

Stranger Adaptations: Cultural Diversity and Public/private interface adaptations in Bankstown, Sydney

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Abstract: While geographical and planning literature has traditionally adopted a macro-scale focus when studying cultural diversity, in recent years this has been supplemented by an emerging concern for 'everyday multiculturalism', including more fine-grained analyses of lived experiences of cultural diversity in places such as shopping strips, gyms and community gardens. Although these micro-scale studies recognise that relationships between socialities and spatialities are important, the more specific role of built form in framing these relationships is not much explored. With a view to extending this literature, the current paper examines how intercultural encounters in public space are influenced by built form in the culturally diverse suburb of Bankstown, Sydney. Drawing on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents and users of Bankstown's town centre, the particular focus is on the role of public/private interface adaptations in mediating interactions within and between different cultural groups. It is argued that these adaptations function as both facilitator and foil for the strategies people employ to negotiate the problematic Simmel long ago associated with 'the stranger': the ineluctable presence in urban environments of people who are physically close yet socially distant.

Introduction

As a result of various push and pull factors, Australia is now home to people who were born in many other nations (Friedberg and Hunt 1995, Ang *et al.* 2006). Data from the last Australian Census (ABS 2012) reveals that close to one in three (30%) Australians were born overseas, and almost half the population has at least one parent who was born overseas. The mixing of people from radically different cultural backgrounds produces spaces that are animated by a particularly intense version of the problematic Simmel long ago associated with 'the stranger', one which arguably lies close to the core of urbanism: the unavoidable presence in urban environments of people who are physically close yet socially distant. One of the key places this mixing occurs is in so-called activity centres. Activity centres are the main public spaces in cities where people meet and interact with one another, and it is where public interactions between 'strangers' are typically most intense.

Ways in which associated issues are, and 'should be', negotiated in culturally diverse societies have been explored from a variety of theoretical and empirical angles in a large literature emanating from geography, planning and cognate disciplines. Despite the relatively recent and growing interest in 'everyday multiculturalism' (Watson 2009, Wise 2009, Ho 2011, Werbner 2013, Wise and Velayutham 2013), there exists very limited empirical research on ways in which these issues are framed, at a more micro scale, by the physical or formal qualities of the built environment. Against this backdrop, the broad aim of this paper is to understand the role of public/private interface adaptations in mediating interactions within and between different cultural groups in Bankstown, Sydney. This research forms part of a broader, ongoing project that is examining relationships between cultural diversity and built form more generally.

Literature Review

Strangers are an inescapable, some might say defining, feature of urban life (Raban 1974, Young 1990, Amin 2002, 2012, Iveson 2006, Valentine 2008). Explicitly or implicitly, the problematic of the stranger lies near the heart of a host of key debates and dilemmas in planning and design, ranging from Jacobs' (1961) 'eyes on the street', in the mid-twentieth century, through to Sandercock's (1998, 2000, 2000a, 2002, 2003) 'cosmopolis', at the dawn of the twenty first century. As Dovey (2000) observes, any number of contemporary development types, from shopping malls, through to corporate towers and gated communities, might be read as varied responses to the stranger.

In the seminal work of Georges Simmel, the stranger emerges as a deeply paradoxical and ambivalent figure. For Simmel, the stranger is not:

the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather ... the person who comes today and stays tomorrow ... He is fixed within a particular spatial group ... But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself (Simmel 1950, p. 402, emphasis in original).

The stranger has come from another place, perhaps another time, but is here to stay, at least for a while. A part of the group, the stranger is also apart from the group, embodying a "unity of nearness and remoteness ... in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near" (Simmel 1950, p. 402). Or, as Bauman (1993, p. 153) puts it: "The most striking and off-putting trait of strangers is that they are *neither* neighbours *nor* aliens. Or, rather - confusingly, disturbingly, terrifyingly - they are (or may be – who knows?) both. Neighbourly aliens. Alien neighbours. In other words, strangers. That is, socially distant yet physically close" (emphasis in original).

