INTRODUCTION

The Context and Motivation for Research

In 2009 my wife and I took up residence in the Cornwall Estate on the southern edge of a city in south-west England and joined with others who were also relocating to the estate to form a small Christian community. Our aim was to learn how a community such as ours, which was focused on mission, could engage sensitively and effectively with long-standing communities on an estate that had been shaped by a history of complex, deep-rooted deprivation and marginalisation.

It was evident from the indices of deprivation published by local government,¹ as well as from our own experience of living on the estate, that serious and chronic deprivation was associated with a specific location defined by the boundary of the estate and that this association seemed to have the effect of setting the estate apart, both physically and socially, from the rest of the city. It also became apparent to us that attempts throughout the history of the estate to address issues of deprivation or improve overall living conditions had met with very little success. The prevailing impression was that there were qualities inherent within the place itself that caused resistance to change.

In this context questions emerged in a number of important areas. The first set of questions was about the nature of the relationship between certain forms of deprivation and a specific location. We were interested to understand why the prospects for a good quality of life were significantly less for a person born and raised on the estate than they were for those from elsewhere in the city.

The second set of questions related to ways in which the association of deprivation and location might be understood theologically. Of particular interest were theological

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¹ South West Observatory Core Unit, *Indices of Deprivation, 2010: Bristol Summary*, (Bristol, June 2011). The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 (IMD 2010) is a Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level measure of multiple deprivation, and is made up of seven LSOA level domain indices which measure deprivation in the following areas: income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training; barriers to housing; living environment and crime. There are also two supplementary indices: income deprivation affecting children and older people (*Indices of Deprivation*, p.5).
notions of power, including ideas about ‘principalities and powers’, and whether these might offer insights about the ‘stubborn’ nature of the place and its apparent ability to resist change.²

The third set of questions were specifically about mission and the ways in which mission might be conceived of and practiced in the face of long-standing patterns of deprivation. Two central questions that arose in relation to mission concerned the potential for place itself to undergo a process of transformation and related to this was the issue of how Christian ideas of hope might be conceived when the experience of daily life on the estate was often found to be deeply disturbing and holding very little prospect of improvement.

This thesis is an attempt to address these questions and I have drawn upon them to compose the following research question:

**In areas where there are deep-rooted patterns of multiple deprivations, what are the implications for the theology and practice of mission afforded by a theological perspective on particular human social space?**

The underlying motivation for this thesis relates directly to mission; it is the desire of the Christian community to have a better understanding about how a theological perspective of the Cornwall Estate might open up a new hope for the transformation of the place and a clearer sense about the kinds of practices that it might pursue in order to participate in such a transformation. With this in view, I will first introduce the estate itself. I will then discuss the research question in relation to a number of contemporary strands within mission studies and will observe that mission studies in themselves do not provide adequate grounds for exploring the relationship of deprivation was in my view suggestive of theological perspectives on power and the powers—especially as expounded through the work of Walter Wink—and this informed the initial lines of enquiry. There were however particular difficulties with this approach, not least the difficulty in understanding how theological notions of spiritual power might relate to the actual lived experience of deprivation and how the particular relationship between power and location might be configured. It seemed that much of the theology about the powers embodied an unwelcome dualism between theological notions of power on the one hand and the social-political arrangements of power on the other.
deprivation to place in the context of mission and in the light of this I will propose an alternative approach.

The Cornwall Estate

‘Council estates’ constitute a particular sub-culture in British society associated with chronic multiple deprivations and experiences of persistent social, political and economic marginalisation. The inhabitants of estates are regularly the victims of negative representations and stereotypes in both mainstream and social media where the derogatory term ‘Chav’ is a common designation. The term ‘council estate’ or simply ‘estate’ refers to large-scale housing projects built between the 1930s and 1980s to which populations were moved en-mass as urban slums began to be cleared from city centres. The philosophy of design, the physical construction and the character of estates has changed dramatically over five decades. The specific focus of this study is the Cornwall Estate in South West England which is one of those built in the inter-war years. A series of housing acts between 1912 and 1935 represented an historic shift in British public housing policy for the ‘working class’ and “for the first time in our history, local authorities undertook the great social task of housing the people.” This resulted in a remarkable increase in housing stock in the interwar years. However, from the outset estates were beset by a complex

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4 Peter Hall, Cities of Tomorrow (Malden U.S.A and Oxford U.K.: Blackwell, 2002); Garner, Working Class; Hanley, Estates. The era of large-scale house building by local authorities was brought to a close in 1985 by Margaret Thatcher’s government who radically changed housing policy by transferring a large amount of Government housing stock to private ownership under the ‘right to buy’ scheme.

5 Jevons and Madge, Housing Estates, p. 87. The important housing acts that led to large-scale building in the interwar years were those of 1919, 1923, 1924, 1930, 1933 and 1935 (Jevons and Madge, Housing Estates, p.11).

6 Housing stock in Bristol increased by over 15% in the interwar years by municipal action alone (Jevons and Madge, Housing Estates, p.87). As a percentage of Britain’s housing stock, council house occupation increased rapidly from 1% in 1914 to 10% in 1938. Much of the new housing was built in outer suburbs to clear slums from the inner cities (Hanley, Estates, p. 61).
interaction of social, political and ideological issues. An early priority was to clear
cities of slum housing and move people out of the terrible physical conditions that
existed in many city centres and industrial areas at the beginning of the twentieth
century. Mixed with this was the desire to build ‘homes fit for heroes’ for those
returning from the First World War.

The physical design of these early estates was significantly shaped by the progressive
ideas of Ebenezer Howard and others who developed the principles of ‘garden cities’,
a planning concept that conveyed a utopian sense of place. As a consequence estates
were comprised of low-density housing and were based on a layout of streets fanning
out in a circular pattern from a series of squares. The houses themselves were small
‘cottage style’ terraced and semi-detached; there were three slightly different designs
of houses which were replicated across the whole country but all typically had large
gardens to encourage the growing of fruit and vegetables. This approach to design
represented a very progressive development from the tightly packed ‘back-to-back’
housing which had characterised the slums.

The Cornwall Estate is an early example of a development that emerged as a result of
these political imperatives and design ideals. However despite good intentions, like
many such estates developed around the peripheries of cities, it typically lacked
adequate provision of basic amenities such as transport, shops, health care, education
and employment opportunities. The experience of the first wave of residents to live on
the Cornwall Estate was very mixed and marked the beginning of a difficult and
disturbing history that was to be characterised by a profound and complex set of
issues around identity, social stigma, geographic isolation and economic hardship.

It is now almost eighty years since the first residents were moved to the Cornwall
Estate. Through the intervening period there have been numerous initiatives and
considerable economic investment by local and national government, charities and
Christian faith groups to address the issues faced by estate residents. Whilst changes

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7 On slum clearance see Hanley, Estates, pp. 18, 25, 51-53, 61, 74. For an early account of the nature
and effects of these estates, see George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (London: Penguin, 2001).
9 For a development of the Garden-City philosophy see Hall, Cities, pp.87-141; Hanley, Estates, p.20.
10 See Appendix 1 for map showing the pattern of street layouts on the estate.
11 Jevons and Madge, Housing Estates, pp.19-20. See Appendix 2 for pictures of typical estate houses
and street scene.
12 Whilst most of it was built in the early 1930s, it was extended in the 1950s by the addition of low-
grade concrete houses at its western fringe—again based on the low-density principle.
13 Jevons and Madge, Housing Estates, pp.5-87.
have occurred and some improvements have been achieved, there is little evidence of
any underlying change which would substantially improve the situation of the estate,
especially in relation to the rest of the city. Indeed it might be argued that the patterns
of marginalisation and deprivation that became apparent in the early period of the
estate’s life have in fact become more deeply entrenched so that the situation of the
estate is analogously as bad as it was eighty years ago.

The denominational churches have not been immune to the challenges of life in the
estate setting. They have experienced decades of numerical decline and have
struggled to maintain a sense of ministry that relates to the difficult circumstances of
estate life. As congregations have reached a critically low level there is a fresh and
urgent impetus for a new and in-depth investigation into approaches to mission and
ministry in these contexts.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{An Investigation of Place as a Theme within Mission Studies}

In this section I will explore the extent to which the theme of place has been
researched within the field of mission studies. I will also discuss the spatial
configurations that are implicit within certain areas of missiology by reviewing three
specific areas in the field; namely the development of contextual missiology (drawing
on the example of Vincent Donovan); the growing interest in culture as a paradigm
for mission in the North American context; and the development of ‘urban theology’
that took place from 1970s onwards in British cities and its subsequent influence on
contemporary theologies of place.

Through this discussion I intend to locate the research question within the broader
discipline of mission studies with the twofold purpose of identifying work within the
field that is relevant to my own research and also identifying the particular ways in
which the findings presented through this study might make constructive
contributions to the field of mission studies itself.

\textsuperscript{14} The challenges faced by estate-based ministry in our city are articulated by Joe Hasler, \textit{Crying out for a Polycentric Church: Christ Centred and Culturally Focused Congregations} (Maidstone, UK: Church
in Society, 2006); Joe Hasler, \textit{Mind, Body and Estates: Outer Estate Ministry and Working Class
Culture} (London: National Estates Churches Network, 2000) and more widely by the National Estates Churches Network (http://www.nationalestatechurches.org/index.html [accessed on 06.03.2015]).
The Development of Contextual Missiology

A general understanding of the situation has been established by carrying out a broad review of mission literature which demonstrates that place\textsuperscript{15} is not considered as a subject in its own right in any of the major texts about mission.\textsuperscript{16} Whilst the subject of place is occasionally discussed in more specialist publications\textsuperscript{17} it is clear that it has

\textsuperscript{15} Whist I do not intend to define ‘place’ at this point, it is important to understand that ‘place’ is used throughout the thesis not only to include the geographic and physical elements of location, but also the cultural, social, spiritual and ideological aspects and the potential dynamic interactions that occur between these elements.

\textsuperscript{16} Included here is a selected sample of works reviewed. Other works reviewed are referenced throughout the introduction. Also of note is the work done by Stanley Skreslet in a global review of all doctoral dissertations in mission studies (written in English) between 1992 and 2001. Of 925 PhDs listed and categorised there is no reference to any dissertation that explores any aspect of the subject of place (Stanley H. Skreslet, ‘Doctoral dissertations on mission: ten-year update, 1992-2001’, in International Bulletin Of Missionary Research, 27:3 (2003) pp. 98-133 [accessed December 15, 2014]).


not been considered within the discipline of mission studies as a subject warranting research or discussion in its own right. This broad omission of place as a theme within mission studies is significant and furthermore, notable for three reasons. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, is the argument that mission by its very nature is ‘located’ or ‘placed’ so that the physicality of the location with its intricate relationships to cultural, social, spiritual and ideological aspects of place will have important bearing upon the way that mission is conceived.18 Secondly, the development since the 1950s within mission studies of interest in context and contextualisation, including the study of culture, belief systems and social arrangements that are found in different places around the world19 makes the omission of place itself as a subject of study all the more outstanding. Thirdly, that there is almost no acknowledgment within mission studies of the significant advances made in the study of place over the last five decades within disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology and human geography.20 Although there is such a notable lack of overt engagement with place, it is important to observe that mission studies are not without spatial elements even if their inclusion is implicit rather than explicit.21 By engaging with the three areas of contextualisation, the gospel and culture, and urban theology, I will discuss the particular ways in which

Michael Moynagh includes a limited discussion on Manuel Castells’s concept of the ‘space of flows’ which presents ideas about how the network society is transforming experiences of local places and its relevance to mission (Moynagh, Church, pp.90-91).

18 The ‘located’ character of mission is expressed, for example, by Hesselgrave and Rommen who state that “contextualization … means that the possibilities for renewal must first of all be sensed locally and situationally, yet always within the framework of contemporary inter-dependence …” (Hesselgrave and Rommen, Contextualization, p.32). By this definition contextualisation is related specifically to the sphere of place through terms such as ‘locally’, ‘situationally’, and the ‘inter-dependence’ between ‘first’ and ‘third’ world contexts (pp.31-32), and the use of these terms results in an implied spatiality within the discussion. However at no point within their extensive analysis of contextualization do they engage with the theory or theology of place itself.


20 An overview of these developments is given in Tim Cresswell, Place: A Short Introduction (Malden, MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell, 2004). Further references are made to these developments in Chapter 2.

21 The influence of place in mission is, for example, clearly demonstrated by Tim Noble in his study of the relationship between spirituality and place in the hesychasm of Nil Sorsky and in Ignatius Loyola with particular reference to mission—and in the case of Ignatius the relationship of mission to the spatiality of the city (Noble, Construction, pp.67–80).
aspects of place are actually incorporated into these areas of mission studies and the inherent conceptions of place that they carry. I will also discuss the influence that these inherent spatialities have had on the development of the subject.

Having first appeared in the late 1950s, the concept of ‘contextualisation’ has become an essential and integral discipline within mission studies. Contextualisation refers to a wide-ranging discussion that has been shaped through a period of growing post-colonial consciousness about ‘difference’—especially the manner in which difference is defined by the emerging ‘first world’ and ‘third world’ or ‘majority world’ settings—and the particular way that the gospel might be translated between these different situations. Amongst the various theological understandings of the term there is a marked correlation between the notion of ‘context’ and ‘culture’, where culture refers to diverse social, political and economic environments and linguistic characteristics of a region or people group. Critically, the aspect of ‘context’ that is absent from almost all texts on the subject of contextualisation is that of place. The absence of place as a theme in contextual missiology through the 1960s and 1970s reflects a similar absence within other disciplines including the social sciences. However the continued absence of the theme within mission studies from the late 1970s onwards marks an important point of departure where the significant

22 The contemporary understanding of mission in relation to ‘context’ first appeared in the 1950s (Kirk, What, p.91) whilst the first use of the term ‘contextualisation’ was by the Theological Education Fund in 1970 (Hesselgrave and Rommen, Contextualization, p.28; Bosch, Transforming, pp.420-423). For ‘contextualisation’ as a standard concept within mission studies see Hesselgrave and Rommen, Contextualization, pp.33-35; Vincent J. Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered (London: SCM, 2001) pp.1-150; Jenkinson and O'Sullivan, Trends, pp.3-85; Spencer, Christian, pp171-175; Guthrie, Missions, pp.101-110; Padilla, Mission, pp.103-127; Robert J. Schreiter, ‘Contextualization from a World Perspective’, in Pittman et.al., Ministry, pp.315-327; Hesselgrave, Communicating, pp.131-137; Moynagh, Church, pp.3-50,168-325. Bevans and Schroeder, Constants, pp.32-72; Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, p.22; Bosch, Transforming, pp.420-432; Nazir-Ali, Mission, pp.1-152.

23 Hesselgrave and Rommen refer to ‘third world’ settings (Hesselgrave and Rommen, Contextualization, pp.33-35.) and Padilla discusses ‘majority world’ settings (Padilla, Mission, pp.103-104.) An extended discussion on contemporary understandings and approaches to contextualization is presented by Hesselgrave and Rommen, Contextualization, pp.37-196.


developments that were taking place within the social sciences in relation to the study of place, were significantly overlooked.\textsuperscript{26}

The detachment of contextual missiology from the mainstream study of place left it without some of the critical theoretical and theological frameworks that would have enabled mission studies to engage more rigorously and sensitively with important contextual themes.\textsuperscript{27} These include questions about the perception of place within the colonial and post-colonial mind-set and the way in which these perceptions shaped the relationship between mission and territory; the particular ways in which various cultures have quite different conceptions of place and that by contesting these settled meanings mission in effect advances cultural dominance or colonial subjugation;\textsuperscript{28} understandings about the relationship between ideological power and place, so that place becomes complicit in the extension of ideological and theological ideals;\textsuperscript{29} the changing way in which urbanisation and globalisation have become the driving forces


\textsuperscript{27} In observing the almost complete lack of engagement between mission studies (and indeed theology) and social scientific theories of place I do not intend to give the impression that the oversight is solely the responsibility of those within theology and missions studies. Whilst social scientists do engage with spatial theory in relation to ancient cultures and indigenous peoples (for example, Steven Feld and Keith H Basso, \textit{Senses of Place} [Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996]; Mary Douglas, \textit{Purity and Danger} [London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002]) none of the studies from the social sciences drawn on throughout the course of this thesis engaged with contemporary theological perspectives on place, even as a means of investigating the spirituality of place.


in how place is experienced, dramatically increasing mobility and undermining the association between identity and place and connection to a sense of ‘home-place’. Theories of place which are of central importance in themes such as these are largely missing from the discussions that took place as world mission sought to adapt to the post-colonial era and the legacy of the slave trade and colonial subjugation in which it was so deeply implicated. Although the post-colonial context gave rise to searching enquiries about the relationship between Western culture and the gospel and the extent to which Western cultural hegemony was transposed or imposed as an integral aspect of the mission effort, there was no discernible development of theological enquiry about place or even appreciation of the importance of place within this context.

The framing of contextualisation in terms of culture without explicit reference to place did not however leave it without examples of spatial narratives, even if these were predominantly implicit. A simple but striking example of such a narrative is seen in Vincent Donovan’s critical appraisal of the use of the ‘mission compound’ as a colonial method for extending the kingdom of God. Donovan states:

The theology of salvation was the theory on which all mission activity was based, out of which that activity flowed. The mission compound with its many necessary buildings was the symbol of that theory and theology where the


An example of an ethnographic study of place which engages with conflicting perspectives of place in tribal and western contexts, including the part played by mission in that conflict, is by Miriam Kahn who began her research in Papua New Guinea in 1976 (Miriam Kahn, ‘Your Place or Mine: Sharing Emotional Landscapes in Wamira, Papua New Guinea’, in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996) pp.167-196.
compound stood for the church, the ark and haven of salvation, the repository of grace, and, indeed, of God. Outside the compound lay the vast area of tribal life and pagan culture empty of all worth and goodness and holiness and salvation. The missionary movement was a movement away from the tribal and human life and culture to the church where salvation resided. Donovan’s description establishes a link between the mission enterprise and particular ideas about the meaning and arrangement of place so that the geographical confines of the mission compound and the materiality of its buildings were specifically associated with the presence of God and the means of salvation. Central to this construction of place is the association of identity with location where to be ‘inside’ the compound was to be a recipient of God’s grace and in contrast, to be ‘outside’ was to be a pagan “empty of all worth and goodness.” In this arrangement salvation involved movement; not only the cultural and social movement that Donovan describes, but also the implied spatial movement “away” from the tribe that is on the outside and into the place of salvation.

The relationship which is of particular relevance to this discussion is the link between theological constructs and material location represented by the mission compound and its buildings. I will argue in Chapter 2 that this is precisely the type of relationship upon which ideological power is predicated, and that without the spatial element—that is the geographical location and material construction of the compound—the ideology (or theology) would find little if any traction. Mission methodology of this type entails contestation between places, or more precisely the contestation between the meanings that are associated with places. Thus, the experience of salvation involved not only a movement from one place to another (that is from ‘outside’ to ‘inside’) but also the adoption of a new mapping of the world which included for the ‘pagan’ not only the acceptance that their ancestral home was in fact on the ‘outside’ but also that the entire social-spatial arrangement upon which their life was predicated was to be replaced.

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34 Donovan, Christianity, pp.xvii-xviii.
35 Donovan, Christianity, pp.xviii.
36 This conceptualisation of ‘space’ is discussed by Mayra Rivera Rivera who observes that in contrast to pre- or post-modern conceptualisations, “modern sovereignty is inherently linked to space … and has been imagined as a crisis between interior and exterior spaces. The bounded space of civil order was set against the exteriorized ‘nature’ of the ‘primitive’ societies, and modernization was conceived as the ‘internalization of the outside’, the ‘civilization of nature’” (Rivera Rivera, Margins, p.118).
37 Cresswell, In Place, pp.149-162.
38 Donovan, Christianity, pp.12-14. For discussion about mission and place in the context of indigenous people groups see Eastham, Dreaming; Tinker, Full Circle.
Donovan’s writing indicates that this conflict between the social-spatial hegemonies of the mission compound and the Masai strikes at the foundations of the Masai’s world view. For example the Masai’s concept of the land as pasture for their cattle stood in stark contrast to the western idea of agriculture:

[F]arming is an anathema to him [the Masai]. The Masai word for farmer is *olmeg* and is truly a term of opprobrium. He uses it for everything that is non-Masai, the word *olmeg* means Batu, European, barbarian.\(^{39}\)

Given these deeply held understandings of the land, it is difficult to imagine the extent to which conversion or salvation for the Masai entailed a detachment from their own tribal and ‘clan’ identity\(^{40}\) and indeed engenders questions about whether such a detachment is in fact possible without causing significant personal and social conflict and confusion.\(^{41}\) Furthermore this exemplifies how the implicit spatiality of salvation embodied through the mission station conveyed both a colonising ideology, which associated mission with the conquering of territory,\(^{42}\) and particular strong associations between place and notions of salvation which were inherent within it. The association between certain conceptions of place and the theology of salvation was not however restricted to the experience of the Masai and when writing the preface to the second edition of *Christianity Rediscovered* in 1982, Donovan observes similarities between patterns of mission in North America and those which he experienced in East Africa:

[A] church life that is not much more relevant to the human life lived in the neighbourhoods surrounding it than the mission compound was to the tribal life of the Africans. The parish church could very well be the mission compound of the American scene, a beleaguered, outpost colony in an alien world.\(^{43}\)

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\(^{39}\) Donovan, *Christianity*, p.17  
\(^{40}\) For the distinction between ‘tribal’ and ‘clan’ identities in the Masai see Donovan, *Christianity*, p.39.  
\(^{41}\) Sam Gill gives an account of alternative spatial senses of nomadic peoples in her account of Aborigines in Australia: “A net of tracks rather than a sealed territory becomes an identifying image of the land … [whilst] defence of territorial boundaries is not key any more.” She goes on to say that it is still the case that “identity is inseparable from territory and their [Aborigine] ontology is strongly spatial” [Gill, *Territory*, p.299].  
\(^{43}\) Donovan, *Christianity*, p.xviii.
The subject of the ‘relevance’ of the church which Donovan refers to here has been a central concern in North American mission studies from the early 1980s and it is this sphere of mission studies that I will explore next.44

Context and Culture in North American Mission Studies

The texts reviewed here, which represent an important and influential movement within North American mission studies, present a distinctive departure from notions of mission in terms of gaining territory and a turn towards mission as engaging with ‘culture’.45 The place-related themes which are so strongly suggested in Donovan’s work are not engaged with and the framing of the discussion is predominantly with reference to culture, in which the church-society relationship has been defined in terms of cultural-distance, with virtually no reference to the function of place.46

A particularly influential series of studies in which the gospel-culture relationship has been axiomatic was inspired by the work of Bishop Leslie Newbigin, who in 1982 established the ‘Gospel in Our Culture’ program.47 Newbigin’s work was foundational for the ‘Gospel in our Culture Network’48 and has also been influential...

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45 Roxburgh, Missional, p.38, 51-52. Although not related to the American network I am referencing here, it is noteworthy that Bevans and Schroeder’s arguments develop along similar lines. In moving decisively away from colonial models of mission that employ militaristic terminology and frame advances in mission in terms of ‘taking territory’ they seem to abandon notions of place altogether and instead speak of “social, cultural, religious and political aspects of the situation” (Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, pp.19-22).
46 There has been some development in the theology of place in North America in relation to ‘ecotheology’. This is a relatively limited development and there is no evidence that it has influenced the broader missiological conversation and the question of relevance: Douglas John Hall, Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) p.122; Conradie, Towards, p.10; Tinker, Circle, p.219.
47 The ‘Gospel in Our Culture Network’ drew specifically on the work of Leslie Newbigin to explore the relationship between the gospel and culture in a North American context. An account of Newbigin’s work as a basis for this study is given in George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (eds.), The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp.1-20. Analysis and discussion of Newbigin’s work in this context is found in: http://www.gocn.org/ (accessed 22.12.2014); George R. Hunsberger, Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin’s Theology of Cultural Plurality (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Hunsberger and Van Gelder, Church.
in the more recent ‘Allelon Missional Series’. Although these studies have made important contributions towards advances in missiology there is no inclusion of place as a category of enquiry and in the light of significant advances in the understanding of the relationship of culture to place within the social sciences—such as that stemming from the work of Mary Douglas in the 1960s—this should be considered as a serious omission with probable long-term consequences for the study and practice of mission. Furthermore, the sense in which spatial language is used within these studies is not dissimilar to the method employed by Donovan in that, on the few occasions when spatiality is observed, there is no actual engagement with the theories of place that undergird the subject of the discussion. This pattern of argument is seen in the writing of George Hunsberger who makes the only direct references to place in the entire ‘Gospel in Our Culture’ series. He proposes a ‘missional hermeneutic’ which is predicated on the “the missional locatedness” of the “sent community.” Hunsberger states:

The sent community as location immediately implicates other layers of location. The community has been sent to be the people of God ‘at this time, in this place’ ... ‘Located’ questions, then, are those that arise out of that tangible place and time in which the sent community lives and in terms of which it seeks to discern its particular charism and vocation. And that implicates further the community’s location in its publicly present witness in that time and place. Its mission itself is the proper location from which the Bible is interpreted.

Whilst this is an interesting discussion about hermeneutical methodology, Hunsberger’s use of the language of ‘place’ and ‘space’ is restricted to social and cultural senses of those terms and makes no reference to theories of place.

Furthermore, by defining the church’s “locatedness” in terms of it being a “sent

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50 Douglas, Purity.


52 Hunsberger, Church, pp.16-17.

53 Hunsberger, Proposals, pp.8-9.
community” with a “social location,” Hunsberger appears to maintain many of the spatial characteristics which were apparent in Donovan’s analysis of the mission station almost thirty years earlier.54

The review of this literature indicates that constructions of place are implicit within these influential series of mission studies and that these constructions, whilst unacknowledged, have important effects upon the argumentation of the series. They also have a degree of continuity with earlier missiological texts that sought to address the challenges of mission at the end of the colonial era, such as those expressed by Donovan. Continuity occurs as the ongoing missiological discussion is predicated on the existence of particular fixed spatial arrangements, where the church or mission community tends to be conceived of as a bounded location defining a distinct ‘inside’/’outside’ paradigm in which the inside is associated with salvation and the outside with ‘being lost’. Within this conception, boundaries maintain a cultural distinction between inside/outside so that salvation involves a journey into a new cultural place and the adoption of a new cognitive map of society which repositions the newly-saved person in respect to all of their former social relationships.

More recently, two distinct developments are evident in relation to notions of place amongst those who are associated with the gospel-culture debate. The first is an exploration of place in terms of ‘localities’ or ‘neighbourhoods’ in response to rapidly changing patterns of globalisation.55 Globalisation is understood as the ‘new context for mission’ and the outworking of globalisation is perceived as the erosion and even destruction of arrangements of place that enable human flourishing.56 In this context


mission is conceived as participation in the development of places which are humanising, in that they foster interdependent community relationships within an identifiable geographical location whose scale is defined in terms of walkable distances; such places are defined as a ‘neighbourhood’ \(^{57}\) or ‘new parish’ \(^{58}\). The second development relates to the notion that those involved in mission are present as strangers or visitors and such an approach involves a reconceptualising of place. Place is no longer seen from the colonial perspective as ‘territory to be taken’ but instead the missionary comes as a vulnerable guest dependent upon the hospitality of others. \(^{59}\) Bevans and Schroeder have conceptualised this approach to mission as “entering into someone else’s garden” so that the missionary’s presence is that of a respectful learner, as much the recipient of knowledge as the bearer. \(^{60}\)

Whilst these developments indicate a changing conceptualising of place with the context of mission, the theory of place itself remains largely unexplored in these studies and there is no critical reflection upon the formulations of place involved in either of these streams of thinking. A brief analysis of these studies is presented in a later part of the discussion where it is observed that their conceptualisations of place are inadequate for contemporary missiology and that they have a limiting and potentially detrimental effect on the practice of mission.

Urban Theology and Mission in Britain


\(^{58}\) Sparks et.al., Parish, pp.23; Leonard Hjalmarson, Introduction to a Missional Spirituality (Charleston: CreateSpace, 2014), pp.65-72. Mission studies in North America and Britain are characterised by a significant lack of engagement between contextual missiology and urban theology. I discuss the British situation later, but the distance between these disciplines is exemplified here in that there is no critical engagement in the series currently under discussion with the 2004 book, edited by Kathryn Tanner, where authors “rethink contextual theology in spatial terms” by investigating everyday sites in five American cities (Kathryn Tanner (ed.), Spirit in the Cities: Searching for Soul in the Urban Landscape [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004] pp.xi-xii).


\(^{60}\) Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, pp.33-34.
Urban theology, which was developed as a particular form of contextual theology from the 1970s onwards, has shown a consistent engagement with various aspects of place. Whilst diverse in its approach, most urban theology has been shaped by a concern for the ‘inner city’ or the ‘ghetto’ as a particular type of place associated with those who are socially, politically and economically marginalised.

British urban theology is notable for its deep engagement with places associated with the social, cultural and material aspects of the urban geography of the inner city. Whilst place itself is rarely identified as a specific subject there is evidence that, through its association of theology with location, a distinctive spatial sense emerged within British urban theology. It is noticeable that when compared to the emergence of place as a subject within human geography during the same period, there is a compatibility between themes such as the association of ideological power and meaning with places, and the recognition of ‘local’ or ‘situated’ knowledge.

The spatial characteristics that developed through the early stages of British urban theology were influenced in part by the coming together of two distinctive elements, namely a strong association with the core ideas of South American liberation.
theology and a particular geographical attachment to a distinctive type of social-political location referred to as the ‘inner city’.

Important ideas that were drawn from Liberation theology included understandings that God has a “bias to the oppressed,” that the church is called to a “preferential option for the poor” and that the experience of the oppressed is the primary point of departure for theology. Inherent within these ideas was the notion that poverty should be conceived of, not solely as an ontological state, but as a function of hegemonic arrangements based on hierarchical structures of race and class.

Hegemonic arrangements such as these are predicated on spatial arrangements so that poverty was not only related to social, economic and political marginalisation, but also critically with geographic marginalisation. Consequently there was an association, or more accurately an ‘expression of solidarity’, between a set of theological ideals, the people who espoused them and certain types of physical location.

A similar pattern is discernible within British urban theology in the 1970s and 1980s where specific links were formed between theological ideas influenced by Liberation Theology and the social-political location of the ‘inner-city’. In this way theological ideas and practices became related to specific places and the people who lived in them. Indeed a number of these places might be considered iconic within urban

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66 Shannahan, *Voices*, p.102.

67 Rowland and Vincent (eds.), *Gospel from the City* (Sheffield: Urban Theology Unit, 1997) pp.1-136. This association between liberationist theology and location had a unique expression in Britain as the ideas of Liberation Theologians were adopted into situations of urban deprivation. Davey comments that “it is not, however, a theme that permeates the canon of liberation theologies. Writing on the urban legacy of liberation theology in Latin America, Philip Berryman comments: ‘[an] area largely overlooked in liberation theology is the urban character of Latin American society. One can read dozens of volumes by liberation theologians without realizing that Latin America has made the urban leap’ in the last generation or so” (Davey, *Better*, p.34).
theology in the sense that their cultural and visual representations have become strongly associated with certain developments within urban theology itself and with the people who advocated them.68

Through this arrangement the idea of the ‘inner city’ took on a new significance;69 not only did it represent the locus of urban deprivation but it also became the symbolic centre for both theological and political ideals. For the groups who espoused these ideals and sought to stand in solidarity with the urban poor, the inner city took on ideological import which became foundational for much of the way in which urban theology developed.70

The social, political and spiritual geography of the inner city became the arena in which urban theology and its related practices were established so that urban theology itself was essentially ‘placed’ or ‘located’ within the inner city. Implicit within that placing was the association between power on the one hand (whether ideological, political, social or spiritual power) and actual physical location on the other. British urban theology, therefore, can be understood as having its own intrinsic spatiality predicated on a hegemonic arrangement of power, where its own adopted position was in the social, political and geographical margin of the ‘inner city’ with its physical and iconic symbols such as tower blocks and estates, and the cultural symbols associated with them such as urban street art and music; all of which conveyed meanings about material deprivation, social exclusion and structural injustice.71

68 For example John Vincent is linked with Sheffield, a northern city associated with heavy industry and back-to-back terraced housing; David Sheppard is associated with the working class estates of Liverpool and also with the Mayflower Centre, Canning Town in the East End of London; Andrew Davey with the multicultural streets and tower blocks of Peckham (Andrew Davey, ‘Liberating Theology in Peckham’ in Michael Northcote (ed.), Urban Theology: A Reader (London: Cassell, 1998) pp.8-10); Kenneth Leech in the multicultural and multi-faith East End (Kenneth Leech, Youquake, London: Sheldon, 1973), Shannahan, Voices, pp.108-116; Anthony Reddie associated the development of Black Theology with urban areas: Reddie, Exploring, pp.64-68.

69 Graham and Lowe, What, p.51; Shannahan, Voices, p.28.

70 Andrew Davey, ‘Faithful Cities: Locating Everyday Faithfulness’, Contact, 152 (2007)pp. 8-20; Doreen Massey, World City (Cambridge: Polity, 2007) pp.54-72. The relationship between place and ideological power suggested here was not articulated or explored in any of the texts of British urban theology but remained implicit within the movement itself. The relationship, however, has since emerged as an important theme within the theology of place and will be discussed further in Chapter 2. Tim Gorringe, for example, argues that the built environment is essentially ideological stating that “the ideology of space is inescapable” (Tim Gorringe, A Theology of the Built Environment [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002] p.7-8). The association is also discussed in Cresswell, In Place, pp.149-162; Gorringe, Built, pp.27-30, 55-61; Graham and Lowe, Good, p.61.

71 Sheppard, Bias, pp.19-37, 58-78; Shannahan, Voices, pp.101-114; Vincent, Into; Rowland and Vincent, Gospel, pp.1-136.
This intrinsic sense of place within urban theology was an essential element—perhaps *the* essential element—which enabled it to develop such a distinctive theological voice and radically transformative approach to mission.\(^{72}\)

This ‘sense of place’ shaped the practice of ‘doing theology’ from local places—namely those places associated with urban deprivation.\(^{73}\) Kenneth Leech, for example, speaks of doing theology in response to the East End of London and says that “theology must be localised, concretised, rooted in particular communities.”\(^{74}\) Likewise Margaret Walsh gives theological voice to the communities living on urban estates.\(^{75}\) The inherent sense of place which developed as an essential essence of urban theology was, at least in part, the basis upon which it went on to present a serious (and prophetic) challenge to ecclesiological and political authorities—a challenge which is epitomised in the 1985 Church of England report *Faith in the City*.\(^{76}\) Indeed, the ideological sense of place was further conveyed through urban theology’s critical opposition to dominant forms of theology arguing that they were “ideological expressions of the interests of the ruling class.”\(^{77}\)

Urban theology’s engagement with and representation of marginal voices resonates with the previously discussed work of Vincent Donovan. In both cases the emergence of marginalised voices signifies a change in, or at least a challenge to, the hegemonic arrangement of place. It also signifies the potential for new formations of place to come into existence as new co-constituted knowledge emerges from dialogical engagement between people who have been previously kept apart by hierarchical social-spatial arrangements. This kind of dialogical engagement is suggested by Margaret Walsh who, reflecting on her work in inner-city Wolverhampton describes

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“an ecclesiology of listening and solidarity” where the task of the Christian community was to “hear what people are saying, to see reality through their eyes and to make our response with them in the light of the gospel.”\(^{78}\)

Despite the emergence of so-called British urban theology as a distinctive voice from the British inner cities of the 1970s and 1980s it would be misleading to suggest that it represented an organised or coherent movement. The sense of coming together that did exist came in part through the shared struggle of Christian groups in cities where certain areas were experiencing a climate of political and social turmoil. However there was little evidence of integration with other Christian voices which were rising throughout this period from groups who occupied the same urban places and were facing fundamental challenges around issues of identity and belonging. An important example was that of the Black communities and the emerging Black theologies that were developing as a movement with its own distinctive voice.\(^{79}\)

Despite the strong sense of place inherent within British urban theology through the 1970s and 1980s, there was no clear development of the movement through the 1990s. This was due, at least in part, to the regeneration of inner cities under the government of Margaret Thatcher so that the actual territory upon which the ‘inner city’ identity was dependent began to be redeveloped and fragmented.\(^{80}\) The loss of territory undermined the theological and ideological foundations of British urban theology so that through the 1990s and the turn of the century it lost some of its potency and ability to critically and prophetically engage with the city.\(^{81}\)

\(^{78}\) Walsh, *Hoping*, p.57; Shannahan, *Voices*, p.106.

\(^{79}\) The distinctive Black voice was being presented through theologians such as Robert Beckford, *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998); Robert Beckford, *God and the Gangs* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004); Anthony Reddie, *Growing into Hope: Volume 1* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1998); Anthony Reddie, *Faith Stories and Experience of Black Elders* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001). Whilst the concerns of the Black community were articulated by some urban theologians (Sheppard, *Bias*, pp.58-78) the development of Black theology should not be confused with British urban theology (as implied by Shannahan, *Voices*, pp.124-157) and from the perspective of ‘place’ it is important to acknowledge the distinct spatiality of first and second generation migrants in relation, for example, to home, identity and belonging. These are explored by authors such as Anthony Reddie (*in*, Jione Havea and Clive Pearson (eds.), *Out of Place: Doing Theology on the Crosscultural Brink* [London and New York: Routledge, 2011] pp.ix-xi) and Edward Said (Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* [London: Granta, 1999]).


\(^{81}\) The discussion about British Urban Theology in this section is restricted to issues that relate to place. A broader investigation would show that the use of Liberation theology within a British urban context was not straightforward. R.S. Sugirtharajah, for example, argues that the 1985 Church of England Report, *Faith in the City*, failed to connect to the main discourses of Liberation Theology; and Andrew
The failure of British urban theology to engage with theories of place, and to understand the particular ways in which cities themselves were becoming the driving forces behind new configurations of place, left it without the critical analytical framework to understand and respond to the changing geographical and ideological landscape of the city. These new spatial configurations could be understood in terms of hybridity, mobility and on-line networks, all of which converged on cities to bring about a time-space compression in which the effect of physical distance within and between cities was significantly reduced and the traditional association of social identity to location was largely fractured.

The association between theories of place and urban studies, which is seen within the social sciences, has begun to emerge in a limited way within theology and mission studies so that urban theology is once again making an important contribution towards the theological investigation of place. Particularly significant contributions are made by Christopher Baker in *The Hybrid Church in the City*; Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe in *What Makes a Good City?*, and Andrew Davey in *Urbanisms of Hope* and

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82 Andrew Davey observes urban theologians failed to fully understand how conditions of post-colonialism were being produced in European cities through changing spatial configurations such as the ‘space of flows’ (R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* [London: SCM Press, 2003], pp. 162-175; Davey, *Better*, pp.34-35; *Faith in the City* [1985]).

83 Andrew Davey, ‘Beyond Intervention and Partnership: Struggling for Space’, *Political Theology* 3, no. 1 (2001) pp. 102-108. Whilst Chris Shannahan does not specifically discuss place he does recognise the importance of the movement from “static definitions of the city as fractured places to the city as fluid and hybrid spaces that are interconnected across the globe” and the challenge that this change in the urban environment brought to British urban theology (Shannahan, *Voices*, pp.15-30).


85 Although themes associated with place are discussed within texts from the field of urban theology and mission, it is notable that since 2000 only a very small number focus specifically on the subject of place. These include Gorringe, *Built*; Baker, *Hybrid*; Graham and Lowe, *Good*; Davey, *Better*, pp.33-46; Tanner, *Spirit*.

86 Andrew Davey discusses critical challenges to urban theologians including the nature of their engagement with the broad field of urban studies; theological engagement with the lived experience of the city; and theological methodologies that can adapt to the rapid changes in the configuration of urban spaces (Davey, *Better*, pp.27-46).
most recently by Philip Sheldrake in *The Spiritual City*. By presenting the themes of ‘hybrid places’, ‘liveable places’, and ‘sacred spaces’ these texts take important steps in bringing alternative spatial concepts into a dialogue with previously described notions of place that have tended to predominate in mission studies. They develop a critical challenge to models of place that are too static, rooted and bounded and Baker in particular attacks social-spatial arrangements that sustain colonial, class and patriarchal hegemonies by drawing on Homi Bhabha’s conceptions of Third Space.

This overview of mission studies, whilst not exhaustive, indicates that there is scope for significant developments to be made within missiology by engaging with the issues that have been raised about theories of place. Firstly, it is apparent that no well-founded and rigorous debate about place exists within mission studies and that there is potential within this field for the development of theological understandings of place that can be used to critically evaluate contemporary approaches to mission and the formulations of place that are implicit within them. Secondly, the overview demonstrates scope for a rigorous dialogical engagement to be established between missiology and the social sciences, especially in relation to the advances made in understanding theories of place within the social sciences with particular attention being given to the relationship of place to social, structural and ideological power and also to the relationship of place to culture and identity. Thirdly, whilst it is evident that urban theology has grown out of a strong sense of ideological location and that more recent developments have begun to explore theories of place, it is also apparent that urban theologies themselves rarely draw on the rapidly developing field of urban studies. Given the clear relationship between urban studies and theories of place it is important that theological investigations into place, as well as missiology in general, engage critically with this field.

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In relation to this study, these observations indicate that there are insufficient grounds within the field of missiology itself to provide the basis for an investigation into place of the type to be pursued here and as a consequence other disciplines will be drawn on for this purpose. However the survey does serve to locate this work in the context of mission studies and with a particularly notable connection to British urban theology and missiology. It indicates that there is scope for a project such as this to make positive and constructive contributions to developments within mission studies and urban missiology in particular. I will therefore seek to maintain a dialogue with mission studies, especially in the concluding chapter of this study, by indicating the ways in which the findings of this research might inform the formulations of place that exist within contemporary mission studies.

**Originality and Significance of Research**

There are at least three distinct areas in which the research presented here may make original and potentially significant contributions to knowledge. Firstly the subject of ‘place’ within theology is itself relatively under-researched, a fact that is acknowledged in most of the publications on the theology of place that have been referenced throughout the thesis. This lack of engagement becomes more pronounced when compared to the very significant developments on this subject that have taken place within the social sciences and the almost negligible impacts this has had in either theology or missiology. By engaging in critical conversation between a variety of geographical and theological sources, I hope to show how having a more developed theological approach to place might inform and open up new perspectives on the critical relationship between place, deprivation and power.

Secondly, whilst there have been some recent developments in the use of ethnography in relation to ecclesiology and pastoral studies, a similar application of contemporary ethnographic methods in mission studies is relatively unexplored. The research shows how the ethnographic study of place can open up important sources of

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insight and knowledge for mission and I argue in the conclusion that the notion of the ‘mission context’ should be extended beyond social and cultural ideas to also include place. With this in view I will present suggestions for a series of mission practices that might be used by a Christian community to connect more deeply with its own place. Thirdly there is, I suggest, considerable scope and need for further missiological research into a variety of subjects associated with ‘council estates’, especially the large, predominantly ethnically white, edge-of-city estates such as the Cornwall Estate. This study is I believe the first within the context of missiology within the United Kingdom to investigate estate-based deprivation in terms of place.⁹³ My hope is that some of these research findings open up potential new pathways for the church to engage fruitfully in this demanding mission situation and that the arguments I have employed might stimulate others to engage more deeply in the important issues of estate-based deprivation and marginalisation with the possibility of hopeful transformation in mind.

The Structure of the Research

Research was developed in two related areas which are reflected in the two main parts of the thesis. Part 1 is an investigation of the theological understandings of place with a particular focus on the relationship between power and place. Part 2 employs qualitative research methods as a way of investigating the actual spatial characteristics of the Cornwall Estate with a view to understanding the relationship (if any) between the spatial arrangements of power in the estate itself and the lived experiences of deprivation. These two areas of research should not be conceived as independent of each other; whilst for the sake of clarity they have been presented separately, the progress of research has sought to involve a critical dialectic conversation between theory, methodology and experience.

The aim of Part 1 is to define a ‘theology of place’ that finds coherence with the particular social location of the Cornwall Estate. The primary concern therefore is not to establish a systematic theology of place but to understand how theological models

⁹³ Whilst not specifically drawing on theories of place, Peter Crunchley-Jones has explored the experience of congregations ministering in a large housing estate in Cardiff in: Peter Crunchley-Jones, *Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land?: A Missiological Interpretation of the Ely Pastorate Churches* (Michigan; P. Lang, 2001).
and concepts might be brought into a discursive relationship with a particular territory, its residents and the prevailing social, material and spiritual settlements. This ‘practical’ approach to theology gives shape to a sense of journey and struggle in the research process which is reflected in the way the chapters of Part 1 unfold. The notion of struggle describes the search for connectivity between theory and lived experience, both my own experience of living on the Cornwall Estate and the experiences of those around me. Thus the search for a theology of place is not to be understood as detached from the practical phase of the research, but rather involving a to-and-fro process of exploration over an extended period of time between a variety of sources (including books, papers, conferences, one-to-one conversations) and my ongoing, and often disturbing, experience of daily life on the estate.

The complexity of this non-linear approach to research is reflected in the structure of the chapters. The approach seeks to convey the reflexive posture which is important in defining the ethos of the research; it expresses a conviction that findings must be understood as tentative and partial in order for them not to ‘do violence’ to place.

The intention is also to demonstrate a degree of integrity and transparency in the hope that the reader, whether in the academy, or by chance from the estate itself, might

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94 The ‘practical’ approach to theology finds its roots in the method of Liberation Theology which might be summarised in the ‘See-Judge-Act’ sequence of the pastoral cycle. Clodovis Boff was a leading figure in the development of method within Liberation theology and his work is discussed in Tim Noble, *The Poor in Liberation Theology: Pathway to God or Ideological Construct?* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) pp.101-148. The method may be summarised in terms of three mediations (where mediation refers to a critical discourse): “The first mediation is the socio-analytical. This involves the use of sciences of the social in order for theology to know what it has to theologize about. The strictly theological moment is the hermeneutical mediation, in which the situation is interpreted in the light of the Scriptures and the Christian faith tradition, and the third is the dialectical mediation, in which this theologial theory is confronted by praxis” (Noble, *The Poor*, 103).

95 The concept of ‘non-violence’ as a way of understanding our engagement on the Cornwall Estate has been of growing importance for the small Christian community living there. Our language and ideas in this area have been shaped by Stanley Hauerwas and Jean Vanier, *Living Gently in a Violent World* (Downers Grove, Il: IVP, 2008) and David Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-surrender, Love of God, and Love of Neighbor* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006) pp.125-146.
identify with, and perhaps empathise with, the vulnerable nature of embedded reflexive research. In allowing for the subjective and non-linear aspects of the research to be expressed I have sought to maintain structure and clarity by arranging the chapters as far as possible to facilitate a logical progression in the argument. In the light of these aims and concerns, the discussion of Part 1, Developing a Theology of Place, is structured progressively through three distinct stages. Chapter 1, Placing Place Theologically: Critiquing Current Theologies of Place is a critical engagement with relevant contemporary literature on the subject. Rigorous interaction with current theologies of place seeks to establish informed grounds for further argument and identify critical questions that need to be addressed. Chapter 2, In-Place/Out-of-Place: Exploring the Concept of Normativity as a Descriptor of Place identifies specific contributions that the social sciences might make to theological perspectives of place. Theoretical and ethnographic readings of place within the social sciences have challenged prevailing theological notions of place in a number of specific ways. With some exceptions, theological approaches tend to present the characteristics of place in bounded, rooted and static terms; and they tend to value places that are imbued with historic spirituality or speak of ‘home’. Whilst similar perspectives also exist within the social sciences there are other well established theories that challenge these understandings of place. They argue, for example, about the limitations of static or binary constructions of place, proposing instead that place should be conceived of in terms such as mobility, trajectories, performances, hybridity and third space. Through dialogical engagement with these various positions, including ethnographic material from the site itself, I seek to develop a conceptual framework for place in terms of ‘normativity’. I argue that normativity can act as a conceptual bridge to helpfully develop theological themes in ways that are responsive to developments in the social sciences and pertinent to the site of research itself. Furthermore, by drawing on themes from Chapter 1, in particular the notion of Jesus-Space, the discussion about normativity enables discussion about theological understandings of place in terms of normative-place and Jesus-Space and these themes form the basis of enquiry for the following chapter.

96 For vulnerability, openness and humility in embodied research see: Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, pp.17-25; McClintock Fulkerson, Redemption, pp.12-18; Veling, Practical, pp.9-13.
Chapter 3, *Jesus-Space and the Creation of Redemptive Places*, is concerned with developing an understanding of place that is clearly theological in character and relates adequately to the particular situation of the Cornwall Estate. This is achieved by introducing a significant ethnographic section to the argument which works in dialogue with the theological material. In addition, an important third element is added to the normative-place/Jesus-Space framework; namely ‘created-place’, so that a theological scheme for place is proposed which comprises three spatial paradigms: created-place, normative-place and Jesus-Space.  

The ethnographic work demonstrates the need for a theology of hope; specifically the way in which the presence of Jesus is understood by the local community to embody hope in a particular situation. Ethnographic work has also emphasised the need for the Christian community to have a practiced theology that is self-aware in terms of the power-place relationship—that is, the Christian community, through its practices would not simply mirror or even reinforce existing arrangements of power but would be ‘differently-present’ in the place. From a theoretical point of view, I draw on two authors whose arguments I believe are commensurate with ethnographic demands, namely Tim Gorringe and Miroslav Volf. In this way, a conceptual framework is opened up that is conversant with both normative arrangements of place and the possibility of new or non-normative expressions of place for which I introduce the related terms Jesus-Space and redemptive-place. The relationship of Jesus-Space to redemptive-place embodies the same eschatological tension expressed by the prayer “on earth as in heaven” (Matt 6:10). However the intention is to convey the spatial sense of that prayer rather than the more usual temporal sense, so that Jesus-Space refers to the spatiality of the New Creation—a spatiality that has come into being through the events of the cross and resurrection—and redemptive-places are the actual embodiments of that space as it is realised on earth through the faithful practices of the Christian community. On the basis of this framework I am then able to move ahead in ethnographic research and discussion about the theology of place in relation to the Cornwall Estate.

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97 The hyphenated form is used in each of these terms throughout the thesis to indicate that specific reference is being made to a particular spatial paradigm.

98 Victor Westhelle argues that eschatology should not only be understood in temporal terms, but also in spatial terms (Victor Westhelle, *Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology Past and Present* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012]).
At the conclusion of Part 1, some of the limitations of my approach are acknowledged and briefly outlined along with a number of important questions that have emerged in the process of research but which lie outside of the scope of this particular project.

Part 2 focuses specifically on the Cornwall Estate and is an investigation based on empirical research into the constitution, function and characteristics of place. The groundwork for the section is laid out in Chapter 4 which explores questions of methodology and method. These include an exploration of ideas about the relationship between the qualitative research and the theological frameworks proposed in Chapter 3 and ways in which these different aspects of knowledge—namely empirical and theoretical—might be brought together without predisposing the outcome of the empirical investigation.

The aim of Part 2 is two-fold. Firstly to establish an overview of the estate including a broad description of the constitution of place and an analysis of the primary characteristics and functions of place—this is the focus of Chapter 5. Secondly, in the light of these findings, Chapter 6 investigates the possible formation of redemptive-places by exploring the emergence of new relational places in two particular locations, the Employment Drop-In and the Bread Café.

A substantial concluding chapter draws together the arguments and findings of Parts 1 and 2 to present a proposal for a theological framework for place and to discuss the theological and practical implications of such an understanding for the theology and practice of mission in an area characterised by deep-rooted patterns of deprivation such as the Cornwall Estate.

The Scope and Limitations of Research

In researching place the intention is to maintain a strong missiological focus and thus to develop a model that ‘works’ in a contemporary urban context with rigorous and well-informed arguments that maintain credibility in the light of recent developments within both theology and social sciences.

The scope of the research is defined by the particular focus on the Cornwall Estate and the relationship between the lived experiences of deprivation and the spatial characteristics of the estate. This, along with the fact of my own long-term residency...
on the estate as a researcher, minister and member of a small Christian community emphasised the need for the research methodology to be in harmony with the values—ethical and spiritual—of those with whom I was in relationship. The process of research revealed interesting, and sometimes surprising, resonances between ethnography and missiology which not only informed my own research practices but also made important contributions towards the mission practices and spirituality of the small Christian community, especially where those practices enabled a deeper engagement with the place itself.

The scope and limitations of ethnographic research were defined in a number of ways. I sought to limit research specifically to those areas which would enable me to engage directly with the spatial characteristics and mechanisms of the Cornwall Estate in ways which were conversant with the theological developments of Part 1. Even within these limits it became clear that there was scope to make finer distinctions with regard to the functioning of place. These included, for example, the ways in which spatial arrangements of the estate impinged differently on those of different generations, different employment circumstances, and those from different streets within the estate.

A significant advantage of my residency on the estate was that it opened up possibilities for engaging with experimental approaches to forming new arrangements of place. Opportunities presented themselves in the form of two small initiatives where long-term residents of the estate, ‘newcomers’ (such as ourselves), and others came together in shared ventures, one of which focused on exploring ‘ways into work’ and the other being around the activity of bread-making. Whilst these ventures restricted research to particular small places on the estate they provided an unusual set of circumstances for investigating the potential for the transformation of place within the context of mission. For these reasons they have been incorporated as a central part of the ethnographic research discussed in Chapter 6.

**Terminology**

I have had to make a number of decisions about terminology through the course of research, some of which are a consequence of drawing on terms from social geography and incorporating them into theological and missiological discussions.
Whilst in most cases I will address issues as they arise through the course of the discussion, I will clarify my use of two sets of terms at the outset. The first relates to the use of ‘space’ and ‘place’. These are used variously by different authors so that there can be no assumed consensus as to their meaning. For the sake of clarity I have tried to be consistent in making a distinction between them so that ‘space’ is used to reference more conceptual ideas, as for example in ‘third space’ or the ‘relational space of the Godhead’. In contrast ‘place’ is used to reference actual social locations including the material, social, spiritual aspects of those locations. However the terms ‘space’ and ‘place’ should not be conceived of as two entirely distinct categories and as such their use may be correspondingly less clear-cut.  

In addition, throughout the course of the argument I have employed the term ‘spatial’ in preference to ‘placial’ and have tried to make it clear from the context whether it is a reference to ‘space’ or ‘place’.  

The second set of terms occurs mainly in Part 2 and concerns the use of ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’. By ‘estate people’ I refer to those who belong to families that have been resident on the estate for one or more generations and by ‘outsiders’ I mean all other people, including those who have lived on the estate for a number of years but have not been resident from childhood. I realise that these terms could be viewed as reinforcing existing stereotypes and also as imposing overly simplistic binary categories. Whilst I dislike the use of these terms I have found it difficult to identify better alternatives and hope that the reader understands that I use them with these qualifications in mind.

99 For a good introduction to the use and development of these terms see John Agnew, ‘Space/Place’, in Paul Cloke and R. Johnston, *Spaces of Geographical Thought: deconstructing human geography’s binaries*, (London: SAGE, 2005) pp.81-96. Agnew explores how the terms have often formed a binary categorisation and argues that to use one there is a need to define both so that there can be a blurring of the binary construct.
100 Although the term ‘placial’ is used by some authors on place, it is however not widespread and not generally accepted as a legitimate word.
PART 1.

DEVELOPING A THEOLOGY OF PLACE: A REFLEXIVE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THEOLOGY, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology.

Ed Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*
A particular challenge of this research project has been to find a theology of place that was able to be conversant with three key disciplinary areas, namely social geography (especially as it relates to marginal urban communities), theology, and ethnography. The hope was to work with two or three already established theologies of place that would fulfil these requirements. What has become clear through the process of research is that the theology of place is still at a fairly early stage of its development and that further work would need to be done to meet the stated requirements. This chapter is the first step towards developing a theological framework that will be conversant with these three key areas.

The chapter begins with a short introduction to the current scope and nature of the study of place within theology. The main body of the chapter is concerned with the development of conceptual foundations that have the capacity to connect critically with the three disciplines mentioned—theology, social geography and ethnography. This is pursued by focusing on the work of five authors that give overall shape to my own argument. I draw on their work as a way of laying important foundations for further research and also to identify the key questions that it appears theology has yet to address in relation to its engagement with place—questions which can then be pursued in Chapters 2 and 3.

The first work to be considered is the recently published book by Craig Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*,\(^1\) which represents a widely held view in Christian theology of place as rooted, bounded and secure. Following that, the conversation is broadened to engage with the question of how ‘meaning’ and ‘power’ (especially ideological power) relate to place by interaction with John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies* and

Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine*. Finally I begin to develop a more critical conversation with the social sciences by drawing on two works that use social-scientific models of place as a basis for reading the Gospel of Mark, namely Eric Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus* and Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*. The chapter ends with a summary of the key theological components that have been established in this conversation and also identifies the critical questions which relate to this particular research project and that will give shape to the discussion in the following two chapters.

**Defining the Contours of Place Within Theology**

Biblical theology has played a significant role in shaping conceptions of place within the wider theological world. Particularly prominent is the work of Walter Brueggemann whose book *The Land* is very widely referenced across a range of theological disciplines. Only John Inge and Craig Bartholomew do much further substantial work in this area, and Bartholomew’s more recent work, published in 2011, is really the only other for which the Biblical-theological approach is foundational and he is the only author who develops a theology of place by surveying the entire Biblical corpus.

One influence of Biblical theology has been to emphasise a number of themes as having central importance in the theology of place. These themes include Creation and Eden; the Land, including the question of the New Testament’s interpretation of the Land; Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem; and the Incarnation. By emphasising

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4 Biblical theology is characterised by a particular attentiveness to the developing narrative themes through Old and New Testaments. It is defined as theology that takes the cannon of scripture as its primary authoritative source. It employs narrative critical methods to identify theological themes which emerge through the developing narrative of Old and New Testaments. For an in-depth definition of Biblical theology see Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007) pp.78-142.


themes which are related to particular places, it would appear that Biblical theology is traditionally more open to geographies and philosophies that tend to define place in terms of location, roots, boundaries and home-place. Quite a different perspective of place might have been developed if narratives of mobility, wandering and dislocation were the focus—narratives that are equally prominent in the overall scheme of the Biblical story. These might include, for example, Abraham’s journeys, Israel’s wilderness wanderings, Judah’s exile to Babylon and the commensurate ideas of a mobile temple, for example in Ezekiel 1. How these more static rooted and bounded notions of place continue to hold sway through Biblical theology will be explored by engaging with Bartholomew’s work in more detail below.

Two further branches of enquiry can be included under the umbrella of Biblical theology. The first relates to cosmological and ideological readings of the text where a central concern is to understand the relationship between places and power, especially social and ideological expressions of power. The Biblical narratives expose and engage with oppressive ideological systems and recount how through the intervention of God’s Messiah and his people, alternative theologies open up new ways of life. Whilst not all the discussions about ideology in the Biblical text hold place as a central concern, the theme of ideology does open up important insights into Biblical narratives from which theologies of place can be further developed. The subject of ideology in relation to place is discussed by Norman Habel, John Riches, Walter Brueggemann and Tim Gorringe.

Secondly, there are a number of specifically spatial readings of Biblical texts which draw on theories of place from philosophy and social geography. Of particular interest

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is the work done by Eric Stewart and Halvor Moxnes both of whom focus on the Gospel of Mark. By drawing on somewhat different spatial geographies, each develops their own distinct approach. Stewart’s reference is primarily to geographies of agency and influence where place, and the relation of power to place, is discussed in terms of human activity, especially the influence of the elite. Moxnes on the other hand draws on geographies of structure. Here the relationship of power to place is predicated on key societal structures rather than human agency. By drawing on different geographies in this way, Stewart and Moxnes create different notions of place. I will engage at some length with the issues this raises.

Another significant influence in the formation of conceptions of place within theology is that of Christian tradition. This is exemplified by Philip Sheldrake in *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* and John Inge in *A Christian Theology of Place* who both include Christian tradition as the core component of their argument, relating it to developments in philosophy, anthropology and human geography. Sheldrake’s concern is about a crisis of place in Western society, “a sense of rootlessness, dislocation or displacement.” He goes on to develop a Eucharistic theology of place which explores the “inevitable tensions between the local and universal dimensions of place.” Inge draws on Christian tradition to demonstrate that the ‘sacramental’ is a central concept for exploring a theology of place where “sacrament is best understood in relation to place by speaking in terms of ‘sacramental encounters’ in particular places.” Such encounters are the experience not of the few, but of the many and occur in many and varied places, giving them a sacramental quality for the person or people concerned. For Inge this concurs with his analysis of scriptures from which he constructs a relational view of place through the paradigm of ‘people, place and God’.

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9 Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Inge, *Theology*. Stephen Pickard draws on “professional Geography” to explore the changing nature of ‘place’ in the post-colonial Australian context. In contrast to Sheldrake he warns of that in a post-colonial context, anxiety about ‘loss of place’ could “promote a retreat into place as a protected space … [where] place is construed as a retreat from alien forces with a concomitant tendency to create new exclusions and tight borders” (Stephen Pickard, ‘Church of the In-Between God: Recovering an Ecclesial Sense of Place Down-under’, *Journal of Anglican Studies* 7 [May2009] pp.40-41).


11 Sheldrake, *Spaces*, p.64. Sheldrake goes on to outline how such a Eucharistic theology of place might be applied to ‘re-placing’ the city.

12 Inge, *Theology*, p.89.

The contribution offered by Christian tradition to the theology of place and senses of place is significant at a number of levels. In the Western World, for example, it has been formative in establishing deep-rooted spatial hegemony whether in terms of Christendom itself, Catholic and Protestant place, or parish and parish church.

Christian tradition also explores notions of sacred and sacramental places and is attuned to ‘senses of place’ and liminal places such as cathedrals, monasteries, pilgrim routes, holy places. Current trends in Western Europe towards ‘post-secular’ and ‘post-Christendom’ arrangements do seem to open up important questions about the formation and meaning of places for the future, and those understandings of place that draw from Christian tradition could well address these concerns. Important contributions could be made as well by conversations relating to the sense of ‘the divine’ in public life; community cohesion and reconciliation; and spatialities that represent alternatives to the growing number and size of shopping malls and their consumerist deities.

Although I do not draw significantly on Christian tradition as a source in this enquiry, it has two particular points of connection to this research. First, its overall representation of place tends towards the same emphasis on locatedness that is expressed within Biblical studies reinforcing the sense that theologically place is conceived of in terms of locatedness and home-place. My own arguments will take a somewhat different direction, and as such will, I think, raise questions which challenge notions of place that have been accepted as normative within Christian theology of place. The second, and more practical implication for my own study, is that the Cornwall Estate itself is identified as a single Anglican parish and that this

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15 For ‘post-Christendom’ see Stuart Murray-Williams, Church After Christendom (London: Authentic, 2005).

16 Vítor Westhelle takes a very interesting approach to place within theology by exploring eschatology in spatial rather than temporal terms and in so doing is able to apply a theological framing of hope and justice to concerns about land (Victor Westhelle, Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology Past and Present [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012]).
traditional religious representation of the place coincides geographically with the political as well as physical-structural boundary markers.\textsuperscript{17}

Within theology itself, a number of other important contributions to the subject of place have been made. Tim Gorringe, whose focus is on a theology of the built environment,\textsuperscript{18} draws on the ethics and dogmatics of Karl Barth to construct a Trinitarian theology of place where “imagination, order and justice are … the keywords of a Trinitarian theology of space and the built environment in which the relational event that grounds all reality, God, seeks correspondence.”\textsuperscript{19} Gorringe introduces a specifically theological reading of space into the existing sociological and philosophical discourse that will offer a visionary engagement with the built environment; he seeks to represent “a Trinitarian mapping of spatiality which might ground the kind of revolutionary practice which Lefebvre, Harvey and Soja all seek.”\textsuperscript{20} Gorringe’s work is helpful in developing my own arguments and I draw on him substantially in Chapter 3.

