Aberystwyth University

Tangential attachments

Yarker, Sophie

Tangential attachments: towards a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of cultural urban regeneration on local identities

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Abstract

This paper offers the concept of tangential attachments as a way to interpret the meaning of urban of regeneration for local residents. This contribution to the critical study of cultural regeneration allows us to consider the multiple ways in which urban transformation can impact on local identities and attachments to place. It recognises the sometimes fleeting, and at-arms-length connections residents can have to places of urban regeneration, and thereby positions the experience of urban regeneration as one part of complex, processual relationships between people and place. The paper extends literatures which critique the social and cultural impacts of regeneration, and offers a more nuanced understanding of how people engage with regenerated urban environments. Principally, it offers a framework that goes beyond a binary presented by some in the literature between enhancing and the undermining of attachments. The paper does this by drawing on phenomenogical perspectives of place and the concepts of memory and affect. The empirical work presented in the paper demonstrates the tangential nature of attachments to urban regeneration, and is comprised of original in-depth research interviews with residents of a local community in Newcastle upon Tyne in the UK.

Keywords

Introduction

Cultural regeneration has always been about more than bricks and mortar and the physical transformation of place. It is also about reimagining a bold new future for post-industrial cities and creating a brand image geared towards attracting capital, labour and leisure (Gomez, 1998).

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Comedia, one of the main proponents of cultural in the UK, describe culture as 'a means of defining a rich, shared identity and [something which] engender(s) pride of place and inter-communal understanding, contributing to people's sense of anchoring and confidence' (Comedia, 2003, quoted in Miles & Paddison 2005, p.835). Such explicit use of cultural regeneration to 'refresh the local soul as well as the local economy' (Ward 2002, p.7) demands questions around how 'local souls' respond to these re-articulations of place, especially when such narratives of place are so often from the imaginations and agendas of others.

Whilst the urban studies literature explores a wide and important range of empirical case studies regarding the local cultural and social impacts of urban regeneration (García 2005; Boland 2010; MacLeod 2002a; Porter & Shaw 2009), this paper argues that it does not go far enough in conceptualising exactly *how* local residents give meaning to urban regeneration projects. Nor does this literature explore in enough detail how residents make sense of these ascribed meanings in relation to their own sense of local identity. Therefore, rather than assuming that the impact of urban regeneration on local identities is about either positive rejuvenation on the one hand or the undermining of attachments, the paper extends this body of work by offering a more nuanced understanding of how people engage with regenerated urban environments.

The paper advances this agenda by making the empirically-grounded argument that while local residents can, and do, suffer cultural and social displacement from their neighbourhoods and regeneration sites, this is only one part of the story. An expanded understanding of the impacts of cultural regeneration demonstrates, for example, that some residents are able to draw on regenerated conceptions of space to maintain local attachments in changing landscapes. Differently, it shows how newer residents are able to use memories and experiences of urban change to locate their own biographies within a place, through such means, to foster senses of 'insiderness'. This paper offers the concept of tangential attachments as a way to interpret some of these meaning of urban of regeneration for local residents.

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The following section of the paper provides an overview of literatures which have dealt with local identity, inclusion and cultural regeneration, and argues for a need to conceptualise social and cultural impact. Next, the paper presents the concept of tangential attachments and situates it within a phenomenological perspective of experience of/in place. The concepts of memory and affect are discussed here as they allow us to explore the experience of being in place and how we give meaning to regeneration. The following empirical discussion demonstrates the tangential nature of attachments to urban regeneration by drawing on original in-depth research interviews with residents of a local community in Newcastle upon Tyne in the United Kingdom.

Cultural Regeneration Critiques

In the post-Fordist era cities no longer function as landscapes of production but as landscapes of consumption (Zukin, 1991). In the search for an alternative urban economic catalyst to facilitate this landscape we have seen culture emerge as a key resource for cities wishing to reimagine themselves on a global stage. The rapid and widespread adoption of culture in this regard has become part of the new orthodoxy in post-industrial urban policy (Miles & Paddison, 2005). Initial enthusiasm was, however, quickly followed by a growing recognition of the limitations of the culture-led paradigm of urban development and a questioning of its ability to tackle complex urban and regional problems (Imrie & Raco, 2003; Lees & Melhuish, 2015; Miles & Paddison, 2005). The main critiques of a perceived 'just add culture and stir approach' (Gibson & Stevenson, 2004) that are most pertinent to this paper are, firstly, accusations of a homogenising effect on local culture and, secondly, the exclusion and disenfranchisement of local identities. These are critiques that put questions of identity, meaning and value at the heart of evaluations of urban regeneration and reflect the emphases of this paper.

