

University of Groningen

Sense of Place as Spatial Control

van Lanen, Sander

Published in:
Representing Place and Territorial Identities in Europe

DOI:
[10.1007/978-3-030-66766-5_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66766-5_7)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2021

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

van Lanen, S. (2021). Sense of Place as Spatial Control: Austerity and Place Processes Among Young People in Ballymun, Dublin. In T. Banini, & O-R. Ilován (Eds.), *Representing Place and Territorial Identities in Europe: Discourses, Images, and Practices* (1 ed., pp. 97-109). (GeoJournal Library; Vol. 127). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66766-5_7

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Chapter 7

Sense of Place as Spatial Control: Austerity and Place Processes Among Young People in Ballymun, Dublin



Sander van Lanen

7.1 Introduction

Phenomenological geographers have widely accepted the vital role of place for individual and communal identities (Casey 2009). Against this essentialist understanding of place, critics maintained that place experience is relational to cultural and political-economic structures (Cresswell 2004). Employing Seamon's (2018) place processes, this chapter provides a sort-of critical-phenomenological exploration of place in the context of austerity through narratives of young adults from Ballymun. These processes illuminate that austerity affects sense of place negatively through a loss of control over lived neighbourhood spaces.

This chapter contributes to an agenda focussing on the processuality of place and its interactions with multi-scalar political-economic transformations. The impacts of austerity suggest sense of place develops relationally (Massey 1991), and confirms that place is relational and existential. This chapter introduces the six place processes—interaction, identity, release, realisation, intensification and creation—and applies them in the context of austerity narratives of Ballymun youth. It concludes that the deterioration of sense of place under austerity is ultimately a loss of spatial control.

7.2 Austerity and Place

The impacts of the 2008 financial crisis were felt far and wide. Triggered by the collapse of US subprime mortgages, the crisis spread globally through collective debt obligations and financial networks (Aalbers 2009; Martin 2011). Amidst fears of

S. van Lanen (✉)

Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

e-mail: s.van.lanen@rug.nl

systemic collapse, governments around the world opted for bank bailouts and monetary injections to prevent acute liquidity problems and bank runs (Aalbers 2013). The resulting budget deficits became soon managed through austerity programmes intended to ‘rebalance the books’ through public spending reductions and tax increases (Kitson et al. 2011). Together, austerity programmes and the slump in the global economy resulted in job losses, wage reductions, and downward pressure on social welfare and public services (Donald et al. 2014). The consequences of these measures particularly hit poorer and younger populations (Verick 2009; Peck 2012). Since 2008, global and national inequalities rose and especially the poor, whether working or not, increasingly struggle to make ends meet (Zucman 2019).

There was a distinct geography to the crisis (Aalbers 2009). Within Europe, a clear core-periphery structure revealed itself as especially the so-called PIIGS—Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain—were hit hard (Hadjimichalis 2011; Perez and Matsaganis 2018). In these countries, unemployment rose far above the EU average. EU unemployment figures increased from 7.0% in 2008 to 10.5% in 2012, and from 6.8 to 15.5% in Portugal and from 7.8 to 24.5% in Greece in the same period (Eurostat 2019). These figures were exacerbated for youth in those countries. Youth unemployment rose from 10.0% (2008) to 31.2% (2012) in Ireland (CSO 2019), and Greek youth unemployment was 59.0%—up 38.5 percentage points since 2008 (Cholezas 2013). Spatial variations of crisis and austerity continue on national and local scales. Peck (2012) argues austerity particularly ‘bites’ in cities as they house concentrations of public sector employees and populations dependent on public spending dependent population groups. Within cities, poorer people and locations are again more vulnerable (Donald et al. 2014).

It is clear that the financial crisis scarred people. In Ireland, population levels living in multiple deprivation increased from 11.8% in 2007 to 25.5% in 2015 (Callan et al. 2014; CSO 2018). The amount of homeless individuals living in emergency accommodation tripled between 2014 and 2017, even quadrupling in Dublin (Hearne and Murphy 2018). Certain public services fell to inadequate levels. In the UK, life expectancy fell for the first time recent in history (Dorling 2019). Mental health issues steadily increased, and suicide numbers in Ireland and Southern Europe rose sharper than expected (Antonakakis and Collins 2015; Corcoran et al. 2015). Beyond this scarring of people, the geography of austerity provokes the question whether places too can be scarred.

