessed, as well as on the experienced quality of social relations. Many participants experienced, or were concerned about, the growing gulf of inequality and disparity between Palestinians. Overall, participants reflected on what they perceived as the fragmentation and breakdown of social relations, which produced as well as made visible in and via the emerging consumptionscapes. The different experiences of spaces of consumption across the two case studies are discussed at the end of each chapter.

Chapter 6 offers an analysis of both case studies in relation to the overall research aims of exploring social relations of spaces of consumption. In this chapter, I first discuss the synergies and divergences between the lived experiences that produced the findings in each of the case studies. I then discuss the overall findings of the research in the context of the core research aim of illustrating the role of consumption spaces in the production and experience of social relations *of* spaces of consumption. I also consider the academic conversations in which my research has made its contributions. As a final step in the critical approach, I also highlight the transformative potential of the research, which I have embedded alongside suggested avenues for future research. Finally, I review the limitations and practical implications of my research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is organised in two parts. Part I introduces how heterogeneous life in society has been framed in academic and policy debates surrounding diversity and multiculture. Specifically, I review the genealogy of the concepts of community, cohesion and conviviality and discuss their relevance in the context of the research aims of this dissertation. Although these approaches and conceptualisations have mostly existed in parallel, they are introduced sequentially with a degree of chronology, with each approach positioned as a response to identified shortcomings of the other. Doing this has enabled me to highlight and discuss opportunities and limitations from each approach in speaking to the research objectives and questions. Part I closes by illustrating how research into everyday spaces of consumption has positioned these as contexts and opportunity structures for intercultural encounters and as relatively neutral backdrops that facilitate contact and exchange across differences. The conceptualisations of social relations that have emerged from such research I call the social relations *in* spaces of consumption.

Part II takes this stance as its starting point and builds from it by drawing on consumption studies to explicitly engage with the role of spaces of consumption in not only holding, but also framing and producing social relations. In order to do so, Part II reviews geographical and cultural approaches to studying consumption spaces and phenomena. It engages 'consumption' conceptually, as well as spaces of consumption specifically. This part of the literature review is relevant because it discusses some of the underlying vectors along which social relations of consumptionscapes emerge and unfold. This is supported by a review of studies that sought to explore lived experiences of spaces of consumption. From this review, I am then able to problematise their framing as 'spaces of opportunity' in the everyday diversity literature.

I close the review of the literature by proposing that to understand the role of spaces of consumption in the unfolding and emergence of social relations, it is important to consider them also as spaces that produce marginalisation, alienation and exclusion. Spaces of consumption do not merely produce horizontal vectors for encounters, they also vertically embed people in structures and systems of power and differentiation. These horizontal and vertical vectors manifest within the consumption spaces themselves and produce the social

relations that emerge in, with and through them. To date, research has rarely engaged with these social relations *of* spaces of consumption.

Part I: Community, cohesion, conviviality and everyday spaces

British cultural theorist and public intellectual Stuart Hall – one of the founding fathers of British cultural studies – considered the 'multicultural question' of how we live together in heterogeneous societies as the constitutive question of our time (Hall, 2000). Reflecting the positioning of social research on the growing creep of diversification into all areas of social life, Hall posed this question against what he termed the 'multicultural drift': describing 'the unplanned, increasing involvement of Britain's black and brown populations visibly registering a play of difference right across the face of British society' (ibid., 1). The growing proliferation of diversity and concomitant exposure to difference has been a key theme across an interdisciplinary field of social research (e.g., Appadurai, 1990; Cantle, 2008a; Meer & Modood, 2012; Urry, 2007; Vertovec, 2007). The multicultural question partially focuses on the role of growing ethnic, cultural and racial diversity in how people experience community and social cohesion, and how they negotiate coexistence with diverse others, as well as belonging to the places in which they live. But it also transcends a focus on the impact of the co-existence of ethnic, racial and cultural 'others' in society by asking how heterogeneity and difference become lived in the spaces of everyday life.

2.1 Unpicking 'community'

The question of what makes a 'community' is often raised, especially in heterogenous and multiracial societies, where lines of differences and differentiation are multi-faceted (Neal et al., 2019b; Sealy, 2018). Research has frequently and differentially engaged with this question. The concerns that emanate from the motivations and purpose of such research, however, can ultimately be attached to a more fundamental question of what makes for a 'good life' for people living in and coexisting in heterogeneous societies. Research has often focused on the cohesiveness of heterogeneous societies and on the factors that make for positive experiences of coexistence of people of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity. And this research has mushroomed in the social sciences in recent decades (Neal et al., 2013, 2018).

But its history can be traced back much longer, as it ties into questions of what makes a 'community' or 'society' come together. These questions were pertinent across Europe in the 19th century, where decades of empire-building overseas had also enhanced nationalism movements at home. This was also the case in Germany, where questions of what makes people cohere and bond were important political discussions in a country that was moving towards becoming a nation. Against this backdrop of history, the German cultural theorist Ferdinand Tönnies made the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* – mostly translated as community and society (Tönnies, [1887]2005). *Gemeinschaft*/community refers to a congregation of people whose social glue lies in that they share values and bonds of kinship, religion, and ethnicity. The cohesion between such people does not come from the fact that they share space. Rather, it emanates from their shared values and ethnic, cultural, and racial identities. This idea of *Gemeinschaft* contrasts with how *Gesellschaft* is conceived. *Gesellschaft* considers more ephemeral, weak ties and connections between people who may share spaces, but not identity, kinship, values, or history.

At the time of writing, urbanisation was sweeping across Germany (and Europe). As a result, weak ties have mostly been associated with urban areas (Granovetter, 1973; Henrikson & Tjora, 2014). Weak ties are not based on markers of identity or shared history, reinforced by the bonds of kinship. Rather, they are based on practices and encounters that take place across (urban) space (Blokland, 2017). While the bonds between people in a *Gemeinschaft* happen naturally, creating cohesion between people in *Gesellschaft* requires intervention (Arvidsson et al., 2018).

The dualistic distinction between community and society perpetuates the idea that it is easier for belonging and cohesion to emerge among people who share ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds or identities. This distinction between different types of social bonds that hinge on people sharing values, ethnic, racial, and cultural history and identity markers should be considered with caution. First of all, dichotomies of this sort represent ideal types that often do not to capture the world in its complex dimensions (Eriksen, 1995; Woo, 2020). As ideal types, they may romanticise the existence – and benefits – of the social bonds that can emerge between culturally homogeneous people and place them in opposition to the challenges for such bonds to emerge in heterogeneous settings.

This thinking has shaped a long line of research and policy surrounding the emergence of social relations (Dinnie & Fischer, 2019). A well-known research paper in the social sciences is the essay 'Clash of Civilisations?' (1993) by American political scientist Samuel Huntington. This paper is nearing 45,000 citations in July 2022 according to Google Scholar[7]. In the essay, Huntington argues that conflict is most likely to emerge between people belonging to different 'civilisations'. A civilisation comprises of people of shared ethnicities, cultures, religions, traditions and outlooks, much like the framing of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*. Huntington's claim is that people's cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be the major source of global conflict in the future. This clash between different civilisations is intensified because of the increased social awareness and contact between people who belong to different civilisations.

The high citation score does not indicate the value of the ideas contained in Huntington's arguments. However, the citations do indicate that the thesis of the clash of civilisations has been hugely influential in the social sciences.

An almost equally as impactful piece of writing (with nearly 30,000 citations) by another American political scientist is Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone* (2000). In this book, Putnam argues that a decline in civic engagement and societal trust in the USA is partially ascribable to the fact that people in a heterogeneous society such as the US' are retrieving into familiar cultural, ethnic and social groupings where their sources of social comfort lie. To explain such (self-)segregation, Putnam draws on the notions of bonding and bridging capital (Granovetter, 1973). Bonding capital develops when people spend time with people who are similar to each other, while bridging capital emerges across diverse 'others'.[8]

According to Putnam, people need a high level of bonding capital (i.e. *Gemeinschaft* or community) first, so that they can develop bridging capital (i.e. *Gesellschaft* or society). While the former is a source of comfort and contentment, the ability to develop the latter is considered a skill that is necessary for being able to succeed in heterogeneous societies.

[7] To put this into perspective, this is approximately 2,370 citations per year. According to Google Scholar metrics, the highest scoring papers in political science average around 100 citations per year. For most other papers, the score is much lower.

[8] In the context of this dissertation, it is of interest to note here that social capital theory has also proposed the idea of 'linking social capital' (Woolcock, 2001) describing the capital that emerges across vertical power structures. This work, however, has resonated much less with researchers of community, belonging and cohesion (Claridge, 2018), and it does not feature in Putnam's work either.

Putnam argues that the multi-ethnic make up of communities in the US has meant that people spend less time with people who are similar to them, which in turn means they are less able to develop the necessary social capital to coexist peacefully with people who are different to them.

The US is not the only society in which such arguments have entered the discourses surrounding diversity. British journalist David Goodhart (2004) has picked up this line of thinking asking if Britain had become 'Too Diverse?' in an essay of the same title written for *Prospect* magazine, which he founded. Goodhart reflects on the perceived breakdown of community in a multi-ethnic society, concluding that "sharing and solidarity can conflict with diversity". What makes this essay an important feature in the diversity debate in the UK is that it was written by someone who had generally been considered of the political left.

Based on the framing of such works on both sides of the Atlantic, much debate has followed on how diversity and coexistence in heterogeneous societies could and should be discussed. Considerations of the impact of the existence of racial, cultural, and ethnic minorities on social cohesion and the future of social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies has featured heavily in public policy and discourse (e.g., Cantle, 2008a; 2008b; Lentin & Titley, 2011; Phillips, 2004; Zapata-Barrero, 2019).

At that time in the UK, the 'community cohesion' agenda was also on the rise following 'the Northern disturbances' in the towns of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001. This had sparked a debate about Britain's multi-racial future, informed by concerns over the perceived rise of segregation in British towns and cities. The government review of these disturbances established that 'parallel lives' were a major cause of the disturbances (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007). 'Parallel lives' referred to a lived separation in geographical communities between people along ethnic, racial, cultural or faith lines, resulting in a lack of opportunity to encounter diverse others or share experiences with them (Cantle, 2008b). These encounters or shared experiences were considered the basis from which shared values for a cohesive society might emerge (Cantle, 2008a; Phillips, 2005).

To this day, the list of research that argues how diversity challenges social cohesion is long (Dinesen et al., 2020). Its influence in social policymaking and academic research is undeniable and it has particularly shaped British approaches to studying social relations or life in heterogeneous societies. As a result, many ethnographic and sociological studies have

focused on groups in societies – bonded by shared ethnicity, race, or culture – to explore how experiences of diversity unfold. These were communitarian approaches to heterogeneity, focusing on group identity (Sealy, 2018). A plethora of studies emerged which focused on the lived experiences of minority ethnic groupings in British society (e.g., Cherti, 2008, 2009; Hussain, 2008; Kesten et al., 2011). This body of work defined ethnic, racial and cultural groups prior to their research processes and conducted research with a view to understand in more depth how life in heterogeneous societies unfolded for people of racial, ethnic and cultural minority background.

Such a research frame may be limiting opportunities for understanding the complexity of lived experiences of heterogeneity, as it focuses mostly on social bonds of identity, rather than exploring the multi-faceted connections that emerge between people based on their interactions and encounters in everyday spaces. And although studies offer rich and interesting insights into the lives of people, as part of groups, in British society, their framing risks contributing to an understanding of community as static or fixed along ethnic, cultural and racial lines (Gidley, 2013), potentially overstating the homogeneity that exists among people who share ethnic, racial, or cultural identities. Research of this ilk perpetuates the relevance of such framing as it focuses the researcher's gaze on pre-defined groupings and categorisations of people, rendering those meaningful through the research processes.

In doing this, research may first not fully grasp the complex identities that people inhabit (Brubaker et al., 2008). Second, such research does not always relate lived experiences of difference against the everyday contexts and spaces in which encounters with 'others' might take place (Neal et al., 2013, 2018). When in fact, experiences of heterogeneity are always embedded. With that, and third, they do not consider the structural components that create a complex web of processes and vectors along which social relations may emerge (Baylis et al., 2019). As such, they limit the frame from which to consider belonging and social cohesion in heterogeneous societies and reduce the effects of broader influences on people's experiences in and of 'community' (Dinnie & Fischer, 2019).

Yet, such research has remained central to the study of life in heterogeneous societies, and continues to present its findings on ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity per se. Dinesen et al. (2020) have reviewed research into this topic comprehensively and they found

that, overwhelmingly, studies found that growing ethnic diversity negatively affected or hindered the emergence of social cohesion, which they measure through social trust. The authors conclude from their review that such research offers compelling narratives and evidence of why an increase in ethnic, racial and cultural heterogeneity correlates with a reduction in social trust. Yet, despite the overwhelming correlation between heterogeneity and reduced trust, the authors discuss this body of research as limited, arguing that its focus on ethnic, racial and identity markers might not sufficiently capture the complexity of everyday lived experiences. Such research risks falling into the trap suggested by Gidley (2013) that researchers find the differences meaningful that they considered at the outset of their research projects.

One of the major missing elements according to Dinesen et al. (2020) is the intersection between the presence of heterogeneity and the presence of disparity and inequality. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) before them have illustrated that the major predeterminant for how people experience cohesion and trust in others appears to stem from inequality. The more unequal a society, the lower the levels of trust in each other appear to be (ibid.). Some research even suggests that the role of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity in social trust should be seen as a placeholder for other factors that shape social cohesion, such as disparity and inequality (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015; Laurence, 2011; Sturgis et al., 2011). Other research appears to be pointing in the direction that ethnic, racial and cultural diversity carries long-term benefits for heterogenous societies and thus is more likely to foster social cohesion and trust in the long-term, rather than reducing it (University of Manchester, n.d.).

While the research findings between disparity and heterogeneity are inconclusive, the discussion of these suggests that lived experiences in heterogeneous societies are complex, and unlikely reducible to any single factor or influence. An approach steeped only in the distinction between different ethnic, racial, and cultural groups then risks oversimplifying the complex interplay of the dynamic systems and processes that all contribute to how people come together in society, and how they break apart (Rice et al., 2019).

This thinking has encouraged a body of work that has begun to engage with more broadly conceived and intersecting considerations surrounding social cohesion. Beider and

Chahal (2020), for example, have conducted research that overlays heterogeneity with classed lived experiences (also, Beider 2015). Based on extensive ethnographic work with white-working class Americans, this research situates the way in which people experience a sense of belonging amid a rise in American populism in the lead up to the Trump presidency. With this, the authors also consider the impact of history and political context in the emergence of cohesion and belonging (also, Beider et al., 2017). Such research exemplifies the complexity of lived experiences and points to the added benefit of gaining insights into everyday experiences from the ground up, while at the same time bringing them into conversation with the dynamic and messy influences of social, political and economic structures (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

This type of research reflects an argument that belonging does not merely happen as a result of horizontal encounters, but rather, that belonging and exclusion are shaped by vertical axes of differentiation and power (Hall, 2013; Yuval-Davies, 2006). Systems of differentiation and political, historical, economic, and cultural influences all shape the context in which belonging and social cohesion between people emerge. The singling out of one effect – ethnic, cultural or racial difference – without taking into account a more comprehensive totality of influences is at best analytical, at worst problematic and lacks the ability to reflect how people actually live (Bannerji, 2005; Woo, 2020). A comprehensive lens to answering the multicultural question thus considers the multicultural nature of society, but also embeds it into societal vectors that direct the production and experience of social relations.

Hall (2000) references this distinction when he goes on to describe the details of the multicultural question. He refers to it as a two-pronged question that asks us to consider 'what we might call the old antiracist or race equality and justice agenda, and on the other hand, the question of whether and how people of very different cultural, ethnic, racial and religious belonging can cohabit in British society and build a common life in a way which recognises rather than abolishes their differences.' (ibid., 2). My reading of this quote is that Hall was certainly interested in the differential outcomes for racial, cultural, or ethnic groups, but also considered the processes by which social formations of ethnic, racial, and cultural difference – as well as other forms of difference – were made relevant, or obsolete, in heterogeneous societies.

Overclaiming the inherent significance attached to the coexistence of cultural, racial, and ethnic groups, risks downplaying the different facets, processes, and dynamics of identity formation within diverse societies. Lived experiences go beyond the communitarian, group-based framing of previous approaches (Valluvan, 2016). They refer to the dynamic connections between people across a complexity of interactions and identities, social positionalities, and experiences. In sum, an exploration of 'community' when narrowly conceived, focuses on cultural, ethnic, and racial groupings in society, rather than the connectedness of people in systems of differentiation that may make such distinctions appear more, or less, relevant, depending on the time and the context. It can reinforce a simplistic understanding of how people experience belonging and reduce the complexity of social identities and lived experiences.

2.2 Social cohesion, conviviality and social relations

When policymakers and academics are interested in a sense of community and belonging, this partially stems from an interest in how informal social life emerges in places and which, as per Hall (2000), often involves multicultural populations sharing space (Wise & Velaytutham, 2014). This elevates the role of 'place' to social life in heterogeneous societies (Neal et al., 2019b). Such a lens is more accurately described through the concepts of cohesion and conviviality, rather than community.

Definitions of social cohesion cover a broad range of facets and influences that include sense of belonging, values, behaviours, civic and political participation, income and wealth equality (Chan et al., 2006; Council of Europe, 2005; Maxwell, 1996). Baylis et al. (2019) differentiate these definitions into those that foreground shared social values and describe cohesion as a state of being, and those that focus on multiple and dynamic factors that shape cohesion as a process of doing. The former chimes with the more narrowly conceived ideas surrounding *Gemeinschaft*/community. The latter focuses on the more dynamic and unstable aspects that are the hallmark of the *Gesellschaft*/society approach. Social cohesion when it focuses on shared values leads to a static description of the state of social relations, whereas social cohesion that focuses on the dynamic interplay of a multitude of influences situates social relations as an ongoing social, political and economic

process. Cohesion becomes a practice that people are engaging in through their daily lives (Blokland, 2017).

Given the persisting prevalence of 'community' in academic research and policymaking, it may not be surprising that social cohesion approaches have also predominantly focused on shared values as a precursor to a cohesive society (Green et al., 2009, 2011). These approaches have frequently foregrounded the unique relevance of socially shared values – or, in the least, a general consensus on the desirability of certain values – in creating a bond between people and in holding a society together (Delhey et al., 2018). As a result, social cohesion has emerged within a normative frame of what makes people cohere across ethnic, racial, and cultural difference, and more broadly, what constitutes a good society.

Cohesion work is often based on the assumption that if societies cohere, they provide a better life for those who live in them (Sealy, 2018). In consequence, the responsibility of policymakers becomes to manage the way in which social formations in heterogeneous societies develop. Two prominent approaches have spanned academic and policymaking circles that support this assumption: multiculturalism and interculturalism. Both approaches have provided detailed formulations on how to make heterogeneous societies cohere.

Multiculturalism broadly focuses on the protection of minority rights within society, and seeks to advance group-based rights for ethnic, racial and cultural minorities (Modood, 2007). Multiculturalism doesn't see difference or heterogeneity as something that needs to be solved, rather it focuses on the way in which the rights of minority groups can be protected and even harnessed to produce positive social relations (Sealy, 2018). Multiculturalism thus takes a group-based approach to social cohesion, which starts from the premise that meaningful ethnic, cultural, and racial groups are formed and coexist in societies.

This group focus of multiculturalism is also a source of criticism. Critics say that it reinforces the existence and significance of boundaries across different ethnic, cultural, and racial categorisations and that it upholds and perpetuates the division between majority and minority cultures in this way (Beider, 2015; Runnymede Trust, 2000). Further, multiculturalism has been critiqued for also overemphasising the role of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups in society, while at the same time downplaying the role of other externalities on experiences of belonging, and the emergence of cohesion (Meer and Modood, 2012).

Interculturalism is different to the multicultural approach in that it focuses specifically on connections and interactions between people of different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Antonsich, 2015; Zapata-Barrero, 2019). Although people are still engaged on the grounds of their ethnic, racial, and cultural identities, the intercultural approach suggests focusing on people as individuals, rather than members of a group (Zapata-Barrero, 2015). While the multicultural approach considers heterogeneity through policies and legal mechanisms to protect and promote group rights, interculturalism takes a focus on people as individuals and on the promotion of contact interventions in encouraging exchange and encounter across social differences and divisions (Sealy, 2018).

The European intercultural approach takes as its starting point the position that diversity is an asset to societies, and it becomes the role of policymakers to harness its potential for societies (Council of Europe, 2008). This contrasts with previous approaches to heterogeneity which often considered its role in creating societal tensions. Although this stance is more frequently associated with the intercultural approach, both the multicultural and intercultural approach break with the clash framing and open avenues for suggesting how policy approaches should harness the potential of diversity (Sealy, 2018). In that sense, both can offer a more unpanicked approach to ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity that considers social cohesion and coexistence from the premise that people in heterogeneous societies get along (Noble, 2013).

Interculturalism considers questions of cohesion to be a local policy issues, which contrasts with the multicultural framing that considers cohesion a concern of national interest (Zapata-Barrero, 2015). With its focus on social cohesion in local areas and on coexistence as it is lived by people, rather than groups, the intercultural approach is grounded in the idea of 'conviviality'. In line with Hall's multicultural drift, conviviality shifts questions of heterogeneity to the domain of everyday life. Conviviality places experiences of community and belonging into quotidian settings and across everyday interactions (Gilroy, 2004). While intercultural approaches consider that contact needs to be created and managed in heterogeneous societies, the convivial approach states that these contacts are already happening as a by-product of people going about their daily lives in heterogeneous societies (Sealy, 2018).

Convivial approaches to coexistence in heterogeneous societies have been extremely prolific in academic research across various fields in the past decades (Neal et al., 2019a). They have traded under a variety of different labels: diversity turn (Berg & Sigona, 2013), everyday multiculturalism (Wise, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009), commonplace diversity (Wessendorf, 2013, 2014), everyday diversity (Zukin et al., 2016a), everyday cosmopolitanism (Noble, 2009) or living multiculture (Neal et al., 2013, 2018, 2019a, 2019b). For the most part, I refer to these approaches as the 'everyday diversity' approach in this dissertation.

Collectively, these approaches have made relevant contributions in the context of this dissertation. By showing that people are navigating encounters with difference often effectively and unceremoniously in their everyday lives, they challenge the political potential of clash narratives to be translated into identity politics. Because convivial approaches are framed in local places and practices and focus on the formation of social cohesion from below, they deconstruct the necessity for group-based understandings of social relations and shift towards those that foreground the relationships and connections that emerge between people in everyday spaces. As a result, they allow for a more dynamic conceptualisation of how 'community' emerges (Baylis et al., 2019; Blokland, 2017). This opens opportunities to consider social cohesion through the more dynamically framed social relations as the basis for community (Amit & Rapport, 2002).

The concept of 'social relations' is a lot more "trouble-free" than the notion of community (Neal et al., 2013, p. 320). Focusing on social relations conceptually forces the gaze towards considering the processes involved in the making of belonging and cohesion. This includes both how people relate to one another horizontally in society, but also how they are co-embedded vertically in social, political and cultural structures (Hall & Lamont, 2013; Mansvelt, 2005). These social relations are dynamic and procedural, meaning that they are susceptible to change and that they adapt to changing circumstances (Dinnie & Fischer, 2019).

The focus on social relations has another added advantage for researchers: as each person is considered for their horizontal and vertical entanglements, meaningful social identities and categories can emerge in the research process. This means that the study of heterogeneity moves beyond the "gaze which looks to study difference as worthy of

normative evaluation" (Valluvan, 2016, p. 211). The frame of social relations positions people in situational assemblages that can include markers of identity, but also transcend them. While the aim of convivial approaches is certainly to consider these vertical and horizontal emplacements of people in their everyday spaces (Neal et al., 2019a, 2019b; Wise & Noble, 2016), the question of whether they have been able to do this to date remains the matter of debate (Neal et al, 2019b; Sealy, 2018; Valentine, 2008; Valluvan, 2016).

2.3 Social relations and everyday spaces

The focus on social relations offers opportunities to extend the gaze from cultural identities and intersubjective experiences towards the spatial emplacements of people and the spaces in which social life of heterogeneous societies takes place. The social relations framing is rooted in two underpinning philosophies, one pertaining to the everyday setting and the other one to a specific understanding of space. The everyday setting distils the more abstract notions of experience and meaning into the day-to-day of the lived, social realities of people (Highmore, 2002; Lefebvre, 1984; Paterson 2005). As such, it offers a grounded and practical approach for addressing issues of social life grounded in the way in which daily life unfolds (Janning, 2015). This approach to heterogeneity is based in lived experience, rather than a normative frame (McIntosh & Wright, 2019). In turn, this approach provides new avenues to inform academic and policy debates from the ground up.

Within this approach, everyday spaces are important sites. They produce and reflect "common meanings of experience, contact, and discovery, [and how they are] writing themselves into the land" (Williams, 1958, p.93). Spaces become an important analytical focus for studies of social relations, because, as I have shown in the discussion of spaces of consumption in the introduction, they have multiple dimensions and manifestations that make them meaningful to social life.

This complex spatial framing highlights that even though physical spaces constitute the material world of our everyday lives, they are also the global nexuses of immaterial dynamics and forces that are being rendered meaningful by the way in which they inscribe themselves into everyday spaces (Belk & Ger, 1996). Neal et al. (2013) for example discuss that conviviality is a transnational issue, but that it becomes meaningful to people in the way that it plays out against the spaces of their everyday lives (p.308). Valluvan (2016) refers to

this when stating that convivial approaches happen at the point where spaces become places, i.e. the process of them becoming "locally demarcated and conditioned towards certain forms of engagement and social purposes" (p.17). While spaces provide horizontal and vertical vectors for social life, they also attain meaning through the way in which they are inhabited and lived by people (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Soja, 1996).

The spatial framing departs from both the communitarian and the identity framing of before. While 'community' relies on trust, familiarity, memory, and prolonged contact or bonds between groups or people of cultural, racial, and ethnic identities, 'social relations' can work with much slighter and more unstable engagements across a range of routine contexts—work, school, public transport, streets, shops, leisure venues—in both voluntary and involuntary contact moments (Neal et al., 2013; McNeil & Cherti, 2012). Meyer and Brysack (2012) conclude in their book *Pax Ethnica* that everyday spaces offer significant opportunities for creating social cohesion in society. Having conducted research into pockets of peaceful social relations in heterogenous cities in Europe, America and Asia, they conclude that spaces of everyday encounters open up lenses for not only understanding social relations in heterogeneous societies, but also for ensuring that they are positively experienced. Their approach is one of many that has sought to highlight how in daily settings, through exposure and encounter, in practices and interactions, relations between people are constructed mostly peacefully and mostly unceremoniously, but most importantly dynamically. According to the authors, the making of competent populations that are able to navigate and thrive in contexts of heterogeneity happens as a result of these everyday processes of connection and encounter that happen in everyday spaces.

2.4 Everyday spaces, spaces of consumption

Focusing on the everyday and on social relations offers an extension of the conceptual application of community to consider people as vertically and horizontally emplaced via the spaces of their everyday lives. This gives spaces of conviviality and coexistence an important role in social life. They are not merely the container in which social relations take place, but they are also a constituent part of how social relations emerge. These everyday spaces in which social relations can be considered come in many different shapes and sizes, and at different scales.

The intercultural and convivial framing of heterogeneity as a local issue is reflected in the scope of such research. Cities, small towns and villages have all provided the spatial boundaries for this body of research on social relations (Neal et al., 2013). More frequently, research has operated at even smaller scales. Studies have focused on the neighbourhood (e.g. Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015; Wessendorf, 2013; Wise & Velayutham, 2014) or the shopping street (Hall, 2012, 2021; Zukin et al., 2016a, 2016b), or, in even smaller spatial units, such as individual retail units (e.g. Ferreira et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2015; Thurnell-Read, 2021), markets (Hiebert et al., 2014; Rhys-Taylor, 2013; Watson, 2009), parks (Neal et al., 2015), or the community centre (Neal et al., 2019a).

In this body of research, commercial spaces as everyday spaces of social relations have also been researched across various sites and scales (Radice, 2019; Wise & Velayuthan, 2014). Most prominently in this research has been a focus on everyday shopping streets (Hall, 2012, 2015, 2021; Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015; Tissot, 2015; Zukin et al., 2016a, 2017). This work positions these shopping streets as melting pots of social, cultural and economic exchange that offer themselves as particularly suited research sites from which to study social relations as they provide a micro-cosmos, a window onto the wider world of heterogeneity as it becomes lived in the contexts of everyday life (Zukin et al., 2016a). Shopping streets – as examples of the consumptionscapes discussed in section 1.1– reflect the (social) politics of their neighbourhoods and cities and highlight the many social, cultural and economic dynamics, decision-making processes and practices that coalesce in them (Ger & Belk, 1996; Rankin et al., 2016).

Consumptionscapes in the conviviality literature have been mainly considered as sites in which heterogeneous social life unfolds. As a whole, this research has been overly positive or celebratory of the opportunities that emerge for social relations through practices and encounters in spaces of consumption (Valentine, 2008; Valluvan, 2016; Sealy, 2018). Yet, consumption spaces are not merely sites of exchange and multicultural connection. This is something that even the scholars in the everyday diversity field recognise. Neal et al. (2019b) for example suggest that ambivalence is at the core of the daily encounters of lived diversity, arguing that conflict features just as strongly in these experiences as the more positive expressions of conviviality and encounter. In a different paper, the authors state that social

relations in everyday spaces are "*stratified*, often *conflictual*, occasionally *transformative* and always *interdependent*" (Neal et al., 2019a, p.86).

Despite these reflections and insights, the everyday diversity field has rarely gone beyond a "reanimation of local experience, an uncritical celebration of cultural difference" (Kincheloe et al., 2015, p.172). It has done so especially in places where the everyday unfolding and bottom-up management of heterogeneity goes well. And while these approaches have been a necessary counterweight to the more problematic diversity discourses (Sealy, 2018), they still present a narrow engagement with social relations, based mostly on a consideration of how horizontal encounters in everyday spaces emerge and constitute lived experiences of heterogeneity.