In his review of the contribution of culture to regeneration, Evans (2005) quotes Klunzman (2004, p.2) as arguing that 'each story of regeneration begins with poetry and ends in real estate'

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(p.959). In doing so, Evans alludes to the fact that despite appeals to local cultural diversity and authenticity, the end result of top-down cultural regeneration can often be a generic blandscapes of consumption (Short, 1989). As a result, such urban spaces have come to be characterised within much of the literature as being based on 'decidedly middle-class tastes and experiences' (Lees & Melhuish, 2015, p.6), and as guilty of essentialising local culture and sense of place (Hall & Robertson 2001). There is an assumption then within these critiques of a top-down imposition of culture and identity, and a potentially dislocating effect on existing, locally-held meanings and attachments.

Questions about for whom regeneration is ultimately for have also been raised in the literature. The creation of a consumption-orientated landscapes through urban regeneration has often led to contradictions in urban policy between 'participatory and sustainable rhetoric and a practice that is more focused on exogenous needs than on citizens' (Rius Ulldemolins 2014). Some of the strongest critics of cultural regeneration have argued that it is ultimately 'little more than a euphemism for 'gentrification' (Lees & Melhuish 2015, p.5). Indeed, a vast gentrification literature documenting the social and spatial displacement of lower and middle-income households as a consequence of urban redevelopment since the 1970s attests to this (Smith, 1996; Zukin, 1995; Atkinson, 2004; Ley, 1994; Lees, 2008).

In research carried out in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Middleton & Freestone (2008) identified a profound sense of disenfranchisement amongst local residents who felt the cultural developments along the Quayside were both socially irrelevant and spatially distant, and perceived that they 'existed for other people' (p.10). A similar sense of alienation was found amongst local residents in research by Boland (2010) in the context of the city of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture. As Boland argues, 'for a significant number of local people the (regenerated) city centre is a distant place upon which they can gaze rather than experience' (p.640). Similarly, in Glasgow, MacLeod (2002) notes efforts by city leaders to sanitize a proud socialist heritage during the year it held the title of European City of Culture. In short, critiques of cultural regeneration often include the

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injunction that urban policies of this sort do not serve the interests of local communities (Eisinger, 2000; Middleton & Freestone, 2008), and therefore risk disenfranchising local peoples and eroding local identities.

Yet despite the weight of critical scholarship pointing to the dislocating effect of regeneration on local communities, there are some that take a less pessimistic position. Bailey et al. (2004), for example, argue that cultural regeneration has the potential to actively enhance and enliven local communities, and warn against assuming the inevitability of homogenisation and/or displacement. In support of this position, Eizenberg & Cohen (2015) demonstrate how culture-led urban strategy in Bat-Yam sought to engage with existing meanings of place through artistic media. Therefore, instead of erasing locally-held place identities that did not 'fit' with the new urban branding, the authors claim there was a successful re-formulation of meanings for locals and visitors alike. Rius Ulldemolins (2014) also challenges the assumption of a one-directional cultural regeneration, and uses the Raval neighbourhood of Barcelona to demonstrate how branding can be developed through participation with a plurality of creators. Contrasting with Middleton & Freestone's (2008) work, Miles (2005) argues that the iconic waterfront redevelopment of the banks of the Tyne River in Newcastle, rather than disenfranchising locals, allowed residents to regain a sense of pride in their city. He concludes that culture-led developments 'can reinvigorate the relationship between culture, place and personal identity and offer a permanent legacy' (p.921), and offer 'the possibility of an optimistic future in an otherwise pessimistic age' (p.923). Thus, for its advocates, cultural urban regeneration has 'a key role in not simply reflecting a sense of local identity but in actually rearticulating and reconfiguring that identity in complex and paradoxical ways' (Miles 2005, p.916). I might also offer a positive 'a psychological effect within the city, building self-confidence and civic pride among the population' (Keating & Frantz 2004, p.190).

This work provides us important and more positive understandings of the impacts on local identity of urban regeneration. Yet, in agreement with Quinn (2005), this paper offers that despite

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these advances in our understanding, empirically the long-term social impact of cultural regeneration still 'remains something of a mystery' (2005, p.931). In particular, Collins (2016) argues that such notions of civic pride and optimism are rarely explicitly defined, nor are they explored by geographers with any frequency. Therefore, there is a lack of both empirical insight into and conceptual nuance around the impact that urban regeneration can have on local identities (Collins 2016).