In the last fifteen years the concepts of Third Space and hybridity have been incorporated into some theologies of place.\textsuperscript{21} Third Space and hybridity are complex formulations of place that critique and deconstruct spatial binary constructions. They are concepts developed within philosophy and social geography by thinkers such as Homi Bhabha, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Sarah Whatmore.\textsuperscript{22} To date the most interesting and in-depth engagement with Third Space theory from a theological perspective has been by Christopher Baker who draws primarily from the work of

\textsuperscript{17} The estate as ‘parish’ does not arise explicitly within my ethnographic research. I note however, that the study of the relationship between estates and related parishes would be a very interesting way of researching place.
\textsuperscript{18} Tim Gorringe, A Theology of the Built Environment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
\textsuperscript{19} Gorringe, Built, pp.1-2, 1-7, 40-49.
\textsuperscript{20} Gorringe, Built, pp.48-49. Note also that Bartholomew’s stated aim is to develop a Trinitarian theology of place. This is however not convincing—it is not introduced until p.243 and is only given six pages (pp.243-248). The material here is mainly a representation of pertinent points from his biblical survey.
\textsuperscript{21} Third Space theory should not be confused with the social concept of third-places made popular by Ray Oldenburg. In the context of mission Oldenburg presents third place as a social space which is distinct from the ‘first’ and ‘second’ places of home and work respectively. For Oldenburg’s discussion on third-places and missiology see: Ray Oldenburg, The Great Good Place (New York: Marlow, 1999); Ray Oldenburg, Celebrating the Third Place: Inspiring Ideas about the ‘Great Good Places’ at the heart of our communities (New York: Marlow, 2001).
post-colonial thinker Homi Bhabha. Baker approaches Third Space through the closely related subject of hybridity, where hybridity “is a multi-layered concept expressing a growing number of influences that now pervade all aspects of our lives.” It describes relationships and interactions in all aspects of life that do not conform to the “binary ‘either/or’ definitions that the Enlightenment and Marxism bequeathed to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”

By drawing on Bhabha, Baker proposes that hybridity represents a new kind of spatiality, namely Third Space that is “the space produced by the collapse of the previously defining narratives of modernity based on colonialism, class and patriarchy. These narratives labelled and defined the ‘other’ on grounds such as race, gender and sexual orientation.”

Ideas of Third Space are also explored by Halvor Moxnes, particularly in relation to the Kingdom of God. Moxnes suggests that the “combination of the term ‘Kingdom of God’ with images from ordinary households, especially the image of the father … challenges the generally accepted order of things, known spatial practices and their ideological representations.”

Apart from these discussions, little consideration is given to the subjects of Third Space and hybridity in the works on theology of place already discussed. However, I introduce the subject here because it does have important bearing on certain aspects of these theologies; concepts of hybridity and Third Space being implicit, if somewhat embryonic, within the sacramental and Eucharistic interpretations of place proposed by Gorringe, Inge, Sheldrake and the ideological presentations of place proposed by Habel, Gorringe and Riches.

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24 Baker, Hybrid, p.2.
26 Baker, Hybrid, p.16. Estates, such as the Cornwall Estate, still seem to be strongly defined by these kinds of “narratives of modernity” which makes Baker’s analysis of particular interest. I discuss this in some depth from Chapter 3 onwards.
28 See Inge, Theology, pp. 22-24; Bartholomew, Mortals, p.279.
29 Gorringe, Built, pp.36-40.
30 Gorringe, Built, pp.26-36.
Place in Biblical Narrative: A Critical Engagement with
Five Accounts of Place

In this section I engage critically with five works on the theology of place whose focus is primarily on the representation of place within the Biblical text itself. The works are by Craig Bartholomew, John Riches, Norman Habel, Halvor Moxnes and Eric Stewart. The aim of the section is to establish grounds for thinking theologically about place including consideration of methods for reading scripture through the lens of theories of place drawn from the social sciences; exploration of the relationship of ideology to place; normativity and place; and Third Space.

The section begins with the recent work by Bartholomew which supports the influential perspective within theology where place is understood predominantly in bounded and located terms. To be of value a contemporary theology of place must engage critically and thoughtfully with this position with particular attention being paid to the serious criticism, both from within theology and social sciences, that its conceptions of place are too rigid and static.

Craig Bartholomew, Where Mortals Dwell

Foundational to Bartholomew’s approach is his exegesis of Genesis 1-11 from which he develops a “placial” [sic] reading of the narrative by using Edward Casey’s ‘Getting Back into Place’ as a hermeneutical grid. Bartholomew concludes that Genesis 1-3 is foundational for a theology of place, and as such its central insights are as follows:


32 Bartholomew, Mortals, p.25. Bartholomew draws on the ideas of Edward S. Casey, Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993).
1. Creation is the basis for place and not some neutral concept of nature.
2. As embodied creatures in the *Imago Dei*, humans are always dated and *located*, that is, *placed*. As a metaphor the *Imago Dei* alerts us to the similarities and differences between God and us, and our placedness is one of the differences.
3. Place is a rich, dense phenomenon. Among other things, Genesis 1-3 alerts us to its aesthetic, social, historical, agrarian, and urban dimensions.
4. God intends for humans to be at home in, to indwell, their places. Place and implacement[sic] is a gift and provides the possibility for imaging God in his creation. Place is thus a dynamic concept evoking the creative engagement of humans with their contexts.
5. Place is never fully place without God as co-inhabitant. Place is thus always, in one way or another, a theological concept.
6. After Eden the challenge of implacement and the danger of displacement are a constant part of the human condition. Humans remain placed, but displacement is a constant threat.

At a much later stage in his argument Bartholomew refers to Trinitarian theology which emphasises a “Christocentric, and thus incarnational approach” as the most helpful way into a theology of place. He states:

> [Trinitarian theology] is important because ‘prime reality’ for the Christian is the God who has come to us in Jesus, and epistemologically it is essential that a theology of place take this prime reality as its starting point.34

Bartholomew does little however to develop a Trinitarian approach and it seems that his main insights derive from his in-depth work in Genesis 1-11. In relation to this he asserts that “the doctrine of Creation is fundamental to a theology of place … it resists all dualisms which undermine the good materiality of our world and any attempt to privilege the soul or the ‘spiritual’ over the material.” Furthermore, “whilst the New Testament theology of place is refocused, it is just as materialistic as that of the Old Testament.”35

Although it is important to develop some critical engagement with the main themes that emerge from a Biblical theology of place such as Bartholomew’s, I do not want to give the impression that the position has no validity. Indeed, the complex nature of place suggests that no single formulation will adequately or fully define place and the Biblical-theological approach establishes some important perspectives about place.

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35 Bartholomew, *Mortals*, p.244.
that should at least be held in tension with other understandings.\textsuperscript{36} Two important areas can be identified that are developed in various ways by Bartholomew and which are also reflected in the approaches of Walter Brueggemann. The first is the relational nature of place defined by the key relationship of ‘God–people–place’.\textsuperscript{37} The second is the imperative of place-making. Bartholomew argues that place-making is a central aspect of what the people of God are called to attend to.\textsuperscript{38} Drawing on Genesis 1-11, he states:

The embodied nature of human beings means that our placedness [sic] is always local and particular; so too will be our primary responsibility for placemaking. Just as the first couple is called to tend to Eden, so we are called to tend to the respective places in which we have been put.\textsuperscript{39}

Similarly, in relation to place-making, Inge expresses the conviction that Christians should be at the forefront of the recovery of place, and that the focus of such recovery is to rediscover the “dormant virtue of neighbourliness.”\textsuperscript{40} Both authors go on to discuss at length practical proposals for place-making.

However this view of place as ‘rooted, grounded and bounded’\textsuperscript{41} (hereafter ‘rooted’) faces some serious critical challenges from developing theories within social geography and to some extent within theology—challenges which seem not to be addressed with any rigour. The focus of the challenge relates primarily to the static and ‘rooted’ nature of place which fails to account for the relations of power to place (in particular ideological power); which is not responsive to globalisation and

\textsuperscript{36} Stephen Pickard draws on postcolonial perspectives to argue that bounded or rooted conceptions alone make place susceptible to relations of power and settlements of territory that embody colonial arrangements. Equally valid are understandings of place as networks, tracks and boundaries which can be held in creative tension with more “sedimentary” formulations of place so that there is a “dialogical relationship” between ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Stephen Pickard, ‘Church of the In-Between God: Recovering an Ecclesial Sense of Place Down-under’, \textit{Journal of Anglican Studies} 7 [May 2009] pp.40-42). Michael Nausner employs a similar dialogical approach drawing on ideas of “homeland” and “dangerous foreign land” in a post-\textit{9.11} American context to explore to place notions of place that avoid binary caricatures (M. Nausner, ‘Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity’, in C. Keller, M. Nausner and M. Rivera (eds.), \textit{Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire} [St Louis, USA: Chalice Press, 2004] p. 121).


\textsuperscript{38} Bartholomew, \textit{Mortals}, pp. 234-318. For Bartholomew, a theology of place needs to be practical and implementable. Under the heading of ‘placemaking’ he explores a variety of ways in which placemaking might function.

\textsuperscript{39} Bartholomew, \textit{Mortals}, p.245.

\textsuperscript{40} Inge, \textit{Christian}, p.135.

mobilizing of place; and which does not engage adequately with real everyday places in which people live and work. These challenges are represented, in part, by the development of different formulations of place such as ‘normative place’ by Tim Cresswell;\(^{42}\) ‘process’ or ‘mobility’ by Doreen Massey;\(^ {43}\) Third-Place by Edward Soja;\(^ {44}\) hybrid spaces by Christopher Baker;\(^ {45}\) alongside ethnographic understandings of place.\(^ {46}\)

The theories here are complex and to rehearse them in any depth would distract from the flow of the argument so I will comment only briefly on the critical issues that give shape and direction to my own research.\(^ {47}\)

In broad terms I suggest that theological conceptions of place as ‘rooted’ have found a particular resonance with humanistic understandings of place that were developing through the 1970s and 1980s.\(^ {48}\) As discussed earlier, humanistic ideas of rootedness and ‘home-place’ resonate strongly with Biblical-theological ideas of Eden and Land and also with Christian Tradition which values sacred locations such as monasteries and pilgrim-routes. Brueggemann, Inge and Bartholomew all emphasise these as humanising aspects of place. However, whilst Inge and Bartholomew both include discussion about the development of place in Western thought, neither of them includes the alternative paradigms for place discussed here as substantial elements of their final arguments, thus in turn, leading to a significant lack in their eventual formulations of place which somewhat restricts their practical suggestions about place-making and recovery of place. I will focus briefly on two critical points, firstly the relationship of power to place and secondly the construction of place in terms of mobility.

Firstly, allowing ‘rooted’ or ‘static’ conceptions to predominate within the theology of place raises concerns about its capacity to deal adequately with questions of power.


\(^ {44}\) Soja, *Third Space*; Baker, *Hybrid*.

\(^ {45}\) Baker, *Hybrid*.


\(^ {47}\) In seeking to make brief comments I note that the complex nature of the arguments themselves and their development over years cautions against a too simplistic categorisation or polarisation of positions—for example, of place as either/or ‘rooted’ or ‘fluid’.

This reflects the wider criticism that emerged in the 1980s against the humanistic understandings of place where “the kind of organic, rooted, and bounded place evoked by Heidegger’s notion of dwelling began to be seen as limiting and exclusionary.” In his commentary on the development of thought in relation to place, Cresswell states that

while humanistic geographers developed a rich idea of place as experienced, felt, and sensed, they did not, on the whole, have much to say about how power is implicated in the construction, reproduction, and contestation of places and their meanings.  

Marxist and feminist geographers and anthropologists in particular began to explore ideas about the social construction of places and in so doing showed that humanistic ideas about ‘home’ or dwelling’ were inherently exclusionary of some, namely those lacking power.

This perspective is developed in the work of David Sibley who argues that the primary social arrangements of place are based on exclusion such that ‘others’ (women, blacks, children, the old, those with alternative lifestyles, gays, the disabled) are placed as outsiders. Thus, in speaking of the home, he sees it not as a place of secure ‘dwelling’ but rather as an embodiment of inequitable power:

Inside the home and the immediate locality, social and spatial order may be obvious and enduring characteristics of the environment. For those who do not fit, either children whose conceptions of space and time are at variance with those of controlling adults or the homeless, nomadic, or black in a homogeneously white, middle class space, such environments may be inherently exclusionary.

An alternative understanding of place which reflected these concerns was the notion of ‘normative places’ which mapped “particular meanings, practices, and identities on to place.” Such normative arrangements of place embodied unequal power relationships as normative and natural and the ‘transgression’ of such arrangements

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49 Cresswell, Place, p.174.
51 Cresswell, Place, p.5.
52 The term ‘outsiders’ is not intended to evoke a simple insider/outside paradigm. Sibley argues for much more complex and nuanced social arrangement of place and, indeed, the ethnographic research in Chapter 5 of this thesis show that marginalised ‘estate dwellers’ who exclude ‘outsiders’ are also people of power.
54 Cresswell, Place, p.174.
defined people as either ‘in-place’ or ‘out-of-place’. The study of ‘normative place’ and transgression opens up new ways of understanding the nature and mechanisms of (ideological) power in relation to place. These ideas will be discussed in some depth in Chapter 2.

Secondly, other significant developments which were critical of notions of place as static and structural, proposed understandings of place in terms of ‘process’ or ‘constructed through mobilities’. A notable voice in this area is that of Doreen Massey who critiques the positions held by Edward Casey and Heidegger as “too rooted.” She says:

Of prime importance here is the persistent counterposition of space and place, and it is bound up with a parallel counterposition between global and local. Over and again, the counterposition of local and global resonates with an equation of the local with realness, with local place as earthy and meaningful, standing in opposition to a presumed abstraction of global space…. Philosopher Edward Casey asserts that ‘To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in’ (Casey, 1996, p.18), and social theorists not infrequently aver that ‘Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed’ (Carter et al., 1993, p.xii). It is, for me, the real difficulty of Heidegger’s reformulation of space as place: in the end, Heidegger’s notion of place remains too rooted, too little open to the externally relational.

Such criticisms represent a serious challenge to the ‘rooted’ constructions of place which tend to prevail in Christian theology and in the light of such criticisms one must question Bartholomew’s decision to employ Edward Casey’s theory of place

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55 Cresswell, In-Place, pp.3-10.
56 I am grateful for the help of Dr Tim Noble in pointing me to the concept of ‘utopias,’ especially as developed within Liberation Theology, as having a number of potential connections with the notions of place that I am exploring in relation to this research. In particular ‘utopias’ connect strongly with ideas of ideology, orthodoxy (an aspect of ‘normativity’) and the construction of ‘third space’. I have not included the study of utopias as part of this argument because its full potential in relating to the subject has only become clear at the stage of writing up my research. However, I acknowledge that this would be a line of research that should be pursued in the future. For discussion of the relationship of ideology to utopia see Tim Noble, Keeping The Window Open: the Theological Method of Clodovis Boff and the Problem of the Alterity of the Poor (Prague: IBTS, 2009) pp.103-120. Also relevant are: Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria (eds.), Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology (London: SCM, 1996) pp. 279-290; John Gray, Black Mass (London and New York: Penguin, 2007).
57 For example: Doreen Massey, For Space (Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2005); Doreen Massey, A Global Sense of Place (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Ginette Verstraete and Tim Cresswell (eds.) Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007).
58 Massey, For Space p.183.
almost exclusively as an interpretive frame for his reading of both Old and New Testament texts. In addition to challenges from social geographers, Bartholomew also faces critical issues from a theological perspective. His narrow framing of place as ‘rooted’ based on his exegesis of Genesis 1-11, limits his engagement with arguments that suggest alternative spatialities in the New Testament. Bartholomew fails to engage with structural or social analyses of place that others discuss in relation to the Gospels. In fact Bartholomew seems to avoid any suggestion of Jesus contesting socially and politically accepted meanings of place in this way even though he refers to the work of Halvor Moxnes whose main argument is that Jesus subverts the normal meanings of home place (I shall discuss Moxnes in detail below). On the contrary, Bartholomew seems to shy away from understandings that relationships of power—whether political, social or spiritual—constitute place, or indeed the possibility that power and place might be co-constituting. For example, when talking of Mathew’s ‘kingdom of heaven’ in relation to the Roman dominion he states:

[Matthew] upholds the Old Testament duality between heaven and earth, critiques first-century Jewish expectations of the overthrow of Roman dominion … and potentially extends sacred space to the whole world. “Sacred space is no longer defined simply in terms of the Land of Israel … The whole world is now a mission field…. Sacred space is wherever Jesus is present with his followers (Matt. 28.20)” [quoting Riches, Conflicting pp.292-293].

In effect, Bartholomew suggests a simple universalisation as sacred space is extended to the ‘whole world’. This account however, fails to take seriously the profound social-political impact that would result from such universalisation. Jerome Neyrey and Bruce Malina, for example, have argued that the purity codes, centred on the Temple building in Jerusalem, dominated Israel’s spatial imagination and defined the

[59] This ‘rooted’ view of place was strongly established by theologians throughout the 1970s. Two such influential American writers of that period are, as already mentioned, Walter Brueggemann (whose seminal work The Land was published in 1977) and Wendell Berry who strongly images the authentic, rooted place of dwelling occupied by ‘settlers’ to the inauthentic mobility of ‘boomers’ who participate in global industries and banking. See Wendell E. Berry Lecture: ‘It All Turns On Affection’, Awards and Honors: 2012 Jefferson Lecturer.

[60] Moxnes, Putting.


[62] See Chapter 2 for references that relate to this subject.

hegemonic settlement of the entire nation. 64 The removal of the purity system through ‘universalisation’ would in effect challenge and subvert the entire social-spatial power structure that gave coherence to Jewish society. Thus, whilst I do not disagree with Bartholomew’s overall statement, he has in my view completely overlooked the profound implications of universalisation that contemporary studies of place would draw to our attention. These implications include the fundamental challenge through Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom to the ideological arrangement of social-space which involved the exclusion and marginalisation of many for the benefit of the few; and also the inauguration of a ‘new kind of place’—one which was defined by the presence of Jesus and his disciples.

These criticisms of Bartholomew’s approach represent an important point of departure between notions of place that are predicated on ‘rootedness’ and those that seek to understand how place is implicated in establishing meaning and power which reflects a similar point of departure in the development of theories of place within the social sciences. 65 These issues will be considered in the rest of this chapter by discussing the work of authors who focus specifically on the relationships of meaning, power and place as they are expressed in Biblical texts which will lead in Chapter 2 to a more rigorous exploration of potential connections between theories of place from within social sciences on the one hand and theology on the other.

Before moving on however, I will outline two other key issues which have emerged from the discussion that have important bearing on the development of my own argument.

First is the need for theology to engage with arguments that define place in terms of mobility or the ‘convergence of storied trajectories’. 66 Although the conception of place in terms of mobility might seem counter-intuitive, it is, in my view, critically important both in its own right and also for my own research. Relevance to research

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65 See Cresswell, Place, pp.126-127.

66 Massey, For Space, pp.3-12. During the course of research I had the privilege of meeting Doreen Massey on two occasions. At the second meeting she very kindly invited me to a meal where we discussed some of my early thinking about Jesus-Space. I am grateful to her for some early comment and encouragement.
relates, for example, to the way in which ‘White Estates’ are commonly represented—especially in the media—as culturally and socially bounded entities. They exemplify for many a kind of static localism associated with disturbing behaviour such as crime or teenage pregnancy, and moreover these behaviours are deemed to be the ‘fault’ of the residents themselves.\(^{67}\) This kind of representation rarely engages with the ‘storied trajectory’ of the community itself which, on such estates, most often involves the mass movement of people in slum clearances; living with the consequences of work and health situations that are direct results of the moving patterns of industry and work in response to global financial developments; the disadvantageous effects of education, housing, employment and transport policies which are invariably made by people who live ‘elsewhere’. Massey argues that the recognition of ‘space’ in terms of mobilities is fundamental for the development of a just and equitable social settlement.\(^{68}\)

Secondly, place-as-mobility has significant bearing on the approach to ethnographic work that I have taken. It is increasingly recognised that for ethnographers to approach the research site as a culturally and socially bounded place which they ‘go to’ to do research will limit the potential effectiveness and findings of the research.\(^{69}\) Therefore, especially when the focus of ethnographic research is place itself, it is essential to develop ethnographic methodology which, as far as possible, does not impose an already-formed static or parochial sense of place onto the research which would represent a major weakness in the overall research project. Thus, whilst Massey’s arguments will not be engaged with in detail here, her insights will be taken into account, especially in the way ethnographic methodology is developed. This will be done by drawing on the work of Sarah Pink\(^{70}\) who presents an ethnographic methodology which seeks a particular attentiveness to mobility in everyday life and also draws significantly on Massey’s ideas. These developments are included as a central part of the discussion in Chapter 4.


\(^{68}\) For these arguments see Massey, *For Space* and Massey, *A Global Sense of Place*. Note that Massey uses the terminology of ‘space’ rather than ‘place’.


These observations also indicate the importance for methodology to allow for a critique of the presuppositions underlying the newly forming argument. Without such openness in the methodology there is an inherent danger of a closed reading of place which would tend towards an ideological position—the very tendency being highlighted here with regard to ‘static’ formulations of place. The methodology will therefore seek to incorporate openness by, for example, including elements such as ‘situated knowledge’ and ‘reflexive practice’.

Exploring the Relation of Power to Place in Biblical Literature: Reading from the Perspective of Cosmology and Ideology

This section seeks to develop the way in which the power-place relationship might be conceived of theologically by investigating the way in which the language of place is used firstly in relation to cosmological readings of the Biblical text and secondly in relation to ideological readings. This is followed by an exploration of ideas about how social-scientific readings of Biblical texts might shed light on the power-place relationship.

Here I discuss two works that engage with the theme of place from these perspectives, namely John Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, who enquires about the world-views of Matthew and Mark through the lens of mythology and cosmology, and Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine*, who uses an ideological analysis of narratives about the Land to understand more deeply the representations of place within the Old Testament. Whilst neither of these directly engages with a critical study of place within Biblical text, they do address important aspects of the way in which the text represents places in relation to both cosmological and ideological constructions and therefore contribute important insights into the way in which place is implicated in the workings of power in the world of the Ancient Near East (hereafter ANE).

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71 Riches, *Conflicting*; Habel, *Land*.

72 In drawing on the work of Riches and Habel there is no intention to blur the important distinctions between cosmology and ideology. In this study the interest does not lie specifically in the subjects of cosmology or ideology but in the use of the language of place within scripture and how a cosmological or ideological perspective of the text might illuminate the use of that language. It is not the intention of this chapter to explore the ideological mechanisms that function within place—that discussion is taken up in Chapter 3.
Both Riches and Habel draw on Clifford Geertz in their understanding that the text can be read at two levels: a surface (social, ethical, political) level and a deep (cosmological or ideological) level. A ‘deep’ reading does not imply greater significance, but it does maintain that an understanding of culture or ‘the way the world works’ is fundamentally important for understanding social, political and ethical meaning in the narrative.

**John Riches, Conflicting Mythologies**

Riches sets out to “examine the Gospels of Mark and Matthew for evidence of the emergence of new senses of self-identity among the communities and circles which formed their intended readership.” Riches’ method is to investigate the cosmological framing of the gospels, in part by drawing on the work of Clifford Geertz, by focusing on two common topics, kinship (seed) and attachment to the Land (sacred space).

Religious cosmologies are “sustained stories about the gods” which critically for Riches are oppositional in nature; by which he means that

\[
\text{[They]} \text{ give voice to oppositions which … are projections of the deep structures of the mind. Such stories with their different codes—geographical, social and cosmological—express and seek to mediate between different patterns of social organisation and different ways of viewing the world.}
\]

He argues that first century Jewish cosmologies are essentially of two kinds, both represented within the Gospels of Matthew and Mark:

One cosmic dualist, which saw the root of evil as lying in the invasion of the world by demonic forces which held men and women in bondage and which could be overcome only by a final battle between God and the demonic forces (1 Enoch 1-36); another ‘forensic,’ which saw the source of evil as lying in the human will, of which the resolution resides in some final assize (2 Baruch).

Riches offers some substantial arguments about the relationship between the language of geography and place on the one hand and cosmology and myth on the other. He argues that acts of ‘naming’ or attaching narratives to locations “are strong expressions of social identity and map not only physical realities, but also social

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75 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.12.
realities and differences: they include and they also exclude.”

Thus, in the world of the ANE, narratives portrayed territory “as much more than physical geography: it is ‘home’ and, moreover, a home which lies under the ‘sacred canopy’ of the gods.”

Thus, the way the physical landscape is named and storied is an “integral part of our struggle for power and control over our world.”

The cosmological mapping of landscapes which Riches describes is not restricted to Hebrew Scriptures or other ANE writings. His project is precisely to argue that the authors of both Matthew and Mark intentionally and coherently develop the cosmological themes embedded in the Old Testament. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, he proposes that the themes of land and kin are used to represent the two distinct cosmologies of cosmic dualism and forensic cosmology. Whilst these narratives have their foundations in the stories of Genesis and Exodus, their immediate and primary points of reference are Isaiah 40-55. The Gospel of Mark thus maintains the scriptural tradition of presenting a community’s foundational story (or myth) by evoking and reinterpreting Israel’s primary narrative.

In other words, Mark re-works Israel’s cosmologies in the light of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection and in doing so incorporates, as a given, the central association between cosmology (or foundational theology) and geography or place. The theme of Mark’s re-working of concepts of place and space in the light of Jesus will be developed further later in the chapter.

A central part of Riches’ proposal is that cosmologies (or society’s shared narratives) are intrinsically structured to communicate at two levels; as cosmology (a deep level) on the one hand and ethos (a social level) on the other hand whereby the dual reading of cultural symbols leads to a “mutual reinforcement”—that is, they present both a ‘model for’ and a ‘model of’ reality. Thus:

> The more people act in accordance with the ways of conceiving the world which are suggested by their shared narratives, rituals and other symbolic

77 Riches, Conflicting, p.116.
78 Riches, Conflicting, p.9.
79 Riches, Conflicting, p.115. The function of naming in relation to social identity and physical location is explored by Mary Douglas who observes that, from an anthropological perspective, taboo is a mechanism that reinforces social identity and cohesion by working to exclude the ‘tabooed’ or ‘dirty’ other. The ideas of ‘naming’ and ‘taboo’ lead to further questions about the particular mechanisms that are at work in linking place to social and ideological power and these will be explored in Chapter 2 (Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger [London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002]).
80 This idea is argued persuasively in Rikki E. Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).
products, the more such patterns of action seem to confer on their conceptions of the world and ‘aura of factuality’. The more realistic a society’s conceptions of the world become, the more its members will be constrained to act in accordance with them.\textsuperscript{81}

Given that Riches’ analysis is fairly dense and intricately argued, I will seek to summarise the main points that are pertinent to my own research. In order to explore Mark’s use of topographical descriptions, the first task, following Geertz, is to “discern what kind of view of reality is being expressed in his construction of space in his narrative.”\textsuperscript{82} One possibility is that it maps a reality, found for example in Josephus, “where Jerusalem and Temple lie at the centre of the Land and where other areas are more or less distanced or excluded from this sacral space.”\textsuperscript{83} Riches however proposes an alternative view—that Mark challenges and reworks such notions of sacred space and in so doing also reworks “notions of God’s power, of order and chaos with which such an understanding of space is linked.”\textsuperscript{84} He draws on Claude Levi-Strauss’s assertion that “myths give voice to fundamental oppositions” to argue that “mythical narratives are constructed not just in terms of binary opposites, such as sacred and profane, but in terms of different and competing concepts of order and chaos, of which sacred and profane is one, righteousness and lawlessness is another.”\textsuperscript{85} Myths therefore are not to be understood as imposing a particular view of the world and a corresponding view of society on people—and it follows that they do not therefore present the distinction between chaos and order as a logical one. Rather, mythological narratives present oppositions as paradoxical by expressing different views of chaos and order within the same narrative. Thus Riches states that

by relating Mark’s treatment of sacred space to deep tensions in the mythical cosmologies of his time, showing, that is, how such tensions are reflected in his narrative account of Jesus’ progress, we may be able to shed some light on how Mark sought to address the problems inherent in such conflicting mythologies.\textsuperscript{86}

With reference to Mark’s contrasting conceptions of reality, in the cosmic-dualist view the world itself is the site of demon infestation, and it is only in the final battle as God descends from heaven that the evil is overcome. In this view, sites such as

\textsuperscript{81} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.10.
\textsuperscript{82} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.117.
\textsuperscript{83} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.117.
\textsuperscript{84} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.117.
\textsuperscript{85} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.125.
\textsuperscript{86} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.125.
temple and land are only significant in terms of “their roles in the final cosmic drama.” In contrast, the forensic view, for which Mark draws primarily from Deutro-Isaiah, presents the land and the temple as promised destination for those who repent of their sins. Here the Land and the Isaianic ‘Way’ are of central importance as a sacred place—sacred in the sense that it is the place where God’s presence is found by those returning from exile.

Not only does Mark reflect these different views of sacred space, with their different mappings of localities, but he is “also engaged in a dialectical process of reconciling these oppositions or differences” such that the dualistic views of the world with their beliefs in Satanic dominance “are in measure overcome and subsumed into views which have their origin in Isaiah’s notion of the way of the Lord.”

Riches briefly outlines the way in which Mark maps these different views in his narrative. An important aspect of this is the relationship of Galilee to Jerusalem and the view that Galilee is not simply set up in opposition to Jerusalem. Rather, Riches argues, Mark is allegorising space so that terms like Galilee and ‘the way’ are not references to particular sacred spaces which contrast to profane sites, rather “they stand for particular religious experience, which is mediated through Jesus and which can be repeated either inside or outside the land.” Thus, “to follow Jesus to Galilee is to ‘see him’, like the Gentile centurion to recognise in him the Son of God, to be led and taught by him … through the preaching of the gospel and to share in his ministry of teaching, preaching, exorcising and healing.” At the same time Galilee “remains a narrative of particular concrete events” so that “what the disciples, and by extension Mark’s readers, are called to is just as much a particular experience of the numinous, of the divine, as was the encounter between Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples in the towns and villages of the Galilee prior to his crucifixion.”

The point that Riches is making here is that the notions of sacred and profane associated with Isaiah’s ‘way of the Lord’ are being discarded and the cultic boundaries are being removed. No longer do ‘the way’ and the Temple figure as

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87 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.131.
88 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.132.
89 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.140.
90 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.141.
91 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.141.
92 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.141.
93 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.142.
centres of sacred or pure space (the place of God’s presence), but now “there is a sense of the irruption of the presence of God ‘where ever the gospel is preached in the whole world’ (Mark 14:9).”

This is illustrated for example by the multiple boundary crossings that Jesus makes in Mark which “demonstrate Jesus’ indifference to such sacred space,” a view which is made explicit in Mark 7 where influences that were defined as polluting by cultic tradition are now of no consequence.

There is now a ‘new sense of sacred space’ which is predicated on the person of Jesus himself. In this new arrangement, identity is no longer defined by attachment to cultic markers and centres such as land, temple, kinship, food laws—such markers are now removed. “It is no longer physical descent and local attachment which defines a person, but his attachment to the one who comes on the way of the Lord and who leads and teaches them.”

Now, to be a Galilean is to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus.

For the purpose of this study, an important aspect of Riches’s argument is to show the sophisticated way in which Biblical texts incorporate representations of place as a means of conveying the central meanings of the narratives. Biblical authors are shown to employ spatial references as literary devices to convey meaning in a manner which resembles the use of human and divine characters. Critically for Riches the literary patterns of the gospels are predicated on the spatial representations of the Old Testament so that the conflicting cosmologies found there now find resolution through the gospel narratives. Furthermore it is precisely through the narrative development of these spatial representations that the presence of Jesus himself is seen to be constitutive of a new kind of place, which includes a newly defined identity for those who choose to follow him.

These proposals find significant resonance with the conclusions of both Stewart and Moxnes who develop social analyses of place within the Gospel of Mark, and also lead to further discussion about the newly configured arrangement of place around the person of Jesus, which is discussed at length in Chapter 3 under the heading of Jesus-Space.

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94 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.142.
95 The theme of purity and pure space, with particular reference to Mark 7, is developed further in Chapter 2.
96 Riches, *Conflicting*, p.143.
Norman Habel, The Land is Mine

Habel seeks to “discern the ideological stance reflected in Biblical texts” where the Land is the dominant symbol. His method is to analyse Old Testament Land narratives by constructing a framework of five categories, which he uses to interrogate texts and thus identify aspects of ideology within them. He makes a distinction between ‘biblical theology’ and ‘biblical ideology’ as “schemes of thought within the Bible.”

By a biblical theology I mean the doctrine and discourse about God expressed within a biblical literary unit that reflect the living faith of a given community. Biblical ideology refers to a wider complex of images and ideas that may employ theological doctrines, traditions, or symbols to justify and promote the social, economic, and political interests of a group within society.

Habel’s analysis thus emphasises a close association between ideology and political, religious and social interests. He argues that different sections of scripture each promote a distinct ideological position with respect to the land and indeed that “these land ideologies, quite understandably, are generally written from the perspective of the landowners or would-be landowners, whether they be monarchs, priests, peasant farmers, or heads of ancestral families.”

Six ideological positions are identified: a royal ideology (Land as the source of wealth), a theocratic ideology (Land as conditional grant), an ancestral household ideology (Land as family lots), a prophetic ideology (Land as YHWH’s personal nahalah), an agrarian ideology (Land as Sabbath bound) and an immigrant ideology (Land as host country). However, he describes these biblical ideologies as:

more than single-minded campaign documents for particular social or political struggles. They are complex patterns of ideas and ideals, many of which may not be systematically integrated but are presented in the text. Moreover they embrace a cluster of images and symbols that reflect levels of meaning rather than a distortion of reality. It is this complex cluster of images and ideas that is promoted in the biblical text as ‘the way things should be’ in society, whether as nostalgia

97 Habel, Land, p.3.
98 Habel, Land, pp.10-11.
99 Habel, Land, p.10.
100 Habel, Land, pp.146-147.
101 See Habel, Land, pp.134-135, 148-158 for a summary of these six ideological positions.
for the past, a justification of the status quo, a vision for the future, or an intricate combination of these.  

For the purposes of this thesis the value of Habel’s argument lies in the contribution it makes about the way in which references to place are incorporated into the narrative of scripture to convey meaning or ideological intent. His approach offers a creatively different paradigm to the ‘rooted’ view of the Land previously discussed in relation to Bartholomew’s work, and thus serves to helpfully broaden and ‘complexify’ the debate.

The studies of Riches and Habel open up some fresh perspectives on the representations of place within Biblical literature and especially the relationship between place-representation, meaning and power. Place-references within texts are not, it seems, related to a modern interest in location but rather function to communicate either cosmological or ideological import, and in doing so play a critical role in communicating the intent of the narrative. Critically the ‘intent’ is not only to communicate truth about God or the way the world is, but also to project and establish the power interests of certain sectors of society. Thus, geographies represented within texts are not necessarily used consistently throughout scripture, or even within the parameters of a single book to portray a single unchanging meaning or position, but are co-opted and manipulated to establish ideological interests or to negotiate cosmological intent.

This method of co-opting geographical symbols within narrative for ideological intent was suggested as early as 1985 by Michael Fishbane. In discussing the use of typologies in ancient Israel, Fishbane refers to their spatial nature in terms of their ‘typological imagination’ through which they identified “diverse loci of sacred geography.” Here, “foundational events and institutions are located at the ‘sacred centre’—an axis mundi where the powers of heaven and earth conjoin—which provides the prototype for later events and institutions.” Important for this argument is Fishbane’s understanding that the “correlations emphasize spatial

102 Habel, Land, p.13.
104 Fishbane, Interpretation, p.368.
105 Fishbane, Interpretation, p.368.
elements or attributes”\textsuperscript{106} [where I understand that by ‘correlations’ he means the correlations between the site in question and the prototype site]. Fishbane cites an example where the correlation is achieved by juxtaposing the loci in question, “as in 2 Chron 3:1, where it is stated—against all historical-geographical likelihood—that Solomon built ‘the Temple of YHWH in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah’, the mountain of Abraham’s near-sacrifice to Isaac.”\textsuperscript{107} However, these ‘typological alignments’ do not all purely reflect “a free religious tendency to identify fundamental spatial events and images. At times, by contrast, certain spatial identifications are decidedly political in motivation.”\textsuperscript{108} By way of example, Fishbane takes the passages such as Isa 2:1-4 that narrate the transfer of Sinai images to Zion. Here the text “gives importance to the new centrality of Jerusalem, and buttresses new hope with the accumulated force of sacred memories.”\textsuperscript{109} In other words, the political interests of Jerusalem and its occupants are served by co-opting mythological narratives about Sinai—now Jerusalem is believed to be the ‘sacred centre’.

Whilst Fishbane’s discussion is through the lens of typology, there is none-the-less interesting correlation here between his conclusions and those of both Riches and Habel about the relationship between geography and ideology or cosmology and the manipulation of place-references in relation to political interest or identity formation.

The second interesting development, focused on by Riches in particular, is the way in which cultural symbols (including those of places and landscapes), and social arrangements are ‘mutually reinforcing’, or in Riches’ terms, the way in which cultural symbols present both a ‘model for’ and a ‘model of’ reality.\textsuperscript{110} This finds significant correlation with ideas that Mary Douglas, Tim Cresswell, and other social geographers of place, express in describing the relationship of place to the formation of society—that they are co-constitutive of each other. That is to say, “society produces space and space produces society.”\textsuperscript{111} Cresswell expresses this by saying that “a place … does not ‘reflect’ ideology; it is not just an ‘expression’ of values. It is better to think of place as something produced by and producing ideology.”\textsuperscript{112} Whilst

\textsuperscript{106} Fishbane, \textit{Interpretation}, p.368.
\textsuperscript{107} Fishbane, \textit{Interpretation}, p.368.
\textsuperscript{108} Fishbane, \textit{Interpretation}, p.369.
\textsuperscript{109} Fishbane, \textit{Interpretation}, p.372.
\textsuperscript{110} Riches, \textit{Conflicting}, p.10. See my discussion above about this.
\textsuperscript{111} See Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.12.
\textsuperscript{112} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.17.
Riches himself focuses on cosmological rather than ideological meanings in the text, he does establish intriguing connections between the way ‘deep’ cosmological frameworks function to produce a sense of meaning and reality in society; ideas which find resonance with the notion of ‘co-constitution’ suggested by Cresswell and others. As such, his arguments serve as a bridge between the study of Biblical texts and the work of social scientists Douglas and Cresswell that are developed in Chapter 2. This theme is also developed through the work of the Context Group who focus on anthropological understandings of New Testament texts and also draw on the work of Douglas.

Thirdly, it is clear from the discussion so far that the constitution of place is very complex and multi-layered. There is no simple or ‘right’ way to understand place and indeed, the challenge is to develop and work with models of place that are not overwhelmingly complex. The works that form the basis of discussion in the rest of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 are designed to identify patterns and themes that taken together begin to distil some order from the complexity without losing the rigour and credibility of the argument.

### Exploring the Relation of Power to Place in Biblical Literature: Readings from the Perspective of Social Geography

At the time of writing, I am aware of only two studies that explore conceptions of place inherent within New Testament narratives and discuss their findings in the light of recent developments in theories of place from the social sciences. The studies by Eric Stewart and Halvor Moxnes are significant for developing theological understandings of place and I therefore briefly summarise their arguments here before offering some critical comment.  

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**113** Eric C. Stewart, *Gathered Around Jesus: An Alternative Spatial Practice in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Clark, 2009); Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox, 2003). Stewart himself observes that whilst the study of spatial representations in Mark began in the 1930s, no work has been done on the “critical study of space” within the gospel with the exception of Halvor Moxnes (Stewart, *Gathered*, p.28-29).
Stewart’s purpose is to enquire into “ancient perceptions of space and place and how they underlie much of Mark’s gospel” in particular attempting “to understand the social nature of space in antiquity, addressing questions related to power and its dissemination in space as well as how Mark understands, accepts and subverts claims made by others to the space in which Jesus lived.”

Stewart argues that a spatial reading along these lines is significant for the interpretation of Mark’s narrative. Jesus himself is portrayed as the new “geographic centre” of the world with “authority over a new spatial practice,” namely the kingdom of God. He creates the “new space of the kingdom in gathering people around himself and sending them out in order to enlarge the space of that gathering.”

Stewart establishes grounds for his enquiry by exploring ‘critical spatial theory’. Firstly he asserts that space is socially produced such that “space encodes social practices and power relations. Those who control space exert their control by means of particular spatial practices.” Secondly, “texts represent space in a slightly different way from the way [it] is represented in the everyday social world.” Texts can be understood as mapping the world so as to present a static picture of places with associated fixed meanings. Stewart draws on Henri Lefebvre’s category of ‘representational spaces’ to describe the way a text creates ‘place’ by ascribing certain fixed meanings to places which are otherwise socially produced and therefore always subject to change.

Stewart’s next step is a detailed study of the spatial conceptions that Greek, Roman and Jewish authors brought to their own texts. Since scientific geography is little known in these traditions, the emphasis is strongly on the human aspect so that places are presented by “alluding to mythical and ‘biographical’ elements of each place … Space in this type of geography is thoroughly imbued with the characteristics of its

114 Stewart, Gathered, p.29.
115 Stewart, Gathered, pp.218-219.
116 Stewart, Gathered, pp.30-57.
117 Stewart, Gathered, p.221.
118 Stewart, Gathered, p.57.
119 Stewart, Gathered, pp.57-61.
inhabitants whilst at the same time it endows those people with its own characteristics.”

Perhaps the most important concept for defining spatial awareness for these cultures is that of *oikoumene*, that is the notion of the inhabited world—“the extent of land in … which it was possible for people to live.” Greek, then Roman, geography placed their own territory, by definition, at the centre of the *oikoumene* and understood all other people and places in terms of their proximity to and relation with their own central position.

These geographical ideas are used in all forms of literary genre of the ancient world as the standard way of talking about and mapping the world; “all used stock stereotypes in order to portray characters in their tales. So close was the relationship between geography and biography that to tell the history of a city one used the *bios* genre.”

In addition, the geographical materials contained within these ancient texts “encoded certain types of power relations.” Stewart continues:

> These power relations are presented as ‘inherent’ in the land or in divine will. This manner of speaking about space offers a portrait of space that is arranged ideally in only one way. Describing space this way offers the opportunity to portray one’s own culture as normative in spatial terms.

Thus Greek and Roman literature employed the language of “geographical stereotypes … to discuss other ‘marginal’ people at the edges of the earth,” who from their perspective were deviating from the normative lifestyle of those in ‘civilized’ society.

Before discussing Stewart’s work in relation to my own proposals for a theology of place, I will briefly summarise the only (that I am aware of) other analysis of a New Testament text from the perspective of a social geography of place, namely the work of Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*.

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120 Stewart, *Gathered*, p.92.
123 Stewart, *Gathered*, p.127. Mayra Rivera Rivera argues that this relationship between the divine and the spatial arrangement of power is characteristic of pre-modern time where “the organization of societies depended on an appeal to extra-wordly principles based on which people or groups were assigned pre-determined levels in the hierarchical structure of existence.” She contrasts this pre-modern “spatiality of power” based on ‘heights’ with modern spatialities based ‘depths’ and post-modern figurations of power which is primarily horizontal” (Mayra Rivera Rivera, ‘Margins and the Changing Spatiality of Power’, in Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, *Still at the Margins: Biblical Scholarship Fifteen Years after Voices from the Margins* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008) p.117.
124 Stewart, *Gathered*, pp.127-128. The concept of ‘normativity’ is developed further at the end of this chapter and as a central theme in Chapter 2, with particular reference to marginalisation.
Halvor Moxnes, The Structural Nature of Place: Reading Mark’s Gospel

Moxnes’s goal is “to uncover the spatial dimensions of the historical Jesus.” Moxnes draws on the work of David Harvey who argues that place is constituted around three notions of ‘spatial experience’ (or material spatial practices), ‘perception’ (or representations of space—the cultural or ideological level of space) and ‘imagination’ (or spaces of representation; imagined places).

By analysing a range of early sources, Moxnes argues that the ‘house’ and ‘household’ were the single most important institution or ‘place’ for a first century Galilean; indeed it was the very basis of a person’s identity and honour within society. Moxnes draws on Bernhard Scott’s placed-based reading of the parables, where Scott states that in the ancient Mediterranean world everyone had a social map that defined the individual’s place in the world. It told people who they were, who they were related to, how to act and behave. At the centre of this map was the family, esp. [sic] the father, then came the village, finally the city and beyond to the ends of the world.

In the light of this structuring of society Jesus’ call to ‘follow’ represents a dual challenge. On the one hand, to leave the household was to be associated with a radical loss of identity and ‘place’ within the community; on the other there is no obvious substitutive new place—it is as if Jesus invites followers into ‘no-place’.

This movement from household to ‘no-place’ represents a danger not only for those leaving, but presents a disturbing challenge to the status-quo of the wider society. In

125 Moxnes, Putting, p.2.
127 Moxnes, Putting, pp.13-14.
128 Moxnes’s primary sources are Q, the Gospel of Thomas and the ‘sayings’ material of Mark’s Gospel (Moxnes, Putting, p.17).
130 Moxnes, Putting, pp.49-50. For Moxnes’s review of all the ‘leaving the household’ sayings from early Jesus tradition see Putting, pp.49-64.
leaving household-space Jesus, and his young male followers in particular, transgressed the normative social/political/religious landscape of the day—the move was in effect an intentional deviance from ‘household-space’ and its associated ideology. Of fundamental importance to Moxnes’s argument is the notion that the first century Galilean household was essentially characterised as ‘male space’. The household was defined by a male hierarchy centred on the father-son relationship such that “the normal way of mapping the world started with the household and the father as its head.” Thus ‘male-space’ encompassed not only the “practical social structures of the house and household activities, place in practical terms, but also the ideological and mental structures and the place of men, women and children within that space.” In responding to Jesus’ call to follow, young men were in effect abdicating their male responsibilities; in leaving ‘male space’ they were in some way experiencing a radical dislocation from male identity, that is, in society’s eyes, they were no longer fully men.

Moxnes’s study opens up a number of interesting avenues of thought in relation to spatiality in Mark’s Gospel, although one might critically comment that his analysis in terms of ‘queer space’ and corresponding extended analysis of the eunuch texts—especially Matt 19:12—detracts from the overall impact of his proposal. Whilst these subjects are interesting in their own right, I would argue that in relation to questions of place within theology and the social sciences, Moxnes makes some insightful and helpful contributions. His structural analysis of place within Mark is especially useful in the light of previous conversation about the ‘rooted’ and ‘secure’ formulations of place. His presentation of ‘home-space’ as a central structural component of male hierarchy, whose dark side is revealed and contested by the alternative spatiality of Jesus’ own presence, is a helpful application of the social-geographical suspicion of ‘rooted’ place to Biblical literature. Thus, despite some reservations about Moxnes’s argument, there is important material that can helpfully contribute to the concluding analysis of this chapter.

131 Moxnes, Putting, p.67.
132 Moxnes, Putting, p.68.
133 Moxnes, Putting, p.73.
134 Moxnes, Place, pp.84-101. For Moxnes ‘queer’ “signals a protest against fixed categories” (Place, p.84).
The Theological Characteristics of Place

The aim of this chapter has been to identify the key aspects of a theology of place that can later be drawn into critical dialogical conversation with understandings of place from social geography. In this concluding section I argue that key themes have been emerging through the material covered in the chapter that point to a number of defining characteristics in relation to the theology of place—characteristics that will determine the shape of discussion in the following two chapters.

The Representation of Place in Biblical Texts

As I have shown at the start of this chapter, place itself is a complex concept and can be theorised in a variety of ways. It is not surprising then, to find that the representation of place in Biblical texts is also complex and multi-layered. I have already discussed the ways in which the complexity of spatial representation works within texts so will not return to that discussion except to comment that there is significant scope for much more work to be done in understanding exactly what are the primary spatial representations contained within various Biblical texts.

The critical focus of my own argument however, is that amongst this complexity, the core component of the representation of place within texts is that of power. Whilst I understand the proposal needs to be more nuanced, I would contend that it is not unhelpful to say that in essence, texts refer to places as a way of referring to power. I have discussed the place-power relationship by engaging with Riches, Habel, Stewart and Moxnes. In each case the power-place relationship includes an ideological component of power where place is the critical ‘link’ between ideology on the one hand and social-spatial or structural-spatial settlements on the other. In this sense texts are not intended to be ‘accurate’ presentations of how (ideological) power

135 See earlier in this chapter in the context of discussion of Riches’ work.
actually functions ‘on the ground’, rather they discuss (ideological) power by selectively representing and interpreting different kinds of places (whether iconic places such as Zion, or everyday places such as the home) for their own purposes.\footnote{Moxnes argues this point in a later essay about the representation of place in the Gospel of Luke: “Luke seems to be engaged in a conscious effort to transform the landscape, to create new meanings associated with it. Luke describes the landscape of the Mediterranean world, but it is represented in such a way that it presents Luke’s ideas and ideals. The journey from Galilee to Jerusalem is not described with attention to topographical accuracy, but to the teaching of Jesus that takes place along the route. Thus, the landscape of that journey becomes a moral or spiritual landscape.” (Halvor Moxnes, ‘Landscape and Spatiality’, in Dietmar Neufeld and Richard DeMaris (eds), \textit{Understanding the Social World of the New Testament}, [London and New York: Routledge, 2010] p.99).} In this sense, texts themselves are involved in establishing or contesting the accepted meanings of places through their narrative accounts; in other words Biblical texts are themselves part of the ideological landscape.

It is this understanding of the power-place relationship that has been the basis of my criticism of conceptions of place as ‘rooted’, as presented, for example, by Bartholomew and Brueggemann. This is not to discount the relational values that these approaches emphasise, such as security and neighbourliness, but to recognise that this ‘rooted’ or ‘static’ formulation of place needs to be understood within the wider context of a power-place dynamic so as not to unwittingly present constructions of place that are inherently exclusive or embody unequal relations of power.

\textit{Normative Place}

The concern to relate theology to recent developments in spatial-theory within the social sciences requires a focus, not on the specific spatial arrangements represented in particular texts (such as \textit{male space} or \textit{oikoumene}), but rather on broader categories of spatial representation that are applicable to all places, especially to twenty-first century urban places. The key category of broader spatial representation that I will argue is emerging from these studies (and also from others to be discussed in Chapter 2) is that of ‘normative place’. Critically, normativity engages with the place-power relationships represented in Biblical texts that have been described above and also has been established as a way of engaging with place in the social sciences, notably through the work of Tim Cresswell and David Sibley.\footnote{Tim Cresswell, \textit{In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression} (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); David Sibley, \textit{Geographies of Exclusion} (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).} In this sense ‘normative
place’ functions as an important hermeneutical bridge between the representation of place within Biblical texts and the lived experience of contemporary places. By ‘normative’ I am expressing the manner in which the social-spatial settlement of a place coheres with the commonly understood (ideological) meaning of the place and the power associated with it (whether religious, social or spiritual power). When the social and ideological aspects of a place cohere in this way they are accepted as normative; they are the ‘natural’ or ‘divinely ordained’ way of being. Although Biblical authors would clearly not have been familiar with the concept of normativity, the argument here is that their interest in particular spatial arrangements were precisely because they were normative; that is to say, the social-spatial arrangements they selected were the ones that embodied unequal power relationships as normative and natural. Thus the author’s interest is not primarily in places per-se but in places as vehicles of power—power which operated for the benefit of a few and the detriment of the many.

Both Stewart and Moxnes assert that the narrative of Mark’s Gospel draws on place-meanings that would be understood in first century Palestine as normative, that is they are an ‘inherent’ or ‘given’ aspect of everyday life. Thus, the landscapes described in Mark’s narrative present a normative settlement or mapping of power associated to place and places where power relations are arranged only in one way, and that way is according to the divine will. What constitutes ‘normativity’ is however differently defined by each of the authors since each have built their arguments from somewhat different geographies of space and place.

Foundational for Stewart’s argument is that place is socially produced and that place or ‘territory’ itself replicates and reproduces social power. In establishing this position Stewart draws on Robert Sack who proposes a three-step process for making a ‘space’ into a ‘territory’: classification, communication and control. Thus, in relation, for example, to ‘classification’ Stewart argues that Mark’s approach to narrative is predicated on the same spatial mapping as the rest of the ancient world, namely oikoumene; that is he “deals largely with the same geographical and topographical stereotypes” found widely in his culture.138 Stewart concludes that “describing space this way offers the opportunity to portray one’s own culture as normative in spatial

138 Stewart, Gathered, pp.179-180.
terms” [italics mine]. In ‘reality’ this would mean that all places, from the vast sweep of empire to the arrangement of an individual house and the corresponding social relations and behaviours of people within those places, would conform to the ideologies of *oikoumene* or ‘civilization’. In this way every person had their ‘proper place’ in the grand scheme of things. People who “lived different types of lives, deviating from the ‘civilized’ lifestyle” were considered ‘out-of-place’; they were socially and geographically marginalised.

In contrast Moxnes draws on David Harvey and neo-Marxist thinking about place as structurally produced and maintained. Thus for Moxnes, Mark would understand that power resides in the structures of society so that power is challenged by subverting the structures and institutions of society and the ideologies embedded and expressed in them. Normativity for Moxnes is defined in terms of male hierarchy, which in Roman society was predicated on the existence of the ‘divine’ emperor. Such a system was co-constitutive of place so that buildings such as houses, temples, market squares and city gates defined the ‘proper place’ for all classes and groups of people, and by defining their proper place also defined their relative power in relation to the emperor.141

A critical element of my own argument is to posit ‘normative-place’ as a way of moving beyond the debate about either/or, social/structural conceptions of place that have been thus far discovered in the work of Stewart and Moxnes. Each of them defines their representation of place as the normative representation and it is precisely this understanding that will be drawn upon in later argument.

In developing the theme of normativity in Chapter 2, I will argue that ‘normative-place’ is a fundamental for defining not only a theology of place, but also a theology of power. There are however two specific areas of caution that should be noted in drawing on the notion of normativity in this way. Firstly, that the sense of ‘whereness’ of place is not lost so that particular relationship of power-to-place in one location may be seen as distinct from the relationship in another location. Secondly, are the concerns about the position from which normativity is described and defined and the question about how normativity is nameable from a non-normative position. I will account for these concerns in the discussion of Chapters 2 and 3.

**Jesus-Space (or Redemptive-Place)**

Given that normative-place represents an unequal or inequitable settlement of place, one would expect that the ministry of Jesus, and indeed narratives of the Kingdom of God, would be presented as a challenge to, and disruption of normativity. However, the logic of such an argument would require not a simple disruption of inequitable normative-place, but indeed the revealing or formation of a new and equitable settlement of place. This is indeed, precisely the argument I will seek to establish, focusing on the characteristics of normative-place in Chapter 2 and the formation of a new, equitable or Jesus-Space in Chapter 3. In preparation for this discussion I will give a brief summary of the grounds laid in this chapter for suggesting that Jesus-Space is presented in the gospels as the alternative spatiality of the Kingdom of God, in response to normative-place which gives shape to the ‘kingdoms of the world’.

Both Stewart and Moxnes describe Jesus’ engagement with their own conception of normative-place and the creation of a new spatiality around Jesus himself. On the one hand, by defining normativity in terms of the social-spatial arrangement *oikoumene*, Stewart understands that Jesus’ engagement with place is, in part, to invert structures by inverting the normative meaning of places. Moxnes on the other hand presents normativity structurally in terms of hierarchical male-space; the ministry of Jesus is therefore portrayed as subverting power by calling young men out of male-space and into ‘queer-space’. By subverting patriarchal structures in this way, Jesus is portrayed as challenging the Roman imperial power itself and thus making claims to his own identity and the nature of his kingdom.

A critical aspect of Stewart’s argument is that geographical stereotypes are inverted in order “to suggest a new type of space centred around the person of Jesus.” He thus creates a new representational space “which stands in opposition to the civilized

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142 In addition to the argument offered here, I have already suggested the notion of a spatiality predicated on the person of Jesus at the beginning of the chapter by noting that the notions of Third Space and hybridity have been discussed within theology. In particular, I drew attention to Christopher Baker, *The Hybrid Church in the City: Third Space Thinking* (London: SCM, 2009).
144 Stewart, *Gathered*, p.179
spaces of cities and the architectural spaces of synagogues and temple.”

Synagogues in first century Galilee, for example, represent the “locus of a community’s order” with institutional spatial practices organised around purity and Sabbath rules. Mark’s narrative contests this representation in at least two significant ways. First, that Jesus consistently violates the spatial practices of the synagogues and does so with apparent impunity; the synagogue authorities seem powerless to prevent Jesus’ activities and the crowds stand in wonder at his teaching. Secondly, by introducing synagogues as places inhabited by unclean spirits (Mk 1:21-27), Mark contests the very idea that they are places of purity and centres of community order. Stewart argues that demons are a “locative category in antiquity” such that “the haunts of demons are on the fringes of society.” They “inhabit places where borders are not maintained” and are “encountered where humans do not maintain social life.”

Thus, Mark presents synagogues as places where civilized order has in fact broken down; these are places which, despite their claims, stand as if they were outside of oikoumene; they are not centres of purity but “resemble peripheral territories.”

Stewart’s argument then, is that Mark inverts the normal representations of space in the ancient world such that the Roman and Jewish elite space of temples and cities from which civilization emanates is now to be found as peripheral space. Jesus becomes the new geographic centre of the world, forming around himself a community of followers by teaching, feeding and offering a new purity not mediated by temple spatial practices but based on his own presence and power to cleanse from unclean demons. This idea that an individual might function as a geographic centre has precedent in the ancient world in figures such as the emperor or travelling philosophers. These would have been understood as a ‘travelling centre’ where territory is delimited by the bodily presence of a person. Mark casts Jesus in this role as he describes the way that disciples and crowds “gather” around him such that

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145 Stewart, Gathered, p.180
146 Stewart, Gathering, p.193
147 Stewart, Gathering, p.192. Similarly in the Roman territory of the Gerasenes (Mk 5) where the presence of the Legion spirit in the territory exposes as fictitious the notion that the Romans were able to bring “peace to regions purportedly under their control” (Stewart, Gathering, p. 219). By confronting the demon, Jesus brings peace where Roman legions could not.
148 For ‘elite space’ and ‘city space’ see Stewart, Gathering, pp.6-7, 184-187.
149 Stewart, Gathering, p.211.
150 Stewart, Gathering, p. 171, 212.
space around Jesus becomes the new meeting space in contrast to the architectural spaces of home, synagogue or temple.\textsuperscript{151}

Stewart concludes that the Gospel of Mark’s presentation of space is that it locates a new spatial practice centred around the exorcising, healing, and teaching Jesus. The cosmic perspective of Jesus’ teaching concerning the return of the Son of man enables Mark’s readers to understand the spatial practice of the temple/synagogue is coming to an end. In any case, it is occupied by unclean spirits. Jesus’ new gathering, however, because of the power of the Holy Spirit, allows for the creation of pure spaces through exorcism ... Jesus’ new spatial practice, ultimately, will be fully consummated, according to Mark, when the Son of man returns, after the centres of civilization, that is, the temple and the city of Jerusalem have been destroyed.\textsuperscript{152}

As with Stewart, Moxnes also argues that Mark portrays Jesus as the centre of a new kind of spatiality. Moxnes draws on the notion of ‘queer place’ to define this new place around Jesus, and in doing so he intends to convey a number of important notions. Firstly ‘queer-place’ questions “settled or fixed categories of identity, not accepting the given orders or structures of the places that people inhabit.”\textsuperscript{153} Perhaps even more strongly, ‘queer’ “signals a protest against fixed categories—it thus points out that all categories are historically and socially constructed.”\textsuperscript{154} Secondly, it identifies a new space or social category; one that is defined precisely by Jesus’ own presence as an alternative to household. Thus, to follow Jesus is by implication to leave household space and enter queer space. Thirdly, to enter this new space was to embrace a “new set of values, not associated with the previous hegemonic ideal of masculinity.”\textsuperscript{155}

Moxnes illustrates this in a number of ways, for example, through the address ‘our father’ (Q11:2-4) which “immediately places the petitioner within the ‘imagined space’ of household relations.”\textsuperscript{156} The juxtaposition of one imagined place denoted by ‘father’ with another denoted by ‘king’ (for example through the phrase “let your kingdom come”) presents the kingdom as taking on the qualities of an ideal household and conversely, that which is imagined as household support now takes place in the

\textsuperscript{151} The verb ‘to gather’ is significant in Mark. It is used seven times including twice in a compound form, Jesus being the object of the verb in all but one case. Perhaps provocatively, it is related to the noun ‘synagogue’ (See Stewart, Gathering, p.212).

\textsuperscript{152} Stewart, Gathered, p.225.

\textsuperscript{153} Moxnes, Putting, p.5.

\textsuperscript{154} Moxnes, Putting, p.89.

\textsuperscript{155} Moxnes, Putting, p.97.

\textsuperscript{156} Moxnes, Putting, p.115
Thus the “combination of kingdom and household sayings makes up an imagined space .... This kingdom is visualised as a household, with God as father and the addressees as his children.” That this is referred to as an ‘imagined place’ does not mean that it is fictitious. It is a fundamental aspect of ‘real’ space as understood by Harvey, such that “relations within this imagined place are meant to influence the material practice of the place in which [people] find themselves.” The first century Galilean, for example, living under Roman dominance experienced the “contrast between the small world of household and kinship and large world of politics of empire.” He explains:

> In this prayer, these two worlds become one, or a third space. The images of the household and the kingdom are combined. They merge, so to speak, so that the kingdom is characterised by the qualities of the ideal household, and household support takes place in the kingdom.”

Thus “the kingdom is not presented as a different space, in contrast to the world, rather ‘it is spread out over the earth.’ That is, the kingdom and the world are not contrasted but combined. There is not a dualistic view of the world here.” It is not a case of waiting until this ‘other space’ arrives but of seeing it here and now within the places we occupy—the kingdom is a transformation of the places of the world.

Finally, using very different terminology to Stewart and Moxnes, Riches also argues that Mark presents a new representational space defined by the presence of Jesus. For Riches, a new representational place is achieved through Mark’s re-mapping of the cosmological spatiality found in Old Testament narrative. As described previously, sacred space is no longer defined by ‘the way’ or the Temple, but is now predicated on the person of Jesus himself. Identity is now found in association with the ‘Galilean’; Israel’s cultic markers and boundaries are discarded and new performances are defined through discipleship to Jesus. Thus, for Riches, Mark’s new representational spaces, defined around Jesus, must imply new spatial practices—the result being that previously settled notions of place based on Israel’s ancient cosmologies and cultic performance, are now challenged and subverted.

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159 Moxnes, *Putting*, p.118.
161 Moxnes, *Putting*, p.121.
It is clear that the different models for place adopted by Stewart, Moxnes and Riches lead to quite different accounts of how Mark presents the formation of a new spatiality around Jesus. For Stewart, the centralising arrangement of oikoumene leads to a portrayal of Jesus as the new geographic centre of the world. Moxnes’s structural representation of households as ‘male-space’ positions Jesus as the centre of a newly configured household. Riches’ new spatiality is predicated on Jesus as the Galilean who defines new spatial practices.