Austerity and crisis undoubtedly affected physical places. The need to balance budgets resulted in a lack of infrastructure maintenance ranging from the critical to the mundane (Shaw 2019), from disinvestment in social housing to reduced upkeep of flowerbeds (Raynor 2017). In Ireland, unfinished and uninhabited housing estates became a powerful and enduring symbol of the boom-and-bust economy (O’Callaghan 2013). Such new ruins, from rural estates to the dramatic Central Bank on the Dublin quays, became the physical scars inserting the financial crash within the background of everyday life. Beyond the spectacular, infrastructure and social housing cuts meant both are falling into disrepair, sometimes at breaking point (Byrne 2017). In poorer neighbourhoods, falling income meant disappearing private businesses, from supermarkets to embroidery stalls (van Lanen 2017a), while

public and community service struggled for shrinking and increasingly competitive funding (Harvey 2012). Crisis and austerity leave their spatial imprints and affect the liveability of cities and neighbourhoods.

Austerity is ultimately a political-economic process. Geographers explored the everyday geographies of austerity and their interactions with specific sites (Hitchen 2019), relationships of care (Hall 2018), and the background spaces of everyday life (Raynor 2017; Shaw 2019). But what about place in an existential sense? How do crisis and austerity impact on the phenomenology of space and place? As experience shapes perceptions of austerity and neoliberalisation (van Lanen 2018), this chapter considers place experience amidst crisis and austerity to reveal how political-economic developments imposed from ‘outside’ affect sense of place on a neighbourhood scale. To understand these impacts, the next section introduces Seamon’s (2018) six place processes.

7.3 Place Processes

In “Life takes place”, David Seamon (2018) introduces six place processes that can sustain and transform place positively or negatively, that is, they either strengthen or undermine place. These processes consist of so-called ‘triads’ where affirming impulses, receptive impulses, and reconciliation impulses interact in various ways. Applying these impulses to place, Seamon sees people-in-place as the affirmative impulse, as their actions act or initiate processes contributing to the creation or relinquishing of place. The ‘environmental ensemble’ is the receptive impulse, the physical and social environment within which people-in-place act—although this active/receptive relationship between people-in-place and environmental ensemble is sometimes reversed. Finally, the spatial reconciliation impulse is ‘common presence’, the “material and lived ‘togetherness’ of a place impelled by both its physical and experiential qualities” (Seamon 2018, p. 87). Common presence encapsulates concepts like ‘environmental atmosphere’ or ‘sense of place’. It provides, according to Seamon (2018, pp. 87–88), the “London-ness of London” and the “Istanbul-ness of Istanbul”.

The first place process is ‘place interaction’, where users of a place conduct their everyday lives and, while doing so, provide place with character or ‘environmental presence’. Place interaction is often common and unspectacular, but it is of critical importance to the existential foundation of place. Nonetheless, it presents itself as “the typical goings-on in a place” (Seamon 2018, p. 94) connecting humans, through their actions, to their environment and people around them. In terms of the spatial impulses, people-in-place are connected to the environmental ensemble through their action if that action is somehow place specific. For example, I walk home on a sunny day with some spare time. I pass a people-filled park and decide to settle down on a bench to enjoy the lively atmosphere. The affirmative impulse is my response to the lively park, while the vibrancy of the common-presence of people in the park

provides the environmental ensemble in which I enjoy this liveliness. Thus, people-in-place (me) and the environmental ensemble are connected through the reconciliation impulse of me soaking up the park's atmosphere. Becoming part of the common presence, my sitting down contributes to its spatio-temporal atmosphere. If this is a facilitating interaction, an action or process disrupting the atmosphere of place would be an undermining place interaction creating distress or discomfort.