There is a need, in summary, for work that allows for a greater appreciation of the complex and nuanced positions, attitudes and strategies that exist between the poles of merely 'positive' and 'negative' local responses to urban regeneration. But such an effort might build on existing work in urban studies that seeks to address gaps in critiques of cultural regeneration itself. In an effort to shift attention away from the more measurable and quantitative indicators of economic development, such as levels of investment and job creation etc., there has been a call for more attention to be paid to the 'softer', qualitative impacts of urban transformations. This would include longitudinal studies as well as attending more generally to the voices of 'ordinary' people and their everyday experiences of urban space (Evans, 2005; Lees & Melhuish, 2015).

The concept of tangential attachments to regeneration

The above review of literature on the impacts on local identity of cultural regeneration has demonstrated the need for a conceptual framework capable of recognising the nuances, complexities, and evolving nature of our relationship to regenerated urban spaces. This paper offers the concept of *tangential attachments* as a means to achieve this. The concept borrows from a geometric understanding of a tangential line, which is one that touches the curve of another line in one spot, but does not intersect it elsewhere. Tangential attachments allow us to understand how local residents draw upon urban transformation in articulating a sense of local identity, whilst also

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imbuing these identities with existing meanings. Transformations in the urban landscape can therefore inform a sense of local identity, but are not the sole source of relationships with place.

The notion of attachments as tangential can be situated within a lineage of concepts in the social sciences which privilege contingent, in-between, positions and experiences. Precarity, for example, has gained currency within urban studies where it is used to describe the insecure and ever-changing nature of migrant mobilities (Lewis et al., 2015; Waite, 2009), as well as precarious urban forms and tenures (Chatterton 2010), and the experience of increasing casualization of the labour market, not least in academia (Peters & Turner, 2014). Within the field of political geography, the concept of the improvised state (Jeffrey, 2012) draws on a wider adoption of improvisation in the social sciences in order to highlight the 'doing' of social practice as it is worked out through everyday life. This idea of 'doing' and 'working out' through social practice is seen in the tangential attachments to urban regeneration identified in this paper. The negotiation between structure and agency within the use of the concept of precarity is evident also.

However, perhaps the greatest theoretical foundation for the concept of tangential attachments comes from David Harvey's (1997) understanding of place as a set of 'conditional permanences'. Drawing on Whitehead (1920 cited in Harvey, 1997), Harvey explains how 'such permanences' come to occupy a piece of space in an exclusive way (for a time) and thereby define a place - their place - (for a time)' (Harvey, 1997, p.261 drawing on Whitehead, 1920). Such a framing reflects the tangential relationships local residents have with urban change. A connection to a particular urban space, for example, can be felt 'for a time' but is not, or might not always, be permanent. Extending this analysis to the nature of local belonging itself Harvey, again, offers a way of thinking about the reflexive nature of such sentiments, and the active process of negotiation and management that mobilises them. He argues that these 'permanences – no matter how solid they may seem are always subject to time as perpetual perishing'.

This contingent and reflexive understanding of being-in-place that such a framework suggests draws on the work of humanistic geographers such as Tuan (1978, 1974), Relph (1976, 1989), Casey (2001, 1993) and Malpas (1999). These scholars argue for a more philosophical and experiential understanding of place that privileges a being-in-the-world. Theirs is a philosophy that does not see the mind and body as being separate, and one that understands places as 'constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations' (Relph 1989, p.26). This extensive and influential body of work provides several conceptual opportunities for drawing out a more nuanced understanding of tangential relationships to regeneration. For example, Tuan, through his notion of topophilia, urges us to attend to multisensory experience of being-in-place and the affective bond formed between people and place. He argues that:

> attachment of a deep, though subconscious sort, may come simply from familiarity and ease, with the assurance of nurture and security, with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time. (Tuan 1978, p.159).

For the purposes of this paper, topophilia means placing emotional and sensorial responses to urban regeneration at the heart of the analysis in order to more accurately understand the complexities of our experiences of urban space.

Harvey (1996), again, has argued that globalisation has produced an increasing number of 'thinned out places' which arguably lack the affective, habitual and experiential qualities that allow opportunities for personal enrichment (Casey 2001). Many of these sorts of absences can be identified in top-down cultural regeneration schemes. However, both Casey and Harvey point to resistance, and to examples where local peoples have sought to create their own senses of place 'with renewed vigour' when faced with these thinned out places.