Of interest to the development of my own argument is not so much the different formulations of Jesus-Space in each of these accounts, but that each of them does indeed come to the conclusion that Mark presents a new spatiality around Jesus that defines a new ‘performance’ of discipleship. This conclusion, reached in each case through a different methodological approach, invites further investigation of the subject by, for example, considering the particular ways in which Jesus-Space might be conceived of in contemporary contexts and the implications for both discipleship and mission.

Given this understanding, Chapter 3 will further develop a theological description of place based on the two defining spatial characteristics of normative-place and Jesus-Space.

The Way Forward: Conceptions of Normative-Place and Jesus-Space

By critically engaging with theological works that relate to place I have proposed a number of primary characteristics of place that begin to formulate a theological framework of place. Significantly, the characteristics defined have the potential for mutual critical conversation between theological framings of place and formulations of place within the social sciences.

In the next chapter I focus on developing a more comprehensive understanding of normativity as a descriptor of place with particular reference to its central characteristics and the mechanisms by which it functions and consider how
normativity might inform a specifically theological formulation of place—namely normative-place. I begin by engaging with a body of work that has emerged from the writing of anthropologist Mary Douglas. Her book *Purity and Danger*, first published in 1966, has proved to be a milestone in describing the way in which culture is spatially expressed. Douglas identifies ‘purity’ and ‘dirt’ as the central organising ideas that are common in all cultures; by defining ‘dirt’ as matter that is ‘out of place’ (and thus presenting a threat to the accepted order of things) she demonstrates the integral relationship between normativity (culture) and spatiality (place). This definition has strong resonances with the notions of normativity discussed above, where for Douglas normativity is defined in terms of purity.

I will argue in Chapter 2 that by understanding normativity as being configured through the representation of place in terms of purity and dirt (where dirt is ‘matter out of place’), new and fruitful avenues for thinking theologically about place are opened up. Firstly, it enables the argument to be moved beyond the agency/structure debate framed above. Secondly it offers an opportunity to engage with significant recent developments in the fields of anthropology and social geography that find correspondence with the Christian theologies of place that are being proposed in this research. Whilst purity itself is a familiar and important theme within Christian theology, the particular relationship of purity to place appears to remain relatively unexplored.

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CHAPTER 2.

IN PLACE / OUT OF PLACE: EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF NORMATIVITY AS A DESCRIBER OF PLACE IN THEOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate ‘normativity’ as a useful descriptor of place within theology and thereby further develop the notion of normative-place that has emerged from the discussion of Chapter 1. The characteristics of normative-place will be discussed with particular regard for the power-place relationship and the mechanisms inherent within normative-place that are associated with the formation and maintenance of place.

The core of the argument will be that the characteristics of normative-place which took shape in the discussion of Chapter 1 find important points of correspondence with conceptions of normativity in relation to two streams of thought about place, one that has developed within the anthropology of religion and the other in social geography. Intriguingly, whilst these two streams of thought develop within distinctly different academic disciplines, they share a common source in the work of Mary Douglas (introduced briefly in Chapter 1) and her important ideas about the way in which ‘purity’ and ‘dirt’ give definition to place. Douglas’s most influential book in this respect, *Purity and Danger* (first published in 1966), is drawn on by most of the authors referred to in this chapter and in many ways it sets the essential framework for the discussion about normativity and place by defining ‘dirt’ as ‘matter out of place’.

In relation to the first stream of thought, within the anthropology of religion, the work of the Context Group is discussed, whose aim was to develop a deeper understanding of the social world of the New Testament by reading New Testament texts through the lens of anthropology. Their work explores spatiality in the social world of the New Testament,

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especially through the paradigm of purity and Israel’s purity laws. By drawing on Douglas’s notion of ‘dirt as matter out of place’ they make interesting connections between the purity laws and the social-spatial arrangements in the New Testament world. The work of this group is explored in the first part of the chapter because it connects strongly with the ideas of Eric Stewart and Halvor Moxnes discussed at the end of Chapter 1.

In relation to the second stream of thought, within social geography, ideas are explored that are specifically related to the critical questions that have emerged from Chapter 1; namely the questions about the relation of power to place, and the particular way in which this subject is addressed through the notion of normativity. These ideas are discussed in the work of Tim Cresswell and David Sibley, both of whom draw on the work of Douglas in establishing their own proposals about place and normativity. It has been observed that Cresswell identifies the problem that human geographers had not seriously considered how power is implicated “in the construction, reproduction, and contestation of places and their meanings” and he goes on to state that

it was questions such as these that led critical cultural geographers to explore how places and their associated meanings have been implicated in processes of exclusion. The mapping of particular meanings, practices, and identities on to place, they have argued, leads to the construction of normative places where it is possible to be either ‘in place’ or ‘out of place’.

The notion of normativity as developed by social geographers thus provides a critical lens through which to view ideas about normative-place arising from my own theological enquiry. In particular it draws attention to exclusion as the primary mechanism operative within normative-place and proposes place-based mechanisms which relate place to ideological power.

By engaging with the designated works normativity can be understood as a useful descriptor of place within theology. This position can then be used as a basis for developing the notion of normative-place as a way of conceiving place theologically, which in turn serves to open up new perspectives and the possibility of new theological models of place which, as far as I am aware, have not yet been seriously or systematically explored. Central to this proposal for a new theological model is the idea that, taken together, normative-place and Jesus-Space are

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theological formulations which describe in spatial terms the redemptive work of Christ in the world. This will be the subject under discussion in Chapter 3.

The Context Group

A relatively unexplored subject in relation to the theology of place is that of purity. This is perhaps surprising given the prominence of purity codes in the religious culture of Israel and in Old and New Testament writings. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the work of a group of scholars, sometimes known as the ‘Context Group’, who in 1991 set out to use models from social science as a frame for reading scripture. Their studies make clear “the dominant role that purity schemes played in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity, precisely how purity conceptions and regulation formed a comprehensive and internally consistent pattern of ordering personal and social life in consonance with structures of order at the cosmological level.”

The purity laws, as held in the Second Temple period, dominated the spatial imagination in Israel. Bruce Malina argues that “the orientational map of Israel consists of two major category sets: the sacred and profane (exclusive and nonexclusive) and the pure/clean and impure/unclean (in proper place/out of place).” Purity laws for Israel prescribed the way of being ‘set apart’ for a God who himself was known as holy, or separate; they defined the ways of moral behaviour required to belong to an exclusive people whose identity was rooted in covenant relationship to an exclusive God. As such, morality in Israel is defined by conformity to purity law—to be moral is to belong.

For Israel spatial representation was organised around degrees of purity according to proximity to the Temple, which itself stood at the centre of all creation. The arrangement is configured around five main spatial categories with corresponding associated places as

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7 Malina, Insights, p.171.
outlined by Malina in the table below:\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic Space Category</th>
<th>Place in Second Temple Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed nature: clean, unclean and abominations</td>
<td>Outside the holy land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed culture: clean or unclean but no abominations</td>
<td>In the holy land replicated by Jerusalem, the holy city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space of God’s people: assembly space</td>
<td>Temple mount and courts of Gentiles, women and male Israelites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold of God’s space; final limits of man’s space</td>
<td>Alter and laver, table seven-branched and candlestick, curtain before the sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s space</td>
<td>Porch, holy place, holy of holies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corresponding to this arrangement was a hierarchy of purity categorising all living things and thus determining their proximity to the Temple and to Jerusalem. Seven main categories defined people with seven corresponding categories for creatures.\(^9\) Thus, the whole of Israel, and indeed the whole of the world, was spatially imagined and socially arranged so as to “allow everything and everyone a certain meaning-endowing, sense-making situation or place.”\(^10\) The purity system provided everyone and everything its proper place, and all were expected to be in the proper place. The goal of life in Israel was not the gaining of status through wealth accumulation as in much of the contemporary West, rather it was the maintenance (or improvement of) one’s inherited position in society, which was culturally determined through notions of sacredness and purity.\(^11\)

Fundamental for Israel was the belief that “this purity system derived directly from the God of Israel who created all that exists. In the very act of creation, Israel’s God set up the system of categories into which all created beings properly fit (Gen. 1:1-2:4a).”\(^12\) From this

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\(^9\) Malina, *Insights*, pp.174-177; Neyrey, *Idea*, pp.94-96, 101. Malina references a list from Jeremias which identifies fourteen categories of people subdivided in five main groups. Group 1: Priests, Levites, full-blooded Israelites; group 2: Illegal children of priests, proselytes, proselytes who were once slaves; group 3: those born of adulterous unions, the fatherless, foundlings, eunuchs made so by men; group 4: eunuchs born that way, those with deformed sexual features, hermaphrodites; group 5: people of all other ethnic groups (= ‘Gentiles’).


\(^12\) Malina, *Insights*, p.171; Neyrey and Stewart, *Social*, p. 103. In this view the formation of boundaries is a central element of the creation account of Gen 1-2, where boundaries give definition to purity (Malina, *Insights*, pp.165, 171). In this case boundaries emphasise the exclusion of the impure. This contrasts to Bartholomew’s
perspective, the themes of boundaries and a proper place for all things are very significant in the creation account of Genesis. Thus the system of purity for Israel was both ideological and normative; this arrangement was ordained by God as attested to in scripture and it was then by definition the natural and proper order of things—it was way things should be in the world, both at a micro level as well as the macro level.  

By analysing the social-spatial aspects of the system of purity that operated in ancient Israel, the Context Group makes a valuable contribution towards understanding place in Old and New Testament contexts. They present well-researched material both in relation to the production and functioning of place as it is experienced ‘on the ground’ in first century Israel as well as the way place is represented within Biblical texts. However, care should be taken to avoid a reductionist approach that conceives of purity as the only spatial arrangement evident in scripture and it is helpful in this respect to understand the system of purity alongside oikoumene and male-space discussed in Chapter 1. Furthermore the spatialisation of purity enables additional understanding about how Biblical texts present normative arrangements of place as being contested by Jesus-Space. However, a significant challenge remains in relation to the work of the Context Group in that it presents a series of independent and discrete social-spatial mechanisms with apparently no attempt to reconcile them into any kind of theory of place. This raises the question about how these various social-spatial arrangements might contribute to a fuller theory or theology of place. It is certainly clear from the theories of place discussed thus far that no single social mechanism would adequately define place and indeed, the texts of the Gospels themselves draw on more than one social-spatial mechanism in their representation of place. A way forward in this respect would be to conceive of place so as to allow it the capacity to accommodate a complex and dynamic interaction of multiple social-spatial arrangements. I will lay the groundwork for addressing this and related questions by introducing Douglas’s work Purity and Danger. In introducing Douglas at this point it should be noted that whilst

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approach discussed in Chapter 1 where “creation involves differentiation” where “place is an essential element emerging from the differentiation process” (Bartholomew, Mortals, pp.10-11). This view of place points to 'habitation' rather than exclusion.  

13 Malina states that the references ‘according to nature’ or ‘contrary to nature’ in Paul’s epistles are a “Hellenistic Judean appropriation of traditional Israelite categories” (Malina, Insights, p.173). This is an important part of the discussion below on what constitutes ideology; for an ideology to be established it must succeed in the claim to be the natural way of things.  

14 See for example Neyrey, Idea, pp.94-96.
she is one of the anthropologists that the Context Group have drawn upon, it seems that they did not take her arguments to their full conclusion in relation to their own work.

Mary Douglas: Purity and Danger

Almost fifty years after its first publication in 1966, Douglas’s book *Purity and Danger* is a classic with recent reprints in 2004 and 2006. Moreover, her argument that pollution and taboo are cultural constructs that relate to the imposition of order on society through categorisation and differentiation has not only stood scrutiny but is the basis of much further development in the fields of anthropology and social geography.

As an anthropologist working in the field of comparative religion and religious beliefs within primitive cultures, Douglas argues that, contrary to prevailing views in the modern secular world of 1960s Europe, ideas about what constitutes uncleanness or dirt go well beyond matters of hygiene. She notes two distinctive differences between contemporary and primitive cultures with respect to pollution: that “dirt avoidance for us is a matter of aesthetics or hygiene and is not related to our religion” and that “our idea of dirt is dominated by the knowledge of pathogenic organisms.” However, this understanding is a relatively recent phenomenon and “if we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place.”

It is this basic definition of ‘dirt as matter out of place’ that has been influential in the social sciences. Douglas continues by arguing that it implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.

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17 Douglas, *Purity*, p.44.
18 Douglas, *Purity*, p.44.
20 Douglas, *Purity*, p.44.
Douglas’s insight provides a critical link for the argument presented here. Specifically it defines the relationship between the particular purity laws of Israel and the broad cultural principles that apply in all places and all times. In other words, the space-purity organisation of Israel described by Malina and Neyrey is an important example of the way cultures organise themselves around perceptions of pollution and dirt. In this sense members of the Context Group have identified the significance of the purity/dirt paradigm for Israel and its spatial expression (and indeed Jesus’ own engagement with that paradigm), but what they have apparently not sought to do in any systematic way is to develop a Christian theology of place that might be informed by this perspective. The argument presented here will seek to develop theological insights about place by drawing on these ideas and further exploring the notion of normativity. This will be done by focusing on the work of Tim Cresswell who significantly develops ideas about normativity and the concept of in-place/out-of-place. However, before engaging with his arguments some specific concerns that he and others have expressed about Douglas’s ideas need to be addressed.

Concerns relate principally to Douglas’s method of generalizing from particular primitive groups and tribal societies (especially Israel) to a broad contemporary application. First is the question about how this informs the basis upon which ethical norms might be established. Tim Cresswell seeks to qualify Douglas’s approach in this respect by arguing that “we can safely assume that some things are almost universally out of place. Fatal diseases, for instance, are unlikely to be welcomed anywhere.” Having made the criticism however, it is not apparent that Cresswell seeks to address the issue himself, nor indeed is it clear that his own position is any more rigorous than that of Douglas’s in this regard. His choice of ‘fatal disease’ rather than, for example, slavery could be construed as indicative of a lack of conviction about absolutes. The question of relativism is an important one and will be explored further at a later point in this chapter in the context of ‘normative-place and ideology’ and also in the discussion on Jesus-Space in Chapter 3.

21 Neyrey makes a similar distinction between these two senses of purity (Neyrey, Idea, p.92).
22 Sibley, Geographies, p.37.
23 Creswell, In-Place, p.39.
24 Richard Beck engages with this issue in his interesting psychological-theological enquiry into uncleanness and the conflict between hospitality that embraces the unclean and the call to holiness. He argues, that from a psychological perspective disgust mechanisms are culturally determined and there are almost no disgust mechanisms that are universally shared (Richard Beck, Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality and Morality [Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011] pp.15-17). Taking a different approach to the same subject, David Sibley discusses social constructions of defilement (his work will be discussed in the next chapter). Both authors demonstrate how difficult it is to establish universal absolute positions from a social, cultural or psychological framework, thus supporting Douglas’s position in this respect.
A second concern is that Douglas does not engage with the question about the types of forces that are at work in the definition of dirt.\textsuperscript{25} Cresswell states:

What counts as dirt varies widely across cultures. In each culture different types of pressures work to create these differences. Douglas fails to discuss the ways in which forces related to class, gender, and ethnicity, for instance, create notions of what is ‘out of place’.

It is, I believe, in relation to this latter question that Cresswell makes some critical developments that build on Douglas’s notion of dirt as matter out of place. In terms of the earlier discussion of Chapter 1, this aspect of Creswell’s work addresses mechanisms behind the formation of normative arrangements of place—such as \textit{oikoumene}, ‘male space’, or more generally ‘pure space’. With this issue in mind, Cresswell’s book \textit{In Place/Out of Place} will be explored in some detail.

\textbf{Tim Cresswell: In-Place/Out-of-Place}

Tim Cresswell develops the thesis that ‘place’ combines the social with the spatial and that people act ‘in place’ according to their social standing. He cites the office as an example where cleaners, secretaries and executives all act according to their relation to that particular place.\textsuperscript{27} Social space is organised to serve the interest of those at the top of hierarchies; it is thus ideological. Actions or activities which do not conform to the accepted meaning of the place are now seen as deviant or ‘out of place’—judgements are not made about actions per se, but about the action’s relation to location or place.

A critical aspect of Cresswell’s argument is the role of “common sense as a mechanism of domination.”\textsuperscript{28} He draws on Pierre Bourdieu to argue that sophisticated theories of ideology insist that everyday common sense is an essential part of history and power. A group cannot become dominant and rule effectively without claiming common sense as their own ... People are not simply imposed upon by dominant groups but are convinced that the ideas of dominant groups will also benefit subordinate groups. Domination thus occurs through common sense ...\textsuperscript{29}

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{25} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.39. See also Sibley, \textit{Geographies}, p.37-38.
\item\textsuperscript{26} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.39.
\item\textsuperscript{27} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.3.
\item\textsuperscript{28} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.18.
\item\textsuperscript{29} Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, p.18.
\end{itemize}}

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Bourdieu describes common sense as a ‘sense of limits’ or as ‘doxa’.

He argues that for an established order to be successful “it must make its world seem to be the natural world—the common sense world.” In this established order:

[P]eople must aspire to that which they are meant to aspire to. If the objective position of a person (as worker, woman, and so on) corresponds to his or her ‘mental’ position (‘taken for granted’ beliefs about the world), the result is ineradicable adherence to the established order. This is because the social world appears as a natural world.

In this “doxic mode of experience there is no conflict,” individuals aspire to what their situation allows, but “if a person’s subjective beliefs do not correspond to their objective position, he or she may start to question the legitimacy of the objective limits.” When this happens the established classification of common sense is challenged and “struggle ensues between the dominated and dominating groups.” “By revealing what was formerly hidden (the contingent nature of social distinctions) a dominated subject causes the establishment to clarify formally common-sense categories.” This defines a move from ‘doxa’ to ‘orthodox’, where orthodoxy acknowledges the existence of other positions and seeks to establish normative territory not now through common sense, but through notions of “what is good, just and appropriate.”

Cresswell’s method is “to examine [these] ‘crisis points in doxa’—those times and places that were previously unquestioned become questioned and powerful groups seek to defend the order of things against heresies of ‘deviant’ groups … These moments of crisis in the flow of things are referred to here as transgressions.”

His approach is to investigate ‘transgressive acts’ and the reactions they prompt in order to understand what was previously hidden from view as natural and common sense. In this way he seeks to use ‘transgression’ as a tool for identifying and describing ideological landscape.

In summary, Cresswell develops and draws on two central themes to explore this relationship of ideology to place. “The first is the way in which space and place are used to structure a

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31 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.18-19.

32 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.19.

33 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.20.

34 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.14. Here Cresswell draws on Goren Therborn’s thinking that ideologies work at three levels: a) define what exists and does not exist; b) what is good, just and appropriate; c) what is possible and impossible.

35 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.21.

36 These two central themes reflect Cresswell’s two principle claims. The first is about “the way place is implicated in the creation and maintenance of ideological beliefs” (a lesson in continuity) and the second is
normative landscape—the way in which ideas about what is right, just and appropriate are transmitted through space and place.” In other words he develops the idea that “the geographical setting of actions plays a central role in defining our judgement of whether actions are either right or wrong;” that is, actions are either ‘in place’ or ‘out of place’.

Cresswell’s second theme is that of ‘transgression’. He observes that “just as it is the case that space and place are used to structure a normative world, they are also used (intentionally or otherwise) to question that normative world.” In this context Cresswell seeks to “delineate the construction of otherness through a spatially sensitive analysis of transgression.” Ideas then of marginality, difference and otherness are predicated on their relation to specific places—to be ‘other’ is to transgress the accepted meaning of place.

**Normative-Place: Describing the Theological Characteristics**

The spatial representations presented by the Context Group and Cresswell’s theory of place both draw on Douglas’s notion of ‘dirt as matter out of place’ resulting in a strong sense of coherence in their subsequent arguments. Their ideas lay the grounds for further exploring normativity as a descriptor of place within theology and the concept of normative-place as an important aspect of a theology of place. Development of the argument in this way will enable discussion about the primary characteristics of normative-place.

**Normative-Place in Relation to Multiple Social-Spatial Arrangements**

Firstly the notion of normativity offers a way of moving beyond the debate about which particular social-spatial arrangements are dominant in the formation of place. These

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37 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.8-9.
38 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.8-9.
40 Malina defines social systems as institutions, culture and modal personalities in Bruce Malina, ‘Rhetorical Criticism and Social-Scientific Criticism: Why Won't Romanticism Leave Us Alone?’, in J.H. Neyrey and E. Stewart (eds.), *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008) pp 3-9. The form that these social systems take varies through time and place. The current list, which derives mainly from the work of the Context Group, describes in part the social systems of the Gospel writers and their audiences. Here institutions are described in terms of kinship, patron and client and economics; culture is described in terms of purity, honour and shame, and gender. I have added *oikoumene* from the work of
arrangements are presented in the work of the Context Group as a complex and varied picture of the social settlements evidenced within New Testament writing and first century culture and include: kinship;\textsuperscript{41} patron and client relationship (including economics);\textsuperscript{42} purity; honour and shame;\textsuperscript{43} and gender, especially in relation to male hierarchy and ideas of patronage.\textsuperscript{44} In addition, Stewart and Moxnes have shown how single social constructions such as \textit{oikoumene} and ‘male-space’ might define place in New Testament life. However these models do not explain how multiple social arrangements work together in the production and sustaining of place, or whether in fact, as perhaps implied by both Stewart and Moxnes’s arguments, there is indeed one dominant socially-constructed notion of place such as \textit{oikoumene} or ‘male-space’.

The intention here is to present an alternative paradigm for explaining the production of place—alternative that is to defining place around any one, or combination of, the social-cultural arrangements described. It acknowledges that place is too complex to be conceived of in terms of any one social arrangement, even when it is confined to its narrative representation.\textsuperscript{45}

Presenting normative-place as a primary spatial descriptor allows for the production of a conceptual framework in which a variety of social-spatial constructions can interact and jostle for place. Thus Mark’s narrative, for example, might better be considered as representing a \textit{dynamic interaction} of ‘male-space’, \textit{oikoumene} and purity codes. In this way, normativity encompasses the complex and interwoven web of these three social-spatial constructions that work together to form places. Normativity acknowledges the complex and un-fixed nature of place that occurs when a variety of social-spatial arrangements coincide with each other.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[44] See my discussion on the work of Halvor Moxnes in Chapter 1. I believe that further interesting work could be done to explore the spatial aspects of the social arrangements identified here, I do not develop this line of enquiry because it would not add substantially to the argument. Also, it represents a significant area of study in its own right.
\item[45] Bruce Malina describes social systems consisting of institutions, culture and modal personalities. “The macroinstitutions [sic] are kinship, economics, government, and religion … Culture looks at definitions of self, others, nature, time, space and what/who holds it all together … modal personality consists of values and behavior that characterize persons as proper human beings in a given society” (Malina, \textit{Rhetorical}, p.8). I understand that all these aspects of social systems have a spatial outworking. Thus the contours of a place are at least as complex and multilayered as the social systems that inhabit that place.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
It is then logical to take further steps to refine this definition of normativity as expressed in the Gospels by identifying the predominant social constructions that the author includes in his narrative. This might find a parallel to the manner in which the author includes human and spiritual characters in the plot. Just as human characters are employed to construct a story and convey meaning, so too social-spatial actors found at play within the narrative should be considered as an integral part of the plot development and communication of meaning.

Secondly, the concept of normative-place describes an important dynamic connection between a given social arrangement and the corresponding production of place. The specific idea in view here is that place is not formed solely as a result of a given social arrangement but that social arrangements and place are co-constituting (this concept has already been presented through the work of Riches in Chapter 1 in relation to cultural symbols which he defines as both a ‘model for’ and a ‘model of’ reality).46 As already discussed in relation to oikoumene, ‘male-space’ and purity codes, each social arrangement has a corresponding spatial arrangement. However the inference that can be made from the model presented by the Context Group is that they perceive the ‘traffic’ from social arrangement to place to be all in one direction; that is to say, social arrangement is primary and place is formed as a consequence of pre-existing social arrangements. This relationship between society and place is addressed by Cresswell who, along with other theorists in space and place, criticise what he considers to be a ‘society-and-space dialectic’.

He refers to Robert Sack, David Harvey and Edward Soja in saying:

[T]hey wish to show that space is not simply formed and moulded but plays an active role in the formation of society. Society produces space and space produces society. The end point … is to undermine altogether this binary form of the society-space relationship.”47

Therefore the list of social arrangements previously presented cannot be regarded simply as descriptive of Israel’s society; they must be seen not only as forming place but also as being formed by place. In addition, the fact that each of these arrangements can be understood in terms of ‘doxa’ (the natural order of things) or ‘orthodoxy’ (what is good, just and appropriate) introduces an additional strong normative aspect into the definition of place. Place, understood in these terms, does not necessarily convey a settled or uncontested arrangement—normativity is not, for example, to be imagined as a single smooth and

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46 Riches, Conflicting, p.10. See my discussion above about this.
uninterrupted surface. Rather place is presented as being in constant flux where multiple social-spatial arrangements compete to establish a normative position, or challenge an established normativity to create a new-normative.

**The Hermeneutical Component of Normative-Place**

A central idea in this argument is that normativity, in formulating the place-power relationship, relates as a theory of place to particular places irrespective of their social-spatial construction. Therefore it functions equally well as a theory in relation to the particular spatial arrangements in the world of the New Testament as it does to a twenty-first century urban context. In this way, the concept of normative-place can function as a hermeneutical bridge between significantly different cultural and historical situations, for example, between first century Palestine and the twenty-first century Cornwall Estate.

This important hermeneutical quality of normativity is an inherent part of Douglas’s work that has largely stood up to critical scrutiny for over four decades. This is in part what makes her approach so attractive in configuring theological reflections on place that will serve as a theological framework for qualitative research in place. The particular elements of Douglas’s argument that are defined here as a hermeneutical mechanism centre on the relationship she establishes between the particularity of Israel and the general principles applicable to all cultures.\(^48\) This relationship is based on a number of assertions.

Firstly, she asserts that uncleanness is culturally defined, so that “any culture worthy of the name [will have] various provisions for dealing with ambiguous or anomalous events” and that notions of purity and dirt are basic for defining order within a society and specifically order that is spatially prescribed.\(^49\)

Secondly, she presents the notion that these ideas are essentially consistent across all cultures whether primitive or modern, secular or religious:

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\text{… [I]f uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained. To recognise this is the first step towards insight into pollution. It involves us in no clear-cut distinction between sacred and secular. The same principle applies}
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\(^{48}\) Some reservation has been expressed in relation to Douglas’s methodology; in part that it leads to a relativistic position. In terms that relate specifically to hermeneutical method I do not believe that this presents any problem although I will pick up other points later in the discussion. For comment, see my earlier discussion on this point.

throughout. Furthermore, it involves no special distinction between primitives and moderns: we are all subject to the same rules.\textsuperscript{50}

Douglas underlines this point specifically in the preface to the 2002 edition of the book observing that whilst the concept of taboos expressed in primitive religions were seen by contemporary culture as “alien and irrational” and that “the concept of dirt makes a bridge between our own contemporary culture and those of other cultures where behaviour that blurs the great classification of the universe is tabooed. We denounce it by calling it dirty and dangerous; they taboo it.”\textsuperscript{51}

Thus she asserts that common cultural-spatial mechanisms based on the language of uncleanness and dirt are equally valid in the spatial-cultural world of Leviticus as they are in contemporary secular society.\textsuperscript{52} Furthermore, these mechanisms are a primary way in which societies in general are structured and in particular they define the mechanisms by which landscapes of power are established and maintained.

\textit{The Ideological Component of Normative-Place}

An important aspect of normative-place as a descriptor in a theological context is that it defines the relation of power to place. I have previously argued that the ideological aspect of place has been established from a theological perspective by Habel, Moxnes and Stewart,\textsuperscript{53} who recognise that scriptural accounts of places and locations incorporate, by definition, ideological positions and furthermore that in some cases biblical literature does not present a disinterested account, but could be regarded as being complicit in forming ideological positions, in part by its spatial representation—that is place meanings may be co-opted, subverted or manipulated in some way in order to represent ideological interests.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{50}Douglas, \textit{Purity}, p.50.
\textsuperscript{51}Douglas, \textit{Purity}, p.xi.
\textsuperscript{52}The intention here is not to minimalise the complexity of comparing the cultural-spatial worlds of Leviticus and contemporary society but to identify elements of cultural-spatial arrangements that will serve as hermeneutical bridges across a variety of different spatial constructions. The point is exemplified by Mayra Rivera Rivera who observes a progression of spatial arrangement from pre-modern to modern and subsequently post-modern. Although, according to Rivera Rivera the pattern of relationship between ideological power and place has fundamentally changed, the post-modern arrangement of a “flattened and mobile plane of differences” still includes ‘differentiation’ between people of difference—that is “classified in reference to a standard, and generating patterns of exclusion and segregation.” The point is that spatial ‘patterns of segregation and exclusion’ continue to operate even when the fundamental settlement of place changes, for example, from a predominantly static-bounded arrangement to a fluid-mobile arrangement (Mayra Rivera Rivera, ‘Margins and the Changing Spatiality of Power’, in Raisia S. Sugirtharajah, \textit{Still at the Margins: Biblical Scholarship Fifteen Years after Voices from the Margins} (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008) p.117-119).
\textsuperscript{53}As noted in Chapter 1, Michael Fishbane also contributes to this understanding.
\textsuperscript{54}Malina and Elliott both point out that in the case of Israel, social life is arranged according to law as interpreted by the priests and that social-spatial arrangements serve the interests of those at the top of social structures, namely the priests, Levites and law makers (Malina, \textit{Insights}, pp.174-177; Elliott, \textit{James}, p.110).
A key development in understanding the power-place relationship is presented by Douglas in her work on the functioning of ideological mechanisms in primitive and tribal contexts with specific reference to Israel and the Levitical law. Here, taboo (which links notions of dirt to corresponding threats of danger) functions in relation to social order as a mechanism for establishing and defending positions of power and privilege. She states:

The study of taboo impinges inevitably upon the philosophy of belief. The taboo-maintained rules will be as repressive as the leading members of the society want them to be. If the makers of opinion want to prevent freemen from marrying slaves, or want to maintain a complex chain of inter-generational dynastic marriages, or they want to extort crushing levies—whether for the maintenance of the clergy or for the lavish ceremonials of royalty—the taboo system that supports their wishes will endure. Criticism will be suppressed, whole areas of life become unspeakable and, in consequence, unthinkable. But when the controllers of opinion want a different way of life, the taboos will lose credibility and their selected view of the universe will be revised.55

Thus, in Israel’s tribal society taboo functions as an important ideological mechanism that relates to the purity map that defined the spatial imagination of Israel. Taboo has its source in God-given law and impinges upon every aspect of daily practice for the whole of Israel and, as such, is a strong definer and defender of Israel’s identity as the people of God. It also relates to arrangements of power, working especially to the advantage of those who can define the nature and context of the taboo (in Israel’s case, the priests and religious leaders).56

In this respect Douglas defines taboo as:

[A] spontaneous coding practice which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations. It threatens specific dangers if the code is not respected. Some of the dangers which follow on taboo-breaking spread harm indiscriminately on contact. Feared contagion extends the danger of a broken taboo to the whole community.57

Douglas’s identification of taboo within primitive and tribal systems as a mechanism that connects spatiality and ideology builds on the discussion of the relationship between ideological power and place in Chapter 1. Importantly it identifies an ideological mechanism that not only relates ideology to place, but specifically involves place as a central requirement for establishing ideological power.

55 Douglas, Purity, p.xiii.
56 A key passage where the relationship between law (or more accurately “the tradition of the elders” [Mk 7:4]) and national identity comes sharply into view is the controversy of Mark 7 where the disciples fail to wash their hands. “The controversy is about the boundaries of God’s people that determine who is in and out, pure and impure, loyal and disloyal” (Williams, Purity, p.251). The strength of response from the religious leaders demonstrates that Jesus’ failure to maintain the tradition of the elders is considered a challenge to authority; powerful interests are indeed been threatened. I discuss these ideas in more detail in Chapters 1 and 3.
57 Douglas, Purity, p.xiii.
Douglas’s definition of ‘dirt as matter out-of-place’ and the associated formulation of a ‘systematic ordering and classification of matter’ give definition to the concept of normativity in relation to place and also define the mechanisms that establish and sustain that order. The primary mechanisms that establish order involve the “rejecting [of] inappropriate elements” through categorisation and differentiation.\(^{58}\)

These mechanisms are further explored by Tim Cresswell and David Sibley who offer practical and insightful ways of analysing and talking about how place functions in contemporary society and, in doing so, propose practical methodologies for researching various places and their associated meanings and power relations.

Within this developing argument the mechanisms presented by Douglas, Sibley and Cresswell finds significant resonance with the notion of normative-place that has been explored here within a theological context. I will therefore briefly outline Cresswell’s proposals for mechanisms that relate to the formation of place as a way of further investigating the mechanisms that potentially operate within normative-place. The chapter will conclude with some comments that define the limitations of Cresswell’s arguments for a theological context.

In developing and understanding of ideological mechanisms, the critical question is about how ideology works and in particular how ideology works in relation to place. The first part of the question ‘how ideology works’ is presented by Cresswell as “what characteristic mechanisms are mobilized in the creation of ideas about what is good and just?” \(^{59}\) In response, Cresswell states that it is generally understood that “ideologies are typically used to classify, differentiate, naturalize and link ideas to action.” \(^{60}\) The second part of the question ‘how ideology works in relation to place’ might then be explored by relating each of these categories to characteristics of place. I will briefly outline Cresswell’s approach to each of these categories.

\(^{58}\) Douglas, *Purity*, p.44.

\(^{59}\) Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.151. There are potential problems in defining ideology solely in terms of what is “good and just.” The context of Cresswell’s argument is about the “moral geography” of those at the centre which is sustained by virtue of the “immoral geography” of those at the margins. The “dominant centre” defines the “normal”, which in their terms is what is “good and just” (Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.149-151). That ideologies are not necessarily good is argued by George Orwell in *Animal Farm* where the seven commandments of the farm are abridged to the single phrase: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others” (George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1945); for the animals left outside the ideology is neither good nor fair [My thanks to Dr Tim Noble for the observation from Orwell].

\(^{60}\) Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.151.
In analysing the relationship between ‘space’ and place and classification, Cresswell understands that

[space] is both a socially constructed arrangement of things and the medium of all these historical arrangements. Indeed, space along with time, has long been understood as a basic dimension of all things natural and mental … When and where things occur are basic categorizations familiar to all … They form the knowledge most fundamental for everyday survival.62

Place is “such a fundamental category of experience that the power to specify the meanings of places and expectations of behaviour in them is great indeed.” Cresswell draws on Pierre Bourdieu who argues that “classifications are the site par excellence of struggle.” In particular the “primary forms of classifications, [Bourdieu] suggests, owe their spatial efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.” In Cresswell’s terms these classifications which remain unarticulated “add up to doxa;” they are powerful precisely because they remain unstated and “are not recognised discursively but practically.”

Differentiation, the second ideological mechanism, considers the nature of ‘difference’ and its relationship to place. All groups develop identity by creating difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’; the “more powerful [groups] in any given context will create the distinctions that become most widely accepted.” Thus “the process of differentiation through which ‘others’ are created is a basic ideological mechanism.” Furthermore “places are fundamental creators of difference” defining who is an ‘insider’ and who an ‘outsider’. An outsider is not just someone from another location, they are people who are “not to be trusted,” they are “someone who is existentially removed from the milieu of ‘our’ place—someone who doesn’t know the rules.”66

61 At this point Cresswell seems to use ‘space’ and ‘place’ interchangeably.
62 Cresswell, In-Place, p.152.
63 Cresswell, In-Place, p.152. Cresswell draws on Bourdieu, Distinction, p.467.
64 Cresswell, In-Place, p.153.
65 Cresswell, In-Place, p.161.
66 Cresswell, In-Place, p.154. The scriptural tradition of the ‘stranger’ as the person of difference contrasts sharply to Cresswell’s understanding that they are “not to be trusted.” Cathy Ross asserts that the stranger can be “the person of promise” (Cathy Ross, ‘Radical Hospitality’, in Paul Cloke and Mike Pears (eds.), Mission in Marginal Places: The Theory [Milton Keynes: Paternoster, to be published 2016]) and Parker Palmer sees hospitality as inviting the stranger into our own private space so that “… some important transformations occur. Our private space is suddenly enlarged; no longer tight, cramped, restricted, but open and expansive and free. And our space may also be illumined… Hospitality to the stranger gives us a chance to see our own lives afresh, through different eyes” (Parker Palmer, The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America’s Public Life, [NY:Crossroad, 1986], p.131). Black theologian Michael Jagessar’s argues that Christian conversion is often predicated on a binary construction of the outsider as ‘impure’ so that conversion itself is from the ‘impure’ to the ‘pure’ which amounts to an ideological imperative to divest oneself of one’s (impure) ‘placed’ identity (Michael N. Jagessar, ‘A Brief Con-version: A Caribbean and Black-British Postcolonial
The third element of ideological strategy is that “to be effective, [it] must connect thought to action, theory to practice, the abstract to the concrete.”67 This is in contrast to popular thought that most often defines ideology in terms of the abstract or narrowly dogmatic. Cresswell draws on Terry Eagleton who states that

[a] successful ideology must work both practically and theoretically, and discover some way of linking these levels. It must extend from an elaborated system of thought to the minutiae of everyday life, from a scholarly treatise to a shout in the street.68

As a fundamental category of existence, place is essential for the everyday practices that are necessary for ideology to be successful:

Places and landscapes are ideas set in stone that, like it or not, we have to act in. Our actions are interpretations of the text of a place that are recognisable to other people and are thus reinforced … We are all philosophers because ideas are related to practice by our behaviour in a place. Our interpretations of the world are revealed in the way we act.69

Thus Cresswell concludes that “place … contributes to the creation and reproduction of action-orientated (ideological) beliefs.”70

The final element of ideological strategy is that place is understood as natural, that is, it is associated with nature or ‘the natural way of things’; it ‘just is’.71 This final mechanism expresses the way that

ideologies involve the removal of beliefs and actions from their social roots and their placement in the realm of ‘nature’. The materiality of place gives it the aura of ‘nature’. The ‘nature’ of place can thus be offered as justification for particular views of what is good, just and appropriate.72

The most powerful aspects of an ideology remain unnoticed and unarticulated, there is in this sense no direct reference to nature but “the supposed naturalness of ideas remains implicit in behaviour.”73 It is this unnoticed or unnoticeable nature of ideology that Cresswell has referred to as ‘doxa’. It is only when the ideology needs defending or articulating that it moves to the realm of orthodoxy. In this case the ideological position is defended by presenting the natural realm not as the ‘best’ way, rather it is the ‘only way’.74

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67 Cresswell, In-Place, p.161.
69 Cresswell, In-Place, p.157.
70 Cresswell, In-Place, p.161.
71 Cresswell, In-Place, p.158.
72 Cresswell, In-Place, p.161.
73 Cresswell, In-Place, p.159.
74 Cresswell, In-Place, p.159.
Whilst this four-fold description of ideological mechanisms is a significant development on Douglas’s position, it is in my view entirely commensurate with it. In addition it provides a helpful critical framework for thinking about the mechanisms involved in the place-power relationship which I will draw on in the rest of this chapter and also in Chapter 3. This discussion about the ideological component of normative-place raises some important issues. In order to address these clearly here, the argument of Chapter 3 is anticipated, where clear distinctions are made between normative-place, created-place and Jesus-Space. Normative-place could be viewed as describing the ‘way the world is’—indeed this coheres with the proposals of Douglas and Cresswell. However, for Douglas and Cresswell, this arrangement of place is descriptive of all there is\textsuperscript{75}—there is no possibility of finding ‘other places’ elsewhere in the world or of transforming current arrangements of place to conform to some utopian ideal.\textsuperscript{76} In contrast, from a theological viewpoint, normative-place is \textit{not} all there is; it is precisely defined in contradistinction both to created-place and also to Jesus-Space. Indeed, normative place could be understood in its idolatrous form as “all that is not,” or “all that is there that is not there.”\textsuperscript{77} On the one hand, normative-place is a twisting of, or transgression against, created-place; on the other hand it is descriptive of place that exists ‘outside’ of Jesus-Space (or in temporal terms ‘before’ Jesus). As such Jesus-Space lies at the very heart of the theological notion of place that is being proposed here and will be the focus of the argument in Chapter 3. In preparation for that I will briefly discuss two key areas that help define the distinction between normative-place and Jesus-Space. The first concerns the question about the relationship of ethics to place, and whether normative-place has the potential to embody any sense of universally shared ethic. The second concerns the question about the possibility of the transformation of place—a question that will be discussed below under the heading \textit{Normative-Place and Transgression}.

The connection between ideology and ethics is framed in Cresswell’s initial question about “what characteristic mechanisms are mobilized in the creation of ideas about what is good and just?” I observed earlier in this chapter that Cresswell comments on the issue of ethics, but that neither he, nor Douglas (as far as I am aware) makes any real attempt to address it;

\textsuperscript{75}This understanding of ‘all there is’ is informed by the argument of Tim Noble who makes a distinction between ‘idol’ and ‘icon’. Drawing on Jean Luc Marion he argues that icons, over against idols, leave space open. In these terms Jesus-Space might be undererstood as a conceptual icon (Tim Noble, \textit{The Poor in Liberation Theology: Pathway to God or Ideological Construct?} [Sheffield: Equinox, 2013] pp.88-96).
\textsuperscript{76}Cresswell discusses the potential for transgression to transform places with particular reference to utopian ideals (Cresswell, \textit{In-Place}, pp.166-176).
\textsuperscript{77}My thanks to Tim Noble for these insights. See Noble, \textit{The Poor}, p. 88-96.
indeed it seems that the framing of ‘in-place/out-of-place’ means that ethics are determined largely by the social-spatial arrangements of each particular place.

The tendency towards relativization of ethics in relation to the formation of place does seem to be implicit in the ideological strategies presented and can be seen in a number of ways. I will give two brief examples. First, the initial step of ‘categorisation’ would, it seems, allow for an ethical expression. The problem however (at least from a theological point of view) is that there is no clear separation between ethics and ideology. This is apparently exactly what Douglas was giving voice to in the title of her book—the association of purity to power (thus “danger”). It is also inherent within the social-spatial mechanisms, such as the purity code, that I have already discussed. In relation to purity for example, it is difficult to distinguish between what is ‘God given’ law (or ethics) on the one hand, and ideological arrangements that maintain unequal systems of power on the other. One could understand that the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) precisely addresses these issues.  

Second, the final element of ideological strategy tends to relativize ethics by the removing it from its roots and associating it with ‘nature’ or simply ‘common sense’. Place is deeply implicated in this relativization of ethics because, as Cresswell argues, place is precisely the vehicle that establishes something as the ‘realm of nature’ or ‘simply the way the world works’. In this framework there is no ‘room’ for allowing for an ethics which is ‘given’(for example ‘given from God’), rather ethics are deduced from what is; they are determined by and descriptive of the prevailing culture and commensurate arrangement of place.

The same question about the potential of an ideologically constructed place to sustain an ethical framework can be asked of Douglas’s analysis. For example, in relation to her study of Leviticus, one might consider the distinction between the ideological versus the ethical intent of the law; that is the extent to which different aspects of the law were intended to establish tribal Jewish identity on the one hand or a universal set of ethics on the other. By relating the concept of taboo to identity and tribal boundaries rather than ethics per-se, it appears that the effect of Douglas’s argument is to move towards a position that relativizes the ethical dimension of the law.  

78 For example, see Walter Wink’s analysis of how ethical performance of the Jewish law engages with power structures that are represented by the Roman military and civil law (Walter Wink, Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992], pp.175-189).
79 For ‘common sense’ see Cresswell, In-Place, pp.18-21. The final element of the strategy states: “Ideologies involve the removal of beliefs and actions from their social roots and their placement in the realm of ‘nature’” (Cresswell, In-Place, p.161).
80 However Douglas herself does not seem to come to a clear conclusion and there is not enough evidence to definitively say that Douglas vacates the law of its ethical content. On the contrary, in the introduction to the reprinted edition of her book in 2002 she argues that even the apparently arbitrary requirements of the law
Interestingly, the normative characteristic of place to be ethically self-defining is also expressed by David Sibley. He argues that exclusion is the dominant formative power in the spatialisation of modern secular society and points to the perception of the “sanctity of space” and the “continuing need for ritual practices” to maintain that sanctity. He asserts:

[These] rituals, as in ancient Israel ... are an expression of power relations: they are concerned with domination. Today, however, the guardians of sacred spaces are more likely to be security guards, parents or judges than priests. They are policing the spaces of commerce, public institutions and the home rather than the temple.81

Thus normative landscapes are indeed virtuous in the imaginations of all who sustain and benefit from them and the people and institutions who wield the instruments of exclusion do so for the good and benefit of civilization.

By relating the ideology/ethics question to Douglas’s work (as opposed to Creswell’s) a change in nuance is introduced which is important to note. Whereas Cresswell specifically identifies place is the vehicle that establishes something as the ‘realm of nature’, Douglas’s focus on taboo incorporates both place and innate human nature as critical elements in establishing something as ‘the realm of nature’. Thus, her argument emphasises that both these factors are implicated in giving authenticity and legitimacy to ideological as well as ethical schemes.

Critical for Douglas’s argument however is that taboo is not in fact an innate human response but is socially determined. Thus whilst taboo describes a very deeply shared innate sense of disgust (Douglas relates taboo to areas of life that are “unspeakable and in consequence unthinkable”82) it is not to be understood as a universally shared response to things or situations. In addition, as previously described, taboo for Douglas is spatialized through the concept of ‘dirt as matter out of place’, thus establishing an inseparable link between what appears to be ‘the realm of nature’ as it relates to both ‘innate human responses’ and place.

David Sibley takes a similar view in his influential book Geographies of Exclusion where he describes taboo as the innate human response of disgust.83 Sibley’s model parallels Douglas’s approach in that he argues that disgust-mechanisms are spatial in character and consequently

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81 Sibley, Geographies, p 72. Interestingly Miroslav Volf expresses a not dissimilar view: “As a power of normalization, exclusion reigns through all those institutions that we may associate with inclusionary civilization—through the state apparatus, educational institutions, media, sciences. They all shape ‘normal’ citizens with ‘normal’ knowledge, values, and practices, and thereby either assimilate or eject the ‘ab-normal’ other. The modern self … is indirectly constituted through the exclusion of the other” (Volf, Exclusion, p.62).

82 Douglas, Purity, p.xiii.

83 Sibley, Geographies, pp.18-19.
defining the spatial geography of a society and also that disgust responses to dirt are socially
determined.84

These and other studies present evidence that disgust reactions, and by implication innate
ethical senses, are indeed socially and culturally determined.85 Whilst this should not be
presented as a conclusive position, it does perhaps demonstrate that the claim that humanity
shares a universal innate ethical sense is not an argument that can be taken for granted.
Similarly, it warns against a too easy association of disgust (and dirt) to morality, which is
one of the points that Sibley persuasively argues.86

From a theological perspective this question can be engaged through the previously discussed
theme of purity in Mark’s Gospel where, in chapter seven, the paradigm for what constitutes
purity is shifted from the external (given code) to internal (matter of the heart). Whilst this
may suggest an innate ethical framework, it is not in my view the point of the passage. In the
context of this argument Jesus’ declaration that “there is nothing outside a person that by
going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile” (Mk 7:15-16) is a strong
attack on the system of purity that the people in authority (“scribes and Pharisees” Mk 7:1, 3,
5) used to maintain a position of power and advantage. In other words, Jesus was attacking a
hierarchical system of power which, as discussed previously, was a central social-spatial
mechanism that defined ‘place’ in the New Testament world.

This discussion about the ideological characteristics of normative-place prepares the grounds
for the argument in Chapter 3 about created-place and Jesus-Space. In particular, it draws
attention to some of the critical issues that will need to be addressed there. For example, in
terms of the ethical characteristics of these places, questions arise about the particular

84 Sibley, Geographies, pp.3-71. It is interesting to note that Neyrey argues that linking “social ideology with
bodily behaviour is a critical step forward in interpreting biblical documents” (Neyrey, Clean/Unclean, p.89). In
relation to this approach he has produced specific studies in Mark 7 (Neyrey, Symbolic, pp.63-91) and also in
304.

85 See for example: L. William Countryman, Dirt, Greed and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and their
Implications for Today (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Marcella Althaus-Reid, Indecent Theology: Theological
Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Richard Beck, Unclean:
Meditations on Purity, Hospitality and Morality (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011). Beck includes an extensive
exploration of the psychology of disgust and its implications for theological notions of hospitality and purity.

86 Sibley, Geographies, pp.49-71. Professor Martin Gainsborough of the University of Bristol has done a very
interesting study concerning the association of dirt to morality in relation to Christian mission in Bristol. Here
slum dwellers in the low-lying industrial areas of Bristol were represented in the city’s press as dirty and un-
Godly. Dirt and poverty evidenced immorality and the associated lack of Godliness. Martin Gainsborough,
‘Liberal Interventionism and the Global North: The Case of Britain’s Inner Cities’ (School of Sociology, Politics
association of place to issues of power and ethics and also the designation of ‘exclusion’ (as the primary mechanism at work within normative-place) as to whether it is a benign mechanism or an ‘evil’ force.  

**Normative-Place and Transgression**

The common sense ordering of normative-place logically implies the probability of anomalous or out-of-place events. This is of course the essence of Douglas’s core observation that dirt is matter out-of-place. Cresswell calls these anomalous events ‘transgressions’. As the designation suggests, a line has been crossed, whether intentionally or not, such that behaviour is deemed ‘out-of-place’. Because the normal arrangement of things is doxic—that is below the level of everyday consciousness (either it is not noticed or it is taken for granted)—the values embedded within a place are not immediately apparent. It is the “occurrence of ‘out-of-place’ phenomena [that] leads people to question behaviour and define what is and is not appropriate for a particular setting.” Thus, “transgression, and the reaction to it, underlines those values that are considered correct and appropriate.”

The study of transgression is at the heart of Cresswell’s methodology. “By studying the margins of what is allowed we come to understand more about the centre—the core—of what is considered right and proper.” By definition, a research approach that sought to investigate common sense landscapes by describing and analysing what is taken for granted would be a very difficult and lengthy process, whereas the study of “events that upset the balance of common sense .. let[us] the events, themselves, become the questions.” The central part of Cresswell’s work is to describe three in-depth case studies of transgressive events, or in his terms ‘heretical geographies’. These studies provide narrative accounts of events that cause crisis in the doxic landscape and the responses of authorities to restore ‘normality’.

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87 Volf presents a strong ethical perspective asserting that exclusionary practices in all forms are unethical and indeed that “exclusion is often the evil perpetrated by ‘the good’ and barbarity produced by civilization” (Volf, *Exclusion*, p.61). Thus where Sibley refers to social-psychological systems such as Object Relations Theory (Sibley, *Geographies*, pp.5-11, 72-87), Volf identifies evil within society, stating that: “The exclusion signified in ‘ethnic cleansing’ as a metaphor, is not about barbarity ‘then’ as opposed to civilization ‘now,’ not about evil ‘out there’ as opposed to goodness ‘here.’ Exclusion is barbarity within civilization, evil among the good, crime against the other right within the walls of the self” (Volf, *Exclusion*, p.60). I will discuss ethics in relation to spatial exclusion in Chapter 3.

88 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.22-23.
89 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.22.
90 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.21.
91 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.21.
92 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.21.
93 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.31. The case studies were of: graffitists in New York, USA; women peace campaigners at Greenham Common, UK; hippy convoys around Stonehenge, UK.
In describing transgression, it is helpful to notice its distinction in relation to the idea of resistance. In contrast to transgression, resistance is defined by “the importance of reactions to transgressions versus the intentionality of the transgressor.” In resistance the focus is on results—“on the ‘being noticed’ of a particular action.” The distinction is further defined by Creswell:

Resistance and transgression are clearly not discrete sets. Some acts of resistance … are judged as transgression. Similarly some actions judged as constituting transgression are intended by the actors and thus also constitute resistance. Since transgressive acts are the acts judged to be ‘out of place’ by dominant institutions and actors (the press, the law, the government), they provide ‘potentials’ for resistance. Intentional transgression is a form of resistance that creates a response from the establishment—an act that draws the lines on a battlefield and defines the terrain on which contestation occurs.

Transgression then is a direct consequence of hegemonic settlement and like hegemonic ordering, transgression has a necessary spatial aspect. That is, transgression and normative landscapes coexist, they are mutually dependant. Likewise, it is the affective character of transgression that gives resistance its potency and ability to challenge established social-spatial ordering of things and even to change the accepted meaning of places.

It is important at this point to identify a critical distinction between transgression (and resistance) and the spatial aspect of Jesus’ ministry that was discussed in Chapter 1. Transgression and resistance are inherently limited in that they are in themselves only enabled by the characteristics and meanings of place that already exist; transgression “depends on the pre-existence of some form of spatial ordering … [and] forms of transgression owe their efficacy to types of space, place, and territory.” In this sense transgression is able to critique, disrupt and potentially deconstruct what exists, but it is unable to construct or create because it does not have within it an alternative or new spatiality.

Cresswell argues that “the seeds of new spatial orderings” can be found within transgression and he points to evidence of these through his own field research. These new orderings gave expression to utopian elements based on ideas such as “nonmilitaristic, nonpatriarchal, nonhierarchical” ways of life. However, there was no evidence that these utopian ideas

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94 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.22-23.
95 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.23.
96 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.166.
97 Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.166-175.
98 Cresswell, *In-Place*, p.166.
were actually being lived-out, or indeed that there was any substantially new formulation of social space that enabled new constructions to emerge. Rather, the impression given was that they functioned simply to deconstruct what already existed. These ideas about transgression stand in distinct contrast to proposals about Jesus-Space which claims a completely new formulation of place, not on the basis of reorganizing pre-existing forms of spatial ordering, but on the basis of a divine act of creation that came about through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In this sense, the theology of place that I am presenting moves beyond the limited responses of transgression and points to the possibility of a complete transformation of place with commensurate newly created spatial ordering and newly formed expressions of society.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has built on the argument of Chapter 1 by drawing on the work of Mary Douglas and others and has identified in-place/out-of-place as a shared paradigm in the fields of anthropology, social geography and theology which has formed the basis of theories about the production and character of place. I have drawn on these theories to argue that normativity serves as a useful descriptor for place and that as such it applies equally well to the multi-layered and complex arrangement of social-spatial settlements both of the New Testament and contemporary worlds. Three inter-related characteristics of normative-place have been explored under the headings of hermeneutics, ideology and transgression all of which bring normativity into a dialogical relation to theology.

Normative-place has not yet been established as a theological framework for place, but in combination with ideas about Jesus-Space (which has been presented as a kind of third space in relation to normativity) it is possible to conceive of a theological scheme which would incorporate both normative-place and Jesus-Space into a broader theology of place. It is this proposal that will be explored in Chapter 3. The chapter will take up the current arguments by more fully exploring the concept of Jesus-Space with particular attention being paid to issues of power in relation to place; the ethical characteristics of Jesus-Space; and the potential of Jesus-Space to be transformative in relation to normative-place.
CHAPTER 3

JESUS-SPACE AND THE CREATION OF REDEMPTIVE PLACES

Introduction

This chapter presents the crux of my argument about a theological understanding of place. In it I build on the work of the previous chapters as well as drawing on new sources to argue that from a theological perspective, one of the primary paradigms for understanding place is that of relationship. Based on this understanding I propose that place can be conceived of theologically in terms of three spatial paradigms: created-place, normative-place and Jesus-Space.

As well as introducing new academic sources I have also incorporated ethnographic material into the structure of the argument and thereby sought to reflect the way in which ethnographic work developed concurrently with theoretical work and significantly influenced the development of the overall research. Whilst this approach somewhat pre-empts the discussion on ethnographic methods in Chapter 4, it conveys an important idea that is central to the research methodology, namely that a practical and missiological approach to the theology of place must be conversant with the actual places under investigation and thus seek to break down the hard and unhelpful distinction between abstract argument and qualitative research.

With this approach in mind I introduce the argument of the chapter by considering my own situatedness as a researcher in the Cornwall Estate.

‘Placing’ Research

The idea that research can be organised around a tidy and linear process beginning with theoretical construction, followed by a defined period of qualitative research of the site, then argument and conclusion, is from an ethnographic perspective, not desirable nor an accurate
description of what actually happens in research. Rather the process of research involves a much more complex and difficult to organise series of experiences and interactions. In my experience, interesting ‘ethnographic-moments’ and illuminating insights have often happened in unplanned and unpredictable ways. Encounters and voices that resonate with and inform research interests have come from multiple sources outside of the formal research sites; these have included for example radio, TV and film, daily informal conversations, and encounters whilst out walking or shopping. Therefore, I begin this chapter by reflecting on certain aspects of my own ‘situatedness’ and how this has influenced the direction and content of my research.

Whist the focus of my research is the Cornwall Estate, my own experience is one of inhabiting multiple places, all of which influence the way I see and understand the issues at hand. An important case in point is the contrasting experiences of estate and college (where college includes academic institutions in Bristol, Prague and now Amsterdam). Whilst I do not wish to set up a false and unhelpful polarity in discussing contrasting places, I do want to give voice to the creative tension experienced by being immersed in two very different situations at once. The ‘college-place’ is in part about well-structured and clearly articulated

1 Mike Crang and Ian Cook talk about the linear approach to research as ‘read-then-do-then-write’ (Mike Crang and Ian Cook, Doing Ethnographies [London and California: SAGE, 2007] pp.2-4). This is explored in more detail in Chapter 4 in the discussion about ethnographic methods. Mary McClintock Fulkerson engages helpfully with this point stating that “theological reflection is not a linear form of reflection that starts with a correct doctrine (or a ‘worldly’ insight) and then proceeds to analyse a situation; rather it is a situational, on-going, never-finished dialectical process where past and present ever converge in new ways” (Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007] p.234).

2 This is of course true of much research, and the task of a formal research project can also work to heighten a sense of awareness and attentiveness. This also finds resonance with the models of prayer used in our small Christian community (such as Ignatian prayer) where moments of insight often occur outside the time of formal prayer but they only happen because of the formal prayer that predisposes you to be ready to encounter them.

3 I discuss reflexive and auto-ethnographic elements of research in Chapter 4 and 5. This includes a methodological discussion about the ‘situatedness’ of the researcher in relation to the research site. Mike Crang and Ian Cook argue this point in relation to ethnographic research: “ethnographies are as much about the culture of the student as they are of the studied … the relationships that matter are not only those between researcher and researched in a traditionally ascribed ‘field’ setting. Others, in the academy … in a researcher’s outside life … and elsewhere have just as much if not more, influence over the findings of the research” (Crang and Cook, Ethnographies pp.8-9).

4 I do not want to pre-empt the ethnographic discussion which follows, but in these comments I am aware of some key ethnographic principles and methods that have undergirded my own research. Indeed, as I write I have already framed the ethnographic approach and have completed the research.

5 Christian Scharen and Aana Vigen discuss the challenges faced by academics engaging in ethnographic research, especially the risk associated with a vulnerable auto-ethnographic approach to research (Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen, Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics [London and New York: Continuum, 2011] pp. 69-71). This is discussed further in ‘Reflexivity and Auto-ethnography’ in Chapter 4.

6 In seeking to be brief, I do not intend to present an estate-college binary where one represents ‘the real world’ and the other is ‘detached’—a stereotype that is not uncommon in some quarters. On the contrary college-place in my experience also represents passion, thoughtfulness, community and costly commitment and feelings of defensiveness arise within me when it is sometimes thoughtlessly criticised by ‘practitioners’.
arguments; there is a notable and constant undercurrent of aspiration to complete a thesis and to produce work which is well regarded. The formal and rational sense of college-place leads to a tendency to view encounters in the community as ‘research material’ and to write about the people encountered in detached and impersonal ways, ways which ‘fit’ well with the terms of the research, rather than to consider them as authentic representations of people as friends, neighbours or associates on the estate. I have noticed the potential for this tendency to affect even my experience of daily living on the estate—an encounter whilst on a walk to the shops or in a local community meeting for example might be valued more for its potential to contribute to research than its intrinsic relational value. In other words, college-place is not restricted to the various physical sites at which the colleges are located, but college-place has the tendency to extend itself to all places by inducing in me a ‘performance of college-place’; one of its temptations is of course to objectify people.

Contrasting strongly to my experience of college-place is that of the estate and my own relationship to it as a resident and minister; notably in terms of the way in which aspiration is configured in each place. For example, after more than four years of living and researching here, I am not aware of a single long-term resident who has attended a higher education college or who knows what a PhD is. Research and well-constructed arguments have very little currency here. I am reminded of a conversation in which I mentioned a student who wanted to come to the estate to carry out a research project; the response, which took me aback somewhat, was along the lines of “we don’t want more f****** research around here.” Observation suggests that this sentiment corresponds to a strong antipathy from long-term residents towards research and those who carry it out on the estate; it connects with a more general sense of being ‘used’ or objectified by research and frustration at the apparent lack of any tangible benefits from the research.

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7 I am not implying that no resident has attended higher education establishments; this is certainly not the case. I am speaking of my own experience of the estate and how on reflection it contrasts sharply to my previous experience of living in the north of the city for ten years where it was unusual for someone not to have been involved in higher education.

8 This illustrates the practical challenges for research in particular marginal communities that have had a history of research projects which have left a negative experience in the community. This is reflected in Crang’s reporting of ethnographic work carried out in Australia where he says that “research is probably the dirtiest word in indigenous people’s vocabulary” (Mike Crang, ‘Qualitative Methods: Touchy, Feely, Look-see?’ in Progress in Human Geography 27 (2003) pp. 496-7). In a similar vein N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln warn of insensitivity to the power relationships inherent within ethnographic work in socially and geographically marginal sites: “In the fields of social geography and anthropology ‘qualitative research’ serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, for truth – and is a sober reminder of the dehumanising potential of ‘research’” (N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research [London: SAGE, 2005] p.1). I will engage with this issue in Chapter 4.
As the estate has become home, I find my sense of ‘estate-placedness’ playing out more strongly in different spheres. I notice a protectiveness rising in me when others want to propose research or welfare projects—my sense of estate-placedness tends to label them as outsiders: “you don’t know what it’s like here” / “you don’t belong here.” Whilst in the company of ‘middle-class’ people from the ‘other side’ of the city, or whilst listening to the news, I might find myself bridling at the association of ‘estate people’ with ‘benefit scroungers’ and ‘trouble makers’.  

This brief ethnographic reflection on my own situatedness in relation to place points to an important aspect of methodology. I suggest that from a spatial perspective, ethnographic research can be understood in terms of a complex and disorganised collision of places within the experience of the researcher. This corresponds to the temporal formulation of research previously discussed which recognises the inadequacy of the linear model and acknowledges the need to engage with complexity and randomness.

The important point here, which I will refer to in more detail later, relates to the production of knowledge, or more specifically to theological knowledge. Knowledge is gained as the researcher experiences and manages the collision of places (of which estate and college are two); here I draw on methods from practical theology (outlined below in methods section) to reflect on and manage this complex and disorganised set of interactions. This approach seeks to flatten the hierarchy of knowledge associated, for example, with the estate-college binary which values rational knowledge as ‘rigorous’ and ‘academic’ in contrast to experiential knowledge.  

In my approach to research, which spans a variety of ‘places’, my aim is to be

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9 Even the BBC is not above this kind of negative representation of estates. As I listened to the BBC Radio 4 flagship news programme ‘PM’ (01.10.2013), accomplished landscape gardener Ian Drummond is celebrated. His achievement is not simply that his recognition as an internationally known landscape gardener, but that he “came from a council estate to become a successful landscape gardener.” The sense given in the interview was that Ian Drummond’s journey of accomplishment was from the estate to success where the estate was represented as an obstacle to success associated with limitation and low aspiration. A discourse was presented where ‘success’ involves a physical separation from the estate. This kind of negative representation of estates is a regular feature of the media which adds to the general discourse that ‘success’ is defined in ‘moving away’ from the estate.