The second process is 'place identity', which embeds a certain place as part of a group or individual identity (Seamon 2018). It contains personal actions in place that facilitate the internalisation of place in their identity. Alternatively, people act in a certain way because of this internalised place identity. In terms of spatial impulses, people interact with the environmental ensemble to attune their common presence to their identity, or the identity of place. It proposes a deeper emotional connection between actions-in-place and those carrying them out. For example, every night I stroll through the local park. As I get familiar with the park and other strollers, I grow attached to it. The common presence, my regular being in the park, facilitates a bond between me (people-in-place) and the park (environmental ensemble). The park becomes part of my identity, and my regular presence becomes part of the park's identity for other strollers. The main difference with place interaction is emotional attachment, positively or negatively, attached to a place. An undermining example of place identity involves a severe negative encounter in the park which disrupts my positive attachment.

The third process is 'place release', where common presence *initiates* actions. This means the more-or-less being together of people and their environment provides coincidental or unexpected phenomena (Seamon 2018). Common presence initiates a relationship between the environmental ensemble and people-in-place. For Seamon (2018), third places often depend on place release, as their surprising encounters contribute to their exciting qualities. The common presence of people within an environmental ensemble provides the opportunity for the coincidental to be experienced. For example, as I walk through town, I hear my favourite song from a passing car. The common presence of me and the car initiates an experience which transforms that place into a place engrained in my memory, at least temporarily. Such experiences contribute to pleasant places where people get happily surprised, and the occurrence of place release contributes to for spatial well-being. Facilitative place release makes places enjoyable. Undermining place release could be an unexpected event that creates a negative place experience, for example an accident or an uncomfortable personal encounter.

The fourth process is 'place realisation', where common presence again initiates action. Contrary to place release, place becomes a "unique phenomenal presence greater than its environmental and human parts" (Seamon 2018, p. 128). Place realisation contributes to the consistency of place through time by conscious or unconscious actions. Common presence plays a significant role in how people-in-place interact with the environmental ensemble, it shapes personal actions to solidify the place qualities. An example is the silence coupe in Dutch trains, where people remain silent to rest, read, or work while traveling. The people joined within this marked coupe (common presence) remain quiet, and, when necessary, remind people on the

phone (people-in-place) about the silence coupe (environmental ensemble). As such, the spatial identity of the silence coupe is sustained through the common presence of the train, its markers, and the passengers, thus enacting the wagon's identity as a silent place. An intrusive element, a source of sound, is addressed to maintain this identity. It thus facilitates place. Undermining place realisation destroys this spatial identity, for example when a restauration wagon is placed next to the silence coupe, which undermines the silence coupe as resting place.

The fifth process is 'place intensification', underlining the "importance of the physical environment in place making" (Seamon 2018, p. 138). Here, the environmental ensemble confronts people-in-place to reinforce a common presence. The physical aspects of place allow people-in-place to act in a way that maintains their physical and social harmonious presence. For example, a car-free street with plenty of greenery (the environmental ensemble) invites inhabitants into the street on summer days (people-in-place). They get to know each other and enjoy their pleasant co-presence, so they co-contribute to sustaining the street's greenery (common presence). In this facilitating example, the vibrancy of the street becomes self-sustaining. The car-free, tree-lined street facilitates the lively street compared to a busy car-dominated street. This latter example would be undermining place intensification; inhabitants stay indoors and do not develop a place connection. Without co-management of the greenery, they become less likely to sit outside and the spatial qualities progressively deteriorate.

The sixth process is 'place creation', initiated by "dedicated individuals who ... envision improvement in that place's environmental ensemble that, in turn, strengthen common presence" (Seamon 2018, p. 151). The focus is on conscious physical spatial interventions to improve the character of place. Imagine a woman living on a neighbourhood square (people-in-place), placing a picnic table on that square (environmental ensemble). This woman and her neighbours increasingly sit and meet at the table (common presence). The woman's physical intervention increases the sense of place for all square inhabitants. Place creation is undermining when someone removes the table as unauthorized object in public space and reduces the square's social atmosphere.