Finally, Relph's (1974) concept of insiders and outsiders helps us to frame the degrees to which people feel of attachment or alienation toward urban environments. Specifically, Seamon's (1979) and Casey's (1993) interpretation of Ralph's work becomes useful as it recognises the ability

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for belonging to place to exist alongside alienation, and therefore does not conceive of identity as being something either wholly inside or outside of place. This allows us to move beyond a simple binary of identities being undermined or enhanced in urban regeneration.

In summary, understanding experiences of being-in-place provides an important starting point in advancing the critical study of the social impacts of urban regeneration. Drawing on the work of the humanistic geographers discussed above, this paper will pay particular attention to the memories and affects produced by regenerated places in order to demonstrate the tangential nature of our relationship towards them. This compliments and extends the existing scholarship engaging with these concepts (see Blokland, 2001; Degen & Rose, 2012; Mah, 2010; Jones & Evans, 2012; Duff, 2010)

Research Design

To explore the impacts of regeneration on local identity the paper profiles the Byker neighbourhood, which is located in the eastern central portion of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the North East of England. The main example of cultural regeneration in this case study is the NewcastleGateshead Quayside which is home to the flagship cultural development projects of the Sage Gateshead music hall and the Baltic Contemporary art gallery, both in in Gateshead, and the Millennium Bridge. This clustering of cultural redevelopments is by far the most visible and celebrated by city officials. From Gateshead, the Millennium Bridge leads pedestrians to a more mixed urban space of residential and commercial buildings containing offices, apartments, and bars and restaurants on the Newcastle side of the quay. In addition, another site of importance for this paper is the Ouseburn Valley. Partly in resistance to the top-down cultural- and property-led developments in Gateshead and Newcastle, the Ouseburn development has evolved from a concern to preserve and enhance industrial heritage. As a result, the focus here is on small scale, creativity-

led development, and has involved the building of artist studios, a community farm, and the supporting of independent pubs and music venues (Gonzalez & Vigar, 2010).[1]

Byker itself is a community that grew amid the boom in ship building and coal transportation on the Tyne beginning at the turn of the 20th century. Today, Byker is a neighbourhood of predominantly social and low-income households, and was the 78th most deprived ward in England in 2000 according to the 2001 UK Census. The 2011 census data showed that 59% of households in the ward were classified as having between one and two indicators of deprivation. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, there were a number of attempts at retail-led regeneration centring on the central high-street in Byker, including the building of supermarkets, a retail park, but also the development of the local library to house a swimming pool and fitness centre. Prior to this, Byker was subject to wholescale redevelopment from 1969-1983 as part of national government modernisation plans. Today the estate is something of an iconic cultural landmark in itself, with the 'Byker wall' residential buildings gaining Grade II* listed status in 2007.

As part of a larger research project on local belonging and attachment (Autor, 2017), the research comprised of 37 in-depth interviews with a cross-section of Byker residents. The interviews asked how residents had seen the neighbourhood and the surrounding area change in the time they had been living there, and what these changes meant to them. Some of these interviews were conducted whilst walking in the various urban spaces referred to, but most of the data used in this paper was generated during static interviews, either in resident's homes or in community spaces. The sample of residents included lifelong residents as well those who may be considered 'newcomers' in an effort to reflect the social and cultural diversity of the community.

Moving between insider, outsider, and in-between

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[1] Since this research has been conducted the Ouseburn area has seen a significant growth of private sector property development aimed at the student and young professional market. This has been the subject of resistance from many concerned that the character of the area has been, and will continue to be, altered significantly.

As demonstrated by the review of literature above, top-down cultural regeneration has been accused of homogenising local culture, (re)shaping local identities, and disenfranchising local peoples. There was certainly evidence of this in Byker, especially amongst some of the life-long residents. Jack, for example, felt that the Quayside as he knew it had been 'killed off' and had 'lost all of its identity'. Describing the point at which this occurred, he explained how 'the heart had gone out of the Quayside when they took that Boat away'. The 'Boat' he referred to here was the local name for a 'floating nightclub' based on a disused car ferry, which was formerly moored under the Tyne Bridge. Its removal in 2002 was interpreted by Jack, and others like him, as part of the re-imaging of the Quayside that endeavoured to shift the brand of NewcastleGateshead away from the party city image of the 1990s (Middleton & Freestone, 2008). For Jack, the removal of this part of his cultural heritage, in an effort to 'clean up' the image of the quayside, was symptomatic of the erasure of any trace of the working-class heritage with which he was able to identify.