This body of research I have suggested focuses on the social relations *in* spaces of consumption. Yet, to explore social relations more comprehensively, an understanding of the vertical processes and dynamics of power and differentiation that also emerge and become lived in these everyday spaces needs to form part of research approaches. In this dissertation, I suggest that a shift needs to happen from considering experiences *in* everyday spaces to experiences *of* everyday spaces.

Wise & Velayutham (2014) speak to the influence of space on everyday diversity by illustrating how the socio-spatial ordering that happens within the built environment contributes to the emergence and experience of social relations. Drawing on their research in Singapore and Sydney, the authors describe how the design of the built environment, in tandem with government diversity policies and regulation, the availability of material objects and amenities all contribute to how interactions in everyday spaces take place. This research indicates that everyday spaces may play a more instructive role in fostering social relations, than their framing as background containers has previously suggested.

What follows could be the assumption that everyday spaces also reflect and inscribe the underlying logics of their use. While this is relevant to all everyday spaces, it becomes particularly pertinent in spaces of consumption, where a multitude of actors and factors shape the lived experiences thereof (e.g., Chatzidakis et al., 2012). Hiebert et al. (2014), for example, have discussed how the way in which street markets emerge reflects how they are marked by policy approaches and regulatory systems, which not only shape the nature of these street markets themselves, but also frame the social relations that emerge with them.

Hiebert et al.'s paper is a call for a research agenda that considers spaces of consumption more explicitly in the context of social relations. The authors conclude that an engagement with this interconnection between spaces of consumption and social relations to date has not been sufficiently made.

There is a gap then between understanding lived experiences in and of everyday spaces, and specifically within that, a gap in understanding how spaces of consumption have a role in the production and experience of social relations.

Part II: Lived experiences of spaces of consumption

This shifting to social relations *of* rather than *in* requires a critical engagement with spaces of consumption, as well as a wider conceptual engagement with 'consumption', and the role both play in social relations. As the everyday diversity literature has been limited in aspect, this section draws more explicitly on consumption studies to review the role of consumption spaces in social relations. I first consider the geographies and logics of consumption that are mediated via consumption spaces and that can produce divergent lived experiences. I discuss and illustrate this drawing on existing research into the lived experiences of spaces of consumption. From this review, consumption spaces emerge for their differential, complementary and sometimes contradicting roles as spaces of opportunity, spaces of alienation/marginalisation and spaces of exclusion. This discussion provides the foundation for exploring the role of spaces of consumption in the emergence and unfolding of social relations in the rest of the dissertation.

2.5 Engaging geographies of consumption

Consumption scholarship has more actively engaged with the role of spaces of consumption in everyday life (e.g., Castilhos et al., 2017; Castilhos & Dolbec, 2018; Giovarnardi & Lucarelli, 2018). These approaches situate consumption spaces and practices beyond the actions and behaviours of individuals and by situating their emergence in the structures of everyday life. Castilhos et al. (2017) suggest that the spatial turn in consumer research has facilitated asking questions about the framing role of everyday consumption spaces for social relations and how their underpinnings manifest in experiences and perceptions of belonging and cohesion. This spatial approach "allows for examining multiple intersecting categories of race, gender, income, and other consumer demographics in understanding the

complex nature of marketplace vulnerabilities" (Parsons et al., 2013, p.35). This builds on earlier work that had positioned consumption spaces as framing the opportunities for and range of decision-making options that are available to consumers (Chatzidakis et al., 2012).

Many 'spatial' consumer researchers encourage a more reflexive engagement with geographies of consumption. As Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) state "space is not merely the background where things happen; it is also a medium that shapes interactions and relations in ways that can liberate or constrain" (p.32). In these spatial approaches, consumption systems are more than containers. They are a boundary framework for social relations, as well as the sites of political struggles that affect social action, human agency and ultimately also, human experience. Spatial consumption scholarship argues that consumptionscapes pervade all aspects of everyday life in modern societies, and thus become signifiers for the nature and types of social relations that emerge within them (Miller & Stovall, 2019). What constitutes 'the good life' and social cohesion thus becomes spatially negotiated within consumption spaces and through consumption practices.

This framing is grounded in two assumptions, arguably crouched within a neoliberal logic. The first one pertains to the ubiquity and relevance of spaces of consumption in society. Understanding how social relations emerge in spaces of consumption necessarily also invokes a critique of the role that consumption spaces are assumed to play in everyday life. The proliferation of spaces of consumption is directly linked to the advancement of a neoliberal logic and of the consumer economy, manifesting their impact in as the centrality of these spaces in daily life (Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015; Miles, 2012; Tissot, 2016; Zukin et al., 2016b). Despite this link, the connection between everyday lived experience as mediated via consumptionscapes as neoliberal spaces has not frequently been made (Kennedy, 2020). This has led some consumer scholars to ask if researchers had become 'useful iditos' to the neoliberal agenda (Askegaard, 2014; Fitchett et al., 2014).

The second assumption within this neoliberal frame assumes and foregrounds individual and collective agency in systems, spaces as well as practices of consumption (Evans, 2018). This is such a core feature of many of the cultural consumption scholarship approaches that have engaged with the role of consumption in social relations that I turn to its discussion in the next section. I partially trace the history of the field to explain the

genealogy of the agentic view of the consumer and show how it has influenced consumption scholarship.

2.6 Sociocultural studies of consumption

Ritzer and Slater (2001) as founding editors of the *Journal of Consumer Culture* highlighted in their first editorial how consumption studies had grown in significance across the social sciences, against a long history of consumption being seen as too banal to be meaningful. Defying this perceived triviality, the editors established the journal that reflected "a huge contemporary interest in consumption" (p. 6) and warranted its launch. The purpose of the *Journal of Consumer Culture* was to explore the central roles of consumption and consumer culture as cultural and social phenomena in contemporary social life.

While such a sociocultural frame for exploring consumption phenomena was not necessarily new (Appadurai, 1986; Isherwood & Douglas, 1979), the launch of the journal marked a moment in the history of the study of consumption. It provided a home for a growing body of work that saw consumption not merely as the by-product or flipside of an economic interest in production. Rather, consumption was considered in its own right and for its sociocultural, ideological, experiential, symbolic and political aspects (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, 2015). The launch of the *Journal of Consumer Culture* formalised a movement in scholarship to consider consumption as one of the major organising principles in society. This interest in the cultural and social aspects of consumption remains relevant to this day (Evans, 2018).

This shift has also partially resulted in consumption becoming seen and explored through research as detached from the capitalist framework that constructs its social and cultural role in society in the first place. It has obscured consumption's importance to the functioning of capitalist societies (Bradshaw, 2017). Instead, it has aligned consumption with questions of how people can construct, via the means of consumption, their own interpretations of 'the good life' (Graeber, 2011). Consumption became about consumer culture, itself a huge heterogeneous concept that covers values, norms and practices associated with consumption (Lury, 2011; Miles, 2017). Both of those, in turn, became framed as a way of life, elevating the role of consumption to become cornerstones of social life (Miles, 1998, Trentmann, 2006, 2016).

While this framing is, of course, not solely the result of research, it has still made research partially implicated in the advancement of the logic of consumption to the exploration of social relations (e.g., Askegaard, 2014; Bradshaw, 2017; Fitchett et al., 2014). This alignment has given rise to two types of consumption scholarship that have used sociocultural approaches to consider consumption phenomena and systems as ways of bestowing agency to people in their everyday lives, or, in contrast, of taking away their agency and subjugating them to the structures and power dynamics that emanate from consumption phenomena and spaces.

2.6.1 Agents of consumption

In the first conceptualisation, consumption is seen as a behaviour template and space of opportunity for people to craft their identities and everyday lived experiences. In this approach, consumption becomes "a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.869). With this comes a rise in consumption spaces and products, as well as the desire to express identity and lifestyle choices in these spaces and through these practices (Zukin & Smith Maguire, 2004). The shift towards consumption as a way of life bestows consumption with significant social relevance as the predominant way in which "people explore, identify and engage with the world around them" (Arnould et al., 2019, p.5). As a behavioural template, consumption then contributes to shaping societal values and norms, aligning how these become enacted and assessed with market economic criteria (Appadurai, 1986).

This view of consumption requires agents of consumption. Consumption is conceived as "a necessary, enjoyable, and often constructive process, a process of creative appropriation of goods and services and their application to reasonable and commendable personal and social ends" (Warde, 2015, p.121). Social relations emerge as a result of people engaging in consumption systems and spaces through their everyday practices and through meaning-making and social contestation as it becomes mediated via the consumptionscapes of everyday life (Shove & Warde, 2001). This approach to consumption chimes with

Blokland's (2017) notion of community as performance. Meaning that it is something people do, rather than something that they are given, or attributes that they come with.

Consumption in this lens is about the individual consumer and their behaviours and choices, linked to their desire for self-actualisation in systems of consumption. Consumer activity then also comes to define social values, and the meaning of personhood itself, whereby people become visible in public life in their role as consumers, or, in the acts of consuming (Lury, 2011). The choices that consumers make and the agency they have in making those choices in systems of consumption are turned into an important arena of social relations, in and beyond spaces of consumption.

Alongside this framing, for most of its history, consumption scholarship has given primacy to the agentic view of the consumer, who is able and willing to use their consumer choice as a means of expressing themselves and negotiating their situatedness in society (Schwartzkopf, 2017). Often drawing on a Bourdieusian lens, this type of consumption scholarship focuses on the ways in which consumers use consumption behaviours to craft their identities and to position themselves in consumption systems (Lury, 2011). While they are mostly conceived of as doing this as individuals, Lamont and Molnár (2001) put forward a collective identity perspective on consumption, drawing on a social identity framework. In their study on the role of consumption for black Americans, they argue that consumption can be used collectively to advance social narratives that create group cohesion. If this crafting of identity is happening with people who are marginalised in society, an engagement with consumer culture can also counter or resist hegemonic forms of social differentiation in society.

Zelizer (2005) has highlighted a limitation of such a view, which is representative of consumer research at large (Kravets & Varman, 2022): it usually positions consumers as active, as doing something, choosing, and behaving in a conscious and purposeful way. In consequence, this research framing has also contributed to positioning of consumption spaces as places of opportunity for consumers to enact their choices and desires as free agents of consumption. This framing resonates with the way in which spaces of consumption have been framed in the everyday diversity paradigm.

2.6.2 Consumption spaces as structures of vulnerabilities and exclusion

Spaces of consumption do not solely provide opportunities for those who engage in them. They can also create boundaries that result in people feeling marginalised or excluded from them. These vulnerabilities counter the neoliberal argument of people's agency within systems of consumption. At the other end of this spectrum then, a body of consumption scholarship has coexisted with the agentic approaches that considers consumption spaces as systems and structures that take away people's agency. In this view, the consumer is not an active agent, but rather a recipient of consumption systems and spaces as structures of exclusion or marginalisation.

Scholarship on marketplace exclusion recognises that in contexts of consumption, to be excluded increasingly means to be excluded from the sphere of consumption and from interactions in spaces of consumption. Burgess et al. (2017) define exclusion in consumption systems as

> barriers to participation in the marketplace relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society. It affects the ability of individuals and groups to be adequately represented in the marketplace and has implications for quality of life and social cohesion" (p. 491).

To be excluded means to be unable or limited in being able to engage in the activities required of a consumer (Durrer & Miles 2009, p.226). Barriers to participation can be economic ("I can't afford") or symbolic ("I am not represented"). They can intersect with other forms of marginalisation already present in society, such as those on the grounds of poverty, ability, race, ethnicity, or culture and religion (Jafari & Goulding, 2008; Kearney et al., 2019; Sandikci & Jafari, 2013; Üstuner & Holt, 2007; Varman & Vijay, 2018). As such, they are spaces that may expose vulnerabilities that people already experienced in society (Varman & Vijay, 2018; Commuri & Ekici, 2008) or they can (temporarily) produce new ones (Baker et al., 2005; Hill, 2001).

Marketplace exclusion broadly acknowledges that market mechanisms do not only foster a sense of belonging for consumers that have the resources, knowhow, and personal attributes to participate in the marketplace, but that they can also promote feelings of isolation, marginalisation, and discrimination. Marketplace exclusion considers the intersections between different bases of exclusion perpetuated by markets and consumption

systems (Saren et al., 2019). The inability to partake in consumption systems (Üstuner & Holt, 2007) or limited or liminal consumption practices (e.g., Bauman's "flawed consumer", 2005) significantly shape experiences of belonging and exclusion in societies that value or encourage consumption (Varman & Vijay, 2018).

Marketplace exclusion invites a shift away from the notion of individual empowerment through consumption systems towards considering the structural factors produce societal exclusions (Burgess et al., 2017). One way of establishing nuance within the context of exclusion is to differentiate semantically between different experiences thereof. Marcuse (2009), for example, distinguishes between deprivation as the fighting for survival, overcoming existential threats) and alienation as the displeasure or hampered aspirations of those constrained by an existing system. Consumers feel excluded if their tastes (cultural capital), their resources (economic capital) and their relations (social capital) make them unable to participate in neighbourhood high streets. The difference between exclusion and alienation then is that exclusion is considered something more existential, while alienation produces a marginalisation. Alienation is a discomfort more than it is an existential threat.

Miller and Stovall (2018) pick up this distinction in relation to consumption and argue that existing research into experiences of exclusion in consumption spaces or through consumption behaviours has often amplified the voices of those that are alienated from the system, not those who are excluded. Although there is a recognition in consumption scholarship to further explore the mechanisms and elements of consumption spaces that produce these more fundamental exclusions, such research is only nascent in consumption scholarship[9]. To date, consumption scholarship has been more likely to have resonated with an ideological lens of consumption that accepts the normativities of the logic of consumption and assumes people's willingness or desire to participate and succeed in spaces of consumption. From a research and epistemic perspective, this resonates with the neoliberal framing of consumption and foregrounds perspectives shaped by the societal norms of the global North (Kravets & Varman, 2022; Varman & Vijay, 2018). In a similar vein to the view

[9] It is interesting to note the contexts in which research on marketplace vulnerabilities and exclusion has often taken place. While much of the research on consumption has focused on Western contexts (Jafari et al., 2012, Kravets & Varman, 2022), insights on marketplace exclusions increasingly emerge from research focused on non-Western contexts, where arguably the effects of the advancement of global consumer capitalism are more challenging and contradictory (Sharifonnasabi et al., 2019; Vijay & Varman, 2018).

of the agentic consumer, this stance considers that consumption spaces should be spaces of opportunity for those who engage in them.

2.6.3 A symbiotic stance

Wilson (2018) critiques approaches that seek equitable access to market competition and consumption systems as essentially still perpetuating the neoliberal centrality of consumption spaces, but from the political left. Indeed, most of these studies assume that consumers want (or should want) to consume and express agency through marketplace structures (Arnould, 2007).

Izberk-Bilgin (2010) has reviewed the two stances that have underpinned research surrounding systems of consumption and the opportunities that emerge in them for social relations and for people's agency towards contestation and resistance, calling them the 'empowerment and agency' stance and the 'enslavement and manipulation' stance. These stances have produced a view whereby people become either trapped in spaces of consumption beyond their control, or where they, as free agents can craft and shape their own lived experiences. She concludes that this may be reducing the complexity of lived experiences that actually emerge in and through spaces of consumption.

In my own research, I have seen the view of the free agentic consumer as limited on two grounds: not only were people at times unable to participate, they also at times inhabited different normativities which made them experience spaces of consumption as external impositions that they did not want to participate in. Instead of their free agency to make and shape their belonging and situatedness in society, I have found that both of these scenarios produced barriers that affected how and when people participated in spaces of consumption (Bröckerhoff, 2017; Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2019). This suggests that a more mixed picture emerges for the opportunities that stem from consumptionscapes in the context of social relations. Izberk-Bilgin (2010) also argues that while so far, the stances towards systems of consumption have been presented as an either/or scenario, the role of consumption systems in everyday life should be more appropriately seen as a spectrum in which elements of both stances have explanatory power for lived experiences.

Chiming with this more symbiotic stance, Wise and Velayutham (2009) also argue that everyday diversity needs to necessarily encompass not only opportunities for

encounter, but also the social reality and lived experience of everyday exclusion. This symbiotic stance is likely to encourage a consideration of the role of spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations.

2.7 Lived experiences of spaces of consumption

In what follows, I review some of the studies that have sought to attempt to combine vertical and horizontal analyses of how people experience spaces of consumption, and how, conversely, spaces of consumption produce the limitations and opportunities for experiences of belonging and cohesion that form the basis of building positive social relations. These studies problematise and add complexity to an understanding of spaces of consumption that goes beyond the dichotomies of opportunity and exclusion (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010), while also adding nuance to such dualisms.

These studies span both the everyday diversity and consumption scholarship, and they focus on different aspects of the interconnected roles of the individual, the social relations of space and the consumptionscape itself. They highlight some of the messy and contradictory experiences that emerge from spaces of consumption, thus challenging their positioning as spaces of opportunity. At the same time, they also evidence that the experiences that emerge in spaces of consumption are not solely those of structures of domination and oppression. Instead, it is likely to conceive that the social relations of spaces of consumption as exemplified in these studies lay bare more multi-faceted lived experiences.

Chatzidakis et al. (2012) conducted ethnographic research in Exarcheia, an anti-capitalist activist neighbourhood in Athens (Greece). Here, the authors illustrate the complex experiences of meaning-making and contestation in the neighbourhood, making its consumptionscape both a space of opportunity for people to negotiate their own situatedness in society, as well as their relations with others in that space. Throughout this, the consumptionscape framed the scripts for behaviours and experiences, while also restricting those processes via the normativities that were enacted through them. The consumptionscape was thus at the same time a space for the production of social formations, as well as providing the boundaries for how those evolved.

In a similar vein, Visconti et al. (2010) discuss how consumption practices and discourses intersect with public space in an analysis of street art in four urban neighbourhoods. This research links the consumption practices of and in space to the emergence of norms that are established and maintained within these spaces. In this work, people – in this case the street artists and residents themselves – emerge as agents who actively engage with the normativities of the consumptionscape, using their public artistic practice to challenge or reiterate them.

These studies sit towards the agentic end of the spectrum by highlighting the potential for social relations that emerges in spaces of consumption. Other studies sit more towards the structures of enslavement end of the spectrum problematising people's agency in spaces of consumption. These studies have sought to explore how spaces of consumption become systems that create an unavoidable maelstrom of lived experiences for people who have very little to no agency in shaping outcomes for belonging and cohesion.

A study by Varman and Vijay (2018) discusses the processes of displacement and dispossession that take place when people in slums in Ejipura, Bangalore (India) have to give up their homes to make space for the construction of a commercial complex including a shopping mall. In their study, the authors find that people faced multiple episodes of violence in the emergence of this consumption complex. This violence was legitimised by police force and through legal mechanisms. It left people who were denied their subjectivity, in addition to lacking agency to shape the outcomes of the expansion of the consumptionscape into the spaces of their everyday lives. This study illustrates how the study participants recollected their experiences against these spaces of consumption as violence and trauma.

Üstuner & Holt (2007) also highlight how spaces of consumption contribute to how people perceive their situatedness in Turkish society. Drawing on ethnographic work, the authors illustrate how women of marginalised backgrounds were made aware of their marginality due to their inability to partake in the emerging consumptionscapes of the rapidly developing and Westernising Turkey. Their inability to partake was economic, meaning that they could not afford the things that were being offered to them. It was also cultural, because they did not have the necessary cultural knowhow for engaging in consumptionscapes authentically, or for being identified as a person that belonged. The

authors conclude that as a result, their sense of belonging became fragmented and fractured, leaving the women in a betwixt-and-between positionality in society. They suggest this fragmented situatedness was produced especially by the social and cultural structures perpetuated via the consumptionscape.

Leipäama-Leskinen et al. (2014) take a slightly different stance to a very similar dilemma. They studied how poor consumers responded to the barriers provided by their own poverty in engaging in consumptionscapes. Reflecting the more agentic framing of research, they studied how people responded innovatively and creatively to the challenge of constructing their belonging in structures in which they were otherwise marginalised.

Based on ethnographic research in two urban neighbourhoods in Melbourne, Colic-Peisker and Robertson (2015) illustrate how the change towards a post-industrial service economy in both neighbourhoods has challenged social cohesion. In both neighbourhoods gentrification in the consumptionscape has exacerbated already existing divisions and differences, increasing socio-economic and ethnic fragmentation where they existed. What is also interesting in this research is that it positions lived experiences of social relations around the words of 'perceptions' and 'feelings' (p.86), highlighting how important participants' reflections of belonging and cohesion are for understanding social relations. The authors say that these experiential and affective nodes of social cohesion are as important in understanding the social life of neighbourhoods as the actual changes that are happening.

This distinction of perceived and 'real' is pertinent to research in spaces of consumption, which have attested to the ability of consumptionscapes to overlay the two and transform them into lived experiences. Zukin et al. (2017) for example, highlight how restaurant reviews can contribute to experiences of belonging and segregation for individual retail units in the consumptionscape. These also translate to the hegemonic differentiation between people who attend the different establishments, reflecting differences in power hierarchies that make or unmake 'success' in the consumptionscape. What Zukin and colleagues found was that discourses surrounding neighbourhood restaurants could lead to 'discursive redlining' that often benefitted those already more privileged in the constantly emerging landscape for consumption.

Tissot's (2015) study of the intersecting experiences of gentrification and diversity in a neighbourhood in Boston's South End also support this view of how people in neighbourhoods can discursively create lived experiences of social relations through spaces of consumption. She reviews how 'new gentrifiers' moving into poorer neighbourhoods and shaping its future direction can exert their 'power over space' through their consumption practices and tastes, making them appear more hegemonic. The resulting change in perceptions, she found, soon also translates into real power in the neighbourhood, as the gentrifiers are now better able to inhabit the normativities of the hegemonic landscape of the consumptionscape that was created matching their own tastes.

What this research illustrates is that not all people moving in consumptionscapes are necessarily interested in creating genuine social relations that produce realities beyond the consumption domain. Brumagh and Grier (2013), in previous work, called this idea 'diversity seeking'. 'Diversity seekers' may be motivated to live amongst people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. In heterogeneous neighbourhoods, consumptionscapes may be most immediate spaces in which those people would encounter each other. However, this does not necessarily come hand-in-hand with a desire to create positive coexistence across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. Rather, the heterogeneity of the area becomes part of its place brand that becomes hegemonically tilted towards the diversity seekers, without necessarily highlighting meaningful or equitable social relations. Contributing to such findings, Grier and Perry (2018) conclude that what emerges in heterogeneous consumptionscapes could be considered as 'faux diversity', a situation whereby people are attracted to the consumptionscapes because of their heterogeneity, without necessarily being interested to foster positive social relations across differences.

This research indicates that perceptions of social relations as they are made visible in and through the consumptionscapes become important indicators of lived experiences of belonging and cohesion. These perceptions contribute to the production of different lived experiences in and of spaces of consumption and indicate that their role in social relations is more complex than the neutral background to research or the spaces of opportunity and the structures of enslavement in which they have often been portrayed to date.

2.8 Spaces of opportunity, marginalisation/alienation and exclusion

In the introduction, I have examined the dimensions (economic, social and ideological) and manifestations (physical, symbolic, lived) of spaces of consumption. What emerges from the review of the literature is that spaces of consumption can play different, at times complementary, at times conflicting roles in social relations. Further to their dimensions and manifestations discussed in the introduction, consumptionscapes can be at the same time spaces of opportunity, as well as spaces of alienation/marginalisation and exclusion (Fig. 3).

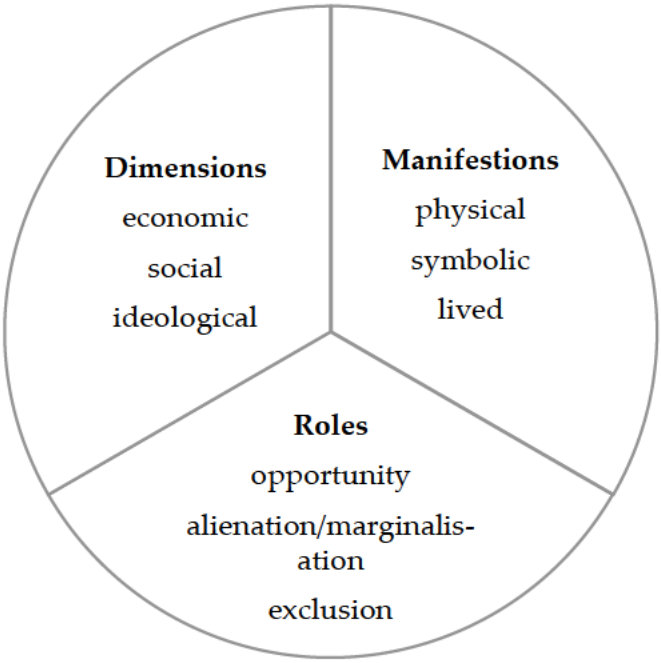


Figure 3: The conceptualisation of spaces of consumption in this dissertation

As spaces of opportunity, they allow people to come together and to craft their identities and lifestyles across societal lines of difference and differentiation. As spaces of alienation and marginalisation, they produce normativities that some people may find more easily to inhabit and thus be more able and willing to conform to than others. As spaces of alienation/marginalisation, they indicate a side-lining in, rather than complete exclusion from these everyday spaces. As such, they can produce a variety of market and social hurdles that may be challenging for people to overcome if they want to fully participate in societies marked by the expanding role of spaces of consumption. Finally, spaces of consumption can also be spaces of exclusion that manifest as power and as systems of

differentiation. They create boundaries that determine people's 'insideness' or 'outsideness' of the social relations that emerge in contexts where consumptionscapes play a central role in social life.

Consumptionscapes are likely to perform all three roles simultaneously. These differential - at times complementary, at other times conflicting – roles of spaces of consumption are explored in the rest of the dissertation. They form the frame for exploring and discussing the contours of the social relations *of* spaces of consumption.

2.9 Chapter conclusion

Social relations research has brought attention to the role of everyday spaces in heterogeneous societies in providing opportunities for everyday encounters across differences. This gives everyday spaces an important in the production and experience of social relations. This review has shown that the multiple dimensions, manifestations and roles of spaces of consumption have the potential to produce conflicting and messy lived experiences, showing that spaces of consumption are more than a backdrop against which social relations play out. As studies into the lived experience of spaces of consumption show, everyday entanglements with spaces of consumption – both horizontal and vertical – are not only likely to result in different outcomes, but also produce different experiences of social relations.

How people in Bristol and the West Bank navigate their belonging within these spaces is the focus of the dissertation. By uncovering how lived experiences in and of spaces of consumption are produced and resisted in these two case studies, I aim to outline the contours of social relations *of* spaces of consumption. Next, I turn to the research design, which has supported me to explore these in more detail.

3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION

So far, I have argued to consider spaces of consumption as more than a research backdrop against which community and belonging play out and to engage with their role in the emergence and unfolding of social relations. This shift positions spaces of consumption as producers and shapers of experiences of belonging and cohesion. In this chapter, I outline the critical research approach that has allowed me to consider this shift in two case study locations: Bristol (UK) and the West Bank (oPt). Besides presenting the research design and specific data collection methods, I also outline my positionality as well as ethical and practical considerations and limitations of the chosen research approach. Further, I discuss some of the opportunities and challenges that stemmed from conducting research in two very different case study sites. I reflect on the way in which I incorporated findings, drawing on an analytical framework that was adaptive and circuitous. My methodological choices allowed me to consider the two case studies as illustrative of the constellations created for social relations within consumptionscapes, speaking both to their specific contexts, but also transcending them. This approach has enabled me to gain insights into the social relations of spaces of consumption in as well as beyond their immediate empirical contexts.

3.1 Research approach and philosophy

The research approach focused on exploring lived experiences of spaces of consumption to consider social relations of spaces of consumption via the everyday unfolding of participants' lives. These formed the affective and experiential basis from which to contextualise and critique the social relations of spaces of consumption. This approach allowed me to explore the production as well as experience of these consumption-mediated social relations.

I chose a qualitative critical approach for the research. A qualitative approach seeks to explore and interpret social phenomena, focusing on the way people make sense or assign meaning to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This often involves an emergent research design for the data collection, which takes place in participants' natural settings (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017). It also involves an inductive approach to analysis, building from the data to gain insights into how participants experience and give meaning to social phenomena (ibid). The data is built up from below. It is organised and aggregated into codes and

categories from which participants' meanings and sensemaking are presented, often thematically (Saldaña, 2016). These experiences of participants formed the first step for the discussion of social relations of spaces of consumption.

Critical research engages in an extra step. Beyond developing such a hermeneutic understanding based on the qualitative data, critical researchers also ask questions about why and how experiences become embedded in contexts and in specific times. The point of analysis becomes to critique and challenge the available data, asking what the data says about the settings in which participants' experiences are situated (Olsen, 2007). Rather than focusing purely on coding and thematic presentation, the emergent codes are queried for what they say, for what they don't say and for what they might be revealing about their contexts. Critical analysis thus involves the critique of one's own findings to support the development of broader conceptual and theoretical contributions beyond their empirical contexts (Kompridis, 2005). Theory and existing research guide such critique and support triangulation (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000), and engages a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning (Eriksen, 1995).

As a final step, critical researchers often formulate transformative opportunities for change based on the research findings. This stems from the underlying assumption that it is the role of research to address a shortcoming or problem in the real world where research can bring about positive social change (ibid.). Critical research is thus public-facing and engaged scholarship (Bhattacharyya & Murji, 2013).

Murray and Ozanne (1991) highlight a multi-step research design that epitomises a typical qualitative critical research process. It starts with the identification of a (practical) problem. It continues with the construction of an understanding of lived experience using multiple ethnographic and qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and observations. It then engages in a multi-stage and multi-layered analysis and interpretation focusing on the interplay of data, lived experiences, research settings and their underlying structures and mechanisms. This analysis triangulates the primary data of the research with previous research, with official documents and media analysis, drawing on policy and data insights where available and relevant. Documents can be drawn in widely, so long as they serve to contextualise the context and time of primary data collection.