The stranger disrupts notions and experiences of 'home' in the phenomenological sense of a pre-conscious, 'comfort zone' of taken-for-granted rules for everyday life. It is not only that the stranger is homeless: "The stranger is by nature no "owner of soil" - soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of a life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point of the social environment" (Simmel 1950, p. 403). It is also that the stranger presents as a challenge to the 'home' of the 'host' group: assumed rules of conduct, rules of encounter, rules of engagement can no longer be assumed, and shift, in the words of Heidegger, from the *zuhanden* to *vorhanden* mode. As Bauman makes clear, the challenge here is at once ontological and epistemological:

The 'strangeness' of strangers means precisely our feeling of being lost, of not knowing how to act and what to expect ... Blunders arise from the ignorance of rules, and the strangeness of strangers is, at bottom, our ignorance. 'Types' (classes, categories) are constructed of differentially distributed rules of conduct (and, by the same token, differentially distributed anticipations of response); social space is rule-governed, and habitable as far as rule-governed (Bauman 1993, p. 149)

The issue of how to live with strangers, how to act with strangers, is dependent upon what we know of them.

Bauman (1993, 1995) suggests that two primary methods of 'social spacing' are employed as 'strategies' for living with strangers. The first, cognitive spacing, involves mastery of the art of mismeeting: "desocializing' the potentially social space around, or preventing the physical space in which one moves from turning into a social one – a space with rules of engagement and interaction" (Bauman 1993, p. 155). Through civil indifference or inattention the crowd is rendered faceless, the collective other becoming but a blurred background to my day-to-day routines. The second, aesthetic spacing, involves mastery of the *flâneur's* art: the city is rendered as playground, theatre, spectacle, and the other an object of interest and curiosity, a source of enjoyment or amusement. While aesthetic spacing involves a certain foregrounding of the stranger that is not found in cognitive spacing, the end result is similar insofar as interactions with the other are more or less inconsequential.

While Bauman (1993, p. 145) notes distinctions between 'social space', on the one hand, and 'physical' or 'objective' space on the other, he also allows for their entanglement, observing that different design strategies nurture techniques of both cognitive spacing (areas 'to pass through, not to use', 'to move through, not to be in') and aesthetic spacing ('places in the city where strangers are at their most secure, where all transgressions of strangeness are by common agreement presumed to be inconsequential,

temporary, gratuitous, playful'). Building on these observations, a key purpose of this paper is to explore how one particular feature of the built environment, the public/private interface, functions to mediate interactions between strangers, at once supporting and foiling the social spacing strategies identified by Bauman. As Dovey and Wood (2015) note, the public/private interface is:

a primary site of transition from private to public selves and vice versa; where friends and customers are greeted and farewelled; where identities are constructed (the entry foyer, front door, front garden); where goods are displayed and exchanged (the shop window); where social activity occurs in interstitial space (the front porch, al fresco dining); where safety is established both with boundaries and with passive surveillance (Dovey and Wood 2015, p. 1)

Despite the importance of public/private interfaces to urban planning and design, Dovey and Wood (2015) note, there have been surprisingly few attempts to develop a formal typology of different public/private interface. Their own attempt to classify different public/private interface types is attractive for present purposes since it is simple in outline, yet provides “a framework through which to analyse complexities and ambiguities” (Dovey and Wood 2015, p. 5). Their typology is derived from four bi-polar variables, each of which is a continuum rather than a binary: accessible/inaccessible; direct/setback; opaque/transparent; and car/pedestrian. From the myriad combinations that might be generated from these variables, the authors identify five primary types: impermeable/blank (e.g. blank walls); direct/opaque (e.g. shop-top housing); direct/transparent (e.g. many retail functions on main streets); pedestrian setback (e.g. suburban dwellings); and car setback (where the interstitial zone comprises car parking) (see Figure 1).