It was not only older members of the community who felt that these regenerated places had changed, symbolically or culturally, and were now disconnected from the values they prized (Savage, 2012). Some of the school-age residents also felt a palpable sense distance from the creative industries that were often geographically on their doorstep. Sixteen-year-old Nathan described feeling excluded from a local arts project he walked past every day:

> You can look up and see his huge piece of graffiti art on the wall, it's massive and I really like that sort of thing, the graphic art and that. But it's sort of looking down at you, like we are on the outside of it all. I know I can't actually go in there, I wouldn't be welcome.

There is a clear sense here that Nathan felt these cultural projects were 'not for him' and he therefore remained figuratively, and literally, outside of them.

However, this initial sense of exclusion was not always expressed in reductionist or reactionary ways. Instead, it was often accompanied by an ability to carve out new meanings, and new senses of insiderness in the urban landscape. Examples of this were seen in resident responses

to a local city farm at the centre of the Ouseburn Valley regeneration. Previously named the 'Byker City Farm', the farm had been renamed 'Ouseburn Farm' in an effort to re-brand it to fit the creative and cultural redevelopment of the area (Author, 2014). The development of which the farm was a small part was often talked about with a sense of loss for older community members but, as demonstrated by Julie, the farm also allowed for a reclaiming of this space. A lifelong Byker resident, Julie recalled how she had recently taken her grandchildren to Ouseburn Farm (referred to by its original name of Byker Farm) and made them stand to have their photograph taken in the same place that she recalled having her own photograph taken as a child. This was something she felt strongly about wanting to replicate with her grandchildren:

> *It just seemed important, you know? This place has changed, changed in name even, but I am still coming here, yet my life has changed so much too, I'm a grandmother now, so a lot of things have happened but there is still some sense of continuity and I think that is important. I suppose that is why I wanted to sort of capture it in my own photo of the kids.*

Whilst feeling a sense of outsiderness, and thus 'outside' of the cultural developments of Ouseburn, Julie was also able to draw on personal memories to maintain some connection with place, and simultaneously expressed feelings of belonging *and* alienation (Casey, 1993). In this way Julie used the farm to 'reconstruct places and recreate their identities' (Blokland 2001, p.281), and to retain and initiate a tangible sense of connection to Ouseburn and Byker.

The coinciding feelings of distance and connection to regenerated environments were also evident in the residents' memories of the NewcastleGateshead Quayside redevelopment. Despite being asked in interviews about the contemporary state of the river, resident narratives instantly slipped backwards in time to reflect upon how the river had been prior to notable efforts at Quayside development. As lifelong resident Charlie demonstrated:

> *I still say 'next to the ferry landing' even though there hasn't been a ferry landing there for years! Have you seen that film Get Carter? Well my dad used to get that ferry every day. Whenever I see that film*

I'm not paying attention to all the shooting and that on the boat- I'm looking right past all that at the scenery behind them to see what I can recognise! There is something that really gets me about that film. I suppose it's because where it is is so familiar, even though it looks nothing like that any more.

In both Charlie and Julie's responses, we see personal connections and memories being used as place-markers in the landscape even though, in the case of Charlie, the physical landmarks are no longer present. This speaks to the experiencing of nostalgia and memory as presence and absence (Author, 2017), and the ability of local residents to 'see and feel through the gaps' of regenerated spaces in order to reconstruct their own landscape of memories (Author, p.). Similar sentiments were articulated by Linda. Having lived overseas for several decades, she described a feeling of 'walking on the bones of my ancestors' when returning to Byker. Despite the landscape looking physically different, Linda was able to see past the tangible regeneration and connect to the existence of 'living memories' and a now intangible personal history.

In all of these instances we can see that whilst local identity may be negatively affected by the process of urban regeneration, it is not completely eroded by it. Memories and place-affect allow us to understand that experiences of place and belonging emanate from diverse encounters in and between bodies, contexts and events (Massumi, 1992). What might be considered 'thin places' become places 'thick' with memory, affections and complex associations (Relph, 1989) in which 'our own personal enrichment can flourish' (Casey 2001, p.408). Here, the transformation of urban space through regeneration does not inhibit the process of local identity, but it does require residents to draw upon their own mental geographies of a place in order to maintain a tangential sense of attachment and local belonging to these regenerated environments.

