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Acknowledgements

The publishing of *Atlas* which, until 5 years ago, was a forgotten tradition of DU Geographical Society, has become one of the characteristic milestones of my time in the society and in Trinity in general. Every year when *Atlas* is released, I know we are almost at an end to another semester of college. This semester is immensely different to what any geography student has experienced before, but nonetheless I am extremely proud to be able to carry on the tradition of *Atlas* in 2020.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to everyone who submitted their work to our journal this year. The standard of quality was so impressive, which made choosing between them such an enjoyable and yet difficult task.

Thanks to Kate Bridget our PRO this year for designing the cover, which incorporates the earth element symbol that has also come to be traditionally associated with *Atlas*'s of recent years.

I wish to thank previous editor Lizzy Gageby Bell for her brilliant instruction and wisdom, to our chairperson Laura Nash who also took on the role of sub editor alongside numerous other sub appointments this year. I would also like to thank our honorary president Philip Lawton for all his help and guidance over the course of this year, and for writing a wonderful President's Forward.

This journal would not be possible to print or publish without the financial support of the TCD Association and Trust and the Alumni of Trinity College Dublin who donate to this generous fund, to whom the society is extremely grateful.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members who came to our events this year and expressed their interest in the events which unfortunately did not happen. I have no doubt that the traditions of Geogsoc, of which there are now a great many, will continue in the second half of 2020 and for many years to come.

Leanne Bell

Head Editor

Atlas #18

President's Foreword

It is a somewhat strange task to write a forward for a publication in the midst of the Covid_19 global pandemic, yet, as I will come back to at a later point, I am also immensely proud of everyone involved in this year's edition of Atlas. This is an unprecedented crisis that has had an impact on our daily lives, not least of which is on health and wellbeing. I don't think any reader of this year's Atlas will need to be informed of the severity of the crisis. As lecturers and teachers, we are conscious of the huge impact that this crisis has had on all our students. In pragmatic terms, this has had implications for the ways in which classes were delivered, coursework outlined, and submitted, and the manner in which exams will be sat. These are all crucial issues, but what also comes to the fore is something that I feel is more important, or certainly will feel more important in years to come when you look back on your time in Geography at Trinity: that of the everyday experience of the University. With particular reference for those students who are finishing up their degree this year, it is hard not to think of the ways in which your final few weeks in TCD have been impacted. Beyond health and wellbeing, one of the stranger parts of the current moment is the strangeness we now feel about everyday places. Things have been somewhat turned upside-down. Those things that have been central to your lives for the last number of years, from The Freeman Library, to the Rose Garden, and all the spaces beyond Geography, have suddenly been made distant.

Amidst this crisis, and amidst the difficulties it presents, there is some signs of light. In this regard, I consider it is an honour to write a forward for a publication that is being put together in the context of this crisis, with the additional pressures that have been handed to students in completing their coursework and preparing for their altered exams. That the editors have continued in their work and managed to bring together the different parts of the publication remotely is a testament to their organizational ability and their tenacity.

While we always need to be careful about how we read into a particular moment in time, it is now more apparent than perhaps any

other period in recent decades as to just how central an understanding of space is for engaging in our world. The current period is demarcated by the intersections of a wide array of phenomena that can be interpreted through a geographical lens. This includes the links between globalization and the rapid spread of disease; the policy differences in approaches of different states; access to health-care and the impact of embedded inequalities; the everyday regulation of space; as well as the economic and socio-spatial consequences of the current crisis, to name but a few. While it is too quick for these themes and topics to be a focus of this edition of Atlas, none-the-less, the work that has been carried out allows us to think about the role of geography in our understandings of the world.

To come back to where I started above, while the current moment has resulted in the unprecedented closure of the University, I look forward to welcoming those returning to TCD in the near future, and hopefully by September. For those of you who are finishing up this year, you will always be welcome in Geography. Please come by to say hello and we look forward to seeing you again at your graduation. In geography, we always talk about how places are nothing without people, and the current moment is a reminder that it is our students who make the Geography Department.

