EDGE TERRITORIES

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality.

Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of the whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center. Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole.

—bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center

Within the vast complex of dehumanization that has come to make up the European border complex, the street is perhaps the most banal of all its spaces. Neither the camp, nor the detention center, nor the Mediterranean, the street is permeated with the everyday occurrence of illegality and sorting integral to contemporary migration systems. Streets in the edge territories of cities are one component in a multi-scalar geography of centers and margins. It is an ordering that continues to evolve out of the “long-term structures” of the human and spatial divisions of labor and capital. The street is therefore a commonplace realm from which to understand migration as part of much longer arrangements of violent displacement. Cities are composed of multiple centers and margins that resonate within and beyond recognizable city limits, emerging in dynamic and entwined relations. In this sense, the urban margin is not always a physical periphery, but it is always a structural and psychological edge territory. This chapter explicitly veers off center to explore place-making from the margins. bell hooks proposes that “to be in the margins is to be part of the whole but outside the main body,” speaking to how margins form outside of but in sight of the
hooks evokes the simultaneous limitations and possibilities of this human and territorial position through the struggle over the relative meanings of centers and margins.

The intersection of global migration and urban marginalization brings into play a wider political economy of centrality and marginality. The dominions of nodes and peripheries across the planet overlap with hierarchies of citizenship status in which “race,” class, and gender are core. Yet hooks challenges the dichotomy of domination and subordination that these relations might imply. The margins, pushed ever further to the periphery by multiple forces of dislocation, potentially offer a place from which to be at risk and to take risk, to oppose and to reconfigure, what hooks names “a profound edge.” I engage with the structural and psychological life of edge territories to explore the promise and limitations of occupying this outcast position. In introducing street economies forged by migrant proprietors on Narborough Road in Leicester and Stapleton Road in Bristol, I unpack the sense of place occupied by migrants who are suspended between the arduous demands of being simultaneously mobile and immobile. Edge territories are places of extended austerity, suspended citizenships, and capricious creativity, their provisional prospects defined as much by temporal as spatial conditions of power.

I return to the question of why a heterogeneous range of individuals on the street had become seemingly homogenized in terms of their respective work prospects and urban locality. More pointedly, how do “race” and place overlap to produce a pattern of migrant emplacement in the city? Structures of inequality and street racism feature prominently in the proprietors’ accounts of where certain individuals and groups are consigned to settle and the limited forms of work available in the urban margins. Expressions of cross-cultural agility and exchange were also deeply significant to proprietors’ accounts of their varied transactions. Many proprietors described the multiple border crossings they had taken on their protracted and fragmented journeys before arriving on the street. With each crossing these travelers become enrolled in a cosmopolitan repertoire of global edges and a process of intensive learning and adaptation, which at the same time is counteracted by external and internal borders. This idea of an unsettled cosmopolitanism speaks to Édouard Glissant’s assertion that with movement comes multiplicity. It also connects Tariq Jazeel’s appeal for a decentering of cosmopolitanism as more mobile than ideological, and emergent within realities
of inequality and unfreedom rather than prospects of tolerance. It is therefore critical to push the current realities of life as a marginal condition more centrally into explorations of multiculture and modernity. Gargi Bhattacharyya’s writing on “edge populations” sharply points to the varied compositions of human “disposability,” incorporating both the growing propensity for refugee camps and the declining availability of employment.

In this chapter I focus on the role of place as elemental to the structure of the edge territories of cities, as a composite of near and far margins. Through unpacking ideas of place and transaction from the periphery, I engage with how to peel back the at times closed conception of the ghetto, while defining the loose, overly ubiquitous ascription of the entrepreneur. Margins are not reducible to ghettos, just as the entrepreneurs of the edge must absorb durable precarity as core to their trade. This raises questions of how we might think more precisely about entrepreneurship in the edge territories, not as an emancipation from marginalization but in recognition of the active making of work in persistently precarious conditions. Equally, it is necessary to acknowledge the discrepant positionality of varied migrants groups and their relationship to precarious work, as well as the differing realities from shop to shop. In their conceptualization of “mixed embeddedness,” Robert Kloosterman, Joanne Van Der Leun, and Jan Rath articulate the salient nexus of marginalization in which migrant entrepreneurs operate. This comprises the stratifying nature of immigration systems, racial exclusions in labor markets, and the hierarchical ordering of urban place. Gender, too, is core to this formation, and across the streets we researched it appeared primarily in binary forms. The vast majority of proprietors we spoke with were male, reflecting how both gendered and patriarchal structures of immigration systems, labor markets, and family arrangements take hold on the street. Migration flows to Europe remain gendered, determined by the demands of labor migration and visa processes as much as the vulnerabilities involved en route. Additionally, migrant women are generally rendered less visible in the labor market, as they are more likely to be consigned to the realms of undocumented work and short-term work arrangements. On the streets we studied, women seldom present as proprietors and appear more as back-of-house participants in family businesses. However, we observed a wide range of work and employment practices on the street that complicate initial observations. Ways of working included part-time, low-paid work that just about allowed
for a working life juggled with study or child care. Crucially, it also included working arrangements that accommodated family arrangements, ill health, and first-time access to work for young people. Shop space was as small as a meter squared and as large as a converted bingo hall, and the temporal occupation of space ranged from those who rented a chair or stall on a weekly basis to those who sublet a large floorspace. The idea of the entrepreneur in the margins is therefore discrepant and requires a detailed understanding of the varied ways in which social positions are differentially reproduced.

My analytic reach outward to the global production of the urban margins is accompanied by a postcolonial attention to history. I refer again to Doreen Massey’s invaluable essay “A Global Sense of Place” and her evocation of place as connected and asymmetrical. For Massey, urban patterns of discrimination have long histories that exceed any singular time and locality. Massey cannot write her own local high street, High Kilburn Road in North London, as a “pretty ordinary place” without tracing the threads to the frictional politics between Britain and Northern Ireland and the conflicts that periodically surfaced on the street. She cannot articulate its diverse street life “without bringing into play the world and a considerable amount of British imperialist history.”