11 Theoretical coherence between research methods and theories of place is essential for establishing a dialectical conversation that will enable meaningful understandings of place to emerge from the research process (Sarah Pink, *Situating Everyday Life* [Thousand Oaks, CA. and London: SAGE, 2012] pp.2-3). In her own ethnographic investigation of daily life in relation to place and performance Sarah Pink “stresses that … theoretical concerns … should be understood as routes both to and from ethnographic knowing. They are *routes to* ethnographic knowing in that they are being used to make ethnographic findings meaningful and coherent. Yet simultaneously they are *routes from* ethnographic knowing in that the theoretical route taken here was developed in response to findings of ethnographic research undertaken over a period of around ten years” (Pink, *Situating*, p.15). In a similar vein Mary McClintock Fulkerson seeks to subvert the “site of privilege” inhabited
attentive to the ‘gift’ that each of the places presents and through on-going reflective practice to establish equal rigour in the formation of each kind of knowledge.

Making Sense of Place in the Cornwall Estate

A Complex and Disorganised Set of Interactions: Finding a Way Through

A critical point in the research journey came as the formal period of ethnographic work began to draw to a close. The particular challenge was to identify accounts of place within theology or social geography that found correspondence with the lived experience of place described in my ethnography. A particular aspect of this challenge was to find explanations that would not only give some understanding of the formation of the estate as a place and the spatial mechanisms that sustained it, but would also offer a more than superficial prospect of transformation. In essence, I was looking for a hopeful account of place, one that offered a hope of transformation that was commensurate with the Gospel.

Having established ‘normative-place’ as an adequate theological descriptor of the prevailing spatial settlement, I looked to theories of third-space and hybridity as possible ways of developing a theology of place that would relate to hope and transformation, and would build upon the ideas of Jesus-Space from Chapter 2. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, third-space hybridity is referred to in a number of contexts as a potential way of understanding the transformation of place.

In particular I worked with the interplay of ideas between third-space hybridity and my on-going ethnographic work. Whilst third-space hybridity thinking provided a provocative and

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12 The language of ‘gift’ comes from June (not her real name), a retired Baptist minister who lived on the Estate for a number of years. I will explore this further in the discussion on ethnographic methods.

13 McClintock Fulkerson expresses a similar point in her extended ethnographic study of a predominantly black congregation in the USA that welcomes people with profound physical disabilities. She presents practical theology as emerging from a ‘wound’ and that such a reading “implicitly assumes an emancipatory interest and demands a response of change. Thus practical theology … is an enquiry shaped by a logic of transformation” (McClintock Fulkerson, Redemption, pp.21-22).

14 For discussion on Third Space and hybridity see this chapter.

interesting analytical framework for ethnographic data, it did not fully address the particular themes of transformation and hope in relation to place.

However, third-space hybridity did present important ways of thinking about alternatives to the binary constructions of place such as those described by in-place/out-of-place and pure/impure. Of particular interest to me were ideas that explored the coming together of previously divided positions which binaries described, and the kind of places that such coming together might produce. As well as the notion of hybridity, the coming together of binary separations is considered in terms of ‘neighbourliness’, ‘presence’ and ‘embrace’. Ideas of ‘presence’ and ‘neighbourliness’ have already been an integral part of the explorations of the small Christian community on the estate. From a theological perspective, the notion of hybridity is presented by Christopher Baker, The Hybrid Church in the City, and that of ‘embrace’ is presented by Miroslav Volf, Exclusion and Embrace where embrace could be conceived of spatially both in terms of third-space and hybridity. These ideas, especially Volf’s arguments about embrace, introduced new themes and new ways of looking at third-space hybridity which found a deep sense of connection with my ongoing ethnographic work, and it is the sense of resonance between the two that has opened up this particular line of enquiry. I pursue the argument here by first describing the ethnographic element of the work before moving onto considering the theological aspects.

Elements of Embrace: An Ethnographic Journey

From a personal perspective, the single most formative influence for thinking about and developing the practice of Christian presence on the Cornwall Estate has been a deepening and ongoing friendship with June. June was 63 years of age when we first met, a retired Baptist minister who had moved to the estate three years previously. In the words of the local vicar, “when June arrived, everything changed on the estate.”

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19 For reasons of confidentiality, names of those I have encountered during ethnographic research have been changed.
20 My early conversations with June (from summer 2008 onwards) are not recorded or noted since work on the PhD had not commenced at that stage. However, in ethnographic terms, these conversations and experiences form an important part of my early knowledge of the ‘research site’.
21 This is a phrase I have heard on a number of occasions as the vicar recounts his own journey of ministry on the estate.
The story of June’s interaction on the estate centres on a network of about fifty children and teenagers who were finding themselves on the outside of normal social provisions including schools, social services, youth services and police. Being often shut out of their homes for long periods in the day and sometimes also at night, the street was their normal place of habitation. On moving into the estate at the invitation of the local Baptist church, June started to “intentionally hang out” with children and young people, spending time with them on the street, taking them homemade cake and developing a practice of hospitality in her own home. June’s central idea was to ‘be present to them’ by which she meant a generous, non-judgemental, vulnerable and open-hearted proximity. Central for June was the question “what gift is Jesus giving to me through this young person?” By this she understood that in her encounters with others, which were often disturbing and challenging, she herself carried a responsibility to learn and be open to being changed by the experience, her conviction being that in meeting these young people, she was indeed meeting Jesus. The disturbance of the encounter was itself a liminal place where Jesus’ presence could be found in powerful ways, and notably the ‘gift’ of the encounter was not primarily from June to the young person, rather it was a mutual or shared experience.

It was the conviction of June and the newly forming small Christian community that Jesus was to be known precisely through the ‘otherness’ of the encounter and subsequent prayerful reflection upon it. The experience of knowing is most poignantly described with reference to the removal of the ‘log’ in one’s own eye before removal of the ‘speck’ in a brother or sister’s eye (Matt. 7:1-5). Thus the ethos of the encounter was a withholding of judgement against the ‘other’ with a commensurate openness to receive from the Spirit a judgement of the self—or in terms of Matthew 7, a removal of the log. Thus, the encounter moves beyond a simple proximity to the ‘other’ to the creation of a new sense of place between persons of difference, a sense of place that comes into being through the practice of withholding judgement and attentiveness to the gift that is being given.

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22 The phrase “intentionally hang out” was part of the language used in the small Christian community to describe a particular way of being present to other people. This kind of presence included a particular attentiveness to the person and the presence of God with them; it spoke of availability, vulnerability and reflexivity. I have since found similar language used in ethnographic studies, notably in Crang and Cook who talk about a “deep hanging out” as “perhaps the best single phrase description” of participant observation (Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, p.38).

23 In fact June always insists that she was the primary recipient.

24 For Matt 7:1-5 in relation to judgment and self-reflection see Veling, *Practical*, pp.82-84.

25 I have subsequently discovered that June’s approach to mission was inspired, in part, by the book by John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God* (London: SCM, 1972). This approach to a mission-shaped spirituality emphasises the presence of the Spirit precisely in the event of encounter between people of difference.
Two contrasting responses to June’s work on the Cornwall Estate will help bring perspective to this very brief summary of the situation. The first response was that, within three months of June’s move to the estate, complaints to the police about public disorder in the area were reduced by about eighty percent. In contrast, the small Baptist congregation (numbering less than twelve people) who had invited June to move to the estate, displayed a deeply emotional and aggressive stance towards ‘outsiders’ (namely young people) coming into their building. This emotional response was manifested physically through the erecting of a set of railings in front of the church at a cost of over £9000. These encounters and subsequent reflections upon them were important in the early formation of the small Christian community; we were deeply impressed by these two contrasting responses to the presence of ‘others’—and the different constructions of place and boundaries that were associated with them.

It is with these experiences in mind that theologies of encounter and presence, such as Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace*, began to suggest a link between our own lived experiences and a theological model that would relate to notions of space and place. Therefore I will adopt Volf’s term ‘embrace’ as a shorthand way of expressing these spatial-theologies of encounter and presence as I develop my argument about Jesus-Space below. However, before focusing specifically on Jesus-Space, I will briefly discuss the concept of third-space hybridity and outline ways in which it helps formulate ideas of Jesus-Space and critically how third-space hybridity and Jesus-Space are distinct from each other.

*Exploring Embrace as a Spatial Concept*

As estate living and research have gone hand-in-hand it has been striking how theories of place from the social sciences have resonated with our own experiences as a small Christian community, in particular the ideas of in-place/out-of-place developed by Mary Douglas, Tim Cresswell and David Sibley described in Chapters 1 and 2. An assertion by Sibley particularly connected with my growing experience of the estate and the place it held in the wider city:

> Human landscape can be read as a landscape of exclusion ... Because power is expressed in the monopolization of space and the relegation of weaker groups in society to less desirable environment, any text on the social geography of advanced capitalism should be concerned with the question of exclusion.

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26 This was reported to me by June and also the local vicar in 2009. Community workers, youth services and police services recognised her effectiveness and asked her about her approach, wondering how a single older woman (armed only with cake) could achieve such impact when public services with trained staff allocated budgets of many tens of thousands of pounds, had no noticeable impact over many years.

It was in this environment of exclusion with its resultant sense of ‘them and us’ that third-space hybridity began to find some hopeful connection. The terms ‘third-space’ and ‘hybridity’ relate to a diverse and complex set of ideas within philosophy and social sciences, so I use them here with care. Significantly, they offer a critique of binary constructions of space and place. Put simply, third-space contests binary constructs by introducing the concept of “spaces of representation” that stand apart from the either/or of the binary axis, whereas hybridity critiques the notion of pure identities (such as male/female; black/white) that facilitates the production and maintenance of binaries.

Third-space hybridity finds intriguing resonance with theological notions of space and place in relation to the imagination or interpretation of place in terms of Jesus’ own ministry, the Kingdom of God or the mission of the church. In other words, it raises the prospect that the ministry of the church might be understood in terms of recognising or developing third-places or hybrid-places. These ideas have not been extensively explored within theology, but they are taken up by Christopher Baker who explores the mission of the urban church in terms of “third space thinking” and Halvor Moxnes who proposes third-space as the space of the kingdom. However, particular reservations emerged as I explored these ideas in relation to my ethnographic research and experience of the estate, which are outlined briefly here.

Firstly, third-space hybridity seemed not to account adequately for the notion of ethics or judgement. In proposing a ‘new-space’ where people of difference come together, third-space hybridity appeared not to provide any basis or identifiable mechanism for discerning or formulating an ethos or or set of values that the space should hold. This issue is not dissimilar from the discussion in Chapter 2 regarding the difficulty in defining an ethical component of normative-place; there I concluded that Jesus-Space would need to define an ethical space which sustained certain characteristics including that of a ‘given’ ethic, and a separation of ethical arrangements from normative arrangements of power. In practice, as the small

28 The terms third-space and hybridity relate to a broad range of concepts. Guided by Professor Paul Cloke of Exeter University, my own exploration of the concepts has been through Edward W. Soja, Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined-Places (Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1996) who draws on the work of Henri Lefebvre; Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 2004), and the development of his work by Christopher Baker in Christopher Baker, The Hybrid Church in the City: Third Space Thinking. London: SCM, 2009; Tim Cresswell who comments on the development of Third Space Hybridity within Human Geography; and Sarah Whatmore who explores physical aspects of hybridity within geography in Sarah Whatmore, Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces (London and Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 2002).

29 It is generally acknowledged that important formative works in these areas are notoriously difficult to read; often noted in this respect are Homi Bhabha and Henri Lefebvre.


31 Baker, Hybrid; Moxnes, Putting, pp.109-124; Moxnes, Landscape, pp.94-96, 105-106.
Christian community, we found ourselves wrestling with questions about the relationship between radical hospitality and openness on the one hand and the need for discernment or judgement on the other. Our practical experience was one of conflict between the formation of places that facilitated the peaceable coming together of people of difference without the possibility of ignoring or even endorsing evil. These struggles focused at times around difficult decisions about the nature of boundaries—not least the pressure from legal sources (such as lease or insurance arrangements), the need to protect property, or professional requirements to maintain a strongly formulated boundary; pressures which conflicted with our own ideas about fostering an open-hearted encounter. The tension was also felt through the experience of being a Baptist ethnographer where the ethnographic task involved a suspension of judgement in order to be attentive to and understand others, and the sense of call to Christian presence also included an ethical responsibility to engage with particular issues that were arising. Secondly, third-space hybridity failed to offer a radical hope to those in marginal circumstances. It did offer a helpful analytical framework and some practical formulations for the formation of new kinds of spaces, including hybrid communities, and a critique of oppressive binary structures and indeed we found it a helpful tool in reflecting on our own mission practice. However, third-space hybridity did not in essence offer a radically new creation of place that was commensurate with the promises of the Gospel and the death and resurrection of Jesus, rather, by definition, it works with what already exists.

Thus, whilst third-space hybridity contributed helpfully in some measure, there was clearly a need to develop certain aspects of place that might be understood as distinctly theological. Previous arguments about Jesus-Space indicate that the key questions to be addressed are those relating to boundaries and ethics, ideology and power, hope and transformation and

32 There are many examples of this kind of tension. In one case, a girl of around 14 years of age came round to June’s house at 11.30pm one night. The mother’s response to June’s subsequent phone call was, “I never want to see her again.” At that time of night social services and police were non-responsive. The choice facing June was to put the girl on the street or to give her a bed for the night. To give her a bed for the night however, meant contravening the guidelines of a major Christian charity that held the lease of the house. The concern of the charity was that if news of this kind of event got into the press, it could jeopardize their public reputation and thus affect their work nationally.

33 One example of this dilemma was in relation to a fairly extreme racist conversation (September 2012). As a white male, I found myself counted as an insider in conversations that included overtly racist humour, and furthermore, the clear expectation was that I would appreciate the humour. From an ethnographic perspective inclusion in the group was very beneficial; from a Christian perspective, not to challenge the language was tantamount to endorsing the strong racist views expressed. In reality the situation is more complex and nuanced than the either/or poles of Christian/ethnographer that I have outlined. However it illustrates the dilemma.

34 Stephen Pickard argues that boundaries can be conceived as “the location at which new and creative opportunities for life together exist” and that when “the accent is on life at the boundary or intersection, traditional notions of territory are reformulated to take account of the fact that it is both at and across boundaries...
these issues form the substance of the following discussion about Jesus-Space and its relation to a wider theological framing of place.

**Jesus-Space: A new Spatiality and Potential for New Place**

This section draws together the elements of the argument thus far to present a broad framework for thinking about place in theological terms. The specific intention is to develop a more rigorous theological argument for the concept of Jesus-Space and its relationship to normative-place. This involves the introduction of a third spatial paradigm alongside the two already named, that of ‘created-place’. Thus a theological understanding of place is presented in terms of three distinct spatialities: created-place, normative place and Jesus-Space.

In discussing ‘theology’ the approach throughout has been based on the principles of practical theology, which in relation to place entails a theological exploration of place as it is lived and experienced in everyday life. Thus, whilst seeking to establish more rigorous theological foundations, the aim is to maintain a focus on a practical-theological framework. For that reason there is no intention to engage with issues that would be raised in the context of doctrinal or systematic theology, as important as those may be.

The three spatial paradigms to be discussed in this chapter can be conceived of in terms of three theological paradigms associated with creation (created-place), the fall (normative-place) and redemption (Jesus-Space). By exploring these three arrangements of place I propose an essential theological framework for place in everyday life. Implicit within the narrative or systematic approach to theology is a progression that assumes a temporal order beginning with created-place, followed by normative-place then Jesus-Space. I do not intend

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35 The practical theological approach is presented in the Introduction and will be explored with reference to ethnography in Chapter 4.

however to adopt this temporal progression, but rather to consider how these three paradigms function simultaneously within our own everyday experience of places. Therefore a central feature of my proposal for an overall framework for place is that all three of these arrangements coexist and impinge upon each other so that the production of any given place may be influenced by any combination of these three primary spatial paradigms. This does seem to bear some correspondence to the way a human community might be viewed in relation to the overarching narrative of creation-fall-redemption. Rarely would a community (or individual for that matter) be considered wholly fallen or evil with no residual trace of their God-created humanity. In a similar way it is likely that no place would normally be experienced as wholly ‘normative’ containing no vestige of its created spatiality. The places one experiences in everyday life might, I propose, be thought of as a combination (perhaps a contestation) of created-place and normative-place. In the discussion that follows I will consider how these spatialities impinge upon each other, in particular the necessary spatial convergence of normative-place and Jesus-Space.

There is here a critical departure between the doxic-type formulation of place as defined by Cresswell and Douglas and my own formulation of normative-place. Put simply, the doxic-type formulation is ‘all there is’—there is no other reality outside of the system defined by doxa. In contrast, normative-place is defined as a single spatiality that exists in a larger reality comprising three distinct arrangements of place. Furthermore, normative-place is not imagined as enduring but as subject to the transforming influence of Jesus-Space that will, in an eschatological sense, become the ‘new normative’. I will discuss this possibility in more detail at the end of the chapter under the heading of ‘transformation’.

Before discussing each of these paradigms in turn I will make a further comment on terminology. It is my inclination to refer to Jesus-Space rather than Jesus-Place in that I understand ‘space’ here in terms of a new set of spatial possibilities and potentials that did not exist prior to the event of the cross, and were beyond imagination. It has perhaps some resonance with the idea that Soja discusses as a space of imagination which seeks to “open up our spatial imaginations to ways of thinking and acting.”

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37 I realise that the sense of my terminology is being stretched at this point. I introduced the term ‘normative’ in Chapter 2 as a way of designating the shared characteristics of the numerous spatial arrangements being presented by the Context Group and others. ‘Normative’ also found resonance with the ideas of Douglas, Cresswell and Sibley. For consistency, I will continue to use ‘normative’ here but remain open to alternative phraseology in the future.

38 Soja, Thirdspace, p.5.
The spatiality of Jesus-Space needs ‘earthing’ (bringing to mind “on earth as in heaven” Matt 6:10). This is not to say that it was not ‘real’ and now becomes ‘real’, but rather that it should take on the quality of place. Earthing in this sense happens in part through the participation and performance of people so that new kinds of places materialise in specific locations. In this section I will explore some of the characteristics of Jesus-Space and discuss some of the performances or ‘participations’ that might be understood as ‘earthing’.

The discussion of Chapters 1 and 2 has indicated that this new spatiality is embodied by Jesus in his own ministry. This spatiality was fully realised through the cross and resurrection so that the empty tomb, extraordinary appearances to the disciples, the coming together of the church in Acts 2, and the use of houses and property—including selling fields (Acts 2:43-47)—were all a kind of ‘materialising’ or ‘locating’ of Jesus-Space so that a redemptive place might be formed.

Having established some parameters for the argument I will now discuss in turn the three spatialities of created-place, normative-place and Jesus-Space.

**Created-Place**

Perhaps the most significant aspect of place conveyed through the Biblical accounts of creation is the representation of place as fundamentally relational. Place is implicated in and gives substance to all relationships including those between God and humankind, between humans themselves and between humans and all that exists within creation. Relationality is an important and explicit part of the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2; it gives definition to the ongoing narrative of the ‘fall’ where broken relationships result in exclusion and even fratricide; and is arguably the central meaning of the Land in the sense that the Land reflects and develops the covenantal meaning of the Garden in the God/people/place relationship.

As has been discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1, this association of relationship to place is already well established within Biblical theology so I will not elaborate further here.

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39 See the discussion in Chapter 1.
41 Although the approach has not been adopted here, it is interesting to note that place is explored in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. Gorrige argues that the spatiality of God might be described as ‘relational event’ such that space (or place) is defined relationally by the Trinity (Gorringe, *Built*, pp.44-47). Volf argues for a ‘mutual interiority’ within the Godhead which necessitates and gives shape to spatiality within the Godhead itself. The “reciprocal relationship” that describes the Trinity defines the spatiality as essentially relational in nature (Volf, *Exclusion*, pp.127-128). Relationality is implicit within Bartholomew’s discussion about the relation of place to Trinity in which he takes a “Christocentric” view (Bartholomew, *Mortals*, pp.243-248).
In the earlier discussion however, I expressed a reservation that this kind of social construction of place should not be too easily associated with ideas of rootedness, boundedness and security and have argued about the importance of boundaries in relation to exclusion (as an ideological mechanism) on the one hand and embrace (in the context of ethnographic research) on the other. I have also identified the nature of boundaries as a critical issue for discussion in relation to Jesus-Space, and whilst this will be engaged with later, I will introduce ideas here about the particular manner in which boundaries can be seen as giving definition to relationship in the context of created-place.

I propose that the boundaries portrayed within creation accounts can be understood as dynamic rather than static. In a static representation, boundaries tend to be presented as constructions around places, such as Eden or Land, or walls around a home, giving definition to a specific location of a type previously described as ‘rooted’. It would seem that a more helpful interpretation of boundary in the context of creation accounts is through a dynamic representation of both separation and binding. This dual aspect of separation and binding implies a dynamic and dialectic sense of negotiation and creative tension which is important in giving relational definition to place on the one hand and also conveys the sense that relationships are predicated on an appropriate sense of spatiality on the other. This dynamic sense of boundary as separating and binding helpfully articulates the significant tension experienced by the small Christian community on the Cornwall Estate discussed in the earlier ethnographic reflections on place in daily life. There, June’s practical experience of embrace required a rigorous understanding and exercise of boundaries—not boundaries as static walls however, but specifically boundaries which were fluid, negotiable and thus relational. Similarly many within the small Christian community have experienced the tension between open hospitality and the safety or security of the home especially when vulnerable people such as children are present. In this sense, hospitality, or ‘embrace’, can never be unconditional; a boundary condition, albeit a relational or covenantal boundary, is always implied. Boundaries are thus experienced as dynamic and relational rather than static and structural.

42 Bartholomew, for example, emphasises the bounded characteristics of Eden in Gen 2: “What is clear on all accounts is that the garden was an enclosed area designed for cultivation … an area bounded, probably by walls …” (Bartholomew, Mortals, pp.24).

43 I find Christopher Baker’s discussion on the concept of ‘negotiation’ helpful. In the context of third-space thinking where negotiation is the process “whereby … antagonistic elements are brought together, not in order to negate one another, but … [to] lead to new identities.” As such, negotiation is a “counter-hegemonic process” and defines boundaries as dynamic rather than static (Baker, Hybrid, p.23).
This balance between separating and binding is helpfully described by Miroslav Volf in terms of the process of “differentiation.”\textsuperscript{44} For Volf creation exists as “an intricate pattern of ‘separate-and-bound-together’ entities,” or more technically as “formation and maintenance of a network of the relations of interdependence.”\textsuperscript{45} In this model, differentiation describes the creative activity of God in Genesis 1 in bringing fullness and order out of emptiness and chaos by separation (for example of light from darkness, water from land etc.) and also of binding, where binding refers for example to the binding together of “humans to the rest of creation as stewards and caretakers of it.”\textsuperscript{46} Whilst Volf’s focus is not on place within theology, I suggest that his definition of ‘differentiation’ (as separating-and-binding) within the creation account, can be understood not only in terms of relationship and identity, but can also be understood in spatial terms. That is to say, created-place describes the forming of both identity and inter-subjective relationships to be predicated on an appropriate arrangement of place both in terms of distance (separation) and proximity (binding). Thus created-place will have certain spatial characteristics; it will embody a sense of distance and also a sense of proximity that presents a vision for healthy and sustained social relationships and identities. It follows that when one or other of these elements dominates, place itself becomes dysfunctional and that relationships and senses of identity suffer. Within this framework it follows that in the extreme a loss of proximity (binding) would lead to exclusion and alienation and a loss of distance (separation) would lead to imprisonment and slavery.

This analysis can be critically applied to the review of the work of Bartholomew and others in Chapter 1 whose emphasis on bounded location focuses on separation and overlooks the value of binding. Whilst Bartholomew draws on the Genesis account of creation to argue that “differentiation” is a central aspect of place formation, his understanding is that differentiation is actually synonymous with “separation.”\textsuperscript{47} Critically this differs from the notion discussed here of differentiation as the dynamic process of both separation and binding. Therefore I suggest that a closer investigation of place in terms of boundaries, specifically incorporating the dual aspect of separation \textit{and} binding, is an important way of developing the argument.

\textsuperscript{44} Volf, \textit{Exclusion}, p.65.
\textsuperscript{45} Volf, \textit{Exclusion}, p.65.
\textsuperscript{46} Volf, \textit{Exclusion}, p.65.
\textsuperscript{47} Bartholomew, \textit{Mortals}, pp.10-12.
The idea of separation in relation to the creation is also presented by Oepke Noordmans in his book *Herschepping*, but with a somewhat different emphasis to that already described. For Noordmans separation makes possible, and is accompanied by, judging in a creative process that continues through to the death of Jesus on the cross such that “in the cross creation as dividing reality reaches its climax.” This idea is interesting in that it proposes an ongoing process of dividing which in some ways corresponds to my own description of normative-place, but it also allows for the dynamic and relational element of the Spirit’s creative judgement—in other words, the dividing process is also the creating process. However, there is here still a strong emphasis on separation, and although the presence of the Spirit in judgement mitigates this to some extent, I suggest that the relational element I have referred to as ‘negotiation’ is still not represented strongly enough.

The critical issue here for a theology of place in relation to creation is that an overemphasis on separation would become synonymous with exclusion. This issue has been discussed at length in Chapter 2 through engagement with Douglas, Sibley and Cresswell, and the resultant proposition that spatial arrangements based on separation alone (for example in terms of ‘dirt as matter out of place’) lead to hegemonic settlements of place that embody unequal and ideological power relations. Such arrangements are essentially binary in nature and result in the exclusion of the other ultimately as alien or enemy. Whilst it is probable that neither Bartholomew or Noordmans intend to portray this position, I posit that ‘differentiation’ (in the sense of a dynamic and balanced dialectic of separation and binding) forms a critical framework for evaluating their arguments, and especially a critical measure which prevents ‘separation’ being transposed (albeit unwittingly) into ‘exclusion’.

It is therefore, in my view, critical for a theological description of place to focus not solely (or even primarily) on a location or place itself, but rather to give particular attention to the boundaries. The point is to emphasise the interaction of ‘different’ places that are located

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48 I am grateful to Professor Henk Bakker for his insights in relation to Noordmans’s work. Separating was an important concept in Noordmans’s thought. In his 1934 publication *Herschepping*, Noordmans introduces the notion of creation as a critical concept. He argues that creating is dividing, seen in the Biblical account of God’s creation of heaven and earth, as the separating of light and darkness, the waters above and below, the sea and the land, the animals and man, Adam and Eve. Creation is judgement, and Jesus’ incarnate life continues the story of God’s creation-in-judgement. Creation is not repaired or somewhat ‘fixed’ after sin, but the Holy Spirit recreates life by pronouncing judgement upon creation, and byreviving the Son of God who was condemned to die a martyr’s death. The idea of the Spirit dividing and judging was pivotal in Noordmans’s theology. References to Noordmans’s work relate to Dr. Bakker’s book review and our own conversation around the subject (Karel Blei, *Oepke Noordmans: Theologian of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Allan J. Janssen [The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America 78; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2013]. reviewed in 2013 by Henk Bakker, Professor of History, Identity, and Theology of the Baptist Faith, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands).
across wider landscapes and enquire about the interactions between such communities; this tends to value senses of place in terms of connectedness with others rather than the security of a ‘thick’ community that tends to foster homogeneity and sees others as a threat. 49 Thus, in contrast to the single process of separation, differentiation, in the words of Volf “suggests that ‘identity’ includes connection, difference, and heterogeneity. The human self is formed not through a simple rejection of the other—through a binary logic of opposition and negation—but through a complex process of ‘taking in’ and ‘keeping out.’” 50 Thus humans are defined not only because they are separate from others, but also because they are connected or related to others; “the boundaries that mark our identities are both barriers and bridges.” 51 This sense of the mutuality of separateness-and-connectedness of created things is reflective of the distance-and-proximity dynamic that describes the inter-subjective nature of the Godhead.

The arguments presented here have focused on place in relational terms. There is no intention however, in taking this approach to diminish the physicality or materiality of place. Clearly the creation of material things permeates the whole creation story and it would be an oversight not to recognise the physicality of the Garden itself and the intentional and profound association of Adam to the earth (Gen 2:7). 52 The purpose of focusing on the relational nature of place is to emphasise that the materiality or located-ness of place, at least from a theological perspective, should not be regarded as the primary factor in the construction of place. Rather, as argued in Chapters 1 and 2, place is co-constitutive; that is to say, “society produces space and space produces society.” 53 This constitutive process can indeed be seen within the Eden story itself. For example Adam and Eve’s relationship with God is directly connected with, and gives shape to, their relationship with the soil. When in covenant relationship with God, they are located in a

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49 Doreen Massey contributes very interesting perspectives on the way in which relational connections form spaces (Massey uses ‘space’ in preference to ‘place’). By considering global space-time compression she argues that space comprises mobilities and connections, and that community need not be viewed in terms of location, history and boundaries, but rather in terms of global-social connectivity: “What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (Doreen Massey, A Global Sense of Place [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994] p.7).

50 Volf, Exclusion, p.66.


52 Bartholomew, Mortals, pp.24-26.

53 Cresswell, In-Place, p.12. For discussion on the co-constitutive nature of place see pp.39, 63-64.
garden which they guard and maintain (Gen 2: 15-17). But when covenant is broken they are not only outside of the garden, but they are in “fields,” not now to be guarded, but to be cultivated by the “sweat of your brow” (Gen 3:17-18; 4:2, 8). The physicality of place in the experience of Adam and Eve is thus co-constructing; it is both shaped by their changing relationship with God and also descriptive of it. In this case, the definitive relational axis is between God and humankind. A similar co-constitutive process of place production might also be seen where the relational axis is between humans.

Take for example the account of Adam’s relationship with Eve. The relationship of proximity between Adam and Eve expressed as “one flesh” is also interpreted as a relationship of distance between the man and his parents in the phrase “a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife” (Gen 2:24). Thus boundary markers defined by distance and proximity are found to exist not only around the Garden, but also within the Garden. Here the ‘leaving and cleaving’ give definition to a social relationship that will inevitably be expressed in the development of a built environment. Homes will be built that express the social-spatiality of the oneness of the man and the woman and the separateness of the man from his parents. Thus, relationality and the social structures to which they give shape, gives definition to the development of the built environment, and conversely the built environment speaks of and shapes relationality.

In discussing the theology of place in relation to created-place I have focused on the notion of dynamic boundaries of ‘differentiation’. In doing so, I have affirmed the located-ness and materiality of place, but sought to identify and avoid conceptions of place that are sometimes associated with creation accounts and are, in my view, not sufficiently aware of issues of power and ideology. In emphasising relationality and the co-constitutive nature of place I have also sought to address the tendency to equate the physicality of place with inertness where place is conceived of simply as a stage or backdrop to the real action.

*Normative-Place*

In contrast to the relationality described in terms of differentiation is the anti-relational process of exclusion by what might be described as the ‘hard’ boundary of separation without binding. It is then precisely the ‘twisting’ of the relational-spatial process of separation-and-binding to the mechanism of separation-without-binding, or ‘exclusion’, that gives definition to a different and distinct kind of spatiality and different experience of place.

The idea of exclusion in relation to normative-place has been discussed at some length in Chapter 2 and will not be revisited here. However, there is potential to develop a clearer
theological aspect in relation to these ideas by engaging with the themes of relationality and boundaries as they have emerged from the discussion about created-place in the previous section. Having drawn on creation narratives to define the nature and function of boundaries in relation to created-place, it seems logical to think about what happens or ‘goes wrong’ with those boundaries in the transition to normative-place. Here, again, I find Volf’s contribution helpful. He states that “if the process of creation takes place through the activity of ‘separating-and-binding’, should not then sin be described as some ‘devastating twister’ that both explodes and implodes creation, pushing it back toward the ‘formless void’ from which it came?” Volf names the “sinful activity of reconfiguring creation” as “exclusion.”

This new and ‘sinful’ embodiment of space and place is narrated in the early chapters of Genesis in terms of exclusion from the Garden (Gen 3:24); the strengthening of separation between male and female through shame and covering (Gen 3:16-17, 21); the ultimate exclusion of others through fratricide and murder (Gen 4:8). This new ‘fallen spatiality’ is defined by independence, rather than interdependence; at its heart is enmity (Gen 3:15) and its spatiality is exclusion (Gen 3:24). It is the production of place in these terms that has been presented as normative-place.

The two-fold aspect of differentiation as ‘separating-and-binding’ illuminates two interrelated aspects of exclusion, one being a “transgression against ‘binding’” and the other a “transgression against separating.” Volf expands on this:

First, exclusion can entail cutting of the bonds that connect, taking oneself out of the pattern of interdependence and placing oneself in a position of sovereign independence. The other then emerges either as an enemy that must be pushed away from the self and driven out of its space or as a nonentity—a superfluous being—that can be disregarded and abandoned. Second, exclusion can entail erasure of separation, not recognizing the other as someone who in his or her otherness belongs to the pattern of interdependence. The other then emerges as an inferior being who must either be assimilated by being made like the self or be subjugated into the self. Exclusion takes place when the violence of expulsion, assimilation, or subjugation and the indifference of abandonment replace the dynamics of taking in and keeping out as well as the mutuality of giving and receiving.

This idea of a perversion of, or transgression against, the given spatiality of boundaries defined by differentiation contributes to the discussion about the relationship of ethics to place in Chapter 2. There it was argued that a Christian theology of place would make a clear distinction between ‘ethical-place’ and ‘ideological-place’ and that the ethical characteristics

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54 Volf, Embrace, p.66.
55 Volf, Exclusion, p.67.
56 Volf, Exclusion, p.67.
of place would be by definition ‘given’ rather than deduced from what already exists. It seems that both these conditions can indeed be satisfied by understanding created-place in inter-subjective relational terms that existed in the Garden and are reflective of the Godhead. Furthermore, exploring place in relation to boundaries of separation and binding, and transgression against those boundaries, adds definition to the ethical understanding of place and the spatial mechanisms at work in the violation of the ethical characteristics of created-place. In particular, I would make the point that the ethical violation of spatial boundaries described here in terms of transgression against separating or binding, leads precisely to the objectification of the other and the production of place that is predicated, not now on the relationships of inter-subjective covenantal love, but on relationships of power. In summary the violation of boundaries in this way is descriptive of the transition from created-place (that is relationally defined) to normative-place (that is ideologically defined).

Both here and in Chapter 2, a proposal has been developed for the concept of normative-place with particular reference to ideological power and ethical concerns, and a critical aspect of this proposal is that the spatiality of normative-place is defined primarily in terms of exclusion. I have argued that normative-place dominates the spatiality of contemporary landscapes; it governs the way place is produced and sustained and is central to the way places are most often experienced in daily life. However, I have argued too that normative-place is not ‘all there is’ but that other arrangements of place also exist, namely created-space and Jesus-Space. In the next section I will discuss the nature of Jesus-Space with particular reference to its redemptive nature in relation to the exclusionary spatialities of normative-place.

**Jesus-Space**

Throughout the first three chapters the notion of Jesus-Space has been developed by interacting with a combination of theoretical and ethnographic arguments. From a theoretical perspective I have engaged with authors who have proposed that a new spatiality is evidenced around Jesus. From an ethnographic perspective I have given a brief introduction to the way in which mission as ‘presence’ on a marginalised estate points persuasively to the need for understanding the gospel in spatial terms. In this final section, I will briefly summarise the important points about Jesus-Space already discussed and then propose some further ideas about key characteristics that give definition to Jesus-Space.

Essential to the understanding of Jesus-Space is that it is predicated on the presence of Jesus himself such that it is not dependent or contingent on prior arrangements of place, namely
created-place or normative-place. It is his living presence, by the Spirit, that brings another kind of space and place to bear that defines a new social-spatial arrangement whose physicality and located-ness is an important aspect of the New Creation. Jesus-Space configures a new and different relationship of power to place and in doing so interrupts and disarms the already established ideological and exclusionary arrangements of normative-place. In this way Jesus-Space indicates a fundamental transformation or ‘conversion’ of place. Thus it is ‘hopeful-space’—it is good news for those who find themselves excluded and marginalised not because it offers a ‘hand up’ to a ‘better place’ within existing structures, but because it invites people to participate in the production of new kinds of places. Jesus-Space is marked out by distinctive ethical characteristics so that to participate in Jesus-Space is to participate in a new ethical ‘performance of place’, one that is predicated not on the spatial ethics of creation that I have described above, but on the ethics of the cross and resurrection.

Jesus-Space must by definition be redemptive by nature; it must express and embody the movement of God redemptively into the exclusionary and ideological territory of normative-place. Thus Jesus-Space cannot stand apart or be dislocated from other expressions of place so that to be a Jesus follower might be imagined as moving to a distant country for example. Jesus-Space must in some way be immanent to, or ‘present’ to places as they already exist. It is this sense of immanence or presence that has been referred to in this argument as ‘embrace’, and whilst it is recognised that the term might hold connotations that are not helpful, I will for the purposes of this argument continue to use it as a shorthand reference for this particular aspect of Jesus-Space.\footnote{The term ‘embrace’ has negative connotations for some. These may include a sense of violation through touch or inappropriate proximity; it may on the other hand denote imprisonment or restraint. The reflexive characteristics that I have described as integral to embrace exclude these negative elements from the way in which I intend the term to be used. However, more suitable terminology may be available. One suggestion, made by Dr. Tim Noble is the term ‘Levinasian’ which would emphasise the reflexive element of ‘being embraced’.
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In the terms proposed, Jesus-Space is earthed, at least in part, through the action of embrace which can be understood as the relational event of the Cross, not simply the embrace of humanity by God, but more poignantly where God makes room within himself for the excluded other, or the ‘enemy-other’. Although created-place reflects the inter-subjective relationality of the Godhead, Jesus-Space is distinct. The cross now means it is necessary to consider the reconfiguration of this space within God, as God in Christ moves to embrace a
‘fallen’ creation marked by enmity and exclusion; a space that disarms all forms of exclusionary space through Christ’s incarnation and cross.

This sense of redemption as the accomplishment of a new kind of space within the Godhead that specifically opens up to the ‘enemy-other’ is referred to by Volf:

On the cross the dancing circle of self-giving and mutually indwelling divine persons opens up for the enemy; in the agony of the passion the movement stops for a brief moment and a fissure appears so that sinful humanity can join in … We, the others—we, the enemies—are embraced by the divine persons who love us with the same love with which they love each other and therefore make space for us within their own eternal embrace.  

The spatial nature of embrace and the spatial mechanisms, or perhaps more appropriately ‘movements’, that describe embrace can be considered by returning to the theme of boundaries and again Volf’s proposals are helpful. He considers the notion of forgiveness in relation to enmity and exclusion and enquires about the way forgiveness can be understood in relation to boundaries. Forgiveness is not of itself a full expression of the work of the cross unless it also results in “communion between former enemies.” Forgiveness itself is a boundary between exclusion and embrace; it allows for a healing of the wounds caused by the ‘power acts of exclusion’ but it leaves a distance or a space between former enemies. Living at a safe distance from former enemies may be understood as peace in some circles, but “a clear line will separate ‘them’ from ‘us’… and we will never include ‘them’ when we speak of ‘us’.”

Volf’s point is helpful in that it provides the beginnings of a spatial mapping of reconciliation, in particular pointing out that reconciliation is not truly reconciliation in a theological sense unless it includes the experience of enemies or people of difference actually entering into ‘each other’s spaces’. Thus challenges remain with this notion of forgiveness in that it is a step (admittedly an important one) towards reconciliation but still leaves open the possibility of further separation and has the potential to unhelpfully strengthen the construction of ‘clean’ identities. Forgiveness conceived of like this still embodies the landscapes of exclusion and the construction of boundaries defined by separation rather than differentiation that, according to previous arguments, hold the characteristics of normative

58 Volf, Exclusion, p.129.
59 Volf, Exclusion, p.126.
60 Volf, Exclusion, p.125.
61 Ibid.
place. However the general point is helpful, that the peace and reconciliation of which the Cross of Christ speaks is not adequately expressed by the absence of hostility sustained by the absence of contact. The way of forgiveness or embrace must embody some kind of boundary mechanism or spatiality that facilitates the meeting of enemies. As Volf says:

At the heart of the cross is Christ’s stand of not letting the other remain an enemy and of creating space in himself for the offender to come in … The goal of the cross is the dwelling of human beings ‘in the Spirit,’ ‘in Christ,’ and ‘in God.’ Forgiveness is therefore not the culmination of Christ’s relation to the offending other; it is a passage leading to embrace. The arms of the crucified are open—a sign of space in God’s self and an invitation for the enemy to come in.63

Thus, the event of the cross, that is the relational event of embrace by the Trinity of the enemy-other, defines a new spatiality within the Godhead, a spatiality that specifically opens up a relational proximity to the ‘other’ who was previously defined by social and spatial ‘exclusion’. This redemptive spatiality is the antithesis of exclusionary normative-place. It has no ‘room’ for the kinds of boundaries which define the binary constructions of ‘in-place’/‘out-of-place’, inclusion / exclusion. It refuses such a definition as the ultimate arrangement of place, and brings into play a new and ultimate spatiality, that of embrace. This newly formed redemptive spatiality—Jesus-Space—is the new centre from which places are produced and experienced. Now, to dwell ‘in Christ’, or to be ‘his body’ is to ‘abide’ in the redemptive space of the Godhead, and in ‘abiding’ to participate in the production of new forms of place ‘on earth’ as substantial expressions of the New Creation.

The creation of Jesus-Space suggests the emergence of a new and extensive landscape with its own characteristic contours, mechanisms and performances, which might be contrasted to the ideological mechanisms of normative-landscapes that are described by Cresswell as classification, differentiation, naturalization and linking ideas to action.64 A central task of the ethnographic work and the subsequent discussion will be to explore these landscapes; however I will offer some initial orientation to the issues here.

An important aspect of the argument has been to consider the ethical characteristics of place, with a particular focus on the ethical characteristics of created-place and normative-place. It follows then, that a critical area of enquiry about Jesus-Space must be about its ethical characteristics. In more practical terms, as one imagines the coming together of enemies, questions of ethics and judgement might be discussed in terms of the relationship of justice

63 Volf, Exclusion, p.126.
64 Cresswell, In-Place, pp.151-162.
and truth to this landscape and the nature of the struggle against deception, injustice and violence. There is a dynamic tension here. On the one hand the “wisdom of the cross” asserts that “within social contexts, truth and justice are unavailable outside of the will to embrace the other.”

Thus the characteristics of Jesus-Space are defined in part by the order of things such that primary place is not given to justice and truth but to the will to embrace. Volf’s formulation in relation to this idea is very helpful:

[T]he will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace precedes any ‘truth’ about others and any construction of their ‘justice’. This will is absolutely indiscriminate and strictly immutable; it transcends the moral mapping of the social world into ‘good’ and ‘evil’.

On the other hand there is the assertion that “embrace itself—full reconciliation—cannot take place until the truth has been said and justice done.” There is a boundary of some sort here; embrace is indeed not unconditional. It is not however the hard boundary of separation which moves inevitably towards exclusion, it is the ‘soft’ or ‘open’ boundary of forgiveness and reconciliation that nurtures movement towards embrace. There is, in Volf’s terms, “an asymmetrical dialectic between the ‘grace’ of self-donation and the ‘demand’ of truth and justice. Grace has primacy: even if the will to embrace is indiscriminate, the embrace itself is conditional.”

What then is the spatiality of “the will to embrace” or “the ‘grace’ of self-donation” within a person or community? I propose that two aspects should be considered, one that relates to a space within the self, the other that relates to a space between the self and the other. The earlier ethnographic section of this chapter has argued that embrace should not enable the discernment of justice and truth solely in the other or the culture of the other, it must be reflexive—it must involve the discernment of truth and justice within oneself.

65 Volf, Exclusion, p.29.
66 Volf, Exclusion, p.29.
67 Volf, Exclusion, p.29.
68 Volf, Exclusion, p.29.
69 ‘Reflexivity’ is a term derived from humanisitic and radical geography and is used in preference here to the term ‘reflective’ which is more commonly used in the context of Christian spirituality (Paul Cloke, Ian Cook, Philip Crang, Mark Goodwin, Joe Painter and Chris Philo, Practising Human Geography [London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004] pp.22-23). The specific intent of reflexivity in a theological context is described by Scharen and Vigen as “self-critical awareness and accountability” which means that “the researcher is willing to look honestly at one’s self—location, biases, etc … and involves taking a hard look at ones assumptions …. [I]t means that the research is genuinely open to being surprised by what one is hearing and seeing” (Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, p.19). The practice of reflexivity is explored in more depth in the Conclusion of this thesis.
is a practice that facilitates the ‘will to embrace’—reflexivity, in a theological sense, is to abide in the cruciformity of Jesus-space, it is to participate in the creation of space within oneself and by extension within the Christian community. Thus reflexivity reflects the priority expressed in Matt 7:1-5 to take the log out of one’s own eye before attempting to remove the speck from that of a brother or sister. It is also precisely this priority that is communicated in Mark 7:14-23 as Jesus declares all foods clean; thus rituals and mechanisms that enabled the exclusion and judgement of the other as impure are now dismantled. In effect Jesus declares an entirely new social arrangement with a new spatiality, one in which the priority of judgement begins with the self rather than the other, a recognition that evil is not defined by conformity to socially and religiously constructed rituals and practices, but is rooted in one’s own heart. Indeed judgement must begin at home, “within the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17).

The judgement or discernment of the self however, presents particular difficulties. As discussed in Chapter 2, the understandings and mechanisms that maintain doxa are most powerful when they are in the realm of the subconscious or common sense; the most effective and powerful mechanisms of exclusion are those that a person is least aware of. How then is it possible to “make space for the other” by suspending judgement if a person is unable even to judge or discern themselves? Critical here is the element of encounter with the other—that is, judgement of self, as with judgement of the other, occurs not in a vacuum but in relationship. That space is defined relationally is, as I have discussed, fundamental to a theological understanding of space and place. Thus, it is in the encounter itself, and reflection upon it that self-judgement occurs. In particular it is the space ‘between’ the self and the

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat also engage helpfully with this idea in relation to ethnographic research. Drawing on Hans-Georg Gadamer, they argue that pre-understandings or ‘prejudices’ are a necessary condition for understanding and assimilating new experience: “It is necessary for a person to be aware of their own historical situatedness and the ways in which it influences their interpretations of those texts, objects, people, and events we choose to seek to understand” (John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research [London: SCM, 2006] pp.111-114).

In exploring the idea of cruciformity, I have found the work of Michael Gorman insightful and challenging (Michael J. Gorman, Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross [Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2001]).


Volf’s proposals helpfully address these ideas. He argues that there is “a distance born out of allegiance to God and God’s future—a distance which must appropriately be lived out as internal difference … [which] creates space in us to receive the other.” This ‘distance within the self’ is in effect a distancing from our own culture which blinds us to ourselves. Distance within ourselves thus enables a judgement of the self and also a judgement against “all evil in every culture” (Volf, Exclusion, p.51-52). I will reflect further on the relationship of spatiality within and without the self in Chapters 6 and 7.

I suggest that virtues have spatial expression and that a commitment to reflexivity in relation to encounter could be understood as giving space to the virtue of patience. Stanley Hauerwas describes patience as the central
other that gives rise to new insight and new life. Terry Veling proposes that life does not happen in the one or the other, but between the two: “[A]ll real living is meeting … it is an encounter between the two. [The] Spirit is not in the I but between the I and Thou.”

It seems that there is no formulation or prescription here, but that there is an “artfulness” in recognising and making room for a liminal quality in the encounter (commensurate I believe with Volf’s “will to embrace”)—a liminal quality of space that makes room for the Spirit and opens eyes to what has not previously been discernible. This ‘liminality’ can thus be called the ‘spatiality of the Spirit,’ it is the redemptive place that comes into being when strangers meet only to find that “between the two there is a third.”

These two aspects of the ‘space within the self’ and the ‘between’ that describe the spatiality of the “will to embrace” is an important step in defining the characteristics of Jesus-Space. I will further develop this aspect of the discussion as a key component of my ethnographic work.

The final characteristic or contour of Jesus-Space to be considered is that of transformation. In approaching this area of discussion, caution should be exercised for at least two reasons. First, as has been made it clear through the course of this argument, place is very complex and multifaceted in its constitution and function and discussion about the transformation of place will inevitably involve engaging with complex issues. It follows that the actual processes and experiences of place-transformation will not be straight-forward or necessarily easy to discern. I therefore stress that in discussing transformation there is no intention to give the impression that a simple process or methodology is being proposed by which transformation can be achieved. A second important aspect of the overall discussion has been about the way place is implicated in the establishing and sustaining of ideological power relations. This is discussed in the Introduction where it was observed that the church has on

— virtue of the kingdom, where patience is towards self, others, God and even the devil! (Stanley Hauerwas, The Peacable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics [SCM: London, 2009]). I find this idea of patience helpful not only in a temporal sense but in a spatial sense. Patience with self is in this sense to withhold the spatial consequences of judgement. Literally it ‘makes room’ by suspending initial (and possibly violent) responses so that they can be reflected on in a ‘different place’. In my involvement with the small Christian community on the estate I have tended to use the phrase ‘holding the space’ as a reference to a place where judgement is suspended whilst reflection takes place. This might frame the exercise of reflection as ‘patient-space’. I suggest that in turn this facilitates the practice of non-violent space.

Veling, Practical, p.55.

occasions participated unhelpfully and unwisely in power relations in the name of mission. Thus a theology which discusses the prospect of spatial transformation would be right to be cautious about the claims it makes.

Questions about the transformation of place form the central aspect of this research and it is notable that many of the theologies of place that have been drawn from in the course of the discussion conclude with a section that discusses the nature and possibility for place transformation, normally under the heading of ‘place making’. The importance of transformation in the context of this enquiry however is not simply as one aspect of a theology of place. On the contrary, my interest, as articulated in the research question, is in the existence of marginal places that are characterised by chronic multiple deprivation and the possibility that such places might be transformed and indeed, what possible insights and contribution Christian theology and mission effort might make towards any such transformation.

The central feature of my enquiry into the transformation of place is ethnographic. It is to ask questions about the practical nature, experience and facilitation of transformation in specific places, so the main engagement with the subject will come in the discussions of the findings of the ethnographic work in Chapter 6 and in the Conclusion. This particular section therefore represents a brief interaction with some specific issues relating to transformation that have been raised so far.

Transformation of place, whilst not necessarily named as such, has been a feature of much of the preceding discussion. Importantly my earlier proposals about the redemptive and ethical characteristics of Jesus-Space are essentially positing the transformation of place, pointing to both the nature of transformation as well as suggesting some of the mechanisms through which transformation might be sought.

The idea of the transformation of place has been introduced in the discussion of Chapter 2 under the heading of -Normative-place and Transgression. There, I engage with Cresswell’s proposals about the potential for place to be transformed and found that his ideas help bring some definition both to what transformation of place might reasonably be expected to entail and also to the language that would help frame the argument for transformation. Cresswell

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argues that “place in a general sense is transhistorical and universal. It is a fundamental element of human existence, a product of the intentional transformation of the natural environment by humans.”

Therefore, when Cresswell proposes a radical transformation of place, he asserts that such a transformation cannot involve the abolition of place, since (in his view) it is a fundamental category and as such cannot be abolished. Rather radical transformation involves a transformation in the meaning of place.

Interestingly, through his work on transgression, Cresswell proposes that transgression has within it “the seeds of new spatial orderings” and that these relate to some extent to the utopian ideals of the groups who provoked the transgression.

Cresswell is unable however to entertain the prospect of radical transformation of the place itself—or indeed that a substantial and permanent spatial change is in fact achievable—in part because there is no new spatial ordering upon which transformation might be based.

In contrast to this position is the spatial transformation presented by Mark’s narrative. Such a transformation is predicated upon two key moves both of which I have already touched upon. The first and obvious move is the actual naming of exclusion as the evil which gives power to normative landscapes. It is precisely this ‘naming’ that Jesus accomplished in Mark 7:14-23. The second move is to redefine that which was previously identified as unclean or impure. Neyrey has argued that ‘purity’ is programmatic for Mark and that Jesus is specifically presented as not conforming to established boundaries of purity. However, whilst Jesus is being accused of being unclean by opponents and seen to be breaking the purity laws, Neyrey shows how Mark structures his narrative specifically to present Jesus as clean (or ‘holy’).

Jesus then, according to Mark, not only transgresses Israel’s mapping of purity, but is presented as “an agent of purity and cleanness” who comes as a reformer of the ideas and experience of purity. As a reformer, Jesus is portrayed as revising Israel’s purity maps according to a new principle, based now not on external purity

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78 Cresswell, In-Place, p.151.
79 Cresswell, In-Place, p.151.
80 Cresswell, In-Place, p.166.
81 See Volf, Exclusion, pp.63-64; 73-74.
82 See my earlier discussion on Mark 7:14-23. The idea about ‘naming’ evil is the central proposal of Walter Wink’s important work, Naming the Powers (Walter Wink, Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984]).
84 Neyrey, Idea, pp.112-113.
85 Neyrey presents an exhaustive study here (Neyrey, Idea, pp.106-115). He lists all of the occasions in Mark where Jesus crosses purity boundaries (Neyrey, Idea, pp.107-111). He asks “what would purity-minded people object to about Jesus in Mark’s Gospel? Just about everything Jesus did! Jesus did not observe any of the maps so important to the Judaism of his day” (Neyrey, Idea, p.107).
alone, but centred on ‘inner’ purity, or that which “comes from the heart” (Mk 7:20-23).  
Those who were previously unclean are now made clean through the agency of Jesus. These two moves of ‘naming’ and ‘redefining’ “condemned the world of exclusion” and opened up a new social space, one that is predicated on Jesus’ presence. The new spatial ordering present in Jesus-Space now makes transformation not only possible, but precisely part of Jesus’ purpose and by extension the mission of the church.

Conclusion

In Part 1 I have used a practical theological approach to develop a theological framework for place in order to facilitate further ethnographic work into the Cornwall Estate. I have drawn sources from theology, social sciences, and ethnography into a mutual critical conversation as a way of identifying the key characteristics of place that are pertinent to a marginal urban situation such as the one that concerns me here. In particular I have formulated a proposal for a theology of place that comprises three spatial paradigms, namely created-place, normative-place, and Jesus-Space. In each case, through critical conversation I have suggested the primary characteristics that give definition to each of these paradigms. The heart of my argument is to propose a new spatiality, Jesus-Space, which could be understood as the spatiality of the New Creation. I have explored the characteristics of Jesus-Space in relation to ethics, power (especially ideological power), hope, and transformation and have explored these themes with particular reference to the function of boundaries and the response of embrace.

The relationship between ‘embrace’ and ‘transformation’ relates to the central question of this research, namely the possible contribution that theological perspectives on place might bring to the understanding of social spaces characterised by deprivation and the possibility of their transformation. The characteristics of Jesus-Space that I have outlined and areas of correspondence with models of space and place from the social sciences open up significant scope for engaging with the ethnographic research. They define a theoretical framing of space and place in theological terms which can facilitate the analysis of ethnographic data. However, a theology of place thus defined insists that place can never be researched in an

86 Neyrey, Idea, pp.111-113, 115-120.
87 Neyrey, Idea, pp.111-113, 115-120.
88 Volf, Exclusion, p.73.
objective, detached, rational way. It is only through personal and vulnerable immersion or a ‘will to embrace’ that place can be authentically known. In this sense the activity of research or theological enquiry is indeed one and the same as mission, which could perhaps be conceived of in terms of attentive and compassionate Christian presence.

With these things in mind I will move to the next major section of the argument where the focus is on ethnographic work in the Cornwall Estate and critical reflection upon the kinds of spaces and places that I find evidenced there. As ethnographic research and reflection develop, my aim is to maintain a sharp focus on the core themes of the research question, which are about the possibility of overcoming deep-rooted patterns of multiple deprivation in this particular marginalised community. In essence this is a question about the possibility of transformation in a place and the kinds of mechanisms that are entailed in transformation.

The discussion in Part 1 has concluded that a theology of place does indeed point to the hope of transformation, and that this hope may be defined by the emergence of Jesus-Space. My aim therefore is to look for evidence of Jesus-Space by using ethnographic methods to study the apparent transformation of particular places within the Cornwall Estate. This evidence will form the core of the discussion in Chapters 6 and the Conclusion.
PART 2
THE CORNWALL ESTATE: AN ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF PLACE

Introduction

The trajectory of research discussed in the following chapters—from construction of research methods to final analysis of findings—is guided by the overall aim of the investigation which is to gain a theological perspective of place and to enquire about how such perspectives might offer new possibilities for addressing the issues of deep-rooted deprivation in the Cornwall Estate. Relational notions of place developed in Chapter 3 in terms of ‘boundaries’ and ‘inter-subjectivity’ are employed in order to maintain the requisite theological focus of the research.

Research findings suggest that the primary characteristics of place, discussed in terms of material and social boundary characteristics, in effect function ‘collaboratively’ with the result that place works predominantly to the formation of normative-place, with its attendant binaries, and to the detriment of inter-subjective characteristics. The resultant settlement of place in the Cornwall Estate could be described as a complex, dynamic arrangement of mutually reinforcing negative spatialities that work primarily to the detriment of long-term residents. The second part of Chapter 5 explores the two characteristics that dominate this arrangement of place, namely ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’.

In the light of these findings, Chapter 6 describes further investigation that was carried out in two specific sites to explore the possible formation of new arrangements of place and in each case inter-subjective relational characteristics are seen to mitigate the effects of ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’. The emergence of new spatial characteristics is further researched to discover the potential for the constitution of redemptive-places.

Following the argument of the previous chapter, redemptive-places in the Cornwall Estate will be particular, grounded embodiments of Jesus-Space whose specific forms will come into expression as members of the small Christian community and others seek to participate in new ethical performances of place. It would be anticipated that a prominent expression of
redemptive-place in the estate would be a softening of hard boundaries so that those who have been previously represented as ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ will experience a change in relationship that evidence a new or different configuration of place.

In the Conclusion the results of the empirical research are then critically reviewed against the theological formulations of place developed in Part 1 in order to present proposals about how the approach to mission is informed by a theological understanding of place and more specifically how a theological understanding of a particular place can inform the practices of mission related to that place, with particular reference to places associated with chronic multiple deprivations.

An important term used in the context of the forthcoming discussion is ‘inter-subjective’. ‘Inter-subjective’ is used to refer to the formation of relationship between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ which seeks, as far as possible, to overcome the cultural, social and spatial arrangements that inhibit the knowing of the other as a human subject. Inspired by Jesus’ call to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Luke 10:25-37) inter-subjectivity describes relationships between people of difference which seek to understand and move beyond the objectification of the other by confronting and contesting sites of privilege so that conversational or dialogical spaces are opened up which include a preparedness to be changed or transformed through the encounter with the other. Inter-subjective relationship, the relationship of love between the self and neighbour—or, indeed, the self and the enemy (Matthew 5:43-44)—is enabled through participation in the work of the Spirit of God (1Cor 12:12-13). However whilst the pursuit of this kind of relationship is of central importance to Christian faith, it must also be recognised that both understanding and establishing self-other

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relations of this kind is fraught with difficulty and may be helpfully imagined as an ongoing site of struggle rather than an ideal to be actually fully and finally achieved.

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CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Qualitative research seeks to understand the everyday lived experience of the estate as a particular and unique place.¹ This chapter summarises some of the methodological considerations that have shaped my approach to research as well as a summary description of the methods used. Whilst investigation of qualitative research methodologies has of necessity been fairly extensive I will restrict this discussion to areas that contribute directly to the overall development of this specific study.² The particular challenge was to find a methodology that engages with everyday life in a way that moves beyond being simply descriptive and is rigorous and critical so that it ‘gets below the surface’ of estate life.³ An obvious but none-the-less important point is that research methodology, to be of value, must be conversant with the understandings of place described in Part 1, whilst avoiding an inappropriate imposition of theoretical constructions onto the empirical research itself.

There are inevitable restrictions in approaching the task. It is clear from the size, complexity, and changing nature of the estate that no research project would be able to describe the place in its entirety. Knowledge about the estate as ‘place’ gained through such research will inevitably be partial and time limited. In addition, the time frame and resources available to my own research impose necessary restrictions that are reflected in the development of both

² I have provided a limited bibliography of works which were formative in the development of qualitative research methodologies and methods. For discussion on the development of ethnography as a subject see Mike Crang, ‘Qualitative methods: the new orthodoxy?’ Progress in Human Geography [e-journal] 26 no. 5 (2002) pp. 647-655. http://www.sagepublications.com (accessed May 2012); Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, pp.8-17.
³ I have drawn on sources that relate ethnography to everyday life which include recent progressive developments in the subject. The following sources were of particular help: Crang and Cook, Ethnographies; Pink, Situating; Christian Scharen and Aana MarieVigen (eds.), Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics (London and New York: Continuum, 2011); Pete Ward (ed.), Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography (Michigan and Cambridge, UK: 2012, Eerdmans); John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research (London: SCM, 2006). Also of interest is the work of Timothy Jenkins in Timothy Jenkins, Religion in English Everyday Life: An Ethnographic Approach in Methodology and History in Anthropology, vol.5. (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999); Timothy Jenkins, “Fieldwork and the Perception of Everyday Life.” Man, New Series 20:2 (1994): 433-55. I am also grateful for the personal help I have received in negotiating this field of research from Professor Paul Cloke, Sam Thomas, and Dr. Maggie Studholme.
methodology and methods. However this does not negate the value of ethnographic findings, but acknowledges that ethnographers do not need to be “‘all-seeing’ or ‘all-knowing’ in order to present relevant and illuminating insights about what is true or significant. Instead, they can offer up as valid the partial, but no less true or significant, perceptions they gain during their involvement in particular contexts.” Indeed, this approach to ethnography finds a deep sense of resonance to the practical theological approach described by Terry Veling where theology (or at least practical theology) cannot be separated from the particular; it is always “embodied in the practices of historical, cultural, and linguistic communities.” The approach to qualitative research taken here is therefore commensurate with practical theology; it acknowledges a provisionality and incomplete sense—it “wants to keep its relationship to the world open so that it is never quite ‘done.’”

**Introducing Research Methodology**

Whilst my approach to empirical research could be considered in general terms as qualitative, the primary methodology I draw upon is that of ethnography. The essential task of ethnography is to “understand parts of the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who ‘live them out.’” In its approach ethnography is an “extended, detailed, ‘immersive’, inductive methodology intended to allow grounded social orders, worldviews and ways of life gradually to become apparent.” Ethnography assumes certain characteristics as fundamental to research. Firstly its primary method is that of participant observation which involves an extended immersion in the community to be researched, described by Mike Crang and Ian Cook as a “deep hanging out.” Based on this central experience of participation, ethnography involves a “‘shamelessly eclectic’ and ‘methodologically opportunist’ combination of research methods.” In practice the ethnographic task might be understood as a journey of discovery where the researcher

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4 Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography*, p.69. This point is also addressed by Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, pp.7-16.
7 Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, pp.1, 37.
finds him or herself immersed in complex and surprising situations, finds that the research is developing in unplanned and unexpected directions and discovers that it does not readily cooperate with external constraints such as, for example publishing deadlines or course requirements.  

Secondly ‘positionality’ recognises the presence of the researcher, not as a detached observer applying a scientific method, but as an integral and active element of the research context where “differently theorized … world views, ways of life, self-understandings, relationships, knowledge, politics, ethics, skills etc., are accidentally and deliberately rubbed up against one another,”\(^{11}\) Thus research involves not only the embrace of the complexity and messiness of sites and communities to be researched but also the embrace of the complexity of the researcher’s own circumstances.  