Critical research consists thus of multiple overlapping processes that together form the basis for research insights. This is important, because one of the features of the critical research process is that it is responsive to emergent findings and their context. Taking these multiple steps allows analysis to circle back on itself repeatedly to critique its own findings and adapt its processes following new discoveries that necessitate changes in direction (Blom & Moren, 2011; Elder-Vass, 2010; Smith & Elger, 2012). This means the processes that make up the qualitative critical research approach can become very complex.

What adds to the complexity of critical research is that it is also interdisciplinary. Drawing on varied theories, methods and modes of analysis is necessary so that critical research can address the real-world-inspired problems that critical researchers identify at the outset. Interdisciplinarity is also required to develop the transformative contribution of the research practically and comprehensive (Hall, 1987, 1996, 1997; Littler, 2016a, 2016b). The transformational outlook of critical research thus situates empirical data in political, social, economic and cultural structures, using circuitous interpretation between data, theory and context to not only gain new knowledge, but, perhaps more importantly, to challenge established forms of knowledge (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

Critical research challenges existing structures of marginalisation or exclusion and shines a light to avenues for change (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017). Since its origins, critical research has also been driven by an understanding of the role of research as political (Horkheimer, [1937]1972). The critical approach that has shaped my own dissertation project emerges directly from the German tradition of critical theory. This was developed in Germany against the context of the Third Reich. At the time, many philosophical, cultural, social, and political institutions were considering their role and value in society. Due to this historical context for the emergence of critical research, the purpose of critical research can be described by drawing on an analogy from theatrical practice that was also embedded into the same moment of history.

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956), Germany's famous playwright of political theatre, saw the role of theatre to prevent structures and systems (usually of inequality, marginalisation or exclusion) from becoming commonly and uncritically accepted. Brecht saw the purpose of

political theatre to disrupt a process of normalisation[10], especially where such normalisation was likely to result in people more easily accepting their own marginalisation. In order to do this, Brecht developed a range of theatrical tools referred to as *Verfremdungseffekt* (*Verfremdung* broadly translates to estrangement, alienation). These tools disrupted the narrative flow of the play so that it created a distance between what was happening on stage and the spectacle of theatre.

This deconstruction[11] served the purpose that people would not become absorbed in the story of the play. Whenever Brecht estimated a risk that audiences would become emotionally embroiled in the plot, a *Verfremdungseffekt* would disrupt and deconstruct the plot narrative. The aim of this disruption was to distort an otherwise ordinary or mundane situation, so that it could become seen as noteworthy. The origins of *Verfremdung* were ideologically motivated. These tools highlight how people in situations of their everyday lives were marginalised or excluded, but that, often, they were not questioning their situation because they had become accustomed to their own marginalisation and oppression (Patrick, 1976). *Verfremdung* could disrupt this normalisation and highlight the man-made nature of the social world and provide opportunities for people, through critical awareness and reflection, to bring about change.

While it may seem unusual to draw parallels between theatrical and academic practice, in this instance such bringing together is not only useful, it also lends itself. Brecht was a contemporary of many of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School and the mutual influence of context – Germany in the 1930s and 1940s – has shaped this approach to intellectual thought (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011). Translating the concept of *Verfremdung* into the research context for this dissertation encourages researchers to consider what

[10] 'Normalisation' is a term that I first came across while conducting research with Palestinian activists of the BDS movement, whose activities had three aims: ending the occupation, equal rights for Palestinians, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Although no unified definition of normalisation exists, many Palestinian activists consider any actions or behaviours that bring Palestinians and Israelis together without opportunity to challenge the occupation, or that can broadly be interpreted to justify Israel's military occupation of the oPt as normalisation (Dajani, 2016). Foucault (1975) introduced 'normalisation' and tied it in with power structures in society, whereby institutions and organisations can use their power to exert influence on what is considered acceptable norms, and then enforce these norms. In both interpretations, normalisation takes place in asymmetric power relationships and normalisation maintains or enhances those already in power. Miles (1998) also uses the term when he discusses the consuming paradox, arguing that the advancement of consumerism in society comes hand-in-hand with its taken-for-granted-ness by those living in consumer societies.

[11] Deconstruction rests on the assumption that even the most everyday and seemingly banal phenomena are the result of and present as dynamic fields of meaning (Hall, 1981). Uncovering the processes by which the significance of everyday phenomena is produced, is a core aim of critical research (Leete, 2018).

aspects of social relations might be taken for granted and could benefit with being deconstructed through research. It challenges researchers to consider the ideological underpinnings of their own work and of the social phenomena that they study, considering them as dynamic fields of meaning-making and contestation (Hall, 1981). It also invites researchers to consider wider societal and political implications of their work. All of this facilitates – and is facilitated by – the ongoing deconstruction and critique typical to critical research.

While critical research design is guided by the core principles outlined so far, it usually does not replicate or fit into already established research moulds (Clarke, 2010, 2014). This is necessary as critical researchers tend to develop grounded methods that will allow them to gain bottom-up insights into the context of the study, influenced by the study aims and its transformational motivations (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Researchers adapt these methods as they progress through the research process. Each piece of empirical research in the critical tradition is only ever the starting point for the more complex and interdisciplinary system of processes that allows critical researchers to develop insight, critique and transformation.

The risk of working with pre-established frameworks for conducting critical research is that they may prescribe specific ideas into the data, rather than being guided by the data itself. This jeopardises the ability to create findings that are directly relevant to the aims and contexts of the research and the ability to make research adaptive to emergent findings in and of that context. The philosopher Hannah Arendt referred to this role of critical research as an opportunity for *durchdenken* (engl.: thinking through, reflecting) – critical research processes should provide systematic roadmaps as a basis from which researchers can craft their own research paths, without necessarily prescribing the boundaries or specific processes that will ultimately make up the critical research (Arendt, 2006). As a result, critical approaches are incredibly diverse, as much as they are adaptive (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011).

This makes the qualitative critical approach suitable to research across two settings, with different cultural frames of reference, operating at different scales and having resulted from different researcher engagement in each case study. This research-specific and active engagement with methodology ensures critical research remains true to its critical aims. The

ability of critical research to engage local contexts empirically, while at the same time encouraging researchers to critique their empirical findings with a view to gain insights that transcend local contexts also made it a suitable choice for my own research approach.

3.2 The evolution of the dissertation project

As I have indicated, the idea to compare across two case study locations was not the initial intention for my dissertation. I was undertaking my PhD research in Bristol concurrently with conducting another research project in the occupied West Bank. The purpose of the former was to understand how encounters and experiences of difference in a consumptionscape were affected by rapid urban change. The purpose of the latter was to identify what considerations Palestinians were engaging in when navigating the decision to take part in a consumer boycott following the marketisation of the Palestinian economy. During my analysis for the project in the West Bank, I found myself often drawing parallels between the themes and experiences that were emerging from fieldwork in Bristol.

I began to consider synergies between the research projects, and informally let the disparate research projects speak to one another by writing notes and memos next to data outtakes and in my research diaries. I loosely let these reflections run on, with no specific focus or direction. Going on maternity leave twice during this time allowed me to take a break from the day-to-day running of work and study. During those years, the idea of bringing the case studies together continued to germinate.

Still, it took significant time and effort to consider the ways in which these different projects – albeit with related remits – might connect. This thinking and decision-making process was aided by the various processes of researcher introspection and reflections in each case study location, before, during and after fieldwork had taken place. These supported my sensitisation to the research contexts in each case study and allowed me to contextualise my data and emergent findings with critical distance (Kipnis et al., 2021). And I had already begun to bring these case-study specific notes into conversation with each other.

The decision to formally combine the research projects as case studies came quite late into the PhD process. It was only signed off at the point at which I was formally beginning the write up in summer 2020. Although I knew this meant a lot of additional work of re-

framing, re-analysing and re-writing large swathes of my dissertation to date, I was happy about this decision. I knew that being able to extrapolate out from each individual case would add breadth and depth to my findings. It made each case study not purely about its context, but also about the wider application of the concepts of the research. And that had been what ultimately motivated me in bringing the case studies together in the first place.

3.3 Qualitative bricolage design

One of the major challenges that emerged from having decided to bring two case studies and their separate research projects together was methodological. Considering the cohesion that can emerge between what initially were conceived as two distinct empirical research projects with their own questions and assumptions was a concern for me. Each research site had its own particularities that had marked the research, each was embedded into a specific historical setting. However, I also noted from reading about critical research that being able to translate across different settings and to make findings meaningful in relation to wider theoretical and real-world considerations was one of the cornerstones of critical research processes (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). What my research then needed was a frame that was able to hold the two case studies.

The frame that I chose was a qualitative bricolage design. It felt suited to my needs as it combines critical thinking with researcher creativity in developing a 'mix and match' approach to research that spans data collection, analysis, and transformative formulation (Kincheloe, 2001; Phillimore et al., 2016). Bricolage research is subject to change, depending on the research setting, the emergent analysis, and findings, as well as the researcher's background and stance towards the research topic (Kincheloe et al., 2015). It is thus a reflexive approach to analysis and interpretation (Kincheloe, 2005). It provides a frame that combines multiple methodological and theoretical tools across varied research settings but remains flexible in the way these become applied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). This adaptive design resonates with the no-one-size-fits-all approach to critical research.

The term 'bricolage' – from French, referring to an activity related to tinkering, improvising and doing DIY – was first discussed for research purposes by Lévi-Strauss in

his *The Savage Mind* (1962). In that text, Lévi-Strauss considers the bricolage as using materials at hand, and combining them to create something new. Since then, bricolage has been used extensively across social research, usually by focusing on choices and actions by individuals that respond to situations or their environments.

In cultural studies, bricolage has been used to explore consumption as a cultural or social practice whereby consumers are drawing on a variety of resources to construct their social identities (Warde, 2005, 2015). In a seminal book for the field of cultural studies – *Subculture – the meaning of style* – Hebdige (1979) describes how members of subcultures are using such consumption bricolages to alter, extend or even subvert dominant discourses through the symbolism of material culture. The bricolage of the (subcultural) consumer is positioned as a tool to construct as well as to contest meanings in society (Fiske, 1989).

While such analyses of consumption through the lens of bricolage shall not be confused with the use of methodological bricolage, they still point to the same core tenets that underpin bricolage in the science of knowledge: the 'mix'n'match agentic formulations' by the bricoleurs themselves (Arnould & Thompson, 2015, p.8) – whether as consumers or researchers – that carry or produce social or cultural meaning, and that have the power to disrupt established norms and social formations, as well as ways of knowing. They point to the value of understanding how social phenomena become assembled. This means bricolage focuses on networks and processes rather than just the phenomena themselves (Leete, 2018). It is based on the premise that understanding the motivations, processes and connections by which social formations emerge and unfold has relevance to exploring perspectives of lived experience, and of research.

Methodological bricolage was developed by Denzin and Lincoln since the 1990s and focuses on research practice (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). According to Kincheloe (2001), the benefit of using bricolage as a research approach is that researchers are employing methodological pluralism and adaptive designs to gain insights of a research problem from multiple perspectives or through multiple lenses. Bricolage is "sensitive to complexity, bricoleurs use multiple methods to uncover new insights, expand and modify old principles, and re-examine accepted interpretations in unanticipated contexts" (ibid., p.687).

Further, Phillimore et al. (2016) argue that a bricolage approach can enhance research in superdiverse contexts, as it supports exploration and sense-making of a multiplicity of

social processes, practices and relations simultaneously, and it can situate and contextualise lived experiences. By focusing on processes rather than outcomes, research following a bricolage design seeks to explore how lived experiences are constructed and produced against the backdrop of the neighbourhood, an assemblage of people, material culture, societal structures and dynamics (ibid.). This also reflects the framing of the consumptionscape and of social relations in this research. A bricolage design thus allows researchers to incorporate the many processes and dynamics that contribute to the way in which social relations are lived, and the way in which they unfold within and in response to everyday spaces.

For all these reasons, bricolage was suited to my research. The people-as-consumers lens of bricolage and the focus on the processes that construct and contest meaning in society, would allow me to consider the horizontal and vertical entanglements that shaped social relations and lived experiences as a dynamic and changing field. Further, the West Bank definitely qualified as an unanticipated context of the otherwise Western-focused research into social relations in diversity studies, as well as in the study of how consumption phenomena and spaces emerge and unfold in spaces of consumption (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010; Jafari et al., 2012). Comparing between two contexts would thus provide an additional layer and lens for the analysis.

Finally, methodological bricolage mostly relies on ethnographic methods (Leete, 2018), which captured the ways in which I had been conducting most of my research to date already. The creativity in which the bricolage researcher applies their methods in context means that bricolage research can be particularly sensitive to the complex and multi-faceted processes that underpin not only lived experiences, but that are also the focus of critical reearch (Kincheloe, 2001; 2005). The benefit of the bricolage thus lies in its ability to uncover the 'situated actor' (Phillimore et al., 2016, p.13), inviting researchers to uncover how the individual's experiences are emplaced horizontally and vertically.

The bricolage was useful to my dissertation project, as it provided a loose enough frame to adapt to the circumstances and changing needs of my research projects. At the same time, it provided a coherent frame for bringing the two case studies together, by focusing the analytic attention on the dynamics of meaning-making and on the ever-emergent connections and constellations that are made and contested in consumptionscapes.

3.4 Applying the bricolage design

The bricolage design was thus the vehicle which brought the two case studies into the same critical analytical frame. I had already made use of multiple methods across both case studies and had used my experience, reflection and discretion to make amends to the research in each of the case studies. For example, in the West Bank, I had initially planned a research project that involved conducting walking interviews with people, referring to interviews that take place while researcher and participant go walking. They have been considered particularly useful for understanding experiences of everyday spaces as they allow environmental features to shape research conversations (Evans & Jones, 2011; Clark & Emmel, 2010). In Bristol, I had found them useful for exploring experiences of consumptionscapes as participants were responding to spatial cues to discuss and reflect on their lived experiences.

Walking interviews can take two forms. If researchers provide the route, it allows them to influence the environmental cues that participants are exposed to, thus making them potentially more relevant to the core concepts and aims of the research (Jones et al., 2008). Letting participants choose the route on the other hand generates rich data grounded in the participants experiences. This enables hidden relations and meanings attached to everyday spaces to come up spontaneously in the process of walking (Kusenbach, 2003). I found this latter option particularly fascinating for understanding experiences of spaces of consumption. Besides having the recordings and transcripts of the conversations at the end of the interview, I was also able to draw out the routes each participant took during their walking interview. These drawings of the Stokes Croft consumptionscape gave additional layers of significance to participant narratives and gave me a more comprehensive data set for analysis.

The differences and similarities between the routes that participants took demarcated certain areas and pathways in Stokes Croft. They also highlighted blind spots in the consumptionscape, letting me identify retail units and consumption spaces that were overlooked or ignored by participants. Through walking interviews, I was able to draw maps of Stokes Croft's consumptionscape as rooted in participants' experience and based on the meanings that they attached to them.

Having begun such experimentation with walking interviews in Bristol, I wanted to explore how they might work in a different setting. However, due to the different nature of the research and the different context, as well as my own unfamiliarity with it, I questioned if this method would be appropriate. In Bristol, not all participants were comfortable in using this method and seemed at times anxious about deciding which route to take. I did not know whether this was to do with them as individuals and how comfortable they were in taking on the role of the local guide, or whether this was due to any pressures they might feel about their participation needing to provide 'good data' for my research (Clark & Emmel, 2010). As I was less familiar reading interpersonal and cultural cues in the West Bank, I decided not to pursue the idea of walking interviews systematically, like I had in Bristol. Although, in the end, some interviews in the West Bank did take place while walking.

The centrality of the researcher in adapting and responding to the changing needs of their research also became evident in the final stages of my fieldwork in Bristol, following my return from the West Bank. While the empirical part of the data collection in the West Bank was finished prior to my consideration to include that work as a case study in my dissertation, the contextualisation of findings, analysis and critique was not. Further, fieldwork in the Bristol case study was still ongoing when I returned from the West Bank. I began considering the synergies between these projects while also still engaged in the fieldwork. This meant that I was able to relate between the experiences of participants across both case studies, not only as a post hoc process of the analysis, but while data collection was still ongoing.

These are just some examples of the ways in which I adapted to my changing projects across different stages of the research process. The bricolage design facilitated bringing into conversation with each other the two different projects and contexts of Bristol and the West Bank through the processes in which data, findings and their analysis and critique came together. The bricolage also supported the analytical focus on social relations as resulting from vertical and horizontal entanglements, themselves complex dynamics that produce experiences and connections, meanings and their contestation. The bricolage design was thus essential to bringing a level of cohesion to this dissertation project.

3.5 Principal data collection methods

As research took place in urban settings, it was a less immersive form of observation than traditional anthropological approaches (Eriksen, 1995; Geertz, 1998). It focused specifically on the context of the consumptionscape for the purposes of the study. This elevated the role of both interviews and the contextualization of observational and interview data, an approach associated with the cultural studies tradition of ethnography (Clifford, 1997). Through my work, I had already engaged in multiple empirical research projects and developed a preference for working with specific methods and for the way in which I applied them in research settings. As a result, I relied on three principle methods for data collection – interviews, observations and contextualisation – applied in a specific way across the two case studies.

3.5.1 Open-ended interviews

Interviews were in-depth, open-ended conversations (Murray & Ozanne, 1991). They formed the basis for exploring experiences of community and belonging in consumptionscapes. Thompson (1997) introduced a hermeneutic framework for consumer research and highlighted the importance of interviews in capturing lived experiences of consumption in participant narratives with a view to interpret them against contextual factors. Interviews thus focused on exploring lived experiences, but also on teasing out personal reflections of the research participants on the meanings they themselves attached to these experiences.

Drawing on the ethnographic tradition, questions that guided these open-ended interviews usually started off with broad questions (grand tour questions), followed by more specific ones that could then be based on participants' terminology and experiences (mini tour questions) (Spradley, 1979). Further, critical researchers consider the conversations between researchers and their research participants to be guided by a desire to discern people's interests (Roesch, 2014). This meant I also asked hypothetical questions. But it also meant that interviews did not merely consist of me asking questions. Rather, I shared knowledge and made connections between lived experience and context during interviews, turning them into two-way conversations (Clarke, 2014; Munz, 2017).

To facilitate this, I developed topic guides as guides for these conversations, rather than relying on more narrowly developed questionnaires. I let conversations go into directions that research participants chose. I responded to their points and stories, or gave background and theoretical insights, where appropriate. I also encouraged participants to reflect critically on their experiences. Further, I would use subsequent interviews to probe issues that had come up in previous conversations, thus gaining further insight and perspectives on matters that had come up.

These interviews were central to being able to understand and explore lived experiences of participants' engagements with and through consumptionscapes.

3.5.2 Observations

Participant observations in this research were mainly based in the consumptionscape and followed their differentiation into three layers (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013), based on Soja's differentiation between firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace (Soja, 1996). Firstspace denotes the physical material realities one can see, feel and touch. Secondspace denotes the way in which decision-makers, such as urban planners, marketers, policymakers, imagine and design a space with underlying logics and meanings. Thirdspace, finally, refers to what people actually do in those spaces and how they use them as part of their everyday lives. People in their everyday lives interpret the ideas of the secondspace and embed them into the firstspace to create a hybridised and adapted version of either, thirdspace.

This distinction between the three layers provided me with a useful frame for the observations I conducted across the case studies. Questions guiding observations of first space included: What do those spaces look (/feel/sound/smell) like? What types of spaces and spatial arrangements are manifest in the consumptionscape? These observations were written down as notes, drawn, mapped and photographed. Observations of second space asked what signs, symbols and signifiers emerged in the space. What design, branding and marketing features were visible in the consumptionscape? Here, I considered advertising in shops, on billboards, on posters or the names of restaurants, cafés, housing developments, streets. I read notice boards in retail units, flyers, promotional materials that were available in retail units or handed out. I also considered the discourses and metaphors that came up in interviews. Here, the observation and collection of those materials already necessitated some

interpretation, exploring the potential meanings of signs, symbols and signifiers I encountered. I took these early interpretations down as research notes.

Finally, explorations of thirdspace were a complement to the interviews I conducted. In these observations, I focused mainly on what people were doing in those spaces, and on how spaces appeared situated in the neighbourhood. For example, I considered which spaces were busy or quiet, which ones stood out visually or not. I sought to get an understanding of the people using certain spaces, by paying attention to the times of day they would visit, to any visually observable markers, such clothes and suspected age, as well as to the activities they engaged in.

Observations in these three layers brought an additional grounding and lens through which to situate and interpret the interview data. Together, interviews and observations formed the first step in a much larger analysis, where the participant stories and their recollections of experiences and signs and symbols, as well as their reflections on those, were interpreted as part of a system of meaning-making and contestation that connected people to much larger political, economic, social and cultural issues beyond their empirical contexts.

3.5.3 Contextualisation

To further support the vertical analysis of social relations, I also engaged in contextualisation activities (Bloemmart, 2014). What this meant in practice was that I did not rely solely on primary data collected for the research. First and foremost, I engaged previous research that could help me gain insight into the contexts of the research or spoke to the overarching dissertation aims. I also reviewed publicly available documents that would paint both official and contested pictures of the consumptionscape in each case study location. Sources I consulted throughout the fieldwork and analysis varied across the case studies, depending on their availability or accessibility. Broadly, these sources included official government records, maps, activist media, websites and leaflets, (social) media, public policy documents, surveys, NGO or charity reports, and statistical data. All of these documents were complementary to the primary data and enhanced a contextualised analysis (Valentine & Sadgrove, 2014). They helped me overlay lived experiences of spaces and embed them in the particular historical moment in which research took place.

All three principal methods complemented each other and supported the analysis. Together, these provided embedded understandings of lived experiences of the consumptionscapes in Bristol and the West Bank and formed the basis for exploring and analysing the contours of social relations of spaces of consumption.

3.6 Fieldwork in two case studies

My dissertation combines empirical work in different settings, at different scales, at varying lengths of time. I conducted research in the consumptionscape of an inner-city neighbourhood in Bristol where I was embedded for several years. In the West Bank, the research had a much shorter duration of six weeks. Further, I conducted research across two principle consumptionscapes, one a neighbourhood high street plus adjacent mall and the other a city-centre shopping precinct in the two towns of Jenin and Beit Sahour. Yet, due to my research and due to the particularities of the Palestinians settings discussed in section 1.7.2, these consumptionscapes could also have been considered as part of a fractured whole in a recently emerging consumer economy – part of the emerging Palestinian landscape of (and for) consumption. In many cases, the consumptionscapes in the West Bank were often the spatial or environmental cues from which people discussed issues of social relations that emerged against the backdrop of the rise of consumerism in the West Bank following the Oslo years. In Bristol, participants discussed lived experiences in and of the consumptionscape in much more granular detail. Such differences in scale and scope might pose challenges of how the research projects and findings could speak to each other. However, as I show in this section, the reasons for bringing these two case studies together and the way in which I did it, allowed me to do just that.

3.6.1 Working across two case study locations

Methodologically, working across two case studies that were not conceived as comparative at the outset and that are marked by differences in design, scale and primary data might set certain challenges as to how much they can speak to the same argument. In the context of this study, the case studies connected because both were considered illustrative of a larger phenomenon (Jackson, 1991; Van Deuren et al., 2016). Their functionality in line with critical research was to highlight different situated manifestations of social relations in

consumptionscapes, offering opportunities for studying convergences and divergences (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) and for extrapolating out from the minutiae of the empirical contexts (Eriksen, 1995). These similarities and variations provided richer insight into how consumptionscapes produced the unfolding social relations, reflected in participants' experiences of belonging and cohesion. This meant that the discussion of social relations of spaces of consumption was informed by the empirical settings in each of the case studies, but could also be elevated beyond them (Hastrup, 1992).

Across both case studies, I chose to engage with both activist and 'ordinary' participants. Working with activists meant hearing the voices of those who were actively contesting the discourses, practices and material manifestations of their lived experiences. 'Ordinary' participants, on the other hand, were less likely to engage in meaning-making and contestation to a specific purpose. Their lived experiences reflected the more everyday and banal entanglements in consumptionscapes that marked the everyday diversity approach. Their experiences and reflections were motivated by the utilitarian necessities of going about their day-to-day lives, thus grounding the transformational outlook of activists, and giving both a practical and hermeneutic angle on exploring its relevance.

The three layers of space were useful in letting the experiences in these different settings speak to each other. It may be more difficult to make comparative interpretations about the physical dimensions of these consumptionscapes, when their scales were different. Still, I have reflected on the physical dimensions of these consumptionscapes in each location to contextualise consumption phenomena within each of the case studies. This served the purpose of embedding participants' experiences against the consumptionscapes in each case study site. While it would not allow me to speak to how the specifics of these firstspaces generated certain experiences in one but not the other, it still allowed me to reflect on consumptionscapes more broadly through and in their material spatialities.

The purpose of the case studies in any way was not to compare how consumptionscapes manifest differently in different parts of the world. This is something that has been the topic of consumer research in the past (Eckhardt & Mahi, 2004; Ger & Belk, 1996; Sandikci & Ger, 2002; Sharifonnasabi et al., 2019; Üstuner & Holt, 2007). With this comparison, I wanted to engage the complexity of vertical and horizontal entanglements that are produced within spaces of consumption, and that translate into lived experiences

not only of the consumptionscape, but also, more broadly, of belonging (Stark & Torrance, 2005). The point of comparing case studies was to be able to speak to meanings and contestations that became mediated via spaces of consumption and to the processes that facilitated these. This did not require the spaces to be the same. Further, the way in which I conceptualise space as a social actor, it would be a near impossible task to find two consumption spaces that are the same, as they always interact with their environments and the people that move within them (Eckhart & Mahi, 2004).

Still, the settings of each case study were similar in two ways. First, each case study was located in a context marked by inequality and disparity. I already reviewed inequality and disparity in the context of social relations in sections 1.6 and 2.1, highlighting the often contradictory, or even inconclusive, research findings of their role in social relations. Stokes Croft is made up of some of Bristol's most affluent and some of its most deprived areas, bringing them into close proximity to each other. As such, disparity in social relations was something that most participants had witnessed or experienced. Inequality and disparity in the West Bank is a much more complex issue. Social disparity has increased significantly across the West Bank and has resulted in changes within and across towns. Beit Sahour, for example, is the most affluent and educated town in the West Bank, while Jenin is overall poorer. Still in both places huge discrepancies exist between the privileged (middle-class and elite Palestinians, 48 Palestinians[12], and international visitors) who usually enjoy more wealth and more freedoms, and those who experience overlapping forms of deprivation. In both case studies then, consumptionscapes brought into physical proximity people across lines of difference and differentiation, making these visible and experiential to those who engaged in them.

Second, the role of consumption was seemingly increasing in both areas. In Bristol, gentrification led to rapid changes in the consumptionscape that had triggered a more salient concern over the impacts of consumption spaces and practices on social relations. In the West Bank, the mushrooming of consumption spaces and practices was associated with the failed Oslo peace talks of the 1990s (Hanieh, 2013; Samara, 2000). The emergence of those

[12] Palestinians living in Israel are often called 48 Palestinians in reference to the year of the creation of the State of Israel. West Bank Palestinians can feel suspicious of them, as a result of their Israeli citizenship (MacDonald, 2021), and as a result of their relative better off socio-economic standing (Forte, 2001). 48 Palestinians face discrimination and marginalisation within Israeli society. This means they experience 'double marginalisation' whereby they sit at the margins of both Israeli and Palestinian society (Darweish & Sellick, 2017).

spaces was the first pertinent issue that Palestinians discussed in the context of the research, highlighting how to them, consumptionscapes were a physical and symbolic representation of the ongoing oppression of Palestinians (Shikaki and Springer, 2015; Samara, 2000; Merz, 2012). In this way, changes in the consumptionscape as well as the proliferation of spaces of consumption within it were useful springboards from which to explore how participants experienced these changes and how changes in the consumptionscape affected their experiences of and feelings towards their own belonging and their perceptions of social relations (Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015).

The pace at which changes across both case studies unfolded might have shaped the experiences of consumption practices and spaces (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019). As I mentioned in section 1.4, the impact of speed of urban change on people's experiences of belonging and community, as well as the emergence of social cohesion, were initial interests in the research. This interest had resulted in the selection of the Bristol case study. And although this framing did not remain the analytical focus of my dissertation, it was helpful that in the West Bank case study, the emergence and proliferation of consumption spaces happened at a time when Palestinian society was also rapidly transforming towards a more salient consumer economy across the oPt. The shared spatio-temporal frame of acceleration thus equally framed experiences of social relations across the case studies.

Despite the different scales and scope of the research in each case study, the central role of consumptionscapes as spaces of social life across lines of difference and differentiation and in accelerated development towards neoliberal capitalism was something that translated across the two case study locations. The data from across the case studies connected through the shared perceptions and experiences of consumptionscapes, even though those were embedded against the institutional backgrounds of each setting. These divergences across settings could also indicate opportunities to address limitations of consumptionscapes in one setting. By seeing the case studies in relation to each other, avenues for social change could be explored in a reading between them.

Showing across two contexts how social relations in consumptionscapes unfolded, I was able to situate experiences of community and belonging within the neoliberal logic. This rendered more evident the influence of the political and cultural power of consumption that underpinned social relations of consumptionscapes, alongside people's experiences thereof.

This had been absent from the everyday diversity literature specifically, but diversity discourses more widely. In this way, being able to draw out similarities and differences between lived experiences of consumptionscapes in Bristol and the West Bank provided a more complex and comprehensive exploration of the research aims. I outline the data collection processes that generated the relevant data in each case study next.

3.6.2 Data collection in Bristol

Field research in Bristol began in 2014 and ended in March 2017. For the duration of the research, I was based in a rented studio space in Hamilton House, a converted office block that houses artists, community groups and social enterprises. Other researchers working in the area have also based themselves in Hamilton House due to its central location that delivers ease of access to participants and local networks, and because of its recognisability in the neighbourhood (Frenzel & Beverungen, 2015).