To locate Narborough Road in Leicester and Cheetham Hill in Manchester, I start with how the state is implicated in establishing the street, and draw on global connections of colonization, immigration policy, and international interventionism in the constitution of the margins. The interrelation between the racialization of space through the dispossession of self and land, and the lively formations of convivial multicultures, requires keeping sight of both center and margin. Our understanding of edge territories must therefore combine how structural violence and practices of refusal and encounter shape place.

In the explorations that follow I show how policy as a directive of political intent places certain categories of individuals and groups in the marginal condition. In place, a host of policies are convened, bringing together the accumulative effects of migration and austerity politics. The margins are established through this palimpsest of power, layered by multiple state policies over extensive time periods. The streets that ground my analyses are located in places where local authority budgets have halved since 2010, resulting in the loss of not only public services but also public-sector jobs. These same streets are also located in highly discriminatory regimes of citizenship where state-led diversity-making
is reflected in the arrangement of people in varied axes of differentiation. It is within this sense of place that streets are produced in the logics of underresourcing and overbordering. These streets are capricious lines of the economies and cultures of the margins, simultaneously governed by the logics of the center while making an “alternative logic” to it. Hiba Bou Akar evokes how this both “contributes to their exclusion from the center and asserts their potential for destabilizing it.”

By tracing the stories of how individuals become proprietors on these streets, I show how profound limitations and extraordinary inventions intersect in occupying this marginal condition. Long-term unemployment and more recent shifts to part-time employment are core to understanding the establishment of the edge territory, and I extend this line of thinking by following the routes to redundancy that the migrant of the margins must navigate. Yet each street is also a composition of hundreds of proprietors and shops, where street interiors host an intricacy of coordinated ideas and practices that exceed the constraints of marginalization.

**THE PLACE OF POLICY**

To get to Narborough Road from the station in Leicester I loop southward past the tired town center, missing the banks and bistros, hotels and parking lots, and multinational combinations of H&M, Primark, Tesco Express, and Marks and Spencer. These ubiquitous groupings of consumerism secure the mundane status of multitudes of centers across the UK, and Leicester is no exception to the convention. Cutting across the A594 ring road that encloses the center, I go past De Montfort University. The visible signs of university investments are apparent in a host of new buildings that point to the emerging economy of higher education, tugging the old industrial center of gravity in Leicester southward to De Montfort, the University of Leicester, and Leicester College. Taking the bridge over the River Soar and slipping down into Braunstone Gate, I would have just about reached the start of Narborough Road. I notice a sign announcing my arrival at the “West End.” Despite the marketing gambit, Narborough Road has no deep allegiances to a singular brand let alone the prospects of a leisure tourism synonymous with London. Until recently, the street had escaped branding and the Golden Mile to the north of the city center had captured the claim of Leicester’s most iconic street, being described as “the nearest the UK gets to a true Indian bazaar.”
After completing our initial fieldwork on Narborough Road in 2015, I was to learn that you can never underestimate the power of football in shaping a sense of place in the UK. In 2016 Leicester City Football Club secured the Premier League, the first time in the 132-year history of the Foxes. Multitudes and platitudes descended on Leicester, as journalists sought to find a jaunty one-liner to capture the city. Having conducted our face-to-face survey of Narborough Road one year earlier, we were contacted by several journalists at the height of Premier League speculation—most of whom were on sports desks at their papers—to ask if Narborough Road could be described as “the most diverse street in Britain.” No, we confirmed. Based on the range of proprietors’ origins, Narborough Road was exemplified by high levels of migration and cultural diversity core to its life and livelihoods. “But couldn’t you say that it is ‘the most diverse street in Britain’?” came the plea. No, we confirmed. Academic moderation is no match for journalistic insistence, and over the course of a few months, papers from the local Leicester Mercury to the international Financial Times proclaimed the street’s stature of unheralded diversity. The lickety-split transfer from press pages to Wikipedia pages secured Narborough Road’s title, formed in the unlikely combination of research, football, journalism, and marketing. While the simplistic idea of “good diversity” has become common parlance in media, institutional, and corporate spheres, it fails to grapple with the far less reducible realities of difference and differentiation. Narborough Road is formed in historic arrangements of power where the flows of migrants to Leicester intersect with durable inequalities. Its sense of place is tied to a colonization and industrialization that was deeply dependent on migrant labor, establishing Leicester as the UK’s first majority-minority city of over half a million people.

In the early twentieth century, Leicester’s mills and factories produced a global output of hosiery, boots, and shoes that demanded a large and skilled labor force. Many of the factory workers resided in the tightly packed row houses to the south of the city within sight and smell of the factories. Streets like Narborough Road provided a rudimentary seam of convenience and civic requirements. Today, in Leicester’s postindustrial phase, a significant part of the street’s economies relates to student life. You can outfit a student room on the cheap with Anglepoise lamps, kettles, and every conceivable size and shape of plastic box, bucket, and broom from Amaan’s Pound Shop. Beds and mattresses are perennially
available at discounted prices at Bed City Leicester. These shops are interspersed among the stronghold of restaurants and carryouts, where Lucky Dragon, Caspian Pizza, Yesim’s Café and Grill, Dhaka Deli, and the Istanbul Restaurant offer high-quality food at reasonable prices (Figure 6). Food-related activity is the street’s core economy, and for some traders the fast-food format is a key entry point into street retail. Fast-food proprietors are also affected by the fluctuating student population, and the precarity of these shops is highlighted by their frequent turnover. Half of the fast-food businesses we surveyed had been established for under a year or were closed. Bookshops, stationery shops, laundromats, music stores, hair salons, and barbershops shape the everyday foreground. Sex, denoted by the subtler terminology of “massage parlor,” is also for sale, although these long-established spaces are often housed one level above the street.