In relation to my own research on the Cornwall Estate, where a significant portion of residents have lived all their lives, my positionality is defined in part as an ‘incomer’ or ‘outsider’.  

Life-long residents are known as ‘Cornwall-ers’, a negative representation across most of the city, but a “badge of honour” for residents.  

This designation is not simply about length of residency but relates to a deep sense of identity and related cultural expressions that apparently set the estate and its residents apart from the rest of the city. My own sense of positionality is further defined in relation to my role as a Baptist minister and tutor at the Baptist College, which for me carries the discomforting sense that I am viewed as a member of the large contingent of ‘do-gooders’ who have come to ‘help the disadvantaged people of the estate’. The ethnographic approach is not simply the recognition of these differences as a prerequisite for doing research; it is about a relational and dialectical sense of engagement whereby the process of learning about others also entails a learning of oneself.  

Thirdly, following on from this point, is the acknowledgment of the positionality and partiality of the knowledge of the researcher as well as the appreciation that people in the site

\(^{11}\) Cloke, *Introducing*, p.170. See also Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, p.35.  
\(^{13}\) From a missiological perspective Bevans and Schroeder propose that the ‘incomer’ or ‘outsider’ can be imaged as a ‘guest’ or ‘stranger’ or visitor to ‘someone else’s garden’ (Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic*, pp.31-34).  
\(^{15}\) Veling, *Practical*, p.6.
of research are themselves “knowledgeable, situated agents.” Ethnographic research is not therefore the objective study of ‘pure’ subjects in a defined research site, but it is the co-construction or co-production of knowledge through the inter-subjective relationships between the researcher and their research subjects.

Inter-subjectivity has specific bearing on at least two areas of my own research in the Cornwall Estate. Firstly, there is an important connection with the theology of place discussed in Chapter 3 whereby inter-subjective relationships are central to the formation of spatial and social relationships that are non-hierarchical and non-ideological. An inter-subjective stance is therefore a theological imperative that will guide and inform my own involvement in research and shape research practices that will critically engage with arrangements of power that I have described in Chapter 3 as ‘normative-place’. Theological notions of inter-subjectivity however, add a crucial additional element to those described in the social sciences. Whereas in the social sciences inter-subjectivity is conceived of in terms of a duality—the self and the other—the theological construction I envisage here is tripartite, acknowledging that a ‘third’ is present in the space “between” the self and the other. The ‘third’ is indeed the Holy Spirit who becomes a central presence for the co-construction of knowledge in the interplay between the self and the other. Therefore, as a researcher and Baptist minister, attentiveness relates not only to the presence and voice of the self and the other, but also to the presence and voice of the Spirit who enlightens the relationship between people of difference. Secondly, inter-subjectivity is an intentional and reflexive location of research in the context of the previously discussed prevailing discourses on the Cornwall Estate of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’. In this sense the aim of the research is to ‘get under the

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16 Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, p.13; Cloke, *Introducing*, p.169. This observation is not to deny the knowledge held by the researcher but addresses the tendency of researchers to trust too much in their own expertise.


19 Whilst exploring ethnographic methodology important questions were raised about the particular distinctiveness of a Christian approach to the subject, in contrast, for example, to that of a compassionate humanist. At this point I introduce the first of two important distinctions, namely that a Christian approach will understand that the presence of God himself (that is the Spirit) will in some way inhabit the research contexts. The second concerns the role of theology as a governing framework for thought and the particular nature of its relationship to the research context. In the following discussion I will consider how both of these aspects are incorporated into ethnographic methodologies using methods of triangulation based on prayerful-reflective practice and practical theological methods. It is important to state here that the intention is not to research the work of the Spirit per-se; rather it is to research a place—or context—where some of the participants (namely the small Christian community) and the researcher (namely myself) seek to be sensitive to the presence of the Spirit. The relationship between theology and ethnography is discussed in Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography*, pp.xxi-xxv.
skin’ of apparent binaries by making room for the voices of ‘local people’ to be properly heard.

Thus ethnographic methods help move the process of research away from a strictly linear organisation of “read-then-do-then-write” and towards an approach that is more adaptable and can respond to and absorb the surprising and unanticipated.\(^\text{20}\) The ethnographic journey facilitates a synergistic interaction of the experience of participant observation on the one hand and the development of theoretical positions that pertain to the site of research on the other.\(^\text{21}\) In practice this involves an ongoing deepening of perspectives through an intermixing of conversations with those living in the research site\(^\text{22}\) and those outside of the research site that have experience and expertise in relevant fields of knowledge.\(^\text{23}\) Simultaneous and thoughtful engagement in these two aspects has important implications for the way the research develops. Firstly, it enables and defines a broad initial engagement which is rooted as thoughtfully as possible in both experience and theory, as a way of ‘casting the net wide’ to gain an initial sense of orientation.\(^\text{24}\) The aim of orientation is to allow the direction of research and the questions asked to be at least informed, if not wholly determined, by the research site itself. For research to be of value it will need to be as free as possible from pre-existing or pre-determined perspectives or constructs since such imposition will clearly limit the potential of research to generate fresh and interesting insight.\(^\text{25}\) Secondly, ethnographic methods recognise that blurring the boundaries between participant observation and academic work “can have a profound effect on one’s views of both” and

\[\text{20} \text{Denzin and Lincoln, SAGE; Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, pp.2-3, 30-35; Latham, Research, pp.2003-2012; Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, pp.3-27. This approach is of course not unlike the hermeneutical spiral which is familiar in theology as elsewhere.}

\[\text{21} \text{Denzin and Lincoln, SAGE, pp.4-6; Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, pp.61-74.}

\[\text{22} \text{These include a wide range of people over a number of years. Examples of specific groups of people are as follows: i) ‘locals’ or ‘Estaters’ whose families have lived on the estate since it was built; ii) people who have moved into the estate as council tenants—not ‘true’ ‘Estaters’ but sharing many of the social-economic characteristics; iii) third sector workers and public sector professionals who work on the estate; iv) those engaged in mission and ministry including members of the small Christian community.}

\[\text{23} \text{In addition to the academic staff and associates of the International Baptist Theological Seminary, I arranged semi-formal conversations with Prof. Paul Cloke, Sam Thomas (PhD student), Andrew Williams (PhD student), Revd. Alister Palmer, Prof. Doreen Massey, Revd. Prof. Martin Gainsborough, Dr. Chris Baker, Dr. Maggie Studholm, Dr Trevor Dean, Rev. Dr. Stephen Finamore, Canon Tim Higgins, John Hayes.}

\[\text{24} \text{Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, pp.17-18. Crang and Cook outline practical methods for doing this initial broad ethnographic research. Much of what they recommend, I had already done in my own situation by virtue of our intentional engagement with the estate and the fact of our living there. Their outline of the process however, provided a rigorous academic framework against which I could check my approach (Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, pp.17-33).}

\[\text{25} \text{Scharen and Vigen suggest that in relation to discipleship and particularly the “accountability of researchers to ethnographic subject” …the choice of research topic ought to be informed by ‘community-expressed needs’. In other words, it is not only the scholar’s research agenda that ought to set the course, but rather the project should be meaningfully related to the pressing issues and challenges faced by a particular community” (Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, p.xxiii).}
might helpfully inform the direction of research. In an inter-subjective approach of this kind the researcher makes the most of their unusual out-of-place presence in the research site as one who is at the same time embedded, but present as an observer or expert. Whilst the presence of the researcher has an inevitable ‘effect’ on the construction or ‘performance’ of the research site, there is an opportunity to cultivate an intentional synergistic effect between the experienced and the academic in order to nurture a sense of liminality—a quality of space which enables fresh insight and valuable understanding. By approaching the early stages of research in terms of ‘casting the net wide’ and taking an ‘intersubjective’ stance, space is made to identify specific themes and focuses for research including practical methods or sites that might assist the process.

Place as a Site for Ethnographic Research

The “appreciation of place as a site for ethnographic research is relatively recent” and has emphasized the importance of understanding the conceptions of place that are actually implicit within research methodologies. Of particular interest for my own research is to note the tendency of some ethnographies of place to “define places as localities.” This idea, which has been common in both popular and academic accounts, associates a particular culture with a distinct, bounded location. Ethnographers Mike Crang and Ian Cook warn against the construction of research sites that associate ‘pure cultures’ and ‘pure subjects’ with bounded locations. They refer to Doreen Massey who states:

Geographers have long been exercised by the problem of defining regions, and this question of ‘definition’ has almost always been reduced to the issue of drawing lines around a place. But that kind of boundary around an area precisely distinguishes

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26 Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, p.39.
27 Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, p.37.
28 Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, p.37; S.J. Lewis and A. J. Russell, ‘Being Embedded: A Way Forward for Ethnographic Research’, Ethnography 12 no. 3(2011) pp. 403; Fiddes, Ecclesiology, pp.25-35. Scharen and Vigen connect this sense of liminality with “awkwardness” felt by the researcher as an obvious “outsider”: “Making gaffes, fumbling, looking silly—even embarrassing one’s self—can lead to critical epiphanies for researchers in that previously subconscious assumptions come to the surface for critical reflection” (Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, p.59). Lewis and Russell observe the liminality associated with the unique embedded-ness of the researcher, and the “personal skills of the researcher” in fostering a quality of liminality: “she [the researcher] represented an alternative positioning in the organisation because of her different role and the expertise she brought to the process” ( Lewis and Russell, Being Embedded, p.403).
29 Pink, Situating, p.37.
30 Pink, Situating, pp.37-40. Also see Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, pp.11-13. For an example of this approach see Stephen Feld and Keith Basso (eds.), Senses of Place (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996)
31 For discussion on ‘pure subjects’ see Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, p.9.
between an inside and an outside. It can so easily be yet another way of constructing a counter position between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

This insight is critical for my own approach to ethnographic research for two reasons. It maps ethnographic methodology in spatial terms that are conversant with my proposals for a theology of place and, more specifically, with my argument for defining place theologically as ‘relational-event’ thus envisaging the configuration of place as more open and dynamic rather than bounded and static. It also provides a critical standpoint to the common representation of the estate (and indeed estates in general) which is precisely as a bounded and located culture inhabited by stereotypical or pure subjects.

Sarah Pink opens up the discussion around the concerns about theorising place in relation to ethnography by exploring the commonality between three otherwise diverse thinkers on space and place, namely Edward Casey, Doreen Massey and Tim Ingold. Drawing on their ideas Pink develops her own methodology by defining grounds which break down the “assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture.” As with Cook and Crang, Pink argues that “conceptual tools that equate place with culture” are inadequate and she proposes instead that the “concept of place is employed through a focus on the concept of the event of place.”

She continues:

[This] involves re-figuring the relationship between the idea of a research site and a place. It requires making a clear distinction between a locality such as the town, the garden, the breakfast held in a town hall and the place-event as a way of understanding the shifting configurations of persons, things, practices, emotions, climatic conditions and more in relation to locality.

In this understanding, places themselves cannot be thought of as having an independent existence where distinctive social and cultural norms are associated with a bounded location. Equally, from an ethnographic perspective the researcher cannot travel to places and do research in them without understanding that she is participating in the co-construction of the place itself—what Pink calls the construction of “ethnographic places.”

This perspective contrasts to Casey’s point of view where priority is given to the place itself as a location, equating ‘place, culture and location’, and, because “human perception is at the centre of analysis of place,” the way of ethnographic knowing would be through the ‘sense of

33 Pink, Situating, p.37.
34 Pink, Situating, pp.37-38. Here Pink follows Doreen Massey, Space, p.130.
36 Pink, Sensory, p.38.
place’ or the experience of the place itself.\textsuperscript{37} However, Pink follows Massey in critiquing this perspective of Casey asserting that this notion of place is limited “by the assumption that place is prior to whatever is beyond it; thus meaning it does not explain how power relations beyond place are implicated in the processes that the ‘things’ that are ‘in’ places are engaged/involved in.”\textsuperscript{38} Massey conveys this broader unbounded understanding by using the term ‘space’ in preference to ‘place’ and imagines that “places are collections of those stories, articulations of the wider power-geometries of space.”\textsuperscript{39} Thus place (or ‘space’) is in a constant state of development and change so that the current experience of place is understood as a “simultaneity of stories-so-far.”\textsuperscript{40}

Pink develops an ethnographic methodology that is commensurate with this understanding of place as one which is in constant movement and flux, by focusing the attention of ethnographic research on what she terms the ‘place-event’.

As researchers of and in place-events, our task is to understand not what happens in homes, neighbourhoods, towns or web platforms as if they were bounded units across whose borders we can cross when we enter them. But rather, we seek to understand how intensities of place occur through the coming together of localities, materialities, socialities [sic] and other constituents.\textsuperscript{41}

This notion of ‘the event of place’ finds a number of important connections with theological ideas about place as ‘relational event’ or ‘embrace’ with the result that Pink’s ethnographic methods and descriptions of research projects present helpful ideas for the formation of my own research methods as well as for the analysis of findings.\textsuperscript{42}

In terms of culture in relation to location, critical analysis of this has particular relevance to ethnographic research of the Cornwall Estate (as with estates in general) since the imagery (perhaps) most strongly portrayed through the term ‘estate’ is precisely the association of particular estate-culture with bounded locations, where the so-called ‘estate culture’ itself is


\textsuperscript{38} Massey, \textit{Space}, p.25.

\textsuperscript{39} Massey, \textit{Space}, p.130; Pink, \textit{Situating}, pp.24-25. It should be noted that Pink (following Massey) uses the terminology of ‘place’ to understand an abstract concept as distinct from locality. Many geographers (such as Creswell) use terminology of ‘space’ to refer to the abstract concept (so replacing Pink / Massey’s ‘place’ with ‘space’) and use ‘place’ to describe the complex of materialities, flows, sensories [sic], interactions and representations that are experienced in a location. I am using place in this latter sense, and will continue to do so unless I am quoting Massey or Pink.

\textsuperscript{40} Massey, \textit{Space}, p.25.

\textsuperscript{41} Pink, \textit{Situating}, p.38. Here I understand ‘materialities’ to mean anything in the location that has physical and material substance (such as buildings, gardens, streets etc.) and ‘socialities’ to refer to anything that has a social aspect in relation to the location.

\textsuperscript{42} For Pink’s discussion on place see Pink, \textit{Situating}, pp.14-29. For four ethnographic accounts of everyday life see Pink, \textit{Situating}, pp.48-122.
represented by the pejorative term ‘chav’. This association of culture to location was clearly evident in my own research and found for example in the public discourse surrounding the estate, whether that discourse was linked with institutions such as the City Council and Press or with informal daily conversation. It is important therefore to develop research methods that are sensitive to location—culture constructs. This includes the assumption that “no ‘culture’ can legitimately be ring-fenced from large-scale, political and economic processes because the global is not ‘out there’, intruding annoyingly on the study, but is always ‘in here’, only existing through variously connected localities.” This indicates that a degree of caution is necessary against adopting (perhaps unwittingly) a too simplistic conception of the estate in relation to research. On the one hand the estate might be perceived as a shifting, dynamic place so that research methods should be attentive to the sense of movement and the complex intertwining of trajectories that combine in the daily lives of people who move in and out of the location that we identify as ‘the estate’. On the other hand the research itself focuses on a particular place referred to as the Cornwall Estate and relations are considered in and from that perspective—a perspective where ‘estate people’ themselves have a clear idea of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’. The relational perception of place discussed in Part 1 presents the possibility of remaining open to these kinds of complexities and apparent clashes of spatial conception. However the challenge remains throughout the research not to reduce the working conception of place to a too-simplistic model.

Another important consideration for the development of ethnographic methodology in relation to a theology of place is the potential to investigate normative landscapes. Importantly, the aim of ethnographic research is not to give a comprehensive description of

43 ‘Chav’ is the derogatory name associated with social groups that are identified with low income, teenage parenthood, large families, low educational achievement, low aspiration and dependency on state benefits. ‘Chav’ dress code is normally represented as tracksuits, trainers and ‘hoodies’. Sociologists and political commentators assert that ‘Chav’ culture finds its origins in the demise of the British ‘white working class’. See Owen Jones, Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class (London and New York: Verso, 2011); Kjartan Páll Sveinsson, ‘Who Cares About the White Working Class?’ Runnymede Perspectives Series (Runnymede: Runnymede Trust, 2009) pp.28-35 http://www.runnymedetrust.org (accessed August 2010). Chav culture has been popularised in Britain by the very successful BBC TV comedy series Little Britain http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/littlebritain/ (accessed 25/10/13).

44 See ethnographic description of the estate in chapter 6 for specific details.

45 In Reconstructing Practical Theology, John Reader makes a similar point about the influence of globalisation in blurring the boundaries of the meaning of ‘local’ within the context of ethnographic study. For example, he argues that as place has become globalized, the study of congregations as ‘local’ groupings has in fact become a ‘zombie’ category of enquiry ‘only half alive to contemporary reality – living more in past/ modernist conceptions of society.” He identifies four categories of ‘locals’: Insular Locals, Resistant Locals, Exclusionary Locals, and Affirmative Locals (John Reader, Reconstructing Practical Theology [Aldershot UK and Burlington USA: Ashgate, 2008] pp.1-33).

46 Crang and Cook, Ethnographies, p.12.
normativity, rather it is to reveal and understand aspects of normativity through the
ethnographic experience of disruption or transgression of the normative landscape. In this
respect I follow ethnographic approaches exemplified by Christian Scharen and Aana Marie
Vigen, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Tim Cresswell, and Sarah Pink.\(^\text{47}\) Cresswell investigates
normativity in relation to place by researching incidents of transgression and reactions to
them. The particular transgressions or ‘heretical geographies’, that he researches are ‘out-of-
place’ incidences of graffiti, protest and ‘hippy convoy’.\(^\text{48}\) The investigation of particular
transgression and the resulting reaction reveal a great deal about the previously hidden
assumptions and prejudices embedded within places and also the nature and identity of vested
interests which lie behind maintaining the status quo. Pink and Scharen and Vigen also offer
helpful accounts of research that are limited in their scope but, like Cresswell, enable
substantial insight into the construction and maintenance of very diverse places such as
gardens, kitchens or a camp for displaced people in Uganda.\(^\text{49}\) In each of these research
projects the value of ethnography in investigating place is around the transgression,
disconnection, rupture or paradox associated with the interruption of spatial normativity,
where the interruption already existed (in the case of Cresswell) or where it was precipitated
(as in the case of Todd Whitmore in Scharen and Vigen).\(^\text{50}\)

An important aspect of ethnographic methodology in researching this disruption of normative
landscapes is that of auto-ethnography. This is especially relevant to my own methodology,
firstly in relation to the definition of place as relational-event (where relational must include
an element of personal account) and secondly, since my own ethnographic journey focuses on
long-term relational involvement with the community as a resident and minister. I discuss
these elements in the section below, *Reflective Practice and Auto-ethnography*.

**Participant Observation and Embedded Ethnography**

My central approach to ethnography follows methods of participant observation with an
emphasis on a long-term embeddedness or immersion in the situation. Participation “implies

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\(^{47}\) Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen (eds.), *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (London and
New York: Continuum, 2011); Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly
Church*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Tim Cresswell, *In Place / Out of Place:
Geography, Ideology and Transgression* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Pink,
*Situating*.

\(^{48}\) Cresswell, *In-Place*, pp.31-146.

Acoliland’, in, Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen (eds.), *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*,
pp.184-206.

\(^{50}\) Whitmore, *Whiteness*, pp.184-206.
an immersion of the researcher’s self into the everyday rhythms and routines of the community and a development of relationships with people who can show the researcher what is ‘going on’ there.” For practical purposes I identify two broad categories of participation or immersion. The first is my life as a resident and minister on the estate. This involves a wide exposure to the estate through the normal processes of everyday life and work. The second is a series of focused and time-limited involvements in various aspects of the estate which provide opportunities for focused and concentrated ethnographic research which would be a more normal understanding of participant observation. Privileged access is opened up for focused involvement as well as insightful conversation on the basis of long-term residency, my position as a Christian minister, and my involvement in Christian community. This ‘mixed economy’ approach is informed by a range of sources including works from social geography that focus on research in relation to everyday life, and works that consider the relationship of ethnography to practical theology.

**Reflective Practice and Auto-Ethnography**

An important aspect of ethnography is the willingness of the researcher to engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection in their relation to the research site. The process of conversation and revision which allows the constructive development of a research trajectory “is particularly significant in relation to the researchers’ own sense of themselves in relation to the process of research.” The central theme of this research about place as relational-event and embrace, points to these elements of reflection and reflexivity as particularly important elements within the ethnography. In Chapter 3 an outline was is given of the

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55 Swinton and Mowat state that ‘reflexivity is perhaps the most crucial dimension of the qualitative research process’ (Swinton and Mowat, *Practical*, p.59). Reflexivity and awareness of the ‘situated self’ is a critical part of methodology that rejects the notion of a ‘detached observer’ or ‘pure subject’ (Crang and Cook, *Ethnographies*, pp.7-16).
57 Use of the term ‘reflexivity’ is discussed in the previous chapter under the heading ‘Jesus-Space’. In this section I will use the term ‘reflection’ because it is more commonly associated with theological study. However the intention is to incorporate some of the meaning conveyed by ‘reflexivity’ such as the specific reference to the positionality of the researcher in relation to the site of research. This and other senses of ‘reflexivity’ are explored by Gillian Rose, ‘Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics’, *Progress in Human Geography* (1997) 21:3, pp.305-320 and Gillie Bolton, *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional*
theoretical considerations that frame the need for reflection in relational encounter and embrace and also a brief auto-ethnographic account of my own reflective experience that shaped the direction of research. This section will add to that account by describing some of the characteristics of reflective practice which were integral to my research. In the second part of this chapter and in Chapter 5 further auto-ethnographic accounts will be included.

Reflective practice was facilitated in two main ways. The first was through the regular weekly meeting of the small Christian community that I help facilitate on the Estate, and the other was through a series of semi-formal and informal meetings with individuals. The focus of the small Christian community is to be intentionally and self-consciously reflective and is based on two particular elements, one being the pastoral-cycle of Practical Theology which, for my own personal and research purposes gave an important context for reflecting on everyday encounters within the estate. The second is a focus on a values-based approach to Christian presence which drew its inspiration from a number of sources including the values-based urban mission organization, Urban Expression, to which the small Christian community is affiliated. The small Christian community has drawn on these resources over a period of time to find personal and local understandings of the values so that they are earthed in their own experience as “embodied convictions.” Throughout its first year reflections on these experiences were recorded in a community journal that the small Christian community reviewed on a weekly basis.

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58 Chapter 3 includes an auto-ethnographic account incorporating a particular focus on reflexive practice (pp.81-83) and ‘inter-subjectivity’. A theological account of ‘embrace’ provides the theoretical and practical basis for the method of reflexive practice that I have adopted in my own research. Regular semi-formal meetings happened throughout the whole research period with Revd. J. Grinonneau every one to two months, and with Prof. Paul Cloke on an occasional basis. One-off, semi-formal meetings with people from a range of disciplines assisted in the reflective process (see earlier footnote).

59 For this approach see Fiddes, Ecclesiology, pp.24-29; Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, pp. 61-74; Laurie Green, Lets do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology (London and New York: Mowbray, 2009) pp.17-35; Swinton and Mowat, Practical, pp.59-66; Veling, Practical, pp.3-73.

60 For a presentation of Urban Expression values see http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk/our-values (site accessed 20/10/2013).


62 A copy of the community journal is contained in the raw material of my research. Like the other raw research material, access is restricted by ethical guidelines, and community members have not given their permission for it to be released for public view. As with many community practices the journal keeping was in reality a messy business and there are weeks missing. However the community recognises it as an inspiring account of the way values and practices were learned in the early days. As an example of the development of embodied values in the small Christian community see my account in Chapter 3 of the ‘speck and plank’ of Matt. 7:1-5 that shaped the practices of hospitality and attentiveness.
From a personal perspective, the experience of moving house to live on the estate in combination with academic research and reflective practice opened up a strong auto-ethnographic thread to the research, part of which I have recounted in Chapter 3. The value of auto-ethnography is not so much that the development of self-awareness (or awareness of the ‘situated-self’) makes for a clearer ‘seeing’ of the research site (though that is in itself of value), but that individual stories, including that of the ethnographer him or herself, “can reveal larger social, political, economic, cultural, and racial dynamics that are too often hidden or silenced.” It is too easy for an ethnographer, or indeed a member of a Christian community to live with a “disconnect between her intellectual assent to inclusiveness and her habituated and embodied sense of what is considered by many in society as ‘normal’.” It is incumbent on the Christian ethnographer in particular (and indeed on ethnographers in general) who seeks to embody values and convictions (prayerfully in the case of the Christian ethnographer) as foundational for research, to express honesty about the way in which reflective research exposes, disturbs and disrupts their own sense of what is normal. Thus, reflective practice for myself and the small Christian community, is an attempt to foster this kind of vulnerable open-heartedness with a risky willingness to encounter our own sense of previously unacknowledged prejudices and the disruption of habituation which was considered ‘normal’ or ‘normative’.

Two accounts of ethnographic studies have found particular resonance with my own situation. In each case researchers were located in communities where their situatedness caused them to feel strongly and discomfortingly ‘out-of-place’. Their auto-ethnographic accounts detail inner disturbance provoked not only by their physical and social ‘out-of-placed-ness’ but also by the expectations upon them to conform to stereotype in terms of their own ethnicity. Their studies exemplify the way in which the autobiographical account of a reflective theologian/ethnographer in a very particular and limited situation, can reveal or

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66 For the discomforting exposure of prejudice within the self as part of ethnography see Swinton and Mowat, *Practical*, pp.112-114. Here they draw on Gadamer’s understanding of prejudice as “pre-understandings” necessary for interpretation to take place. Swinton and Mowat argue that engaging with prejudice thus understood, must be a central consideration for ethnographic methodology. This embedded and vulnerable approach to the place finds resonance in both missiology (Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic*, pp.19-31, 90-92) and practical theology (Veling, *Practical*, pp.23-28).

expose ‘truths’ that would be difficult to see apart from their own ‘disruptive presence’. The accounts exemplify well how important and necessary auto-ethnographic insights can be achieved without unhelpful or narrow introspection.

Methods: A Description of Ethnographic Research

The formal phase of ethnographic research spanned ten months from February to November 2012. This was preceded by an extended lead-in time of thirty two months living on the Estate and prior to that, twelve months of growing engagement with the Baptist and Anglican congregations and other Christian groups involved in mission on the Estate. The lead-in phase coincided with the early stages of my PhD research and was marked by a sense of struggle about the shape of a meaningful and grounded theological engagement with a community that was characterised by chronic physical and social deprivation. Ideas about ‘meaningful’ and ‘grounded’ research were not expressions of a clear thinking academic approach but were shaped by encounters which I found raw and disturbing. Many such encounters happened throughout this extended introductory period and to convey a sense of them I will give a brief account of two that occurred during visits to June’s house. June practiced, in her words “vulnerable and open-hearted hospitality” by having an ‘open door’ which resulted in our meetings being frequently interrupted by visitors of all kinds. One regular visitor was M, a boy of six years of age who would come round to ask for food. M was pale and underweight with the ‘typical’ skin-head style hair cut which added to his gaunt look. He would normally arrive at the door in a blue dressing gown because apparently he had no coat. He was regularly locked out of his own home, even when his mother was in, until between 6pm to 7pm and left to wander the streets of the estate on his own. He would often turn up at June’s place for a cheese-toastie or a piece of cake that she would invariably have on hand. It was not unusual in my experience of visiting June to find myself getting down on the floor to build Lego cars with M.

68 Scharen and Vigen argue that most ethnographers working in marginal communities occupy “sites of privilege” and that “to work toward justice in society and right relations among people … [they] must actively interrogate and subvert these very sites in [their] advocacy, in larger structural and material relations, and in [their] scholarship” (Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography*, pp.xx-xxi). McClintock Fulkerson argues that sites of privilege are characterised by “obliviousness” and that “transformation of obliviousness and its social harms is best imaged as the creation of its opposite: ‘a shared space of appearance’” (McClintock Fulkerson, *Redemption*, p.21).
During one such visit a group of about fifteen teenage ‘lads’ wandered past the front of the house. “You see that girl with them?” June said. “Well, she’s effectively their sex slave … she ‘services’ the whole group.” On further enquiry June explained that the girl was fourteen years old and was used by the gang for sexual acts which normally took place “in a ‘loo’ somewhere or behind a shed.” Her motivation, according to June, was that it gave her a sense of belonging and identity.

I recount these events not because they are especially dramatic or shocking, but because they were formative in my experience of the estate and influential in shaping my approach to theological research. I found a deep sense within myself of growing disturbance which in part related to encounters with those whose lives were shaped by experiences of struggle and challenge which were far removed from anything that I had known in my own life. A critical element of this disturbance however, was not about what was going on ‘out there’ but related to the apparent irrelevance of missiology and academic theology to the reality I was encountering. It was the struggle to bridge the apparent gap between theology and raw life on the estate that eventually led me to an ethnographic-theological approach to research.

As part of the small Christian community, the disturbing immersion into estate life over the first two years revealed that the so-called ‘multiple social deprivation’ that described the estate was the consequence of an almost overwhelming and complex set of issues. The challenge for research was to construct a method which would provide enough focus (or particularity) as to be manageable, but enough breadth or openness so as to be honest about the complexity of context. On the one hand a too-narrow focus would tend towards self-determination of findings, on the other a too-broad approach would tend towards confusion. I therefore adopted a two-tier approach to the ethnographic phase of research that would engage with both the breadth and depth of the research site. I will describe these approaches briefly under the headings of research methods for ‘orientation’ and ‘focus.’

**Research Methods for Orientation**

The orientation phase offered a contextual framework for more focused research by providing a broad picture of the research site. Orientation drew on a number of different approaches to qualitative research over a period of about ten months including the following: participant observation; recording of an ethnographic log; walking and visual methods; semi-structured

interviews\textsuperscript{70} and group conversations. This primary research was complemented by drawing on a number of other studies carried out on the estate over the course of its history that included broad-ranging sociological studies as well as focused studies on issues related to health, the built environment, social networks and patterns of multiple deprivation. I have listed my own research materials and secondary sources in an appendix at the end of this chapter.

\textit{Ethnographic Log}

Field notes were the primary way of gathering research materials throughout the period of orientation as well as during organised sessions of participant observation. The Ethnographic Log is a series of field notes that comprise a written record of observation and reflection over the ten month period of orientation and research. Practically, this involved carrying a notebook as a prompt to stay observant to the context and to record observations and reflections during my daily life on the estate. It also necessitated observation when I was in other parts of the city; the intention being to provide a broad view by drawing on encounters and conversations from further afield including interaction with other forms of media such as the internet, TV, books and the press. In essence the log was about the ethnographic discipline of “being there”—of a particular attentiveness to the apparently mundane, everyday-ness of life.\textsuperscript{71} It required an attempt to record first-hand the voices of people I encountered in daily life, especially when those encounters occurred on the estate, as well as my personal emotions and impressions that arose through them. The log formed a sense of connectivity between the various strands of research by including a critical reflection on the development and execution of other elements of research. In this way the log became “an ongoing sense-making process … [involving] attempts to tie together minutiae of theoretical and empirical detail gleaned in and between the different locales of a project’s expanded field.”\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{70}By ‘semi-structured’ I mean that interviews did not follow a predetermined list of questions or use of a questionnaire. Conversation was guided by a pre-prepared list of issues and questions that I wanted to cover but the style of the interview was conversational rather than question-and-answer. The advantage of the semi-structured approach was that it allowed scope to follow interesting but unplanned avenues of conversation. Semi-formal interviews were arranged on the basis that they would offer additional, helpful insight and understanding to existing areas of research, in particular they were helpful in complementing research based on participant-observation.

\textsuperscript{71}Pink, \textit{Situating}, p.3; Lewis and Russell, \textit{Embedded}, p.400. Lewis and Russell make use of the phrase ‘being there’ to explain ethnography: “what, then, is the constant of ethnographic practice? It lies perhaps in an attitude toward ‘being there’ sufficient to experience the mundane and sacred, brash and nuanced aspects of sociocultural life and, through observations, encounters and conversations, to come to an understanding of it” (Lewis and Russell, \textit{Embedded}, p.400).

Health Profile

The Health Profile drew on a relationship with Dr. D, a senior general practitioner (GP) and leading board member of the Estate Health Centre. Over the research period I participated with him in presenting seminars on the health and social characteristics of the estate to groups of ministerial and medical students. As well as this participant observation, the research involved reflection on Dr. D’s own research on the health characteristics of the estate which consisted of the analysis of statistical data that he was able to access from the National Health Service (NHS) in his role as a GP, and his own personal records and experiences in his daily work. Whilst he had a considerable depth of knowledge of health issues on the estate in general, he had also carried out research in two particular areas: the characteristics of teenage pregnancy, and the changing patterns of drug use in older men. In addition to the seminars and our shared involvement in other contexts, the Health Profile involved two semi-structured interviews where Dr. D explained the detail of his research findings. The Health Profile also included a semi-structured interview with Dr. S, who worked as a GP and senior manager of the Health Centre on the estate for one day each week and at the Department of Social Medicine at the City University for the other four days. Both doctors were Christians and all contact with them followed previously agreed ethical standards, especially in relation to confidentiality.

Connected Communities

‘Connected Communities’ is a project of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts (RSA) which carries out research about how social networks can be better understood and utilized to address social and economic challenges in various communities. It involved an extensive programme of research through 2012 in seven sites of social and physical deprivation and marginalization across the UK, including the Cornwall Estate. The research in the Cornwall Estate consisted of completing 350 questionnaires by door-to-door interviews. Results were processed using advanced graphics software to give a visual

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73 Dr. D., Teenage Pregnancy: A Challenge for the Church (unpublished essay).
74 EL2, 434-461. EL2 references the semi-structured interview with Dr. D.
75 The RSA is a large charitable foundation involved in “rigorous research to create a unique programme of work … solving big problems by unleashing the human potential for enterprise and creativity.” http://www.thersa.org/about-us (accessed 29/10/2013).
presentation of social connectivity within the Estate. The research was carried out on the Cornwall Estate by the Media Project, a local organisation which focuses on “digital inclusion through socially engaged practice.” The research was a specific exploration of the link between health—both physical and mental—and social inclusion; in essence it demonstrated a link between the strength of a person’s social networks and their overall levels of health.

In my capacity as a local resident and minister I was invited to join a consultation group for the implementation phase of the project. The main idea was to develop a system of ‘social prescription’ where local GPs would identify patients whose health might benefit from improved social connection. Whilst maintaining GP-patient confidentiality the patient would be invited to use a specially developed interactive computer tool to help them make connections with potentially helpful groups in their locality. My involvement with Connected Communities also included an extended interview with Ms. M, the Media Project member of staff who was responsible for organizing the data gathering on the Cornwall Estate. During the interview she presented and explained both the raw and processed data sets.

**Walking and Visual Methods**

Urban Walking is a multisensory approach to ethnography drawing on the felt perception and experience of place as well as visual methods. The method was developed over a period of eighteen months by organising four walks across the city for groups of between ten and twenty-five ministerial students. The Urban Walking strand of research consisted of ten walks across the city with groups of between two and eleven people. Of the ten walks, seven started in the Cornwall Estate and progressed across six or seven distinct urban environments over a length of about five miles. Walks were carried out at different times of

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77 Although I have quoted from the Media Project website, for reasons of confidentiality I have withheld its actual name and have not referenced their website. I have worked closely with members of the Media Project for more than four years and was given exclusive access to their raw data before it was anonymised and converted to graphic form.


79 The series of ten walks were commissioned and sponsored by the Church Urban Fund (CUF) as a research and educational exercise relating to urban mission. This included a presentation of findings to a small seminar. CUF understood that the walks would be included as part of my PhD research.
the week, and various times of day and night, to expose walkers to the sense in which place changes according to time.

Walks took about three hours, allowing for a fifteen minute orientation before the walk started and forty-five minute reflection at the end of the walk. The post-walk reflections were in an informal group conversation where I used prompting questions that drew on visual method theories, the use of which were designed to foster a deeper ‘noticing’ of what had been seen on the walk. Post-walk conversations were recorded and I kept a personal diary of observations throughout the walks.  

**Research Methods for Focus**

As the orientation phase of research developed it became increasingly clear that the arrangement of place in the Cornwall Estate was dominated by two important characteristics which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5 under the headings of *Relations of Unequal Power* and *Hard Boundaries*. These relate to complex interactions between material and social aspects of everyday life which result in settlements of place that are deeply embedded and have distinctive binary characteristics.

The theoretical work on the theology of place progressed alongside the orientational ethnographic research and suggested that research methods should focus specifically on the function of boundaries in relation to the formation of place. Of particular interest was the suggestion from the theological work that place itself might be transformed through the formation of redemptive-places, and that one way of identifying this transformation was to identify and investigate the development of inter-subjective relationships across previously hard or non-porous boundaries. In Chapter 3 I have argued that the development of these kinds of inter-subjective relationships is an important aspect of ‘embrace’, which describes the spatiality that is central in the formation of redemptive-places.

In the light of these developments two particular situations presented themselves as potentially interesting case studies, namely the Bread Café and the Employment Drop-In. Each of these were small experimental initiatives facilitated by members of the small Christian community with the specific intention of developing groups that were relationally focused rather than structured around service provision. In each situation members of the

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80 Whilst the series of Urban Walks were an interesting project in their own right, the data collected did not add substantially to the overall research project. The quality of the data obtained could have been improved by providing a more focused period of pre-walk orientation for the walkers; more thorough methods of data collection during and after the walk; and a fuller and more focused post-walk reflection.
small Christian community recognised that physical and social barriers were hindering inter-subjective relationships between ‘long-term residents’ and ‘outsiders’, and that the two initiatives provided different opportunities to experiment with alternative arrangements of place which would facilitate a different quality of relationship.

The research methods used in both cases were a mixture of participant observation along with the keeping of field notes, and semi-structured interviews with the managers associated with the two projects around which the initiatives were based.

In the case of the Bread Café, the host organisation was a newly formed catering business based in the Health Park and research included a number of informal conversations and an extended semi-formal interview with M, the manager of the company. The Bread Café was initiated and developed by members of the small Christian community, including myself, in close association with M and a small group of ‘long-term residents’. I was thus deeply embedded in the project and used field notes as a primary research method.

The Drop-In was initiated by B, who was also the manager of the Advice Centre and a member of the small Christian community. The Drop-In was a direct response to perceived boundaries within the Advice Centre that B felt acted as barriers to more fruitful relationships with clients. In this case research methods had to engage with two different sites about 500 metres apart. My approach was through participant observation in the Advice Centre by means of volunteering as a host-receptionist once a week from September to November 2012, as well as conducting a series of informal conversations and semi-formal interviews with B to track the development of the Drop-In; from a research perspective it would have been preferable for me to be present as a participant observer at both venues, but this was not practically possible.

**Analysis of Research Materials**

Once field research had been completed I started the process of analysis of the research findings. The aim was to allow themes to emerge from the materials through progressive readings. This was approached systematically by first printing all the field notes and transcripts of interviews, including line numbers for accurate referencing, and space on the right-hand side of the page for annotation. Colour coding and annotation were used to identify and then narrow down themes that became clearer on each successive reading. The second step of analysis was to identify the ways in which the emerging themes related to particular areas of interest that had arisen from the theological enquiry into place, such as
boundaries and encounters between people, especially where those encounters took place between people from different social contexts.

Having established quite a strong sense as to the way in which the material was providing evidence about the formation and nature of place, I sought to test the conclusions that were being formed by looking for exceptions to the patterns that were emerging. Therefore, in a fresh reading of the transcripts I looked for incidences of inter-subjective relationships that did not conform to the binary patterns that I had been identifying.

In practice, the process was not as cleanly defined as described here; it included, for example, many moments of insight and surprise which necessitated cross-referencing notes from a number of different sections in order to identify the connections and trends that began to form an overall pattern. These insights were annotated on the right-hand side of the page next to the appropriate part of the transcript. In addition, on reflecting with others about the progress of analysis in the research materials, I concluded that there was a lack of clarity in the results about the distinctive voice of ‘long-term residents’. 

Thus I added a final reading of the materials to the overall process in which I identified the direct voices of ‘long-term residents’ and gave these added weight in the final analysis.

In order to develop the broad description of place which is presented in Chapter 5, I drew on secondary sources, to compliment my own findings. The analysis and discussion about the formation of redemptive places in Chapter 6 is based almost exclusively on the ethnographic research findings relating to the Bread Café and Drop-In.

**Ethical Considerations**

Normal ethical guidelines and protocols were followed and formal ethic approval was obtained for the research project described. Particular care was taken to protect the identity and confidentiality of those involved in projects where I was the participant-observer and in the semi-formal interviews. All names of people, places and projects have been made anonymous and all research material has been password protected.

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81 I am grateful for the insight of Prof. Paul Cloke at this point in the analysis.

82 Ethics approval was received from the University of Wales which was the accrediting university at the time (‘Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice’ [University of Wales, 2012]). Useful ethical procedures were also drawn from Paul Cloke, Ian Cook, Philip Crang, Mark Goodwin, Joe Painter and Chris Philo, *Practising Human Geography* (London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004) pp.164-168; Crang and Cook, *Doing*, pp.26-31.
In part, the challenge of researching the Cornwall Estate is that there is a general, negative expression by many in the local area that they have too often been the subjects of research and, as I described earlier, there is in consequence an antipathy to research and researchers in general. The methods of participant observation that I have described, combined with a rigorous practices of confidentiality, have sought to mitigate any negative effects of my own research on the Estate.

**Conclusion**

Whilst an approach to research based on ethnographic methods offers the potential for well-substantiated and insightful findings, there are inevitable hazards and difficulties associated with the methodology. I conclude therefore by offering some insights gained through the completion of the research, including some critical observations about difficulties that were encountered, and some necessary qualifications and limitations to the work. In addition I make further critical comments and recommendations for research at the end of Chapter 5.

Keeping field notes for the Ethnographic Log and during the times of participant observation raised a number of practical challenges and difficulties. First was the challenge of knowing what to write and how much to write; this related in part to the amount of time taken to write notes up at the end of a day and also the growing volume of notes that required reading and analysing. The final analysis of field notes underlined the value of hearing and recording the voices of ‘long-term residents’ through unguarded everyday encounters and also of my own spontaneous responses in certain situations, and in hindsight I would give added weight to both these aspects in my note taking. Second was the challenge of recording information accurately, especially in the case of reporting speech. In some cases notes could be taken during the course of a conversation, but in most cases this was not possible, either because it would have broken or stopped the flow of conversation, or because as a participant observer I was actually doing a job which made the taking of notes impractical—whilst making bread for example. In these circumstances notes could only be made at a later time, in which case

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83 This is not an uncommon challenge for those researching certain marginal communities that have been the focus of research projects over an extended period. In developing my own methods, I note Crang’s reporting of ethnographic work carried out amongst ‘indigenous people’ in Australia where “research is probably the dirtiest word in indigenous people’s vocabulary” (M. Crang, “Qualitative Methods: touchy, feely, look-see?” *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (2003) pp. 494-504. [http://www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com) [accessed 24.05.2012] pp.496-7).

84 This is a common dilemma for those carrying out participant observation (Cloke, *Introducing*, p.197).
the aim was to memorise key phrases from the conversation until an opportunity presented itself to write something down.

With hindsight, the third challenge in keeping field notes has been to recognise and capture the significant events and moments and furthermore to focus on aspects of the event that are especially illuminating for research. There is an acknowledged risk in ethnographic research that key moments can pass by and that it is only much later that there is a sense that something valuable was missed. An example of this kind of oversight is illustrated by a distinct gap in the field notes relating to the first occasion on which a group came together to make bread; as a participant I was so preoccupied with the event itself that I failed to adequately observe and keep records. Whilst I noted at a later date the significance of ‘long-term residents’ moving for the first time into the ‘professional space’ of the kitchen, I failed at the time to be observant of people’s immediate responses and the senses that it provoked within us as a whole group. As a first occurrence, this was a unique event and experience has shown that in ethnographic work these kinds of situations should be anticipated and prepared for in advance.

The particular strength of the research methodology however, is its extended period of immersion in a number of areas of estate life and its level of access, which in various situations was of a privileged nature because of my position as a Baptist minister and resident on the estate. Research findings suggest that this approach to participant observation has been an effective way of ‘getting under the skin’ of the everyday life of the estate and a good way of gaining a more authentic hearing for the voices of ‘long-term residents’. In addition, the extended semi-structured interviews with people who have significant involvement in estate-based organisations added an overall rigour to the research and enabled the investigation to be focused on a number of key issues.

However, through the process of participant observation it has become apparent that there are ways in which the current research could be further improved in both its methodological rigour and in its focus. A potentially fruitful approach would be to involve ‘long-term residents’ in focus groups and interviews and I have made some practical suggestions at the end of Chapter 5 about some of the key issues that might be explored using this method.\(^85\)

\(^85\) An important factor in deciding what research methods to employ was the negative attitudes towards researchers and consultants which seemed pervasive on the estate. This was in part due to the fact that the early stages of my own research coincided with the mid-point of an extensive process of consultation by the city council relating to a planned major physical redevelopment of the estate. The primary methods used by the professional research agency responsible for the consultation were focus groups and public consultations. The resident’s consultation group, chaired by the vicar, expressed strong negative opinions towards so-called ‘outsiders’; the perception was that large amounts of money would be spent on ‘research’ and subsequent reports which, in the view of some residents, would not lead to a useful or positive outcome. Indeed, due to the
One context in which group discussion did develop in quite surprising ways was in the Drop-In which was facilitated by B. It became clear through the course of research that this setting, which was specifically formed to encourage inter-subjective conversations relating to unemployment and connected issues, became a place in which a wide range of concerns could be fruitfully discussed. In contrast the Advice Centre, the site of my participant observation, did not prove to be a good situation for this kind of exploratory conversation; I discuss the reasons for this in Chapters 5 and 6. The result was that in choosing the Advice Centre over the Drop-In, I missed an opportunity to participate in the potentially more informative series of conversations. I was then only able to hear the accounts of these discussions through B, who regularly conveyed material to me through informal and semi-formal conversations.\footnote{This is an inevitable a risk associated with research. Similarly two pieces of research based on semi-structured interviews (one with a GP working in social medicine and the other with a community photographer) proved to have no useful contribution to the research.}

Finally, the primary attraction for my own research of an approach based upon ethnographic methodology was the correspondence it found with incarnational notions and practices of Christian mission. As research has progressed so has the understanding of the importance of the synergy between ethnographic methodologies, practical theology, a spirituality of neighbouring or embrace, and mission. Synergistic connections occurred in particular around areas such as the facilitating of inter-subjective relationships; the co-construction of knowledge; the development of rigorous practices in relation to deeply-embedded and reflective living; and the co-constitution of place in relation to both compassionate and attentive presence, and grounded research. Therefore, in the context of this research, methodology is not simply a means to an end but has become an important and integral part for understanding the formation of places which I have described in Chapter 3 in terms of created-place or redemptive-places. As such, the areas that I have highlighted here as arising out of synergistic connections will be taken up in the concluding discussions about the central findings of the research.

\footnote{financial crisis the report was eventually ‘shelved’ and plans were postponed. Such strongly held negative views about ‘researchers’ and their association to ‘outsiders’ weighed heavily against using focus groups as a research method.}
CHAPTER 5
THE CORNWALL ESTATE: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate and identify the characteristics of place which are important in the composition of the Cornwall Estate. The discussion will draw on a range of research materials, including ethnographic findings, to give a broad description of the characteristics of the estate in terms of place and will consider how key components of place, such as the material, social, and representational, function interdependently to maintain the central compositional features of the place.

Consideration will be given to the ways in which a broad description of the estate, in terms of place, relate to the theological arguments of Chapter 3 with particular reference to the themes discussed there of created-place and normative-place. Further thought will be given as to how these theological engagements focus attention on particular features and functions of place. This broad spatial-theological description of the estate will provide the groundwork for a focused investigation into the nature of redemptive-places in Chapter 6.

An important concept which develops throughout the discussion of this chapter is that of boundaries. The idea of boundaries emerged in Chapter 3 to denote that theological conceptions of place might be understood in terms of interconnectedness or relational connectedness between places and that interconnectedness can be conceived of spatially so that boundaries define relational distance and proximity between people and communities. Critically the spatiality of boundaries is encountered in the reality of everyday life through a variety of material, social, and relational arrangements that are experienced as places. I have suggested that the complex interaction of material and social arrangements results in the composition of places as either resistant to or facilitating of inter-subjective relationships. Places that are resistant to inter-subjective relationships are characterized by exaggerated
relational distance and boundaries are experienced as exclusionary or ‘hard’. Conversely places that facilitate inter-subjective relationship are characterized by relational proximity that fosters interconnectedness between people and communities. In this case boundaries are experienced as bridges as well as barriers; they have a porosity or softness about them.

Central to the approach of this chapter is the recognition that qualitative research methods respect the construction of knowledge from the research site itself. Care has therefore been taken not to impose predetermined theological notions of place—in this case with reference to boundaries—but to allow the research findings to have their own voice. In this sense the aim of this chapter is for a co-constitution of knowledge which draws sensitively on a variety of sources that include the data collected through qualitative research methods, theological knowledge about place from Part 1, and the researcher’s own situated knowledge.

In the first section of the chapter, as well as drawing on my own qualitative research materials, I include findings from a number of sociological studies that have been carried out during the life of the estate. The initial analysis is presented under the two headings of material boundary and social boundary characteristics and in these sections I seek to identify the primary characteristics of place that are evidenced within the research materials. Other features of place are also observed to be significant in the research findings, namely representational and cognitive features and whilst subjects in their own right, I include them in the discussion of social boundary characteristics. Furthermore, the material and social boundaries are shown to be of a complex nature and do not tidily comply with discrete categorization but rather are found to be interdependent with other boundary types. An example of the way in which places resist discrete categorization might be seen in the instance of a footpath. Whilst a footpath is normally considered in physical terms, the sense in which it constitutes a place relates in part to the way it is used. Therefore, if, as observed in my own study, groups of people occupy a footpath by sitting on it, then the sense of place is neither primarily physical nor social but an interaction of the two.

In the final section of the chapter I draw on the research materials to observe that particular features of place within the estate combine in complex dynamic interactions to form an arrangement of place that could be described as a hegemonic settlement with strong binary characteristics. I argue that this settlement could helpfully be discussed in the light of the theological conceptions of place which I have proposed in Chapter 3, namely created-place and normative-place, and that the primary features of the settlement could be understood as ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’.
Material Boundary Characteristics

In an investigation of place, the physical or material aspect of place seems the most natural starting point. This starting point is given added poignancy when recalling the spontaneous outburst from a student during a discussion about health issues on the Cornwall Estate that took place during the course of research. In a moment of insight she exclaimed, “Surely the relationship of disability isn’t due to the house you were born into … perhaps I’m being naïve, but why the link?” 1 This exclamation about “the house you were born in” helpfully focuses attention on the nature of this discussion about the materiality of place. It suggests that the material nature of place including its location, physical geography and all aspects of the built environment, is not simply a passive backdrop against which the ‘real action’ of social engagement takes place, but that the materiality of place itself fulfils a dynamic and interactive role in the constitution and maintenance of a place, in this case the Cornwall Estate. 2

For the purpose of analysis of the ethnographic findings I have defined this materiality in terms of the ‘material boundary’. I will observe in this section that the materiality of the place plays a critical role in forming and sustaining patterns of multiple deprivation and furthermore that the research findings, both historic and current, suggest that the physical nature of the place itself contributes strongly to the formation of entrenched patterns of deprivation and also to the sustaining and deepening of those patterns. In this way, the physical aspect of the place holds a distinctive function in relation to the other aspects of place (such as social, cognitive, representational and relational) in that it provides a foundational structure through which other aspects of place find traction and achieve long-term, sustainable expression. Given the relational analysis of boundaries in Part 1, this foundational function of the material boundary raises important questions about the interaction of the relational and the material; for example how the relational shapes the formation of the material and also how the material acts to influence or determine the relational. These important questions are investigated through the case studies.

Because the built environment is central to this part of the argument, I will supplement my own ethnographic research by drawing on a number of social scientific studies carried out in the early stages of the life of the estate which make detailed reference to the development of housing and other physical infrastructure. Of particular help is a comprehensive study,

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1 EL1, 308-310. EL1 is the reference designated to field notes included in the Ethnographic Log.
2 See Part 1 for discussion of these ideas.
Housing Estates: A Study of Bristol Corporation Policy and Practice Between the Wars, carried out by Rosamond Jevons and John Madge of the University of Bristol which includes in-depth analysis of the effects on the location and built environment on new residents. Drawing from these and other sources I will observe and describe the critical characteristics of the estate in terms of ‘distance’, ‘boundaries’, ‘uniformity’ and ‘public buildings and open spaces’. I will however, begin the description of the physical environment of the estate by drawing on visual research methods to give an account of the distinctive sense of place gained as one travels from the city onto the estate.

A distinctive sense of place: ethnographic journeys from city to estate

Although there are no ‘welcome’ signs to indicate that one is entering the Cornwall Estate, it is clear, whether walking or driving, that over the course of a few hundred metres you have moved from one part of the city and have ‘come onto the estate’. Whilst factors such as the social, personal and spiritual play a role in determining this changing sense of place, what is most immediately striking is the changing physical environment including both the natural and built environment. The estate is built on a plateau to the south of the city so that to approach it from the city one travels up a long hill on one of the two access roads which cut through a broad sweep of semi-managed urban green-space called The Slopes. On arriving at the top one finds roads lined with distinctive, relatively small, 1930s brick built semi-detached housing. On its southern and western boundaries the estate is marked by main roads which provide only four main access points for transport, and two additional pedestrian accesses, so that there is an even clearer sense of moving ‘on’ and ‘off’ the estate.

3 Rosamond Jevons and John Madge, Housing Estates: A Study of Bristol Corporation Policy and Practice Between the Wars, ed. Prof. A.M. Tydnall (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1946). It should be noted that most of the empirical research in this volume was carried out prior to the end of 1939 but that completion and publication of the project was delayed by the war. I also draw on a later report by James Tucker which uses empirical research to compare conditions on a number of slum clearance estates (James Tucker, Honourable Estates. London: Victor Gollanz Ltd, 1966).

4 The use of visual methods and walking was helpfully informed by Janet Fink, ‘Walking the neighbourhood, seeing the small details of community life: Reflections from a photography walking tour’, Critical Social Policy (December 2012) pp.31-50.

5 This sense of ‘arrival’ is echoed in the Regeneration Framework (2008): “Within the built up area, public realm and streetscape attributes such as street trees, levels of enclosure, street furniture and distinctive open spaces facilitating a sense of arrival, public life and gatherings are sparse and in parts absent” [Cornwall Estate] Regeneration Framework Baseline Briefing (Council Briefing Paper, Bristol: BCC, 2008) p.14.

6 There are three main types of housing although 82.6% of the housing represents two standard 1930s designs which, from an external perspective, look very similar. A third design was used in a later addition to the estate in the 1960s and built from concrete structure in a ‘Radburn layout’—both these features now recognised as sub-standard and include about 30% deficit in floor space compared to current legal building standards (See Regeneration Framework, 2008, 09.3, pp.17-24).
The physical characteristics that convey this distinctive sense of place include an interesting combination of low-density housing, built on the garden-suburb design, and a low physical aspect which is accentuated by an almost complete lack of tall buildings and mature trees. These features combine with the physical height of the location itself to convey a sense of exposure and vulnerability. Rather than the beauty and sense of community aspired to by the garden-suburb vision, the spatiality results in a sense of boring, grey uniformity and functionality and of isolation from the rest of the city. This sense is further compounded by the physically run down and tired appearance of most of the streets leading to an overall mood of depression or despondency. In addition the circular patterning of street layout, which is typical of the estates influenced by garden design, makes it challenging for visitors to find their way around and adds to the sense of disorientation and vulnerability. The journey onto the estate is marked by other physical indicators. An increase in the general amount of rubbish on the streets, including the occurrence of rubbish hot-spots, is evident as one approaches the estate. I regularly encounter rubbish hot-spots on the route I use to and from home as well as on my walk to the local shops where it is common practice to stuff drink cans, plastic food containers, cigarette packs and other litter into the hedges around front gardens. Also striking is the distinctive use of various kinds of fences, hedges, walls and gates to establish strong boundaries around the small front gardens. Early photographs of the estate show front gardens bordered by low wooden fences presenting an open and bleak appearance. At an early stage in the estate’s development, privet hedges were planted by the city council around every front garden in attempt to introduce some greenery and subsequently such hedges have become synonymous with council estates around the country.

8 The building quality of local authority housing changed through the 1930s. As budgets were squeezed, the original aspirations for the garden design were compromised. Grass verges and tree planting were no longer included. This change is very evident as one travels onto the estate from the eastern end down BW, one of the first roads to be built. A width of the road with wide grass verges and mature trees makes for a very pleasant environment. The road, which is now exclusively in private ownership, is definitely not considered as part of the Cornwall Estate. There are a few buildings of intermediate height including the Anglican Church and some three and four storey flats that have been built at various stages of the estate’s life.
10 Concerns about littering and dog fouling are part of the overall estate discourse. They are a regular feature in local publications such as the quarterly estate magazine The Knowledge, (Issue 54, 2012, pp.3; Issue 56, 2013, p.3, 5). Quality of life research show that these are concerns held within the community (Engaging Residents in [Cornwall Estate]: We wouldn't live anywhere else [Bristol: I.R.I.S., 2004] p.59).
11 Jevons and Madge, Housing, appendix.
Quite a number of hedges still remain and most are fairly well maintained with hedge trimming in the summer being a regular feature of estate life. However, many have been pulled up and replaced by other kinds of boundary structures such as metal fences and brick walls, whilst a more recent trend is the use of concrete blocks to construct walls that are disproportionately large in relation to the size of house and garden. They add a drab and somewhat foreboding appearance to the front of many houses. The strong commitment to the maintenance of these boundaries between garden and pavement is seen not only in the significant work and expense invested in building new walls and gates, but also in the regular ritual of opening and closing gates. Cars are often kept off-road in the front garden area with considerable effort taken to keep them behind closed gates, sometimes squeezing two or even three cars into extremely small areas so that when gates are closed there are at times only a few centimetres of space between cars and gates—precision parking is required.

Boundary maintenance around front gardens in this way gives the impression of an almost ritualistic performance which reinforces a strong sense of territoriality around houses. The resultant impression is of a significant private-public boundary where the private space of the house and front garden appears to assert itself onto the pavement. In addition to the apparent ritualistic boundary maintenance, this assertion of private space seems at times to be reinforced through the practice of householders and friends occupying the pavement and even the road space outside of their homes. It is not uncommon in the summer for example to see people sitting on the pavement outside of their house or gathering in groups which spill out from the front garden so that one has the sense in walking past the house that one is moving through the person’s private space.

The occupation of street space in this way carries with it a sense of unspoken challenge or assertion that “this is my space.” This more aggressive ‘occupation of place’ is performed in a variety of ways, from people sitting or standing obstructively; by the verbal abuse of passers-by or occasionally by physically throwing things; to more subtle behaviours such as the discomforting practice of watching people as they move through the space; and raised

12 The kinds of public spaces that are regularly occupied in the ways I describe here include places outside of shops, particular stretches of pavement, public squares, bus stops, and some green spaces. At times whole sections of road have been affected in these ways to such an extent that bus drivers have refused to drive down them for fear of their buses being attacked.
13 For example, in June 2013 I passed two teenage girls sitting on the pavement with their feet in the road (the road in question being the main through-road in the estate). In passing, I was required to walk around them and car drivers had to take care so as not to drive over their feet. An hour and half later on my way back they were still in the same place.
14 I have both witnessed and been on the receiving end of all these behaviours whilst walking around the estate.
voices and use of language that dominates the space so that even if that language is not directly addressed to passers-by, it nevertheless fills the space that they are moving through. The occupation of street space is also evidenced by the responses of passers-by to such ‘occupations,’ where they range from crossing the street, taking a completely different route thus extending the journey to avoid conflict, or in more extreme cases staying at home for prolonged periods of time for fear of contact with others.\footnote{DI, 16-28. This kind of street behaviour in the context of the estate would, I suggest, be considered as ‘common sense’ and thus virtually unnoticed in the everyday life of the estate [for the role of ‘common sense’ as a mechanism in maintaining ideological power in relation to place see my engagement with Tim Cresswell in Chapter 2]. The force of this is portrayed powerfully in a BBC documentary made about racism on a similar estate in the north of the city. In making the programme two Asian investigative reporters posed as a young couple moving to the estate. As they walked around the estate they secretly filmed and recorded their encounters with groups of local people showing their abusive, threatening and violent behaviour towards the reporters. The programme presented these responses entirely in terms of racism. I suggest however, that the programme also demonstrates the particular settlements of place that operate within estate culture and that the aggressive responses of ‘long-term residents’ were at least in part due to the violation of ‘their territory’ (Undercover: Hate on the Doorstep, BBC Panorama, \texttt{http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8303000/8303229.stm}, Accessed 25.02.2014).}

In my own case, I recognise that the sense of discomfort felt when encountering this kind of territorial occupation of the street may well be enhanced by my situation as an ‘outsider’. I am aware that such encounters heighten my own feelings of difference and I am conscious, for example, that my appearance (the way I walk and my style of dress) marks me out as being from elsewhere—I am clearly not a ‘long-term resident’.\footnote{16 The designation ‘long-term resident’ is problematic in that it can suggest a negative representation. However it is difficult to find an alternative phrase that does not have the same implication. Therefore, I will seek to use the designation here with care, specifically to describe people who have lived on the estate for many years (very often all their lives) and would be considered locally as ‘belonging here’—they would be considered an ‘insider’ / ‘one of us’. I will continue to use ‘…” commas to indicate my concerns about the designation.}

Having lived on the estate for a number of years, I began to note as I started the process of ethnographic research, that on a number of occasions I was strongly impressed by the surprising visual impact of everyday scenes observed outside of the estate that served to emphasize the visual distinctiveness between estate and city. The sense of these impressions was of a sudden appearance or a realisation that came without warning and brought into focus something that had been in clear view, but yet had been beyond my sight.\footnote{17 This sense of ‘the remarkable in the mundane’ or the ‘divine’ in the ordinary is discussed by David Silverman in, \textit{A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Qualitative Research}, (London and Los Angeles: SAGE, 2007) pp.11-23.}

Whilst walking in the north of the city, for example, I was struck by the sight of two men, each of about thirty years of age, standing casually in conversation whilst two young children, apparently their own, played on the grass around their feet.\footnote{18 This reflection took place in conversation with Dr Maggie Studholme (Ethnographic notes 16.07.12). Dr Studholme is an anthropologist (recently retired) from the University of Bristol.}

Firstly the ‘visual thought’ (I could not describe it as an articulated thought to begin with, rather more of a...}
visual impact) that accompanied the observation of this cameo scene was the impossibility of such a scene occurring in the Cornwall Estate. The words that spontaneously came to mind as I walked past were, “Wow, you would never see that on the [Cornwall Estate];” such an occurrence would be out of place and, in my experience, would attract a significant amount of attention. A number of visual factors suggest a place specificity of the scene. A striking feature was the easy confidence of the men as they talked which was conveyed through their posture—a self-assured sense of stature, heads up, square shoulders and relaxed conversation. Also apparent was the sense of security and safety conveyed by the children as they played in the space immediately around their fathers’ feet. This performance of ‘easy confidence’ or ‘un-self-aware authority’ contrasts quite notably with the kind of performances that take place on the Cornwall Estate.