This apparent contradiction between cultural distance from place and a personal or social connection was also observed in the use and appropriation of areas of regeneration by local residents. For many years after the initial decline of industry, many of the sites of regeneration along the NewcastleGateshead Quayside, and in Ouseburn, had been almost inaccessible and unusable.

Old and newer residents alike, although not uncritical of the redevelopments along the Quayside, were often united in the pleasure of having these urban spaces re-opened to them as shown in the following example from Jane:

> *It's lovely to be able to walk along there now, it was sort of forgotten about for so long and now it can*
> *be used again, I think it's a really good thing. It's sort of given the river back its purpose if you know*
> *what I mean? And I think a lot of people around here feel better for that*
>
> *Interviewer: Better?*
>
> *Yes, sort of having something special, something to be proud of again I guess. It just makes you feel*
> *better, being able to see the river and the bridges. It just makes you feel happy to live here.*

Jane's experience of place as expressed here is reminiscent of Tuan's (1974, p.247) description of topophilia. Topophilia is:

> a fleeting visual pleasure, the sensual delight of physical contact, the fondness for place because it is
> familiar, because it is home, because it incarnates the past, because it evokes pride of ownership.

Aside from rare examples of attending concerts at the Sage and one-off visits to Baltic, most participants who had experience of the Quayside predominantly used the 'free space' on the Quayside, and partake in walking and admiring the view. This demonstrates the variety of ways in which residents can consume urban regeneration that may not always conform to the original intentions of planners and designers, but which are nevertheless meaningful for people who may not be considered the primary audience for these plans.

The social history importance of the River Tyne to the communities along its banks has been explored by many local artists and writers, and is the focus of author and playwright Michael Chaplin in his illustrated book, Tyne View (2012) and his 2013 play 'Tyne'. Chaplin suggests that the place occupied by the Tyne in the hearts of many local residents speaks to both its future as well as to the significance of its past. That the Tyne is conceived of a 'locus' of local identity for many in Byker is therefore not surprising. What is perhaps unexpected about these attachments, however is their

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continuity despite the changing use and image of the river. Its transformation from a post-industrial space to one orientated towards a service and leisure economy, far from only displacing participants culturally, may actually have helped residents find new ways of maintaining a sense of insiderness in Byker.

This response - of a (re)connection to place in spite of feelings of dislocation - reflects the findings of research by Miles (2005) which emphasised how the cultural redevelopment of the Newcastle and Gateshead Quayside allowed for a reinvigoration of local identities, and served as a catalyst for a reassertion of pride in the area. Similarly, Bailey et al. (2004) argue that 'given the right conditions local people can re-establish ownership of their own sense of place and space and, perhaps more importantly, of their own sense of history' (pp.49). The analysis presented in this paper, however, develops these debates by providing a conceptualisation of exactly *how* this enhancement of local identity occurs. By exploring how residents were affected by place, and how they used memory to reconstruct the urban landscape to better reflect their own understanding of it, relationships with place emerge that are reflexive and contingent, and which are more than just about 'pride'. This is a sense of local identity that bears a superficial relationship towards the regenerated environment, taking from it the visual and affecting cues offered, but which is ultimately non-complicit in any attempts to project a new image of place. Those local identities and attachments formed out of an experience of place *before* the regeneration still persist, but are neither wholly reimaged nor undermined by urban transformation. Rather, residents maintain a tangential relationship to places of regeneration. It may be less helpful, therefore, to consider local identities as undermined or enhanced by regeneration. Alternatively, we might think about how the affective and dynamic experience of place allows for both insider and outsider positions to be maintained tangentially.

Becoming 'an insider'

The regeneration of post-industrial spaces can often be framed as about finding ways to celebrate an industrial legacy as a valuable cultural asset. This is often viewed as an important way to recognise local culture within the process of regeneration and to avoid accusations of social exclusion. But what of the local residents who may be excluded from this (re)newed, development-centric sense of industrial heritage itself? How do more recently-arrived residents make sense of a cultural identity to which their personal biographies may have little connection? And what can this tell us about how we experience change in our urban environment?