An enduring feature of the edge territory is its markers of marginalization, and Narborough sits in the Westcotes Ward and falls within the 10 percent of most-deprived parts of England.¹⁴ Health inequalities are
notable, as is the percentage of children living in poverty. Both of these features of deprivation connect with long-term unemployment, which in this part of the city is significantly higher than the national average. At odds with these features of relegation is comparatively good attainment in high school grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education. Place-based surveys of employment in the area connect with Satnam Virdee’s analysis of changing employment profiles of “different racialised minority groups” from the mid-1990s onward. Job losses following deindustrialization, as well as periods of recession such as the 2008 financial crisis, are disproportionately borne by “immigrant-origin workers.” It is these workers who were historically positioned in semi- and unskilled work in manufacturing and later in public-sector service provision, making work redundancies and joblessness historically acute in areas such as Narborough Road. Work profiles across Leicester and Leicestershire also reflect the national shift from high percentages in full-time employment to a ratio of two-thirds full-time to one-third part-time employment. As a region, employment in manufacturing, wholesale, and retail and public-sector services remains significant, but shifts to self-employment and the role of micro-businesses are increasingly constitutive of work prospects. Virdee emphasizes that the particular emergence of microbusinesses and self-employment among minority groups needs to be read in conjunction with a racially restrictive labor market. I further situate this employment landscape within the formation of edge territories where the contours of place are additionally shaped by pronounced state austerity programs alongside the intensive regulation of migration.

The role of state violence at the level of urban neighborhoods has historically intersected with labor exploitation, highlighted by Ananya Roy through “the urban as a governmental category” and by Katherine McKittrick in a critical engagement with forms of “urbicide.” The prospects for any significant shift in inequality in marginalized neighborhoods such as the Westcotes Ward have been substantially curtailed by a relentless program of local government cuts. Marginalization in UK cities has been historically marked by the intersection of place, race, and class. More recently it has been exacerbated by the UK government’s Austerity Programme, which launched in 2010 following the Great Recession of 2008, where an overwhelming burden of cuts was directed onto local state activity. Over the period from 2010 to 2018, central government grants to local councils were reduced by half. At a
Leicester town hall meeting in February 2018, the Labour mayor referred to the planned £20 million in cuts to services that year alongside the 6 percent increase in council tax by clarifying, “The decisions we take tonight will curse this city for future generations.” The planned budget cuts included an 80 percent cut to youth services, the state effectively producing the circumstances in which vulnerability and violence reside.

The dramatic impetus of cuts exists alongside inter- and intra-urban migratory circuits that render Narborough Road as a transitional area. Here it is important to be aware of the temporal impetus of policy on place and how its speed and duration affect the rhythms and disruptions of neighborhood space. The local Labour Party office has its headquarters on Narborough Road, and while talking to Jack, the office manager, he highlights the high levels of population “churn” in the area. Stepping into the office interior off the street, we are met with street-level officialdom designated in the loose arrangement of a photocopy machine, printers, numerous piles of paper, campaign posters, and pin boards covered with local information. Jack describes the core office activity and the high population turnover:

As an MP’s office we have a significant caseload. That is our primary form of engagement, certainly with new arrivals. Key issues that come up include the quality of private-sector housing in the area, the rights around work, and support in child tax credits. When you’ve helped one person, it is common for a number of people from the same community to come. . . .

What’s really significant here is the churn—it’s a very, very transient population. In the run-up to an election cycle, we knock on a lot of doors. Within a parliamentary cycle, at least 50 percent of the people we have spoken to before have moved on.

Jack points to the rapid turnover of a residential population over a five-year period, describing the area as a transition zone. In this sense, churn is affected by a significant short-term resident population made up of university and college students together with the dynamic nature of urban migration trends. Narborough Road is shaped by a global churn fueled by processes of conflict and catastrophe as well as apparently banal policy changes.

Westcotes Ward is also a place of temporary residence for more than half of all asylum seekers residing in Leicester, and the churn is
reflected in the short-cycle nature of the asylum dispersal program.\textsuperscript{24} Since the implementation, in 2000, of the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1999 the UK has followed a policy that has relocated asylum seekers away from the southeast of England to “dispersal zones” where relocation spaces are identified in deprived urban areas where comparatively inexpensive social housing is available.\textsuperscript{25} In our street survey we similarly recorded a pattern of churn, with just under half of proprietors having been on the street for five years or less. Among these proprietors were a group who had come from places of ongoing conflict, including Kurdistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan. At the same time, Narborough Road is also formed by a longer-term presence of proprietors, close to a quarter of whom had been on the street for twenty years or more. These temporal variations complicate the analysis of what Virdee articulates as “different racialised minority groups.” Groups are arranged and rearranged in varied axes of differentiation and crossover, bringing to bear temporal questions of how differentiating periods of policy surface in differential experiences of journeys, borders, and employment.

In our survey of proprietors along the Narborough Road, we became aware that this particular grouping of proprietors had been on the street for four decades, from 1975 to 2015. The shaping of their journeys and the nature of their arrivals is a way of unfolding the street’s “global sense of place.” The distinctly “differentiated mobilities” that Massey refers to are reflected in the geopolitics of specific places and how these intersect with a variety of racializations and class positions.\textsuperscript{26} Together, these shape the discrepant nature of these journeys and arrivals. We set about trying to draw these intersections of time and place on Narborough Road, connecting proprietors’ journeys to the street to their narratives of related political events and policies, that often extend well beyond the locality of Leicester. We made something of a Morse code chart, combined of dots that sit between a horizontal and vertical axis, to signal the punctuations and procedures of displacement and emplacement (Figure 7). On the horizontal axis we set out the respective countries of origin that proprietors had come from. On the vertical axis we set out dates that reflected proprietors’ accounts of periods that were significant to their migration. Some proprietors referred to the disruptive nature of the global financial crisis on their employment with subsequent layoffs leading to self-employment on the street. Others narrated how a violent political upheaval or targeted piece of policy had resulted in their arrival on Narborough Road. It became
apparent that the production of migrant diversity on Narborough Road relates to an extended coloniality, constituted by wide mechanisms of social sorting and “the unfolding of global histories.” The Morse code chart is intended to visualize the ways in which migration is a change process entirely integral to the political ideology and economic life of liberal democracies, with its streets formed by the longue durée of global interventions and associations.