The changing sense of place that I have sought to convey here, especially through the visual impact experienced on the journey to the estate, draws attention to the way in which the materiality of the place affects the lived experience of the estate for both residents and visitors alike. In particular, materiality conveys a sense of being either ‘on’ or ‘off’ the estate, a sense which, as I will observe later, contributes to feelings about identity as either an ‘Cornwall-er’ or an ‘outsider’. Other visual factors contribute significantly to the distinctive sense of place. These include observation about the behaviours of people that might be considered characteristic of the estate, and also, as an outsider myself, an awareness of my own appearance that marks me out as different.

This visual journey also illustrates the way in which place is constituted by both material and social elements. Whilst boundaries such as hedges, walls and gates are material, their maintenance and use is a social activity; the meaning associated with place (in this case the delineation of private and public place) is thus established through the interaction of the material and the social. The way in which the material-social interaction is formative in the Cornwall Estate will be explored later in the chapter; at this point I will continue to discuss the physical environment by focusing on the material characteristics of ‘distance’, ‘boundaries’, ‘uniformity’ and ‘public buildings and open spaces’.

**Distance**

In relation to the Cornwall Estate distance functions in two important ways, the distance of the estate itself from the rest of the city and the distances which function internally within the estate. Distances from the rest of the city are both real and perceived. Real distances are about
the location of the estate in relation to the necessities of everyday life such as employment, shops, social centres and schools; all of these distances present significant challenges to daily living on the estate and have done so since it was built.19

The effect of poverty works to exaggerate the impact of distance between places of work and support infrastructures and this has been the case since the beginning of the estate’s life. In 1939 “one family in four in the whole estate was living in poverty, no similar concentration of poverty existed elsewhere in [the city] at the time of the survey.”20 The rehousing of families led to greater living costs and lack of access to work and to the support networks that had been available previously with the result that “their poverty ties them more closely to the estate.”21 Distance from sources of employment had a particular effect on the Cornwall Estate in comparison to similar estates in the north of the city that were located near centres of industry.22 Practical constraints caused a perceived sense of distance that, according to my observations, still exists today and is compounded in a physical sense by the estate’s location on a high plateau and the relatively strong physical boundaries that surround it.23

Internal distances are determined by the overall design of the estate which was based on the garden city model that incorporates a very low density of housing on a circular pattern of roads and crescents.24 The resultant sense of scale has been detrimental to the formation of

19 The Regeneration Framework (2008) identifies this issue stating that “perhaps the biggest single movement issue for the [Cornwall Estate] study area is the lack of connectivity between it and the city centre, and even the surrounding urban fabric. The area is severed on almost all sides, either by topography or highway infrastructure. Even within the study area, it is difficult to get about given the illegible street layout. This situation is at the heart of most of the major movement problems of the area (Regeneration Framework (2008) 06.7, p.7). “Isolation” was also recognised as a significant problem throughout the first decade of the estate’s existence (Jevons and Madge, Housing, p.9).
20 Jevons and Madge, Housing, p76.
21 Jevons and Madge, Housing, p76.
22 Jevons and Madge, Housing, p37. The IRIS Report (2004) identifies distance and lack of connectivity with places of work as an important issue: “[The estate] is … not connected to the world of work nor is the world of work attracted to the area” (IRIS, p.iv). “This creates economic and social isolation from the rest of Bristol,” which can be observed for example in that there are only five businesses registered for VAT in the whole area (IRIS supplement, p.7). The perception of distance was a notable element of the ethnographic walks from the estate to the city centre (Ethno Walk 1, 12-18). ‘Ethno Walk’ references audio recordings of observations and reflections with small groups using walking and visual methods.
23 I have described some of the elements of the ‘strong material boundary’ earlier in this chapter under the title A Distinctive Sense of Place: an ethnographic journey from city to estate. Material boundaries are defined in The Regeneration Framework (2008) which relates distance from the city and difficult transport links with employment and other social issues: “The street layout makes it very difficult to provide a bus service from the heart of the study area that connects to the city centre within a reasonable time. As a result, access to employment is poor within [the Cornwall Estate], contributing to its social problems” (Regeneration Framework (2008), 06.7, p.7).
24 The Regeneration Framework (2008) resonates with my own ethnographic research: “Orientation within the study area, particularly for visitors, is challenging. This is due to a number of townscape characteristics, including a built form with uniform building heights and architectural style, lack of landmarks and little
community in that nodes around which community life would normally function, such as

green spaces, schools and shops have been too dislocated or distanced from each other to be
effective. This problem was noted soon after the estate was built:

The squares are unobtrusive, the public buildings are few and those which
do exist are not all located in the centre; some centres have sacrificed the
sense of unity through their excessive area of unusable open space, and by
the scattering of public buildings too uniformly around their fringes. The
scale is too large for the size of buildings.\textsuperscript{25}

These detrimental aspects of distance in relation to the experience of everyday life were
recognised in the recent ‘regeneration proposals’, a multi-million pound plan to regenerate
the estate. Work was cancelled however when funding collapsed in the financial crisis of
2008.

\textit{Boundaries}

In the earlier section, \textit{A distinctive sense of place}, I argued that the physical environment
engendered a sense of being either ‘on’ or ‘off’ the estate and here I observe that strong
physical boundaries around the estate exaggerate the sense of distance previously described
and compound the feelings of separation and isolation from the rest of the city.\textsuperscript{26} I also
indicated that boundaries function in complex ways within the estate itself, including for
example, the construction of walls and gates to delineate private and public spaces.\textsuperscript{27}

Another significant boundary characteristic of the Cornwall Estate is the particular way in
which the physical boundary around the estate coincides with certain social boundaries,
resulting in very weak social and network connections to other parts of the city and the wider
world. As mentioned previously, the 1939 research observed that the pattern of strong
boundaries and weak social networks tied people more closely to the estate and more recently
a significant study by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in 2010 shows a
similar correlation still exists. They deduce that

\begin{itemize}
\item variation in street width, surface treatments and landscape features across the site (The Regeneration Framework (2008), 09.1, p.14).
\item Jevons and Madge, \textit{Housing}, p23.
\item The Regeneration Framework (2008) states that the estate “is severely disconnected from its surrounding
neighbourhoods to the north, west and south. Topography and bands of mature vegetation, reinforced by a dual
carriage way (A4174) and impermeable industrial estates, represent layered barriers (Regeneration Framework, 09.1, p.14).
\item The Regeneration Framework (2008) observes similar strong privatising boundaries around public buildings:
“These six large sites providing facilities for over 1000 primary school pupils, health care and leisure and local
employment are possibly the most active and alive parts of the estate during day time. However, they tend to
have only one access/egress point, set back from the public street and are therefore hidden from the street,
highly impermeable, acting as barriers to movement” (Regeneration Framework (2008), 09.1, p.14).
\end{itemize}
in social capital terms, [the Cornwall Estate] is considered a highly bonded community. From neighbourhood statistics we know that 95% are White British, almost a fifth of 16–74 year olds are in what the Office for National Statistics terms routine occupations, (compared to 9% nationally), and 6% have never worked (3% nationally). These statistics indicate less opportunity for contact across demographic groups and less influence from ‘outsiders’. 28

In addition the RSA researched the way in which social networks transcend physical boundaries by “overlaying geographic data onto social network data.” 29 Whereas in many communities networks often transcend physical boundaries, 30 it was found that in the Cornwall Estate not only are the networks themselves weak, but that they do not regularly transcend the physical boundaries of the estate. 31

The distinctive and powerful effect of this coinciding of boundaries can be seen by referencing a comparative study carried out by the RSA in New Cross Gate, South East London. Here it was found that the centres of social networks did not coincide with geographical centres so that “social exclusion and geographical exclusion were not the same thing.” 32 As a consequence, those in New Cross Gate who are geographically marginalised are not also socially marginalised. This contrasts sharply to the situation in the Cornwall Estate where those who are socially marginalised are also geographically marginalised. Coinciding material and social boundaries thus form an important aspect of established arrangements of place within the Cornwall Estate; they function to harden boundary conditions and contribute towards strengthening binary characteristics that distinguish the estate from elsewhere. These considerations will be important for discussions in Chapters 6 and 7 about the potential for the transformation of place.

29 Rowson, Connected Communities, p.30.
30 The RSA use the term ‘homophily’ to describe the social arrangement that occurs “when connections between similar people are more common than among dissimilar people” even when those connections cross boundaries such as those that occur around an estate (Rowson, Connected Communities, p.28).
31 Rowson, Connected Communities, p.28. The IRIS Report (2004) presents similar conclusions by analysing different sociological data. “Many residents (67%) living in [the estate] were born and brought up there. The remaining (33%) … 51% had relatives living nearby or they had married into an [estate] family” (IRIS, 2004, p.iii). In extended interview sessions 90% gave ‘family’ as a reason they liked living in the estate, and in an open question 66% said that family and friends were the most important reason for living on the estate (IRIS, 2004, p.29).
32 Rowson, Connected Communities, p.30.
Uniformity

An important feature of the early garden city concept was the intermixing of sizes and styles of housing and a commensurate intermixing of people from different social strata. Like most social housing developments of the 1930s and 1940s, the Cornwall Estate departs from this ideal in that the housing stock is mainly of one kind. Internally houses may be distinguished in that some have a “parlour” (a separate living room) whilst most do not (71.8% are non-parlour). Outwardly all the houses look the same and the only different kind of housing provision consists of flats (5.1% of total provision) and the addition of concrete built houses in the 1960s to extend the western end of the estate. The uniformity of the estate is noted by the Tyndale report of 1946 which states that “parts of the estate are undoubtedly monotonous in appearance; as some of the tenants say, the houses are ‘barrack-like’. The uniformity of materials and elevations is not relieved by any variety in colour.” A similar observation was offered in a chance conversation with G who was amongst those who moved to the estate as part of the slum clearance movement in the 1940s; “At the time it was just houses—there was nothing else there. There weren’t even any roads, just dirt.” The appearance of drab monotony is not though the most serious consequence of physical uniformity of the housing stock. Rather, the occurrence of low-grade and undersized housing as the only available kind of housing across the entire area presents a serious barrier to social mixing and exacerbates the occurrence of ‘homophily’ identified in the RSA research.

Public buildings and open spaces

Public buildings and shops are loosely clustered around five centres on the estate. Public buildings such as community centres, churches and social clubs are all relatively run down.

33 Chen, Cities, pp.36-37.
34 The uniformity of housing stock was a result of a series of housing acts in the 1920s and 1930s and the way in which funds were allocated. After the first wave of housing which was built to a high specification, building companies significantly reduced the funds allocated to each dwelling resulting in a notable reduction of size and quality. Thus the Tyndale report states that in the Cornwall Estate, “6 034 houses built – earliest in 1920, with population of 27 600 by 1939 … The composition of the population and the physical structure of the estate reflect in an interesting way the evolution of the housing policy since the first world war. From East to West, the estate falls into three main social zones. At [KP] are the expensive 1919 and 1923 Act houses. Most of the rest of the houses were built under the ’Wheatley Act’ … the first wide band populated by families from slum clearance and the second on the far western end of the estate from ‘the oldest and worst slum areas’” (Jevons and Madge, Housing, p17, 19). It is very notable that the original “expensive” 1919 and 1923 Housing Act houses are now all privately owned and not considered to be part of the estate.
35 Jevons and Madge, Housing, p21. Housing design and statistical information is provided by the Regeneration Framework, 2008, 10.1, p.20.
36 Jevons and Madge, Housing, p22.
37 EL1, 608-612.
38 In relation to buildings on the estate the IRIS Report (2004) concludes that “most of the shops, service and community facilities are under–maintained, some not fit for purpose, giving the area a tired look” (p.39).
Primary schools and health facilities on the other hand have enjoyed considerable investment over the last ten years and are by far the better quality of building in the area. It is notable that there are no buildings associated with private enterprise anywhere in the estate itself (except for local shops) but that all larger buildings are linked to public sector provision such as health and education or charity sector projects. Local shops are generally inadequate and have a run-down feel, and cluster in areas that many find uninviting or actively avoid.

The consequence of the broad distribution and generally low grade of public buildings and open spaces is that there are no thriving or vibrant centres on the estate. Furthermore, it appears that the complete lack of centres of private enterprise means that almost all public buildings tend to foster a social distinction of service user/service provider where service users are most often associated with ‘long-term residents’ and service providers with ‘outsiders’. Therefore, whilst the positive influence of a well-maintained health centre and primary schools should not be overlooked, the overall arrangement of public buildings and open spaces does little to mitigate the negative physical aspects that I have described.

In this section I have described the material boundary characteristics of the Cornwall Estate by drawing on a range of findings. These suggest that the materiality of the estate, including its location and built environment, plays an important and perhaps determinative role in shaping the overall character of the place. I have observed that important spatial arrangements tend to function negatively in the sense that they exaggerate distance between places and establish or maintain hard boundary characteristics. These negative arrangements of place are observed both within the estate itself as well as in the relationship between the estate and the rest of the city and have been found to have serious detrimental implications for social, economic and relational interconnectivity.

Whilst this section has focused on the materiality of the estate there have been some references to social practices which specifically engage with that materiality, as in the

39 RSA research shows that more than 10% of local people view the main area of shops as a place they actively avoid (RSA report: Social Connections and Wellbeing: why we look at people’s networks, p.11). IRIS Report (2004) notes the poor quality of shops and public facilities compared to a multicultural urban area with similar overall levels of deprivation.

40 The Regeneration Framework (2008) identifies green spaces and parks as poor in quality: “The results from the Quality of Life in Your Neighbourhood Survey, 2005-07 provide some evidence that green open spaces are perceived as being of poor quality and show signs of neglect. An open space quality assessment, forming part of the Parks and Green Space Strategy (Bristol Parks, Culture and Leisure, 2005/06) confirms these perceived quality issues. None of the open spaces within the study area scored ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’ under the citywide approach of assessing green space quality” (Regeneration Framework (2008) 07.3, p.10).

41 The Regeneration Framework (2008) identifies “nodes, mostly performing badly, are formed by the street junctions” and are “are not supported by sufficient local footfall and passing trade” (Regeneration Framework (2008) 09.1, p.14).
maintenance of boundaries around front gardens; the careful (in some cases almost ritual) use of gates and fences to demark private space; and the limited engagement by ‘long-term residents’ in social networks that reach across the boundary of the estate. These references exemplify the generally accepted understanding that place is co-constructed through the dynamic interaction of spatial and social factors. In the cases I have cited the social performance is observed to strengthen the binary function of the boundary and reinforces the sense of distance and separation between the estate and rest of the city. Therefore the next section will focus on an analysis of social boundary characteristics as a way of laying the grounds for exploring the co-constitutive effect of the spatial-social relationships of the Cornwall Estate.

**Social Boundary Characteristics**

This section explores the way in which social factors function and interact to constitute and sustain distinctive characteristics of place within the Cornwall Estate with a particular focus on those characteristics which relate to issues of deprivation and marginalization. An important observation in this section is about the compelling way in which research findings draw attention to facets of everyday life that shape the experience of deprivation, and critically, that these facets of life cannot be understood in isolation; rather in the lived experience of ‘long-term residents’, they combine with other factors so that the dominant pattern of life could be described as an experience of regular and frequent overwhelments. This approach suggests the need to encompass within the scope of research a broad spectrum of social factors if the located nature of deprivation is to be properly explored. Therefore the section includes a broad observation of social issues that feature in the research materials and analysis of the ways in which apparently disparate factors—such as birth weight, diet, home environment, family relationships, smoking and addictions, education, the quality and extent of relational networks, stress and mental health issues, and ability to participate in on-line

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42 The IRIS Report (2004) presents a comparative study of the Cornwall Estate in relation to two multicultural inner city areas both of which have similar levels of overall deprivation to the estate. The IRIS data identifies differences between the areas so that “residents of [the Cornwall Estate] talk primarily about their families and friends … [and] whilst people from other areas spoke about liking diversity, people in the [Cornwall Estate] community appreciated everyone being similar” (IRIS, 2004, p.27).

communication—combine together in seemingly conspiratorial ways to affect the quality of people’s lives.

The challenge of this broad approach is to maintain a meaningful focus and to organise research so that it remains manageable in the context of the overall investigation. It is inevitable that many areas of potential importance to the research arise during the process, and difficult decisions have to be made as to whether they should be included here or deferred for future work. These issues, along with subjects for further research, are outlined and discussed at the end of this chapter.

Given these challenges and associated risks, the focus of research remains however on the ways in which the broad spectrum of social issues contribute to the construction of place and on identifying ways in which place is complicit in establishing and maintaining the lived experience of deprivation. Critically the broad sweep approach enables observation and analysis of the dynamics that occur between different social factors and the resultant impact upon people’s experiences of deprivation. As discussed previously, the dynamic interaction described in ‘between-ness’ enables consideration of the particular relational characteristics that function within the social boundary; that is, it describes the ways in which social arrangements contribute to either the overall hardening or softening of boundary characteristics.

My approach to engaging with the necessary breadth of issues is to draw on two particular themes that run through the research materials, namely those of health and family relationships. Conversations with health workers in the early stages of research strongly suggested that health was a dominant issue in the estate and that frontline healthcare was informed by a wide range of social considerations. Therefore a study of the issues encountered through frontline healthcare should enable a broad engagement both with structural factors such as the implementation of health, economic and educational policy by government, and also with the ways in which those policies impinge upon the everyday lived experience of ‘long-term residents’.

In terms of family relationships research findings suggest the experience of living in an environment of long-term deprivation has a significant influence on the formation of distinctive patterns of relationship within the families of ‘long-term residents’ and that these patterns of family relationship have important implications for the social constructions of place.
The relationship between social issues, such as health and family relations, and the location of deprivation in particular populations has been explored through ‘indices of multiple deprivations’ which are widely used in mapping poverty in the U.K. They are introduced here because they define a standard range of measures for specific populations of between 1000 and 1500 people that are generally accepted as a standard framework for describing levels of deprivation across regions.  

The IMD statistics show that in the city in which the Cornwall Estate is located there are nine Super Output Areas (LSOA)\(^{45}\) that fall in the most deprived 2% of population in England, and that four of these comprise the entirety of the Cornwall Estate. Notably, of the remaining five LSOAs, four relate to marginal white estates similar to the Cornwall Estate, three of which refer to the adjacent estate.\(^{46}\) Thus IMD statistics indicate that in the case of this city, there is a strong correlation between multiple deprivation and specific geographic locations and furthermore that the types of places that are found to be amongst the most deprived are ‘white estates’.\(^{47}\) The aim of the qualitative research discussed in this section is to observe the inter-relations between these socially prescribed domains and by analysing these inter-relations to argue that deprivation is not solely the result of an accumulation of negative social measures in a population, but rather is a complex web of interdependent and mutually reinforcing factors that seem to conspire together so that the lived experience of those within the location is one of a ‘vicious circle’ of deprivation. Furthermore, I will argue throughout this chapter that the accumulation of negative IMD measures in a single location is not due to some kind of happenstance, but that a qualitative approach to research shows that social factors relate the lived experience of deprivation to a function of the place itself.

\(^{44}\) Indices of deprivation combine thirty statistical indicators to produce an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Subsets of these indicators are used to rank areas within seven different ‘domains’ of deprivation: income; employment; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training; barriers to housing and services; crime; and living environment (Indices of Deprivation 2010: Bristol Summary (South West Observatory Core Unit; June 2011, p.1. www.swo.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alId=48864 [accessed 04.01.2014]). IMD are also published by the city council in, Deprivation in Bristol 2010 (Published by Bristol City Council) http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/deprivation (accessed 04.01.2014).

\(^{45}\) “Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were developed to provide geographies that are of approximately consistent size across the country, and whose boundaries would not change over time. Each Lower Layer SOA has a minimum population of 1,000 and a mean population of 1,500, and they are constrained by the boundaries of the wards used for 2001 Census outputs” (Indices of Deprivation, 2010, p.1).

\(^{46}\) Deprivation in Bristol 2010, p.5.

\(^{47}\) Quantitative analysis can provide detailed and significant information about a place or social group. However in my experience, it is not uncommon to see quantitative analysis such as the IMD misused by selectively taking statistical data to strengthen negative stereotyping of a place. This tends to project negative representations of places thus reinforcing problematic characteristics of place in the process. For an overview of the development of poverty measures in the UK over the last fifty years see http://www.poverty.ac.uk/definitions-poverty.
The opportunity to investigate health issues in some depth opened up through virtue of my living and ministering on the estate, where this led to a working friendship with a local general practitioner (GP) and an opportunity to conduct a number of semi-formal extended conversations both with him and another GP in his practice. The most insightful contact with the GP focused around the interface of his own personal experience of health care over eighteen years on the estate and the statistical research (including IMD statistical data) that he used as the basis of a presentation to groups of ministerial students who visit the estate on a regular basis. In our discussion therefore, we were able to explore the relationship between the quantitative analysis of health and social issues and the GP’s observations of the testimonies of people about their daily life on the estate and their own lived experience of deprivation. It is this conversation, which took place over a number of sessions that comprises the central part of the following narrative.

In the words of the GP there is in existence a “vicious cycle” where health and mental health problems, domestic breakdown, the policies and practices of statutory agencies, educational development, and social relations conspire together in very complex ways. One example of this relates to the high incidence of low birth weight on the estate caused by a number of factors, significantly the prevalence of smoking (over 40% of households have a smoker in them), where babies born to smokers are on average 300 grams lighter than those born to non-smokers. However “if you are a young mum, poorly, poor nutrition, stressed probably … then all those factors [in addition to smoking] lead to smaller babies … and there is an association between low birth weight and development and probably intellect as well.”

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48 Ethnographic data relates to semi-structured conversations with the two general practitioners who work at the surgery on the estate. Data also includes research papers by each of these GPs relating to aspects of health on the estate; ongoing encounter with GPs and others in the field of health; and a joint presentation to ministerial students which I undertook with a GP.

49 The statistics are drawn from the UK department of health, the city council’s ‘wellbeing data’, and the city’s Primary Care Trust and describes the health profile of ‘long-term residents’ in relation to the rest of the city in a number of key areas. The data is presented by the GP in the form of an unpublished presentation, *Health Issues in an Urban Priority Area* (April 2011) and an unpublished essay, ‘Teenage Pregnancy: A Challenge for the Church’ (2011). Areas analysed include educational qualifications, child abuse and child protection, teenage pregnancy and abortion, smoking, community disorder, crime, drugs, birth weight, breast feeding, obesity, diet, exercise, life expectancy, mortality rates related to heart disease, cancer and COPD, self-harm, disability, levels of trust in the community and dental health. Ethnographic material was collected from other health professionals on the estate and the narratives that emerge are similar in content to those I have included here. I have drawn on this account because of its clarity and the substantial experience of the GP himself. The additional ethnographic evidence tends to substantiate these findings (EL1, 296-320, 441-475; GP2). GP2 references a semi-structured interview with Dr.S. (university researcher in social medicine and GP).

50 EL2, 520.
51 EL2, 484.
52 EL2, 318-320, 360-366.
53 EL2, 495.
54 EL2, 484-489.
In addition to the high incidence of low birth weight there are other key factors which are likely to affect the development of babies. These include the probability that their mothers will be very young, often in their teens or early twenties and often with two or three children by different partners—known locally as “partner churning;” they will be less likely to breast feed and have less support from health visitors or parents; mothers will often have poor diets and be suffering fatigue, and have a much higher likelihood of domestic violence than elsewhere in the city, since in the Cornwall Estate domestic violence is considered both “normal behaviour” in many families and a “private matter;” mothers and babies will be more likely to be in unstable relationships with fathers and wider families and also have less stable and inadequate housing arrangements.

Because of the high number of domestic violence incidents, health visitors spend much of their time involved with case studies related to this and typically are unable to spend as much time with new mothers as in other “middle class areas.” Distrust of social workers, and to a lesser extent teachers, by ‘long-term residents’ makes supportive intervention for mothers and children less likely and more difficult.

The GP reflects through his long experience of estate practice that children are brought to see a doctor with issues that are a direct result of these multiple issues. For example he comments, “I saw a patient yesterday (a child). She (her mum) thought she had ADHD because she was basically tearing the house up, ripping books up.” After some minutes of conversation the GP concluded that the erratic and destructive behaviour (“which could not have been ADHD”) coincided with the period when the child’s father left home. This, according to the GP, is not unusual; “I mean I probably see three or four mums a week because they say their kids are basically hypo … [by which I mean] really, really difficult behaviour in quite young kids causing bruising on their mums and destroying stuff at home.”

56 EL2, 208-214.
57 EL2, 210.
58 EL2, 520-523.
59 EL2, 523-525.
60 EL2, 85-100, 108-115.
61 EL2, 160-169, 521-530.
62 EL2, 218-220.
63 EL2, 225-231.
64 EL2, 234-235.
Conversations with this local GP were illuminating in the sense that they drew together informed perspectives about the way in which changing political and economic factors affected the wellbeing of his patients with the personal concern of a doctor who had come to know many of his patients and their families intimately. Indeed, that the interest of this GP went beyond professional interest to a human concern and compassion for those on the estate has been reflected in his training and licensing as an Anglican priest in the parish; this expresses a growing conviction that care for ‘long-term residents’ needs to extend beyond the boundaries of professional GP practice. The sense he communicates through our conversations is thus both professional and compassionate, at times deeply personal, and the resulting narrative presents a significantly different perspective to the statistical analysis of multiple deprivation and offers a textured and intricate picture of the complex and tangled issues which shape the lives of ‘long-term residents’.

As outlined above, an important aspect of his narrative is that ‘long-term residents’ regularly experience certain social patterns that would be considered unusual in other parts of the city. Political and economic factors are portrayed not as distant and irrelevant but are seen to have a direct bearing on the actual experience of people’s lives sometimes with quite dramatic and negative consequences. The political and economic aspects of the narratives are often intertwined with accounts that relate to personal circumstances, including relationships with family members and the local community, and it is this combining of the political/economic and personal/community which is important for understanding the constitution of social patterns which are characteristic of the estate.

The resulting picture is of people whose lives are dominated by long-term struggles with deeply entrenched and complicated issues with little expectation that circumstances will improve or that individuals themselves are sufficiently empowered to change them. Critically, the professional-compassionate narrative of the GP makes an explicit link between this kind of deeply entrenched deprivation and the geography of the estate itself; it thus complements the perspective given by analysis of IMD statistics by offering a narrative which humanizes the account and importantly, in humanizing also makes it more complex in the sense that the personal stories portray the sense of ‘vicious circle’ which is sustained by a dynamic and intricate interweaving of multiple factors.65

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65 This narrative of a ‘vicious cycle’ was repeated by other health care workers I talked to in the course of research (EL3, 232-247, 252-269; EL2, 449-550).
Social, economic and political elements of the ‘vicious cycle’ and the particular way in which these influence ‘estate families’ can be seen in the previously mentioned high incidence of lower than average birth weights. Low birth weight itself results from a number of social conditions and behaviours connected with the family and home environment, a history of poor education, physical poverty and low paid work and lack of work. Statutory organizations in the area such as social services, schools and health care providers are chronically overwhelmed by the complex social conditions resulting in a tendency to focus on urgent or priority needs rather than tackling the long-term underlying causes of problems. These priorities are normally determined by the policies of central government rather than the particular circumstances of the estate itself and are prone to a culture of ‘short termism’ and frequent change. In the narrative account cited here, health visitors spend much of their time on work related to domestic violence and associated multi-agency case reviews rather than promoting health amongst expectant mothers and breast feeding amongst new mothers on the estate. In addition, there is a clear correlation between low birth weight and its associated causes, and physical, mental and social problems that children suffer in early and later life which in turn tends to cause further social and relational dysfunction in their own families, thus making low birth weight more likely in the next generation. In this way the complex set of interconnected social components tend to establish a cyclical pattern of cause and effect, of which low birth weight is one factor.

The experience of social factors relating to issues such as economics, education, health and housing seem not however to be the only elements that sustain the cyclical patterns of chronic deprivation. The research findings, including a number of personal testimonies, suggest that patterns of relational conflict and relational breakdown within families are a common experience amongst a significant number of ‘long-term residents’ and that such conflict appears to deepen or exacerbate the sense of the chronic nature or ‘vicious cycle’ of struggle.

Family breakdown and relational dysfunction is, of course, not unusual in wider society and it is important in the context of this study not to make unwarranted distinctions with respect to

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66 EL2, 484-489.
67 This has been frequently testified to in conversations with health visitors, GPs, social workers, teachers, school governors and youth workers who work on the estate, for example BC1, 670-677. BC1 is the reference designated to field notes made at the Bread Café.
68 EL2, 158-169, 519-530.
69 EL1, 486-526, 812-859, 1137-1154, 861-880; BC1, 168-201.
‘long-term residents’. However, testimonies gathered through the course of research, as well as other supporting evidence, does indicate that patterns of serious relational stress and family breakdown were a common experience of ‘long-term residents’ and furthermore that certain kinds of dysfunctional relational behaviour, such as domestic violence or the violence associated with long-running family feuds, and teenage sexual relationships that result in high incidences of teenage pregnancy are more prevalent amongst estate families than elsewhere in the city.  

Of particular interest to my own enquiry is evidence in the research findings of frequent associations in the testimonies of ‘long-term residents’ between issues that are linked with communities that experience chronic multiple deprivation and the breakdown of family relationships including divorce and separation as well as the exclusion of adult children from the home. Issues of deprivation that were most comm only talked about in association with relationships were unemployment; serving prison sentences; long-term addiction to drugs or alcohol; premature death and suicide within the family; domestic violence; loss of home, usually through eviction; chronic and serious illness; and serious financial poverty including the inability to buy food or heat the home. In many cases people’s testimonies indicated that they were experiencing more than one of these issues at any given time.

70 Deprivation In Bristol 2010: The Mapping of Deprivation Within Bristol Local Authority Area (Bristol City Council 2010).

71 BC1, 66-78, 431-460, 179-187; AC, 130-149, 283-291, 623-626. The following is an extract from a record of a conversation in the Bread Cafe about employment: “R works in A…. – about 15 miles away – until recently cycled there (just got car) and his job is cleaning the porto-loos once they come back from events (he has no sense of smell which helps). S [his partner] can’t find a job – desperately short of money – would like to stack shelves, but can’t find anything that she can actually travel to. Unable to go further than Bri or Bedm. Due to lack of finances, her phone and broadband have been disconnected – which makes life more difficult, because she can’t look for jobs on the internet or call people about jobs that she does see” (BC1, 455-456).

72 BC1, 188-194; AC, 21-24, 63-66, 130-149, 150-156, 305-308, 350-355, 743-750, 831-839; DI, 341-394, 1060-1069. The following is an extract from a journal entry recording encounters in the Advice Centre: “Young chap (mid 20s?) comes in. Has a cup of tea and leans on the counter talking to me whilst he waits for a talk with B or P. … First story he tells is that he has just been made redundant after been in a job for a long time. Has a partner – and two children – 4 and 7 years old. Stuck with benefits – claims to be living just on child benefit for the last 3 months … As he talks it becomes clear that things have not been quite as straightforward. He was arrested just after the birth of his second child (now 4) and when he was 11 days old went to prison – ended up being there for between 18-24 months. Got in a fight when he was drunk and was convicted of assault and burglary – none of which he can remember. When inside did some extra English exams – and also some work. Gave all his earnings whilst in prison to charity (difficult to believe?) because he felt so guilty. Now he is out, wants to make a bit of a go of it, hence the job as a fork lift driver” (AC 130-144).


74 EL1, 322-350, 490-526; BC1 118-151; AC, 74-78, 116-127, 831-839.

75 AC, 21-24, 63-66; DI, 341-394, 1060-1069.

76 EL1, 5-16; AC, 300-315, 355-357, 618-621, 918-923.

77 EL1, 836-839; BC1, 168-151; AC, 448-481, 740-742; DI, 316-376, 1071-1077.

78 BC1, 436-460; AC, 135-137, 150-164, 448-453, 649-653, 918-923.
Whilst the research findings do not provide detailed evidence about the particular ways in which these everyday experiences of deprivation affect family relationships, it is clear from many of the narratives that relational stress and breakdown compound the problems of deprivation and conversely that deprivation increases the experience of relational stress and is a factor in relational breakdown.

The sense of this association can be found in the following narratives summaries that were recounted to me as I got to know people over many months. S is a member of the Bread Café and began to talk about her situation as we made bread together. She is with her second partner having nine children between them, one of whom has cerebral-palsy and another with behavioural problems. Their joint income is very low, S’s partner has a minimum-wage job which involves a twenty mile round trip by bicycle every day and S herself works part time as a school playground assistant. She is unable to find full-time work within walking distance, and because of their lack of finances their phone and broadband connection has been disconnected so that searching and applying for jobs has become extremely difficult. S confesses that she “very often just feels like somehow giving up or running away, feeling that I just can’t keep going or can’t face things.”

J is a woman in her late fifties living with a reclusive older man and has been out of employment for many years. She talked about events that took place over twenty years ago when “stuff was just building up and getting worse and worse all around me … it’s just like a volcano goes off.” In trying to escape from the problems she walked out on her husband and children; “I know it’s my fault … I know I did wrong.” She moved in with an older man R: “There’s no relationship there … you know what I mean … it’s not a proper marriage … we’re not really even in love … it is just kind of convenient.” Twenty years later J still finds herself completely shunned by her three children, two of whom live on the estate and the third “somewhere [just off the estate] but I don’t know the address.” She continues to be “devastated” by their rejection of her, as when, for example, one of them recently returned a birthday card and money she had sent to try to build a bridge.

H is a woman of about forty years of age who would frequently spend time with us whilst we were making bread. H talked about how she had suffered from bipolar disease, how her first husband died when he was about forty years old and that her second partner was “a very bad man” and spent some time in prison. H shared about how she is lonely and often depressed and confesses, “I don’t trust people anymore because I’ve been taken advantage of so many

79 BC1, 429-475.
80 EL1, 812-859.
times. When I had money people wanted to be my friend, but it is all gone now—I have nothing left and no one wants to be my friend.”

T is a man in his late thirties and a regular visitor to the Advice Centre. He has little sense about how to care for himself and this along with his small stature makes him vulnerable to abuse by those around him. He is often attacked and robbed of cash, especially on days when he collects his benefit payment from the post office. On one occasion T had spent most of the morning with us in the Advice Centre and, because he had no money, was given a bag of food to take away. T left the Advice Centre about midday but after five minutes came running back pursued by a younger man in a hoodie who actually had his hand in T’s pocket. After he had recovered somewhat from the shock, I escorted T down the road. This was an enlightening journey as after only about one hundred metres someone called out from one of the houses, “Hi [T], what you doin’?” This was T’s niece, and the house belonged to his sister. It was clear however from the body language that T was not welcome to stay and furthermore that he had no expectation of a welcome. T in fact has a number of family members on the estate but has himself been made homeless and is currently living in a shelter; his experience is one of chronic and serious poverty and loneliness.

These research findings, including the four briefly summarized testimonies, suggest that experiences of chronic deprivation by ‘long-term residents’ are extremely complex in nature and that they are intertwined with relational issues that can be seen to further complicate and compound the effects of deprivation. Relational breakdown in the context of deprivation on the estate is seen for example to have significant bearing on physical and mental health, security of accommodation, security of financial income, and levels of personal and social wellbeing. Furthermore, the narratives indicate ways in which the stress associated with long-term deprivation can lead to relational breakdown or dysfunction within families. A sense of desperation is expressed through S’s statement that she “very often just feels like somehow giving up or running away” and J’s confession that “stuff was just building up and getting worse and worse all around me … it’s just like a volcano goes off.” Similarly a profound sense of loneliness is expressed in H’s testimony that “I don’t trust people anymore” and T’s evident alienation from his own family.

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81 BC1, 179-199.
82 It should be noted that the research findings suggest that patterns of resilience have developed within families and between families that are a direct and positive response to challenging life situations, including such things as the use of humour, care and generosity, and song writing and music (BC1, 84-108, EL1, 385-410, 1137-1154, 1278-1281).
At the beginning of this section I suggested that everyday life for many on the Cornwall Estate was shaped by the experience of ‘regular and frequent overwhelmings’. In drawing some initial conclusions about the nature of social boundary characteristics, the quantitative and qualitative findings discussed indicate ways in which social mechanisms contribute to experiences that are overwhelming. Firstly I propose that the previously referenced domains of deprivation should not be understood as having a limited or discrete spheres of influence but may be better conceived in terms of spheres of power which react dynamically with other social spheres so that their combined effect is to either detract from or enhance the power of social arrangements in a location. This effect and its relation to the materiality of place will be discussed in the next section under the heading of Relations of unequal power. Secondly I propose that in the case of the Cornwall Estate the high incidence of deprivation in all, or almost all, social domains has resulted in a long-term and serious compounding of deprivation with the result that structured social provision such as education, health and welfare, and crime prevention is failing to achieve substantial change and in most cases is simply managing the symptoms of deprivation. In addition serious, chronic multiple deprivation has had a significant lasting, detrimental and sometimes drastic effects on the quality and wellbeing of family relationships thus adding further levels of complexity both to the experience of individuals as well as the wider community. The overall sense, at least for a significant minority, is of a ‘vicious cycle’ of deprivation with little prospect of escape. Thirdly, an important observation in relation to place is that these patterns of social deprivation appear to be located. I have already explored some of the possible reasons for this particular relationship of deprivation to physical location of the Cornwall Estate and will discuss this in more detail later. However, an important observation that emerges from the research findings is that there is a direct association in the narratives between people’s experiences and the Cornwall Estate itself; almost without exception their stories are ‘placed’ so that the life of the estate is an important and active component of the story. The narratives I have referred to are not, for example, narratives of movement around the country or between countries, or even around the city, they are all narratives that take place within the estate itself, or in a few cases within a radius of about one mile, even when the narratives include previous generations. Thus the overall picture is one in which social arrangements, including economic and political factors, are seen to be shaped by multiple interdependent components which interact together in complex and dynamic ways to function consistently and strongly to the detriment of ‘long-term residents’ in particular. In addition the occurrence of ‘vicious cycles’ as a
common social experience is seen to have significant implications for the constitution of the place itself.

Social mechanisms that I have not thus far considered in this section, but which can be influential in the shaping of place are representation, stereotyping and cognitive mapping. I consider them briefly here as a sub-category of the social boundary.

**Difference: Representation, Stereotyping and the Formation of Place**

The ethnographic, statistical, and historical research I have drawn on in this chapter shows that the correspondence between social identity and location is particularly strong in relation to the Cornwall Estate and furthermore that the representation or stereotyping of both the place and the people is strongly negative. Negative representations of the estate were recognised as problematic within a few years of the first residents moving in. This was identified as early as the period from 1932 to 1935 in the university-based research by Jevons and Madge:

The sense of loneliness and neglect was reflected during this period in acts of adolescent hooliganism and crime which won for this district a bad name from which it still suffers. The stigma of this reputation has left a lasting impression on the tenants, and has undoubtedly prejudiced people’s willingness to move there. Better-off families still prefer to settle in Southmead … When the [FW] community centre was opened the occasion was wisely taken for renamining the district [FP], to replace the earlier name of [Cornwall Estate], which had achieved a certain notoriety throughout the city.

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84 James Tucker cites a number of cases in the years leading up to 1966 in which housing officers working for the City Corporation allocated housing to people according to their hygiene and perceived class status. The aim was not to put the ‘wrong people’ in the ‘wrong places’ (Tucker, *Honourable*, pp.51-52, 57, 74-76). According to Tucker the estate was divided into five separate areas where people from one area would not associate with people from another. Tucker quotes one man from the western end of the estate referring to an area about 500 metres away: “We call it ‘duffers’ paradise down there … (Duffers are debt collectors). Down there you get the manual workers, It’s all working class … I was in school with some of them down there. The people with brains came from this part” (Tucker, *Honourable*, p.64).

85 Southmead is a similar estate built in the north of the city.

86 Jevons and Madge, *Housing*, pp.80, 82. James Tucker discusses the renaming of the estate and its felt effects in the years leading up to 1966. He cites examples of people not being interviewed for jobs because they had a Cornwall Estate address and others who refused to associate with people because they were from the Cornwall Estate (Tucker, *Honourable*, pp.63-64).
The formal renaming of the estate has resulted in a rather unusual situation whereby its official name is used in formal documents, maps and on road signs whereas its original name, the Cornwall Estate, is the name which remains in common daily use. The dual name can lead to confusion or can still evoke strong feeling. I have, for instance, on numerous occasions, been angrily rebuked by one local church member who was an early resident on the estate for using the ‘wrong name’ for the estate; he threatens to refuse to talk to anyone who does not use the ‘correct’ name.

The popular name of the estate is commonly used as a derogatory term and the abbreviation ‘Cornwall-er’ is used by residents and others as a reference to both identity and location. This designation is referenced without fail in every report about life on the estate. For example, the Connected Communities report introduces the estate by saying:

Locally, [Cornwall Estate] residents are known as [‘Cornwall-ers’], and there appears to be a disparity between the internal and external perceptions of the area, captured by the fact that being [a ‘Cornwall-er’] can be both a badge of honour and a judgemental label. 87

The IRIS report identifies this “labelling” both by the press and within the city generally as a term which “reflects significant awareness of ‘turf’ boundaries, as well as uncomplimentary attitudes towards those who live in the [Cornwall Estate] community.” 88 They quote examples from young people interviewed in the course of their research, including this recollection from a nineteen year old woman:

I remember when I was younger I went to this party in [a neighbouring area] … I was the only one there from [the Cornwall Estate] and they knew that. They were really bitchy to me and snooty and I left really early and never went to anyone’s house off the estate again, until I left school. 89

On a wider scale, the distinctive culture of white council estates across the country is stereotyped in popular culture by the term ‘Chav’. As a negative and demeaning representation of ‘white working class’ or ‘estate class’, Chav conjures up a specific group of identity markers including dress, language and grammar, education, body weight and work habits. 90 Author and political commentator Owen Jones argues that the identification ‘Chavs’ relates to the demonization of the white working class and he introduces the emotional power of the stereotype by relating the example of a London based gym that in 2009 advertised a

87 Rowson, Connected Communities, p.18.
89 IRIS, 2004, p.62. For a similar sense of cognitive mapping see my previous comments in relation to observations by Lynsey Hanley (Hanley, Estates, pp.148-184).
90 Hanley provides an extended definition of ‘Chav’ with particular emphasis on ‘Chav clothing’ (Hanley, Estates, pp.176-180).
boxing course as “Chav Fighting.” The manager of the gym communicates the “depth of hatred that inspired the class” as he explains who Chavs are:

They tend to live in England but would probably pronounce it ‘Engerland.’ They have trouble articulating themselves and have little ability to spell or write. They love their pit bull dogs as well as their blades. And would happily ‘shank’ you if you accidentally brush past them or look at them in the wrong way. They tend to breed by the age of fifteen and spend most of their days trying to score ‘super-skunk’ or whatever ‘gear’ they can get their sweaty teenage hands on. If they are not institutionalised by twenty-one they are considered pillars of strength in the community or get ‘much respect’ for being lucky.  

Even when the stereotyping of people and place does not carry the strong negative emotions exemplified in these comments, negative stereotyping is so much a part of daily discourse that it goes apparently unnoticed. During a conversation in the Advice Centre for example, one man in his mid-sixties talked about growing up near the estate; his home was just a quarter of a mile from the estate and whilst he was free to go anywhere he liked on his bike, he was “not allowed to cross the road into the [Cornwall Estate] because it was a dangerous place.”  

I also note my own easy participation in this discourse as my instinctive response to the news that a catering business is relocating to the estate was, “If you want to kill a business bring it to the [Cornwall Estate].”  

Whilst these everyday representations of the estate seem fairly innocuous they form part of a wider spectrum of representation that conveys a range of emotion ranging from a low-level anxiety to an almost malicious hatred. General anxiety is conveyed for example through the question frequently asked by first-time visitors to the estate, “Is it OK to leave my car here?”  

In contrast to these accounts are the emotionally charged opinions of G who talked to me from his tea van that was parked next to the river in an area of light industry in the east of the city. When he was young G’s parents were “forced” to move to the Cornwall Estate as part of the slum clearance programme. The family stayed less than a year; “it was so bad that we

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92 AC, 861-863. AC is the reference designated to field notes made at the Advice Centre.
93 EL1, 361-364.
94 EL1, 248-249.
went to live in [B].”

Speaking about the slum area they were moved from G states: “We were community down there. Yes it was very poor, but a good place to live. [The Cornwall Estate] was a real contrast – just wasn’t a good place to be.”

G’s emotion is apparent as he describes an encounter with some “estate kids”:

There was this one big mouthy bloke … I said to him …, ‘Oi you, come with me!’ We went round the back of the stables …, ‘If you give me any fxxxxx grief today I’ll smash you in. You think you’re fxxxxx tough – I went to [B] school in the days we rioted’.

This encounter clearly happened some decades ago, but in conversation it was apparent that it had become a central part of the way that G narrated his relationship to the estate, namely one of conflict in which he personally came out victorious. In contrast to the success that G had achieved in his own life, he points to “the youth” of the [Cornwall Estate] as being “the problem”:

… [T]hey expect to be given everything. You know what we say in [the City]? The scum floats to the surface … people in the [Cornwall Estate] are scum. You will never see that area change. They could change it if they wanted. They have been given huge amounts of money in that place – but nothing changed.

The emotional nature of the stereotyping which is evidenced within the research findings is an important indicator that mechanisms of social and spatial exclusion are functioning in relation to the estate. I have argued in Chapter 2 that ‘taboo’ and ‘disgust’ are important social-spatial mechanisms which are fuelled and sustained by emotions such as anxiety or fear in relation to people of difference. David Sibley argues that “feelings about others” is an important route into understanding the “problem of social and spatial exclusion” and that “the resistance to a different sort of person moving into the neighbourhood stems from feelings of anxiety, nervousness or fear.”

Representation and stereotyping can therefore be understood as significant factors in the construction and maintenance of the spatial characteristics of the estate. Of particular note is the strong association of specific people with specific location implicit within the representation, as seen in the designation ‘Cornwall-er’, and also the consistent part played

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96 EL1, 613-614.
97 EL1, 615-619.
98 EL1, 638-644.
99 EL1, 650-657.
100 Sibley, Geographies, p.3.
101 The use of stereotypes to establish strong associations between people and place is of particular note in a number of studies of estates. Hanley for instance discusses the “pervasive stereotype which suggests all council-estate dwellers are ignorant and that all ignorant people dwell on council estates” (Hanley, Estates, p.170).
by stereotyping throughout the developmental trajectory of the estate, evidenced for example through the attempt to change its name within the first ten years of its life. In addition there is substantial correspondence between the research findings and the arguments presented in Chapter 2 that establish a correlation between stereotyping and the formation of place. This correlation is expressed by Sibley who states:

Stereotypes play an important part in the configuration of social space because of the importance of distanciation in the behaviour of social groups, that is, distancing from others who are represented negatively, and because of the way in which group images and place images combine to create landscapes of exclusion.\(^{102}\)

This relationship between representation and stereotype and the configuration of social space is integral in the formation and maintenance of the normative spatiality of the estate.\(^{103}\) This understanding has important bearing on the argument developed through the course of this study about redemptive place and its particular expression in the Cornwall Estate. In contrast to the exclusionary effects of negative representation and stereotype, redemptive places act precisely to resist or interrupt mechanisms that maintain distance between people of difference, whether that difference is physical, social or representational; a central feature of redemptive place being ‘proximity,’ or the practice of ‘presence’ to the other. It is clear from the analysis presented in this section that the ‘practice of presence’ in the Cornwall Estate will necessarily entail confronting the strong spatialising forces of representation and stereotyping.

**Cognitive Mapping**

Closely related to the concepts of representation and stereotyping are ideas about cognitive or mental mapping.\(^{104}\) Although cognitive mapping had not been part of the initial focus for research, the analysis of research materials suggests that it has a potentially important

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function in relation to the formation of place and that further research is therefore warranted. Cognitive mapping may be understood as an inner sense of spatiality and defined as the “mental device by which individuals acquire, order and recall information about their spatial environment, in the process of which they distinguish and define themselves spatially in relation to a vast, terrifying, unknowable world ‘out there’.”

Currently I know of no research about the ways in which cognitive or mental mapping functions within the Cornwall Estate or other predominantly white marginal estates. It is clear that such research would need to be sensitively designed if it were to discover the distinctive characteristics of cognitive space held within the community and my own research was not carried out with this aim in mind. However, some patterns have emerged in the research findings which I present briefly here to show ways in which these distinctive features of cognitive maps might be understood.

There are indications of unusually strong associations between senses of identity and belonging and the geography of the estate as exemplified in the heightened emotions associated with the historic connections of families to the estate; in the high proportion of residents that remain on the estate throughout their lives; and in the presence of extended families within the estate.

In addition, there is a strong sense of privacy associated with family homes; the private nature of family-space is seen when the whole family gathers for doctors’ visits to a terminally ill family member, in contrast to middle class areas where the patient would tend to be left alone with a doctor; or in the perception that other people, especially social workers and teachers, are not generally welcome into private family space even if it relates to domestic violence or violence against children. This sense of private home space may have some bearing on attitudes that have been observed towards domestic


106 EL1, 606-678; IRIS, 2004, p.62. This distinction corresponds to findings by the RSA that portrays the estate as a “highly bonded community … who feel a strong identification with the [Cornwall Estate].” The report observes “several generations staying in the same area, often with the implicit assumption that ‘those who grew up on the estate, stayed on the estate’.” (Rowson, Connected Communities, p.28). I suggest this corresponds with the notion of distinctive social and cognitive mapping that configures strong, private family space in contrast to weak, public social place.

107 EL2, 129-134.

108 EL2, 97-98, 110-115, 149-152.
violence, neglect and domestic harm of children.\(^{109}\) This strong association of family-space as private, together with generally small and weak networks outside of the family\(^{110}\) suggests a cognitive mapping that exaggerates the strength and proximity of family and home and underrepresents the presence and strength of wider social and friendship networks.\(^{111}\) Whilst there is insufficient evidence from the research findings to draw any substantial conclusions about the relationship between cognitive mapping and the spatial form of the Cornwall Estate, there are indicators that further research into this relationship could contribute important insights into the normative spatial arrangements of the estate and could offer a particular understanding of the mechanisms that sustain hard social boundaries. In this instance a greater knowledge of cognitive mapping would contribute to a better comprehension of the normative arrangements of the estate as well as being helpful in further understanding the specific configuration of redemptive-place within the estate.

In addition to the initial evidence present within the ethnographic research findings, the importance of cognitive mapping is emphasised by the research and personal testimony of Lynsey Hanley. As someone who was born and raised on a white marginal estate and now writes as a sociologist and social commentator, Hanley describes the cognitive map of an ‘estate person’ as “the wall in the head.”\(^{112}\) She argues that it combines with social and representational elements, stating for example that

> the problem with having a wall in the head is that it makes you look thick to people who don’t have one, or whose walls were only knee-high and could be jumped over without much effort. Invisible barriers to knowledge, self-awareness and social mobility seem to irritate those who think they don’t

\(^{109}\) The privacy of ‘home space’ seems to support “a kind of inverse law which means that around areas like this that people think that [domestic violence] is normal” EL2, 111-113.

\(^{110}\) The RSA report (Cornwall Estate findings long version p.22) shows that “people's support systems are not joined up; most networks are very small and consist of only a few people” (Rowson, Connected Communities, p.22). These findings are supported by qualitative evidence in relation to the Christian Advice Centre that I explore further in Chapter 6.

\(^{111}\) One possible way of investigating cognitive mapping within a community (for example in relation to perceptions of private and public places) might be to research levels of trust between people. The relationship between trust and the formation of place is implied in the IRIS Report (2004) which draws on Home Office findings in stating that people with qualifications had higher levels of trust and were more likely to participate in civic activities than those with no qualifications. “Similarly, the likelihood of showing increased trust and participation rose with levels of educational attainment. Those with a degree were more likely to have higher levels of trust and participation than those who had GCSEs/A levels” (IRIS 2004, p.15). The report shows a strong correlation between very low educational achievement on the estate (the lowest in the city with only 2% achieving A-levels) and low levels of community involvement (36% had community involvement). This compared with another multicultural inner-city area with equal overall levels of multiple deprivation, but better educational attainment with 45% having A-levels. Here 72% were involved in community (IRIS, 2004, pp. v, 15).

\(^{112}\) Hanley, Estates, p.176.
exist, to the extent that they will happily describe walled-in people as ‘scum’ or, in the current argot, ‘chav scum’.

The “wall in the head” is a central part of Hanley’s testimony as she describes the struggle she faced as a student as she sought to integrate into college and find acceptance in the world outside of her estate.

In this first part of the chapter I have discussed spatial characteristics of the material and social aspects of the Cornwall Estate including the function of representation, stereotyping and cognitive mapping. In the second part of the chapter I explore ways in which the material and social interact together and argue that it is their combined effect, rather than their independent qualities, that are most important for the formation of the place itself. I discuss these primary characteristics of place under the headings of ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundary characteristics.’

The Primary Characteristics of Place in the Cornwall Estate

My method thus far has been to investigate the material and social boundaries as if they were discrete entities. Whilst helpful for the purpose of analysis this approach does not accurately reflect the co-constructed nature of place itself, which describes the formation of place through the dynamic and interdependent relations between the material and the social realms. It is this notion of co-construction that I focus on in this section, specifically proposing that the combination of material and social boundaries on the Cornwall Estate result in a distinctive settlement of place that is characterized in terms of relations of unequal power and hard boundary characteristics.

Relations of Unequal Power

This section of analysis focuses on three separate accounts recorded in the ethnographic diary, all occurring within a few days of each other. The accounts may be considered as

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113 Hanley, Estates, p.176.
114 ‘Power’ is a general term and may be variously defined according to its context. In Part 1 for example I have discussed power in relation to ideological, social and spiritual power. In this section my aim is not to define power in an abstract sense, but to offer an earthed description of the multiple ways in which power works through the daily life of the Cornwall Estate. For a helpful introduction to ‘power’ and ‘empowerment’ in relation to social networks and community development see the report by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts (Jonathan Rowson, Steve Broome, and Alasdair Jones, Connected Communities: How social networks power and sustain the Big Society [London : RSA, 2010] p.54).
typifying the day-to-day life of the estate; they are not especially dramatic and from my experience would be taken by those involved in the accounts as ‘the way things are around here’.

The first account concerns K, a young mother of two young children who suffers from unspecified chronic health issues. Following a change in legislation by the UK government, the city council reduced K’s housing allowance thus requiring K to pay a ‘top-up amount’ on her rent, an amount however that she could not afford. Whilst K was making attempts to sort the problem out with the housing office her “landlord used the opportunity to evict her.”

The second account concerns S, a single man, probably in his thirties. Over more than two and a half years, S had spent a considerable amount of time with a couple of the men from the small Christian community and as a result a reasonably strong relationship had developed. One of the members of the small Christian community, B, recounted though that the relationship did not feel balanced; he and others “seem to keep pouring out for S – helping him with all kinds of stuff; buying stuff etc. and S keeps coming back for more – doesn’t seem grateful for any of it.” During our conversation B was reflecting on events of the previous week where S had applied for a volunteer role at the Christian Advice Centre where B was the manager. “The team discussed the application and decided that for a number of reasons it was not appropriate to offer S the post.” As a result S “got very angry and accused B and other staff of not thinking he was good enough.” A process of negotiation followed where B tried to engage S in conversation and seek to find some mutual understanding in the midst of what had become a tense situation.

The third account focuses on the reflection of another small Christian community member, A, who worked with a small estate-based charity that was established to help people cook and eat healthy food. A’s job was to supervise work at a fruit and vegetable growing project. In recounting his morning’s work A tells of going to meet a man who had been referred to the project. They meet as arranged at 10am at the square in the middle of the estate. The man was already drunk, but they proceeded with the plan to visit the project. There the ‘drunk man’ was introduced to T who is a long-term resident of the estate and manages the small fruit and vegetable growing site. T is “a really nice chap. [T] talked to the [drunk] man and showed

\[EL1, 3-121.
116\ EL1, 5-6.
117\ EL1, 12-13.
118\ EL1, 37-41.
119\ EL1, 42-46.
120\ EL1, 47-49.\]
him his teeth that were badly decayed – ‘this is from drinking – used to be an alcoholic – but now off the drink’.”

In the course of our conversation, A talks about the “relationally dysfunctional and badly organized” nature of the management of the project; he also relates T’s “fear of paperwork … and all the formal stuff,” a fear which he attributes, at least in part, to his lack of literacy skills.

Each of these encounters evidences a sharp inequality between the ‘long-term resident’ and ‘outsiders,’ an inequality that might be understood in terms of the relative power associated with those involved. Although long-term residency itself is not the issue (since some short-term residents would no doubt have similar experiences) the association between a range of expressions of chronic disempowerment and being a ‘long-term resident’ is notable and can be seen in a number of ways. The incident of K’s eviction, for example, is precipitated by an introduction of legislation by the UK government designed to curb excessive social welfare budgets. The change, which eventually causes such a dramatic and negative impact on the living circumstances of both her and her children, is an adjustment to the financial-structural fabric of life, an adjustment over which she has no control. However the more immediate causes of her eviction highlights her lack of capacity to respond well to the situation and exposes her vulnerability. These can be identified in terms of components of a social boundary that relate to a lack of financial capacity to absorb any shock or change in circumstance: a lack of skills and capacity to negotiate effectively with those in positions of structural authority, such as the landlord and the housing department; and an absence of any empowering relational networks such as supportive family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues—in K’s case the only supportive relationships in evidence were with E and A from the small Christian community. The account also points to a fragility in K’s health where a downturn in circumstances results in a corresponding downturn in health and a lack of personal wherewithal in the face of a crisis.

The encounter between S and the Christian Advice Centre can be thought of in physical, social, cognitive and relational terms. S’s encounter contrasts to that of K notably in terms of proximity and relationality. In terms of proximity S could easily walk both to the Advice Centre and also to the house of the centre manager, B, who lived on the estate. In relational

121 EL1, 101-104.
122 EL1, 109-114.
123 EL1, 11-12.
124 EL1, 12-13.
terms S was able to have regular face-to-face access with those representing the organization and his most immediate experience of the organization was direct contact with people who both knew him well personally and were also familiar with life on the Cornwall Estate. Thus, whilst there is an inevitable structural element in S’s relationship to the organization of the Advice Centre, the immediacy of S’s encounter is in terms of proximity, relationship and negotiation.

However, the outcome of the encounter still results negatively for S himself and indeed for all concerned. As in K’s case, his encounter results in an increase in distance from all others involved in the account and a corresponding experience of disempowerment and marginalization. S’s lack of power is evidenced, in part, by his lack of ability to participate in normal social relationships. The account shows that an aggressive and angry response to relational encounters results in the fracturing rather than building of relationships as well as a strongly self-destructive element in the anger itself. His encounter resulted in the accusation that “because B was his ‘friend’ he [thought] he would understand him – but it was just like other situations – B was the one with the power – just like everyone else.”

S’s emotional representation of the encounter as “just like other situations” and others as “the one[s] with the power,” suggests a cognitive sense of the place and his own position within it, where place is in part about those who are empowered (“everyone else”) and those who are disempowered (himself and other ‘Cornwall-ers’). This sense of being judged by others was reinforced the following day when S (who claims not to be a Christian) came back to B and said that “he had been reading the Bible and the passage in Matthew about ‘do not judge other people’—he said that is what B had been doing to him.”

Whilst social-boundary components are evident in this account, it is the energy of S’s emotionally charged cognitive map that dominates the exchange and on reflection B acknowledged that his own reaction was also not without anger. Thus, despite the attempt made by B and the team at the Advice Centre to cultivate a healthy relational context through hospitality and negotiation, it appears that the perceived sense of difference between ‘long-term resident’ and ‘outsider’ is in this case unbridgeable. S’s emotionally charged inner mapping of himself as a ‘long-term resident’ made normal relationship very difficult in that it effectively associated the Advice Centre and its staff with his own negative experiences of ‘distant’ and ‘powerful’ governmental institutions.

125 EL1, 50-53.
126 EL1, 54-60.
127 B commented that: “I resented his presence—[he] doesn’t seem grateful for any of it” (EL1, 32-3337-41).
The strong expression of difference which characterizes this encounter appears not only to result in relational distance, but also has the effect of consolidating social difference in the sense that the response of those working at the Advice Centre was to assert the functional rather than the relational aspect of their presence. Thus part of B’s response was to think that “it would be much easier if S wasn’t someone he knew well—perhaps [I] should just act as a service provider?” This response makes a distinction between two different ways in which relationships might be configured between staff and clients, namely a functional relationship which emphasises formality and thus relational distance between people, or friendship which emphasises relational proximity. It is clear that in an organisation such as a Christian advice centre, these two expressions of relationship will inevitably be in tension with each other.

However the distinction between functional presence and relational presence is a critical issue both for the Christian community on the estate as well as for the wider estate community. The distinction, which might be thought of in terms of service providers or neighbours, is encountered in a number of ways. For example, the expectation that professional service providers (such as educators, doctors, health care workers and social workers) will not live on the estate is unashamed and explicit. In terms of those involved in the charitable sector, with the exception of B at the Christian Advice Centre, no-one in a management position in any charity has been resident on the estate in at least the past five years.

This service provider/neighbour divide has important, and detrimental, effects on the formation of the estate as a place. Whilst material and social aspects of place also play a role in this divide (those, such as GPs, working at the higher end of the health profession would not, for example, be attracted by the small size and low quality of the housing on the estate) the most often cited reason that service providers are not resident relates to anxiety about the potential for dysfunctional relationships, such as that exemplified in the encounter between S and B.

In the spatial terms of my own study, the analysis of this encounter seems to strongly support existing evidence that the primary reason given for the divide does indeed

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128 EL1, 66-69.
129 This is a recurring theme of conversation even amongst Christian service providers. For example a young Christian teacher who was part of the small Christian community was strongly advised by her trainers to move away from the estate (Conversation in small Christian community, 2010); GPs have repeatedly argued that they could not both live and work here; health visitor, Z, expressed the critical need for Christians to live on the estate because in effect all the Christian care workers leave the estate at the end of the working day (Conversation at ‘The Well,’ 2011).
130 These observations are drawn from my own local knowledge developed through the research process. Whilst some ‘long-term residents’ have been employed in local projects such as the Media Centre, they are normally in roles with limited responsibility.
131 This cognitive mapping of difference between ‘long-term residents’ and service providers as ‘outsiders’ is shown for example in an interview with a local GP: “Social workers are almost universally seen as being a threat to the family and a threat so they are not welcome. Teachers too to a lesser extent” (EL2, 149-151).
relate to a cognitive boundary and the narrative of the encounter illustrates how cognitive boundary characteristics might affect the way in which a particular place functions. In this case it served to exaggerate and thus reinforce the differentiation between the ‘long-term resident’ and ‘outsider’ thus increasing social and relational distance between the people involved.

Relations of unequal power are also evident in the account of A and T, both of whom worked for an estate-based health charity established in partnership with the local government health authority and estate-based doctors. The encounter between T and the charity management team indicates the way in which physical, social and cognitive boundary types correspond to shape the experience of a ‘long-term resident’. The social boundary relates to the organizational aspects of the charity itself, which might be seen for example in A’s observation that T is “very fearful of paperwork. He was due to come into the office for an assessment … but I was trying to keep him protected from this formal stuff.”

Whilst all involved in the project, including A, were very impressed with T’s ability to turn a patch of waste land into a productive and attractive small holding, A and T it seems were alone in being aware of the considerable fear that T had of the “formal stuff” or organizational elements represented for him by “paperwork.”

Physically, the organization had two sites, the allotment and the office, both of which were on the estate within about ten minutes walking distance from each other. For T however, these two sites apparently represented two different experiences; the allotment being a place where he felt at home and at ease, and the office where he was fearful and ‘out of place’. In T’s case this cognitive sense, which invests physical locations with meaning and emotion, played an important role in shaping his own relationship with his employer; the feelings of anxiety associated with the office and the resultant sense of being ‘out of place’ put T at a disadvantage in terms of his ongoing employment. In this case however, it seems that T’s sense of place, or cognitive map, was recognized by A, who sought to mitigate the detrimental effects of the “formal stuff” on T by relocating the assessment to the allotment itself.