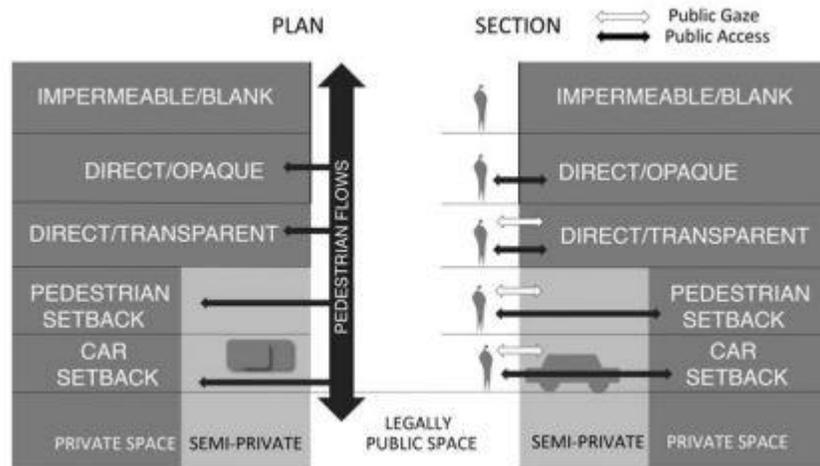


Figure 1: An interface typology.
Source: Dovey and Wood 2015, p. 6

Interestingly, where Simmel identifies “a unity of nearness and remoteness” in the figure of the stranger, he associates a certain unity of separation and connection in public/private interfaces, suggesting that the public doorway “demonstrates in decisive fashion how separating and connecting are only two faces of one and the same action” (Simmel 1997). This double- or janus-faced-logic is nowhere more apparent than in the *adaptations* of public/private interfaces discussed by Dovey and Wood (2015). Their analysis of public/private interfaces also incorporates countless examples and illustrations of such adaptations, from transparent/direct to pedestrian setback, for example, when seating is provided in front of a cafe; or from pedestrian setback to direct/opaque when a tall wall is constructed in front of a suburban front garden. A key point to note in the examples and illustrations that Dovey and Wood (2015) provide is their hybridity. The ‘new’ or adapted interface is not entirely divorced from its previous incarnation; in most instances, traces of the ‘former’ interface type persist, such that the adaptation plays in multiple registers at once. In what follows, we seek to trace out some of the ways in which this this state of affairs mediates interactions between strangers in the culturally diverse suburb of Bankstown in Sydney’s west.

Case Study and Methodology

The Local Government Area (LGA) of Bankstown is situated in Sydney's western suburbs, approximately 17 kilometres west of the central city, and 11 kilometres south of Parramatta. Lakemba Mosque is sited just outside of the LGA, to the east; the Villawood migration hostel is similarly just outside of the LGA, around six kilometres north of Bankstown's town centre. Historically dominated by a population with working class, Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, but today home to people who were born in 130 different nations, Bankstown is one of the most diverse communities in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2011), almost a half (44%) of the population was born overseas; for 63% of the population, both parents were born overseas. After Australia, the most common countries of birth are Lebanon (7.1%) and Vietnam (6.8%) (Figure 2). More than 60 languages are spoken in Bankstown, and 60% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, including Arabic (21%), Vietnamese (9%), Cantonese and Mandarin (5.5%) and Greek (3.6%). A little over a quarter (28%) of the population is Catholic; one in five (19.1%) are Muslims.