Recruitment of participants followed a mix of sampling techniques. Initially, I relied on pre-established contacts. This was facilitated by the fact that I was already a regular visitor to Stokes Croft and that I had built networks through my rental of the local studio space. I was also occasionally engaged in community work by volunteering for a community kitchen that was run out of Hamilton House. In February 2016, I was invited to join the board of directors of Coexist, the social enterprise that at the time managed space use of Hamilton House. The invitation was extended to me as the organisation wished to increase its community engagement work. Staff were motivated to build on the questions that I was raising with my research. This posting brought additional contacts for my fieldwork. I also sought participants by advertising my research on local noticeboards.

Besides snowballing, the selection of participants also followed a purposive sampling method called 'criterion sampling' (Palys, 2008) whereby participants were selected based on specific criteria in relation to their engagement with the consumptionscape and for the additional and varied insight they could bring to the research. I considered four types of participants to be relevant to the consumptionscape in Stokes Croft: visitors, residents, business owners and stakeholders. Residents lived in Stokes Croft. Business owners were selected for the institutional role that they played in the consumptionscape. For these two groups of people, their requirements and engagements with the neighbourhood were not a

matter of choice, but a matter of daily necessity. I also interviewed visitors to the area, people who came in and out of Stokes Croft. These participants mostly visited on a regular basis, usually more than once a week, for leisure or for work. Their demands of the consumptionscape could be more easily described as being based on wants or nice-to-haves. Stakeholders had pastoral, political or social interests or responsibilities in the neighbourhood. My analysis of conversations with these different groups enabled me to consider the multiple experiences that emerged in the consumptionscape from a variety of lenses.

In total, I conducted 47 interviews ranging from between ten minutes to two and a half hours. Interview length varied both by response willingness and by design. In terms of participant willingness, I found that some participants were particularly invested in the local community, often through forms of community engagement and activism. As a result, they were often happy to talk for very long periods of time. Business interviews, in contrast, were purposefully designed so that they could be capped at approximately twenty minutes to ensure I was not interfering with business practice. Some business owners spoke for less, while others were happy to talk for more than an hour, asking to meet outside of their working hours.

Unless participants specifically requested otherwise, all interviews were recorded. Recordings and interview notes were uploaded to the Coventry University server. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, partly by me and partly by a Coventry University approved transcription service. All interviews were conducted in English, English being the first and/or preferred language of all participants.

For the duration of the fieldwork, besides the more everyday and ad hoc engagements with the consumptionscape, every 12-15 weeks I took a structured walk up and down the local high street to undertake a detailed survey of the area, noting observations based on the three dimensions of space. These walks focused on changes in shop tenure and changes to shopfronts, on how busy places were, the range of people, and the activities they were engaged. They focused on the types of products that were being offered (on menus and shelves), and the way in which those were communicated to people through signs, advertising, and aesthetic choices made by the outlets. I also used these walks to write down field notes and reflections that emerged in situ. These walks usually took a

half day, although the local neighbourhood could easily be walked in 15 minutes. They served as a reflective and reflexive exercise that grounded me in the research site.

Finally, I also attended local events on an ad hoc basis (Cingolani & Ponzo, 2014; Wessendorf, 2013) with the intention of getting a deeper understanding of local community affairs and priorities that were being discussed. This also gave me a feel for who was likely to partake in such meetings, and, just as significantly, who wasn't. More formally, as a researcher, I participated in two cookery classes for homeless people and for people recovering from addiction. I also took part in a street art walking tour, where I could speak with tourists about their impressions of the Stokes Croft area. I kept notes throughout the field research, which supplemented data with written notes on thoughts about the settings, the social behaviours, and the interactions and relationships taking place outside of more official observational activities (Chatzidakis et al., 2012).

My fieldwork concluded officially in March 2017, when I went on maternity leave after the birth of our first child. However, as a Bristol resident, I still return to the neighbourhood, and keep up to date with its developments through my own observations, through my networks, through social media and through local news outlets.

3.6.3 Data collection in the West Bank

My research on issues of consumption in the West Bank began in 2015. During spring and summer 2015, I conducted six weeks of fieldwork in the West Bank, the data of which formed the basis for this case study. During that time, I was hosted by the Arab American University Jenin (AAUJ) and based in a small village called Zababdeh just outside of Jenin, in university-organised accommodation. Colleagues at AAUJ supported me in initiating my field research. Similar to the Bristol case study, I followed different sampling methods, including snowball and criterion sampling. As with the research in Bristol, in the West Bank, I mainly interviewed people who were engaged in different spaces of consumption. Given the different context and topic of the research project, the categories of research participants were slightly different in this case study, including women as heads of the family, young adults, business owners, community organisers, policymakers, and academics. They also mostly spoke English, as I discuss below.

To mitigate the challenges and ethical considerations for field research in a highly contested context and one that was new to me, I followed previous protocol for research in the oPt. I built personal trust with prospective participants by spending time with them, sometimes over multiple meetings, immersing myself in their communities and in the study locations, and answering any questions about the research – and process – prior to their participation (Norman, 2009).

Observations in consumption spaces followed the same template as the observations in Bristol along the three layers of space. Observations in the oPt also took on an additional role as I needed to get a more in-depth insight into the everyday consumption lives of people and how they intersected with practices and spaces of consumption. This was partly necessitated by my lack of familiarity with the (consumption) context prior to beginning the fieldwork. It was also necessary to contextualise the barriers that participants experienced when considering whether or not to take part in the consumer boycott, the original purpose of that field research (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021).

Central to this work were participant observations with individual participants. These took the shape of prolonged times spent with participants and they took place with people in their everyday spaces of consumption (Penaloza, 1994; Leete, 2018). This included the home, cafés, shops, high streets, restaurants, shopping malls and shopping precincts. These were longer, more informal ways of getting together with people and insights were gained over multiple, unstructured conversations that took place during the participant observation. They allowed me to develop in situ understandings of consumption phenomena and experiences in and of spaces of consumption (Arnould et al., 2003).

In total, I conducted 12 of these participant observations. They took place across the Jenin and Bethlehem Governorates and ranged from two hours to two days. To ensure my own safety, I arranged these home observations through snowball sampling, initially through my colleagues at AAUJ. Some visits were arranged on the back of interviews that I had conducted, so that I could meet more members of the family and speak with them. Other home stays came about through facilitation by the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), an activist travel organisation based in Beit Sahour. I had interviewed a member of their staff and they had offered to facilitate home stays with three families whom they thought

would be able to give me varied insights into Palestinian everyday consumption practices and experiences.

I also conducted 19 more formal interviews in total, which all lasted around 60 minutes. Interview length was mostly determined by the time people had made available in their days to be able to speak with me and resulted in a much more homogenous length of interviews compared to the ones in Bristol. Most of these interviews were conducted in English. Where the participant did not speak English, they chose a family member with good English levels to interpret for them. I also considered that the language barrier might have meant that participants could have felt exhausted after the hour-long conversation. While most interviews consisted of individuals, some interviews had more than one person joining the conversation. Interviews took place in cafés and restaurants, in homes and in people's places of work, or at AAUJ.

As with the research in Bristol, all interviews were recorded. At times, participants asked me to not be recorded or for the recorder to be turned off for parts of the interview. In those instances, I took notes. Recordings and interview notes were uploaded to the Coventry University server immediately after the interviews, and were deleted from the recording devices, or papers were destroyed in the offices of the hosting university. I transcribed all interviews myself.

Some additional ethical challenges emerge from researching in the West Bank, further to those of appropriate ethical conduct for any research, such as those pertaining to confidentiality and anonymity of participants, as well as correct use and storage of data. I was told by my research supervisors that Israeli border police sometimes temporarily confiscated electronic equipment, such as phones, laptops and audio recorders to take an image of their hard drives. Unsafe data storage could thus challenge the anonymity and safety of the participants. All documents of the fieldwork were anonymised, password-protected and uploaded to the CU server. Consent forms were also photographed and uploaded, and the originals were destroyed at AAUJ offices. Research notes were typed up, anonymised, password-protected and uploaded prior to crossing the border. I deleted all files from my computer. I also destroyed and discarded the Palestinian SIM card that I had bought which could have provided a record of any phone contacts or conversations.

While the fieldwork whose primary data is discussed in this dissertation has ended, I have remained engaged in the West Bank through research on two externally funded research projects, one of them directly building on this case study. These projects allow me to remain familiar with the context for consumption that marks Palestinian lived experiences.

3.7 A joint approach to analysis

Finally, I employed the same approaches to data analysis across both case studies. Just like the overall critical research approach, data analysis in critical research is adaptive, circuitous and does not follow a one-size-fits-all approach. The coherence of critical research emerges from researchers following certain orientations and principles that guide their work, rather than trying to fit research projects into already established moulds. Such orientations act as guiding principles to the researcher throughout as they adapt to the research context (Clarke, 2010, 2014). They are a way of attuning the analytic eye to complex connections and processes, building meaningful insights dynamically and circuitously. In this dissertation, I have been guided by two such research orientations.

The first orientation considers how meanings and their contestations are shaped by the dynamics, forces and structures of the historical moment in which they are constructed. This is what some researchers call the 'conjuncture' (Grossberg, 2019). In the critical tradition, the analytic orientation towards the conjuncture means researchers seek to understand the underlying forces shaping social relations in the moment, with a view of being able to deconstruct them in their analysis (Gregg, 2006; Hall, 1981; Leete, 2018). Focusing on the conjuncture means a complex approach to analysis that consists of aggregating data from divergent empirical contexts and triangulating the data analysis spatio-temporally beyond their empirical settings (Grossberg, 2019). By adding layers of analysis, the aim of this conjunctural orientation is to be able to understand experiences that are taking place in a specific empirical context, and extrapolate out from them beyond that empirical context, so that they say something about the current moment in time (ibid.).

The second orientation of the analysis is guided by the motivation for creating transformative opportunities through research. This second orientation then led me to consider and deconstruct the prefigurative role that consumptionscapes as spaces of a

neoliberal logic might play in the social life of communities. By focusing my attention on the consumption scripts that, mediated via consumptionscapes, translated into the framing and production of social relations, I could critically engage with spaces of consumption as spaces of everyday life. Guided by the transformative orientation, I was able to explore some of the barriers and challenges for social relations that emanated from spaces of consumption.

Guided by these orientations, data analysis consisted of interpretation of data, critique and transformative formulation (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Interpretation in critical research considers empirical material from a multitude of angles in an inductive way. This type of interpretation is always circuitous "in a spiral-like movement" (ibid., p.148), at times homing in on specific details, and the minutiae of the research settings and, at other times, extrapolating out to a 'whole'. I analysed the primary data that emerged from the interviews in two steps: first, I went through each interview script thematically and within itself and then, as a second step, I considered themes that were emerging across the scripts in each case study. This involved drawing comprehensively on the interview data and existing research.

The second step of critical analysis, critique, involves extrapolating out from empirical context to the larger issues that are emerging in the findings (Eriksen, 1995). In this dissertation, this critique was guided by deductive reasoning and 'retroduction' (Olsen, 2007). Retroduction invites the researcher to consider why certain data emerge in certain contexts at specific moments in time. Retroduction was facilitated by triangulating with different types of data beyond the primary interview data. Observations, public surveys, public documents, and extant research all contributed to an increasingly nuanced reflection of why certain topics or themes came up in the interviews, while others didn't. Retroduction then supported another aim of critical research – to explore how and why certain meanings and experiences are central to lived experiences, while others become marginal in social life (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). This again, in line with the critical bricolage, focused on the relationships and processes that emerged within the settings (Kincheloe, 2005).

As previously discussed, the qualitative critical approach gives the researcher a much more active role in the interpretation of findings, with researcher interpretation and creativity being one of the hallmarks of the bricolage approach (ibid.). This active involvement of the researcher in generating as well as analysing data and the development

of transformative formulations of their research may open up critiques for potential bias (Hammersley, 2009). To counterbalance such risks, triangulation of the data and of findings becomes an important step in the critical research process.

The bricolage design lends itself to methodological triangulation, which means that multiple sources of data are used to answer the same research questions (Belk et al., 2013). In each case study, different people were interviewed as part of the research. I also drew extensively on contextual data as described in section 3.4.3. Further, throughout the analysis, I have discussed my findings by drawing on extant research to create distance with the empirical context and to bring different analytical perspectives to the data. This meant I was able to read and contrast different types of data to formulate the findings of each case study.

One of the early motivations for bringing together insights across two very different sites of research was to be able to triangulate across them too. This helped me broaden out from each case study and consider the how, what, when and why of the data, reflecting on its context, while also embedding the findings across the two case studies. Eriksen (1995) refers to the zigzag movement between inductive and deductive argumentation for developing research findings. Based on the findings emerging from the empirical fieldwork and drawing on theory – the critical researcher's 'necessary detour' (Hall, 1992, p.286) – I was able to develop the transformative formulation emerging from the findings (section 6.4). This was the final step in this critical research.

3.8 Positionality and reflections on the research process

The role of the researcher is central to critical research. Researchers respond to their research contexts, they analyse and critique the emerging data, they contextualise research findings, they embed them into wider global discourses via interpretation and they develop transformational insights from their research. While researchers are seen as a research instrument in qualitative work, they become an intentional agent in critical research (Olsen, 2007). They see their purpose to add value to society through research and by generating political, social and economic insights that can enhance equality, inclusion and social justice from their findings (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). The critical researcher consequently is driven by a desire to explore new knowledge that contributes to social transformation, while simultaneously also wanting to challenge established forms of knowledge.

The dual purpose of critical qualitative research as both a contribution to knowledge and as a tool for social change means that it goes beyond the remit of other qualitative work: the motivations for conducting the research (discussed in section 1.4) are just as interconnected with the research design and its implementation, as other academic or practical considerations (ibid.). On top of epistemological and ontological considerations of the research, axiological considerations become central. The critical researcher is constantly engaged in considerations of these, prior to devising the data collection and analysis methods. They also need to return back to these considerations throughout the research, and even afterwards.

One way in which I was able to consider these complexities and address the challenges of doing critical research was through extensive researcher introspection and journaling: I considered my own positionality and practiced regular reflections throughout the research process. I drew on a positionality toolbox that I was developing with colleagues for operating in heterogeneous research contexts and for conducting cross-cultural research (Kipnis et al., 2021). This included the practices of regular journaling for the duration of the fieldwork and extensive notetaking. Especially after periods of observations and following interviews, I spent time collecting thoughts and reflecting on impressions. Further, I engaged in regular stock-taking exercises of the research data and my observations in the wider context of the research aims and questions. This allowed me to regularly reflect on what I was finding in the field, and where my research was going. I also considered critical incidents through research vignettes (Bröckerhoff & Lopes, 2020). Finally, I revisited and critically reviewed my own notes regularly.

Critical researchers need to be especially aware of their own positionality, partially because of the political and transformative ambitions of their research. Researcher positionality considers the connection between the researcher and their world view and experiences, and how those might impact on their relationship with research participants and the wider research process and findings (e.g., Rowe, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Because of the close alignment between the researcher and the research process in critical qualitative work, such considerations are integral and essential. I considered this positionality before, during and after the research process (Holmes, 2020). To aid this process, I distinguished between conceptual, data collection and analysis stages of

positionality considerations, each focusing on a different step of the research process (Kipnis et al., 2021).

3.8.1 Conceptual positionality

At the outset of the research, I considered consumption to be representative of, and thus a suitable context for understanding, social relations in societies of advanced, or advancing, neoliberal capitalism. This 'conceptual baggage' (Kirby & McKenna, 1989) crystallised throughout the fieldwork, as well as during the analysis and write up of the dissertation. My research in the West Bank highlighted to me that this framing of consumption as a given and benign cultural phenomenon was problematic. I remember about three or four interviews into the field research, a participant asked me "What is consumption?". By framing my research through the lens of consumption I had assumed my participants' familiarity with consumption, as well as its centrality to lived experience. Further, in my interviews in Bristol, people rarely wanted to explore consumption spaces and practices through the lens of the multicultural connectors that previous research has suggested (Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015). They wanted to talk to me about the impact of gentrification on the social relations of disparity and inequality in the neighbourhood. As such, my understanding of consumption shifted throughout the research process. From an arena representative of social relations, towards its more productive role that I discuss in this dissertation.

This then also led me to reconsider the individual within consumptionscapes. As I outlined in section 2.6, the agentic view of people in being able to make free choices in consumptionscapes has shaped much of consumption scholarship. I also went into my research in Bristol with this assumption. However, over the course of the research process, I came to see this view as not only limited, but also as reflective of the Western lens that has shaped much of consumer research (Kravets & Varman, 2022). While the challenge to the view of the agentic consumer came predominantly from the West Bank case study, even Bristol participants' narratives made me reconsider this perspective. I thus shifted to consider agency as situated.

This then brings me to the next point in my conceptual positionality. I already highlighted in the introduction (section 1.4) that I took personal and professional experiences into my dissertation project with me which challenged how I considered

diversity at the outset of the project, contributing to how I consider it now. Raising ethnic, cultural and racial factors of diversity at the outset of the research had presupposed their importance to my work. Besides my own reflections, this was challenged by participants' desire to speak to issues of gentrification, as a result my research rarely focused on them. For the purposes of my research, I developed an 'indifference to difference' (Amin 2013, p.3) approach. Valluvan (2016) explained the importance of such a stance because otherwise researchers would work with "epistemologies which continue to presume identities of difference to be both ontologically authentic and culturally separate" (p.4). It allowed me to let lines of differences and differentiation emerge as part of the research process (Gidley, 2013). My conceptual positionality thus necessarily shifted as a result of the ongoing research project.

3.8.2 Data collection positionality

Data collection positionality focuses on the research contexts, on data collection procedures and anticipating what likely relationships may emerge between the researcher and research participants. In this context, I already discussed how I adapted my research to ensure that the core concepts of my work were relevant across both case studies. Further, I ensured that language barriers were sufficiently addressed – besides inviting people less confident in the English language to be joined by their chosen interpreters, I also ensured to ask questions of clarification, whenever I wondered if a meaning of a word or sentence might be ambiguous. I also used subsequent interviews to probe an issue where I only noticed afterwards that I had not realised an ambiguity.

Another core feature of data collection positionality pertains to the researcher's personhood and how it may shape how researchers build relationships in research settings and with participants (Holmes, 2020). Some aspects of positionality are culturally ascribed or generally regarded as being fixed, for example, gender, race, skin-color, nationality (ibid.). Others, such as political views, personal life-history, and experiences, are more fluid, subjective, and contextual (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). In Bristol, I was a fellow Bristolian resident, and I was (relatively) young, thus matching demographic markers of some of those I interviewed for the research. In the West Bank, I was a visitor with no prior experience in the research setting, and without Arabic language skills.

However, I found that none of these markers specifically predicted whether interviews would flow or whether they would feel disjointed. It was impossible to pre-determine my status as insider or outsider prior to the interviews, because the distinction between cultural insider and cultural other had limited applicability across my research settings (Eriksen, 1995). This is something I had already reflected on in previous research where a colleague and I found that our positionality markers in relationship to participants were fluid and situational (Bröckerhoff & Kipnis, 2014). Similarly in the research across both case studies, I found that my fieldwork experiences shifted along a spectrum of 'insideness' and 'outsideness', between interviews, but also sometimes during them (Kipnis et al., 2021). In all cases, I found that establishing trust in me and credibility of my research mattered more than any identity markers or preconceived ideas of my likely relationship with participants.

3.8.3 Analysis positionality

During analysis, I considered my role as a researcher in shaping the emergent meanings and observations in the fieldwork locations. I have already discussed elements of this throughout the chapter, such as the analysis which focused on the triangulation of the data across different sets of primary data, as well as being able to embed and theorise these based on previous research and the availability of contextual information and data. Further, ongoing introspections and reflections, as well as the critique of my own research notes and memos with advancing fieldwork, all ensured that I was reducing the risk of interpretation bias. I was also able to discuss my emergent research findings with networks in both case study locations, thus giving them additional contextual relevance.

3.8.4 Final positionality reflections

In my experience then, my positionalities shifted throughout the research process. I was able to make sense of these with ongoing reflections and introspections that I engaged in, as well as by discussing any issues or considerations with my supervisors. Kipnis et al. (2021) refer to this as the fluidity of positionalities, inviting a consideration of positionality less as a state of being, but rather as dynamics that shape the research process. The reflective exercises and introspection activities outlined were crucial in letting my research respond to and adapt to

the changing contexts, emergent findings, and its changing analytical focus over time. Holmes (2020) identifies the need for dedicated time as a key requirement in reflecting on one's own positionality. The PhD research process has certainly provided me with that. While I have enjoyed most aspects of working on the dissertation, it is these reflections on positionality and the concomitant politics of knowledge production that I have enjoyed exploring the most as part of the dissertation process.

3.9 Writing in the present and the past

I want to add a final note here on how I have written up the case studies. Large parts of the case study write ups are written in the 'ethnographic present', grounding the participants' data and my own fieldwork in the empirical setting in which it took place (Eriksen, 1995). This is customary in write ups of ethnographic work. However, and in line with the critical approach, I also wanted to reflect the historical period in which the research was conducted that transcends the empirical context (Hastrup, 1992). This is most evident when I switch to the past tense when describing historical events or processes that happened in the area outside of the participants' narratives and my participant observations. I also chose to use the past tense for the discussions at the end of each chapter, to highlight the differences between the participant-led data write up, and the reflections that I engaged in as the researcher. Finally, the past tense is used throughout to highlight the choices that I made throughout the research processes, and to make evident my role as the researcher, in line with critical traditions. This is how and why the write up switches between the present and past tenses in this way, each tense fulfilling different purposes.

3.10 Chapter conclusion

Comparing lived experiences in these two seemingly very different settings may appear unusual. This chapter has shown that although the dissertation was based on two disparate research projects, they already had a certain level of relatability and cohesion in contexts, methods and approaches to analysis. The qualitative critical approach allowed me to aggregate up from lived experiences in each setting, to making each setting an illustrative case study of social relations of spaces of consumption. The findings in both case studies have rested on the dynamic constructions of meaning and their contestations as reflecting in participants' experiences and perceptions. My role as the researcher working across the two

settings also meant that research was guided by the same experiences and orientations from which the transformative potential of the dissertation's critical motivation could be unlocked. This chapter has outlined the roadmap for the research underpinning this dissertation and given the necessary background for framing the research findings that I present and discuss over the next three chapters.

4 BRISTOL

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings from my research in Bristol. I already highlighted in sections 1.4 and 1.6 that this case study was the original research for the dissertation, and it has provided the backbone of my entire journey as a doctoral researcher. When I began my fieldwork in Bristol, people did not talk to me about the ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity in the consumptionscape in the context of social relations. Rather, they wanted to talk about gentrification and its impact on experiences of belonging and the cohesion across differences in the local community. I had chosen the case study, because gentrification represented an urban change that I thought would manifest in social relations (Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015). I had anticipated this to provide the contextual background to the research, instead of the lens through which social relations were mostly discussed.

While this posed a challenge to how I had initially conceived my dissertation research, an opportunity arose from the work I was doing in parallel in the West Bank. The positioning of the consumptionscape in Bristol was different to that in the West Bank. Many of the lived experiences of consumptionscapes that made them so noteworthy to Palestinians, were already broadly accepted in Bristol. In the West Bank, consumptionscapes were emerging and unfolding against the backdrop of the occupation which laid down physical and political lines of fragmentation. Bristol's consumptionscape resembled more of 'melting pot' model associated with urban neighbourhoods in global cities (Zukin et al., 2016a). They were at times contested, but an otherwise normalised feature of the relatively unfettered and established neoliberal capitalism of the UK (Davidson, 2013). I was also finding that in terms of diversity, the social relations in the consumptionscape in Stokes Croft had many of the hallmarks of the banal and proficient encounters across social divisions of the everyday diversity field, with a certain level of indifference to the ethnic, cultural and racial heterogeneity in the area (Amin, 2013).

While the centrality of consumptionscapes to everyday life was mostly established in Bristol, the process of gentrification was slightly disrupting this sense of normalisation at the time of my fieldwork. The changing consumptionscape in Stokes Croft meant that it was just as salient in people's experiences as the consumptionscapes in the West Bank had been to the participants of my research there.

I realised when I started comparing the two case studies that focusing on social relations in spaces of consumption provided a flat view of how belonging and cohesion among people emerged (Sealy, 2018). In addition to their potential as sources of everyday encounters, it was the way in which they manifested and translated vertical systems of power and differentiation into lived experience that made consumptionscapes so interesting to the study of social relations (Massey, 2005). Considering the social relations that emerged in, and as a result, of these changing consumptionscapes allowed me to identify the contours of what I have called the social relations *of* spaces of consumption that became the focus of this dissertation.

Picture 1: Tagged graffiti declaring Stokes Croft Bristol's Cultural Quarter. Source: my own

4.1 Consumptionscapes and gentrification

Although not initially conceived as part of the original outset, gentrification and its impact on community life and social relations became pertinent issues for this case study. The sociologist Ruth Glass (1964) initially defined gentrification as the influx of middle-class people who were displacing lower-class people from London's Islington neighbourhood at the time. The term gentrification was tongue-in-cheek, alluding to the creation of a new urban gentry within this context of displacement (Hamnett, 2003). As a result of this focus on the impact of the behaviours of one group of people (incomers) on another (existing

residents), a persistent theme across gentrification research has remained the exploration of agents of gentrification, putting the focus on the complicity of people in creating structures and dynamics of exclusion (Lees et al., 2008, 2015). Research in this area has outlined the influence of, amongst others, artists (Grodach, Foster & Murdoch, 2018), students (Smith, 2005), and tourists (Cocola-Gant, 2018) in transforming the spaces of everyday life to the needs of the incoming population. They have had the concomitant effect to link gentrification to individual behaviours (Lees et al., 2008). Due to the centrality of consumption issues at the core of many gentrification discourses, especially consumer behaviours and choices have been considered as a motor for gentrification (Massey, 2005). As a result, consumption practices have become a highly contested and political topic in gentrification discourses.

Other definitions of gentrification have evolved with the growing body of research and insight into its manifold sources, processes, and manifestations (Lees et al., 2008, 2015). Smith (2000), for example, describes gentrification as "the reinvestment of capital at the urban centre, which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space" (p.294). Dorling and Rees (2003) discuss how gentrification produces transformations in urban space that rewrite geographies of social segregation and concentration, and thus contribute to the widening socio-spatial polarisation between people. These definitions foreground the importance of more structural influences on gentrification outcomes. They underline the importance of everyday spaces in contributing to the negative effects of gentrification.

The case study in Bristol illustrates social relations of consumptionscapes in this context of gentrification. This chapter illustrates the ways in which consumption-oriented activities and consumption spaces act as facilitators or barriers to the emergence of social relations. The material and spatial changes of the consumptionscape feature prominently in the situated experiences of the research participants. These changes also herald a cultural shift in which the relevance of spaces of consumption to lived experiences grows, increasing the role of consumptionscapes to the study of social relations of spaces of consumption.

4.2 Commercialism and urban image

Stokes Croft is an area located just north of Bristol's city centre. Stokes Croft is not really an official neighbourhood, as it crosses constitutional boundaries and wards. It is an area that has come to be known as a neighbourhood, even if this view is contested. The first thing that will strike any visitor to Stokes Croft is the ubiquitous graffiti that can be seen on any stone surface in the area. During interviews, I ask participants in my research how they would describe the area to someone who didn't know it. The adjectives that are repeated over and over are 'loud' and 'colourful'.

Picture 2: 'Dr Martens' graffiti in Stokes Croft. Source: my own

It is November 2015 and a new graffiti has emerged on the side of a building in Stokes Croft. It depicts a pair of white Doc Martens boots on a black background. The graffiti is the work of artist and illustrator Mark Wigan in collaboration with street artist Stika. Wigan's illustrations are appearing on the Dr Martens boots that year. The graffiti distinguishes itself from other graffiti in the area in that it was commissioned and funded by Dr Martens and

thus is a form of corporate advertising. The graffiti, as can be seen in the photo above, was tagged quickly with the words "no adverts" and the link to the Dr Martens website was crossed out.

I conduct a walking interview a few days after this has taken place with a copy editor in his 20s, who comes to Stokes Croft to work every day, but also likes to spend time socialising and attending classes here. Pointing to the scribbled out 'no advert' tag on the graffiti, he praises the quick response by the street artists, relating it back to the overall values he sees are particular to Stokes Croft: "And that's the mobility of the Stokes Croft community – if something's not right, they'll deal with it quickly. And it sometimes feels like a bubble where the outside world can't really touch it."

Inkie, another street artist, who originally comes from Bristol, condemns the Dr Martens initiative which he sees as a commercial sponsor encouraging a well-known street artist to spray over the work of other, non-commercial and amateur artists (Salter, 2015). Inkie himself would very soon become associated with another street-art related controversy in Stokes Croft. He has been commissioned by a London-based hospitality chain that is opening its first restaurant in Stokes Croft to give its interiors a local, urban style reflective of the Stokes Croft area (Booth, 2016). A couple of weeks later, he has done just that and many people in Stokes Croft that I speak to at the time are not happy about it. This chain restaurant's arrival is controversial, and one of the main talking points in most of my interviews at the time. While some greet its opening with excitement bringing an East London flair to the area, others find the restaurant's branding offensive. The name references meat and alcohol, which many consider inappropriate and ill-fitting in an area which is known to be an area of concentration for substance and alcohol abuse in the city. People feel the name lacks sensitivity towards the challenges and problems associated with the local area. The promotion of meat, further, appears to offend the ecological concerns that many of the activists, community businesses and people in Stokes Croft share and promote.

The copywriter feels that just like the Dr Martens graffiti before it, the hospitality outlet is misreading the local area, trading on an image, without engaging in the local community, and with that exploiting, rather than generating a shared community ethos:

> [the restaurant], and to me that's quite a big… like… the landing of maybe the next phase. It's a chain business. It doesn't fit so well with the Stokes Croft aesthetic. I

> think it misinterprets […] Stokes Croft as a Shoreditch/Hoxton kind of area with this contrived hipsterdom. But I don't agree with that. I feel that here it is an authentic… if it is hip, it's just because of the way it is. It is not a contrived, it is not manufactured. The grittiness of Stokes Croft is what it is, and that's what's come naturally.