Philip Lawton

Honorary President

Chairperson's Greeting

Welcome to the 18th Volume of ATLAS, DU Geographical Society's annual publication! It was my pleasure to be able to assist our lovely Librarian Leanne in reading over this year's submissions; they were all truly fantastic! The selected articles display a range of all things Geography and recognises the broad scope of the subject that we all love so much. Congratulations everyone!

I would like to give a massive thank you to Leanne Bell for organising and conducting the publication of this year's ATLAS; her dedication to the Librarian role this year has been palpable, and I believe that drive is instrumental in making this journal the success it is.

I must extend this gratitude to our Treasurer Ben Healy for assisting Leanne in securing the funding that has made this year's publication possible, and also to Kate Keinle for designing the front cover.

A huge thank you also to Honorary President Phillip Lawton for his support throughout the year and interest in helping with ATLAS; he provided us with invaluable advice, ideas, and guidance, many thanks Phillip!

And last but by no means least, to the wonderful GeogSoc Committee 2019-20, thank you! This is especially to my other two Execs – Ben and Ellen – for keeping me in check this past year, for their advice and solutions when stuff has not turned out as planned, and for checking in during my final year in Trinity; honestly could not have done it without them, cheers lads!

I hope this journal has found you well, wherever it is in the world
you are; it really is something to enjoy and treasure,
All the best and happy reading,

Laura Nash

Chairperson

Dublin University Geographical Society

2019-2020

New frontiers or the same cold shoulder? A discussion on global border patterns and their effect on mobility

Alan Bolger

In an increasingly globalising world, borders and their related interactions have received greater attention in a bid to understand world geography and its inhabitants' mobility. It is undeniable that the current scheme of borders is one that is dynamic and will continue to change as societies alter their relationships with one another and with the physical landscape. The first stream of discussion in this essay will attempt to distinguish between the more concrete physical border and the more abstract "invisible" boundary. The differing interpretations of the word can lead to varying relationships surrounding the border and the complexity of said relationships. As a second point, the mass migration in mainland Europe following the conclusion of World War II, specifically following the fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism in the East Bloc, will be examined. The constantly changing border structures which existed throughout the twentieth century allowed for the altering of Western European society on a large-scale, the effects of which can still be observed. Thirdly, and finally, the concept of non-violent intervention across borders will be introduced and discussed. The concept of a third-party crossing a border to effect positive change in areas of conflict is not a new one but rather one which has garnered more of the spotlight in recent decades. Through the consideration of these three topics, a rudimentary but valuable understanding of how world geography and mobility is influenced by borders should be obtained.

In order to begin thinking about the effect borders have had on our planet, one must first have an understanding of the differing conceptualisations of borders that exist. Perhaps the most obvious image that comes to mind when visualising a border is that of a physical boundary between one area of land and another. Be that a wooden fence separating two neighbour's gardens, or the demilitarised zone which exists at the border between North and South Korea. Literaturical use of the term 'border' can be dated back as far as de

Pisan's mention of "*frontyers and borders*" in the late fifteenth century (de Pisan, C., 1489). The Oxford dictionary also defines the term as "the district lying along the edge of a country of territory, a frontier." In practice however, borders as a reality are a feature which predate even the aforementioned Middle English writing.

One such example of this early boundary construction was that of Hadrian's Wall in second century Britain. The placement and composition of this physical border was heavily influenced by the societal needs of the expanding Roman empire and also by the physical landscape of the area now regarded as Northern England. One notable feature is the construction of the central part of the wall along a crest of igneous dolerite, offering a natural advantage in terms of defence and observation (Ganster & Lorey 2004, pp. 45). The direct connection between the existing terrain and the man-made addition is a common denominator for the erection of many borders, to the present day. Take the border between the modern states of Russia and Georgia for example. The border mainly follows the path of the Caucasus range and was drawn up following the proclamation of the Georgian Democratic Republic in 1918 (Urushadze 2008, p. 1). The extreme mountainous terrain still proves difficult to cross, with only one legal border crossing located along the military highway.