At the top of the chart, a collection of dots indicates the most long-standing proprietors on Narborough Road. This collection of dots starts in 1975 and run through to the early 1980s and include a group of proprietors who were born or lived in Uganda, Malawi, or Kenya and came to Leicester via East Africa. The dots indicate the presence on the street of the “East African Asian refugee crisis” that extended from 1968 to 1976, following the period of independence after colonial rule and the emergence of “Africanization” policies. Mahmood Mamdani places this expulsion in the formation of a deeply racialized colonial regime and its postcolonial continuum “in a broader history of modes and rules
and not just relations in the market place. . . From the standpoint of the political, the Asian expulsion belongs to a larger history of social cleansing.”29 In the decade following 1968 approximately twenty thousand displaced East African Asians settled in Leicester. Their migration circuit had a much longer history connecting to colonial rule in India, “when people were moved to other British colonial territories like Kenya and Uganda to support major infrastructure projects.”30 The migration of these refugees to Leicester was not left unmediated by the state, and in 1972 Leicester City Council issued an advertisement in the Uganda Argus declaring its inhospitable stance: “An important announcement on behalf of the Council of the City of Leicester, England. . . In your own interests and those of your family you should accept the advice of the Ugandan Resettlement Board and not come to Leicester.”31

It has been asserted that the resettlement of “Ugandan Asians” in Leicester was partly connected to the council’s discriminatory advertisements and its unintended consequence of attracting refugees to the city.32 The unforeseen impacts of these advertisements were narrated in a conversation with Jaffer, a proprietor on Narborough Road who had formerly lived in Uganda, who confirms that “the advertisement in the paper brought Leicester to my attention, and was part of why me and my family came to Leicester.” In reflecting on the racist intentions of the advertisement, former Leicester city councilor Brian Piper, elected in 1973, said: “I felt at the time that the advert was dishonorable. . . The excuse the city council leadership used was pressure on services, but the underlying reason was fear of more ethnic minority immigration . . . what we describe today as racist.”33 It appears that intersecting political polices, underscored by ethnic and racial discrimination in parts of East Africa and the UK at national and municipal levels, stimulated a layer of migration in Leicester, as evidenced in the contemporary street life of Narborough Road.

An additional layer of policy-led diversification includes the government’s asylum dispersal program. From the year 2000 onward, there are clusters of dots on the chart representing proprietors from Kurdistan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Somalia. On Narborough Road, 14 percent of proprietors were born in countries where the principal flow of migration over the last twenty-five years has been in connection with asylum. Of these flows associated with conditions of violence is a lineage of Britain’s interventionist politics in the Middle East. The dispersal program for asylum seekers introduced in the Asylum
and Immigration Act of 1999 is enunciated in four of five of our surveyed streets. Birmingham, Bristol, Leicester, and Manchester are among twelve key urban areas that were designated as sanctuary cities for asylum seekers and refugees. However, this act simultaneously secures a “marginal reality,” restricting the choices about where and how asylum seekers are granted settlement, and offering limited access to work in comparatively deprived dispersal areas.\textsuperscript{34}

Proprietors from Poland and Lithuania represent another flow of migration that is symptomatic of international policy and legislation. In 2004 the supranational legislation to enlarge the European Union to include the A8 Eastern European countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia) significantly expanded the numbers of those with the right to legally live and work in the UK. For example, the largest non-UK-born population increase in the UK between 2001 and 2011 was the Polish-born population, with an increase from 58,000 to 579,000 individuals.\textsuperscript{35} The A8 accession legislation did not intentionally aim to diversify specific geographic areas, but the 2004 EU freedom-of-movement policy effectively stimulated large population movements. Streets such as Narborough Road in Leicester are a lens into the lived reality of the intersections of EU and national policy.

Looking at the lower portion of the chart, which speaks to recent times, it is notable that the diversity of proprietors on the street peaks directly following the 2008 global financial crisis. Over this period, particularly from 2012, net migration into the UK increased. The “Migration Statistics Quarterly Report” indicates that the largest increase over this period relates to the growth in EU migration from the EU15 countries, following the aftershocks of combined widespread unemployment and severe austerity governance across Europe.\textsuperscript{36} While these particular migratory populations did not significantly feature in our surveys, we did capture the flows of individuals already living in the UK who exited formal employment sectors after 2008, often through layoffs. The connection between waged employment followed by self-employment featured in more than half of our respondents on Narborough Road, who stated they had been in some form of work—usually in the public sector—before they had set up shop. Proprietors recollected how they had formerly worked in public employment such as in the post office, in public transport, or for the local authority, and subsequently went into street retail after being laid off. For example, Saadli, who had
set up his computer shop five years earlier, recalls: “I used to work in the city council and then there were cuts to jobs. When I lost my job, I decided to look for a shop where I can do computers. . . . But it’s a challenge here. People don’t have a lot of money. Some of us are struggling.” In the edge territories, this second wave of layoffs differs from but is attached to those that followed deindustrialization, each process capturing changes in the composition of the working class: the first from factories to forms of self-employment, and the second often from public-sector employment to the street. It suggests the variants of class inequalities among migrants in these marginalized communities and the complex layering of precarities.

The place of policy reveals the intended and unintended processes through which places diversify in relation to social sorting as well as the durable intersection of “race,” class, gender, and place in the production of the urban margins. The phenomenon of “super-diversity” identified by Steven Vertovec reflects the increased fragmentation of migration patterns following deindustrialization.37 The concept becomes salient not as a descriptor but when it is moored to the depth and reach of power and its differentiating effects, as a means of unpacking the forces of fragmentation.38 I have emphasized this point through exploring the hierarchical splintering of people and place, with an emphasis on policy. This splintering effect is explicitly highlighted in economic terms by Cedric Robinson, in understanding how capitalism simultaneously deploys the differentiation and “diminution” of people.39 The dislocation of people from one place and their consignment to another place is part of this process of curtailment. The methodological implication of “a global sense of place” in relation to migration and mobility partly lies in tracing the interconnected spaces of displacement and emplacement. This allows us to trace different arrangements of sorting, fragmentation, and grouping driven by a global migration system that is marked by important periodic intervals as much as by historic continuity. While these processes may be physically detached, they are politically and economically contiguous, creating an expanse of edge territories that span national and supranational frameworks. It remains crucial to specify which types of urban streets are diversified through turbulent processes and discriminatory mechanisms. The five streets in our research are all located in comparatively deprived urban areas, suggesting that policy-driven diversification is markedly expressed in edge territories where global migration intersects with urban marginalization. The place of
policy thereby reveals the “whereness” of power—where the effects of economic inequality and policy-driven diversification are intensely spatialized.\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{ROUTES TO REDUNDANCY}