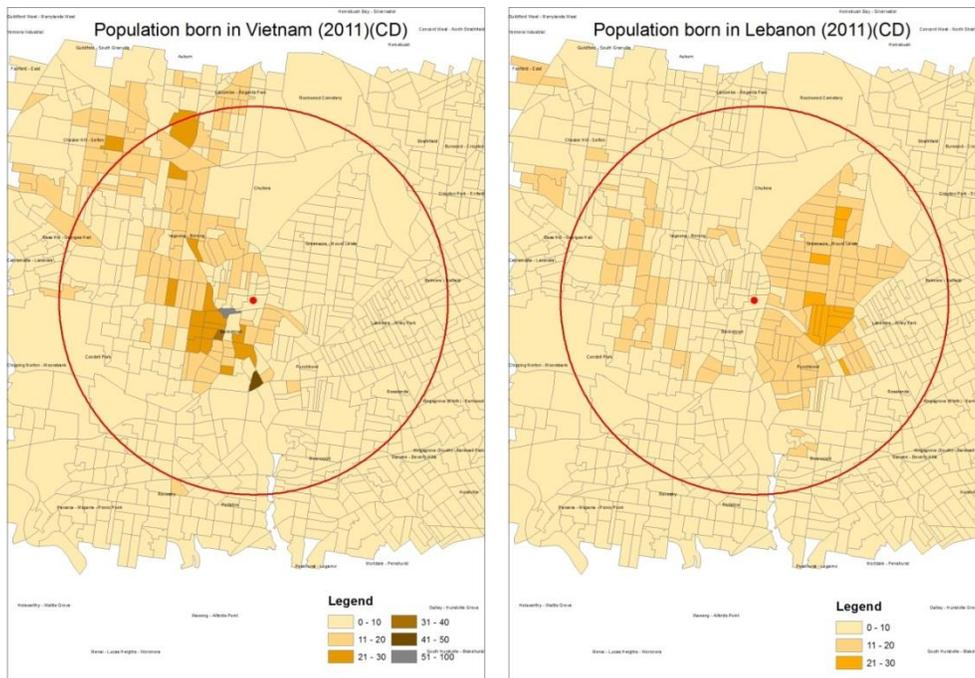


Figure 2: Concentration of residents born in Vietnam (left) and Lebanon (right)
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2011)

Bankstown's town centre, the focus of this paper, is physically divided into two sections, north and south, by a railway line and associated cutting (Figure 3). The north-eastern quadrant is dominated by a regional shopping centre, Bankstown Central. The north-western quadrant is dominated by traditional strip shopping and a range of civic functions including Bankstown City Council, Bankstown Library, Paul Keating Park and an RSL club and war memorial. Travelling south from Paul Keating Park and the war memorial, the road offers one of only a handful of ways across the railway line; the crossing forms an axis that terminates at a Vietnam Boat People Memorial. To the west of the memorial, a fine-grained strip of shops along Chapel Rd South - referred to locally, and somewhat confusingly, as 'Chinatown' - is dominated by Vietnamese traders. Bankstown Sports Club is located to the south of this section, an emblem of the area's working class origins. The south-eastern quadrant is dominated by a mixture of traditional strip shopping, along with recently constructed high-rise residential towers.



Figure 3: Map of Bankstown

To better understand the role of public/private interfaces in mediating interactions within and between different cultural groups in Bankstown, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with eighteen users and residents of Bankstown's town centre. Interviewees were contacted through community and industry groups in the case study area, and were drawn from a variety of cultural backgrounds including Britain, China, Columbia, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Pacific Islands and Vietnam. Interview questions related to uses and activities in the area (including views, issues, problems, positives and negatives related to these); changes in the area (including best and worst changes, views and opinions about changes); uses of public space and activity centres in the area (including design of public spaces and physical attributes of the area); opinions about design of public spaces and physical attributes of the area, and participant's personal interest in cultural uses and activities. The interviews were transcribed, coded and subject to content and discourse analysis.

Findings

Rules of cultural diversity

When asked to describe Bankstown, interviewees typically began by emphasising the area's 'diversity' and 'multiculturalism', often linking their observations to what was observed and observable 'on the street':

Bankstown is like a cultural melting pot. There are so many cultures here, it's really culturally diverse ... that's a key part of Bankstown's identity now ... not every ... city centre has this many cultures living in such proximity with each other, at least that's the way it looks on the street.

This cultural diversity was frequently presented as a badge of honour and point of distinction: "It is a multicultural city. If you look at Wikipedia you can find Bankstown number one. We have 220 languages, 142 nationalities" Nonetheless, such statements were quickly qualified by the claim that there are two

“dominant cultures”, occupying different spatial territories within Bankstown’s city centre. This understanding was commonly attributed to ‘what the shops are’:

[Bankstown] is quite diverse. Broadly ... it is two halves. There is a Vietnamese half and, probably more Lebanese, but Arabic half. There is many other variations within that, but it seems that’s what the shops are. Like, on one side of the railway line it’s more Asian, and the other side it’s more Middle Eastern.

It was also suggested that the social mix mainly comprises “non-Australians”: “You do not see much Aussies in Bankstown, which is a bummer, because it’s Australia. It’s cool to see them. You have to go somewhere else ...”. For many, it was felt that ‘Anglo people’ had long ago abandoned the area, producing some confusion about the culture playing ‘host’ to newly arrived cultural groups:

We hardly find Anglo people in Bankstown. You can count them on numbers. The rest, they all went to Camden, they went to the west, to the north, Newcastle, Castle Hill, North Rocks. They escaped from this environment. Not because they do not like to mixed with the Arabs or with the Vietnamese or with the Korean or the Chinese. Because they felt they are not welcomed anymore in their country and this is not good.