The construction of Hadrian's Wall was also heavily influenced by the societal conditions of the time. Although the threat from the Scottish Lowlands would have been minimal, the wall was built as a means of creating a division between the Roman civilians and the Scottish barbarians to the north (Tolia-Kelly 2010, p. 74). It must be noted that the wall may not have served as a strict boundary of the empire, but rather as one of the *limites* of Rome. These borders were constructed by the empire as a means of controlling migration, smuggling and customs into their territory. The building of fortified portals called milecastles meant that tariffs could be charged on goods and a record could be kept of individuals entering and leaving (Breeze 2003, pp. 1-18). This condition-driven building of boundaries creates a clear divide between not only the geographic areas of land but also the societies on either side. On the one hand, this allows societies to develop their own individual cultural identities, including language,

music and cuisine. This can be seen following the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. On the other hand, the creation of artificial borders such as the division of the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel has had detrimental consequences. The separation of families, the loss of shared history and culture to name but a few. In this sense, one could be hasty to make the assumption that a world without these created borders would be a “better world.”

Perhaps a more difficult border concept to grasp is that of it as an abstract rather than a physical structure. When translated from English to German, the word ‘wall’ can be interpreted in two ways. As *Mauer*, meaning ‘wall’ in the sense of a physical barrier and *Wand*, meaning ‘wall’ in the sense of the “face” of the wall (Ganster & Lorey 2004, pp. 2223). The Berlin Wall, or *Berliner Mauer*, was one such border which at different times and for different groups of people acted as both *Mauer* and *Wand*. Upon construction, the wall acted as a physical boundary between West and East Berlin, between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, between the capitalist West and the socialist East. Party rhetoric in the East even went as far as to describe it as an “anti-fascist protection wall” (Brinks 1997, pp. 207-217). However, as time progressed and movement across the border become less regulated, the border became less *Mauer* and more *Wand* for Westerners. The population was becoming increasingly mobile and the integrity of the wall was lessened as an effect. What has once acted as a clear concrete demarcation between “good” and “evil” had become something which existed far more as a psychological and economic border. This concept is something which can be observed in the Trump administration’s rhetoric surrounding the US-Mexico border. Despite the issuing of Executive Order 13767 in January 2017, the border wall remains significantly more *Wand* than *Mauer*. The increase in anti-Mexico propaganda being released negates the need for further concrete construction surplus to the 30% border wall which existed in pre-2010, according to the NY Times (<https://www.nytimes.com>). Features such as the Berlin Wall act as far more than just a physical border controlling the flow of people and goods in and out of a territory. The influence they have on modern geography and how we as a society

move is undeniable, whether the border is acting as a security system, as a sculpture or even as an art canvas.

It is clear that Central and Eastern Europe is home to one of the greatest border densities in the world. A long history of interdependent relationships as well as countless periods of conflict have resulted in a network of international boundaries which have both aided and impeded the mobility of societies. The characteristics of these border zones vary greatly from one pair of nations to another. On one end of the spectrum is the air of transnationalism which can be observed across the German-Dutch border. Aided by the European Economic Area, the border region here is a clear example of how two nations can forge a mutually beneficial relationship whilst maintaining their individual sovereignty. In recent time, a housing shortage in the Netherlands has seen Dutch families relocate to the German side of the border whilst maintaining their jobs at home (Strüver 2010, pp. 323-343). On the far end of the spectrum, the volatile relationships which existed within the Soviet and Yugoslav blocs remain evident in the modern international borders. One notable example of this is the continued ethnic hatred between Serbian and Croatians. Aside from the landmine-scattered landscape, cross-border nationalistic Serbian radio broadcasts serve as a reminder of the Croatian struggle for independence and the difficulties individuals face whilst trying to cross that particular border (DellaVigna et al.

2014, pp. 103-132).