To think about the violence of here and now through edge territories is to specify more acutely not only \textit{where} violence locates but \textit{whom} violence locates. We move now from Narborough Road in Leicester to Stapleton Road to the northeast of Bristol’s center. I start with an introduction to Haaruun and Alimah, both of whom have undertaken arduous journeys to the street. Haaruun’s place on Stapleton Road is partially full on the morning I walk in to his corner shop. Haaruun wears a dark gray suit and stands at the front desk. He helps a customer with travel arrangements while calling out instructions to an employee behind a cubicle designated for money remittances at the back of the shop. On the wall behind him is a poster of a beach somewhere, an image so common to travel iconography that it presumably adorns the walls of travel agencies in a plethora of counties across the world. On this cold day in Bristol, the image stands in for anywhere but here. Toward the back of Haaruun’s shop, a few men sit in front of a row of computers, with a sign above them that clearly indicates, in capital letters, “\textit{NO PORNOGRAPHY ALLOWED IN HERE}.” There are many shops with internet services across the streets we explored, signaling a group of customers unable to afford internet contracts and Gigabyte phone deals, let alone a computer. Haaruun looks at me quizzically, and after running a few questions past me we begin to talk. Haaruun explains that he’s had his shop on Stapleton Road for twelve years but that he identified mostly as a teacher, since that was what he had wanted to be, and that was what he had trained for. Our conversation is conducted somewhat in a teacher-pupil style, with each question answered with respect to a wider set of relations, a wider set of lessons, as he connects his own sequence of journeys to political events and border negotiations.

He speaks about the way in which the shops on Stapleton Road in Bristol broadly reflect the spatial and ethnic composition of Somalia. Haaruun was born in the north of Somalia in Hargeisa, in a region in the Horn of Africa that was historically part of centuries of sultanate rule and was subsequently declared a protectorate by the British in the late 1880s. The tumultuous history of internal fragmentations and
international interferences exceeds my focus here. The human scale of displacement can only be partially grasped through the extent of ongoing exodus from Somalia, which was estimated in 2015 at approximately 400,000 people who are displaced within Somalia, along with 389,272 recorded refugees. According to Haaruun, “Most Somalis in this area of the street are from the north [of Somalia], and on the other side are from the south. We mix, we don’t have problems. As Somalians we do have a few differences.” Stapleton Road’s northern tail runs alongside IKEA, the perennial marker of cheap land on the urban periphery. The street is bisected by the A4320 motorway, forming the division of a northern and southern strip to which Haaruun had referred. A quarter of the proprietors we surveyed on Stapleton Road were from Somalia, and all of them had set up shop in the last ten years. Almost half of the proprietors had been on the street for five years or less. These temporal rhythms speak to different migratory trajectories, including asylum and secondary migration, particularly by those granted asylum in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, who, like Haaruun, subsequently relocated to the UK.

Haaruun describes how he was working as a teacher in Somalia when the civil war broke out. He went to the Netherlands, where he claimed asylum. Aspiring to continue his career as a teacher, he undertook additional studies to improve his teaching qualifications in line with the expected accreditations in the Netherlands. However, he was unable to find permanent work in the teaching sector. This experience is not unique to Haaruun, and there are direct correlations of greater structural disadvantages for refugees in labor market participation. The more extended the asylum process, the less likely it is that claimants will be able to step into the labor market. This differential access to the labor market is a systemic stratification of citizenship by the state, based on paltry evidence that denial of the right to work deters refugees. What it does accomplish is the reduced possibility of accessing work once legality is confirmed. Haaruun eventually decided to pursue another line of work through setting up a shop. He explains that the processes for initiating a shop in the Netherlands were highly regulated at neighborhood level. Restrictive vetting processes in the Netherlands are well documented and highlight financial viability assessments and local competition evaluations as part of the application process. Vetting processes extend to the aesthetic regulation and design
of storefronts and interiors by neighborhood organizations, smoothing out the makeshift possibilities of city-making often in favor of a more prescribed global chic. Haaruun lived in the Netherlands for seven years and has retained a Dutch passport. He was eventually compelled to move to the UK in order to be able to work and retain a level of autonomy by starting his own business. Prior to the Immigration Act of 2014, all that would have been required of Haaruun was the means to secure the first few months of rent. He reflects on the difficulties of his protracted journey: “We [Somali refugees] got our training in Holland and Denmark. People who came first got training in a hard life.”

Haaruun’s story reflects his own inhabitation of a durable border, one where his refugee status made entry into work extremely difficult and where vetting processes to set up shop take on legal and aesthetic forms. Despite Haaruun’s qualifications, his multilingual competency, and his efforts in further adult learning, his choices of where and how he settles remain restricted, underscoring Massey’s “differentiated mobilities” in the global formation of the street. Haaruun’s migratory trajectory involved navigating the complexities of national asylum legislation as well as business regulations at a city scale, revealing how street diasporas are produced by intersections of policies in multiple national and urban spheres. Such “double migrations” are a common feature of (im)mobility evident in migration patterns undertaken by erstwhile refugees from Somalia, where the dispersal flows from the Netherlands shape street life in cities like Leicester and Bristol. This process is commonly referred to as “double migration” because of the formally recorded entry points into two EU states. However, such circuits are frequently far more fragmented, pointing to protracted and multiple processes of displacement that are profoundly damaging to human prospect. Here is an account of a five-stage journey, commencing with warfare and incorporating multiple borders, given by a migrant from Somalia for a Runnymede report:

I came to Britain, from Holland. There was a civil war, causing me to come out of my country looking for asylum. The Netherlands granted me asylum and granted me also nationality and I’ve been living there for about 11 years. Then I moved to Leicester with my family and my children—first of all when I left from Somalia I went to Yemen, then to France and then to the Netherlands, that was my route and Netherlands was the first country who granted me
asylum and gave me a home to live and an education like the Dutch language. When the thought came to my mind to come to Britain so many of my friends and almost all the family of my wife were in Britain at that time.47

During our conversations with proprietors on Stapleton Road we became aware that many proprietors had made multiple journeys before settling in Bristol. We have to imagine this journeying as an immense span of time, not only distance, that extends the border into a grueling physical and psychological terrain. For Figure 8 we began with tracing the outlines of these extended zigzag circuits, not so much a journey as a sequence of disruptions. Each stage requires remarkable reserves of energy, while each stage depletes the energy required. Not all proprietors articulated their extended journeys to us, but of those who did, a compelling narrative emerged of the kinds of agility and determination required in becoming a multiple migrant. The contorted journeys of proprietors on Stapleton Road are traced in jagged lines across the globe, extended from city to city and finally to the street: Somalia–Netherlands–Britain; China–Argentina–Britain; Jamaica–Spain–Britain; Sudan–France–Holland–Britain. These lines only hint at the arduous journeys and multiple relocations undertaken by the proprietors and the repertoires required to undertake protracted journeys across space and time.