7.4 Research Context

After 2008, the Irish government rolled out a severe austerity programme (Whelan 2014), including cuts in social welfare spending, heightened public service fees, privatisation, and tax increases (Fraser et al. 2013). This chapter draws upon a project into the experiences of crisis and austerity by disadvantaged urban youth Ireland (van Lanen 2017b), which explored austerity experiences through in-depth interviews with youth aged 18–25 in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. For simplicity, this chapter builds solely upon the interviews carried out in Ballymun, Dublin. According to 2011 deprivation figures, it was among the most deprived areas of the country in 2006 and 2011 (Haase and Pratschke 2012). Since the mid-2000s, a large-scale

regeneration programme had drastically transformed the physical environment from Ireland's only high-rise social housing estate into predominantly terraced housing. The simultaneity of crisis and regeneration meant several plans never materialised, including a new shopping centre and cinema. In total, 20 Ballymun youth were interviewed during 2015, discussing their personal experiences of austerity and everyday life, including their neighbourhood, their household, work, and education. The next section studies these narratives of Ballymun youth to assess how austerity and crisis affect youth's experience of place.

7.5 Austerity and Place Processes

Seamon groups the place processes according to the position of common presence as reconciling impulse. In place interaction and place identity, common presence moderates the interaction between people-in-place and the environmental ensemble. In place release and place realisation, common presence, as initiating impulse, strengthens, or dissolves, place. Finally, in place intensification and place creation common presence is the outcome of the people-in-place and environmental ensemble interaction. This grouping is applied to the discussion of the place processes in Ballymun, in the context of austerity.

7.5.1 *Common Presence as Moderator*

As place interactions concerns the "everyday goings-on of a place" (Seamon 2018, p. 91), the interviews with Ballymun youth contain many examples. However, this chapter is specifically interested in place processes affected, directly or indirectly, by the implementation of austerity. Rather than to identify any examples of place interaction, I focus on day-to-day occurrences mediated by austerity. Two themes stood out as they occurred in at least half of the austerity accounts; (1) there being 'nothing to do' in Ballymun and (2) the facilitating role of public and community services in place interactions.

The constant reoccurrence of Ballymun as a place with 'nothing to do' for youth signifies its limited ability to facilitate various 'goings-on' in place. Youth, as people-in-place, and their environmental ensemble, the neighbourhood, are not meaningfully connected through their common presence.

... there's nothing for the older young fella's, like, like there's no football pitches around where we live, they knocked all down, there's nothing, like, there's a playground with one swing or something, so there's nothing for us now, like. Then the police are stopping us twenty-four seven and giving out about us having nothing to do, there's no jobs for us or anything ... (Ian, 18)

I don't know, 'cause, like, can't really think of anything else to do, like, everything just involves money, like if you go to the pictures, that's money, if you go swimming or something, that's more money, so, you can't really go in like. (Orla, 18)

The absence of things to do in their neighbourhood, especially for youth of lower socio-economic status, is not new and surely predates austerity (Kelleher 2013). Nonetheless, spending cuts for public, community, and voluntary services reduced the services and amenities available to Ballymun youth. Both professional and leisurely amenities disappeared as government spending diminished sharply (Harvey 2012), as Ian indicates. Beyond physical access, Ballymun youth with low spending power, exacerbated by austerity, was financially excluded from facilities. Together, spending reductions and a fall in disposable income reduced the opportunities for a variety of place interaction within Ballymun to the point that it reduced youth's sense of place.

The negative impacts of austerity on the possibilities for place interaction are confirmed when participants discuss the value of not-for-profit and affordable services. Speaking of the Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (RECO), Tessa says:

... this is really the only place that young people can come to, [...] you could have something to eat, and play a bit of pool, or whatever like, and they do for the younger kids [...], they go out and do activities and all, like. But it seems like, when you hit around fifteen or sixteen, like, where it's hard for young people especially as you're coming home from school and then there's nothing ... (Tessa, 23)

In a neighbourhood with hardly any activities available, the presence of the services like the RECO gain in importance for activities and place interactions. As such services are valued by participants, but operating in ways that do not fully serve the Ballymun community, it becomes clear that austerity reduces the possibility for positive place interactions of Ballymun youth.

Place identity, as a place process, applies to such interactions of people and place that incorporate place in the identity of people-in-place. Nearly all participants expressed that they identified Ballymun as home and felt deeply connected to it through their histories, experiences, and personal networks.

... my footprints will always be here, always, I wouldn't, like, the one thing I think this place for is for making me who I am. (John, 22)

... it's not even the area I feel attached to, it's the community that's in it ... (Callum, 21)

Although the place and the people of Ballymun contributed to the homely experience of Ballymun, some of these qualities were affected by austerity in the experience of participants. In particular, this occurred in relation to the absence of either employment or affordable housing for inhabitants (van Lanen 2017a).