Broadly speaking, 20th century migration in Europe can be grouped into two time frames, post-World War II and post-Cold War. Immediately following the conclusion of the Second World War, the governments of Western nations, notably Germany and France, opened their borders to foreign labour in an effort to rebuild. As large-scale migration began, little heed was given to the long-term economic, social and political effects of mass migration across international boundaries. Those in power believed that the labour market would regulate the migration and that immigrant workers would eventually return to their country of origin. Between 1950 and the early 1970s an estimated 30 million workers and their dependents entered Germany alone (Messina 2007, p. 3). The size and uneven

distribution of this cross-border travel has not gone without creating social, political and security tensions in the recipient countries. Federal Labour Office recruitment policy in the 1960s has resulted in large Turkish populations in many Germany cities. The same can be witnessed in the Saint-Denis commune in Paris, where workers from former French colonies have settled and, in many cases, failed to integrate (Body-Gendrot et al. 2000, pp. 119-120). In response to their societies becoming increasingly multiracial and multicultural, many natives turned to far-right political parties such as the National Front in France or the less organised route of civil disobedience. This sentiment is one which has come to the fore again in modern Europe in response to the increasing number of migrants from the war-torn Middle East.

The second major wave of European migration during the last century occurred following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, marking the conclusion of the Cold War. The events surrounding German reunification signified a major redrawing of European borders and the paths of migration taken by its citizens. The first major breakthrough actually happened in Hungary in 1989, when 6,500 East German tourists were allowed to pass over the Iron Curtain and into Austria (Hall et al. 2006, p. 118). This border crossing proved to be the catalyst for the fall of the Wall, beginning with the GDR Chancellor announcing that East German citizens were free to cross the border and visit West Germany. What could not be predicted was the asylum crisis that would follow such a seismic border relaxation. The concept of *Aussiedler* or 'right of return' saw upwards of 1.2 million ethnic Germans seek asylum and subsequent citizenship between the years of 1991 and 1994 (Chapin 1997, p. 24). It was becoming apparent that developed countries in Europe could no longer efficiently regulate the flow of persons across their increasingly more porous territorial boundaries. In a bid to prevent the xenophobic sentiments that were rife in the 1970s, many governments implemented policy change to halt this 'postnational' movement. In a now reunified Germany, the SPD-Green coalition began offering green cards to skilled workers in the areas of labour shortages and measures were introduced to filter out fraudulent asylum applications. These anti-migration policies served as ways of reinforcing a nation's borders and sovereignty

without the need to build physical structures (Geddes et al. 2016, p. 220).

In a world where geopolitical tension is at a post-Cold War peak, the eruption of conflict between two parties is becoming more of a certainty than a probability. As more of these conflict zones arise and individuals become better educated on them, the number of subsequent border crossings made will also increase. This idea of a nonviolent intervention across a border into a zone of conflict, again is not a new concept but rather one that has lacked a clear and concise definition in the past. The term is often used interchangeably with “nonviolent interposition” and “nonviolent unarmed peacekeeping,” although fundamentally their definitions are the same. Early classification of this kind of cross-border activity was rudimentary in the sense that it was defined by the interests of the third-party. The intervention was said to be partisan if the third-party was detached enough to seek a common solution despite identifying with the oppressed; and nonpartisan if the third-party acted as a completely neutral actor (Hare, A., et al, 1977). Advances in fields such as technology and communication has brought many more actors into play in non-violent cross-border intervention, and as such allowed for a more concise classification. The four main actors at play are elite-run organisations such as the United Nations, violent organisations acting on their own behalf or on behalf of an aggrieved group such as ISIS, nongovernmental organisations like Amnesty International and grassroots organisations. The reasoning behind cross-border movement is visualised as a spectrum of its political impact; reinforcing the existing belief system being at one end and the facilitation of social change being at the opposite end. The means by which it is conducted provide the final dimension of the classification. Was the mobilisation militarily, economically, ideologically or non-violently driven? (Moser-Puangsuwan, Y., et al, 2000)