The opening of the restaurant becomes an often-evoked proxy for wider discussions around change, agency and lived experiences of belonging and cohesion in Stokes Croft's changing consumptionscape. To many participants, up to that point, neighbourhood change has been something that they feel the local community was in control of. And although it was happening quickly, it has done so with little outside intervention or interest. When I interview a music producer, she tells me about the many ways in which she sees neighbourhood change as having been relatively slow and inclusive to the people in the area to that date. When I ask her what she thinks of the opening of the new chain restaurant, she is surprised as she did not know what the development was going to be. She exclaims: "that is like the opposite of me saying [Stokes Croft] is not gentrified".

At the time of my fieldwork, a sense that things are at a tipping point in Stokes Croft prevails, fuelled by the perceived growing interest of commercial and "external" actors not only in the local consumptionscape, but in the area more widely. What participants do not know yet is that this restaurant's tenure in Stokes Croft will end up being short-lived. Less than two years after opening, it closes its doors again in October 2017.

These two events highlight how the consumptionscape forms the interface between different dynamics that shape community life in Stokes Croft. These two events and participants' reflections show how the physical space of the consumptionscape becomes the backdrop in which the perceived tension between commercial and social interests of the consumptionscape plays out. Through the spaces and practices that it generates, it renders them visible in the contexts of everyday life.

4.3 Commodification of space

Stokes Croft defines itself in three different ways: first, it is the name of the main high street; second, it is a conservation area which has seen a variety of regeneration projects – such as pedestrian crossings, cycling provisions, shop frontages and signs; third, since 2007, a

community organisation called The People's Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC) has campaigned for Stokes Croft to become recognised as a cultural quarter or neighbourhood. This campaign has had the concomitant effect of establishing Stokes Croft as an urban brand, facilitated by the area's reputation of being a place of counterculture, protest and grassroots organising (Frenzel & Beverungen 2015; Larner, 2013). The Stokes Croft brand has placed Stokes Croft not only on Bristol's map, but at the time of my fieldwork, Stokes Croft has also become known internationally and a hot spot for tourism.

Picture 3: Map of Stokes Croft. Source: my own.

Place construction is one of the frontlines in gentrification research, seeing places turn from spaces of use value – where people go about their daily lives – towards them being places of exchange value – spaces that become imbued with certain images and logics (Perez, 2000). The emerging image of gentrifying places can exacerbate existing social divisions in neighbourhoods or create new ones (ibid.). To some participants, this place construction is exemplified in the shift from Stokes Croft being the name of the street to becoming

considered a neighbourhood or cultural quarter. A staff at a local community organisation reflects on the meanings of the place image in Stokes Croft:

> For such a short piece of road, such a lot of discourse. It is really funny when you think about it. When the Tesco thing happened, everyone was like 'the area of Stokes Croft' and someone put on a message board 'just so you all know, it is just a road' it isn't even an area, it is just a street, and it is this whole political landscape.

I meet a former restaurant owner, who together with friends, opened a vegan café that is run as a worker's co-operative in the neighbourhood in 2006. He is no longer involved in the café, which is still a busy feature on the high street, but he still occasionally visits the area. For our interview, he is asking to meet in a café by Bristol's harbourside, rather than in Stokes Croft itself. During the interview, he shares his reflections on the placemaking based on Stokes Croft's 'urban image', which he sees as romanticised compared to his own experience of the neighbourhood, and of setting up and running a business in the local consumptionscape:

> In terms of image, I mean, I mean there's no, I think it gets a lot of notoriety because of the fact that it is mostly independent as a high street […]. And obviously then when Tesco moved in, there were the riots and that was national news. So, I think when people think of Stokes Croft, they think of the Tesco riots and so it's got this sense of 'oh it's a really independent high street, we've got some small businesses'. All those small businesses are kind of relatively trendy and so I guess that's the image it projects. And I would just say that that is pretty much what it is. But I think some people mistake trendiness for, grotty, you know, gritty urban, people living on the breadline but still managing to run a vegan café. I kind of sense that again because there was a riot here or because it's next to St Pauls that it's actually a bunch of people living in poverty. And somehow that's really romantic. I feel quite sceptical about that. I do think it's a kind of trendy place for middle class people to set up small businesses if they want to and other middle class people to shop in those places and that's kind of what it projects and I think that's what it is but I wouldn't be surprised if that's often mistaken by people who live here as being this really gritty, melting pot of all these different people.

In his perspective, the place brand or image of Stokes Croft has helped develop the area into a space of consumption that has become meaningful to some people, while others, mostly those who have resided in the area for a long time, are marginalised even as the image is emerging. Spatial exclusions are a common feature in gentrifying consumptionscapes (Hagemans et al., 2016; Massey, 2005; Rankin et al., 2016). These spatial exclusions increase when they become associated with the production of place and space brands (Miles, 2010, 2012). As areas turn into an image or brand, they become useful for their symbolic meanings, turning the spaces themselves into a product that can be sold. This value may eclipse its role of being a place where people live (Boyd, 2000).

What this means is that a discrepancy is likely to emerge between those that reside or utilise the neighbourhood on a daily basis and those who may benefit from an increased value of the neighbourhood, as it either translated into economic value of property or retail space et cetera in that neighbourhood, or as the consumptionscape becomes more geared towards those who visit for short periods of time (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Miles, 2012). The branding turns the neighbourhood into a commodity that may or may not live up to its reputation, but whose maintenance is increasingly spatially and socially embedded via the consumptionscape, and for users of that consumptionscape. The consumptionscape thus facilitates the commodification of place, which itself reflects the divergent lived experience between those who rely on it for its use value, in contrast to those who rely on it for its exchange value.

Miles (2010) has written about the way in which the neoliberal logic has turned cities into spaces for consumption, whereby places are crafted exactly for people to have consumption experiences in, or more accurately, of urban space. This can extend to commercial spaces, but it can also translate into public spaces, especially where such placemaking becomes enmeshed with bottom up aestheticisation of spaces, such as through street art (Visconti et al., 2010). Karantonis (2008) has described these contradictions and extremes in Stokes Croft and has suggested it has turned the inner-city area into a liminal place, a public gallery for consumption, while at the same time being and remaining the site of real social deprivation and inequality.

The image of Stokes Croft contrasts with what some participants have called “the other Stokes Croft” – a site of otherwise common inner-city social and public health

problems, such as homelessness, substance abuse and (drug-related) violence. According to some, Stokes Croft relies on the presence of these to enhance the gritty look and feel that contribute to the experience of this particular urban brand of the consumptionscape (Harper, 2016), risking that the experiences of some hinge on the continued existence and visibility of the disparity and inequality of others. I meet an activist, in his 20s, who has lived in Stokes Croft for three years. He has been involved in setting up a citizens' media initiative. We sit on the pavement outside, overlooking Turbo Island, a place, if any, that is often invoked by people who want to convey the ethos of Stokes Croft.

Picture 4 & 5: Turbo Island and view onto Turbo Island. Source: my own.

Turbo Island is a small, triangular patch of land sat at the central intersection of the consumptionscape. In the day, people may use it to eat their sandwiches or sit and smoke a cigarette. It is also a spot of daytime drinking. But mostly, it is at night, when this tiny plot comes to life and, according to its reputation, into its own. Regularly, people set up rigs, playing drum and bass music. Often there's a bonfire. It is a mixing place for everyone who moves in the neighbourhood. It is a place for night time revellers as much as it is a place where people who are otherwise marginalised in society can just be or socialise. It feels like a place that produces experiences of Stokes Croft according to its reputation. Overlooking

Turbo Island feels apt when considering many of the topics that come up in my conversation with the journalist activist I have come to meet. He suggests that it is the juxtaposition of the area's people and the potential use of that juxtaposition as commodity that opens Stokes Croft up as the site of contradicting claims and struggles:

> Stokes Croft is a metaphor – an adjective as much as a geographical location; an intersection; and boundaries; [a place] where different communities are colliding. Activists, hedonistic hipsters, the street drinking scene, and the Afro-Caribbean community. [Stokes Croft] is a mix of grit and manufactured grit.

This idea of 'grit' as opposed to 'manufactured grit' is also something that resonates with the graffiti incidents discussed at the start of this chapter. The idea of 'grit' invokes a sense of the community where it is, while the idea of 'manufactured grit' represents an image that is crafted based in some of the realities of place, but for the purpose of commodifying the neighbourhood and consumptionscape, serving newcomers and or visitors to the area (Perez, 2000). Often, in gentrifying neighbourhoods, the commodification of places is associated with the expansion of commercial interests that rest their initiatives on such community-based meanings and dynamics (Betancur, 2002, 2011). And in Stokes Croft these are growingly seen as being at odds with the interests of the local community. The consumptionscape in Stokes Croft in this way also brings into relief the differences between the people of the neighbourhood. The growing concern is that the area will increasingly trade on its ability to let disparity coexist with privilege, making it paradoxically an inclusive and exclusive space at the same time.

4.4 Urban image and politics

The juxtaposition between commercial and community interests is complicated and fraught. Often, place brands develop on the back of imaginative community initiatives in the first place that raise the reputation of a local place (Govers, 2018). It would be too simplistic to position the politics of the urban brands – or the reputation of their consumptionscapes – as inherently detrimental for the social relations of that neighbourhood. When I ask participants about their associations with the local neighbourhood, besides people telling me that it is 'loud' and 'colourful', less visual and more political descriptions also emerge, that people find noteworthy: dynamic, political, countercultural.

As Chatzidakis et al. (2012) have shown in Exarcheia in Athens, which, similar to Stokes Croft, had a countercultural reputation that brought people together: the urban image – what they refer to as the social identity of place – was able to cut across social groupings in society, transcending class, ethnic, racial, cultural, and age divides. People who were potentially stratified via other systems of differentiation in society, were able to come together and create a consumptionscape in Exarcheia that was able to disrupt social norms and envisage a shared future of alterity, in which consumptionscapes produced more positive experiences of social relations. In this way, countercultural neighbourhoods can provide opportunities for people to live their politics in everyday life in a way that transcends social boundaries (Haenfler et al., 2012, Monticello, 2022).

Picture 6: Picture of the high street with 'boycott Tesco' in the background. Source: my own.

Reflecting the conversation with the former co-operative café owner, many people in Stokes Croft also talk about the consumptionscape being 'independent'. I do find this during my fieldwork too. In 2015, I conduct a survey of all 115 usable retail units in the consumptionscape. Of those, only one shop – the notorious Tesco Express (Mizon, 2021) – is a chain store. Although the opening of this branch of the Tesco in 2011 led to protests and some damage to the branch as well as increased social unrest in the area, it also provided an opportunity for the local community to come together across their differences and preserve the ethos of the local area (Clement, 2011).

Urban neighbourhoods and their everyday consumption spaces can become sites for everyday politics (Forno & Wahlen, 2022; Monticello, 2022). Still, when mediated via the consumptionscape, this also comes with problems. Chatzidakis et al. (2012) conclude that despite the justice-oriented ethos of the consumptionscape in Exarcheia, people also felt excluded from the consumptionscape via the everyday politics that were expressed through it – this was both exclusion as well as marginalisation or alienation.

Conflicted experiences about the politics of the consumptionscape can also be felt in Stokes Croft. I am having lunch on the top floor in Hamilton House, when an informal conversation breaks out between the people there, discussing the Tesco in Stokes Croft. One community worker tells me she needs to go shopping at Tesco, because she can't afford to buy anywhere else, but that she also feels guilty for doing so. To avoid this conflict of affordability and politics, she walks to the city centre Tesco and does her shopping there.

One of her colleagues also says that he'd be worried to publicly say he was in favour of the Tesco opening (as well as speaking about a new housing development in the area that is currently under review and controversially received by people and activist groups in Stokes Croft), because it would be seen as a controversial statement to make in the area. Eliza, a local resident tells me:

> I go to Tesco all the time and when it first opened I refused to go. I was like 'no I'm boycotting it […]. You know, I was really against it before it happened and now I have just succumbed to it because it does have fresh fish and fruit and vegetables and cheap milk and all of the things that like, unfortunately I do want to pay less money for, especially for milk that doesn't go off quickly and things like that, so yeah unfortunately you know, I use it a lot and if there were a shop on Stokes Croft that

sold milk that didn't go off quickly and fresh fruit and vegetables and you know like a fillet of salmon for four quid I would use it for sure but it just doesn't have that kind of breadth. So yeah, I guiltily use Tesco all the time.

Picture 7: the front of Hamilton House with temporary art installation 'I'm Staying'. Source: my own.

When the politics of the consumptionscape clash with people's needs to go about their daily lives, they may put a strain on the local social relations. I am having tea in a flat just off the 'main strip' of high street with a female local resident in her thirties. The window is open, and we hear traffic, sometimes driving, sometimes idling at the nearby traffic lights. "People like the idea of what [Stokes Croft] is" she contemplates, when we begin to discuss the reputation of the area, which she believes to be "better than the actual neighbourhood". In this way, the spatial transformations, and changes, in the consumptionscape also indicate the relationship between the materiality of place and how these affect the social relations that emerge within these spaces (Castilhos, 2015; Lopes, 2018).

4.5 The old and the new

Besides the spatial transformations in Stokes Croft, the values expressed in and through the consumptionscape were also changing. This is common in gentrifying spaces, where the normativities that define a place are also being produced, reconfigured and contested as part of the change processes (Castilhos & Dolbec, 2018; Lopes, 2018; Miles, 2012). One way in which this can happen, is by rupturing a sense of history and continuity of a space. Colonialism and pioneering metaphors have often been invoked in gentrification discourses (Atkinson & Bridge, 2004). These attach not least to the students and artists that become seen as pioneering gentrifiers that lead the discovery as well as the renaissance of urban areas (Lees, 2003).

Such language attaches to modernist discourses more widely. In his book *Hyperculture* (1998), Bertman discusses that the 'new world' discovered by Christopher Columbus, was an 'old world' to the local natives who had already been living there when Columbus landed. Bertman suggests that struggles over space in cities can be seen as running in parallel to discourses of the age of discovery, where urban neighbourhoods become the new colonial frontlines of negotiated power and hegemony by encouraging the cultural myopia embedded in these words of 'old' and 'new'.

Crouching neighbourhood change into this idea of the new or the renaissance allows some people to take privilege over others by ascribing hegemonic discourses about the history of the neighbourhood. Those who own the history, in that sense, also then own the privilege of what emerges in its aftermath. Depicting a neighbourhood in a transition from bad to good, for example, as well as from old to new, allows this neighbourhood to become contested territory that can be ascribed new meanings and relationships. A marketing professional's narrative resonates with this idea when we meet:

> … the area would without doubt have been left to rot even further than it was without the PRSC's intervention and battles with the Council to try and allow… or to take ownership of certain buildings, to allow certain things to happen, like the graffiti. It felt like a bit of a revolution, because people had to fight against something to enable this to happen. […] And they [local cafes, bars, restaurants that opened in the 'first wave'] are all the same ilk, reflecting the same essence. And I think as the time has gone on, I think where these kind of people are really showing their worth, is that they are not trying to 'clean up' Stokes Croft, they are not trying to clean up

the streets of the homelessness. They don't want it to follow the conventional path of economic growth and capitalism, and I have already mentioned that's important. And you can definitely see the benefits to the area of that staunchness, that vision, that belief."

Picture 8: "Stokes Croft – beauty from ashes". Source: my own.

Consumptionscapes and consumption-oriented activities can be central to the restructuring of the social order in urban neighbourhoods by providing opportunities for hegemonic discourses to be produced and to become reflected in the fabric of the consumptionscape (Zukin et al., 2017). This is aided when the sense of history is often not continuous, evoking a history of rupture, or emergence, rather than organic development.

What this translates to is that while initially change may seem – both in actual terms and perceptions – significant, over time, gentrification is less likely to lead to commercial change, nor concomitant change in the neighbourhood (Hentschel & Blokland, 2016). 'History' becomes squeezed into a potentially very short timeframe. In Stokes, Croft, a

flattening of the change curve was arguably already taking place during the time of my fieldwork. A local resident who has lived in the area for nearly ten years explains how she experiences the changes to the consumptionscape:

> There's so many coffee shops in Stokes Croft now, we don't need another one and every now and again someone's opening up a new lunch place or coffee place. They all serve coffee, they all serve wraps, they all serve vegan sausages and things like that. And I like all of those things but, you know, five of those places are fine. We don't need ten, we don't need twenty. And I do feel a little bit like, with gentrification, just comes a kind of repetitiveness of 'oh there's a trendy new bar' or' there's a trendy new coffee shop', 'oh there's a trendy new bar', 'oh there's a trendy new coffee shop' 'oh but it's got a meeting space downstairs' and 'but all of them do'. You know? So I guess, yeah, it's changing really quickly and places start up and then they close down but it's not really changing, it's just – erm… what's the word..? – repeating itself.

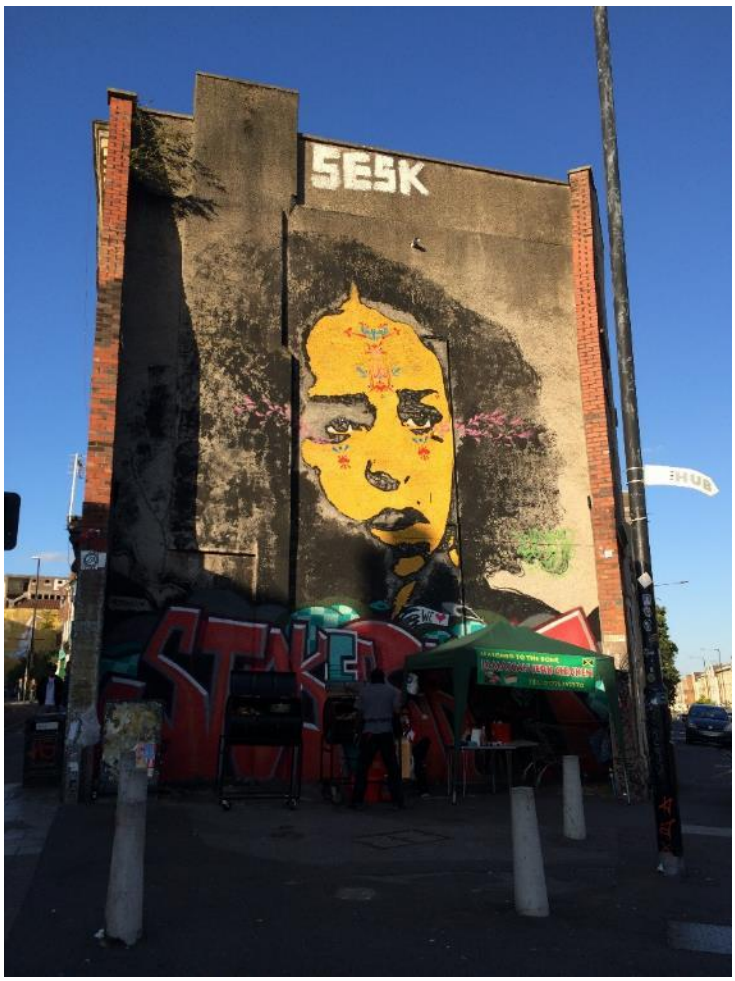
4.6 Parallel lives and exclusion

Generally, participants were more interested to discuss social relations in the neighbourhood alongside the lines of socioeconomic inclusion. While diversity was seen as a nice, or even desirable attribute in the local area, diversity concerns were subsumed to the more imminent concerns of the inclusivity or exclusivity of changes in the consumptionscape (Grier & Perry, 2018). This translated into experiences of belonging or cohesion that were expressed in terms of affordability more than in terms of ethnic, racial, and cultural identity. A woman who was also based at Hamilton House told me during our walking interview:

> Yes, I guess, I feel that because I am quite skint, and I can often not afford to get food here, and I have to get out of Stokes Croft to get food I can afford. [a person in the street is approaching us to ask for change] I guess that's where the negative feelings lie with me, seeing the imbalances, seeing the poverty…

This rendered the racial, cultural or ethnic heterogeneity of the local area side-lined, eclipsed by other concerns of inclusion in the consumptionscape. Because of the other dominant concerns, many participants felt that positive experiences of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity in the consumptionscape were desirable, rather than an important feature of social

relations in the neighbourhood. Often, participants expressed the view that different social groupings would operate in parallel to each other, rather than exhibiting genuine engagement. During my interview with a local resident DJ, he speaks of a restaurant and bar that hosts DJs at the weekend: "How are you going to make a Jamaican who likes reggae like [this place]? People do what their tastes tell them." According to this DJ, expressing one's preferences in the consumptionscape is not a choice that emerges from privileges, nor is it one that carries consequences. This DJ appeared at ease with a consumptionscape that catered for encounters in parallel, rather than across social divisions.



Picture 9: street art and jerk chicken. Source: my own.

The activist journalist, who referred to his experience of heterogeneity in the consumptionscape as colliding, going on to wonder if he meant coexisting, elaborates on the difference between the two words, he says:

> Coexistence implies joining and it feels very much like there are parallels in the same space and that there is not much interaction at all. There are plenty of places you'd go where different people would go. And you would completely overlook other places.

Expressing a preference for certain outlets can be banal, but becomes problematic when it ties into systems of power and differentiation. Since Bourdieu's Dinstinction (1984), scholars have been aware of the political nature of our aesthetic choices: taste is rarely a value-neutral expression of preference, but a political, hegemonic, structure that serves to set some people apart from others (Grier & Perry, 2018; Tissot, 2015; Zukin et al., 2017). Close geographical proximity in the consumptionscape did not mean equal engagement across differences through the consumptionscape.

Picture 10: shop front in Stokes Croft for a mixed-use space. Source: my own.

The emergence of the hegemonic narrative of the neighbourhood was often the source of critical reflection in research participants who were concerned that white, middle-class and young tastes and preferences held more power in the area and changed how people of a

broad range of backgrounds could engage with local consumption spaces. As already discussed, people raised concerns that the presence of people less privileged in this consumption lens, such as street drinkers, drug users, the homeless, non-white consumers provided a scenic backdrop to the lifestyle of these newly emerging tastes and hegemonic narratives in the area. In my conversations, street drinkers became a proxy with which participants discussed their concerns over the inclusivity of the spaces of the consumptionscape:

> I think street drinkers have a difficult time, because that was always their base, the steps in front of the building that is Hamilton House is where they used to drink. To be honest, they are still there, so they are not really being pushed out. But I can see why they would feel displaced because now they are moved on a lot more.

People spoke of how the consumptionscape became a place in which people didn't fit as easily anymore, pushed to the margins with rising consumption (Lopes, 2018). For example, a local resident talks about a particular place that had changed ownership in recent months:

> We used to go there and dance in there. And then when it got renovated […], I don't really like it anymore. Because it feels a little bit hipster-y. Like people who… I don't know… I just feel a little bit uncomfortable in there. Whereas before it was just a bit anything goes, not like a clique, maybe. But I think that is a lot of what is going on now. I mean I love ale, so I am not really complaining, but there is a whole style that is coming with it, that can make someone who doesn't fit in feel like they don't fit in.

This becomes particularly problematic when experiences in the consumptionscapes are overlayed with other experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, or where the consumptionscapes replicates such experiences, for example in the context of race (Grier et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2019). In an interview with a journalist in the local area, he highlights his concerns over the exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities within the consumptionscape of Stokes Croft:

> The Afro-Carribean community are really on the back foot here, both in terms of affordability but also culture. Things like the crisis of the Malcolm X centre… Or the Kuumba Centre. It used to have a pan-African flag and depictions of a couple of postcolonial figures above its door… And now, it's basically a place for 'Stokes Crofters'… and that's really emblematic… the place that was pan-Africanist and

> black pride and there's now people in pantaloons juggling and it's totally, sort of like, at least within its context, a de-politicised and white space.

References to ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood often had to be prompted in my research, as participants more readily framed diversity as a socioeconomic issue, rather than one of race, culture or ethnicity. Still, after prompting, conversations with participants could also highlight the complexities of negotiating intercultural encounters within the consumptionscapes. Once checking specifically on how such experiences of heterogeneity intersect with consumption, a more complex picture emerges of why or how engagement with 'others' may be inhibited or enhanced. Billy, someone who was actively involved in the earlier waves of neighbourhood change, and who has been coming to Stokes Croft for approximately 10 years, expressed mixed emotions about visiting a Somali-run café in the neighbourhood:

> Participant: You go about 50 yards down there; you've got quite a Muslim, Islamic-style, Somali café. Right here on the right. Again, it is one of those places where you can probably get lunch for £3.
>
> Researcher: Have you been?
>
> Participant: For some reason, no. I went through a period a couple of years ago, where I thought I would start going to Somali cafes in Easton. And I would sit there watching the World Cup, and it was really nice. But somehow I don't gravitate… It's a shame, because you meet different people. It's a bit like travelling without leaving.
>
> Researcher: Why do you think that is?
>
> Participant: Maybe there is a little bridge you need to cross? So it is resentful, people in there don't look like me, for example, and maybe I'd feel like I'd be imposing, or like a tourist. But I think once you make the effort of doing it, it's always worth the effort. I often feel quite an affinity for community, when I am in those places. I suppose my laptop looking, book reading, mono coffee that I am having on my own. Whereas when I feel I go somewhere else, there is more conversation. Conversation and people.

These mixed emotions he highlights during his interview illustrate both an interest in but also an uncertainty towards racial, ethnic, and cultural others in the consumptionscape. Although Billy feels drawn to go inside the café, he also displays a lot of uncertainty on

whether it would be appropriate for him to go in, and whether he would feel comfortable in a space that to him appears to not cater to his "laptop, book, coffee habit" of utilising cafés. Such conflicting experiences problematise the suggestion of the everyday diversity paradigm that an engagement with diverse others was often a quotidian and banal encounter.

Picture 11: Being able to buy fresh fruit and vegetables was new to Stokes Croft. Source: my own.

Billy's experience ties into the emotional politics that can emerge within consumption spaces. Ahmed (2014) describes the discomfort of people who enter spaces where they feel that they don't fit, or whose normativities they cannot easily slot into. The affective

experience of disorientation and displacement of spaces becomes overlayed with the differential experiences within changing consumptionscapes. Lopes (2018) in her study of gentrification in the inner-city neighbourhood of Sao Paulo, Brazil, identifies a range of affective experiences that hinder the emergence of social relations within a gentrifying consumptionscape, illustrating how spatial injustices that emerge in cities are facilitated, or driven, by consumption ideology and the affective experiences thereof. These emotions include fear and disgust.

Speaking of the same Somali café, a marketing professional initially tells me he feels a little scared to enter. When I ask him to elaborate on why he thinks that is, he sanitises his own story and shares with me what he probably perceives a much more acceptable version of heterogeneity in the neighbourhood:

> I am not really scared. Because that would be quite racist. I look in there, and I think it looks like a really, it's like, it feels like [another restaurant in the area] for the Afro-Caribbean crew. Just a big cafeteria, with a pool table and a big TV, and they watch football. And it's always a buzzing hive of activity. The food looks, like it's pretty… it's not refined food, it's honest, it's earthy, it's what the people love. I have always felt like it would be a good experience to go in there. Like people would come and chat to you a lot."

A local resident also appreciates the diversity of the local high street without necessarily feeling compelled to engage with it. As we walk past the Polish shop, I ask her if she's been:

> No, I haven't been in there actually. I'm a vegan and I feel like Eastern Europe well other parts of Europe I guess because any type of Europe […] It's kind of a bit more meat-orientated so I think I went in to one when I was back living in Weymouth where I'm from and there was just like this pig's head in a jar and I remember being really put off, just like I don't want to see that, sorry. Yes that's fine if you want to eat that, that's okay, but […] no, I don't want to see that.

Fear and disgust in this way may drive behaviour and in return produce social formations in consumptionscapes, showing the consequences of tase and consumer preferences in expanding and changing consumptionscapes. As Zukin et al. (2017) found in their analysis of online restaurant reviews that the discourses surrounding certain restaurants and bars created desirability while at the same time excluding others, translating into the scripts that

made some outlets slot into and succeed into the fabric of the consumptionscape, while others would become excluded. Although the Polish shop was also a small independent business, catering to the local community – a large Polish church sits just north of the boundaries of Stokes Croft, for example – its offer did not sit as well with the food ethics and politics in the local area. When I returned to the local area after my maternity leave (and after the end of my fieldwork), I noticed that the Polish shop had closed its doors.

4.7 Indifference

Spaces in flux are also spaces in which transitions in the norms that govern the use of consumption space are taking place (Castilhos & Dolbec, 2018; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018). These norms can uphold spatial boundaries or rewrite the lines of privilege and power that allow social access. Those who can access and inhabit the normativities of these spaces hold power more easily. The processes that produce such exclusions and marginalisations rely on such normative structures as they produce the stratified lived experiences of consumptionscapes, while also making these exclusions appear more acceptable or banal (Saatcioglu & Corus, 2016).

My first interview in Bristol takes place on a sunny day, and Marnie and I are walking through Stokes Croft. She takes me to the outside of a place, where she had dinner with her friends on the Saturday night prior to the interview. The place she went to is located in the Bearpit, the inside area of a large roundabout at the entrance to Stokes Croft. The Bearpit has historically been seen as one of Bristol's inner-city 'problem areas' of homelessness, drug use and crime (Buser, 2017, 2018). In a public-private regeneration effort, some hospitality businesses were operating in the Bearpit at the time of the fieldwork. Marnie has spent her Saturday evening in one of them:

> When you think the Bearpit used to be full of, very sadly, homeless people with nowhere to live. And that is just not happening anymore. I hope that this is because they have found somewhere else, and not just because they were like 'we need to build a restaurant here'. I hope that in the process Bristol has been like 'How can we help these people and also change it to a space that people are going to enjoy hanging out in?'…

Picture 12: View of some businesses in the Bearpit. Source: my own.

While being aware of the potential displacements amid the changes to Stokes Croft, her concern for local homeless people does not go as far as to question if her consumption choices and behaviours are implicated within them. In the neoliberal logic, people are encouraged to view society as a collection of individuals who all come with competing (or even sometimes shared) interests that they seek to satisfy in the consumptionscape, often through the use of finite resources (Wilson, 2018). This can result in their attitudes more easily leaning towards also seeing others responsible for the way that they experience consumptionscapes. Marnie had possibly internalised a view whereby the public space in the Bearpit could not hold hers and the homeless people's interests, and where she did not ultimately share responsibility for the inclusivity of everyday spaces.