This research identified examples where the process of urban regeneration enabled newer residents, particularly those born overseas, to situate themselves within the narrative of a place. Once again, memory and the affective qualities of regenerated environments in these instances were particularly important in establishing some form of partial attachment to place. In relation to memory, the witnessing first-hand of urban change, the sense of 'being-there' whilst it was occurring, and the ability to recall memories of these changes, were used by many local residents to enhance a sense local attachment:

> *The Library, on Shields Road? I can remember that being built. I can say I was there. I saw it. And that*
> *makes me feel like I have a place here because then I can share my story with others. I can tell them*
> *about the library and they can tell me about other things, other parts of the history that happened*
> *before I got here.*

Jamie (above) takes pride here in possessing 'insider' knowledge, and in being able to access memories prior to urban redevelopment. Specifically, he uses these memories to tell others about Byker, and to position himself as an 'insider' and a custodian of local knowledge. More recent memories like these are used much like historical memories and senses of loss are used by older members of the community, and are used similarly to (re)assert residents in place. This demonstrates to some degree what Rowles (1983) identifies as an autobiographical insiderness, whereby attachment can be articulated in and through several different places on the basis of

significant life events in each respective place. History here is shown not to be something past, but

something that moves through the lives of people and places, and is constantly being recreated in

the present through memory (Blokland, 2001).

Senses of change and the witnessing of urban transformations through regeneration also

had an effect on how newer residents felt about Byker itself. In these cases, the concept of affective

atmospheres (Anderson, 2009) is helpful in thinking about how collective understandings can

produce a certain mood, feeling or ambiance in/around a place. Mark, for example, an asylum-

seeker who had been living in Byker for seven years, offers an insight into the potential for

atmospheres to produce a hopeful attachment to urban development. He spoke at length about his

excitement after moving to Newcastle, particularly as he saw it as an 'arts-centre'. Going on to refer

specifically to the Ouseburn, and how important the optimism and dynamism of that area was, Mark

suggested that:

> *There [are] a lot more people doing creative stuff there, trying to build the community and*
>
> *feed back into the community that is regenerating ourselves as individuals but also the place*
>
> *as a whole. That sense is coming and there is a lot of encouragement for it.*

There is an expression here which points to the importance of new beginnings. In 'regenerating

ourselves', Mark speaks not only of new beginnings after being granted asylum, but also a

rejuvenating spirit which was reflected in the urban landscape around him. But when asked how

often he visited Ouseburn, Mark's answered: 'very rarely'. To him, the Ouseburn offered a vision of

what Byker *could* become, along with the potential for a ground-up development which could

benefit local people not just materially, but which could raise hopes, aspirations and a sense of

pride.

Once again, the infrequency with which this participant spent time in the space in question

did not appear to impact negatively on his ability to use this same space for claiming a sense of local

identity. In another example, Daniel, who had also come to the UK from Africa ten years ago,

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expressed similar sentiments when talking about the regeneration, in the Ouseburn, of an old

factory into an office space for creative and digital start-up companies, and a former Shipping Office

into a boutique hotel. As he noted:

> *I think it is great what they have done down there. Before it was just an old building nobody used it*
>
> *and now, look at it! You can see the change happening and this is exciting.*

It is important here, however, to be wary of accepting uncritically the ways in which these accounts

appear to 'buy into' the positive and inclusive rhetoric of urban renaissance policy. Despite this,

Daniel identifies an affective atmosphere of potential in Ouseburn, and expresses pleasure in seeing

this change occur, and the sense of hope he sees these developments bringing to the area. Again,

these sentiments do not necessarily map onto the physical use of those spaces: Daniel admitted

later in his interview that the boutique hotel is 'nice, but a bit posh for me'. Thus, whilst Daniel

signals here a challenge to his economic or cultural capital, this does not seem to undermine his

sense of local attachment. Differently, Daniel might be considered spatially excluded, but not socially

excluded.

In summary, we see in these examples the tangential nature of attachments to regenerated

environments expressed through a simultaneous feeling of insiderness and outsiderness.

Regenerated areas may not be being physically appropriated or consumed in the way intended by

planners and developers, but they were nonetheless incorporated into existing and emerging local

identities and attachments to place. In the case of residents having recently moved to the area,

urban regeneration offered the potential for inclusion in ways that were dependent upon the

meanings imbued by the residents themselves. By incorporating the memory and affective

experience of regeneration into personal biographies, this group of residents were able to achieve a

sense of insiderness and belonging in Byker.