A modern example of non-violent cross-border intervention is the work of the Balkan Peace Team-International (BPT-I) between the years 1994 and 2001. The work of the initiative was diverse and played a key role in the shaping of the geography and mobility of the post-Yugoslav nations. Unlike many previous iterations of civilian

peacekeepers, the role of the BPT-I extended far beyond acting as a buffer between the conflicting parties. The group actively worked to bring the parties together, providing a channel of independent, non-partisan information which could open the door for future dialogue (Schirch 2006, p. 39). On the ground, the third-party individuals offered services such as language classes to citizens, many of whom had been displaced by the conflict. The drawing of ‘artificial’ borders meant many groups became marginalised on the wrong side of the line. For example, the peaceful transfer of land between the newly independent Croatia and the local Serbian authorities according to the Erdut Agreement was largely made possible by the mediation of the BPT-I (Clark 2006, p. 25). Through the redrawing of borders, the mobility of local communities in the Srem-Baranja region was not hampered in the way that has manifested in many Balkan border regions. Evidence of this can be seen in the highly autonomous Republika Srpska, one of two constitutional entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is made up of over 80% ethnic Serbs. Lack of dialogue has left many communities feeling ‘trapped’, their mobility severely hindered by the InterEntity Boundary Line which creates a 4 km zone of separation between the two entities (Crampton 1996, pp. 353-361). Situations such as this show that the work of cross-border, non-violent intervention has its limitations but nonetheless has been a significant factor in the shaping of world borders and how individuals interact with them.

Limiting the word ‘border’ to a rigid, binary definition is something many are quick to do when considering their effect on how we interact with our planet. The image of a stone wall such as the one built for Hadrian is one all too familiar to the majority. When in reality, a border is something far more dynamic and often times abstract. The “invisible” boundaries which are drawn onto the physical landscape by society can often hold more power than a physical structure separating A from B. Patterns of mobility are often set out following periods of conflict, as can be seen throughout not only the European continent, but also worldwide. What may have created positive social change at one period of time has created a far more ambiguous future for those communities in constant interaction with the borders. Only time will tell whether further education on conflicts and non-violent

intervention across these borders will eventually lead to a world geography where the significance of borders will have minimal impact on the mobility of the human race.

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Countering Marginalisation and Fostering the Right to Dublin City for its Asylum Seeking Inhabitants: The Case of ‘Sanctuary Runners’ and Residents of Direct Provision in Clondalkin, Dublin

Alannah Owens

“[T]he national appropriation of ‘human rights’ – their entanglement with citizenship – has given rise to new categories of persons without rights, such as refugees, displaced and stateless persons. How are we to conceive of the rights of these people, whose number is in the millions in the world today?” President Michael D. Higgins , June 2014

“Solidarity, Friendship, Respect” Motto of the Sanctuary Runners (as seen on their trademark blue t-shirts)

1. Introduction

This study compares the everyday experience of both Direct Provision (DP) and the Sanctuary Runners movement (SR). “Direct Provision is the means by which the State seeks to meet its obligations to provide for the material needs of people seeking protection in the State.” (McMahon, 2015, p44). The Sanctuary Runners emerged in Cork City, at the Cork City marathon in 2018. They use “Parkruns” as a platform to engage both residents of direct provision centres and members of the wider public in locations throughout Ireland in weekly Saturday morning runs together. This comparison is made in order to establish: (1) whether there is evidence of the exclusions that Cities governed by a neoliberal logic have often been cited to provoke and (2) whether there is evidence of a resistance to these processes in Dublin.

This first section introduces the idea that Sanctuary Runners represent the empowerment of a right to participation and *autogestion*. Section 2 will survey on the one hand, the literature on Neoliberal Urbanism and on the other the response from the Right to the City

literature. The relevance of a cultural critique of these concepts will then be highlighted. It is into this theoretical context that the qualitative research and methods of this study will fall in Section 3. The participants in this case study were interviewed about their experience of Dublin City and Sanctuary Runners as DP residents and the results will be presented in Section 4, along with an analysis of the findings. The conclusions drawn and presented in Section 5 allude to the effectiveness of the Sanctuary Runner movement in fostering a capacity for *autogestion* or developing a sense of belonging, that is denied to residents by formal DP policy and spaces.