Through proprietors’ narratives we became aware that contending with the lived realities of extended migration regimes and the practices of settling in across numerous locations requires high levels of endurance. The changes in circumstances in each border crossing often demand of the migrant distinctive shifts in occupation and in training. The extended journeys require a process of skilling, where migrants acquired new qualifications, professions, and proficiencies in multilingualism. Fifty percent of proprietors on Stapleton Road reported having a college or university education. Forty-one percent were competent in three or more languages. Often these language proficiencies extended beyond regional or national borders, connecting proprietors to wider networks of support and trade. However, the multiple journeys just as readily inflicted a de-skilling process on the migrant, so that existing or newly acquired work skills were not recognized or formal employment opportunities were restricted. This protracted process of movement across space and its accumulation of instabilities induces a “fractal precarity.”48
We spoke with Caleb, a proprietor born in Somalia who moved to France and learned to be a baker. He then moved to Holland, where he found it hard to set up a business due to restrictive business regulations at the city scale, compelling his final move to Bristol. Caleb now runs a French bakery on Stapleton Road. His story of multiple migrations incorporates a resourcefulness out of layers of restriction. Biyu, the only family member in the shop who spoke English, recounted their journey from China to Stapleton Road. She describes how her father, Chaoxiang, had first left China to migrate to Argentina, where he had learned to speak Spanish. He left Argentina following the global financial crisis and moved to Bristol and set up a carryout. In Bristol, Chaoxiang no longer needed to use Spanish as a skill set for his everyday life and livelihood, and he had not yet learned to speak English. Such levels of adaptation require of the migrant not only significant levels of determination in negotiating space, language, and work but a
speed of repeated transitions that is often difficult to contend with. The resourcefulness of the multiple migrant is a persistent pursuit, and in the process of journeying it is the racialized migrant who is most likely to confront such extended migratory regimes. The notion of a visa, or even visa-free access, is entirely foreclosed in these processes of movement. For large portions of the world’s population such infrastructures of mobility are denied by a moral economy of privileged mobilities and marketized citizenships.49

We learned from our surveys that 42 percent of proprietors on Stapleton Road had experienced some other form of work or occupation before setting up shop. Their combined skills and resources have reshaped Stapleton Road, but at great personal expense. Asad, who has had his shop on Stapleton Road for a year and previously was a “professional bus driver,” suggests, “About twelve, thirteen years ago the street was a ghost town, and now it’s full, full of migrant businesses. But the council don’t recognize our work.” The deeply hierarchical nature of extended migration regimes challenges the idea that assimilation—as dependent on the hard work of integration—is readily available to all migrant citizens. The processes through which Haaruun, Caleb, and Chaoxiang have “skilled up” by acquiring additional languages or upgrading occupational or educational status have not secured stable work prospects. These prohibitions exist alongside a lineage of integrationist policies that have emphasized a cultural process of assimilation that foregrounds “British values” and “community integration.”50 The elemental value of work as participation, alongside the unequal realities of life within the edge territories, is masked by these narrow ideologies of assimilation.

How do we make sense of these multiple journeys that involve numerous displacements and emplacements? The enormous contribution of Johan Galtung’s idea of “structural violence” is that it articulates the unending liability of discrimination—not only its damage to quality of life here and now, but also the systematic denial of human potential and a humane future.51 The institutional limitation of potential is key to showing how structural violence is writ into how people and places are disproportionally underresourced and overtargeted. Processes range from urban “racial banishment,” analyzed by Ananya Roy,52 to groups targeted for “societal abjection,” identified by Imogen Tyler.53 Disproportional underinvestment intersects with the additional violence of disproportional blame, apportioning to abject citizens their responsibility
for their circumstances. The contemporary vocabularies of blame written into the Immigration Act of 2014—“sham marriages” and “bogus students”—work to legitimize the punishments handed out by market and state. These processes are perhaps easier to place, since they involve explicit localities and institutions, but the multiple migrations described by Haaruun, Caleb, and Chaoxiang speak to a global arrangement of dispossession, where embargoes on human life are ordered through an expansive complex of displacements across space.

The limitations on visa infrastructures, the foreclosure of routes, and the shutting down of legal circuits is a systematic denial kept alive by two parallel but reciprocal architectures. The first is the state architecture of border brutality, which limits entry by limiting legality, and additionally limits citizenship through the right to work or to live with a spouse or with family. The hideous irony is that the state rhetoric of integration is systematically undermined by how states limit rights, securing "a vicious circle of disintegration." The second architecture evolves in response to the first, where dangerous migrant journeys emerge in parallel with migration profiteering. Both architectures exist through substantial circulations of money and profit, in either maintaining the border or circumventing it. As Ruben Andersson’s research on the Africa-Euro interface shows, these architectures also intersect with collusions across state, parastatal, and cartel infrastructures. Structural violence is imposed on human movement, and given the current nature of border arrangements that liberal democracies are prepared to advance, it is a “necropolitics” that continues to escalate in its human harm.