... if you're walking into the shop and, there's fifteen employees and you know them all personally from being around the area, then you're gonna respect that place more, 'cause it's, it's just part of your home. (Josh, 21)

But, like, it's not home, [...] I was homeless there for, like, nearly a year, and I still would not call it, [...] it is not a place to raise a child, like, it just wasn't suitable ... (Tessa, 23)

According to Josh, the general fall in employment during the recession impacts the opportunities of parts of Ballymun, such as a shop, to become home. As a feeling of home comes close to identifying with a place, less local employment in the area thus reduces part of the processes that make Ballymun a part of his identity. Nonetheless, his connection and identification with Ballymun remain strong. When Tessa was interviewed, she just found a house after almost a year of homelessness. Her identity was so connected to Ballymun, that even in homelessness she could not accept a house elsewhere. As access to affordable housing diminished during the recession (Hearne and Murphy 2018), Tessa associated her experience with austerity. Nonetheless, her connection to the neighbourhood, based on previous experiences, remained so strong she made it into a house into the area. Austerity, thus, seems to affect place identity in limited ways, while overall feelings of home seem strong enough to weather any negative consequences.

7.5.2 *Common Presence as Initiator*

Place release pertains to unexpected occurrences, whether ordinary or extraordinary, initiated by common presence. Such occurrences were not directly discussed during the interviews, so the following excerpts cover neighbourhood experiences where the presence or absence of potential unexpectedness play a role. In the austerity context, both facilitating and undermining examples of place release concern neighbourhood vibrancy and the street as place of trouble.

The abandoned shopping centre and lack of services was regularly mentioned as a source of reduced public activity. These disappearances impacted common presence in Ballymun, as it weakened the vibrancy of their activities and customers. This shift in place ballet (Seamon 1979) impacted negatively on the possibility of positive chance experiences.

[The weekly market] used to have a lot, a lot more stuff, like, they used to have not just, like, crochet blankets, or cakes, or cards, they used to have foreign foods as well, which was great, because they used to have this little stand that did this Turkish delights, which are my favourite sweets, and I used to love going there, but they don't have it anymore ... (Hannah, 19)

... like a couple of times I've kind of stumbled by and there's been big gatherings outside even the Axis, or across the road, like of people just lighting candles and coming together and going on a walk just to, eh, to promote suicide prevention ... (Josh, 21)

As Hannah indicates, the weekly markets once boasting a wide diversity of stalls had been shrinking. She admired the variety of market encounters, more or less predictable, as a weekly highlight. This rhythmic common presence of buyers and sellers in Ballymun disappeared, transforming Hannah's place experiences. Of course, the neighbourhood is not suddenly devoid of activities and, as Josh indicates, unexpected encounters still exist. As with place identity, the local community spirit is highly valued through positive encounters with community activities. Although

suicide awareness activities could result from suicides under austerity (Corcoran et al. 2015), this cannot be concluded from these interviews.

Place release can also undermine place. Chance encounters made several participants avoid public space, often conceptualising the street as ‘place of trouble’ (Kelleher 2013), a spatiality with potentially uncomfortable encounters.

... when I was living out here it was like nearly every day, or every second day, like, I was coming into the police and stuff like that ... (Timothy, 20)

I get very paranoid in Ballymun, yeah, there’s just a few dodgy people, like walking around you, like, you do be in fear, like. But you just don’t know who’s like on drugs or who is out of their head or something ... (Alice, 25)

These narratives indicate potential trouble in public space which interferes with place experience, although originating from different actors. Timothy remembers regular police harassment when being on Ballymun streets with his friends, reducing their sense of appropriation and belonging in their neighbourhood’s public spaces. Other inhabitants cause Alice’s source of trouble, especially intoxicated people, reducing her at-easiness especially in the evening. Together, extensive policing of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and concentration of unemployment and substance abuse contribute to undermining place release (Wacquant 2007). It is hard to tell whether austerity contributed to increased ‘trouble’, but spending cuts reduced safe leisure spaces for youth.