2. Literature Review

The theory which will help to underpin and contextualise this critical urban geography case is represented in Figure 1 below. By putting the three bodies of literature - neoliberal, right to the city and cultural urban geography- in dialogue with each other in this section, we will set the theoretical context for the methods and analysis used.

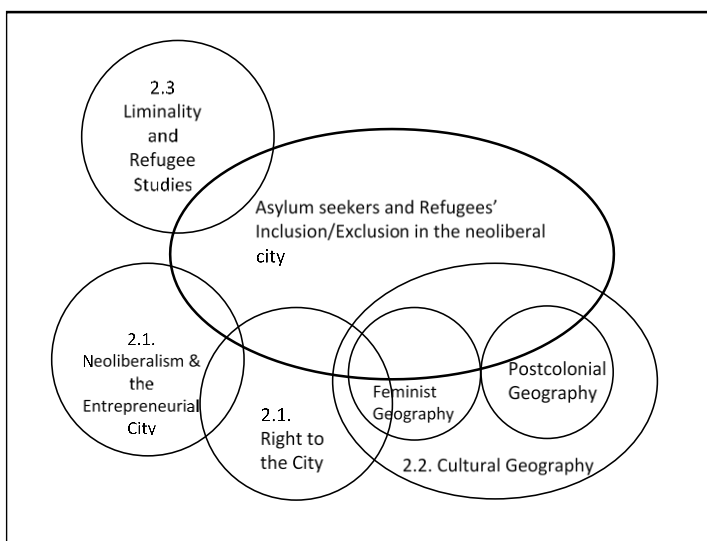


Figure 1: The Literature drawn on in this study to contextualise and inform the study of DP residents' experience of the neoliberal city and SR.

2.1 Actually Existing Neoliberalism and The Right to the City

Neoliberalism is both an ideology and a practice that has come to 'actually exist' as a consequence of widespread adoption in urban entrepreneurial practices of governments since the 1980s (Jonas, McCann and Thomas, 2015; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Ireland has had a wide and pervasive experience of neoliberalism, as has been observed in the housing sector and its current crisis (see, for example, the works of critical urban geographers such as Byrne and Norris, 2016; MacLaran and Kelly, 2014; Kitchin et al., 2012; O'Callaghan, Kelly, Boyle, and Kitchin, 2015). Bhagat (2019) has tried to fill the gap in the literature of neoliberalisation that does not take refugees into account, defining racial neoliberalisation as "an ongoing process of government downsizing and market-based regulations that actively and adversely prevent the survival of racialized poor not only on the national scale but in urban centres too" (Bhagat, 2019, p3). Her study focused on the situation in Paris.

While neoliberalism disenfranchises inhabitants, "one popular trend in response to perceived disenfranchisement [by neoliberalism in cities] has been a fascination with the idea of the 'right to the city' as a way to respond to neoliberal urbanism and better empower urban dwellers" (Purcell, 2002, p99). The right to the city and neoliberalism are an antagonistic pair. The former offers an oftentimes utopian vision of what the city and the urban can be, especially if tapped into by activism for which the seeds are often present in the urban (see Harvey, 2008, Mitchell, 2003 and Purcell, 2002).

Thus, on the flip side of neoliberalism lies theory on "The Right to the City". This concept was itself coined by Henri Lefebvre in his 1968 book "Le Droit à la Ville [the right to the city]". It emphasises agency of ordinary people in halting the erosion of the public arena by redevelopment from the private sector, and doing so in an inclusive and democratic way (Jonas, McCann and Thomas, 2015, p39). Participation in the urban and appropriation of urban space by "citadins" (Purcell, 2002; 2003) emphasises that "[w]hereas conventional enfranchisement empowers national citizens, the right to

the city empowers urban inhabitants" (Purcell, 2003, p102) to both change oneself and the city by allowing a transformative pulse to act in both directions (Harvey, 2008). The broader name that Lefebvre gave to the revolutionary and reformatory impulse to change one's present conditions was "autogestion". "Each time a social group...refuses to accept passively its conditions of existence, of life, or of survival, each time such a group forces not only to understand but to master its own conditions of existence, autogestion is occurring" (Lefebvre, 2009, p135 *in* Purcell, 2014, p148). This will become a pivotal concept in the forthcoming analysis of the role of the SR movement.