132 EL1, 84-121. The difficulties faced by this initiative are also referenced in the GP interview (EL2, 37-45).
133 EL1, 109-114. The estate has the “highest levels of low and very low literacy in Bristol (26%) and above average low numeracy – ranked 1st in the city” (IRIS, 2004, p.71).
134 EL1, 112-113.
135 EL1, 111, 114.
T’s situation indicates how widely shared life experiences of people on the estate might shape a common cognitive mapping of ‘long-term residents’. In particular it highlights how certain deficiencies in the two important areas of health (“rotten teeth”) and literacy (“very fearful of paper work”) tend to act to exclude people from certain social and physical places. These two observations would be commonly understood in the context of a wider discourse within the estate where “rotten teeth” indicate serious chronic health issues, which have been previously discussed, and “fear of paperwork” relates to very low levels of skill in reading and writing and commensurate lack of confidence to engage with any processes that demand literacy skills.

These narratives build on the previous discussions about material and social boundaries to suggest that in the case of the Cornwall Estate, place consistently functions to make distinctions between ‘long-term residents’ and ‘outsiders’ and that the distinction is predicated upon unequal arrangements of power whereby ‘long-term residents’ find themselves chronically disempowered in relation to ‘outsiders’. In each of the cases cited here it is the ‘long-term resident’ that is on the receiving end of services or help provided and indeed there is little sense of their own agency to affect their circumstances. This may seem an entirely obvious point and one that seems to be taken for granted in the everyday lives of the people and projects I have described. Yet it is, as I have argued in Chapter 3, precisely this acceptance of an arrangement as ‘normal’ or ‘the way things are around here’ that is the basis of its potency. Material and social arrangements (including the representational and cognitive elements) combine to present an overall settlement whereby ‘long-term residents’ are deemed to be ‘in place’ in certain material and social locations such as an allotment, and ‘out of place’ in contrasting material and social locations such as the office. Thus the Cornwall Estate could be described as a hegemonic settlement where deeply embedded

136 For example, the GP interview evidences a clear boundary across the North-South divide in the city in relation to tooth decay with the Estate having the worst tooth decay in the city (EL2, 475-477). Statistics show that 54% of five year old children on the Estate have two or more decayed teeth and that the average number of decayed teeth for 5 year olds is 2.8 teeth (Dr. D., Health Issues in Urban Priority Areas [unpublished presentation, April 2011] pp.18-19). In his role as a trainer, he observes that “because most of the students are middle class, they would be horrified to think that if their own child, by the time they got to school, had already lost 2 or 3 teeth. They would be embarrassed” (EL2, 478-481).

137 Low levels of literacy on the estate are well documented. In the course of an interview a GP relates research which shows that over 50% of residents on the estate have no educational or technical qualifications. He observes that people did not come on a free cooking course offered by the Health Charity because, in his opinion, they could not read the recipes (EL2, 41-45; 65-66). For low levels of literacy also see IRIS, 2004, p.v; Dr. D., Health Issues, p.2. Participant observation at the Advice Centre provided primary evidence about the lack of literacy skills in relation to everyday demands such as reading and understanding utility bills or letters from landlords.
binary arrangements maintain chronic and serious inequalities of power between ‘long-term residents’ and ‘outsiders’. The narratives I have discussed demonstrate how material, social and cognitive factors all play a role in maintaining this settlement in the everyday life of the estate. Furthermore, the narratives involve people who are seeking a rapprochement between the ‘long-term resident’ and the outsider; that is, in each case there is an attempt to challenge structures of inequality that maintain difference by forming new arrangements based on relational connections. However, in each case there is little evidence that a more equitable arrangement is achieved. Indeed the research findings suggest that both the Advice Centre and Health Association are predicated upon the very same binary arrangements of place that typify the estate as a whole and thus are unlikely to achieve the kind of transformation that is hoped for. This seems to be behind S’s frustration when he states that “because B was his ‘friend’ he [thought] he would understand him. But it was just like other situations. B was the one with the power … just like everyone else;” it seems that the relational connection between S and B is unable to mitigate the negative structural and social effects and they find themselves reverting to binary opposite positions determined by the characteristics of the place.

Interesting resonances emerge between the empirical evidence presented here and the theological arguments of Chapter 3 which suggest that power inequalities are a characteristic of place itself, and that such inequalities can only be effectively addressed through the intentional rearrangement of place, or the formation of new or ‘redemptive places’. I will explore this proposal in detail, with specific focus on the Advice Centre, in Chapter 6.

**Hard Boundary Characteristics**

The combination of material and social boundaries on the Cornwall Estate results in a second distinctive feature of place which I have termed ‘hard boundary characteristics’. This refers to

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138 In stating this attention should be drawn to some points of methodology which have been previously presented and will be explored further in Chapter 6 and the Conclusion. Firstly, the “acceptance of these things as ‘normal’” is taken, by definition, as a general condition and not intended to be associated in particular with either ‘long-term residents’ or ‘outsiders’; there is no intention to attribute greater insight or awareness to either one group of the other. Secondly the actual ‘insight’ that this is the arrangement that describes the estate cannot be claimed to be the sole preserve of the researcher or any other individual; indeed this would suggest some kind of Gnostic position or claim to privileged power. Rather the insight (which itself is understood as partial and temporary) occurs as people of difference experience certain kinds of ‘out-of-place’ encounter so that the consequent knowledge or understanding is not the preserve of one group or another, but belongs to those involved in the encounter. Furthermore, Mary McClintock Fulkerson argues (along with others) that those in positions of power are most often “oblivious” to the consequences of ‘difference’ in such encounters; she uses the phrase “obliviousness that comes with dominance” (MaryMcClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007] p15). Questions therefore about ‘who’ sees these things, and ‘how’ they are seen are important and will be discussed further in the Conclusion.
a construction of place that is evident within the research findings and features a strong binary arrangement which is predicated upon a settlement of power through the maintenance of ‘distance’ between people of unequal power. Mechanisms of place that maintain the binary are, by definition, resistant to the development of inter-subjective relations between people or groups of people that find themselves at different ends of the binary arrangement.

The research findings discussed in this chapter indicate that, within the Cornwall Estate, the material and social boundaries (including elements of representation, stereotyping, and cognitive mapping) function collaboratively to maintain and establish hard boundaries which work in the everyday experience of life on the estate to resist movement—whether social, physical or relational—across boundaries; that is they function so as to maintain ‘distance’ between people of difference.

In referring to the function of boundaries as ‘collaborative’ I mean that all the primary characteristics of place I have explored within the descriptors of material and social boundaries function predominantly in only one way; that is they tend towards the formation of binary arrangements and to the detriment of inter-subjective or hybrid arrangements of place. Of the boundary characteristics considered, namely the material, social, representational, and cognitive, there is little evidence that any one of them consistently functions to mitigate negative arrangements of the others. Rather each tends to work in the same direction such that the overall arrangement of place could be understood as a complex, dynamic arrangement of mutually reinforcing negative spatialities.

The sense in which this collaborative effect functions to harden boundaries is seen for example within the three narratives recounted in ‘relations of unequal power’. In the cases of S and T, both find themselves as ‘long-term residents’ positioned on the outside of the respective organisations and that the association between ‘long-term resident’ and ‘outsider’ is reinforced in each case through material, social and cognitive aspects which resist the formation of inter-subjective relationships.

It should be observed that in these accounts members of the small Christian community introduce components into boundaries that can be regarded as positive in the sense that they introduce elements of negotiability and inter-subjective relationship. However, in each case the components themselves do not appear to substantially change the characteristics of any single boundary and there is as a result no clear transformation in the circumstances of the people concerned. I will discuss transformation in more detail below.

For example, in the accounts cited above, which I have discussed in terms of Relations of Unequal Power, there is no evidence within the ethnographic material to indicate a boundary that functions positively with respect to the ‘long-term resident’.

In the case of S I have not explored how the materiality of the Advice Centre functions to maintain binary arrangements between ‘long-term residents’ and ‘outsiders’. This is an important aspect of the next chapter and I will discuss it in detail there.
The evidence suggests that central to the definition of hard boundary characteristics is the resistance of place to the formation of inter-subjective relationships. Bringing this proposal to the fore provides a different and perhaps more creative way of investigating the characteristics of hard boundaries especially with respect to their potential to change, and in Chapter 6 I will explore the formation of inter-subjective relational places in connection to the Advice Centre and the Health Park. In the context of the broad enquiry of this chapter, an overview of the occurrences of inter-subjective relationships within the research findings would serve to test whether such an analysis of hard boundaries as a characteristic of place in relation to the Cornwall Estate holds validity.

Here the intention is to observe the extent to which expressions of inter-subjective relationships have a mitigating effect on otherwise hard binary formations of place. These might be conceived as, for example, ruptures or fissures that suggest arrangements that differ from the normative settlement of place. Expressions of inter-subjective relationships in this context could include evidence of stable relational networks or of practices of negotiation across material and social boundaries.

Analysis of research materials in this way indicates a deficit of the positive relational components I have identified. Indeed, whilst there are numerous examples of negative relational indicators (such as inequalities of power, small and unstable relational networks, and confrontation rather than negotiation) there are considerably fewer examples of the positive relational components. It is notable that all the positive relational indicators observed are in the context of developments of health care provision in the estate over the last fifteen years where the design and provision of a new health centre along with the establishment of health care groups was strongly tailored to the physical and social requirements of ‘long-term residents’. Whilst the research findings indicate that these developments have contributed positively to a stronger relational element associated with health care in the Cornwall Estate and individuals who participate in these relational

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142 For the use of the term ‘inter-subjective’ see the discussion at the end of Chapter 3.
144 EL1, 84-108, 241-242, 142-146, 322-328, 342-350. A positive relational component is exemplified in the exchange between the caretaker of a small-holding on the estate and a long-term unemployed man: “chap was drunk at 10am when he met him … eventually ended up in allotment and introduced the gardner S … [who] talked to M and showed him his teeth that were badly decayed – ‘this is from drinking – used to be an alcoholic … but now off drink’” (EL1:84-105).
145 EL2, 247-280.
networks have benefited, it is very difficult to discern any overall measurable improvement in health and wellbeing as a direct consequence of these enhancements.\textsuperscript{146} Despite these positive developments in the relational characteristics with respect to health care, there is still a strong imbalance towards particular relational components which are detrimental to ‘long-term residents’ and there is no indication within my own research materials to suggest that the overall effect has been sufficiently strong to mitigate ongoing detrimental patterns sustained by hard boundaries. In addition, statistical evidence from across the city shows that whilst the absolute standard of health care has improved on the estate itself, indicators of deprivation, including health indicators, point to a widening gap between ‘long-term residents’ and most others in the city\textsuperscript{147} signifying an overall increase in relative deprivation and marginalization. The more likely outcome is for the growing deprivation gap to further harden binary arrangements of place that create distance between ‘long-term residents’ and others.

**Concluding Remarks**

The aim of this chapter has been to draw on the findings of qualitative research to investigate and describe the primary characteristics of place that constitute the Cornwall Estate. A range of secondary research sources were used where appropriate. The scope and limitations of ethnographic research were defined in a number of ways. Research was limited to those areas which would enable direct engagement with the spatial characteristics and mechanisms of the Cornwall Estate and which would also be conversant with the theological developments of Part 1. Even within these limits it became clear that there was scope to make finer distinctions with regard to the functioning of place. These included, for example, the ways in which spatial arrangements of the estate impinged differently on those of different generations, different employment circumstances, and those from different streets within the estate. Further ethnographic study in these kinds of areas would offer significant scope to extend research into the spatial characteristics and mechanisms of place.


\textsuperscript{147} For example, statistics that relate to life expectancy and mortality in relation to coronary heart disease, cancer and COPD all indicate a continuing or widening gap between the estate and most other parts of the city (Dr. D., *Health Issues*, pp.20-24).
Furthermore, having discussed the strengths of participant observation as a research method in Chapter 4, it seems that this method did not facilitate the kind of focused discussion about specific issues that had been hoped for at the Advice Centre and Bread Café. Whilst there was plenty of opportunity for conversation in these contexts, its focus tended to be on the mundane experience of everyday life and not a direct engagement with the critical issues that began to emerge through the course of the research. These everyday conversations have indeed been informative for the research process but they have not necessarily provided the opportunity for ‘long-term residents’ to directly or critically engage with the central issues that have emerged in the research.

It seems that this lack of engagement was in part a function of the very binary arrangements that were being investigated so that my own presence as an ‘outsider’ in these contexts tended to militate against serious discussion. In contrast to the informative discussions that opened up easily with staff members in both the contexts, discussions with ‘clients’ were not so forthcoming. As such, it has become apparent through the course of research that as an embedded researcher I was not sufficiently aware of the effect that my own presence as an outsider might have on the conversational dynamics of a situation. In the light of these experiences, further research might include the use of more rigorous ethnographic methods, especially those of reflexive practice which are discussed further in the concluding chapter.

In the light of these limitations I have sought to analyse the research findings within this chapter in a balanced way paying particular attention to the voice of ‘long-term residents’ whilst recognising that the research has been limited in certain respects by the lack of focused expression of critical ‘estate voices’.

The ethnographic approaches to research discussed in Chapter 4 were designed to ‘get under the skin’ of the everyday arrangement of place. However the nature of place which constitutes the Cornwall Estate is complex and multifaceted and findings should be considered as partial and provisional. Further work would enable the rigour of the research to be improved and the findings refined. This could be achieved through a series of carefully structured and well-presented interviews and focus groups with ‘long-term residents’ focusing for example on the nature and extent of inter-subjective relationships and relational networks; the extent to which different cognitive formulations of place affect ‘long-term residents’; and the way in which representation and stereotype function to create distance between ‘long-term residents’ and others.

It is also apparent that there are a number of specific social areas that would be important to investigate in relation to place and that those findings could be used to critically reflect back
on the conclusions that have been drawn thus far. Areas which could be researched include the effects on family relationships of very long-term deprivation; the particular dynamics and effects of hard boundaries as experienced by certain groups such as young people and manual workers on the estate; the impact that certain so-called ‘problem families’ and ‘difficult streets’ have on the constitution of place in the estate as a whole; the ways in which newcomers to the estate, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds, might become agents of change with respect to place; and the forms of cognitive mapping that exist within different groups and how that mapping might have an effect on the character and function of the place itself.

Whilst the research has acknowledged limitations, the discussion of this chapter has moved towards some clear proposals. Particular attention has been paid to the relational aspects of place, namely the way in which material and social components of place function to either facilitate or impede inter-subjective relationships. This includes the observation of interaction between socially prescribed domains such as those used in the IMD. Analysis has shown distinctive spatial characteristics in both the material and social aspects of the Cornwall Estate and that these characteristics combine in dynamic and complex ways to form a settlement of place whose dominant features are ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’. The result is a strong binary arrangement of place which is expressed through prevailing discourses of ‘insider’/‘outsider’ and ‘in-place’/‘out of place’.

The dominant features of ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’ define an entrenched inequality of power between ‘long-term resident’ and ‘outsider’ such that place functions strongly and consistently to the detriment of ‘long-term residents’. The association of hard boundary characteristics with this binary arrangement means that inter-subjective networks across boundaries tend to be weak and difficult to establish and correspondingly that practices of negotiation between people of difference are significantly diminished in comparison to other parts of the city. In the light of these settlements of place I have argued that deprivation is not solely the result of an accumulation of negative social measures in a population, but rather is due to a complex web of interdependent and mutually reinforcing factors that seem to conspire together so that the lived experience of those within the location is one of a ‘vicious circle’ of deprivation, and furthermore that the accumulation of negative IMD measures in a single location is not due to some kind of happenstance, but that the lived experience of deprivation is a function of the place itself.
A critical argument of this chapter is that the deeply embedded nature of these characteristics of place defines a landscape which tends to be resistant to transformation; an analysis that would seem to be supported by other research findings, some from as early as 1935, that I have drawn upon in the course of this study. Together with my own research materials, these findings suggest a developmental trajectory of place in which there has been relatively little change in the primary characteristics of place since the estate was built and first inhabited.

Questions about the potential of place to be transformed were central in the discussion of Chapter 3. There the arguments drew attention to the relational formation of place, and these arguments have shaped the direction of the research discussed in this chapter in terms of the focus on boundaries and the dynamics between boundaries, with a particular interest in evidence of inter-subjective relationships across boundaries. In relation to the spatial paradigms discussed in Chapter 3, the findings of this chapter suggest that the primary characteristics of place within the Cornwall Estate are those that are associated with normative-place—that is arrangements of place in which power is a determinative factor and which embody hierarchies of power as ‘normative’.

However, research findings have also provided some evidence of the formation of inter-subjective relationships in a limited way that begin to suggest that the normative settlement of place might be changed by nurturing the inter-subjective relationships. In these incidences material and social boundaries become more porous and normative formulations of place are challenged. These developments are explored in the next chapter with the particular aim of investigating the possible formation of redemptive-places within the Cornwall Estate in two specific contexts, namely the Advice Centre and the Health Park. Following this, I will further explore in the concluding discussions the findings of this current chapter in the light of the theological models proposed in Chapter 3 and will enquire about what insights a theological perspective on place might bring to the problem of chronic deprivation and consider their implications for mission.
CHAPTER 6
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF REDEMPTIVE PLACES

Introduction

A core question of this investigation relates to deeply rooted patterns of deprivation and marginalisation that exist within the Cornwall Estate and the possibility that fresh insights into theological understandings of place might enable the formation of new redemptive places and an exploration of the potential for place itself to be transformed. From a theological perspective I have argued that transformation of place is indeed possible and occurs when the normative arrangements of place that give shape to and sustain patterns of marginalisation are challenged, subverted and ultimately replaced by new redemptive settlements of place. Redemptive places themselves are the embodiment of Jesus-Space, a new spatiality associated with the New Creation.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the possible formation of redemptive places in the Cornwall Estate, to seek to understand how they are characterised and what mechanisms and practices are critical in their formation. By drawing on the ethnographic methods discussed in Chapter 4, I have investigated two particular situations in relation to the formation of redemptive places: a catering company which moved to the estate as a new business start-up; and a long established Advice Centre run by Churches Together.² These

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¹ The relationship of Jesus-Space to redemptive-place is discussed in the Introduction and more fully in Chapter 3.
² The research data which I refer to throughout this chapter are contained within the following records, where the parentheses indicate the abbreviation I have used to reference each set of data throughout Chapter 6.

Ethnographic records relating to the Catering Company and Bread Café are as follows:
- Bread Café Log (BC1).
- Bread Café Log (BC1.1).
- MM interview (BC2).

Ethnographic records relating to Advice Centre and Drop-In are as follows:
- Ethnographic Log (EL) 23-26 / 29-82.
- Advice Centre Log (AC).
- Interviews with Advice Centre manager (B).
two situations emerged as possible places of interest for research during the period of broader investigation into the estate discussed in Chapter 5. Whilst the catering company and Advice Centre were distinctly different types of organisation they shared some important features that indicated the potential to develop aspects of redemptive spatiality. Both organisations brought ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’ together in the same physical space on a daily basis and for extended periods of time; however, it was also apparent that these localised places embodied previously described binary characteristics by, for example, maintaining structural and relational distance between the ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’. This sense of distance was emphasised in that the ‘estate people’ in attendance in both places were primarily those who had experienced long-term unemployment and had suffered from chronic ill-health so that their daily lives had been shaped by protracted experiences of deprivation. It became clear through the course of research that these life experiences caused the feelings associated with difference to be more keenly felt and more challenging to cope with.

Also important was the willingness of managers, staff and ‘estate people’ to be involved in developing new and experimental approaches with cooperation and support from members of the small Christian community. Cooperation in this way enabled us to establish related initiatives with the intention of developing new arrangements of place that sought to challenge binary structures and facilitate the formation of inter-subjective relationships. In the case of the catering company the related initiative was the Bread Cafe and in the case of the Advice Centre it was the Employment Drop-In.

The aim of the research was to investigate the changing characteristics and performances of place that occur in the transition between the host organisation and the newly forming relational place. Informed by the understanding of the function of boundaries in the formation of place as discussed in Chapters 3 to 5, research focused specifically on the nature of the boundaries and the encounters that happened around them. This included paying close attention to evidence of the development of inter-subjective relationships as an indication of the possible formation of redemptive places.

The chapter is structured firstly by presenting the research findings which relate to the catering company and Advice Centre, and then discussing the particular arrangements of place that are found within each setting. In each case I observe that hard physical and social boundaries dominate the arrangements of place, and intriguingly in each instance the service-counter has a significant function. Secondly, I analyse research materials that relate to the
Two Sites: Catering Company and Advice Centre

This section begins with a brief introduction to the two organisations and is followed by a more extended presentation and discussion of the research findings.

**The Catering Company**

In 2011 two chefs, M and E, both in their thirties, moved their newly established catering company to a large site on the northern edge of the Cornwall Estate known as the Health Park. The company use the well-equipped kitchen as a base for outside catering events as well as running the Health Park Cafe. The cafe and kitchen are separated only by a display cabinet and serving counter so that kitchen staff and customers can see each other.

The Health Park itself is a large site bounded by a high metal fence. It incorporates three sizable buildings which house a range of health services including two doctors’ surgeries (with about fifteen general practitioners [GPs] between them), community and family health services, NHS Walk-In centre and a kidney dialysis unit. The substantial range of health services provided on the site employ a large number of staff with the result that the Health Park is one of the hubs on the estate frequented by both ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’. The site is a pleasant modern environment with a generous area of green space which includes some outdoor exercise machines and a children’s playground.

A member of the small Christian community, H, had completed her catering training with M and E and became the first new staff member to be employed in the catering company. It was largely through her involvement that relationships grew between the catering company and the small Christian community which became the foundation for a joint venture that specifically sought to engage with the ‘estate people’ who frequented the cafe. Whilst the
venture started as a short-term bread-making class, it eventually took shape as a longer term social enterprise called the Bread Cafe.

The Advice Centre
The Advice Centre opened in 1995 as a project of the Churches Together on the Cornwall Estate. It operates mainly on a drop-in basis offering a wide range of advice relating to social benefits and finance, housing and rent issues, mental health and counselling, and support for older people. It is situated in the middle of the estate in two refurbished shop fronts which are on the ground floor of a complex of flats. The centre has two employed staff one of whom, B, is a member of the small Christian community and who took on the role of managing the centre in 2012. Staff are assisted by a team of volunteers and visiting specialists who offer advice on particular issues.

The centre has many thousands of visits through the year and research has shown that it is the biggest single provider of personal advice on the estate. It is a well-presented building with a waiting area where tea and coffee can be purchased for twenty-five pence per cup. The waiting area includes a small reception counter behind which is a kitchenette, and this is staffed by a team of volunteers. A short corridor leads to two consulting rooms, an office and a computer terminal which can be used by the centre’s clients to fill in various forms.

I was involved in both of these projects in my capacity as Baptist Minister on the Cornwall Estate and as a member of the small Christian community. Whilst I did not work in either of the projects, I had established good relationships with their managers and through reflective conversations found in each case that the organisations struggled with ongoing tension between staff (including volunteers) and ‘estate people’, a situation that reflects what I have described in Chapter 5 as the binary social and spatial settlements. Against this background we saw an opportunity to take some simple but intentional steps to try to reconfigure the

3 Churches Together is a national ecumenical organisation that provides encouragement and practical support for churches to participate together in mission and ministry. The Churches Together expression in the Cornwall Estate was strong in the 1980s and 1990s but has been diminishing as the denominational churches have declined and some closed. See http://www.ctbi.org.uk/.
4 Jonathan Rowson, Steve Broome, and Alasdair Jones, Connected Communities: How social networks power and sustain the Big Society, (London : RSA, 2010).
5 Those in management positions had also provided the necessary agreements for me to function in a research role as a participant observer which included fulfilling the necessary ethical requirements.
6 In that chapter I described the dominant features of this settlement as those of ‘relations of unequal power’ and ‘hard boundaries’ resulting in a strong binary arrangement of place which is expressed through prevailing discourses of ‘insider’/‘outsider’ and ‘in-place’/‘out of place’.
arrangements of place associated with each organisation by seeking to remove or soften the immediate barriers that gave structure to and sustained such stark ‘us’ and ‘them’ divisions and also to introduce new relational arrangements of place which we hoped would facilitate new kinds of encounter between ‘staff’ and ‘customers’.

The initiatives that emerged, the Bread Cafe and the Drop-In, were therefore direct responses to reflective practice around the two specific social-spatial contexts of the catering company and Advice Centre. Whilst their locations on the Cornwall Estate meant that they both engaged with the common social-spatial characteristics of the estate, each organisation also has its own distinct experiences of daily estate life and it is this encounter between organisation and estate that provides an important context for understanding the ways in which elements of redemptive-place might be encouraged in each location.

**Difference as Normative: Divided by the Counter**

The catering company and Advice Centre are distinctly different kinds of organisations. The catering company is a private business and came to the estate purely for commercial reasons; in any conversation about the company and the nature of its engagement on the estate business and financial considerations remained uppermost. In contrast the Advice Centre is a Christian charity that made a strategic choice to be specifically located on the estate. Its aim is to serve those who are most deprived by providing well-informed advice free of charge and it is wholly funded through grants to achieve that aim.

Although the organisations are very different in their structures and aims, during my period of study I noticed that both similarly experienced troubling tensions between staff members (including volunteers) on the one hand and ‘estate people’ on the other. Analysis of research materials showed in each case that the troubling tensions were, in part, a function of the spatial arrangement of the organisation’s facilities; that is to say the physical arrangement of the building and furniture in each project effected a distinction between service providers and clients where service providers equated to ‘outsiders’ and clients equated to ‘estate people’. A notable finding was that in each organisation the ‘counter’ was found to fulfil an important physical and symbolic function, demarking ‘private’ or ‘professional’ space which was off-limits to ‘estate’ people, and in both cases became a physical and symbolic site for tension.

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7 EL, 948-1019; BC1, 612-621; BC2, 544, 627-639, 833-851, 1261.

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frustration and misunderstanding. The counter appeared to play an important role in maintaining the binary distinctions that I have described as normative within the Cornwall Estate and I will explore the nature of this in more detail below.

**The Catering Company: A View from Behind the Counter**

A dominant feature of the catering company was the curved glass counter that served as a hard boundary between the ‘professional place’ of the kitchen and the ‘customer place’ of the cafe. The catering staff identified three different and distinct groups that regularly engaged with these places: themselves as professional chefs and catering staff who belonged ‘behind the counter’; doctors and staff from the health centre; and ‘estate people’—the two latter groups belonging in front of the counter. Commenting on the customers in front of the counter, M states, “We try not to sort of, segment our customers and to label them, but there is a definite group” which behave in distinct ways. In the case of the “healthcare professionals … who come in, buy our food, who sit down and [then] leave … the sort of transactional nature of that is very simple.” In contrast to this ‘normal’ interaction is the disturbing behaviour of ‘estate people’: “People come in and they can’t find a mode, a kind of setting that goes, ‘OK, I know how to operate, I know how to interact with this and ask for what I want.’”

Whilst the chefs, M and E, knew little of the estate before establishing their business there, they were impressed by the strong negative representations of the estate and ‘estate people’ conveyed by friends and colleagues. These presented the estate as a place with “lots of joblessness and lawlessness and a total shithole;” that staff would need “firearms training” and equipment would be “gone [stolen] within a week.” These representations found little connection with M and E’s actual experience. However, what did surprise and impress them was that the behaviours and attitudes which they assumed were ‘normal’ for a café or business environment could not be assumed in their new location. ‘Estate people’ frequently presented a challenge to their idea of ‘normal’ behaviours by, for

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8 BC2, 446-478.
9 BC2, 181-183.
10 BC2, 183-186. Also BC2, 388-413.
11 BC2, 438-441.
12 BC1, 119-122.
13 BC1, 101-102.
14 BC1, 835-836. See also, BC2, 128-131: The Cornwall estate is “where trouble is, that’s the place in [the city] you don’t want to go to. That’s where joyriding happens and all that kind of stuff.”
15 “It isn’t as bad as you first think” (BC2, 136).
example, bringing their own food, vigorously complaining about and challenging prices, asking for food that was not on the menu and complaining that food was too fancy or not ‘proper English’ food. In addition to this confrontational behaviour, M observed that the ‘non-normal’ responses of ‘estate people’ also included a sense of disorientation or lack of confidence around boundaries that, from his perspective were open and welcoming. He comments for example that “we were presenting this cafe. It’s not littered with sort of horrible hand-written signs, it’s very modern, it’s very contemporary and there [are] sometimes people who come in and literally freeze. They don’t know what to do, and we try, you know, we try to make it as friendly and welcoming as possible ...”

The extent to which difference between catering staff and ‘estate people’ affected interactions across the counter can be gauged by the emotional responses of the staff, in particular the associated levels of stress that staff experienced. M for example, whilst reflecting on the staff reviews, reported that staff compared their work in the Cornwall Estate with another ‘middle class’ café they worked in. In that café people “come in and they ask us nicely, they order and they’re polite and we serve them and it’s jolly and lovely—but it’s really difficult up at the [Cornwall Estate].” “it’s one of the toughest service environments that you could ever imagine.” M comments that staff have found that “there’s almost a saturation point” and that the only solution is to “rota people away from [the Cornwall Estate]” to the other café.

For M himself the environment in the café provokes a profound sense of personal struggle. Whilst he holds deeply to the principles of a welfare state and a socially responsible business, when he “look[s] out from behind the counter” and “see[s] people sitting there doing nothing you think ‘get off your arse, do something!’” M’s experience seems to be one of inner conflict between a perception of what it means to support the marginalised on the one hand and what he observes ‘from behind the counter’ on the other: “I find it really hard. I think on an almost hourly basis … it’s incredibly infuriating … You learn … to love and hate the different flows of our emotions. There is that kind of duality; yes, I’m very protective of it, yet I hate it.”

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16 BC1, 416, 459-460; BC2, 449-450, 446-478.
17 EL, 128-146; BC2, 348-375, 417-418; BC1, 286-291. For example, when offered grated carrot salad, one customer responded: “Can’t be doing with foreign stuff,” where it transpired ‘foreign stuff’ even included garden mint (EL, 136-146).
18 BC, 420-426.
19 BC1, 411-413; BC2, 429-446.
20 BC1, 414-415.
21 BC2, 530-534.
22 BC2, 513-514, 544-546.
The research findings presented here suggest that the catering company broadly conforms to the normative spatial arrangements of the Cornwall Estate that I have discussed in Chapter 5. They show how social differences are experienced within the particular locations of the kitchen and café and how the counter acts as a physical and symbolic boundary across which those differences are expressed. Whilst healthcare staff conform to ‘normal’ expectations at the counter, ‘estate people’ perform differently at the boundary causing emotionally charged engagements with staff. They also function differently within the café itself, tending either to dominate the space as if it were their own home\textsuperscript{23} or exhibit anxiety about entering the space and knowing how to function within it once they are inside. Especially intriguing is M’s view ‘from behind the counter’ that gives rise to such strong and seemingly unresolvable emotional struggle.

The evidence presented here indicates an arrangement and performance of place within both the Health Park and the catering company that deeply embodies the social spatial binaries that support the unequal power relationships between ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’ that have been previously described. This arrangement persists despite the efforts and intentions of catering company staff, Health Park managers and doctors to engage with ‘estate people’ and help improve their wellbeing. The arrangement is also seen to persist within the café despite the considerable efforts of the new café owners to present a welcoming and open environment. It is within this context of hard social-spatial boundaries that the Bread Café emerged as a joint venture between catering company staff, a group of ‘estate people’ and members of the small Christian community.

\textit{The Advice Centre}

The spatial arrangement of the Advice Centre reflects a tension which arises from two distinct user groups, who have different expectations of the centre, and the different ways in which they engage with the place itself.\textsuperscript{24} One group is comprised of people who approach the centre as clients seeking advice. In many instances their situations are deeply complex and the visit to the centre is precipitated by a crisis that relates to issues such as a sudden change in benefit income, a debt problem or a difficulty related to housing. In most of these cases the people visiting the centre behave as clients in that there is typically a formal approach to the reception counter, an exchange of

\textsuperscript{23} BC2, 188-200.
\textsuperscript{24} AC, 216-225.
information with the volunteer on duty to assess the nature of the advice needed and then the visitor will usually wait in the seating area until they are invited by one of the two advisors, B and P, to come down the corridor to one of the consulting rooms. In this instance clients and staff conform to the physical arrangement of the centre (reception counter – waiting room – corridor – consulting room) and the social interaction with staff is formal. I will refer to this engagement with the place as ‘formal-structured’.

A second group is comprised of people for whom the Advice Centre has become an important part of their personal daily routine. Whilst some come every day many come two or three times a week, staying between thirty minutes and two hours and on occasions up to three hours. On arriving at the centre most of these people will walk straight past the reception counter to the waiting area where they will occupy their ‘usual chair’ if it is free. On the way they will offer some banter to the volunteer receptionist whom they have come to know through their regular visits. Typically they will order cups of tea or coffee from the volunteer and usually expect it to be brought to them where they are sitting. Most regulars have their own routines or performances so that their stay is structured around one, two or even three drinks through the morning and whilst some pay the twenty-five pence charge without quibble, others regularly try to negotiate a free drink. Without exception, people in this group all experience long-term, complex issues which have been seriously detrimental to the quality of their lives and some will regularly depend on practical and relational support from the Advice Centre staff. For this group the seating area is not a waiting area, but functions as a social space where they find warmth and company; it is a place where they have come to feel “at home.”\(^\text{25}\) I will refer to this engagement with the place as ‘informal-relational’.

The distinctive behaviours of different people within the public seating area of the Advice Centre evidence different interpretations of the place and find a parallel with the two groups who occupy the Health Park Café as described above. In this sense the use of each place is divided between those who comply with the publically stated meaning of the place and those who ‘occupy’ the space in a manner which challenges or subverts that stated function.

As with the group of ‘estate people’ who occupied the café, those in the Advice Centre have, as I observed, adopted a pattern of small assertive behaviours which establish and maintain their occupancy. These include for example, walking past the reception counter rather than consulting with the receptionist; occupying a particular seat for a long period of time;

maintaining a rapport with other regular ‘occupants’ and volunteers where the familiarity of the banter makes clear distinctions between ‘regulars’ and the ‘visitors’ who are waiting for advice. 26 In addition, the ‘regulars’ habitually test the boundaries of the place through a range of small but repeated behaviours: trying to get tea and coffee free of charge; parking bikes inside the reception area; asking the reception volunteer to bring drinks to them; rearranging the furniture; and occupying the toilet. 27

These two interpretations of the place tend to conflict with each other, and whilst the staff of the Advice Centre are skilled in maintaining a pragmatic balance, the conflict reflects a struggle within the centre itself. 28 Christian convictions about ‘loving your neighbour’ and ‘serving the poor’, are strongly held throughout the organisation and expressed in practical care and welcome of all who come to the centre. However, prior attempts to make the waiting area more open and hospitable led to it being unhelpfully occupied by a group of young people who sometimes used the centre for drug dealing with the result that the whole place could not fulfil its aim as an advice centre and at times became unmanageable. 29 As a result stricter rules were introduced allowing some people to stay but on the condition that they respected the ethos of the place and did not disrupt its work.

One might argue that this pragmatic approach enables the centre to provide a wider range of services that encompass both advice and hospitality. However the research materials indicated that the situation was more complex and that the extension of hospitality in this way fails to address some of the serious issues inherent within the binary settlement of place that I have discussed in Chapter 5 and in fact continues to reflect an arrangement of place precisely commensurate with it. In a positive sense one might observe that by encompassing practices of both hospitality and advice, the centre provides a softer boundary between the everyday life on the estate and the formality of a consulting room. Thus the provision of a hospitable seating area could be envisaged as a safe half-way point between the street and the consulting room and indeed many of the centre’s clients know the advisers B and P quite well and ask to see them by name. Yet within the seating and reception area, the pattern and strength of the discourse retains its distinctive characteristics and themes. Here the casual flow of

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29 AC, 950-970. Also, I recall a visit in 2005 when the manager at the time was suffering obvious distress in relation to a group of young men who had been dealing drugs from the centre. During my meeting with him the doors were locked and the blinds closed because the manager was anxious not to be seen by one particular young man.
conversation amongst the ‘regulars’ centres on a number of recurring themes which include social benefits, debt and other financial issues, personal health problems, and experiences of prison and probation.\textsuperscript{30}

The themes are narrated in particular ways. There is for example, an underlying assumption that to live one’s whole life on benefits is normal and this is reflected in the detailed accounts given by the ‘regulars’ of their benefits history, including exact dates when their benefits changed and details of letters they received from the benefit office, some of which go back many years;\textsuperscript{31} that violence is a natural part of life; that violence that leads to a broken relationship with a spouse or to a period in prison is a normal experience;\textsuperscript{32} that drug and alcohol abuse is an inevitable part of growing up and it is taken for granted that you will either suffer personally through such abuse or lose a family member or friend through early death.\textsuperscript{33} These narrative constructions and the shared underlying assumptions strongly reinforce discourses of difference, dependency, hostility and victimhood as normative for the estate. That these discourses prevail and indeed frequently dominate the space defined by the seating area of the centre appear to be contrary to its public aim which is to offer hope. Indeed in its daily functioning the Advice Centre seemed to demonstrate a limited ability to challenge such discourses and my own participative experience as a volunteer on the reception exemplified this limitation, particularly as a newcomer. My ‘newcomer’ status also gave rise to a sharp awareness that my role was not only to welcome clients, but also to act as host to an already well-established community of regulars, who, I felt, in the normal order of things should have been welcoming me. Thus, the role of ‘host’ seemed predicated not on being a member of the gathered community, but as a guardian of the space, or maintainer of the boundaries—a distinctly uncomfortable and somewhat conflicting experience—and, like every other volunteer and staff member, I occupied this role as an ‘outsider’ or ‘non-estate person’.\textsuperscript{34}

This analysis of the Advice Centre in terms of place offers some important perspectives about the function of the centre itself and the way in which its internal spatiality reflects its actual locatedness in the wider landscape of the city. In particular the research findings I have discussed indicate that the centre can be conceived of as being located at an interface of the estate and the ‘outside world’ so that the binary inside/outside arrangements of place that are


\textsuperscript{32}AC, 173-177, 352-353, 744-748.

\textsuperscript{33}AC, 121, 152-156.

\textsuperscript{34}AC, 31-32, 150-156; 227-235.
characteristic of the estate also determine the spatial characteristics of the centre itself. In addition it is evident that the centre is specifically located at a juncture of such different cultural and social expressions that its role becomes mainly one of mediation or interpretation between them rather than one of advice giving.

This sense of being located on an interface is evidenced, for example, by the contrasting discourses (and worldviews they embody) of the ‘regulars’ who are located in and dominate the waiting area, and those who represent institutions such as local government who are located in the consulting room or at the end of a phone. The effective strength or hardness of boundaries at this interface is evidenced in behaviour which suggests heightened emotions—including anxiety and stress—that clients often experience in their engagement with ‘outsiders’. Thus, conversations in the centre between groups of ‘estate people’ and also with volunteers were in general confident, sometimes assertive and on occasions marked by aggression and even explosive anger. In contrast, when talking to officials, such as those from statutory organisations ‘outside’ the estate, the same people experienced considerable anxiety and loss of confidence seen, for example, in a lack of ability to express themselves in coherent ways on the phone; a lack of ability to understand what others were trying to say to them; a lack of ability to process information; and a lack of ability to read the necessary information to deal with an enquiry.35

The spatial arrangement of the centre, its physical and social aspects and the social performances that occupy the place point to mediation as its primary function, where mediation might be understood as facilitating communication and connection across hard physical and social boundaries. Hereby the location of the centre at the inside/outside interface of the ‘estate’ and ‘world’ and the associated conflicting discourses necessitates not advice, but first an enabler of connection and communication. In this respect the staff, rather than providing advice, often found themselves in the role of mediator with the associated provision of emotional support and interpretive assistance between two distinct worlds. Furthermore, the tensions I have described in the use of the reception area may also be understood as a function of the centre’s location at an interface; it is a safe ‘home’ or halfway point between the two worlds and the mixing of familiar relationship with formal assistance provides the emotional, relational and practical support for people to mediate across otherwise seemingly impenetrable boundaries.

Although the Advice Centre does very valuable work in its provision of advice and mediation, in terms of the theological formulations of normative and redemptive places discussed in previous chapters, my findings are that it does not in any substantial way interrupt or challenge those that define the Cornwall Estate nor does it re-imagine social-spatial relationships. Indeed, the spatial characteristics and practices of the centre appear to be predicated on the same normative arrangements of place found in the wider estate. For example, these arrangements are seen in the segregation of ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’ within the centre itself, where volunteers and staff are, without exception, ‘outsiders’ and clients and ‘regulars’ are without exception ‘estate people’. Indeed it seems there is little possibility for an ‘estate person’ to progress to the status of staff member and very limited scope for staff or volunteers to introduce alternative spatial practices which might challenge the dominant binary arrangement.\(^{36}\) It was these very limitations that gave rise to the plans for the Drop-In as an alternative physical and social arrangement of place.

A further spur to these plans were the possibilities for alternative arrangements of place already glimpsed within the Advice Centre itself and amongst the relational interactions that occurred between members of the small Christian community (including the manager of the Advice Centre) and ‘estate people’. One such interaction occurred towards the end of my involvement in the Advice Centre when a large pile of Christmas cards needed folding and staff, volunteers and the ‘regular group’ of ‘estate people’ took on the task in the waiting area. There was an immediate change in the arrangement and sense of place as people drew their chairs around and started working. One woman for example, who had “aggressively turned her chair” away from the others, turned her chair back and as she folded cards started to talk constructively with the rest of the group.\(^{37}\) It was notable that the tone of conversation changed, silences were easier and the conversation more relaxed. It appears that the introduction of a simple piece of work in which all could participate resulted, for a brief period of time, in an ‘out of place’ encounter\(^{38}\) where the relationships between the members of the group were temporarily and partially reconfigured. It is this sense of ‘out-of-placed-

\(^{36}\) In Chapter 5 I discussed one case in which an estate person did apply to be a volunteer. For a number of reasons he was unable to make the transition and I suggested that his story evidenced the hard boundary conditions that prevail within the estate and were reflected in the Advice Centre itself.

\(^{37}\) AC, 971-977.

\(^{38}\) I use the language of ‘out of place’ to reflect the discussion of Chapters 2 and 3. Here I refer to work by Mary Douglas, Tim Cresswell and others who use the phrase to indicate the sense in which ‘out of place’ events or behaviours can transgress the normative or ‘doxic’ arrangement of things. Such events play an important role in the transformation of place.
ness’ or ‘transgression’ of the normal arrangement of the place that suggests that an alternative arrangement of place might be possible.

Discovering Redemptive Places: Crossing the Counter

The second part of the chapter will focus on the possible alternative arrangements of place that had been glimpsed through encounters at the catering company and Advice Centre by analysing research materials that relate to the Bread Café and Employment Drop-In, giving particular attention to evidence that suggests spatialities and practices that are characteristic of redemptive places.

Bread Café

The activity which initially drew people together from radically different social backgrounds was that of bread-making. This commenced with a series of sessions spread over ten consecutive Saturdays during which catering staff, a group of ‘estate people’ and members of the small Christian community came together in the café to learn how to make bread together.39 However, it became apparent that there was a deeper significance emerging through these sessions that concerned the reconfiguring of the place itself as the activity happened. Of particular interest was the way in which this reconfiguration seemed to emerge precisely as a consequence of people coming together from different points of the social-spatial binary arrangement.40 I will refer to this formation of place through the mutual participation of people of difference as the co-construction of place—a concept that has been introduced in Chapter 4. The formation of physical and social arrangements of place through co-construction emerges as an important characteristic of redemptive-place and was one of the reasons for engaging with the Bread Café project as a potentially exciting site for research.

The Bread Café could be conceived as introducing two new spatial arrangements into the kitchen-café site. The first was achieved by reconfiguring the boundary characteristics of the

39 BC2, 654.
counter which functioned as a hard boundary between catering staff and ‘estate people’.\textsuperscript{41} This movement entailed ‘estate people’ having access to the ‘professional space’ of the kitchen and free use of the equipment and appliances therein. It also involved catering staff, especially M, E and H moving from the kitchen to the café to spend time mixing with ‘estate people’ who had previously been viewed across the counter as troublesome customers.

The second new spatial arrangement occurred as ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders’ (namely catering staff, health workers and members of the small Christian community) moved away from structures and formulations which protected identities and towards spaces which facilitated relations of equality. This ‘new space’ was physically configured in our experience in two ways, one was around the activity of making bread together,\textsuperscript{42} and the other, which occurred at a later stage in the development of the Bread Cafe, was sitting around a circular table to eat together or discuss Bread Café business.\textsuperscript{43} It was quickly apparent that these new spatial arrangements made room for particularly rich and interesting moments of encounter where the relational space between ‘estate person’ and the other was newly configured.

Whilst moving between café and kitchen was a short distance physically, the sense of personal and social impact was quite profound for all involved and appeared to include two aspects.\textsuperscript{44} The first entailed being on unfamiliar territory and permitted into a previously inaccessible place and applied especially to the ‘estate people’ and members of the small Christian community on entering the kitchen—for the catering staff the impact related more to having unfamiliar people in their previously private kitchen. The second aspect related to the newly configured proximity to people who had formerly been known only from across the counter in a staff-customer relationship. This new proximity was described by M who had previously been “infuriated”\textsuperscript{45} by his view from “behind the counter” of ‘estate people’ “sitting there doing nothing.”\textsuperscript{46} Reflecting on the early bread-making sessions, he observes that we had become “a bunch of people making bread”\textsuperscript{47} so that “in the same conversation you’re showing someone how to knead bread and they’re telling you about their arthritis … they are telling you this incredibly personal information and you are thinking, ‘OK, active
listening but can we just knead the bread?” … It’s really hard, but really fun.” To move across the counter was both a physical and social move; it entailed moving into a new kind of social-relational place with a heightened sense of vulnerability and risk. In M’s words, “You can’t kind of look through your management handbook and go this is the dynamic and this is how to behave.”

Analysis of the research findings suggests that this new arrangement of place was characterised by a number of distinctive features which I will present briefly here. These could be summarised as a non-conformity to stereotype; disturbance and struggle; negotiation; the growth of inter-subjective relationships; and journeys of personal and social transformation.

‘Non-conformity to stereotype’ describes two distinct patterns of experience and behaviour associated with the new kinds of physical and social proximity which bread making entailed. The first relates to the realisation amongst those involved that the perspectives held about others ‘across-the-counter’ did not conform to their experience of the other when participating in a ‘side-by-side’ proximity defined by making bread together; there was in effect a disjuncture between ‘across-the-counter’ understanding, which tended to be stereotypical, and the insight gained through relational experience. Inherent within these experiences was a shared sense of ‘seeing’ or ‘appearance’ in which negative stereotypes were progressively displaced and qualities such as understanding, trust and respect began to emerge in their place.

Research findings show for example, that for catering staff and members of the small Christian community growing relational proximity to ‘estate people’ brought a strong sense of awareness of the complex and profoundly debilitating range of issues which belonged to the very people with whom they were forming relationship. Research findings also indicated that patterns of behaviour within the sphere of the Bread Café were different for both staff and ‘estate people’, although changing patterns of

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48 BC2, 800-808.
49 BC2, 562-565.
50 BC2, 778-780.
51 BC2, 816-845. The phrase ‘shared space of appearance’ is used by Mary McClintock Fulkerson and I discuss the concept later in the chapter (Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007] p.21).
52 During the course of Bread Café the issues affecting the ‘estate people’ that became apparent to the group included overwhelming health, mental health and social problems (BC1.1, 16, 18-20, 70-77, BC1, 13-21, 53, 71-73, 158-159, 168-201, 600-606; EL, 385-418. We also became aware of others on the estate whose situations excluded them from visiting the Health Park at all; these included a person who had not been out of his home for over ten years, a man who lived in a shed and those with other complex issues (BC1, 812-821; EL 128-131, 322-350, 379-384).
behaviour were most strongly evidenced in the ethnographic material in relation to ‘estate people’. One example of this dynamic is seen in a narrative thread about L that runs through a number of the ethnographic sources. L was one of the ‘estate people’ that M viewed ‘across the counter’ as “lazy” and whose behaviour in the café was difficult and demanding.\(^{53}\)

However, on our first meeting these preconceptions were challenged as she revealed that her motivation for learning to make bread was a desire to work and enthusiasm to find employment.\(^{54}\) A long history of poor emotional and mental health, broken family relationships, poor physical health including epilepsy and serious obesity had made the prospect of employment highly unlikely. Despite these challenges participation in the Bread Café was accompanied by well-observed changes in L’s behaviour.\(^{55}\) Behavioural changes were observed by catering staff, health centre staff and members of the small Christian community and include a modification in the way she spoke to people;\(^{56}\) a consistent participation in hard physical work despite the pain often suffered as a result;\(^{57}\) a remarkable determination to learn and overcome mistakes;\(^{58}\) and an enthusiasm for work which she shared with her seventeen year old daughter.\(^{59}\) The catering staff who had encountered L many times a week as a customer, now made spontaneous observations about changes they noticed in her behaviour and demeanour. H observed that, whilst L normally uses a mobility scooter, this is not the case when she comes to Bread Café; on these occasions she walks. E observed her determination to learn through her mistakes comparing her favourably to people who had paid for expensive cookery classes who “didn’t want to allow time and space for failure or to keep on trying” when they had got it wrong.\(^{60}\) M commented about the “amazing” change in L: “from someone who used to be very difficult, critical and non-participative; to someone who was now cheery and much more polite and engaging. Her whole stance and approach to things was different.”\(^{61}\)

Although the transformations seen in L were more dramatic than many, this was not an isolated account and indeed it was evident that some measure of changing perceptions,

\(^{53}\) BC1.1 55-64.
\(^{54}\) BC1.1, 16-30.
\(^{55}\) BC1, 385-412, BC1, 1020-1026.
\(^{56}\) BC1.1, 62-63.
\(^{57}\) BC1.1, 28-30, 79-81.
\(^{58}\) BC1, 397-406.
\(^{60}\) BC1, 413-427.
\(^{61}\) BC1, 1020-1026. It is important to note here that I am not implying that change is in one direction only—namely within L herself—but occurs precisely in the space ‘between’ M and L that arises from the new proximity between them. M’s ‘amazement’ indicates a change within M himself so that he now ‘sees’ that about L which was previously beyond his capacity to observe. I will go on to discuss this new sense of ‘seeing’ or ‘appearance’ towards the end of the chapter.
attitudes and behaviours were the shared experience of many who participated in the Bread Café initiative. It is important to note however that whilst the changes described were observable throughout the period of research there is no evidence to suggest that these, or indeed other forms of transformation, had a sustained or lasting impact on the individuals or groups involved. Indeed, the extent and permanence of physical and social transformations which are associated with the formation of these new spatialities is an important question and will form the substance of some of the discussion later in this chapter and also in the conclusion.

Seemingly in contrast to ideas about transformation, the new formulation of place also gave rise to a sense of struggle and disturbance. The softening of boundaries and resulting dissolution of stereotypical perspectives was accompanied by a new and often shocking appreciation of the seemingly intractable challenges that ‘estate people’ faced. The sense of disturbance related in part to the personal connection and increased empathy with people suffering in these kinds of situations. Disturbance also included quite personal senses of challenge amongst ‘non-estate people’ about our own social responsibility and the pattern of our own lives in the light of clear patterns of social injustice which were no longer safely ‘out there’ or even ‘over the counter’ but were now to be found in close relational proximity.

Thus disturbance associated with personal encounter was not limited to the immediate context of the Bread Café but also had the effect of shaping a broader landscape of struggle. Struggle was observed, for example, between the managers of the catering company, M and E, and some of their staff who did not share their enthusiasm for ‘crossing the counter’; in this case ongoing careful negotiation was needed so that the kitchen space could be shared.

Struggle also resulted from different expectations and attitudes to work which were based not on the stereotypical ‘laziness of estate people’ but on practical issues such as the ability to read the numbers on the weighing scales, or the sense of unfairness felt by Bread Café volunteers in that they had to pay for cups of tea whilst for catering staff this was free. Closer engagement between ‘estate people’ and others also brought many fresh ethical challenges. One such challenge that arose in a number of contexts related to racist
stereotyping by ‘estate people’ of black and minority groups. I experienced a typical ethical
dilemma in an early session of the Bread Cafe when P told me a joke which in the context of
broader social norms would have been considered racist, offensive and crude. I sensed at the
time that sharing this particular joke was P’s way of extending friendship to me and found
myself refraining from making any judgemental comments (whilst also wondering if my
holding back was the easy option in the situation). Through some quite personal
conversations over the following months I also grew to understand that humour was an
important and intentional part of life for P. He saw it as a way of supporting people whose
lives were otherwise unremittingly difficult: “I think it cheers people up and makes them
smile. I was here in the café yesterday and a group of us [were] sitting in the corner telling
jokes and crying with laughter for about two hours.” It also became clear, both through P’s
comments and behaviour that he increasingly and intentionally regulated his jokes according
to the place and company he was in.

Critical for the reformulation of place was the practice of negotiation, especially negotiation
between ‘estate people’ and others. Negotiation comprises a strong thread throughout the
ethnographic data and encompasses a broad range of practices from brief comments made in
the course of work to organised gatherings around a table to discuss the development of the
Bread Café, including practical aspects such as the very sensitive issue of pricing and how
oven space would be shared between the chefs and the Bread Café bakers.

The research findings that relate to the catering company and Bread Cafe indicate that on all
occasions negotiation was predicated upon relational proximity; that is negotiation did not
happen ‘across the counter’ but rather took place in contexts where people were face to face.
Important aspects of this relational proximity have already been discussed in terms of the
dissolving of stereotypes and engagement in struggle and disturbance. Thus, proximity is not
a simple spatial proximity but indicates a commensurate social and relational proximity.
Likewise, negotiation was not a formal practice which would bring about a new organisation
based on partnerships between different people; rather negotiation describes the way in which
people tried to talk together and understand each other in the context of a newly forming
place. As hard physical and social boundaries were progressively removed, negotiation

67 BC1, 80-95.
68 BC1, 91-95.
69 BC2, 611-612.
70 BC1, 203-230.

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became a critical tool for exploring and forming the new place and as a consequence inter-subjective relational characteristics were increasingly in evidence.

Examples of places formed in part by negotiation were the regular gatherings around café tables. Some of these were very informal, such as thirty-minute breakfast breaks, and others were more formal, being arranged a few days in advance for the purpose of planning. The unusual sense of togetherness experienced during these gatherings was possibly helped by the circular shape of the table and the close physical proximity caused as we tried to fit more people around the tables than they were designed for. This arrangement seemed to facilitate a sense of ease and a confidence in conversation and negotiation—elements which are indicative of growing inter-subjective relationships.

The period of ethnographic research tracks development from the initial course in bread-making to the eventual formation of the Bread Café and evidences how practices of negotiation, both informal and formal, between people of difference are central for the formulation of the new kind of place including its physical aspects (where it is located and arrangements of furniture) and its social arrangements (how people would relate together and how decisions would be made).

Thus the developmental trajectory of the newly forming place that we have called the Bread Café is characterised by co-constitutive dynamics. Whilst these dynamics have of necessity involved senses of disturbance and struggle, they have also been marked by experiences of energy and creativity.

The Drop-In

The Drop-In was established as a direct response to the previously described tensions experienced in the Advice Centre between ‘formal-structured’ and ‘informal-relational’.

Through an extended series of semi-formal reflections with the manager of the Advice Centre, B, and other members of the small Christian community, it was decided that we would seek to form a new spatial arrangement that would be predicated on Christian notions of relational presence including understandings of redemptive-place that were emerging through my own study at the time.

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71 BC1, 203-230; BC2, 606-678; 731-808; 1261-1283.
72 BC1, 203-230; 923-954; 682-703.
74 EL, 791-792; BC1, 41-50, 72-75, 520-521; BC2, 36-40, 1225-1229, 1231-1237.
75 Time constraints meant that I was not able to participate myself in the Drop-In, but I was able to maintain a regular practice of semi-formal reflective conversations with B, and this section is derived from some of those conversations.
The aim of the Drop-In was to engage with people who were experiencing long-term or life-long unemployment, and by pursuing this in the context of an inter-subjective relational place, allow for the appearance or emergence of outcomes that were otherwise not apparent or conceivable in the everyday experience of life. This approach constituted an intentional and critical posture towards the normal delivery of services to the unemployed on the estate which were predicated solely on the goal of moving people into positions of employment with little real attention to their life circumstances; an approach which we observed was, for many, resulting in further experiences of alienation from mainstream society.

The Drop-In took place on Tuesday mornings in an old Baptist church building and was facilitated by a team of five people, four of whom lived on the estate, one being a long-term resident. People were initially invited through word of mouth and a limited leaflet drop in the streets immediately around the Baptist building and over eight months the group grew to about twenty people with between five and fifteen guests attending on any given week. The intention of the Drop-In team was to provide an environment which would be conducive to honest and open conversation and would foster relationships of trust between the team and guests; giving guests space to explore their experiences of long-term unemployment and related issues. To achieve this the team recognised the need for the place to be as free as possible from a sense of coercion or conditionality, something that was a feature of most groups for unemployed people and involved demanding prescribed outcomes, whether or not those outcomes were in the best interests of the person concerned. The team also recognised the need to minimize the negative effects of difference in terms of ‘outsiders’ and ‘estate people’ being applied to the team and guests respectively. These aims could be thought of in terms of developing physical and social proximity between hosts and guests in order to achieve deeper levels of inter-subjective relationship and the team sought to engage with them by reflecting on the physical and social aspects of the place and organising accordingly.

The team realised however that to try to achieve these aims whilst meeting in the premises of the Advice Centre would seriously disrupt the established ethos of the centre. They therefore established the group at the Baptist premises, which was about a five minute walk from the Advice Centre, and allowed the group to arrange the physical layout of the room so as to encourage relational encounter—specifically they were able to exclude any furnishings that suggested a distinction or boundary between the team and the guests. The main gathering

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76 DI, 269-270.
77 DI, 427-428, 434-449.
78 DI, 265-282.
place consisted of a circle of easy chairs with a table to one side from which hot drinks could be obtained. Except for a small kitchen, the hall was the only useable room in the church so the building itself contained no obvious physical characteristics that might be interpreted as barriers between the team and the guests.

The team sought to shape the social sense of the place by embodying a number of core Christian values during the gatherings, values which were based on theological understandings of hospitality, openness and respect for others. By inviting guests to participate in the core values, the intention was that both team and guests would gradually develop relational connections across relatively hard social boundaries and thus foster a social space in which the relational characteristics of openness, patience and trust could be nurtured. This relationally configured place could then provide a context for discovering and exploring the issues that people were struggling with in relation to unemployment. This approach to creating a place based on relationship and shared values was regularly referred to by B and the team as ‘holding the space’ or ‘holding a Christian space’, a practice which they facilitated by meeting for a short time of prayer prior to each gathering to reflect on the ways in which values were shaping the group’s social interactions.

Research findings indicate that conflict and conflict resolution played an important role in the development of the Drop-In and the research materials contain narratives of conflict between members of the Drop-In team and guests and also between team members themselves. In the following paragraphs I will discuss a series of these events in terms of conflict, struggle, resolution and negotiation.

The first account of conflict relates to the early months of the Drop-In and to the different interpretations by hosts and guests about the availability of a free breakfast. The intention of the host team was that eating breakfast together would facilitate opportunities for conversation and interaction. B explains their intention by stating, “I didn’t want it to be a place where people came and ate their free food then went. I wanted there to be a bit of a

79 DI, 327, 449, 456-470, 535-536, 831-833, 879-880. The values statement used by the Drop-In team is included in the appendix. Theological understandings of these values are explored in: David Augsburger, Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-surrender, Love of God, and Love of Neighbor (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006) pp.57-170; Cathy Ross, ‘Radical Hospitality’ in Paul Cloke and Mike Pears (eds.), Mission in Marginal Places: The Theory (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, to be published 2016).
81 DI, 435, 818.
83 DI, 977-998.
84 DI, 855-862, 948, 977-998.
buy-in from people involved.”85 However, when food was made freely available to guests in a self-service style the response was “I will take everything I can get.”86 some guests simply ate as much as possible before leaving without participating in any group conversation.87 After reflection, the team changed the way food was served so that it was brought out from the kitchen already served on plates and offered to both guests and team members as they arrived. The intention of the new approach was to practice the core values of the Drop-In by emphasising hospitality rather than the availability of free food, and the team observed that as a result there were positive developments in the way that guests behaved and participated in the sessions in general. B observes that following the changes there was both a willing participation in eating together and also a genuine expression of gratitude:88 “When J brings [the food] in everyone is really grateful, but there is no added ‘what else can I have.’”89 The team also observed a participation in the values of the group as guests began to make unsolicited contributions. For example, “a couple of guys have made donations without being asked … one guy brought a whole load of cans of spaghetti … slowly, slowly little bits are arriving and people are really grateful.”90 This breakfast narrative is understood by the team to be an important part of the early formation of the Drop-In and the growth of closer relationships within the group as a whole. Initially the team understood that the non-relational ‘help yourself’ approach encouraged guests to conform to stereotypical patterns of ‘service provider’ and ‘service user’ which were predominant on the estate. B observes that “just having [food] in those pots out there [in the kitchen] … [where] there wasn’t a person there anymore so people just got into helping themselves because they got back into that thing of thinking ‘brilliant I can have as much as I like.’”91 The team were frustrated that the provision of food in this way was not interpreted in terms of hospitality but through the lens of institutional hand-out; the result was to “kind of flick a switch … into a different reality”92 where free food was simply part of an organised provision by “‘Mr government person’ or ‘Mr church person’.”93 Simple adjustments to the routine and the practical use of the kitchen had a significant impact on the sense of place and the way in which people engaged with the Drop-In sessions.

85 DI, 436-439.
86 DI, 459-461, 499-500.
87 DI, 461-463.
88 DI, 476-477, 488.
89 DI, 477-478.
90 DI, 484-488.
91 DI, 501-503.
92 DI, 505.
93 DI, 492-497.
Practices which reflected an institutional approach were quickly abandoned and gradually replaced by relational expressions of friendship and hospitality. This change of ethos was evidenced through expressions of gratitude, practical expressions of generosity, and practical involvement in service by guests.

A second account of conflict which related to the host team’s intention to ‘hold the space’ centred on the aspiration to value a person and respect their views, even when the views expressed were deemed offensive. Conflict around this aspect of ethos was exemplified in two ways. First was the tendency of guests to express judgemental views about other ‘estate people’ who were known to them or about new guests when those guests were not themselves present. Implicit within this observation is the tendency of the group, even in its early expression, to formulate its own group identity through discourses of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ where ‘outsiders’ were referenced in negative or derogatory terms. Second was the conflict caused by highly discriminatory, and for the team grossly offensive, statements that were made about people of Asian descent in terms of being ‘immigrant’ and ‘Muslim’ with reference to Asians in general and also to specific people who worked as shop keepers on the estate.

The research findings suggest that these negative representations of others presented the sharpest points of conflict between the host team and guests. Whilst the team’s intention was not to allow such expressions to go unchallenged, the sense is that the expression of negative views about people of difference remained an intractable point of conflict and tension within the social dynamic of the group. As B comments, “There wasn’t a solution. They [the guests] didn’t all … just decide they didn’t want to be in the English Defence League … they justified their decision and there was some pretty healthy debate.”