While place release is unexpected, place realisation maintains the qualities of place through common presence.

... so trying to stay in [school] while everybody else dropped out, that would have been, would have had an effect though when it came to me finishing secondary school, [...] so then I left school and the recession hit ... (Sophie, 25)

... you just notice people have less money as time goes on, you see it more in certain shops, there’s less people there, [...] I’ve gone to the pub a fair few times with my dad, playing pool and stuff like that, and you notice that it is nowhere near as full as it used to be ... (Owen, 20)

These narratives illuminate place realisation under austerity, focussing on individual effects of common presence and on austerity’s impact on common presence. Sophie recalls how the values of her local social circle did not encourage educational achievements which made her unprepared for the recession. After she dropped out of school, which she expressed as normal among Ballymun youth, she believed better education would have relieved her personal consequences. The common presence of Sophie and her environment inspired her to perpetuate the economic vulnerability of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Later, her participation in the Irish Youth Guarantee pilot in Ballymun resulted in employment. She was eligible because of her common presence; unemployed in Ballymun.

Owen, alternatively, experienced austerity as a discontinuation of place. Lower local disposable income, caused by falling employment and welfare rates, affected space interactions. The leisurely qualities of Ballymun reduced as pubs were empty, making Ballymun less pleasurable for Owen. Austerity and place realisation interact

in various ways, it is continuous in not-preparing inhabitants to economic shocks, produces beneficial attention to vulnerable communities, and significantly affects local place ballets.

7.5.3 *Common Presence as Outcome*

For the final two processes, common presence is the outcome of interactions between people-in-place and environmental ensemble. Place intensification starts with environmental ensemble, describing how physical environments shape behaviours of people-in-place.

... when it first hit, it didn't affect me, but it affected the area, [...]it ripped the heart out of the area, 'cause all the lovely things that were promised didn't come about. (Michael, 24)

... that's just an eyesore in itself, so just level it and just put something nice there for the people. And it'll generate jobs, like, if they could give people jobs, from Ballymun, if the new shopping centre goes in ... [...] get that construction done, quicker so it's out of the way ... (Josh, 21)

Michael and Josh reflect upon the relationship between Ballymun's physical environment and its inhabitants. Initially unaffected, Michael felt austerity through its neighbourhood effects and the unrealised regeneration plans. Closing shops and the decaying shopping centre aggravated austerity's impacts on sense of place. Physical closure of shops further aggravated local unemployment, initiating a spiral of decline affecting the common presence of inhabitants experiencing austerity amidst its spatial scars (Storm 2014). This experience was thus engraved in the background of everyday life in Ballymun.

Place creation is initiated by people-in-place, rather than the environmental ensemble. No participants discussed conscious interventions in the environmental ensemble. However, they regularly discussed attempts by others, failed or successful, by predominantly local government and community organisations.

And then the towers been taking down, [...] now it's just all busses and roundabouts and fields, like, there is nothing anymore. I know, people probably say, 'is it not better without the flats', but no, it wasn't, the flats was what made Ballymun ... (Tara, 18).

... it's like an outreach group, it's to help people around my age, it's for the older group to stay of the streets, to stay, don't be doing stuff you shouldn't be doing and stuff like that. (Callum, 21)

Interrupted by crisis, the Ballymun regeneration failed on many of its promises, including a new shopping centre, cinema, and improved public transport. Most iconically, the seven Ballymun towers were replaced by terraced housing. Many participants missed the towers. They realised their inadequacies, but the idea they 'made Ballymun', as Tara expresses, was common. Their demolishing is a form of undermining of place creation, exacerbated by the improper completion of the regeneration project.

Other mentions of place creation referred to community activity within the neighbourhood. Callum, for example, took part in a RECO professional outreach group. Most participants highly valued such interventions, considered them active contributions to a 'better Ballymun'. Although not necessarily physical interventions, they provide the socio-cultural environment to better youth's socio-economic prospects and a more pleasant environment. With not much to do in the neighbourhood, these initiatives provide activities to enhance place experience. Through interruptions in regeneration and community services, austerity facilitates or undermines place intensification by disrupting the environmental ensemble, or encouraging interventions in Ballymun's environment.