Consumptionscapes allow some people to claim and write the local discourses, bringing the privileged in close geographical proximity to those who are being excluded from these spaces (Butler, 2003; deVerteuil, 2018). Them being spatially close, but socially apart means that social relations were being held together by a visual sharing of space, more

so than an actual engagement across differences. This is what concerns some participants express when they say that they "diversity on the pavement, but not in the cafés".

4.8 Opportunities in the consumptionscape

The role of spaces of consumption as spaces of marginalisation and exclusion became more noteworthy and prevalent during fieldwork. Local businesses, however, as a result of their positionality within consumptionscapes, provided many examples where social considerations took centre stage. Many initiatives indicated a desire by collectives and individuals to envision and experiment with creating and enacting alternative visions for environmental, economic and political configurations in, through and with the emerging consumptionscape (Moreton & Larner, 2016). Reflecting the ethos of a community business (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2020), these spaces were actively involved in trying to foster more positive social relations (Bright, 2020).

The place brand could benefit the local area, by providing a space of opportunity or a counter-space (Soja, 2010) that was attracting many more outlets of economic alterity to the area which were creating alternatives to the neoliberal capitalist model of increasing profit and global commodity chains (Chatzidakis et al., 2012). Stokes Croft also set the expectation with people as consumers that its businesses would uphold certain values in the local community. A resident postgraduate student tells me how she has asked a restaurant that is part of a Bristol-based chain to be accountable for their impact in the local area:

> When the [restaurant] opened, I was a bit anti it. It was a chain, just a Bristol chain. But actually, I've gone in there, I fed that back to them, and they said they recruit local people, we source locally, so they're quite different from a chain. And I thought 'fair enough'.

Another element can frequently lead to exclusion in consumptionscapes is the increase in prices that often comes hand-in-hand with development or gentrification (e.g., Zukin & Smith Maguire, 2004). Many of the restaurant owners, I speak with, are consciously trying to keep the cost of their offer down as much as possible. I am told how various places offer amenities to homeless people and local sex workers, such as showers, toilets, hot drinks. Some even collect clothing and food for them. One restaurant owner describes part of their role to be a "social worker, but without the agency of social workers".

Building on the social role of consumption spaces, I am told about the nights of the Tesco Riots, where a local café took on the role of the first response station, offering people a place to shelter, to be cleaned up and to be served a hot drink and food. In this way, businesses in the local area play a part in creating alternative social relations to those more habitually associated with a shift towards consumption structures and systems. Consciously engaging with the local politics in the area means businesses can also become engaged as places of possibility by highlighting values other than economic ones, or commercial profits. They can become places that provide informal support networks, which tie them into the fabric of social relations in the neighbourhood.

During the time that I visit, such informal support systems seem to become less frequent. I speak to one of the restaurants, who tells me that with new businesses arriving, the competition has grown, which in return has an impact on their business practices. Colic-Peisker and Robertson (2015) highlight how it is relatively common for the opportunities to provide social, informal support in neighbourhoods to be crowded out by the growing creep of gentrification. In these settings, informal support mechanisms can become replaced by more formal and commercial service provisions, which are more detached from the everyday contexts of the neighbourhood – an external actor coming in, rather than an internal actor reaching out. Many businesses in Stokes Croft during my fieldwork are trying to defy that trajectory.

Still, participants highlight also how building positive and inclusive social relations within the context of a shift towards consumption is seen as requiring more concerted efforts and goodwill by the local community. This is difficult when a place is changing relatively rapidly and attracting more and more people and actors to an area. Across many of the interviews, it becomes obvious that participants hold often conflicted, and at times, contradictory viewpoints and emotions towards the developments of the consumptionscape in the area. Rather than being unaware 'perpetrators' of gentrification, they reflect actively and critically with the complexity of the challenges and opportunities that emerge in Stokes Croft. A local activist working for a community organisation considers the future trajectory based on the churn of people in the area:

But it is interesting because now… as soon as the first new wave of students came, they don't remember any of that, they weren't here. And each generation of students or people who come to Stokes Croft and don't know the history of that.

Picture 13: "There's more to life than simply increasing its speed" graffiti. Source: my own.

The dynamicity and perceived speed of the neighbourhood changes in the area highlights that within each change, new people are attracted to the area with arguably little awareness of what has been before, resulting in a neighbourhood with an increased number of stakeholding groups and divergent interests that could fragment social relations. These fragmentations can make the collective organising for fostering positive social relations in the consumptionscape more difficult in the long-term.

4.9 Concluding discussion

In summary, this chapter has illustrated the lived experiences and discourses that emerged in Stokes Croft. This case study of social relations of spaces of consumption has shown how

consumption-oriented activities and consumption spaces emerged as facilitators of or barriers to lived experiences of belonging and cohesion. Both material-spatial and cultural-symbolical changes transformed social relations in the neighbourhood, leading to more pronounced experiences of fragmentation. Engagements in the consumptionscape contributed to the commodification of place and to the differentiation of social relations in the emerging and emergent spaces of Stokes Croft. Such processes could become instrumental, or instrumentalised, in emplacing differences as well as differentiation within social relations. These processes at times reflected, and at other times transgressed traditional boundaries of social differentiations.

At the same time, interactions in the consumptionscape also offered people opportunities to make their voices, and their actions, heard. Similarly, businesses emerged as important players in counteracting some of the more immediately negative effects of gentrification and wider neighbourhood change. Although many benefitted from the expansion and changes to the consumptionscape in recent years, their position also rendered them influential exactly for that reason and they were willing to use their influence for fostering more positive social relations.

Finally, lived experiences in Stokes Croft illustrated how the consumptionscapes fostered both vertical and horizontal entanglements. Changes in the consumptionscape were the access point for participants in Bristol to discuss their vertical entanglements within the structures of the economy and of society, while also being able to consider their horizontal entanglements with the people with whom they shared their everyday spaces. The social realities and lived experiences in the neighbourhood highlighted how the politics of difference and diversity, and of political economy intersected, producing the sites in which their meanings could be constructed and contested. The consumptionscape was able to manifest such complex processes and dynamics and render them visible in the domain of everyday life. Its role in the production and experience of social relations had grown at the time of my fieldwork.

5 WEST BANK

In this chapter, I introduce findings from the research conducted in the oPt. Although I had already published the research findings from this case study (Bröckerhoff, 2017; Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021), a renewed engagement with the data allowed me to reflect on these findings and the data taking into consideration the aims of the dissertation. In the West Bank, consumptionscapes were contested comprehensively and in a way that cut across all layers of society. They often provided the spatial or environmental cues against which people were discussing how social relations emerged and unfolded in the West Bank at the time of my fieldwork. I discuss the findings of this case study by drawing on the limitations of viewing people as agentic individuals in systems of consumption who make choices to construct their social identities, and to signal belonging. In the West Bank, the lived experience of consumptionscapes presented as a fractured sense of social relations that posed barriers to how belonging and cohesion might emerge.

5.1 Consumptionscapes and marketisation

The West Bank case study highlights how social relations of spaces of consumption emerge in the context of marketisation. Marketisation refers to the restructuring of a state economy towards a market economy. Marketisation is a process that extends market forces into areas of public and social life, resulting in the commodification of labour, of services and infrastructure, the restructuring of the state for competition and market mechanisms and the promotion of liberalisation (Whitfield, 2006). In this way, marketisation also institutionalises a capitalist social order (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018). In academic literature, marketisation has been presented in ways that are at opposite ends of a spectrum. On the one hand, the market is considered a mechanism for a more equitable and fair economic exchange and resource distribution than would be possible at the hands of the state (Söderberg, 2009). The other view positions markets as ideological, as politically motivated projects that usually contribute to growing social divisions and disparity (ibid.).

Consumptionscapes are a phenomenon of a marketised society, and thus directly linked to the processes of marketisation. Consumptionscapes, as they are conceived in this dissertation, are a product of neoliberal capitalism. Three interrelated issues are likely to

have a bearing on social relations, when consumptionscapes are emerging in the process of marketisation (e.g., Brown, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Wilson, 2018). First, the increasing reliance on market exchange, market structures and the consumer economy in everyday practices gives consumption an increased social validity. Second, the rise in a culture of consumption translates into a more individualised experience of being and belonging in society. Third, and maybe a result of the first two, the mediation of social relations via consumptionscapes may contribute to a sense of fragmentation. These three issues also cut through the themes that emerged from my research in the West Bank.

Picture 14: a sign above a community space in Beit Sahour. Source: my own

5.2 Commercial enterprise and contradictions

In Beit Sahour, the consumptionscape sprawls along a main road that runs seamlessly from the town into the larger, busier Bethlehem. In fact, it is only during my second visit that I realise that this small town with a population of approximately 15,000, is not merely a neighbourhood of the more well-known city. What marks Beit Sahour out as a town in the West Bank is that it is predominantly Christian – at 75%, it has the highest Christian majority in the West Bank and Gaza – and that it is an overwhelmingly middle-class town, with the highest levels of university-educated people per population in all of the oPt and with many of the town's population having returned from study or work experiences abroad (ATG, 2008).

Picture 15: Segregation wall in Beit Sahour. Source: my own.

The segregation wall runs through some of Beit Sahour and acts as a daily spatial and material reminder of the occupation shaping lived experiences. It also serves to uphold the activist character of the town (Bowman, 2004). Since the first intifada, Beit Sahour has held the reputation of being particularly active in creative and non-violent resistance against the occupation (ATG, 2008). The first intifada began in 1987 and lasted until either 1991 or 1993, the year of the signing of the first Oslo Accord agreements. A large swathe of activism of the first intifada took the shape of forms of alternative economic organising, running food growing and distribution cooperatives and sharing networks for produce which allowed Palestinians to sustain self-sufficiency over many years (Qumsiyeh, 2010, 2017; Rigby, 1991).

A documentary film *The Wanted 18* documents how at the time of the first intifada, Palestinian activists were able to purchase and smuggle 18 cows across the border from Israel, with the intention of setting up and maintaining a Palestinian dairy production that could be run independently of Israel during that time. The film covers the story I am told many times while in Beit Sahour: how Israeli officials were tasked with finding the cows and

people in the town contributed to moving them around and hiding them, and a prolonged chase ensued. Local people had also contributed in the making of the *Wanted 18*. The memories of such activism of the past remain an important part of the town.

Beit Sahour has remained a hot spot for activism. The town hosts many organisations that attract solidarity activism and tourism to the area: these include the Alternative Tourism Group (trips, information materials, guides and home stays), Joint Advocacy Initiative (youth and student exchanges, olive harvest, advocacy visits, publications), Palestine Wildlife Society (conservation and ecological management), and Masar Ibrahim (walking tours and multi-day hikes). 27% of the working population is employed in the tourism sector (*BeitSahour* n.d.).

My participants, some of whom are organising or working in these organisations, tell me that these organisations serve to counter the more traditional tourism that they see as offering de-politised visits to the local religious sites, such as the Shepherd's Field, where, according to Christian tradition, angels announced the birth of Jesus. Although tourism in general, and especially solidarity tourism, are sometimes critiqued for their impacts on local communities, these organisations work towards highlighting some of the contradictions and lived experiences amid the threat of eviction and violence that shape Palestinian lives under occupation (Kelly, 2016).

I already discussed the contradictions of the consumptionscape at Qalandia checkpoint in the opening pages of the dissertation. During my visit to Beit Sahour, I also keep noticing similar examples of enterprise that surprise me. Some of these take place near the segregation wall, for example. The segregation wall has come to be covered in graffiti over the years. Some of it by famous street artists such as the Bristolian artist Banksy. Recently, Bansky financed and set up the Walled Off hotel in Bethlehem, which is an art venue and hospitality place as much as it is a hotel (Adams, 2019). On the hotel's website itself, it describes its local area as 'bustling [… with] all the restaurants and bars' (Walled Off, 2022). Alongside the bars and restaurants, in this area, you can find shops that sell postcards, T-Shirts and tote bags with motifs that had been spray painted on the wall. These anti-occupation paraphernalia are produced just metres away from the wall.

I meet with a participant and discuss this commercial activity. He tells me that he dislikes how the segregation wall has come to be covered in street art and slogans. He wants

the wall to look ugly, so that it reminds the world of what it is. He does not want people to forget its true purpose, and he is worried that all the commercial activity surrounding the wall and its aesthetics might normalise or trivialise its existence and impact on Palestinians living in the restrictions and suffering that it brings. He does not want people to mistake the wall for an open-air art gallery.

This view is debated a lot not only in relation to the wall, but also in the context of any commercial activities that emerges in the context of the occupation. Palestinians are also certainly divided on their views on this issue. While, arguably, the presence of art on the wall has given rise to many opportunities for ensuring livelihoods and engaging in conversations about its presence, it at the same time runs the risk of normatively reframing how the wall is experienced and how it becomes normalised into the social, political and economic fabric of life under occupation. Similar views exist of the checkpoint economy. I have discussed these in more detail in a book chapter (Bröckerhoff, 2017).

Some Palestinians more willing to engage in these opportunities. The *Walled Off* hotel is now a Palestinian-run independent business, employing local Palestinian staff. When I visit this part of town, one of the shopkeepers who is selling postcards and bags, comes to meet me in the street as I am looking at the graffiti. He is carrying three cannisters of spray paint and asks me if I want to use them, for a small fee. These examples illustrate the complex, and at times, contradictory picture that emerges for spaces and practices of consumption in the West Bank.

Picture 16: Anti-occupation graffiti on the segregation wall, Bethlehem. Source: my own.

5.3 Consumption systems and politics

It is a very hot May morning, when I catch a taxi to Jenin for my first interview of the field research with the coordinator of a cultural organisation and a few of her staff. It is also my first visit to Jenin. Jenin is a city with a population of nearly 40,000 people, situated in the north of the West Bank. Throughout history, and until now, Jenin has been an important trading and agricultural centre (ATG, 2008). It offers trade opportunities, markets and an established hospitality scene relying on its agricultural produce (welcometopalestine.com, n.d.). Like Beit Sahour, Jenin is home to many cultural and activist organisations, such as Cinema Jenin (movie theatre and educational film centre in the area), the Freedom Theatre (a theatre company, running theatre and drama educational programmes) and the Strings of Freedom (a youth orchestra for refugees from Jenin camp run by an Israeli Arab). Other organisations of alternative economic activism focus and represent the cities' reputation of organic, agricultural produce: Canaan Fair Trade and Zaytoun are fair trade cooperatives

working towards enhancing Palestinian food sovereignty and establishing direct trade by exporting Palestinian produce internationally.

Jenin is less affluent, and its population has overall received less formalized education compared to the population in Beit Sahour. Only 6% of the population have university degrees, for example, and 24% have not been in formal schooling (Giacaman & Husseini, 2002). In contrast to Beit Sahour, Jenin as a place feels less confident and more hardened. In 2000, the sense of failure of the peace process felt among Palestinians in the oPt contributed significantly to the second intifada (Pressman, 2003). This intifada became increasingly violent. In 2002, Jenin was under siege while Israeli military forces set up camp on the hills on the outskirts of the city. From there, the city centre and refugee camp were bombed for 13 consecutive days, causing many casualties and extensive damage to homes and infrastructure (Bleibleh et al., 2019). The memory of the second intifada has shaped the landscape and collective memory of the city (Tabar, 2007). During the conversations in my fieldwork, I notice the contrast between the more playful, ludic resistance in Beit Sahour, and Jenin's seemingly harder political character marked by the recent more confrontational and violent experiences of the occupation.

Jenin is also a place where Palestinians from across the different territories come together and meet. The Arab American University Jenin (AAUJ) is based just outside the city and attracts local Palestinian and 48 Palestinian youth to the area, making it an important meeting place for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and in Israel (Zaid, 2020). Spaces of consumption in Jenin are also bringing Palestinians from both sides of the border together (Forte, 2001; Taha & Hawker, 2020). At the time of my fieldwork, plans are in progress to build the Jenin Industrial Free Zone (JIFZ), a business district to provide business cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian companies[13]. Jenin, just like many

[13] Industrial zones were designed within the framework of capitalist peacebuilding, which rests on the assumption that conflict is unlikely to emerge between trading nations (Gartzke, 2007). Although not new, industrial zones have been planned and developed since the second intifada with support from international donors to enhance economic cooperation between Israel and the oPt (Bahour, 2010). At the time of my fieldwork in 2015, four of these were in planning and/or operational. The proponents of capitalist peace see industrial zones as cornerstones for developing peaceful relations between Israel and the Palestinians. The governments on both sides support their development and they receive international funder support. Critics see them as promoting a colonial political economy that advances Israeli interests at the cost of Palestinians' freedom and development (Dana, 2015; Bahour, 2010).

places in the West Bank that I visit during my time there, is place of encounters and of contradictions.

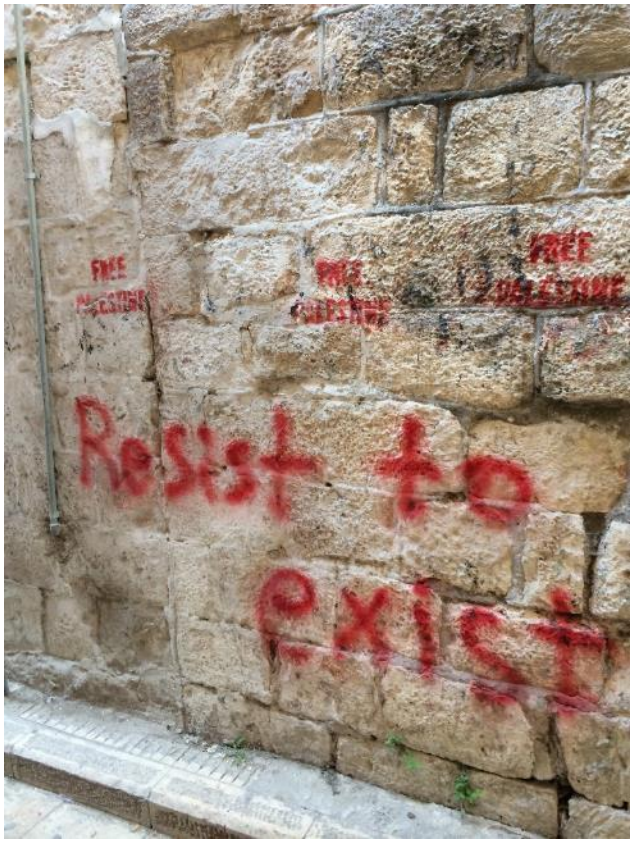
Picture 17: Consumptionscape in Jenin. Source: my own.

As I step out of the taxi in the street that is adjacent to the city's refugee camp, I am greeted by a member of staff who leads me through the garden and into the meeting room. The wind is blowing through an open window, and the participants and I engage in polite conversation and drink tea, as I have become accustomed to so seemingly quickly over my first week in the West Bank. As the more formal part of the interview begins, our discussions about consumer boycott and consumer resistance soon turn into a conversation about the consumer economy of the West Bank that has emerged since the Oslo years. One of the staff comes from a European country and is the first to share her views. A Palestinian mother is eager to add to the discussion, speaking of the rise of consumer culture in the West Bank:

> Participant 1: " […] to me, as a foreigner, it is really horrible to see how the market economy, and the consumerism ideal has completely taken over. That to buy the latest phone, iphone, LCD screen….
>
> Participant 2: We are not thinking about the occupation. We are just thinking about getting married and buying a big house and a car. And this is why we have a loan from the bank. And we only care about our food, our children, our kindergarten, school. And I think this is why now, we all have loans from the bank. And people who have loans, they will never remember their issues. Because you are always trying to solve the problem "I want to pay this for the kindergarten, for the school'. So, we are very busy with our daily life, and we forget our basic issue about Palestine and resistance.

This brief snippet of a conversation reflects many conversations that I have with Palestinians that highlight the messy complexities and conflicting experiences of Palestinians living the marketisation of the West Bank in their daily lives. Frequently, this is expressed as a conflict between wanting to live a normal life, while also wanting to support anti-occupation activism.

Sumud (from Arabic for 'steadfastness') refers to a form of resistance that Palestinians practice in their everyday lives, by aiming to live ordinary lives amid the ongoing violent conflict (Soliman, 2021; Kelly, 2008). *Sumud* can be summarised in the slogan 'to exist is to resist' – a slogan that is spray painted or written across stone surfaces everywhere in the occupied West Bank. The core idea of *sumud* is that any attempt at living life every day whilst occupied is a step towards peaceful resistance and conflict transformation. This has become more complicated when everyday life intersects more frequently with the spaces of consumption, themselves seen as part of the occupation (Bröckerhoff, 2017). When the consumptionscape then becomes entangled with politics and is seen as something that is considered implicated in the ongoing oppression through the occupation (Taha & Hawker, 2020), it complicates the idea of engaging in consumptionscapes as a banal and ordinary practice and renders these interaction more easily as seemingly political choices.



Picture 18: This is a graffiti that plays on the wording of *sumud*. Source: my own.

5.4 Work and spend

> … we have to live, we have to eat […]. Economic, daily living, economic hardships are dominating Palestinian life recently […]. And if you see at the end of the month, how people are queuing just before the ATM machines in order to get their salaries – it is a time to celebrate.

This quote comes from an interview with a professor of politics at a local university. He is one of the first people I interview for my study. Still in the early days of my research stay in the West Bank, I wonder if this might be an exaggerated observation. Later during my stay, I am in the centre of town one day. It seems unusually busy and bustling. I notice long queues at the cash points. A research participant, whom I am meeting for lunch that day, acknowledges the queues as we walk past them to a restaurant and explains that it is payday today and that seeing people queue is a common sight of payday: people are getting money out of the cashpoints so they can spend some of it in town.

The above quote also sticks with me during my fieldwork – and I often come back to it over the next few weeks, as I immerse myself in the lived experiences of marketisation and

the subsequent rise in consumption in the West Bank. It points to one of the most immediate effects of marketisation, namely the embedding of life into wage-labour systems, whereby labour is undertaken in exchange for salaries that reward such productive inputs into the economy. This work-and-spend cycle of market economies, means that people are earning a salary, while at the same time being encouraged to re-invest it in the economy via consumption (Southerton, 2011). As marketisation relies on consumption, the imperatives to spend one's earnings grow in marketising societies (Schor 1992). This leads to an upwards spiral whereby everyday life is increasingly organised via market structures and people become increasingly reliant on consumer goods to manage their daily living.

Picture 19: Palestinians associate snacks with marketisation. Source: my own.

This is especially evident in emerging economies, which have a different starting point to developed capitalist economies (Ger & Belk, 1996), but it is not unique to them (Schor, 1998). In capitalist (emerging and established) economies, consumption primarily emerges as the means to spend productive surplus in society (Southerton, 2011; Graeber, 2011). Consumptionscapes are implicated in marketisation, as they are the spaces that enable

consumption behaviours in society. They often replace other societal structures and processes that lie outside of market capitalist rationality (Brown, 2005; Colic-Peisker & Robertson, 2015).

Picture 20: 'Accessories'. Store signs imitate global brands that have no representation in the oPt. Source: my own.

To increasingly cater to the work-and-spend cycle, new consumer goods and services have also entered the West Bank. Besides the new cuisines, hospitality and retail venues and lifestyle options discussed in section 1.7.2, these also include, prominently, the internet and mobile phones (Hanieh, 2013). The advancing of consumer economies often turns what was once considered luxuries, into daily necessities, as part of the upward consumption spiral of the work and spend ethic progresses (Schor, 1998). Palestinians are reflecting on this development, in the West Bank too:

> [During the first intifada], we didn't use to have internet, we didn't use to have mobiles, we didn't use to have many things that we would pay much for nowadays […]. I can't work without the internet, none of the family can work without the

> internet, I mean, the kids sometimes do their exams online, so can't live without these things.

One of the direct consequences of the emergence of the consumer economy in the oPt then has been the rise in daily necessities, which has also led to an increase in the cost of living (e.g., Palestinian Bureau of National Statistics, 2010). This increased cost of living becomes problematic when it leads to an experience of feeling trapped within a work-and-spend cycle. When I interview an activist and family father in Beit Sahour, who works in the tourism industry, he tells me:

> And others, many of my friends are also very busy, usually related to earning a living. They often have to work more than one job to earn a living and pay for children's education, because the cost of living is very high.

5.5 Consumer borrowing and cohesion

In the West Bank, and as already discussed in section 1.7.2, this increased cost of living comes alongside high levels of unemployment and poverty, and a growing gulf between the consumption of the richest ten percent and the rest of the population. In order to keep up with these increasing demands in everyday life, consumer credit has increased significantly in Palestine in the post-Oslo years: between 2008 and 2010, for example, bank credit almost doubled, mainly fuelled by consumer-based spending on property, cars and credit cards (Palestine Monetary Authority, 2011). Consumer credit is also significantly higher in urban areas, with Ramallah seeing nearly two thirds of all consumer borrowing in the West Bank, reflecting the differences that exist between Palestinians' lived experiences of the rising consumer economy in urban and rural areas (Harker, 2020).

In a village just outside of Jenin, I have been invited for dinner with the family of a pharmacist. One of his daughters, who, like all her siblings, and as is customary in Palestinian culture, still lives at her parental home with her husband and child, illustrates the way in which consumer credit becomes accumulated in daily life:

> I have many friends in Ramallah they live their lives like this: they are getting married by loan, they buy a house by loan, they buy a car by loan. […] And they buy it, they didn't have the money, but they want to be like their family and the family in

> Ramallah, they buy a car. And they continue their life, working day and night, just to pay back the money to the bank.

Consumption becomes a means to negotiate belonging, even if it emerges against the backdrop of individual consumer debt. A working mother living in the centre of Jenin expresses this as "You need to borrow [money from the bank] to be one of them in society".

Hanieh (2013) argues that individual and household debt because of market liberalisation has facilitated that the sense of self-worth has become more defined by individual possessions. This has led to Palestinians being caught in a web of financial dependencies. Harker (2020) describes this rise in consumer debt as a form of violence that cannot, as with most things Palestinian, be seen detached from the political and military violence of the occupation. The contrary is the case according to the author: debt has become one of the occupation's means of exerting power. In this sense, social relations of spaces of consumption are tied to the politics involved in the neoliberal marketisation of the West Bank in the post-Oslo years.

5.6 The lifestyle of consumption and pacification

Although it might be surprising that people in this context are willing to take on consumer credit and put themselves into debt for the sake of consumption, research especially in other emerging economies illustrates that it is not (Sanikci & Ger, 2002; Üstuner & Holt, 2010). While the issue of consumer debt is not limited to emerging economies, the salient role that it takes in these developing contexts marks it out as noteworthy. It highlights the intersections of neoliberal capitalism with the social, political and cultural systems and structures of power that often have been seen to accompany its rise (Brown, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Mason, 2015; Wilson, 2018). The market rationality that underlies neoliberalism relies on consumption practices to function (Graeber, 2011). It thus exacerbates their necessity which are diffused socially and culturally. As such, with the neoliberal re-structuring post-Oslo, the conditions for the societal 'aspirations' towards consumer lifestyles with a focus on material possessions – financed by consumer credit if necessary – were set (Hanieh, 2013; McMahon 2014; Samara, 2000; Shikaki & Springer 2015).

This elevated role for consumption practices and lifestyles is criticised by an activist in Beit Sahour:

> People have developed this concept of consumption. I mean people consume everything that is needed and not needed. I mean, if you are now going to ask young people in the street what is your dream for the coming months, and you will have 60% telling you I want to change my mobile to have i6plus or i6what."

When consumption becomes tied up in the discourse of modernity and development, it often becomes an index of social status (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). Another consequence that emerges is that when consumption becomes an established index for conveying one's social positionalities, it can enhance fragmentation of society in terms of lifestyle choices and lifestyle practices. This means that society, beyond any increase in inequality in political, cultural or socioeconomic terms, may appear more stratified as people engage in more differentiated lifestyles through their consumption (Sandikci & Ger, 2002).

One of the ways in which participants feel this fragmentation is in the way it appears to divide the younger and the older generation. Especially older activists reflect on the ways in which young people embrace new lifestyles offered to them in the market as undermining their engagement in social issues and in fostering meaningful social relations. A student from Jenin tells me that she feels a disconnect between the older generation and their interests, and the younger generation: "Young people nowadays are more interested in technology than in society. […]". The politics professor from the local university who told me about the payday ATM queues, also talks about a difference in the cultural outlook that is facilitated and reflected in the consumption practices of the younger generation:

> Traditional food is receding, especially among young people. They want quick fast food. Burgers, sandwiches, and all that. And that suits their culture. When young boys and girls sit together, we don't expect them to eat *makloubeh* or *mlukijeh*. They want everything fast. They go to the restaurant and ask for a burger, chicken that's fried. […]. Life is fast, they want to cook with this newly changing environment around them, but that [is] also impacting their way of thinking. You know, they are not patient. You know, when you eat fast, you think fast, you also expect to achieve tangible results fast. But that is not practical. You know, everything is easy, technology has become our life. Very smooth and very easy. So you don't want to be involved in much hardship, and politics is hardship. We have become an extremely consuming nation. […] You must have noticed and seen for your eyes, the new

> generation, I think they are obsessed with technology. They are obsessed with Facebook, they are obsessed with - it is a new culture of liberal globalisation - obsessed with Real Madrid or Barcelona. And that comes at the cost of national issues, in my view. […] So you don't want to be involved in hardship and politics is a hardship. They are used to a very delicate and comfortable life, young people. […] So they don't want to be involved in a sort of serious thinking.

Of course, such statements could be the expression of intergenerational differences which are common to many societies around the world. What matters in the context of this study is that it highlights how consumer culture negatively influences perceptions of social relations and social solidarity, even before such a reduction in solidarity has taken place (Hanieh, 2013). In response to some of the critiques above, for example, some of the young people in my research argue that they use technology and social media as a tool for political activism. They feel these outlets offer them an opportunity to share their experiences with audiences at home and overseas. This, to them, constitutes a more likely strategy for success than some of the social activism of the older generation.

Picture 21: Lunch with a participant of the 'younger generation'. Source: my own.