Conclusion

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This paper argued that the impact of urban regeneration on local identities has been under-theorised and, as a result, there has been a tendency to oversimplify the effect of regeneration as either enhancing or undermining local identities. The empirical work presented makes the case that the relationship between urban regeneration schemes and local residents is more complex than is suggested by the current literature. Drawing on the experience of being in these regenerated places, via the concepts memory and affect, demonstrates how we residents give meaning and relate to such places in a way which transcends the often dichotomus labelling of responses to development. Residents have been shown to draw meaning from sites of regeneration in various ways, and were able to use their own meanings and interpretations of these spaces and fit them, to a lesser or greater extent, to their own stories in/of place. The contribution of this paper is, therefore, to propose that a more useful way to conceptualise our relationship to urban regeneration is one, as has been demonstrated here, of *tangential attachments*.

Crucially, adopting this conceptualisation is not to argue that *place* plays a tangential role in residents' sense of identity. For many residents of Byker, the surrounding area (much of which has been affected by some urban redevelopment or other) played a pivotal role in their conceptions of self and biography. Indeed, what is clearly not tangential are residents' deep connections to place, expressed here through an exploration of memories and affective experiences. However, the ways in which certain *spaces* became transformed, or reimagined, by urban regeneration was often only of partial consequence - and was tangential - in the formation of senses of local belonging and attachment for residents in Byker. This reminds us of Harvey's (1997) understanding of place as a set of 'conditional permanences', wherby a connection to a particular urban space is felt 'for a time', but might not always be a constant. On this basis, we require new terms of reference for conceptualising the local social and cultural impacts of urban regeneration. Thinking of the relationship between residents, place and urban development as tangential goes some way toward this.

An understanding of tangential attachments demonstrates that senses of local identity will not always be dislocated when places are transformed through urban regeneration. Neither does it suggest that we accept as reality the re-imaginings of place projected onto urban spaces by others. Senses of local identity and attachment are not static, and are not simply canvasses for the projection of cultural regeneration. A sense of place, local identity and belonging are all fluid and evolving processes that are worked on as we experience and give meaning to place in our everyday lives. Such a conception reflects an understanding of identity and belonging as a process of becoming rather than ontological being (Bell, 1999), and to the need to unpack the ways in which belonging is both actively practiced as well as how it is 'sensed', felt and experienced (Mee & Wright, 2009; Antonsich, 2010; Author, forthcoming). This is a perspective capable of recognising multiple and simultaneous feelings of identification and dis-identification within urban change, and attends to a perceived 'emotional deficit' in urban studies (Collins, 2016).

From this we can conclude that a much greater appreciation must be fostered of the agency and reflexivity involved in the process of giving meaning to urban (and perhaps in particular redeveloped urban) spaces. It would be a mistake to assume that because communities are able to adapt to urban change, that those involved in the orchestrating of urban regeneration have free reign over its implementation, or that the voices of residents should be side-lined. This paper has drawn attention to the diversity of deep and personal connections people have with the places where they live. These connections should be respected and brought more fully into the urban planning process. Not only does this have implications for how we study regeneration, as discussed above, but it also for how regeneration is *done*. A comprehensive set of recommendations for urban planners and regeneration practitioners is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a discussion of suggestions shall serve as a conclusion.

The notion of 'rescue geographies', offered by Jones and Evans (2012), provides us with some initial direction on how, through the use of affect and memory, we might bring the embodied

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relationship between resident and place to the attention of regeneration practitioners. As part of rescue geographies, walking interviews with community members were conducted to capture existing place associations and to 'help create more authentic regeneration schemes which respond sympathetically to landscapes already soaked in affective connections' (p.2315). This sensitivity to resident experience should, this paper argues, be present at outset of urban redevelopment, and would go somewhere to situating the relationship between people and place at the heart of the question.

The development of ideas from rescue geography would also provide new and innovative ways of advancing of participatory planning; a paradigm of planning that has emphasised the involvement of the whole community in all stages of the planning process (Arnstein 1969). In that this paper privileges the involvement of local residents, there might also be valuable applications of participatory action research (PAR) within an urban policy setting. PAR is an approach to research with communities that emphasises collective inquiry and action, both on the part of the researcher and the participant. The latter acts as a co-researcher to ensure the direction of the research reflect the needs and values of the community concerned (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). PAR has received considerable attention within social science research, and the arguments of this paper would support its wider adoption both in academic and urban practitioner circles.

More broadly, considering the role that individual meaning-making and interpretation plays in resident's relationship with urban space, the design of urban space itself (both in terms of the practice of design and the eventual outcome) could perhaps foster these personal and intimate connections. Urban designers may wish therefore to avoid prescription in the imagining and building of places, and alternatively to invite and nurture the processual and tangential character of place attachments.

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