7.6 Afterthought

Studying the six place processes identified by Seamon (2018), in the context of austerity, illuminates austerity's impacts on the impulses involved—people-in-place, the environmental ensemble, and common presence. First, austerity affected environmental ensemble in two major ways. One, the interference of crisis with the Ballymun regeneration resulted in an incomplete and, in the eyes of Ballymun youth, unsuitable physical landscape. Two, spending cuts for public and community services drastically transformed the cultural environment and service landscape. Although many participants praised the work of educational, professional and leisurely services, these often struggled to maintain sufficient service levels. Austerity's impact on the environmental ensemble, thus, reshaped the neighbourhood landscape away from the needs and desires of Ballymun youth.

Second, austerity reduced the opportunities for people-in-place to engage with their environmental ensemble. Private and public services disappear and falling disposable income erects financial barriers towards the remaining facilities. 'People-in-place' that consciously act, predominantly the regeneration project, are perceived as implementing unwanted transformations and renege on promises made. Together, these affect the common presence experienced by Ballymun youth. Amidst continuing spatial identity, they progressively feel there is nothing to do in an environmental mismatch with their needs and aspirations. Among service reduction and deprivation, desired place ballets (Seamon 1979), such as the weekly market or vibrant pubs, are no longer sustained within Ballymun. Austerity thus results in declining spatial appropriation, as inhabitants lose control to use and shape the neighbourhood as they see fit.

The reduction of sense of place under austerity is thus largely a question of power and control. Ballymun youth, the people-in-place, are disempowered through personal developments and the neighbourhood trajectory. Deterioration of sense of place follows a decline in power over what to do with their lives and time, less influence over neighbourhood appearance, and minimal leverage over local facilities and interactions. Instead, Ballymun youth feels their conditions of place imposed by spending cuts, falling incomes, and environmental dilapidation. This relation

between austerity and sense of place provides space for a constructive dialogue between Seamon's phenomenology (1979, 2018) and its social constructionists critics (Cresswell 2004). It suggests that the phenomenological study of place processes can reveal the power relations forming variegated individual and collective space experiences. Sense of place is, partly, facilitated or undermined by political-economic power structures and experienced in specific places. A critical phenomenology of place can reveal the consequences of political, economic, and cultural structures on people, place *and* people-in-place.

This is not a full phenomenology of the six place processes (Seamon 2018). Nevertheless, it employed these processes as a framework to understand the relation between austerity and sense of place in a disadvantaged urban neighbourhood. It demonstrates the capacity to investigate sense of place as a set of processes sensitive to political-economic transformations. The specific focus on austerity's consequences for *people-in-place*, the *environmental ensemble*, and *common presence*, reveals the importance of cultural and political control over place for sense of place. It confirms that austerity has severe consequences for everyday life in general, and in-place!

References

- Aalbers, M. B. (2009). Geographies of the financial crisis. *Area*, 41(1), 34–42.
- Aalbers, M. B. (2013). Neoliberalism is dead... Long live neoliberalism! *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 1083–1090.
- Antonakakis, N., & Collins, A. (2015). The impact of fiscal austerity on suicide mortality: Evidence across the “Eurozone periphery”. *Social Science and Medicine*, 145, 63–78.
- Byrne, M. (2017). Austerity has left our city's infrastructure creaking. *Dublin Inquirer*. Available at: <https://www.dublininquirer.com/2017/02/28/mick-austerity-left-citys-infrastructure-creaking/>. Accessed 17 June 2018.
- Callan, T., et al. (2014). Crisis, response and distributional impact: The case of Ireland. *IZA Journal of European Labor Studies*, 3(9), 1–17.
- Casey, E. S. (2009). *Getting back into place* (2nd ed.). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Cholezas, I. (2013). *Youth guarantee in times of austerity: The Greek case*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Corcoran, P., et al. (2015). Impact of the economic recession and subsequent austerity on suicide and self-harm in Ireland: An interrupted time series analysis. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 44(3), 969–977.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A short introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- CSO. (2018). *Survey on income and living conditions (SILC): 2016 results*. Cork: Central Statistics Office.
- CSO. (2019). *Seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment by age group, sex, month and statistic*. Available at: <https://statbank.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselection.asp>. Accessed 23 Nov 2019.
- Donald, B., et al. (2014). Austerity in the city: Economic crisis and urban service decline? *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 7(1), 3–15.
- Dorling, D. (2019). *Austerity bites—Falling life expectancy in the UK, the BMJ opinion*. Available at: <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2019/03/19/danny-dorling/>. Accessed 27 Nov 2019.
- Eurostat. (2019). *Unemployment statistics*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unemployment_statistics. Accessed 23 Nov 2019.