Wherever consumption practices and spaces appear, the tension between how people perceive their utility and use also rises. Consumption spaces and practices can be an enjoyable source of contentment and distraction, or a domain for the exertion of economic, political and cultural power in the domain of everyday life (Miles, 2012). The rise of consumer culture in the West Bank, arguably, is even more: when consumption maintains their structural oppression by enhancing the immediate and short-term lived experiences, then it risks contributing to the ultimate further perpetuation of their subjugation (Taha & Hawker, 2020). The family father and activist who works in the tourism industry evokes an image of 'the good life' when telling me: "We can go on vacation, we can go to nice restaurants, we have a nice house, we have a nice car, so what do I need more than this?".

In this sense, consumption provides an avenue for enjoyment, while at the same time perpetuating power structures in the marketising society that maintain the conflict dynamics in the region via the vehicle of consumption. This paradox is the backdrop against which

participants' reflections and lived experiences emerge. The director of a cooperative, and mother to two children talks about the desire of young people for an escape in the form of consumption: "They want to feel that they can do things and have things, not always be victims of oppression. If they are always victims of oppression, they will look for things that will make them feel more developed." Despite the apparent contradictions, the appeal of the consumer lifestyle has grown for Palestinians, arguably because other elements of their everyday life remain limited through the restrictions of the occupation.

5.7 Fragmentation and stratification

In the context of the oPt, the fragmentation of social relations in the shift towards consumption salience can be accessibly understood with an illustration of political consumption and consumer activism and its stances towards the ongoing occupation. To illustrate the complex ways in which marketisation and social relations are intertwined with the conflict dynamics shaping Palestinian everyday life, I want to present a vignette from my field notes.

> The small village where Ibrahim lives is surrounded on three sides by Israeli watch towers, the segregation wall and military fencing. [...] After I have been shown the small-hold garden, where his parents grow vegetables for home consumption and keep bees, we [Ibrahim and his parents] visit his wider family, who live on the same plot of land. We start talking about everyday life and politics. Ibrahim mentions the nature of my research. The father straight away answers 'Boycott doesn't do anything. The conflict is not a conflict over products. [...] There is no point in boycotting Israeli products anyway, as their quality is much better'. [...] Ibrahim and his dad felt that boycott was a 'trend thing' – whenever there are obvious political issues, such as the war on Gaza last year, then people call for and participate in boycott and as soon as the political situation calms down again, "everyone's like 'let's have a 'Tapuzina'" (excerpt from field notes, 10 May 2015).

Tapuzina is an Israeli juice brand. The BDS boycott, as well as the Palestinians that support it, believe that Palestinians should boycott Israeli goods and services. Israeli goods are easily available in the emerging consumptionscapes of the West Bank. They are often cheap and are often referred to with a certain level of respect by my research participants. Further, as I

already indicated, Palestinians also rely on the occupier for many daily necessities (McMahon, 2014; Nassar, 2011). In the case of Ibrahim and his family, for example, Ibrahim had to rely on critical medical care in Israel and Ibrahim's dad needed to find work opportunities in Israel in the past. Due to this paradoxical situation of being at the same time tied to Israel for daily necessities and being offered more choice and freedom in the consumptionscape, which includes Israeli products that are perceived as superior, whether to engage with Israel goods and services or not has become a contested topic that has the potential to split Palestinian public opinion (Micheletti & Oral, 2018).

Further, the emerging consumption spaces and interactions within them offer opportunities to bring Palestinians (and Israelis) together across social divides in time and place, it also brings into physical proximity people with different positionalities and privileges. In a study of Palestinian women shoppers in Jenin, Forte (2001) finds that the coming together in consumptionscapes contributes to an awareness of differences in social status, which exacerbates lived experiences of marginalisation from society. A middle-aged mother from Jenin reflects on this: "But it is all about consumption and superficial appearances. If you can buy the most expensive dress, you will buy it. [...]". As the consumptionscape brings together different experiences of being Palestinian, it also makes differentiation, and perceived fragmentation, more easily visually evaluable within the temporary engagement with consumption (Üstüner & Holt, 2007).

Echoing the Forte's findings, Taha and Hawker (2020) conducted a study of social relations across four malls in Israel and the West Bank. They conclude that despite the opportunities to transcend social divisions by meeting in the same place, shoppers, in fact, remained segregated. They would often move in atomised groups or as individuals, separately from others. The opportunities to become the bearers of collective and interdependent identities were missed across all four of their study sites. Any experience of a dissipation of ethnic hierarchies in the Israeli-Palestinian formation were only temporary and restricted to the engagement within the consumptionscape. In this sense, the coming together in the consumptionscape is presented as a coming together in consumption rather than a coming together in shared experiences. It only lasts while people are shopping.

In this sense, consumptionscapes do are unlikely to produce meaningful engagements, but are directly implicated in facilitating lived experiences that appear more

stratified and fragmented. This could happen via the products that were offered in and through the consumptionscape, but it could also happen more broadly through the encounters that were facilitated through them.

Picture 22: Shopping mall in Beit Sahour. Source: my own.

5.8 Stratification and politics

Status anxiety, outgroup feelings towards others and a sense of nostalgia in the emerging consumption-mediated social relations exacerbate the sense of a polarization between people and their varying social and cultural lifestyle choices (Cherrier & Belk, 2015; Ger & Belk, 1996). This sentiment of fragmentation of people, places and institutions has resulted in a crisis of legitimacy for Palestinian leadership to garner meaningful social interactions and organise society holistically (Nabulsi, 2010). One university lecturer of political studies interviewed for this research states: "Every party works for the benefit of its party, rather than for the whole of the nation". This reflects a common view among participants of the growing division between political parties since the 2006 elections.

The experience of fragmentation or marginalisation are enhanced by growing inequality across the West Bank. In this context both political and class divisions were able to grow. An activist from Beit Sahour also highlights the challenges for political organising along emerging differences in class perceptions in Palestinian society:

> Activists often belong to the rising middle class in the West Bank: they have travelled abroad, espouse liberal world views and choose to reject an overtly consumerist lifestyle, rather than be financially restricted to do so. In the West Bank, this has created tensions between activists and the general population who often don't trust their methods, and, as a result, their intentions.

Fragmentation is especially problematic for social relations when it comes hand in hand with increasing inequality, which might make people experience society to be more fragmented, reducing social cohesion. To return to the issue of trust in social activists then, experiences of increasing fragmentation along class, cultural or social divisions contribute to a growing polarisation in social relations. As one participant explained:

> They [the activists] don't have direct touch with our daily lives, at national level. [...] If you go [...] to some of the villages, you will see some sort of pre-judgement. A sort of stereotype image about the activists: they are few, they are mixing with foreigners, they are mixing with Israelis. [...] I think there is a kind of confidence and trust gap.

Palestinians may reject certain forms of activism because the privileged economic situation of their political leaders render them out of touch with the struggles of ordinary people, and because they espouse a lifestyle that to them reflects the global values of liberalisation and marketisation, rather than traditional Palestinian values that they experience as being lost.

In the advancing neoliberalisation of Palestinian society since the Oslo years, social relations are no longer being experienced as being based in community solidarity, but rather as broken into individual fragments (Hanieh, 2013). These individualising, differentiating tendencies have reduced avenues of collective organising, compared with before the 'neoliberal turn' of the Oslo years (ibid., p.119). The working mother from Jenin tells me:

> People before, they were socialised. And congregate with each other and care about each other. Nowadays you might see your mum, once a week, once a month. It depends on your family. Nowadays you are just running, because

of kids, so you are more focused, a small family, your husband and kids. […] People [are] busy in material things.

Within the rising consumer economy, people's ambitions and aspirations stratify along a consumption spectrum: from overtly spectacularist or conspicuous consumption practiced by business, political and urban elites at one end towards traditional, at times, fundamentalist or religious values informing consumption at the other end (Eckhardt & Mahi, 2004; Sandikci & Ger, 2002, Izberk-Bilgin, 2010). Those excluded from the emerging structures of consumption experienced a potential marginalization from their own society (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, Varman & Vijay, 2018).

I already recalled in section 3.8.1 an interview where the participant was not sure about the meaning of the term consumption. What is interesting to note is that from my own offered explanations, this student from Jenin takes that consumption equates to something like opportunism or greed and exploitation by those who try to use the current political and economic climate to increase their own benefit:

Researcher: A few people have said to me that Palestine has become a consuming nation. Do you agree with that?

Participant: I don't understand, what do you mean by consuming?

Researcher: Consuming – that [people] want to buy things and have new cars and new technology.

Participant: I don't understand, they are using the political situation?

Researcher: That in their daily lives, they are interested in buying new things […].

Participant: Yes, there are a lot of things, and a lot of different situations. A lot of people use our political situation to do one thing. Now people are using these things, but their reputation is going down. What you want with lots of money, without your dignity?

This quote highlights the political entanglements of the rise of the consumptionscapes in the marketisation of the West Bank. In most parts of the occupied West Bank, consumptionscapes have taken on a particular political character, which cannot be seen as detached from the capitalist peace agenda of the post-Oslo years, nor can they be seen as separate from the discourses that promote them as spaces of coexistence in ongoing efforts towards conflict transformation (Taha & Hawker, 2020). Many developments that have

happened since Oslo have been experienced by Palestinians as instances of (structural and cultural) violence of a colonial neoliberal political economy that perpetuates their marginalisation (Harker, 2020).

Picture 23: "Wall Street" – ludic resistance in Beit Sahour. Source: my own.

While I interview two activists in Beit Sahour, both mention Rawabi as an example for how differentiation in Palestinian society is emerging not only socially, but also spatially. Rawabi is a purpose-built satellite city that was designed and built to cater for middle- and upper-class Palestinian families. At the time of the field research in spring 2015, the town development was being finished with people beginning to take occupancy of their houses there. Research participants are critical of the vision of Rawabi that essentially supports the ethos of the capitalist peace agenda: if Palestinians want peace, then they need fit into the global world order economically and culturally (Grandinetti, 2015). This means, that Palestinians need to become rich. And that their Palestinian identity needs to become assimilated into the culture of globalisation (Roy, 2016).

When I interview Sami, another student, he is concerned about the differential uptake of such offers among Palestinian society. He worries that the allure of such a development offers Palestinians a superficial escape from the more oppressive lived experiences of living under occupation, while in actual fact doing very little to change the structures of the occupation. Just like Sami's concerns, the studies of the lived experiences of Palestinians of the Rawabi development by Grandinetti and Roy highlight how such neoliberal projects differentiate and fragment Palestinian social relations along a consumption spectrum – between those that can afford to and want to be part of such developments, and those that do not want to or can't. Projects such as Rawabi thus contribute to the normalisation of an economic system that is experienced as benefitting the elites who are more easily aligned with the normative frameworks of global capitalism. This in turn fragments, while also feeding distrust in systems and spaces of consumption.

5.9 Opportunities for social relations in the consumptionscapes

As I discussed in section 2.9, consumptionscapes have been conceived as spaces of opportunity, as well as the marginalisation and exclusion. While the former had dominated the everyday diversity literature, the latter was an emergent concern of consumption scholarship. It has also been the predominant frame in the discussion of the data throughout this chapter so far.

It has been much harder to ascertain opportunities for social relations emerging from these consumptionscapes in the West Bank, due to the political and economic entanglements that they have with the occupation that is so comprehensively still shaping the lived experiences of Palestinians. Further, and as I have discussed elsewhere, the relatively recent rise of a neoliberal political economy has meant that Palestinians were much less likely be able to use the opportunities of the consumer economy for negotiating belonging or fostering positive social relations (Bröckerhoff, 2017). On the contrary, it might be argued that, based on the experiences of the research participants so far, for the most part, consumptionscapes had done the opposite.

Still, I want to attempt to highlight opportunity structures of consumption for Palestinians, to meet the requirement of critical research to critique and problematise my own findings. In the discussion so far, I already highlighted that the consumptionscape

might present opportunities to feel a degree of freedom and choice for Palestinians who are otherwise restricted in their daily lives. For shoppers in Jenin and in Beit Sahour, the consumptionscape could also offer a space for those banal encounters which the everyday diversity paradigm has brought to the attention of the study of social relations. As such, the consumptionscape offered incredibly rare opportunities for people to meet across divides: rural and urban, young and old, affluent and poor, farmer/producer and consumer. The studies by Forte (2001) and Taha and Hawker (2020) showed this to a certain degree, although both studies also caution against reading more into the encounters than their origins in the utilitarian motifs for those who go shopping. As Forte discusses, women were not going to the consumptionscape to socialise across difference, they were staying within their own circles.

Still, given the major restrictions that Palestinians face in the West Bank and beyond, the consumptionscape was also one of the few places where people would come together. Here, Forte also found an unusual source of pride and self-esteem for women mingling in Jenin's consumptionscape. She found that local Jenin women viewed women living in Israel as wealthy or modern, irrespective of their economic wealth at home or socioeconomic background. For the West Bank women, the fact that their produce was popular and respected by these 48 Palestinians was a source of pride. When I sit on a terrace in Beit Sahour, the local farmer and shepherd whom I interview also tells me about the shopping trips that happen to the West Bank:

> And our vegetables, they are all organic. they are still healthy vegetables. And that's why many people in Israel, Palestinians in Israel, come here to buy. And not always it is cheaper, sometimes it is more expensive, but it is really healthy and organic.

In this sense, the commercial competitiveness of Palestinian produce, and its desirability was interpreted as a vote of confidence from Palestinians living in Israel towards their occupied neighbours. This is significant, because of the power differentials that shape lived experiences of Palestinians on either side of the border.

The shift towards consumption in an emerging economy is linked to experiences of modernity, and the feelings of being part of a social and cultural mainstream. Banal encounters in the consumptionscape could then contribute to the experience of belonging to modern and wealthier groups in society. The director of a church initiative tells me:

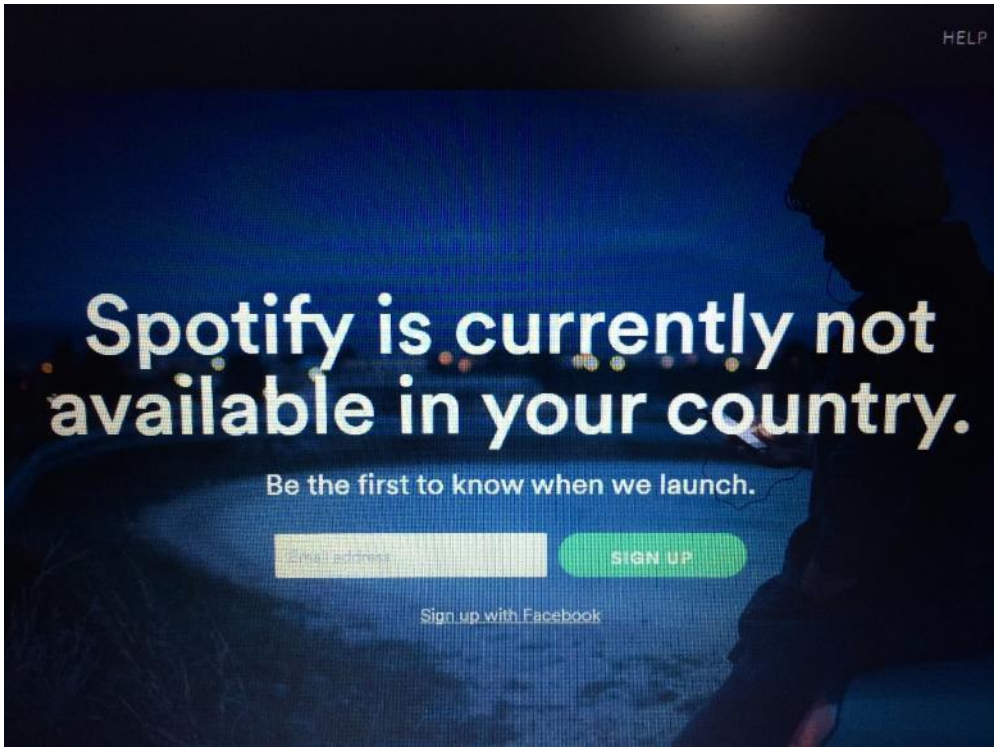
> people think that [consumer culture] is one way to access many things, to feel that you can know about many things, that you can communicate to other people about things. I think it also has to do with a complex of inferiority. I want to feel that they can do things and have things, and not always be the victim of oppression.

In this sense, the consumptionscape becomes a place of escape and opportunity for Palestinians to forge a collective identity away from the occupation. New social relations could be created on the back of such consumption-oriented activities, thus enhancing the social relations across the West Bank that would move the focus away from Palestinians being seen as the victims of systemic oppression in the first place, towards a view of Palestinians that could competently engage in the hegemonic structures and systems of global capitalism. It is debatable whether this is a successful strategy for peace and sovereignty, but consumer scholarship has long argued that in order to be able to succeed in market structures, people need to be able to become proficient in their habitus first (Arnould, 2007).

Further, in the West Bank, people saw additional benefits from engaging in consumptionscapes, most notably felt, and expressed, by the younger generation as a means to enhance their everyday lived sense of freedom. Participants felt a sense of freedom that could be expressed through the offerings of global consumer culture, allowing an escape not just from the conflict but also from the otherwise more traditional values of Palestinian society. Ibrahim has just told me that he loves the Western lifestyle, as we sit down in his office. When I ask him about his reasons, he answers:

> The freedom. You can do what you want, when you want it. Here in Palestine, besides the occupation, Palestinian traditions all inhibit people's freedom. Not the same level as the occupation, but still.

However, he also reflects that the escapism that the consumptionscape might offer is mostly illusory and short-term. It could only temporarily eclipse the reality of the ongoing conflict and the long-term effects of the continued occupation. "People consume and they have a sense life is getting better and then something happens, and they remember 'Oh no! I am under occupation!'". Ibrahim's reflections resonate with others. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the shadows of the occupation when discussing the social relations of spaces of consumption in the West Bank.



Picture 24: A Spotify reminder that the consumptionscape is still restricted. Spotify has since become available. Source: my own.

5.10 Concluding discussion

This chapter shows that in the oPt, marketisation has led to vast changes in the economic, social and cultural composition of society. The emergence and proliferation of the post-Oslo consumptionscapes had knock-on effects on social relations that include reduced social solidarity, experiences of marginalisation and a reduction in Palestinians' engagement in solidarity politics. Many of the Palestinians interviewed for this study expressed concern over the lack of social solidarity as a form of social connectedness since the marketisation following the Oslo years.

This sense of fragmentation has also deeply shaped Palestinian experiences of social relations. It provided the backdrop to how Palestinians considered the consumptionscapes, as both physical and symbolic manifestations of the changes to the West Bank that they experienced. At the macro-level, these included the (de-)development, the urbanisation, the military occupation. Relationally, they discussed differential experiences across parts of the West Bank, most notably felt as the urban-rural divide, continuing experiences of violence and oppression as well as occupation restrictions felt differently across areas A, B and C. All of these contributed to the perceptions and experiences of a stratified Palestinian society. At

the micro-level, reflecting on their own consumption practices often triggered a sense of anxiety, even if to some the emergence of new and alternative spaces for consumption provided relief and excitement, crouched in the hope for changes in society.

As the politics of belonging were increasingly spatially and socially navigated via consumptionscapes, the potential of new opportunities to weave together the tapestry of social relations intersected, and at times clashed, with participants' hopes. The consumptionscapes were central in mediating these complex and contradictory experiences. As a result of the multi-faceted challenges faced by Palestinians in the rapidly marketising society, many participants felt disaffected from the newly emerging structures for participation and belonging in society, and more importantly, from each other. These social relations of consumption spaces were experienced as fractured and disparate in the case of the West Bank.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

So far, the findings of the dissertation have extended insights from previous research into social relations by specifically engaging with spaces of consumption. This has positioned spaces of consumption not merely as backdrops against which social relations take place. Instead, these spaces became part of the assemblage of social relations themselves. With them, through them and in them experiences of belonging and cohesion unfolded, shaped by the parameters that these spaces inscribed. With this, the dissertation was able to consider social relations in both the horizontal encounters between people, while also considering the vertical emplacements of these encounters and of people in societal structures and systems of power and differentiation.

In this chapter, I discuss the synergies and differences between the case studies. I revisit the aims, objectives, and questions that I considered throughout this dissertation and consider how the findings in each of the case studies speak to them, considering also the findings that emerge from bringing the two case studies into conversation with each other. I highlight the key academic conversations to which my research contributes. As a final step of the critical research approach, I then move on to consider the transformative potential that emerges for research and policymaking from an active engagement with spaces of consumption and from gathering stories of resistance that unfold within and against the boundaries of spaces of consumption. Finally, I consider the limitations and practical implications of my work.

6.1 Synergies and differences in the two case studies

The main motivation for bringing the two case studies together was that I would be able to let the findings in each speak to the findings of the other, thus exploring the social relations of spaces of consumption in as well as across case studies. In this section, I discuss the synergies and differences between the two case studies.

6.1.1 The positionality of spaces of consumption

As a result of bringing these two case studies into conversation with each other, I was able to consider the role that consumptionscapes play in everyday contexts. In chapter 4, I showed how gentrification transformed an already partially existing consumptionscape. In chapter

5, I introduced consumptionscapes as the product of marketisation. Due to their different developments, consumptionscapes took on different positionalities in the local communities in which they developed and unfolded (Fig.5). In Bristol, the consumptionscape was experienced as something that was already internal to the social relations, but that its changes and expansion were reconfiguring its role in the production and experience of social relations. In the West Bank, in contrast, the consumptionscape was seen as an external actor making a claim to social life, and thus transforming social relations from the outside, moving in. Although the starting points and trajectories for the role of consumptionscapes were different, in both case studies, they became a territory in which contests over social differentiation and power were expressed and negotiated. Just that in gentrification, this role was renewed, rather than newly emergent.

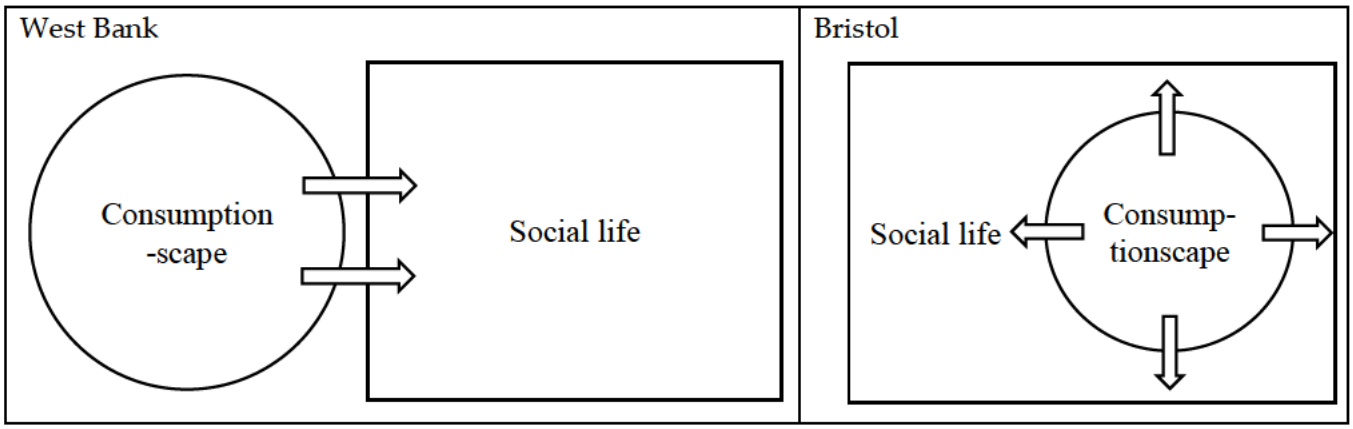


Figure 4: Consumptionscapes and social life in Bristol and the West Bank

The shifts in the spatial embeddedness of the consumptionscape was reflected in how participants in Bristol approached the consumptionscape in comparison to the West Bank. In the West Bank, experiences of consumptionscapes were recollected holistic, usually referring to the consumptionscapes in their entirety, or, more often, even referring to 'consumption' – the logic of consumption, consumerism, consumer culture – as a whole. This contrasts with the way in which participants in Bristol discussed their experiences of consumptionscapes, which were discussed and referenced with more granularity in relation to the consumptionscape itself. My analysis suggests that these result from the different positionalities that the consumptionscapes occupied in each of the case studies.

6.1.2 The centrality of spaces of consumption

Miles (1998) has argued that in advancing neoliberal societies, a certain level of normalisation happens, which means people accept consumption-mediated ways of living and organising social life as 'natural', turning the consumption ideology into taken-for-granted lived experience (p.155). The central role of consumptionscapes in social life may itself be the result of the normalisation of their presence, so that these become experienced as ordinary and banal. Graeber (2011) discusses that over time, consumption spaces and practices become normalised, constituting "internalised nexuses of meaningful social relations" (p.502). In both case studies, people were resisting these interpretations of previous research.

Gentrification and marketisation discourses and practices brought into relief the role of the consumptionscape in both case studies. This emerged in the way that people were making sense of their lived experiences and social relations as they became increasingly mediated via consumption (Bordelo et al., 2013; Hall & Massey, 2010). The discourses of normalisation are, of course, necessarily generalisations of lived experiences to some degree and by way of writing concluding thoughts. In fact, the findings across both case studies also challenge the more sweeping interpretations of normalising or institutionalising neoliberal capitalist order via spaces of consumption (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018; Gibson-Graham, 2020). These lived experiences, as the findings of my research show, are multi-faceted and contradictory, at times complementing and conflicting.

As a result of my findings, a critical engagement with the role and experiences in and of spaces of consumption provided a point of reflection and discussion of lived experiences and of social relations more widely. The importance of consumption-related phenomena and spaces across both case studies reflected participants' sense-making of the societal transformations that were happening and manifesting into the spaces of their everyday lives. Lived experiences of consumption spaces across both case studies not only reflected the social relations already in place, but also produced new vectors along which they emerged and unfolded. A complex and multi-faceted matrix of lived experiences emerged that made visible, as well as produced the social relations of spaces of consumption.

6.1.3 The roles, dimensions, and manifestations of spaces of consumption

The research findings also speak to the roles, manifestations, and dimensions of spaces of consumption as outlined in the earlier section of the dissertation (see Fig. 3 on p. 60). At the outset of the dissertation, in the introduction, I outlined the economic, social, and ideological dimensions of spaces of consumption, and how these dimensions manifested across experiences of physical, symbolic, and lived space. As a result of the literature review in chapter 2, I also considered how spaces of consumption took on differential roles for social relations as spaces of opportunity, of alienation/marginalisation, and of exclusion. And I sought to explore these within and across the different case studies.

My findings indicate that the economic dimension of spaces of consumption was felt the most viscerally by participants. A positive lived experience of the consumptionscape hinged on the economic ability to partake in what it had to offer. In both case studies, people felt excluded from the unfolding social relations of spaces of consumption, if they could not afford to fully engage in the consumptionscapes. This was economic exclusion rather than alienation, meaning that barriers made participation in consumptionscapes difficult or impossible. This had a consequence for their dimension as social spaces – if people were unable to engage in the spaces economically, they also experienced themselves marginalised from the opportunities for social encounters and connections that could emerge from them.

As social spaces, the consumptionscapes offered opportunities for the kind of everyday, spontaneous contacts across difference that the diversity studies literature has afforded them. This was pertinent in the West Bank because people often had to overcome significant physical and geographical barriers for these encounters in consumptionscapes to take place. Yet, in either case, encounters in the consumptionscape seemed to result in very little prolonged or significant engagement across social differences in heterogeneous societies that lasted beyond the ephemeral contact in the consumptionscape. This resonates with critiques of the everyday diversity field of placing too much emphasis on the opportunities that may spring from everyday spontaneous contacts (Sealy, 2018).

Further, the social dimension of spaces of consumption as a site of encounter also seemed to generate concerns over the nature and trajectory of social relations in each area. Across both case studies, the disparity between people's lived experiences was made visible and coexisted in close physical proximity. In both case studies, the consumptionscape acted

as a physical and lived reminder of the differential lived experiences of those who shared these everyday spaces. In Bristol, this appeared to translate into an expressed desire for enhancing equality and equity in and through consumptionscapes. In the West Bank, these translated more into a rejection of consumption spaces, and lived experiences were felt as highlighting the stratification that existed in Palestinian society, reminding participants of their own potential marginality in the reconfiguration of social relations in contexts of consumption.

The conception of spaces of consumption as spaces of opportunity to generate meaningful social connections did not always materialise for participants, and this was a concern for participants across both case studies. They were not always able to participate in consumptionscapes, so the opportunities of connection were not necessarily open to them. This was partly the result of the economic barriers discussed above, but also emerged from people not knowing how to or not wanting to inhabit the emerging normativities for social relations as they were mediated via consumptionscapes.

Stemming from this, it was the ideological dimension of consumption spaces that appeared to produce their most prominent role for social relations across both case study locations. In part I of the literature review, I discussed the multicultural question. Hall (2000) concludes that this question has always also been a question "of contestation, a question of difference, a question of argument" (p.15). Evans (2018) considers this to be the crucial opportunity of consumption spaces, as providing a thinking space for the most pertinent issues in society. Participants' lived experiences and reflections showed that across both case studies, consumption spaces offered ample opportunities for critiquing and advancing critical thinking on the constitution of social relations, and for raising questions of what makes a good society.

6.2 Discussion of the research aims and objectives

The explicit engagement with consumptionscapes in Bristol and the West Bank has shown how consumptionscapes can provide opportunities to explore the complexity of social relations in heterogeneous societies when these become mediated via spaces of consumption. The differences between the settings has also allowed me to focus on the different influences of spaces of consumption on lived experiences of belonging and

cohesion. In Bristol, people were engaging much more explicitly with the spatial manifestations of the consumptionscape. In the West Bank, participants were reflecting on the logic of consumption that underpins everyday consumptionscapes. In Bristol, lived experiences were more focused on the changing nature of the everyday space of the consumptionscape, in the West Bank, these were focused on the expansion of the logic of consumption into all areas of society, something that participants saw was exemplified by these spaces. Across both case studies, the findings show that these were not social relations in spaces of consumption as discussed in previous research approaches. A critical engagement with spaces of consumption allowed me to illustrate that they were indeed more fittingly described as the social relations of spaces of consumption. As a result, my findings illustrate how spaces of consumption had a role in the production and experience of social relations in Bristol and the West Bank.