2.2 The Cultural Critique of the Right to the City

In particular, Fenster (2005, p224) responded to the concept of Right to the City with a gendered and feminist critique of the concept. What Fenster found lacking in Lefebvre's original formulation was a sensitivity to the patriarchal power relations, which themselves intersect with culture and ethnicity, and are manifest in both public and private urban scales. Narratives based on the everyday experiences of women revealed discrepancies on all three fronts that show that right to use and participate in the city varied between men and women, at multiple scales. Control and access to resources, even at the private scale, is found to be closely linked to a gendered sense of belonging that is inherently exclusionary to those who find themselves on the outside of the "boundaries of belonging" (Fenster, 2005, p229) that are constructed by the power relations.

Drawing also on postcolonial theory such as that of Simone (2008) illustrates that racial identities are understood to occupy peripheral roles (Jonas et al, 2015, p48; Roy, 2011). Ananya Roy has argued that by "worlding" themselves, migrants are agents of change in themselves and in the destinations to which they travel, and rather than remaining in the side-lines, "centre" themselves through processes of daily resistance to exclusionary neoliberal and capitalist forces (Jonas et al, 2015, p51) For Roy the processes of worlding are heterogeneous

and ambitious everyday practices can result in new realities or “worlds” (Roy, 2011, p12).

2.3 Urban Geography and the Liminality of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland

This postcolonial premise links well into the literature observing that Direct Provision residents have been made deliberately marginal by state policy that has constructed an alternative welfare provision system, DP, for those seeking asylum in the Ireland which is lacking in terms of social and economic welfare provisions (Thornton, 2014), which is unsurprising to theorists like Simone.

Liminality, meaning “threshold” in Latin and is a term originally used in anthropology to describe being “neither here nor there” (Turner, 1969, p95, in O’Reilly, 2018, p. 823). It is a common trend in the asylum and refugee experience globally (Fontanari, 2015), a consequence of the tying of citizenship to nation-states. Zoe O’Reilly (2016) has discussed at length how people in Direct Provision live out liminality in their daily lives; spatially, temporally and ontologically. The ontological category refers to “the internalized sense of being a liminal being, where an ‘in between’ existence becomes part of one’s identity and everyday lived experience” (O’Reilly, 2016, p. 839). A number of writers on DP have observed the emergence of “intimacies of exclusion”(Mountz, 2011, p382 in O’Reilly, 2016, p. 836) or what geographer Saskia Sassen (2003) has referred to as “informal citizenship” (p50). This is a belonging in a country which is not formed by official citizenship statues but rather emerges through people being present as residents in the community for extended amounts of time many years rather than the maximum of 6 months as originally intended (McMahon, 2015, p49), leaving this a ripe case for analysing the relevance of Purcell’s “citadens’ concept.

3. Methodology

Inspired especially by the work of Fenster (2005), qualitative mixed methods were used in this study (Jonas et al, 2015, p45). These

methods were chosen, because as of Elwood (2006) has assessed, “the best critical urban geography involves direct engagement with people and communities by researchers who also maintain a focus on the wider structures to which those communities are connected” (Jonas et al, 2015, p45).

3.1. Participant Observation Field research:

Firstly, Participant observation field research was used to study the Dublin Sanctuary Runners on Saturday mornings from November 2019-January 2020, at Corkagh Park, Clondalkin.

3.2. Interviews:

Secondly, four in-depth interviews were carried out by random selection of DP participants in the SRs group, which allowed for an assessment of the internalised senses of inclusion and exclusion that residents of Direct Provision involved in Sanctuary Runners may feel (see Lees, 2003). All participants were originally from the African continent, but different states, and there were variations in terms of (dis)ability, sexuality and gender. The two men, Participants A and D were interviewed separately, but the two women, Participants B and C, were interviewed together at their discretion.