When I first came here ... I was just like, ‘Wow, this is Australia’. Coming from Lebanon ... I am expecting to read English everywhere, and I am like, ‘Oh, okay’. I did not find it so appealing to me that I am in an English country with Arabic writing...

The portrait interviews subsequently painted was of a series of communities within the community, with minimal levels of interaction between sub-communities:

I think people stay within their culture ... As you see people walking around, they’re walking in their cultural group ... we actually divide our society up into ethnic cultural groups.

Africans ... are like their own community in their community, almost like the Vietnamese groups ... the Vietnamese ... do not have problems with people because they do not really extend themselves to external communities ... I think they feel comfortable within that bubble. Foreign people coming to their area, or into their comfort zone, put a question mark in their head.

Where interactions between sub-communities were identified, these were mostly centred on food, which was often seen as tantamount to culture:

We are culturally unaware of another culture. I think my culture is the best culture, and therefore I look down on another culture ... We are [starting to introduce our cultures] through food. Cause I think now we are finding that different cultures like other people’s cultural food. I was out with a Chinese man the other day; he took me to a Japanese restaurant. Japanese and Chinese don’t get on. There is a history, a war, and a very severe war.

With a myriad sub-communities, several ‘dominant’ sub-communities, and no clear ‘host’ community, the problematic of Simmel’s stranger comes to be compounded, ramified. The problem is not so much - or not only - that different cultural groups import qualities “which do not and cannot stem from the group itself”; it is that the contours of “the group itself” are difficult to discern. Not *the* stranger set against a host group, but a series of strangers, each strange, one to the other.

Despite (or perhaps because of) this, across the interviews it was very rare to find ill-will expressed towards any facets of the social mix, let alone antagonism or antipathy. Instead, the prevailing attitude was along the lines of tolerant indifference, set against a background ambience of potential tension:

I think people are stuck with their cultures big time in Bankstown. Sometimes it can become a bit bad. They are kind of like their traditions and cultures and it could affect other people's lifestyle. Not precisely pointing out a race, all of them. We all live on the same platform, different people, but like let's try to not be weirded out by each other, cause you feel a bit of tension

For many, this tension manifested itself as a kind of uncertainty about rules of conduct, and about anticipated responses from actions, coupled to a concern that rules about 'respect' were not intuitively known but needed to be spelt out:

I think they call it cultural stress as opposed to culture shock. It is that ongoing daily 'am I doing the right thing?' So, I go to their shop. Yes, I am in Australia but I am in their shop. So I need to know what is appropriate. What is an appropriate interaction? ...

Here in Bankstown we are losing the principles of life, slowly, slowly, because we don't have strict rules... It is really bad to see a lot of sign in Bankstown. There is a lot of signs: 'Private parking,' 'No rubbish here', 'Leave the place clean'. People spending money on signs and people are not respecting the signs.

In so far as it is 'on the street' and 'in their shops' that much of this plays out, it is to one key element of the street, and of shops, that we now turn: the public/private interface.

Signs from elsewhere

From a formal point of view, there is nothing especially unique about the shop facades in Bankstown's town centre. Likewise, it would be difficult to sustain the argument that Bankstown's traders have adapted public/private interfaces in particularly novel ways. In countless main streets and town centres across Australia, buildings of similar vintage and (more or less) similar condition might be identified. In countless locations across Australia, the public/private interface is adapted, as a matter of course, to suit the needs and desires of traders and customers: signage is attached to facades and awnings, private seats and tables in public space enable *al fresco* dining, goods spill over onto footpaths. In that most spectacularly banal of contemporary development types, the (post)modern shopping mall, supermarkets and discount department stores modify their interfaces by pushing eye-catching products and bargains into the 'public' concourse.