Being able to consider these social relations across two case studies gave more comprehensive insight. Across both case studies, consumptionscapes gave people opportunities to craft identities that transcended their social backgrounds. With that, consumptionscapes were seen to provide opportunities to break up traditional societal divisions. But at the same time, spaces of consumption were producing new divisions in these contexts of disparity and inequality, with people becoming aware of increasing stratification alongside their progressively central role in social life. Consumptionscapes embedded a notion of social competition and status anxiety into everyday life and with that they also exacerbated social anxieties. In the contexts of my research, consumptionscapes became places of fragmentation and connectedness, of cohesion and conflict, of resistance and solidarity providing scripts and boundaries for social relations, as well as breaking open and re-configuring them within the paradoxes of consumption.

In both case studies, the findings suggest that the influence of spaces of consumption was mostly one-directional, with spaces of consumption prefiguring and producing lived experiences of belonging and cohesion. Across both case studies, participants felt little agency to mould or, if necessary, change social relations neither towards those with whom they shared space, nor to their situatedness in society. However, they found that the consumptionscape made visible the social relations that emerged and unfolded in and through the contexts of their everyday lives. As such, spaces of consumption provided

scripts that produced and made visible people's vertical and horizontal entanglements in and through their everyday lived experiences (Fig. 5).

The explicit engagement with consumptionscapes in Bristol and the West Bank has highlighted the complexity and paradoxes for social relations in heterogeneous societies when these become mediated via spaces of consumption. A continued engagement with the role of spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations may bring additional insights the study of these social relations *of* spaces of consumption.

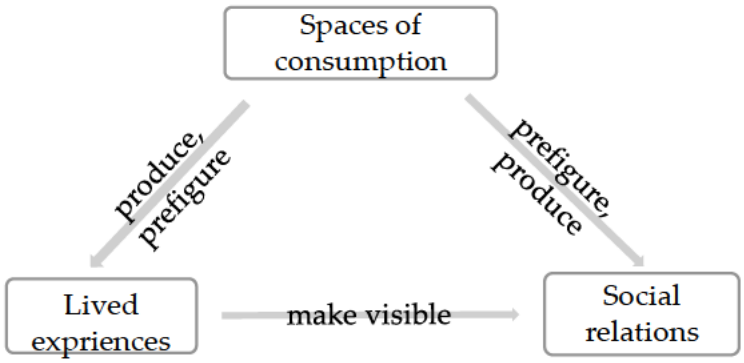


Figure 5: The directional flows of social relations *of* spaces of consumption

6.3 Contributions to academic conversations

Now that I have discussed the research aims and questions in the context of my findings, I consider the contributions my research has made to academic conversations. In the everyday diversity field, it offered an active engagement with spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations, thus responding to critiques that research in everyday spaces had not sufficiently engaged with the vertical processes of power and differentiation that are manifested and made visible in and through those spaces. The research provided an insight into social relations *of* as opposed to *in* spaces of consumption.

The findings from the two case studies further highlight different chances and constraints that emerge from consumptionscapes as consumption scholarship is beginning to explore. The findings illustrate across the dimensions and manifestations of space how these took on the roles of spaces of opportunity, of alienation/marginalisation and of exclusion in the context of social relations. This speaks to the messy and complex realities of lived experiences as they play out in, with and through consumptionscapes. My research

thus contributes to consumption scholarship's interest in the role of spaces and systems of consumption in social life.

Finally, the research also offers methodological insights into studying the complexity of lived experiences via its bricolage design that allowed to engage differential contexts, via multiple methods and lenses, combining horizontal and vertical analyses of social relations. This has provided the research with the ability to contribute to research and policy approaches that seek to consider lived experiences from the ground up and as embedded in the contexts of everyday life.

To make these contributions, my dissertation has brought together a body of research from different fields and disciplines. It has thus also contributed to interdisciplinary conversations across academia. I present these in the next three sections.

6.3.1 Social relations and everyday spaces

The dissertation builds on extant research into the role of consumptionscapes and its relationship with the social relations that unfold within them. In recent years, approaches that focus on the minutiae of lived experiences, without contextualising these and considering them within their vertical axes of power have been criticised for not engaging with questions of power and differentiation that shape these lived experiences in everyday spaces (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019; Sealy, 2018; Valluvan, 2016).

Different scholars have proposed varied approaches to how the complexity of lived experiences is to be studied. Woo (2020) discusses the importance for being able to consider multiple intersecting influences on lived experiences to be able to capture these in their entirety. Rice et al. (2019) discuss that to genuinely reflect intersecting influences on lived experiences, then lived experiences need to be considered through the 'large issues' against which they unfold, and through how these become embedded in everyday spaces. Neal et al. (2018, 2019b) also suggest that an understanding of place is central to understanding how heterogeneous social life unfolds across horizontal differences and vertical divisions. While Neal et al. position that this is best explored through the study of everyday encounters in place, Rice et al. suggest that it needs to be analysed through the dynamic and contradictory workings of power and how it manifests into everyday spaces.

The distinctive contribution of my dissertation then lies in its exploration of lived experiences of spaces of consumption that combines experiences of horizontal, people-to-people encounters, with experiences of vertical axes of power and differentiation as mediated via spaces of consumption. The framing of social relations of (as opposed to in) has allowed me to do this. The findings have shown that consumptionscapes as everyday spaces play a role in the production of social relations, as much as they have a role in the experience of social relations.

6.3.2 Social relations and neoliberal capitalism

The research also contributes, albeit in a smaller way, to academic conversations about the role of neoliberalism in social life. Neoliberal capitalism entails a heightened visibility, role, and hegemony in the way in which consumption spaces and practices translate into lived experiences. The salience of consumption spaces and practices in neoliberal capitalism has elevated their role in the organisation of social life (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018; Graeber, 2011; Wilson, 2018). Consumptionscapes manifest neoliberalism's cultural power and thus become a median between the neoliberal logic and lived experiences of everyday life (Wilson, 208). This role of neoliberal capitalism becomes diffuse and embedded into consumptionscapes (Miles, 2010, 2012, 2017).

The findings of this research have shown that social relations in spaces of consumption are social relations of spaces of consumption. Spaces of consumption are also spaces of neoliberal capitalism. In consequence, social relations of spaces of consumption are also social relations of neoliberal systems. Scholars interested in life in heterogeneous societies have called for an engagement with neoliberalism's role in social relations (e.g., Duggan, 2003; Lentin & Titley, 2011). In fact, Duggan (2003) argues that an engagement with the constituting role of neoliberal capitalism in social relations is a prerequisite for policy and research approaches that seek to enhance cohesiveness and social justice in heterogeneous societies. She argues that an engagement with neoliberalism may deconstruct the way in which identity politics have produced the marginalisation and exclusion of those who don't comply with the normativities of the neoliberal logic.

Scholars in the field of consumption have also suggested that it is necessary to explore the interlinkages between consumer culture as a sociocultural phenomenon and its

role in manifesting and perpetuating economic structures and ideologies of neoliberalism in everyday life (Fitchett et al., 2014). Kennedy (2020) discusses the way in which the advancement of consumption systems has facilitated the advancement of what he considers a particularly disengaged and predatory form of capitalism that fractures and disrupts social relations. An engagement with spaces of consumption can move the discussion of social relations in neoliberal capitalism away from its more politicised aspects towards the ways in which they are practices and lived through the spaces of everyday life (e.g., Gibson-Graham, 2008, 2020). An engagement with consumptionscapes such as the one underpinning my research thus offers a grounded approach to exploring social relations in the context of neoliberal capitalism.

6.3.3 Embracing complexity and messiness in research

Charmaz and Belgrave (2019) argue for a grounded approach that embeds lived experiences horizontally and vertically as a way of challenging the neoliberal underpinnings of research. Askegaard and Linnet (2011) have suggested the same to be able to uncover the neoliberal underpinnings of everyday consumption lives. What I found in my research was that consumptionscapes offer a suitable entry point to consider vertical and horizontal entanglements that can illustrate the role of neoliberalism in everyday life. My research empirically supports the suggestions that spaces of consumption may offer insights into the mutually constitutive and fundamentally inseparable dimensions of economy and society, as well as constituting a frame for research that transcends their perceived distinction (Granovetter, 2017; Jackson, 2002; McDowell, 2000).

Eriksen (1995) discusses that challenging dichotomies has a long tradition in ethnographic research but that dualisms still often serve analytic purposes. The postcolonial scholar Santos (2004, 2014, 2018) argues that dualisms are also one of the hallmarks of the history of Western thought. Moving beyond dichotomies thus also has an important role in developing epistemic justice and re-distributing power in the hierarchies of knowledge (Kravets & Varman, 2022). As a step towards re-dressing power in knowledge production, Santos suggests research needs to be developed from the ground up, if it wants to challenge established normative knowledge frames. The importance for methods that can engage with messiness and complexity grows in this grounded approach (Law 2004; Charmaz &

Belgrave, 2019). Through this research, I have been able to develop an approach that has considered the multi-faceted and complex processes that contribute to the emergence and unfolding of social relations. I was able to consider both horizontal and vertical entanglements of lived experiences against their complex realities and everyday contexts.

6.4 Transformative formulation and avenues for future research

The final step of critical research is the transformative formulation that emerges from the research, and in my case, seeks to contribute to societal change via research and policymaking. As I discussed in section 3.1, critical researchers draw on theory to guide them in this final step. In that section, I had also already highlighted that my take on critical research was guided by the German critical approaches of the second half of the 20th century. In this section now, I draw on the work of Hannah Arendt to discuss two ways in which research into social relations of spaces of consumption can create its transformative potential in research and policymaking. Specifically, I draw on Arendt's work on the 'banality of evil' and 'thoughtlessness'.

6.4.1 The banality of evil

The phrase 'the banality of evil' emerged from Arendt's observations at the trial of the German Nazi official Adolf Eichmann[14] held in Jerusalem in 1962. According to Arendt, Eichmann's behaviour throughout the trial and his reaction to his sentencing lacked any sense that he was taking responsibility for his personal implication through his actions in the Holocaust. Describing his behaviour and final words, as he steps onto the gallows, Arendt penned the sentence that contains her well-known phrase: "It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us – the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying banality of evil." (Arendt, [1963]2006, p.1252).

[14] Adolf Eichmann (1906- 1962) was a senior Nazi organiser in the Holocaust. He was in charge of organising transport logistics and mass deportations of Jews to concentration camps. After the war, he had fled to Argentina. There, he was eventually captured by Israeli intelligence services and extradited to Israel in 1960. His trial took place in Jerusalem in 1962. He was found guilty of war crimes and sentenced to death by hanging. He was executed on 1 June 1962.

The critique at the core of Arendt's writing is a reflection on intentionality and on moral responsibility. Eichmann himself would not admit to being a war criminal, as his motivations were not those of a war criminal. He publicly upheld that he was free of any moral obligations for the outcomes of his actions in the Holocaust (Keshner, 2016). In his testimony, Eichmann said he was not a thought leader in the Holocaust, so he had no reason to feel guilty. The banality of evil thesis thus speaks to the role of individuals as embedded in wider systems or structures. A core question that emerges from Arendt's work is about the responsibility of the individual to consider their impact on others due to their interconnectedness within societal systems and structures.

Arendt's formulation of the banality of evil and her core message that it was not Eichmann's intentionality but his lack of critical thinking – his thoughtlessness – about his role as part of a wider system was controversial at the time of writing, when the memory of the Third Reich was still recent and raw (d'Entreves, 2019; Young-Bruehl, 1982). This meant her argument about the importance of critical thinking, or, conversely, the risks of thoughtlessness, was not well-received. In the present day, Arendt's argument around thoughtlessness should be seen as a discussion of the responsibility people hold in society for perpetuating social relations, or systems of power and differentiation, whether they do this intentionally, or not (Butler, 2011). Arendt herself returned to the issue of critical thinking and thoughtlessness throughout her life, and most explicitly in *The Life of the Mind* (Arendt, 1977):

> It was this absence of thinking that awakened my interest. Is evil-doing […] possible in default of not just 'base motives' [...] but of any motives whatsoever? The absence of thought I was confronted with sprang neither from forgetfulness of former, presumably good manners and habits nor from stupidity in the sense of inability to comprehend – not even in the sense of 'moral insanity' […]. Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific content, could this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually "condition" them against it?" (p.4-5).

A reading of Arendt's discussion of thoughtlessness invites a consideration for the ways in which people might perpetuate privilege and power, or marginalisation and exclusion –

whether intentional or not – through an un-thinking, un-reflected engagement with the structures, systems, and spaces of their everyday lives.

6.4.2 Consumptionscapes at points of salience

A present-day reading of Hannah Arendt's work thus suggests that normalisation of the prefigurative role of structures and spaces of everyday lives happens when people unthinkingly engage and perpetuate the scripts that they provide. This was true for Eichmann, operating in the oppressive and violent system of the Third Reich. But it can be just as much true for any other system or structure as it shapes and frames social life. A critical engagement with everyday spaces thus offers people the ability to become aware and think about the spaces of their everyday lives and how social relations emerge horizontally as well as through vertical systems of power and differentiation within them.

This process of thinking is aided when such thinking is situated at points of rupture (Skey, 2009). The points of rupture in both case studies – marketisation and gentrification in advancing the role and centrality of spaces of consumption and their underlying logics – meant that their role in the production and experience of social relations became more salient. This point of salience encouraged critical thinking on what might otherwise be considered ordinary and banal in the context of social relations. Studying the role of consumption spaces at such moments of transformation thus offers opportunities to critically engage with the emergence and unfolding of social relations within them, and to consider them as not only social relations in, but also of spaces of consumption. Future research could uncover other contexts of salience of everyday spaces of consumption and draw on the lived experiences of those who are living these transformations. This will enable researchers and policymaker to consider approaches based in lived experience as well as critical thinking for fostering more positive social relations.

6.4.3 Stories of resistance

In both case studies, spaces of consumption emerged as spaces of marginalisation and exclusion, contributing to a lived experience of more fractured social relations. The critical framing of this research suggests that this outcome is the result of processes and dynamics of meaning-making and emplacement, and as such, the fragmentation of social relations is

not an inescapable or irreversible outcome. An important part of critical work then becomes to find alternatives to the systems and structures that produce experiences of marginalisation and exclusion. Arendt herself in her critique of thoughtlessness reminds about the importance to look for stories of resistance that can inspire social change. She points out "most people will comply, but some people may not, […] 'it could happen' in most places but it did not happen everywhere (Arendt, [1963]2006, p. 233).

One of the main opportunities that emerges is to review instances where consumptionscapes are being produced as spaces of possibility or counter-spaces to their hegemonic framing (Forno & Wahlen, 2022; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Soja, 2010). Some scholars suggest that change comes from actors who are using the tools of the market to formulate alternatives (e.g., Arnould, 2007; Gibson-Graham, 2008; 2020), while others suggest more radical approaches are required that sit outside of the confines of the consumptionscapes to produce change (e.g., Bradshaw, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2013). Future research could explore the role of different actors in and out of consumptionscapes in generating alternatives that sit within, against and beyond capitalist economies and their production of social relations (Hall & Ince, 2017). Such research offers the potential to bring more actors into consideration for policy approaches that seek to foster positive social relations.

6.5 Limitations of the research

Every study has limitations, and besides the ones I have already discussed throughout the dissertation of combining two separate projects as case studies, I now highlight three sets of limitations pertaining to my work. The first set of limitations is methodological, pertaining to the different locations, scales, and durations of fieldwork. The biggest opportunity for my work to explore the role of spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations, as I saw it, was the ability to bring together the two case studies into the same frame for discussing social relations of spaces of consumption. I considered that being able to bring two separate projects to speak to the same research aim would provide breadth and depth to my discussions. I believe that the research has illustrated that. As it turned out, the process of bringing the case studies together was not only a great opportunity, but it also brought the most significant challenges along the way.

The different foci of the research meant that while the case study in Bristol spoke more to social relations of spaces of consumption, the study in the West Bank spoke to social relations of 'consumption' more broadly, couched within the consumptionscapes, but engaging with consumption at a more conceptual level. This was a challenge, because of my stated objectives to consider everyday spaces of consumption in the production and experience of social relations. In the West Bank the consumptionscape mostly offered spatial cues for the wider discussion, while in Bristol, people engaged with the consumptionscape at the more granular level.

Some may see this as a limitation of case study research conducted in this way, whereas I found this to present the study's greatest opportunity also. I found that both case studies brought with them the opportunity to consider my aims and objectives from a slightly different angle. As I reflected in my review of the literature, an explicit engagement with the logic of consumption could help lay bare the contours of social relations of spaces of consumption. Indeed, in the West Bank I was able to highlight the more fundamental influence of the logic of consumption into everyday life, in a way that the Bristol case study alone would not have been able to do. Both case studies then were illustrative of the core concepts – one study contributing more to the everyday spaces conversations, the other more to the politics and socio-cultural meaning of consumption systems and structures conversation. It was their conceptual connectivity across the logic of consumption and their contextual similarities that brought them together beyond geographical boundaries to become part of the same research frame (Falzon, 2016), and, jointly, add breadth and depth to the discussion.

While this was the most obvious methodological challenge, others also came into play. Conducting ethnographic research also means that research sites are not given. Rather, they are constructed as part of the research process (Amit, 2000). I was living in Bristol and able to emplace myself closely in the case study site for many years. In the West Bank, I visited for a much shorter period of time, conducting more of a 'hit-and-run model of ethnography' (Geertz, 1998). Further, due to the distance, I did not return to the West Bank during the dissertation journey. This means that I was not able to be as equally physically embedded in both research sites.

As a result of my different fieldwork experiences, the Bristolian case study could have been much more layered and multi-faceted due to the additional time and exposure in the field. To counterbalance such imbalance, I had to complement the ethnographic observations and interviews in the West Bank with many more contextualisation activities that allowed me to add depth and complexity to my understanding of consumption spaces and practices as well as the state of social relations.

Another set of limitations can be considered under the label of 'time'. I finished my fieldwork in Bristol as I was going on maternity leave. I returned to my work and study a year later, and partially completed my analysis and write up of the Bristol case study, shortly before going on maternity leave for a second time. This meant that any development of the dissertation was pushed back further. As a result, much time passed between fieldwork, analysis and write up. During that time, not only did I progress and develop, but also the academic fields that I was seeing myself becoming part of moved on too. While I found that initially, the idea of spatial injustices in spaces of consumption felt marginal to an interest in social relations, during the time of my dissertation project, such interests were becoming more central across academic fields.

The second part of this limitation relates to the availability of time. As I have discussed throughout chapter 3, the decision to bring together the two case studies late into the journey was complex and time-consuming. This was in addition to the already time-consuming processes involved in critical research. As a full-time researcher and now also mum-of-two, I found it incredibly challenging to find prolonged periods of sustained thinking time for relating across the two case studies and recrafting my dissertation that had focused on a single case study to date. The time I had for working on the dissertation felt patchy and disjointed, taken in the evenings, after the kids were sleeping and all tasks of my work were done, or as chunks of annual leave, when I needed consecutive days for writing and thinking. Due to both the passing as well as the scarcity of time, I therefore consider that my findings reflect the circumstances in which they emerged. In the acknowledgements section, I suggest that research is always a product of its time, as well as a product of the researcher, and this rings true to me too as I come to the end of my doctoral journey. Seeing research as a learning process, I hope to continue to develop the analysis and findings of this research to build on what I have presented here.

The final set of limitations further picks up on the findings themselves. In both contexts, the salience of consumption spaces and practices made them something people were mostly aware of and wished to speak to. However, I also feel that the topic and critical framing might have attracted people with a particular activist bias to partake in my research. This might have been exacerbated by the fact that both contexts were also spaces of disparity and inequality, which made issues pertaining to the fostering of positive social relations particularly noteworthy at the time. To avoid representing hyperbole as findings, and as discussed in chapter 3, I complemented the grounded approach to research with various forms of triangulation across different sources of data collected via different methods across different case studies, which allowed data to be analysed through different lenses. I also drew extensively on contextualisation activities to support the analysis. The circuitous design and analysis of the critical approach thus allowed me to repeatedly question my own emergent findings and consider them from different angles, sometimes zoning into details of empirical context, and at other times zoning out across the two case studies, or even wider societal dynamics and processes or issues. In a way, and somewhat ironically, the passing of time supported this process, as it allowed me to consider the relevance and pertinence of the findings with some distance between the generation of the data and its analysis and discussion.

6.6 Practical implications

I do not claim to have found the answers to the practical challenges of everyday policymaking. In fact, in my years of straddling the academic and policy fields, I have been grateful for the freedom with which academics can engage in ideas and thinking, without needing to be constrained by the same practical and pragmatic barriers of policymakers. Still, this research gives some insight into the practical implications of conducting case study research in consumptionscapes to advance policy approaches.

I already highlighted in this chapter that the findings of this research indicate that spaces of consumption offer a suitable entry point from which social relations can be considered. Consumptionscapes locate these social relations at the interface and convergence of the economic and the cultural dimensions of social cohesion. This extends

the scope of policymaking and offers to broaden the pool of actors who can become engaged in policy formulations and activities.

Further, building an understanding of social relations based on everyday experiences means approaches to social cohesion can be developed from the ground up, focusing on empirical analyses of the complex and contradictory nature of social relations, and how they play out in everyday spaces of consumption (Henriksen & Tjora, 2014; Wynne-Jones, 2014). Grounding policy on research based in everyday spaces gives lived experiences the potential to form the basis of social policy development (McIntosh & Wright, 2019). This supports policy frameworks that have placed more emphasis on place-based approaches to social cohesion and to the emergence of social relations (e.g., UK Government, 2022).

Further, across many academic and policy fields, the role of businesses, economic systems, and practices in shaping social sustainability are on the rise. This is also a growing field in business schools and the business community, who are increasingly becoming interested in the role of marketing and organisational practices for fostering positive social relations, as well as in analysing the impact of economic and organisational policies in the world (e.g., Barrios et al., 2016; Fajardo et al., 2019; Mick et el., 2012). The UN's Global Compact considers social sustainability to hinge on the ability of the business world to be better able to understand the social sustainability of its systems and practices (UN Global Compact, 2022). Rather than being positioned as at odds with one another, this research proposes a more diversified and differentiated understanding and subsequently theorising of alternative economic practices and spaces that straddle community and economic interests, offering a transcendence of the economic and the social (Granovetter, 2017). This may open new avenues and routes for exploring and harnessing the role of economic spaces and players in social life.

Finally, economic practices have often been critiqued for their association with the liberal peacebuilding model that has dominated the conflict transformation and international development world. More recently, an interest in the role of economic spaces and practices is emerging that chimes with the community economics approach outlined in the previous paragraph. It situates these spaces and practices in the domain of everyday peacebuilding, focusing on the bottom-up agency that everyday spaces can foster in conflict-affected societies (e.g., Autesserre, 2020; MacGinty; 2021; Miklian et al., 2019; O'Driscoll,

2021; Soliman, 2021). Consumption spaces may offer a more diffuse and practical angle for considering conflict transformation approaches building from the local, everyday level, rather than relying on the national political solutions of previous approaches.

These practical implications of my research are based on the findings that show how case study research in consumptionscapes allows to consider horizontal and vertical dynamics of belonging and cohesion, the building blocks of social relations, in a way that is grounded in everyday places and spaces, while also speaking to wider issues and causes of conflict and disparity in heterogeneous societies.

6.7 Closing remarks

As I started this dissertation, I close, by stating that consumptionscapes are everywhere. They emerge in expected places, but also in the most unusual ones. As my research has shown, their significant role in social life is undeniable. They take on varying roles as spaces of opportunity, of alienation/marginalisation, and of exclusion that dynamically prefigure and (re)configure social relations. This partially happens through processes of meaning-making, and of contestation. As a result, the role of consumptionscapes in social relations is not inescapable or irreversible. Opportunities for social change will build on the recognition that people can make a difference in their everyday lives and lead the way to necessary change from the ground up. Exploring and critiquing spaces of consumption, as I have done in this dissertation, can be a first step in untangling their role in the production and experience of social relations, and in envisaging their potential in fostering positive social relations.

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APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

In this section, I summarise how I have approached the relevant concepts of this dissertation.

Alienation. The displeasure, or hampered aspirations, of those constrained by an existing system. A discomfort.

Belonging. A feeling of being comfortable in the spaces of everyday life, and having good relationships with people with whom one shares everyday spaces.

Capitalism. An economic and social system that relies on marketised structures and promotes economic growth. It shapes and institutionalises social formations in society. Capitalism is a learning system, meaning it has the ability to adapt to different circumstances to maintain its relevance.

Consumption. Consumption refers to the logic of consumption (ideological underpinnings of consumption), consumerism (a culture of consumption that elevates its societal relevance and significance) and consumer culture (a social arrangement of marketised and symbolic structures that facilitate the emergence of consumption spaces and consumption behaviours through the provision of consumer goods and services). Consumption becomes a 'way of life' when all three come together.

Consumption salience. A period in which the centrality of consumption phenomena to social relations is pertinent. Consumption salience is situational and context-specific.

Consumptionscape. Consumptionscapes are the assemblage of multiple spaces of consumption. They can operate at varying scales. They have an economic, social and ideological dimension, and they manifest as physical, symbolic and lived spaces. For social relations, they have a role as spaces of opportunity, spaces of alienation/marginalisation and

spaces of exclusion. Their boundaries are fluid and constructed and change and adapt depending on their contexts.

Disparity. A situation where noticeable and significant differences exists between people in society that may be seen as unfairly unequal (see also *inequality*).

Gentrification. The regeneration of an area that often involves the gradual replacement of the existing population by new residents. Consumption-led gentrification refers to a situation where this process of population change is facilitated or accelerated by changes in consumption spaces and practices.

Diversity. Diversity refers to heterogeneity, meaning the differences that exist between people and that people find meaningful. This can include ethnic, racial and cultural differences, but also other factors, such as age, gender, class, and more. Systems of differentiation are important as they also produce or shape these differences in society.

Exclusion. The state of being on the outside of a system, or an existential threat or barrier to participating in a system.

Heterogeneity. see *diversity.* The preferred term in this dissertation to move away from the association of diversity discourses more exclusively with ethnic, racial and cultural identity markers and differences.

Inequality. Inequality describes a situation where people in society don't have access to the same opportunities, meaning that distribution of power is uneven and unequal (see also *disparity*).

Logic of consumption. The underlying principles of consumption phenomena and how they manifest in everyday life. It is strongly connected to the advancement of *neoliberal capitalism* and *neoliberalism* as cultural power.

Marketisation. The restructuring of an economy towards that of a market economy. This includes advancing market mechanisms across public and private services, and the refiguring of the state for competition within these market mechanisms and structures. See also *capitalism.*

Neoliberal capitalism. Also free-market capitalism. It is the mode of capitalism that is marked by a neoliberal logic of promoting individual choice, and competition. It is more than an economic system, and includes social, economic, political, ideological and cultural laws, structures and practices. See also *neoliberalism* and *capitalism.*

Neoliberalism. As an economic and political project, neoliberalism expands market rationality into all areas of society. Neoliberalism acts as cultural power in this way.

Occupied Palestinian Territory. Over the history of the occupation since 1947, Palestinian land has been divided. This is not only a geographical issue, but also a cultural one (see *Palestinian*). 'Occupied Palestinian territory', or short 'oPt', is a commonly used terminology in academic and policy fields, which specifically denotes the geographical areas of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. All areas are classified as 'occupied' in international law. Whether or not, and to what extent, Palestinians or Israelis have a right to the geography that encompasses these areas is one of the main fault lines of the conflict. The choice of oPt over other names draws attention to this ongoing tension underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The use of the singular 'territory', rather than 'territories' thus represents a politically-sensitive nomenclature that references this ongoing fragmentation of Palestinian geography and seeks to contribute to a more cohesive understanding of Palestinians in line with international law. Occupied Palestinian territory is also commonly used by international bodies, such as the UN, UNOCHA, UNRWA, EU- EEAS, and ICJ.

Palestinian. The experiences of Palestinians vary across different parts of the oPt, and across the West Bank. The West Bank is divided into three administrative areas (Areas A, B and C) with differing levels of Israeli and Palestinian control. Further, physical boundaries (e.g., checkpoints) and restrictions on movements (e.g., curfews and permits) have physically and

culturally fragmented Palestinian society. Together, these restrictions have contributed to different access to each other, and to differential involvement in political, economic, social, and cultural life across the West Bank. 'Palestinian' refers to the experiences of the participants based in two areas of the West Bank – the Jenin and Bethlehem Governorates – classified as Area A, indicating a higher level of control by the Palestinian Authority.

Social cohesion. The sense that people in an area belong to one another, resulting in lower experiences of local tensions and conflict.

Social relations. Social relations are the horizontal connections and relationships between people, as well as the vertical emplacements of people in the wider structures of society. This can refer to long-term and unstable, voluntary and involuntary connections across a range of (everyday) contexts. Social relations encompass the experiential and affective nodes (see *belonging* and *social cohesion*) that shape a person's experience of their situatedness in society.

Spaces of consumption. Spaces of consumption are spaces that allow, promote and foster consumption practices. Spaces of consumption operate at different scales, ranging from individual retail units to more large-scale assemblages (see also *consumptionscapes*). Spaces of consumption bring people into contact with each other, sometimes across social divisions. Spaces of consumption are not merely economic spaces, they also serve a social role in fostering social relations. Spaces of consumption also have an ideological lens as they manifest neoliberalism's cultural power in everyday life. They are spaces that produce as well as hold social representation, production and contestation.

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS APPROVAL BRISTOL

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Aurelie Broeckerhoff

Project Title:

The subjective experience of fast-paced urban change and its effect on social relations in a diverse, urban neighbourhood

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

28 September 2015

Project Reference Number:

P30306

APPENDIX 3: ETHICS APPROVAL WEST BANK

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Aurelie Broeckerhoff

Project Title:

Exploring food-based consumer resistance as conflict transformation in Palestine

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

05 May 2015

Project Reference Number:

P32764