In addition to expressions of conflict that occurred at the interface of team members and guests, tension and conflict also occurred between members of the team themselves. These

\[94\] DI, 484-507.  
\[95\] DI, 476-477, 481-482.  
\[96\] DI, 484.  
\[97\] DI, 512-516, 519-521.  
\[98\] DI, 525-526. These intentions were expressed in the ‘Volunteer Guidelines’ for the Drop-In: “The main aim of the drop-in is to provide a safe space, free of judgement, which unemployed people in the local community can come to. This means that no matter what their background, belief or opinion, everyone is welcome. Our main responsibility is to listen. We are to respect every person’s point of view, whilst protecting the needs of the most vulnerable. This includes avoiding any statement or behaviour which may marginalise specific groups or individuals, even if we think they are justified.”  
\[99\] DI, 547-548.  
\[100\] DI, 562-631.  
\[101\] DI, 532-533, 538-551, 562-631, 780-782.  
\[102\] DI, 576-578. The English Defence League is a far right political group with strong nationalistic leanings.
conflicts arose in some instances from the diverse personalities and class backgrounds of the team members. One team member for example, came from a very wealthy situation and during each session parked her luxury sports car immediately outside the church building and on a number of occasions invited her own personal trainer to facilitate some fitness training sessions for the Drop-In guests.\(^{103}\) Whilst this sense of incongruity caused discomfort and awkwardness amongst team members it seemed to have little effect on the wider group; conversely, much to the surprise of the other team members, sessions with the personal trainer proved a popular addition to the group for a number of its members. Thus far I have discussed conflict that occurred between different members of the group. However there were also occasions in which the group was united in its struggle to deal with a shared issue or problem.\(^{104}\) One such struggle occurred as a result of the theft of the purse of a team member, C, during one of the Drop-In sessions. Following the theft, C along with the other members of the team decided that the theft should not be reported to the police, but that the Drop-In group should be informed and the perpetrator invited to return the purse and contents on the basis that no further action would be taken.\(^{105}\) Whilst no confession was forthcoming and the purse was not recovered, the impact on the group as a whole was quite dramatic; people “were really cut up; they were really gutted that someone would do that in our group … that you don’t treat this place like this.”\(^{106}\) The depth of feeling was expressed personally to C by one of the men from the group who voiced his sadness, reasoning that “we are like family aren’t we?” C was deeply moved by this spontaneous demonstration of relational solidarity especially knowing that it came from a man whose own experience was one of broken family relationships. In addition she felt a personal sense of affirmation and belonging which registered deeply with her own family experience of fractured relationships.\(^{107}\) The theft of the purse and the emergence of the language of ‘family’ subsequently became an important episode in forming the group’s sense of self-identity.\(^{108}\)

The following section draws on the previously discussed theory of redemptive place as a framework for analysing the events narrated here. The discussion will indicate that the dynamics of conflict, struggle and resolution associated with events such as those described

\(^{103}\) DI, 256, 851-899.  
\(^{104}\) DI, 333-420, 644-683, 900-916.  
\(^{105}\) DI, 651-652.  
\(^{106}\) DI, 664-666.  
\(^{107}\) DI, 673-683.  
\(^{108}\) DI, 644-662, 904-916.
became important factors in the development of stronger relational connections between members of the Drop-In, especially in the formation of relational bridges between people who were on different sides of the ‘outsider’/‘estate person’ divide. Emerging from these events are strong relational discourses within the group which employ the language of shared identity and belonging. At the core of the story of the Drop-In, enabling members to journey from moments of conflict to points of resolution, was the practice of negotiation; where negotiation not only happened between people, but crucially also involved intentional and thoughtful reflection upon the physical and social aspects of place in order to facilitate relational proximity and conversation.

The Characteristics and Practices of Redemptive Places

In this chapter I have drawn on the findings of qualitative research to investigate the potential formation of redemptive spatial characteristics in the emergence of two small communities, the Bread Café and the Drop-In. Analysis has focused on the material, social and relational arrangements of boundaries with particular attention being given to evidence that suggests the softening of hard boundaries; the development of inter-subjective relationships and the co-construction of place. The evidence presented in this chapter indicates that there is indeed a distinctive difference in the spatial characteristics of the emergent communities (namely the Bread Café and Drop-In) and their respective host organisations (namely the catering company and Advice Centre respectively). This development in the nature of place between the host organisation and emerging community can be considered in terms of a developmental trajectory so that changing spatial characteristics can be observed and analysed in relation to the passage of time. By imagining such a place-time development in relation to the catering company/Bread Café and Advice Centre/Drop-In a number of important patterns can be observed.

Firstly, the evidence presented at the beginning of this chapter indicates that the Advice Centre and catering company, despite attempts to engage in an open and relational way, in fact both still conformed to the arrangements of place that have been defined as normative in

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Chapters 5 and 6. Given the arguments of the previous chapters as to how ‘the way things are’ becomes characteristic of normative place this is to be expected.\textsuperscript{111} The developmental trajectory of place observed in the journey from Advice Centre to Drop-In is notable in that it necessitated a change in location. Indeed, staff at the Advice Centre presented a discourse based on their interpretation of recent events to argue that a softening of boundaries would seriously undermine the ability of the centre to perform its primary function, namely the provision of advice to ‘estate people’. Thus, whilst the Drop-In involved the manager and the ‘resident’ group of clients from the Advice Centre, the only way of exploring the development of inter-subjective relational arrangements was to physically move location. This naturally raises the question about whether the move from Advice Centre to Drop-In can actually be conceived of as a developmental trajectory of place, or whether the change in location causes such a disjuncture that the Drop-In should be considered in separate terms.\textsuperscript{112}

In contrast, the developmental trajectory associated with catering company/Bread Cafe takes place in the same location; indeed a critical component of the trajectory is that a fresh approach to the physical elements of the location itself were a central aspect in the reformulation of boundaries, namely the twofold movement involving the softening of the counter as a hard boundary and the formulation of a new relational place around bread-making. It is important to note however, in analysing the catering company/Bread Cafe trajectory, that the new arrangements of place were contained within certain parameters determined by the business interests of the catering company, and indeed it was clear to all involved that by developing a partnership with local Christian groups and ‘estate people’ the business interests were being positively served.

Therefore the analysis of place in terms of the developmental trajectories of the Advice Centre and catering company indicate some important qualifications to any subsequent discussion about the formation of redemptive places. Firstly the qualification that both of the host organisations were predicated on arrangements of place which maintained rather than challenged the binary settlements that characterise the Cornwall Estate, and indeed the ongoing viability—including the economic viability—of the organisations was dependent on the maintenance of these arrangements.

\textsuperscript{111} It is important to note here that my use of ‘normative’ is a particular reference to the discussion of Chapters 5 and 6; in Chapter 5 ‘normative’ is a reference to ‘doxic’ formations of place that function ideologically and in Chapter 6 ‘normative’ refers to the context of ‘created-place’ and ‘redemptive-place’.

\textsuperscript{112} Whilst I have discussed the physical location and arrangement of the new building I have not included in this study other effects that the new location might have had on the formation of place, such as the meanings that hosts or guests might associate with the building.
Secondly, the qualification that any new arrangements of place that developed through the emergence of the Drop-In or Bread Cafe were contingent upon the continuing cooperation of the host organisations and in this sense the formation of redemptive spatialities were experienced only as provisional. This second point raises an important question about the nature of redemptive places and the extent to which they are by definition provisional and necessarily co-existent with normative arrangements of place. The alternative possibility is that places might be established where redemptive characteristics predominate over normative arrangements and in a sense become a ‘new normative.’ I will engage with this question in a later part of the discussion.

Given these qualifications, the evidence presented here suggests that the two trajectories under consideration do indeed indicate the development of redemptive spatial characteristics, and these are especially evident in the way in which physical and social proximity grew between people who were previously separated. However this growth in inter-subjective relationship was not something that happened spontaneously but needed the initiative of the small Christian community to intentionally reformulate the spatial arrangements in partnership with other groups. A central part of this intentionality within the small Christian community is the previously discussed theological understanding of inter-subjectivity as referencing not only a quality of relationship between people of difference, but more precisely, that between the self and the other a ‘third’ is present, namely the Spirit.113 The presence of the Spirit in this way is acknowledged by members of the small Christian community who seek to participate faithfully in the Spirit’s activity through the practices of prayer, reflection and negotiation—practices which they understand to be integral to the development of the new place.

Also evident within these initial reformulations of place is a concern that reflective practices and ethical behaviours are incorporated into the spatial formation precisely to allow for the further growth of inter-subjective relational characteristics.

A further important characteristic of redemptive-place is suggested by observing the developmental trajectory of each community. Although each has its own distinctive sense of place, due in part to their different activities and locations, it is evident that there are some common stages of development. The first stage of development might be considered in terms

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113 This idea has been previously discussed in Chapter 4.
of the initial softening of hard boundaries and the gradual development of a new experience of physical and social proximity. Importantly, in spatial terms, these early stages include significant elements of inter-subjectivity in that they emerge out of grounded relationships and reflective negotiations with a variety of others. The second stage of development should be understood to be a direct consequence of the newly configured relationships of the first stage. Whilst the first stage might be considered primarily in terms of softening boundaries and growth of inter-subjectivity, the second stage can be seen as the formation of co-constructed place. Critically the particular arrangement of co-constructed place could not have been anticipated by any of the participant groups; by definition co-construction of place is dependent on the knowledge of self and other which was previously unavailable and comes into view only as inter-subjective relationships are formed.

The experience of those involved in the Bread Cafe and Drop-In indicates that in practice these developmental stages of redemptive-place are not experienced as discrete and well organised; on the contrary they are complex, socially challenging and emotionally painful. Indeed, one might argue that given this sense of disorganisation it is difficult to actually identify a given place as redemptive. I will engage with the particular question about the nature of redemptive-place in the Conclusion, but will make some additional observations now about the characteristics and practices that define the two stages of development that I have outlined here.

Firstly, there is strong evidence within the research findings that both stages of development include experiences of vulnerability, struggle and conflict and the accompanying practices of negotiation and conflict resolution. Importantly these experiences and practices are not found to exist simply between people of different social groupings but also occur between people within the same social group. I suggest that a cause-and-effect process is evident such that as binary arrangements are softened potential conflict is less constrained by these hard spatial structures so that experiences of conflict occur, not only between different social groupings, but throughout the group in general. The removal of hard structures, which maintained a kind of peace predicated on relational distance, allows a new experience of relational proximity; people from diverse social backgrounds who previously knew each other only as strangers, outsiders, and even enemies, now find themselves inhabiting the same social space. For this new arrangement of relational proximity to function the Christian practices of forgiveness and reconciliation must be newly learned. It is critical, therefore, to understand from the perspective of Christian theology and practice that the softening of boundaries, and the consequent meeting of strangers and enemies, must be predicated on the mediating and
reconciling presence of Christ. Thus the formation of redemptive place can exist only as the presence of Christ is known, since indeed it is in his own flesh that the barrier and dividing wall of hostility has been pulled down and in him that the two groups, previously separated, have been made one (Ephesians 2:14-15). Central therefore to the formation of redemptive places are practices that make room for the Spirit; indeed to participate in the formation of redemptive place is to participate in the work of the Spirit. I will discuss the practices associated with the formation of redemptive places in the Conclusion.

Secondly, it is evident that new arrangements of physical and social proximity enabled different and surprising ways of understanding or ‘seeing’ the other. In many cases an increased porosity of boundaries and the associated relational proximity facilitated a renewed evaluation and appreciation of the other which included a process of challenging and dismantling of stereotypes. Research evidence has been presented that suggests that the heightened sense of vulnerability and risk associated with an unfamiliar proximity to persons of difference resulted in a qualitative difference in terms of conversation and social interaction. This is seen, for example, in the Bread Cafe where the ‘side-by-side’ arrangement of making bread together resulted in an act of listening that previously would not have been conceivable. Indeed the physical rearrangement of the place from a difficult ‘across-the-counter’ relationship between ‘posh’ chef and ‘troublesome’ customer to a ‘side-by-side’ configuration of place seemed to bring with it an assumed, though largely unspoken, commitment to engage differently with the ‘other’ person, and this in turn led to experiences which had surprising and profound impacts on both individuals and the group alike.

At this point it is helpful to engage with the notion of ‘obliviousness’ discussed by Mary McClintock Fulkerson. Critically obliviousness relates to social—and I would argue spatial—arrangements of power; it is a non-seeing that “comes with dominance,” and in the context of the catering company and Advice Centre this might be understood as being an integral aspect of all that happens around the hard boundary of the counter. Obliviousness or ‘non-seeing’ is a quality which works predominantly in one direction, sustaining patterns of difference so that the organisations, and people who work within them, become complicit.

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114 See for example Chapter 6.
115 See Chapter 6.
116 See Chapter 6.
(albeit unwittingly) with the very forces that define and sustain difference. Therefore the experiences of struggle (both personal inner struggle and struggle in relationships) which are a consequence of the newly configured proximity signify ruptures or fissures in a person’s normative experience of place. These fissures are created by a break between the dominant view of a place and the new experience of “appearance” that arises from the removal of obliviousness. Indeed, for Fulkerson herself, obliviousness is symbolised in her own discomfort when in proximity with persons of difference.

In this context the ‘different or surprising ways of understanding or seeing’ that I have spoken about equate with an interruption of the non-seeing of obliviousness and are consequently an interruption or disruption of the mechanisms of power that sustain difference and inflict “social harm.” The new physical and social proximity that causes such ruptures in the normative experience of the dominant group might be understood as the creation of “a shared space of appearance”—that is the creation of a place that is the antithesis of the normative arrangement of place where obliviousness sustains harmful and unequal arrangements of power.

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that such a “shared space of appearance” entails a new sense of seeing in two important ways: a seeing or recognition of the other, not through stereotype or representation but through relational connection as human beings; and also a recognition or seeing in oneself of instincts and responses that have been complicit (whether unintentionally or not) in keeping persons of difference at a distance.

This new “shared space of appearance” denotes a distinct second phase in the spatial trajectories of the catering company/Bread Cafe and Advice Centre/Drop-In and importantly signifies the forming of spatial characteristics which are qualitatively distinct from the previous arrangements of place. A critical point of disjuncture in the characteristics of place that the “shared space of appearance” signifies is that of the co-constitution of knowledge and commensurate co-construction of place itself. In normative arrangements of place

118 Fulkerson, Places of Redemption, p.21.
119 Fulkerson, Places of Redemption, p.15.
120 The phrase “social harm” is used by Fulkerson, Places of Redemption, p.19.
121 Fulkerson, Places of Redemption, p.21.
122 Fulkerson refers to this as “contemporary social obliviousness” that both “disregards … marginalising forces” and also “represses complicity in the/my production of ‘difference’” (Fulkerson, Places of Redemption, p.15).
123 See for example sections entitled ‘Bread Café’ and ‘Drop-In’.
124 This understanding stresses the importance in mission for the Christian community itself to be open to transformation and explains the necessity for transformation in terms of engagement with place. The theme of the transformation or ‘conversion’ of the missionary is discussed by Anthony J. Gittins, Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission (Wipf and Stock: Oregon, 2001) pp.36-54.
characterised by hard boundaries knowledge which shapes social, spatial and political landscapes is predicated on existing settlements which reflect a ‘common sense’ (or ‘taken for granted’) view of the world—thus knowledge sustains the established order and serves to protect the interests of those with power. In contrast the newly constituted places, which can be glimpsed in the Bread Cafe and Drop-In, are brought about, at least in part, by the new knowledge that arises precisely in the point of meeting, where those whose presence and voice were previously excluded are now recognised and heard.

In conclusion I propose that, on the basis of these observations, the Bread Cafe and Drop-In can be understood as introducing new arrangements of place into the strong binary settlement that is normative for the Cornwall Estate, and furthermore that these new arrangements do indeed incorporate some important aspects of redemptive place. In addition, whilst the Bread Cafe and Drop-In have been somewhat experimental in nature, they have become a significant site for the practical-theological investigation of place within a marginal mission context. They are in many ways works-in-progress and raise as many questions as they offer insights. In particular they invite discussion about the importance of place within mission and whether the formation of new redemptive places should be a specific aim of mission. In addition they open up further enquiry about particular practices which have been associated with the formation of redemptive places and the extent to which these practices might be helpfully incorporated into the practice of mission, especially within marginal contexts. I will briefly address these questions in the conclusion.

Finally the findings invite further questions about the nature and experience of redemptive-place itself. The evidence that I have presented in this chapter suggests that redemptive expressions of place are contingent upon the prevailing normative spatial arrangements and that the actual experience of redemptive-place is somewhat tenuous and short-lived in the sense that they exist only as the participants continue to ‘hold the space’. This suggests that redemptive places might be considered solely in terms of temporary interruptions or fissures

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125 The phrases ‘common sense’ and ‘taken for granted’ are included in the discussion of Chapter 3 with reference to Tim Cresswell’s arguments about normativity and ideological power.
126 This sense of “new knowledge that arises at the point of meeting” is conveyed beautifully by Vincent Donivan in the preface to the second edition of his book, *Christianity Rediscovered*, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. He describes the emerging of a new knowledge as being like “the melody of a new unwritten song that haunts you, with the notes and the words not yet in place. It is there just out of your reach and the melody haunts you because it is not yet complete, but you will recognize the song when it is complete: a new song that many are trying to sing today in place of the ancient hymn of salvation” (Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* [London: SCM, 2001] p.xvii).
in the normative arrangements of place. Such an understanding is perhaps not unhelpful; it corresponds well with the notion that experiences of ‘shared appearance’ or ‘co-construction of place’ can be seen in terms of prophetic events that engage with and expose previously unseen and unjust settlements of power. A provisional sense of place also corresponds well to the arrangements of power that are expressive of the ‘now and not yet’ understanding of the Kingdom of God; it resists the temptation to establish a ‘new normative’ through the accumulation of power in the name of God or for the cause of justice. My inclination is to think that in this current age redemptive places will, by definition, have about them a sense of provisionality and that it is precisely in this quality that they offer prophetic and hopeful vision for new ways of living together and perhaps a glimpse of the newly created place that will be fully experienced in the age to come.
PLACE, DEPRIVATION AND MISSION

The theological arguments and empirical research that have been developed through the course of this enquiry indicate that the experience of everyday life in the Cornwall Estate is deeply connected to the characteristics and mechanisms of place. In particular the geographic and physical elements of place are not conceived of as a benign or passive backdrop, but rather as dynamic and forceful components that shape all aspects of cultural and social interaction. Indeed everyday arrangements of place are seen to embody social, spiritual and ideological expressions of power which are instrumental in sustaining deep-rooted patterns of multiple deprivations.

Furthermore, theological perspectives on place in general, and on the human social space of the estate in particular, indicates that there are important implications for the theology and practice of mission. The argument presents reasons for the integration of theological perspectives on place into mission studies, especially in the field of contextual missiology, and indicates that through the study of spatial components of context fresh and hopeful engagement for those affected by long-established patterns of marginalisation and deprivation might be opened up. In particular theological perspectives on the spatial aspects of context can bring added insight into the nature and arrangement of power relationships embedded in places thus affording the opportunity for mission practices to be developed which engage more effectively with unjust constructions of power.

Importantly, theological perspectives on place also facilitate consideration of the spatiality that is inherent within the theory and practices of mission and thus reduce the potential of mission itself to be complicit (albeit unwittingly) in arrangements which sustain the very structures of inequality and injustice that it is the intention of mission to address. ¹ There are therefore compelling reasons for a rigorous engagement between the theology and practice of mission and questions of place and it is important that current concern in mission studies about issues of contextualisation—which, according to earlier observations, is normally understood in cultural and social terms—be extended to include place.

¹ The spatial characteristics inherent within the theology and practices of mission have been discussed in the Introduction. The spatial characteristics of mission practices in the Cornwall Estate are discussed in Chapter 6 with particular reference to the Advice Centre and the Drop-In are compared (pp.119-120).
I have proposed theological notions of place that shed fresh insight on the particular relationship between deprivation and geographical location and thus suggest alternative approaches to mission which include an intentional engagement with the particular arrangements of place in a given context. These approaches to place include participation in the formation of places in order to enable increased levels of inter-subjective relationship and even the possible transformation of places which I have described in terms of the spatiality of embrace and the formation of redemptive-places.²

Empirical study of the estate has shown that chronic deprivation and inequality are a function of, and sustained by normative (or relationally dysfunctional) arrangements of place and this is seen for example in the unequal arrangements of power between ‘estate people’ and ‘outsiders.’³ In this context my research has demonstrated how an awareness of a particular place has practical relevance for the way in which the Christian community engages with issues of deprivation and marginalisation.

There are, I realise, no easy solutions to the challenges of mission in the Cornwall Estate nor to the troubling and continuing experience of deprivation suffered by so many people. Indeed the initiatives described and researched are, I confess, small and provisional in relation to them and I lay no claim to them offering definitive answers or solutions.

However the argument presented here indicates that there are practical and hopeful ways in which the Christian community might engage more effectively and prophetically with arrangements of place that sustain patterns of marginalisation. Therefore this concluding chapter brings together aspects of theoretical and ethnographic research to present some important summary arguments and to also suggest areas in which further research might be pursued. In terms of mission praxis, a series of practices that have already been explored as an integral part of the research are brought more clearly into focus and proposed as core practices for the Christian community that wishes to engage more deeply with the place they inhabit.

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² The notion of inter-subjective relationships which has been explored in this thesis finds correspondence with ideas of dialogue within mission studies, explored for example by Bevans and Schroeder (Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, Prophetic Dialogue [New York: Orbis, 2011] p.28). Because inter-subjectivity includes the spatial element of relationships it offers new insights to the current discussion about dialogue, and presents one way in which the research findings might contribute to the subject of mission studies.

³ Chapter 5.
The Importance of a Theology of Place in Understanding Deprivation

An important step in the research process was to establish a theological framework for understanding the relationship of deep-rooted patterns of deprivation to particular places. In the first part of the study this problem was addressed by developing a three-fold theological formulation of place defined by created-place, normative-place and Jesus-Space. The organising idea for the theological definition of place is that of relationship—or more precisely inter-subjective relationship—where a creational spatiality is given definition by the distance (separation) and proximity (binding) that gives form to inter-subjective relationships. The dynamic process of separation and binding is reflective of the relationships of the Godhead and gives definition to the created order of place including its material, social and spiritual aspects. Thus created-place may be thought of as embodying a relational ethic central to which is the maintenance of the dynamic of separation and binding that facilitates both personal and social identity.

Normative-place occurs when there is a distortion of the relational spatiality of created-place so that the resulting settlement of place embodies relations predicated predominantly on power rather than those of inter-subjective, covenantal love embodied by created-place. This distorted or dysfunctional arrangement of place gives power to social and cultural hegemonic settlements and ideological spatial arrangements.

Redemptive-place is predicated on the presence of Jesus by the Spirit and configures a new and different relationship of power to place which interrupts and disarms the established ideological and exclusionary arrangements of normative-place. It embodies the spatiality of embrace enabling reconciliation between former strangers and enemies; it brings to life a new and hopeful imagination of place and is thus a type of third-space which anticipates a fundamental transformation or ‘conversion’ of place.

The second part of the thesis involved an extensive ethnographic investigation into the relationship between the spatial arrangement of the Cornwall Estate and the patterns of deprivation that are embedded there and this led to some important conclusions in relation to the theology of place and the theology and practice of mission.

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4 Chapter 3.
5 The nature of the relationship between place and ethics has emerged as an important question through the course of this research. Whilst I have not engaged extensively in an explicitly ethical discussion, the theological framework of place that I have proposed has an inherent ethical dimension, which lays grounds for further exploration of this relationship.
6 See Chapter 3.
Firstly, the research findings indicate that there is a direct and significant relationship between the chronic deprivation associated with the Cornwall Estate and the character and function of place. It has been observed that material, social and spiritual aspects of place interact dynamically to create complex and mutually reinforcing spatial arrangements so that the lived experience of long-term residents is likely to be one of chronic deprivation, and for some a vicious cycle of deprivation. This observed link between place and deprivation challenges the notion that multiple deprivation simply describes a complex set of social ills that affect a community—ills that can be remedied through the appropriate enactment of social policy and charitable support. Rather, it suggests that chronic deprivation is not itself the fundamental problem but is symptomatic of a deeper malaise, namely the dysfunctional nature of place itself. From this perspective place is understood to be a critical and influential factor in establishing and maintaining multiple deprivation, and indeed the existence of persistent deprivation itself is indicative of a dysfunction within place. It is imperative therefore that the character and mechanisms of place be given proper consideration when addressing issues of deprivation, whether by national or local government through social policy, or Christian groups through the practice of mission.

Secondly, a critical aspect of my analysis of place in general and the estate in particular is that place itself should not to be conceived of as an inherently bounded or localised phenomenon and that spatial mechanisms do not function independently of, or in isolation from ‘other places’. Specifically, the designation of a given social-location as a bounded and independent entity is a distortion of place as theologically conceived — namely in terms of created-place. This analysis has particular relevance to the Cornwall Estate where the association of ‘estate culture’ to a bounded location has been shown to be particularly strong, and more generally where such an association is understood to be an integral part of the designation of a location as an ‘estate’. Importantly, the relational notion of place conceives of material, social and spiritual spheres in a complex and dynamic web of inter-relations so that places are interdependent rather than independent and their form is determined by the interconnectedness or relationality between places. I have discussed this interconnectedness in terms of boundaries and have argued that it is the spatiality of the boundary—or the ‘between-ness’—that gives definition to places. In this view place is not defined as that which is circumscribed by a boundary but by the nature of its connectivity to other places, a connectivity which is predicated on the spatiality of the boundary itself.
This approach to the investigation of place has proved a significant challenge to the imagination throughout the course of this research. Representations of place as bounded location are so pervasive in a Western context, that to speak of or imagine place differently is conceptually and practically problematic. This is particularly the case in relation to the Cornwall Estate where even the designation ‘estate’ is a representation of a bounded location. Such representations of place are reinforced, for example, by the maps of deprivation that make graphic equivalence between the territory of the estate and high levels of social deprivation and also by the socially accepted designation of identity as a ‘estater’ or ‘outsider’.

The proposal developed here is to conceive of place in terms of boundaries. Whilst this does not exclude the possibility of a bounded sense of place, it also helps to conjure an imagination of global interconnectedness so that the experience of place in a given geographic location is a function of global connection and interrelatedness. This proposal takes account of conceptions of place as dynamic, fluid and mobile. Importantly however, the concept of boundaries draws attention to mobility and connectedness between people and places that are differently empowered rather than the dominant forms of mobility that predominate between existing nodes of power. Therefore, conceiving of place in terms of boundaries allows for a theological understanding of place based on the idea of inter-subjective relationships to engage dialogically with both static and fluid conceptions of place. Consequently, the boundary conditions of the Cornwall Estate that my research has established as ‘hard’ (that is resistant to relational connectivity) and indicative of ‘relations of unequal power’ are not simply a reference to the geographical distinction between the estate and the city but they define the overall nature of the global field of interconnection that constitutes the estate as a place.

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7 This is exemplified in the Introduction where I discuss the conceptions of place that are implicit within the theology and practice of mission. The influence of bounded conceptions of place were discussed in relation to colonial influences on mission and exemplified by Vincent Donovan (Vincent J. Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 3d ed. [London: SCM, 2001] pp.17-39); the relationship of the gospel to culture in North American mission studies exemplified by the ‘Gospel in Our Culture Network’ and the Alleleon series (Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, Introducing the Missional Church: What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Become One [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009]); and the symbolic and ideological importance of the ‘inner city’ in British urban theology.

8 Here I use ‘global’ in the sense of “relating to or encompassing the whole of something, or of a group of things” (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/global?q=global, accessed 22.07.2014).

9 These ideas are presented in the Introduction and explored in more depth in Chapter 2. An important work in the developing these ideas is that of Doreen Massey, For Space (Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2005).

10 In a model where place is conceived of in fluid or mobile terms, a hard boundary might be imagined as being like the banks of a river—high river banks direct the flow (of power) in only one direction. Whilst this simple model should not be pressed too far, it offers a comparison to the bounded in/out model of centralised power.
This understanding of place is a key aspect of the outcome of research. Not only has deprivation been shown to be associated with the character and function of place, but furthermore, place is not a reference to a specific geographical territory, such as an estate, but is descriptive of the interconnectivity between places—where interconnectivity describes the extent and character of global connections. Therefore the existence of deep-rooted patterns of deprivation within the Cornwall Estate is not caused by the dysfunction of place solely within the geographical confines of the estate itself, but is related to a global dysfunction of place which I have referenced as normative-place.

This analysis directly addresses the research question in a number of important ways. The research question asked:

In areas where there are deep-rooted patterns of multiple deprivations, what are the implications for the theology and practice of mission afforded by a theological perspective on particular human social space?

In relation to the question, the analysis proposes firstly that chronic deprivation in specific geographic locations is symptomatic of underlying dysfunction in the global arrangements of place; secondly, that the mechanisms that cause patterns of deprivation to be resistant to change are not solely social, economic or political, they are also mechanisms of place; and thirdly those mechanisms are specifically the mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation that find their potency in normative arrangements of place.\textsuperscript{11}

In presenting these proposals I am arguing that the challenge facing the Cornwall Estate is not primarily one of deprivation, but one of marginalisation, and in that sense is not simply a ‘local’ problem belonging to the estate but a ‘global’ problem of the city and beyond; and that whilst the problem of marginalisation cannot be addressed solely in terms of place, that conversely it cannot be addressed without regard to place.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Place, Mission and the Formation of Redemptive Places}

A further important proposal that emerges from the research is that place itself is dynamic and adaptable and that through an intentional engagement with the material, social and

\textsuperscript{11} In making these points I am drawing on my earlier analysis of ‘normative place’ in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{12} I do not wish to imply here an either/or binary between deprivation and marginalisation, neither do I intend to minimise or dismiss the actual problems of physical and social deprivation.
spiritual components it is in fact possible to alter the formation and lived experience of place. There is no suggestion in the research that this would be conceived of as bringing change to long-standing, fixed or static arrangements of place, rather, according to the concepts discussed in Chapter 6, this should be understood as influencing the developmental trajectory of place. Furthermore, it has been previously argued that a theological vision for place is not limited to a change in its formation, but envisions a transformation in the actual nature of place. Critically, this transformation is not achieved through the coercive or violent assertion of power, but through the nurturing of the types of inter-subjective or dialogical relationships that have been previously described. To engage in such a transformation is a participation in the activity of the Spirit and is therefore fundamentally an activity of mission.

There are therefore two distinct approaches, or phases, to the transformation of place, both of which are the subject of analysis in the empirical research. The first can be conceived of as a softening of hard boundaries which can be achieved through the adjustment of material and social components of place to accomplish an increased level of inter-subjective relationship. The effect of such changes is to reduce the influence of the mechanisms of marginalisation and exclusion that are intrinsic to normative arrangements of place, with the consequence that binary formations are moderated and the potential develops for new hybrid spaces to come into being.

Such a development is, however, not a fundamental change in the nature of a place; the boundary arrangements that define the place remain normative throughout the change and ultimately determine the nature and extent of the change. Indeed, such a process is not a transformation in place but purely a modification to the current normative arrangement.

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13 The colonial notion of ‘taking territory’, discussed in the Introduction, would be an example of this way of trying to bring about transformation (Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, pp.19-22; Donovan, Christianity, pp.xvii-xviii).


15 I am arguing therefore that normative arrangements of place encompass a broad spectrum of expressions ranging from hard binary formations to soft hybrid arrangements. The hybrid arrangement can itself act as a third space, thus having the potential to disrupt and transform hard binary arrangements of normative-place. The themes of hybridity and the transformation of place are discussed in Chapters 1 and 3; in Chapter 2 ideas about the transgression of normative or ‘doxic’ arrangements are discussed in relation to the work of Tim Cresswell.
This kind of change can be seen in the case of the Advice Centre which had achieved a significant modification in the hard binary arrangement of place experienced on the Cornwall Estate; to step through the door of the centre was to step into a more humanising and relational place. However, research evidence suggests powerful constraints upon the degree of change. For example, relationships between people in the centre were constrained by the staff-client relationship, an arrangement that we found could not be fundamentally changed whilst on the premises itself. In addition, the link between funding and attaining ‘positive outcomes’ with respect to clients effectively constrained the kinds of relationship and activity which could be endorsed in the centre, even when more effective and hopeful approaches were apparent.\(^{16}\)

The second approach to the transformation of place is the introduction of an entirely different spatiality, that of redemptive-place. There is a qualitative difference between what I have described as modifications in normative-place and the formation of redemptive-place and it is important to draw a clear distinction between the two. Critically the constitution of redemptive-place is entirely different from that of normative-place and these have been discussed at length in Chapter 3. In summary, redemptive-place is predicated on Jesus-Space, spatiality which embodies resurrection and new creation and therefore is characterised by both continuity and discontinuity between ‘old’ and ‘new’.\(^{17}\) Redemptive-place is brought into being as the church participates in the presence and activity of the Spirit;\(^{18}\) it defines a new social-spatial arrangement whose physicality and located-ness is an important aspect of the New Creation.\(^{19}\) The essence of redemptive-place is the spatial embodiment of the cross which removes dividing walls between those who were enemies and estranged so that a new social and spatial proximity, or place of embrace, is established.\(^{20}\) Therefore the formation of redemptive-place cannot be conceived of as an autonomous activity; just as participation in the Spirit is fundamental in the conversion of a person, so too is it in the transformation of place. In addition, the work of the Spirit is seen primarily in

\(^{16}\) The approach described here has some similarity to that presented by Bevans and Schroeder as ‘mission as dialogue’ where dialogue has four characteristics: respect, openness, willingness to learn and attentiveness (Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, pp.29-31). My argument engages critically with that of Bevans and Schroeder in that, whilst dialogue results in a more humanising experience of place (as for example in the Advice Centre), it does not include the idea that the place itself might be changed or transformed.

\(^{17}\) This might be considered as analogous to ‘natural body’ and the ‘spiritual’ or resurrected body (1Cor 15: 20-23, 35-49).

\(^{18}\) Taylor, Go-Between, pp.3-25.

\(^{19}\) See Chapter 3.

relation to the person of difference, the stranger, the enemy: the Spirit is located in the space *between* the self and the other, convening a new kind of relationship and therefore a new kind of relational space. For this reason a central theme that runs throughout the discussion of mission practices is about how the Christian community participates with the activity of the Spirit in relation to place.

A further critical issue about the difference between normative-place and redemptive-place concerns the provisional nature of redemptive-place. The question of provisionality has arisen in the context of both the theological enquiry and the empirical study where a provisional and vulnerable sense of place was keenly felt through the experiences of the Bread Café and Drop-In. Whilst this sense was no-doubt in part because the projects themselves were small and dependent on a number of factors working together, it is important to emphasise that provisionality refers to something more than this. The proposal that has emerged is that the provisional aspect of redemptive-place is in fact fundamental to and an integral part of its character, and that this is determined through its foundational relational arrangement of participation with the Spirit who convenes inter-subjective relationships; a character which may be understood in terms of hospitality and openness.\(^{21}\) Such openness is an acknowledgment that redemptive-place is always contingent on its particular location and receptive to the possible arrival of strangers who find themselves ‘out of place’; that is strangers who bring with them new spatial arrangements and imaginations.\(^{22}\)

The provisional nature of redemptive-place relates theologically in a number of other important ways. The first relates to the function of redemptive-place as a third place. This has been discussed in Part 1 where, by drawing on ideas presented by Edward Soja about Third Place, it was understood that redemptive-place can be conceived as a ‘space of imagination’.\(^{23}\) The second, and related, line of enquiry is about the eschatological or utopian

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\(^{21}\) This kind of ‘openness’ of a place where people of difference meet through the convening work of the Spirit might be conveyed through the words: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).

\(^{22}\) This point is also made by Jione Havea who presents four basic convictions relating theology to place: “i) our theologies are shaped by the place in or for which/from we theologize … ; ii) no theological statement can encompass the complexity of all places … ; iii) so we are challenged to allow our theologies to intersect and supplement each other; iv) and to engage subjects that have thus far not been (fully) acknowledged, expressed and entertained.” The provisional nature of place engages with the fourth point which Havea expands on by saying “that we need to account for subjects that are out of place” (Jione Havea and Clive Pearson, *Out of Place: Doing Theology on the Crosscultural Brink* [London and New York: Routledge, 2011] p.3.

characteristics of redemptive place. Redemptive-place embodies the eschatological sense of the prayer “on earth as in heaven” (Matt 6:10). Just as the prayer conveys a temporal provisionality, it may also be seen as presenting a spatial provisionality which imagines a new ‘heavenly’ arrangement of place, that has been presented here as Jesus-Space, with a corresponding earthly realisation of redemptive-place. As a consequence the potency of redemptive-place derives not only from its capacity to provoke an alternative imagination of place (thus subverting binary forms of place) but also from its apparent provisionality, which paradoxically reveals normative arrangements of place themselves to be transient. From this perspective, the provisional nature of redemptive-place engenders and embodies hope—specifically the eschatological hope of the New Creation. Thirdly, as a consequence of the provisional nature of redemptive-place, the relationship of power to place is differently convened. In redemptive formation of place, hegemonic arrangements that served the interests of those in power are now challenged and interrupted and the new relational spatiality which is predicated on participation in the Spirit serves to radically moderated and reconfigure the use and effects of power.

The potential to affect change in the arrangements of place in the ways described here has important implications for the practice of mission in areas of chronic deprivation and by association it also has implication for other kinds of locations and geographies; what these might be and how they operate should be the subject of further research. It is essential that in its mission the Christian community engages with both the moderation of strong binary settlements of normative-place as well as participating in the formation of new redemptive places. However, the arguments I have presented about the nature of redemptive-place are critical in that they stress the formation of redemptive-place, with its provisionality, as the indispensable heart of mission. This is a significant challenge for the Christian community since provisionality by definition feels counterintuitive and unstable in relation to mission—the inclination is always towards organisation and normalisation as a more easily sustainable

24 I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr Tim Noble for drawing my attention to utopian studies as a potentially helpful way of approaching the study of place and for making the point that it is precisely the eschatological that maintains the provisionality of the utopian.

25 Victor Westhelle, who investigates eschatology from a spatial perspective, argues that those who are spatially marginalised or disenfranchised are also those who have a foretaste of the eschaton. He states that: “People in transitional spaces, in choratic realms do not have much room to negotiate space. They are experiencing the eschaton. They are dispossessed, or more apt would be to say: they are not possessed …” (Victor Westhelle, Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology Past and Present [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012] p.121).
approach. It is clear that these findings also raise important questions for established congregations and denominations about how, through their buildings and social and spiritual arrangements of place, they might effect a continuing expression of provisional redemptive spatiality.

The need for further research into a number of important areas is clear, especially in relation to the formation and sustaining of redemptive expressions of place. Two critical subjects in this respect are the relationship of power to redemptive place and also the kinds of practices that would enable the Christian community to engage in forming and sustaining redemptive places. The arguments I have presented here provide grounds for further research in both these subjects, and I will briefly outline those grounds here.

Power and the Spirituality of Place

An important theme of this research has been the nature of the relationship between place and power. Indeed, a key concern has been the unusually strong association of deprivation to a clearly bounded location and the questions this has raised about that nature of the power or powers involved in sustaining such a strong association. It appears that hidden powers are at work, or at least, powers that are difficult to discern.

This idea of the hiddenness of power has become a familiar theme in the study of place and, as I have shown in Part 1, is not confined to theological analyses. Amongst others Mary Douglas, Tim Cresswell and David Sibley have all argued that ideological or social expressions of power are embodied in place in ways which are by definition difficult to see; in fact hiddenness proves to be an important factor in the potency and durability of systems of power.

These observations engage with two important themes that have emerged through the course of research. The first concerns the spiritual dimension of place and the notion that, in addition to the material and social components of place which I have discussed, there is in fact a third distinct dimension that could be described as spiritual. The second, and related theme, concerns the theological theme of ‘the powers’, including powers and principalities, angelic and demonic powers and the relationship of such powers to place.

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26 There may also appear to be a tension in placing the words provisionality and ‘redemptive’ together as the latter carries with it the important theological notion of the once-for-all act of Jesus on the cross. It is important to note that my intention is not to make any comment on this theological notion; my use of the adjective ‘redemptive’ relates specifically to the ideas of Jesus-Space that I have explored in Chapter 3 and onwards.
27 Discussion of these ideas can be found throughout Chapters 1 to 3.
I have not engaged extensively with either of these questions in the course of the investigation because after some consideration, it was found that they did not actually present an accessible way of approaching the research question about the relationship of deprivation to a geographical location. In particular, the concepts and language which has undergirded much of the discussion associated with ‘the powers’ were seen to be too suggestive of a dualistic view of the material and spiritual. Consequently much of my analysis has been completed on the basis of an integrated material/social aspect of place without the introduction of a distinctive third spiritual component.

However, an important outcome of this enquiry into place is that both theological and empirical research findings do indicate there is a distinct spiritual component of place and that the model of relational boundary spatiality that has been developed throughout the study lays strong grounds for further exploring the specific ideas contained within this proposal. There is also a natural progression of argument from positing a distinct spatial-spiritual aspect in this way to proposals about the spirituality of place and ‘the powers’.

The rationale for a distinctive spiritual component of place is most easily seen in the arrangements of created-place and redemptive-place. In created-place the Spirit of God himself is understood to be present in the space ‘between’ the self and the other in the formation of inter-subjective relationships. Redemptive-place is predicated on the very presence of Jesus who through the newly created spatiality of the cross removes ‘dividing walls’ and makes room for those who were formerly enemies to be reconciled and to embrace.

Whilst the model of place based solely on a material/social boundary arrangement does not specifically exclude the possibility of the presence of the Spirit of God, it does not acknowledge as necessary a spatial component for the spiritual as an integral component of place. In contrast the theological notion of created-place conceives place specifically as the sphere where human and divine connectivity happens and must therefore include ‘room’ for the Spirit of God as an intrinsic and necessary aspect of place alongside material and spiritual components. Thus without a ‘full’ or ‘ordered’ spiritual dimension, place is somehow depleted or emptied of its intended essence.

In addition, the notion of redemptive-place specifically challenges a model of place predicated solely on the material and social boundaries since redemptive place includes a spatiality of embrace, which I have argued is not simply a rearrangement or even

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28 I am drawing here on the language of Ephesians 2 vv.13-16.
29 The language of ‘full’ and ‘ordered’ is a reference to Genesis 1:1-2.
transformation of what already exists (namely social/material components) but is a newly created dimension defined and sustained by the resurrected presence of Jesus. Thus a theological perspective of place based on a relational spatiality conceives of the presence of God himself as integral to place, giving it essential form and character. Were his presence to be somehow displaced then the very form of place itself would be distorted and no longer expresses the covenantal loving-kindness of the Godhead or healthy inter-subjective human relationships.

This leads naturally to consideration of the spiritual aspect of normative-place where it is more difficult to conceive of a rationale for a distinct spiritual component, since by definition the Spirit of God is not present in the same way. I suggest that in contrast to the relational fullness of created and redemptive-place, the spatiality of the spiritual boundary in normative-place can be conceived of as vacuous or empty; it is an anti-relational spatiality objectifying and excluding of both God and neighbour so that in the extreme it becomes entirely vacated of relational presence. With no divine presence to give relational form to place, expressions of power are ungoverned, unformed and raw, having no humanising, ethical or redemptive qualities about them.

In conclusion, the theological conception of place presented here not only requires a spatiality that specifically incorporates the spiritual, but it also invites further research about the relationship of the biblical notion of ‘powers and principalities’ to place itself.

Mission Practices and the Formation of Redemptive Places

This research has specifically located theological reflection in the daily lived experience of the Cornwall Estate. By drawing on methodologies from practical theology and ethnography a series of research methods have been devised and followed. Critically, these methods have not only enabled grounded research to be carried out, but they have also positively influenced the small Christian Community in its ability to relate more deeply and thoughtfully to its own context. In effect, many of the research methods have also functioned as reflective mission practices in that they have provided practical ways for the Christian Community to more effectively draw alongside ‘others’ as neighbours so that together with them they have participated in journeys of mutual learning—journeys which have also included some degree of transformation. As a consequence such methods, or ‘practices’, have entailed
simultaneously a participation in learning and an experience of change or transformation—
including the transformation of places. It is this dual sense that is important for the way in
which ‘mission practices’ are being defined here: they are practices which facilitate a
transformation in people and places through a process of mutual learning. I have argued that
when such learning takes place through inter-subjective relationships it enables newly co-
constituted knowledge and this itself opens up the possibility of newly constituted places,
even of redemptive places.

Therefore the use of the term ‘mission practices’ is specifically intended to convey this sense
of mutuality and reflexivity between the self and the other. This stands in contrast to the use
of the term in the context of a mission ‘strategy’, where in a spatial sense strategy suggests
the extension of territorial influence and unequal relations of power between the Christian
community and others. Thus the term ‘mission practice’ might be more helpfully understood
here as relating to ‘spirituality’ rather than ‘strategy’.  

The discussion of Chapter 4 included some critical engagement with the research methods
used and I will conclude this study by proposing ways in which, during the course of the
research, the methods themselves have begun to be freshly imagined in terms of actual
‘mission practices’ in their own right. This preliminary introduction to mission practices,
which has a particular focus on their engagement with place, is intended to suggest areas for
further work not only in a theological sense but also in terms of practical usefulness to small
mission-shaped Christian Communities such as our own.

30 The idea of ‘strategy’ in the context of mission is discussed by Victor Westhelle and by Stephen Bevans and
Roger Schroeder. They argue that ‘strategy’ implies certain relations of power which are contrary to the ethos of
Christian mission and suggest that ‘spirituality’ is a more helpful concept. In practical terms they suggest that a
practical outworking of mission as spirituality might be conceived of as ‘tactics’ (Westhelle, Eschatology, pp.119-130)
and ‘dialogue’(Bevans and Schroeder, Prophetic, p.2).
31 Indeed, in the context of marginal places, these practices are being further explored and incorporated into the

The Practice of Contextual Theology with Regard to Place
In the Introduction it was argued that little attention has been given to the subject of place
within contextual missiology. This study has shown that by including place as a central
concern of contextual theology, potential new ways of understanding are opened up including
the potential to engage with the particularity of specific contexts in both theological and
practical terms.
An important aim of contextual theology in this regard is to engage with the problem of ‘non-seeing of,’ or ‘obliviousness to,’ the material, social and spiritual settlements of place that sustain the harmful and unequal arrangements of power which characterise normative-place. Theology thus becomes a participation in new ‘spaces of appearance’ which by definition cause ruptures or dislocations in the ‘taken for granted’ or normative arrangement of things. In this approach the physical and social proximity between the researcher or Christian community and ‘others’, and the physical and material arrangements of place, are integral to the practice of theology. In this way contextual theology is conceived of as a core activity of mission that makes visible and thus disrupts previously unseen social-spatial arrangements of power and brings into imagination new and hopeful ways of living predicated on the presence of Jesus by the Spirit.  

Whilst contextual theology of this kind will draw on a range of methods, of fundamental importance is the embodied presence of the Christian community within the context. In this sense the physical and social location of the actual body of the theologian (or theologians) becomes an indispensable factor in the development of theological knowledge. This kind of embodiment is itself is not an entirely a new proposal and finds resonance, for example, with black and feminist theologies as well as the earlier mentioned liberation and urban theologies. However the critical addition in this research has been the consideration of...
place as an essential part of the experience of embodiment, so that the previously considered social and cultural arrangements are specifically understood in relation to other key components of place, such as its materiality, so that the embodied presence is understood as an integral component of the place.

Furthermore, for a contextual theology that has regard for place, the particular location of embodiment is not, where possible, left to chance but entails an intentional positioning in some kind of boundary place. Thus the embodied theological community engage in their own ‘out of place’ experience as an integral part of their theological as well as missionary experience. The sense of being ‘out of place’ and associated vulnerability reconfigures encounters with others and the way in which relationships are formed with the potential that they become places of mutual learning and formation, or in the terms of Mary McClintock Fulkerson become “shared spaces of appearance,” and places for the healing of “obliviousness that comes with dominance.”

This kind of intentional embodiment in a boundary location associated with marginality will of necessity involve a range of research methodologies and mission practices, such as, for example, the use of walking and visual methods, participant observation and reflective practice. The following expand on a number of these that specifically bring to the fore the relationship of mission practices to place.

The Practice of Being a Neighbour

The practice of being a neighbour, or ‘neighbouring,’ as a Christian response to marginalisation and exclusion is not new and has, in a few cases, been discussed specifically

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36 It is of course understood that many involved in mission and contextual theology, such as those previously referred to in areas such as black and feminist theologies, have no choice about their place and by definition are embodied in ‘out of place’ locations.


from the perspective of place. However the study of place presented here indicates that the practice of neighbouring must include certain spatial characteristics if it is to relate effectively to social-spatial arrangements that define marginalisation. In particular neighbouring necessarily involves making moves across boundaries in order to foster physical and social proximity and the acceptance that such moves will involve transgression or violation of the normally accepted physical and social arrangements of place.

The insistence on boundary crossing as part of the practice of neighbouring challenges the idea that participation in the compassion of God can be accomplished whilst at the same time maintaining arrangements of place that are marginalising and excluding. This understanding is synonymous with Volf’s argument that in some circles forgiveness and peace is understood as living at a safe distance from former enemies, an arrangement which however “still leaves a clear line between them and us.” As with forgiveness, neighbourliness cannot be predicated on maintaining distance between people of social difference: it must entail a social and physical proximity—namely a movement across boundaries and towards embrace.

The practice of neighbouring as I have described it here may enable critical engagement with two distinct approaches to mission that are becoming more widely practiced in the UK. The first approach concerns ideas about the recovery of place and is specifically a response to a perceived “loss of place” or “downgrading of place” as a consequence of influences such as

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40 The ideas of being a neighbour, the compassion of God, and crossing social-spatial boundaries come together as central thoughts in Luke 10:21-47, a passage that was important in forming the practices of the small Christian community on the estate. The passage portrays both the geographical and social characteristics of marginalisation and that the mission of Jesus and his disciples is associated with a violation of the physical, social-religious and spiritual boundaries which sustain these separations. Thus, the priest and the Levite “passed by on the other side” (vv.31, 23) and the Samaritan “came near” (v.34). There is an association between “compassion” (v.33 and only otherwise in Lk 1:78; 7:13) and the physical and social proximity which entailed transgression by the Samaritan of the normative arrangements of place; a transgression that the Priest and Levite were apparently not prepared to commit.


globalisation and consumerist economics. Neighbouring has featured in the thinking around this and John Inge, for example, advocates that the “virtue of neighbourliness” should be at the forefront of the recovery of place. From a slightly different perspective Paul Sparks, Tim Soerens and Dwight Friesen argue that the loss of place or “dislocation” might be addressed through the practice of being neighbours as a critical practice for a recovery of neighbourhoods or “new parishes.” Both these works have much to recommend them, especially that of John Inge who engages in a thoughtful and insightful conversation. However, they exemplify the problem inherent within many approaches to mission predicated on the idea of neighbouring as the recovery of place in that they do not clearly engage with the social-spatial mechanisms of exclusion, or with the obliviousness of individuals and the wider community to these mechanisms. There is within these approaches a danger that the practices of mission associated with establishing a ‘new neighbourhood’ unwittingly reinforce such patterns.

The second approach to mission with which the practice of neighbouring might critically engage, is that of mission as ‘service provision’. Churches in the UK engage extensively and creatively in providing services and meeting the needs of those who suffer social and material deprivation. The issue here is about the extent to which this approach supports patterns of marginalisation; it is precisely the issue explored in the relationship between the Advice Centre and the Drop-In. I am not suggesting an easy solution to this dilemma, but I am suggesting that mission practices that specifically relate to place might shed some fresh light on this area and suggest new ways of relating to these challenges.

**Reflective and Reflexive Practice**

Whilst reflective practice has an important and established place within Christian spirituality, theology and mission, the interest in this study has been the more specific sense in which the spiritual practice of reflection can play an important part in the ‘conversion’ or

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45 Sparks et.al., *The New Parish*, pp.8-35.
‘transformation’ of self. This approach might be more accurately described as ‘reflexive’ practice in that the reflective researcher or Christian missionary is both the subject and object of reflection. In relation to the theological notions of place proposed in this study reflexivity has been shown to be especially important in enabling the researcher to be aware (at least in part) of their own situatedness, and the particular way in which their own presence has a co-creating effect on the place itself.

The research has shown that the relationship between the researcher and the place they occupy can be conceived of in terms of three interrelated mechanisms that each have an important reflexive element, namely the “shared space of appearance,” the co-constitution of knowledge; and the formation of inter-subjective relationships. These are mechanisms that relate specifically to the out-of-place experience of the Christian community or researcher who intentionally seek to locate themselves in boundary places that define and sustain patterns of exclusion. In these situations reflexive practice is critical in enabling those involved to interrogate and subvert their own sites of privilege; sites that I have argued are sustained by normative arrangements of place. Consequently the ability of the Christian community or researcher to participate in reflexive practice of this kind is important for enabling the potential transformation of the place and the corresponding transformation of the researcher.

The understanding that reflexive practice relates to seeing oneself in ways that correspond to conversion or transformation was for the small Christian community epitomised by the exhortation to “take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt 7:1-5). The reflexive sense of this saying was further illuminated by Miroslav Volf’s notion of “the will to embrace [which] precedes any ‘truth’ about others and any construction of their ‘justice’”—a notion that has been explored at


50 Otherwise described as the healing of “obliviousness that comes with dominance” (McClintock Fulkerson, Redemption, pp.15, 21).

51 Drawing on Jennifer Harvey, Scharen and Vigen contend that “to work toward justice in society and right relations among people … those in positions of relative privilege (due to race-ethnicity, education, citizenship, socio-economics, religion, language, etc.) must actively interrogate and subvert these very sites in our advocacy, in larger structural and material relations, and in our scholarship. And in so doing, Harvey maintains, “we also (re)form our own moral identities” (Scharen and Vigen, Ethnography, p.xxii).

52 Volf, Exclusion, p.29.
some length in Chapter 3. The sense conveyed through this is that a person cannot know the other until they have come into social and spatial proximity with them; but equally, neither can that person wholly know themselves until they have come into proximity (or embrace) with the other.\(^5^3\) Reflexive practice deals precisely with this encounter and is predicated on an understanding of Matthew 7 that self-judgement, or seeing-of-the-self, is a pre-requisite for a clear-sighted assessment of others.

**The Practice of Negotiation**

The research findings have shown that ‘soft’ or ‘permeable’ boundaries are defined by and sustained by the practice of negotiation. In the case of the Bread Café, for example, once the ‘hard’ boundary represented by the counter was removed, negotiation became a key practice for establishing and maintaining the new relational space where those who had been previously separated from each other were occupying a shared space; in particular, the kitchen that had been exclusively the domain of the chefs had become a newly negotiated place with its associated tensions. Negotiation involved working with participants in a thoughtful engagement with physical, social and spiritual aspects of a place so that the obstacles presented by unequal arrangements of power and hard boundary characteristics became less of a barrier.\(^5^4\) In terms of a practice, negotiation involved the intentional positioning of a Christian community between groups of people who were separated by physical and social binary arrangements of place and the working out subsequently of ways that enabled the disparate groups to come together in relationships of equality, respect and dignity.

Critically, negotiation takes place in the context of the struggle and conflict that inevitably occurs as people from different parts of a social-spatial settlement begin to encounter each other in new ways.\(^5^5\) Causing change to the arrangements of place results in experiences of

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\(^{53}\) As McClintock-Fulkerson observes, it can be far too easy for groups based on certain distinctions (such as race, socioeconomics, and physical/mental abilities) to not truly see others, or in Fulkerson’s terms be ‘oblivious’ to them (McClintock-Fulkerson, Places, pp.71-27).


\(^{55}\) The practice of negotiation in the context of conflict is discussed in the context of ethnographic observation in Chapter 6. Christopher Baker discusses the essential role of both negotiation and translation when people of difference inhabit a shared space; in this instance “negotiation refers to the way in which different voices and discourses are brought into … the Third Space to negotiate with one another on how best to accommodate different perspectives” (Christopher Baker, *The Hybrid Church in the City: Third Space Thinking* [London: SCM, 2009] pp.21-24, 133-134).
disturbance and disorientation which are much like those involved in the practice of neighbouring and crossing boundaries described earlier. In this context negotiation entails maintaining a sense of calmness and serenity\textsuperscript{56} whilst assisting and supporting people who are, for the first time, encountering each other as neighbours knowing that, when the distance that has maintained peace\textsuperscript{57} has been removed, previously hidden issues will assert themselves.

As well as attentiveness to the physical and social arrangements of place, negotiation involves a particular sensitivity to the spiritual aspect of place, especially to the presence of the Spirit between people from different social-spatial locations; and perhaps specifically to recognise the reconciling presence of Jesus who pulls down dividing walls and enables those who were once enemies to embrace.\textsuperscript{58} Importantly, the vision or hope of negotiation is specifically to achieve a change in the arrangement of a place such that inter-subjective relationships can flourish. Whilst mediation may also be understood in this way, the term mediation has been used in the context of this study to describe the facilitation of communication between people at different points on a social-spatial spectrum without attempting to change the spatial arrangement as a result. In the context of my research I proposed that mediation was the primary activity of the Advice Centre and in contrast negotiation was the primary practice of the Drop-In.

The mission practices that relate intentionally to place discussed in this section have arisen through the process of research and are not intended to represent an exhaustive list. They should, however, be understood as primary practices in the sense that each one represents an indispensable aspect of the way in which mission encounters place. Consideration should also be given to a range of secondary, or non-essential, practices or methods that might be particularly appropriate for certain situations and a number of these have also been referenced through the course of this study. For example, it has been noted that the strategic development of social networks can have a significant impact on the development of a place and in some contexts this might be particularly important in shaping the practices of the

\textsuperscript{56} For discussion on inner serenity and calmness see earlier discussion about reflective and reflexive practice and the ‘space within the self’.

\textsuperscript{57} I draw on the language of ‘peace’ here as a reference to my earlier discussion about Volf’s understanding of peace and forgiveness. This understanding of peace carries connotations ‘keeping the status-quo’ rather than Christian ideas of Shalom.

\textsuperscript{58} See Chapters 3 and 4.
Christian community. In other situations the practices of mission might include direct involvement with the processes of planning and development of the built environment, or involvement in processes of physical regeneration. These represent significant commitments of time and energy, but as the case of the Cornwall Estate has shown, the sensitive and appropriate development of the physical environment can make the difference between a city that fosters equitable and harmonious social interaction on the one hand or tends towards inequitable and unjust arrangements that lead to social fragmentation and hostility on the other.

A Final Word: The Covenant Meal, Imagination and Embrace

I have argued that Christian mission can bring about change in patterns of long-term deprivation and marginalisation such as those experienced on the Cornwall Estate. However, to do so it is essential that the actual practices of mission intentionally concern themselves with understanding how places are formed and, crucially, with the actual transformation of places as defined through the formation of redemptive places. Therefore in the terms I have employed throughout this investigation, mission could be conceived of as a striving towards an eschatological vision of Jesus-Space.

This definition of mission in relation to place emphasises a critical link between the practices of the Christian community and the space of imagination, or Jesus-Space. The ‘striving towards’ is worked out in the everyday life of the Christian community as it participates in practices which are inspired by the vision of a redemptive spatiality. As such the practices are in essence a faithful performance which takes its cue from the vision of Jesus-Space. Jesus-Space thus functions much like a space of imagination, as discussed in the context of third-place thinking, so that the relationship of redemptive-place to Jesus-Space might be conceived of as the spatial equivalence of the now/not yet tension of the kingdom expressed, for example, in the prayer of Jesus “on earth as in heaven” (Matt 6:10). Jesus-Space stands apart from and beyond the normal arrangement of things, both inspiring and evoking fresh and hopeful configurations of place in everyday life and challenging and subverting all patterns of place that tend towards ideological settlements and arrangements of unequal power.

59 These issues are discussed in Chapter 5 with particular reference to the work of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts (Jonathan Rowson, Steve Broome, and Alasdair Jones, Connected Communities: How social networks power and sustain the Big Society [London: RSA, 2010] pp.54-55).
One of the consummate Christian imaginations of place from which faithful practices take their cue is the New Testament presentation of the covenant meal—the Eucharistic or heavenly feast. This representation of place as a meal around the symbols of bread and wine functions as an unyielding prophetic stance against all formations of place that dehumanise people and embody exclusion and marginalisation as normative. It is expressed powerfully in the vision of church as the body of Christ (1Cor 11:17-34) and the consequent declaration that “by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free …” 1Cor 12:13.

This image of the meal and the body moves well beyond ideas about welcoming the stranger or even ideas of radical hospitality. At its core is the concept of the redemptive-place of embrace where those previously alienated by hegemonic and ideological arrangements of place (Jews and Greeks, slaves and free) are united around one table as one body. This consummate expression of the redemptive spatiality of embrace conveyed by the covenant meal is exactly the arrangement anticipated by the many stories of social-spatial inclusion throughout the New Testament narrative. Indeed, one might imagine that all other expressions of redemptive-place anticipate and point towards the heavenly feast.60 This might be seen for example in the progression of Mark’s narrative, which has been explored in previous chapters, from the provocative social rearrangement of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in Mark 3:20-35; to the annulment of the purity laws and the profound implications for social inclusion and reconciliation (Mark 7:14-19); the table of Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3-9) and ultimately at the table where the covenant meal was eaten (Mark 14:17-25).61

Mission might be understood as an attempt to emulate these narratives and through participation in the Spirit, to recreate the places they evoked in the imagination. It is this sense of emulation that has been portrayed through the practices involved in the Bread Café and Drop-In. These gatherings are not in themselves complete expressions of a covenant meal, but in their spatial arrangements and practices they seek to incorporate, at least in an embryonic way, the arrangements and experiences of unity and embrace that finds its consummate expression in the descriptions of 1Corinthians.

Therefore, in concluding, what better place to finish than to encourage those of us in the Christian community who seek to participate in transformational mission to emulate the

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60 I indicate a few examples here by way of illustration. There is considerable scope for exploring further spatial readings of the New Testament.

61 For the spatial implications of Jesus’ declaration about all foods being clean see my earlier discussion in Chapter 2 especially in relation to the work of members of the Context group.
covenant meal or heavenly feast in all our relationships. Critically, this practice makes space for all to join as participants in a community of embrace and grace irrespective of social or religious standing. It matters not that the community falls short of the imagination, what matters is that those present seek a faithful performance that bears witness to an alternative and hopeful arrangement of place; specifically one which is predicated on the presence of Jesus himself so that the promise might be realised that “where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst” (Matt 18:20)—inhabiting and filling the place between them.
APPENDIX

A. Map of the Cornwall Estate Showing Pattern of Street Layout
B. Photos of Cornwall Estate Showing Typical House Design
C. Deprivation Map: the association of deprivation to location

Deprivation in Bristol 2010

Source: DCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2010
analysed by Consultation, Research and Intelligence, Bristol City Council

Multiple Deprivation 2010
- Most deprived 10% in England
- More deprived than average rank
- Less deprived than average rank
- Least deprived 10% in England
D. Research Materials for Qualitative Research

Each entry commences with an abbreviation used for footnoting

AC. Participant observation field notes from Advice Centre
BC1. Participant observation field notes from Bread Café
BC1.1. Additional participant observation field notes from Bread Café
BC2. Semi-structured interview with M (joint manager-owner of catering company at the Health Park)
DI. Semi-structured interview with B (coordinator of the Employment Drop-In and manager of Advice Centre).
EL1. An Ethnographic Log comprising field notes and reflection undertaken throughout the course of research
EL2. Semi-structured interview with Dr. D. (GP and Anglican Priest)
Ethno Walk. Audio recordings of observations and reflections from small groups made over a series of sessions using walking and visual methods.
GP2. Semi-structured interview with Dr. S. (GP and University researcher in social medicine)
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