Yet, in Bankstown, where 'the stranger's' presence is felt so intensely, where the other is enigmatic, and (social) rules of conduct and engagement are fraught, shop interfaces are freighted with heightened significance. For some, a shop façade represents a kind of visage or text which might be read or interpreted to glean the 'spirit' of a culture, and to garner clues about cultural codes:

If I look at you, from looking at your face I can see what spirit you have. Some people are very clever to hide all of that, but the first impression is 'Oh, she is a lovely lady, or he is a lovely man'. You can build the trust. And the same thing with the shops if you look at the place or products, look at the books example. I am man that love books... You look at the attractive one [book]. When you go the shops and you see the title and you don't see the signs, you don't feel like I want to be there. So both of these shops I don't know, I never entered ... Because they are not attractive.

Without exception, public/private interface adaptations in Bankstown were construed as embodying a cultural logic derived from elsewhere and/or elsewhere:

It is interesting. It says something about where they've come from. Because that's the way which they would operate their shops in their birth country. And so, I think they brought their culture into Bankstown.

the shops seems to have a bit of everything in them. Like I think in Australia back in the 50s and 60s where there'd be a bit of everything in the shops which has changed in Australia, but it is still how it is for them

A Lebanese Australian contended that consumption practices in Bankstown are preserving a dated version of Lebanon: "Like you are in 2015 here, Lebanon is in 2025, the cars and fashion, restaurants".

For many, the presence of non-English shop signage provides the starkest of reminders that multiple cultural codes operate in the area. Amongst bi-lingual interviewees, there was widespread agreement that at least some English signage should be provided on every shop; shops that provide only non-English signage were almost universally condemned. As one speaker of Arabic and English put it:

I am coming to Australia and I know before I left my country that I am going to a country that they speak English. But when I go to a shop that is only in Arabic, reminds me about one of the restaurants in England and they put a sign outside of the door: 'No Arabs and dogs'. When I am writing a sign in Arabic I am saying to Anglo people or to the Vietnamese or to the Korean 'No, don't enter'.

For a speaker of Chinese and English, the presence of signage that was only in Chinese was alienating not only for non-Chinese speakers but also, more poignantly, for him/herself, representing a cultural code that s/he partially inhabited, yet which was not shared with, or understood by, others:

If Chinese shop only writes in Chinese I feel too isolated ... If they have English and Chinese, other nationalities can come to enjoy Chinese as well.

For interviewees who spoke only English, attitudes to non-English signage tended to be more sanguine. Some felt unmoored from their own cultural codes: "you do feel a bit out of place I think. You feel like you are not with your own culture or you're stepping out of your culture". More commonly, this unmooring was experienced as a kind of touristic thrill, akin to what Bauman describes as 'aesthetic spacing':

I like it. Not only it does not bother me, but I like it. It brings the world to me and that's why I'm so attracted to this area. It's not plain. It's a bit like when I travel and I am in another country and I start seeing people with different cultures, they look different to me or they speak a different language. I am very attracted to all that kind of thing. So, it makes me feel good. It makes me more curious to go and see more".

One interviewee recounted a kind of excited exhaustion from trying to keep abreast of different languages, as new cultural groups moved into the area:

Tired, in that, it's good looking at it and reflecting on it and it means I've got to keep up with it. So, that is why it is tiring. Cause, I am learning Arabic. Because, when I first moved to the area I thought 'Okay I need to learn some Arabic here, so I can talk to people'. And now I think I have learned the wrong language.

Setback adaptations

A further feature of the public/private interface that appears to become entangled with the strategies of 'social spacing' Bauman discusses in the context of the stranger, involves adaptations from one interface type to another type. While many types of public/private interface adaptation may be found in Bankstown, the type which received the most commentary involves adaptation from a direct transparent type to a pedestrian setback type, as goods or tables and chairs are placed on footpaths, creating an interstitial zone in front of shops. While this type of adaptation may be found in most parts of Bankstown,

interviewees most strongly associated it with 'Chinatown' where much of the public/private interface is adapted in this way on a daily basis. As one person described it: "*people selling stuff on the pavements or down in the little buildings, you have got some kind of alleys which have fish markets and things and all the fish are kind of in the middle of the walking area*".