- Fraser, A., Murphy, E., & Kelly, S. (2013). Deepening neoliberalism via austerity and “reform”: The case of Ireland. *Human Geography*, 6(2), 38–53.
- Haase, T., & Pratschke, J. (2012). Pobal HP deprivation index for small areas: Datasets electoral divisions. Available at: <https://www.pobal.ie/Pages/New-Measures.aspx>.
- Hadjimichalis, C. (2011). Uneven geographical development and socio-spatial justice and solidarity: European regions after the 2009 financial crisis. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 18(3), 254–274.
- Hall, S. M. (2018). Everyday austerity: Towards relational geographies of family, friendship and intimacy. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(5), 769–789.
- Harvey, B. (2012). *Downsizing the community sector: Changes in employment and services in the voluntary and community sector in Ireland, 2008–2012*. Dublin: Irish Congress of Trade Unions.
- Hearne, R., & Murphy, M. (2018). An absence of rights: Homeless families and social housing marketisation in Ireland. *Administration*, 66(2), 9–31.
- Hitchen, E. (2019). The affective life of austerity: Uncanny atmospheres and paranoid temporalities. *Social & Cultural Geography*.
- Kelleher, F. (2013). *Place, teenagers and urban identities: A new social geography of young people in Cork*. Cork: University College Cork.
- Kitson, M., Martin, R., & Tyler, P. (2011). The geographies of austerity. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 4(3), 289–302.
- Martin, R. (2011). The local geographies of the financial crisis: From the housing bubble to economic recession and beyond. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 11(4), 587–618.
- Massey, D. (1991, June). A global sense of place. *Marxism Today*, pp. 24–29.
- O’Callaghan, C. (2013). Ghost estates: Spaces and spectres of Ireland after Nama. In D. Linehan & C. Crowley (Eds.), *Spacing Ireland: Place, society and culture in a post-boom era* (pp. 22–42). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Peck, J. (2012). Austerity urbanism: American cities under extreme economy. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 16(6), 626–655.
- Perez, S. A., & Matsaganis, M. (2018). The political economy of austerity in Southern Europe. *New Political Economy*, 23(2), 192–207 (Taylor & Francis).
- Raynor, R. (2017). Dramatising austerity: Holding a story together (and why it falls apart...). *Cultural Geographies*, 24(2), 193–212.
- Seamon, D. (1979). *A geography of the lifeworld: Movement, rest and encounter*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Seamon, D. (2018). *Life takes place: Phenomenology, lifeworlds, and place making*. New York: Routledge.
- Shaw, I. G. (2019). Worlding austerity: The spatial violence of poverty. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 37(6), 971–989.
- Storm, A. (2014). *Post-industrial landscape scars*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Lanen, S. (2017a). Living austerity urbanism: Space–time expansion and deepening socio-spatial inequalities for disadvantaged urban youth in Ireland. *Urban Geography*, 38(10), 1603–1613.
- van Lanen, S. (2017b). *Youth and austerity in the city: Geographies of precarity in disadvantaged urban areas in Ireland*. Cork: University College Cork.
- van Lanen, S. (2018). Austerity beyond the budget cut: Experiences of austerity urbanism by disadvantaged urban youth. *Lo Squaderno*, 48, 49–53.
- Verick, S. (2009). *Who is hit hardest during a financial crisis? The vulnerability of young men and women to unemployment in an economic downturn* (IZA Discussion Paper 4359). Bonn: SSRN.
- Wacquant, L. (2007). *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Whelan, K. (2014). Ireland’s economic crisis: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Journal of Macroeconomics*, 39, 424–440.
- Zucman, G. (2019). Global wealth inequality. *Annual Review of Economics*, 11(1), 109–138.