INTERIOR MARGINS
Alimah is a young man who, together with two friends, had recently opened a shop on the southern side of Stapleton Road at the time of our survey in 2015. He was undertaking a degree in electrical engineering at Coventry University, and the shop was a means for Alimah to pay his way through his studies. The shop is also something of an experiment between the three friends, and everything about the interior speaks of a low-budget, high-energy investment. Alimah had escaped the civil war in South Sudan by traveling to Libya, then to Greece, then to France, and then to Bristol, with much of his young adult life and energy absorbed in this contorted journey. He found a shop on Stapleton Road through word of mouth, for a rent of £750 per month. The street
is located within the Lawrence Hill Ward to the northeast of Bristol city center, and although property values in Bristol have escalated, rents on Stapleton Road are comparably lower than in most areas in the city. Mali, who has had his restaurant on Stapleton Road for three years, noticed, however, that “now rents are increasing quickly.” The Lawrence Hill Ward is ranked among the most-deprived 10 percent in England and Wales, with the highest levels of overcrowded households in Bristol.\textsuperscript{57}

A host of derogatory portrayals of the street have assisted in assigning its stigma. An article based on a night of journalistic evidence concluded that Stapleton Road was “the worst street in Britain,” with “Dozens of hookers, plying their seedy trade” and “Drug-pushers with their faces masked with scarves.”\textsuperscript{58} Pejorative caricatures of urbicide do little to deepen an understanding of place and the kinds of stresses people are living with. They also seldom connect with larger urban patterns and economies that transcend the city, including the illicit economies that emerge in close proximity to ports. Research on national rates of drug misuse suggests that Bristol has historically had comparably high levels of misuse, as well as the highest rates for heroin and crack cocaine use across core cities in England and Wales. Measures of fatalities and harm are increasing alongside government cuts to drug-related services.\textsuperscript{59} Geedi, who recently opened a tax firm on Stapleton Road, confirms that one of the challenges of running his business is that “there are so many crackheads around here.” Sig, who lives locally and has had her hair and beauty salon on Stapleton Road for more than fifteen years, says that “it’s crackheads and rubbish not collected by the council that are part of the problem, but it’s got better. I’ve lived here a long time, and I can’t stand the way people come in and talk nonsense about our street.”

During our fieldwork, we were aware of multiple kinds of pressure people were under. Dan, who has operated his pawnbroking and money remittance store on Stapleton Road since 1976, confirms that his shop is always busy, with customers pawning goods to raise cash, as well as regularly sending remittances on. Pressure was also visible in more acute forms and over the course of our morning surveys we became aware of a steady stream of adults who made their way to a street feeding scheme run by a crisis center. In addition to the daily provision of hot meals, the center provided life-skills training, a night shelter for women, and a food bank. After the lunchtime session I spoke with Val,
who said that the center had been running on Stapleton Road for about seven years. Val noted that there had recently been

a definite increase in meals from eighty meals served a day to five hundred to six hundred meals a day. It’s going to get worse. The reduction in benefits is a problem and we see the knock-on effects. . . .

This is a tough environment to work in, it’s flat-out work on pieced-together support, and there’s high uncertainty around our food supply. It’s “Ready, Steady, Cook” en masse. It’s very stressful.

The underlying nature of inequality and deprivation in the Lawrence Hill Ward filters into the social requirements of running a shop in ways that are attentive to people’s needs. Jeremiah, who has run his African curios shop on Stapleton Road for over fifteen years, suggests that “to be in a shop like this, you need social skills.” He has a degree in social work and used to be a probation officer; he confirms, “some people come in not to buy but just to talk.” According to Jeremiah, the challenges of running his shop extend from “expectations of bartering” to “a lack of public services, poor rubbish collection, and street cleanliness.”

The social life of the street is not confined to its immediate neighborhood, and Sig reflects on how well connected Stapleton Road is, underscoring the role of public infrastructure in supporting street ties, “The street is so well located, there’s a fantastic bus route and we’re near the station. I’ve got clients from all over the UK, so that’s really handy.”

Martishsa, who graduated from Bristol University in business studies and now runs her own hair salon on the street, confirms this importance of broader connections: “About 40 percent of my customers are not from Bristol, but are from all over the southwest as far as Newquay.”

Alimah’s shop is placed within these varied dimensions of an edge territory that is strategically located but suffering from an increasing lack of public services. From his space he has crafted a complex cultural world out of a narrow shop unit. The shop is painted with vigorous slashes of yellow and orange with linoleum flooring throughout. Although the space is subdivided into a sequence of four rooms, it is possible to see each room from the front of the shop, as well as the smokers who cluster in the outside courtyard to the rear. Each of the four spaces accommodates a distinctive social and physical experience shaped in response to the preferences and practices of its predominantly
male customers, who are largely from the Horn of Africa. Alimah’s shop is drawn in plan to capture how the space is composed of four distinct but related social zones (Figure 9). The first zone fronts onto the street and comprises an internet café with three computer terminals on one side and a counter with mobile phone accessories on the other. The MDF boards that separate the computers have been designed and assembled with care, and Alimah positions himself upfront on a stylish white swivel chair where he has command of the whole space. Phone covers, batteries, cables, and mobile phone cards adorn the wall behind him, and every inch of the front space is neatly arranged with these inexpensive goods. Aside from the standard fluorescent tubes that run the full length of the ceiling, the distinctive aesthetics distinguish Alimah’s shop from others along the street.

A dividing wall marks a clear threshold between the first and second zones, and from this point the shop transforms from a mercantile to a more semi-public setting. The second zone is dominated by a small pool table that is placed in the center of the room, enlivened by young men playing and observing the game. The third zone is the coffee area, reconfiguring practices of East African coffee-drinking street culture within this interior shop on Stapleton Road. Coffee culture has come to frame the social atmosphere of the street, with over ten shops on the street dedicated to meeting up and hanging out over a meal or a coffee. Often a large TV screen is an integral part of these spaces, and Al Jazeera is often on in the background. When we were conducting our fieldwork in another of these eating houses, Barack Obama was making his first address to the Organization of African Unity in its headquarters at Mandela Hall in Addis Ababa. The patrons turned to watch the address, vocalizing occasional responses. There is a sense in these spaces of an extended living room, where relaxed hanging out and political discussion merges with eating, reading, and chitchat. More-informal social gatherings spill out onto the pavement, too, with groups of people hanging out up and down the length of the street. Jamal comments, “I’ve been working here for fourteen years . . . there used to be more shops—there used to be a Greggs, a fruit and veg shop, and an English language center—and now there are more cafés.”