The adaptation of interfaces from the direct single type into the pedestrian setback type takes two primary forms, one involving displays of goods and produce on footpaths (i.e. 'spillovers'), the other involving displays of people on footpaths (i.e. *al fresco* dining). Each elicited different but overlapping responses from interviewees. On the one hand, both forms facilitate 'aesthetic spacing', as encapsulated in the 'fascination' one interviewee describes when inspecting the products, and when seated outside a café:

I walk there, I feel like, 'Yeah cool!'... It is like you are walking in Bankstown, and you take a step into Chinatown, and suddenly you do not feel like you are in Bankstown anymore ... You feel like you are in Vietnam ... You do not see any shop from another culture in there...Vietnamese restaurants ... Vietnamese groceries and fruit markets and cafes ... I know that I stand out because I am different ... I am fascinated ... how they do things like how we do it, but slightly differently ... [When sitting outside a café] I am fascinated ... watching them.

On the other hand, both versions possess the capacity to disrupt 'cognitive spacing' techniques, in so far as the other and his or her way of life is difficult to avoid, difficult to push into the background. In relation to displays of goods on footpaths, for example, a refrain of 'mess' was common amongst a segment of the interviews:

when there are fruit on the footpath, and it is messy, and you cannot walk, you will be upset because they are introducing something that is not nice...

it is crowded ... shops on top of each other ... not much space ... it is probably good for them ... but for Australians it is foreign, dirty, crowded ... I heard people saying it is like going to another country ... they feel like they need their passport...

Yet at the same time, a kind of order was often imposed through appeal to council standards, rules of conduct, it was hoped, that were common to everyone:

I think they have to get approval, if the council gave them approval...some have their tables outside...I think they have to be approved...if they do because of their own interests it is not fine ... Of course it is annoying...but I am sure they have approval...I will be upset if they do not have approval...

they stop in front of you as you as you are walking and you should manoeuvre around them to get around ... Everyone does that in Bankstown. It is so annoying...they do their own thing... it is the selfish area.... they do not think about if anyone is behind me or... they do not take notice ... It is [selfish to display products on footpaths] but at the same it is standard...the council probably approved...it will be selfish if the council did not approved it...it is selfish that they applied for it...having more space for their shops

Meanwhile, for some women, *al fresco* dining placed the other, in the form of males, in uncomfortable and unavoidable proximity:

I don't like in some places where they put tables and chairs outside. And the majority that sit out there are normally always males. And walking out near them and they are smoking. I do not like that environment... and I don't like walking past. To me it's a whole group of men...I just don't like it. It does make me uncomfortable... As a woman, I feel intimidated. I feel uncomfortable. I prefer to go out of my way, to move away from it and walk away.

Discussion

In seeking to explore the role of public/private interfaces in mediating interactions between strangers in the culturally diverse town centre of Bankstown, we are in no way intending to suggest that this element of built form 'causes' anything to occur. Rather, the point is more that elements of built form - in this case public/private interfaces and associated adaptations - embody latent tendencies or capacities for connection and disconnection. These tendencies or capacities embody a form of social logic which then become entangled in other forms of sociality. An unmodified, non-adapted pedestrian setback interface, for example, involves a degree of 'sacrifice' in so far as a portion of (typically private) property is 'given up' for other (typically more public) purposes. A new space is created which, not inconsistent with a sacrificial logic, tends to be initiatory or ritualistic in nature. Crossing a suburban garden setback, one is initiated into the private realm (typically via displays of identity of one kind or another) without necessarily feeling that one is in the private realm. By contrast, a direct transparent interface expresses an abrupt process, one where connections are forged through absorption or expulsion, without ceremony. When a direct transparent interface is adapted to become a pedestrian setback, there is potential for the two logics to become entangled, producing a paradoxical situation akin to 'immediate initiation'. One is immediately and abruptly 'inside' an identity display, without associated ritual or initiatory process. Likewise, the 'trans' - the 'movement between' - that is embodied in a pure direct transparent interface is removed. The window that frames views and mediates gazes exchanged between interior and exterior dissolves; what once might have been held at controlled arm's length is now 'here'. Further, the 'sacrificial' logic of the setback might potentially become inverted, to become a 'selfish' logic, as the public realm is seemingly colonised by private interests. Having said all of that, it must be noted again that public/private interfaces and adaptations of the kind described in this paper occur in many places, all the time, without prompting so much as a raised eyebrow. In the case of Bankstown, perhaps the potential for tensions to appear in relation to adaptations of public/private interfaces has arisen from entanglement of the social logic that is latent in interfaces, with another social logic associated with 'the stranger'.

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