Last in the progressive sequence of social spaces in Alimah’s shop is an outdoor space only accessible through the shop, and this is where the smokers gather. The sequence of spaces offers a range of social experiences, accommodating multiple transactions and social activities within
the tight arrangement of the sixty square meters of space. In drawing the plan, we hoped to capture the space as a graduated sequence of sociability. We have purposefully drawn the plan as it is lived, giving the same line thickness to a computer keyboard as to a chair or a wall. The plan shows how the shop is composed of numerous small increments combining to make a differentiated whole. Thresholds, tables, and computer terminals all contribute to the small clusters of situations, from playing cards to checking emails to having a coffee with a friend. The drawing denotes an everyday material culture particular to Stapleton Road and its routine of inhabitations. Within Alimah’s space we see culture manifest from the inside out. The spaces are not fixed; in their loose composition they allow Alimah to effectively run a number of parallel social and economic experiments and to shift things around to accommodate changes. Through a micro record of inhabitation, we become conscious of the selection, positioning, and fluidity of objects that are placed in relation to social routines and economic experiments. Michele Lancione refers to this view as “a vitalist approach to the margin,” acknowledging not only the dense composition of human and nonhuman forms but also a point of view not determined from the center. Alimah’s space is similarly shaped from the outside in. As an interior of the margins, it is a place that emerges out of the intersections of multiple migrations, still-affordable rentals, an economy veering toward self-employment, and youthful ambition (Figure 10).

The aggregation of individuals along this seemingly banal stretch of
street provides a space that is shared both within and beyond networks of kin and gender. In the southern portion of Stapleton Road, diasporic belonging has emerged through the extended displacement of people from the Horn of Africa, traversing the complex passage of European asylum systems and citizenship, and finding ways to a street in the edge territories of Bristol. This is not the first significant link forged between Africa and Bristol. From the city’s position on the River Avon a substantial port emerged, and with it, shameful profiteering in the slave trade. From Bristol the floating prisons and death carriers transported hundreds of thousands of people from West and Central Africa across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and North and South America. The transatlantic slave trade provided the architecture for the magnitude of incarcerated displacement, and Bristol, as a key node within the global dominion of the centers and margins of slavery, amassed considerable wealth through the process. The city developed its own spatial history of extended cores and peripheries. Features of marginalization captured by places like the Lawrence Hill Ward connect with asylum dispersal programs, the availability of cheap social housing, and comparatively low land values for rent. Such margins also make visible the reduction of state services, often accompanied by fairly loose applications of local
regulatory and planning frameworks. Within these margins of the city, interior alterations, cultural experiments with low-budget spaces and high-energy adaptations shape the interior life and livelihood of the street. The materiality of Stapleton Road, with its narrow-fronted shops and deep extensions to the rear, provides room to accommodate the alternative and creative forms of encounter and exchange that run along the depths of these units. Transactions are differentially paced, from the commercial and highly visible space at the front of shops to the more obscure, semi-private spaces at the back. These interior margins reveal the unpredictable overlap of global place, urban topography, and civic energy that is hard to quantify and qualify. The textured depth of the street exists beyond the street facade, part of but apart from the categories of urbcide that mask the complex life of margins. Interior margins like Alimah’s shop evoke the place of the intimate in partially reconfiguring the global.

PLACING THE MARGINS, LOCATING MIGRATION
When Ruth Wilson Gilmore ask us to comprehend the racialization of space endemic to capitalist economies and sovereign structures, she prompts us to consider how multiple scales—always spatial and temporal—locate the long solicitation of racial violence core to state-building, and by extension, city-building. Placing the margins is a way of bringing in the relations of history and geography for a deeper and wider understanding of how migration systems are a core to state-making and city-making projects in the UK. This chapter shows that policy is never simply responsive to migration; a dense complex of state actions, with intended and unintended consequences, actively plays a role in how people become displaced and where they become emplaced. Through the place of policy we come to see how colonization shifts into coloniality, revealing a spatial configuration of dislocation and the racialized geographies of social sorting. Tracing the proprietors’ routes to Narborough Road, it also becomes clear how policies intersect to produce an expansive web of marginality. State decisions on how to manage the fallout from the global financial crisis; on whether and how to be involved in international political intervention; on where to disperse asylum claimants; on when to invite migrants in on the basis of their labor value and when to restrict their right to work—all coagulate to shape the edge territories.

In placing the margins it is the overlaps and not the binaries of globalism and intimacy, and of policy and inhabitation, that matter. From
Alimah’s space we can see the world as an encrustation of politics and economics saturated in the bricks and mortar of his shop. Alimah’s shop invokes the scale of the migrant in the overlaps of near and far, in the lively intersections of protracted journeys and youthful aspirations. A vast amount of imagination goes into the making of his experiment, and it is impossible to comprehend the immensity of his effort without understanding the unduly difficult route he has been required to taken simply to live in the world as a young person.

The particular locus of the city matters to the analysis too, and in situating the interior margin in a periphery of Bristol we can reflect on how racialized processes of human movement and restriction are anticipated in preceding centuries of slave trade and colonization. These global displacements and contorted circuits of migration are linked by an underlying ethos of subordination, where labor value is given higher status than human value, and where human value is divided into relative categories of citizenship. The scale of the global projects of subordination and the vast surpluses of profit generated by these endeavors have normalized human displacements and the entitlement to sort and restrict human mobility in brutal ways. These geopolitical projects are the bedrock from which the draconian attitudes toward border control now grow, despite the claims to humanity and social justice in which liberal democracies locate themselves. Crucially, edge territories bring together the rich and assertive impertinence of crossings. This forms a place that can be fixed as neither a “stable” community nor a singularly coherent working class, but rather as a responsive multiculture attuned to struggle and adept in adjustment. Amaan, Yesim, Jaffer, Saadli, Haaruun, Caleb, Biyu, Chaoxiang, Asad, Alimah, Geedi, and Jamal are migrants of the margins whose lives are centered on struggle, not of the grand sort, but nonetheless of the kind that demands significant human energy across a lifetime. From the margins, they learn new languages, change jobs, acquire additional skills, become self-employed, set up shop. In this edge territory they remain a vital part of the whole, outside of the main body.