4. Case Study and Analysis

The dominant theme that emerged from the four in-depth interviews was that living in Direct Provision limits the residents from integrating fully into the wider Irish community, and that consequently, they found much solace in being part of the Sanctuary Runner movement. SR offers them a way to mitigate the negative personal effects of their urban and social marginalisation in DP, as well as offering them an opportunity to be present in the Irish landscape – both physical and social.

4.1. DP as a place in the neoliberal city of marginalisation and exclusion

Throughout the interviews it emerged that DP is a source of both physical and social exclusion in neoliberal Dublin. While there was a general consensus amongst all of the interviewees that Ireland and the Irish people were generally very welcoming of foreigners, there was a sense amongst all of them that DP itself posed a barrier to integration with the domestic Irish community.

4.1.a. Physical exclusion – access/isolation

Firstly, there was a feeling that the configuration of their living arrangements posed a physical barrier to their integration. The placement of those seeking asylum in a centre that is solely for them cuts them off from the everyday interactions that inhabitants of the city would naturally have in non-institutional residential areas; neighbourhoods, housing estates, apartment blocks etc.

Participant C: Because you know living in direct provision, is just us here. And then you know, you have a few Irish people coming with some donations maybe clothes and whatever, and you have some little project and whatever, but you have the feeling that we were secluded or whatever. Because you know, if we weren't living here, we would be placed in different communities and it would be easier to kind of integrate and meet people quickly.

However, all participants acknowledged that certain factors made it easier to physically integrate into both the local community and the wider Dublin City, in Clondalkin, compared to any other DP centres around the country – a reason cited by both women for this was because of the good public transport availability – regular busses into the city centre. All of the participants expressed a preference for city life, three out of the four having grown up in cities, with participant C commenting:

I am a city girl, so like either way if I would relocate to a different country I would always want to live in a big city, because that's what I'm used to, that's where I grew up.

4.1.b. Social Exclusion – perceived stigma that results from lack of contact and integration

While social exclusion was identified by all four interviewees as being a product of living in direct provision, the exact source pointed to by each of them varied.

Participant A perceived the barrier to inclusion in Irish society as coming from a lack of public knowledge and understanding of DP.

Participant A: Yeah, yeah. Like is quite difficult, but, you know the problem eh, the Irish themselves, they don't know about Direct provision, because is like the government don't explain them about that system.

However, on the other end, Participant D, a very active and engaged in the Clondalkin and Dublin city communities felt that residents who did not integrate failed to do so out of fear on their side, which was fostered by the lack of contact between DP residents and the wider Irish community.

Participant D: Some people are scared from their health, from the Irish people, because you know, there's no integration, you know they don't know how the other people will like. "They fear because they don't know how the other person look like. Maybe they going to fight with me because I'm a foreigner. Thar's only normal that's because of the no integration.

There was agreement in the group interview between participants B and C that there is a social stigma associated with being a resident of a DP centre which makes it harder for them to establish more intimate relationships and foster senses of belonging in Dublin's urban social space with people who do not live in DP. Explaining that when they go out and are mingling with people, for example talking to guys on a

night out in the city centre, as soon as they mention that they live in DP, the guy will lose interest.

Participant C: Once you mention "I live in direct provision" they are like, they often look down, they look down on you because you live in Direct provision. I find that a lot, a lot, yeah.

Participant B: They look down at us, they say, direct provision, no.

4.2. Sanctuary Runners as a place where residents fashion a space of belonging for themselves and experience inclusion and community in the urban context

DP is inherently *not* designed to integrate asylum seekers into the community. The residents feel marginalised by the institution of DP – in centres outside Dublin they feel physically liminal, and in Clondalkin Towers feeling socially marginalised. However, despite this fact, the Clondalkin Towers residents are finding ways to create urban social space for themselves. Involvement with the Sanctuary Runners is a process through which they are finding ways to build senses of belonging.

4.2.a. Immediate community – building a strong SR social unit, a social support base – like family

Throughout the two months of participant observation, it was clear that there are people who attend more regularly from both the Clondalkin Towers DP centre and Sanctuary Runners who attend from the wider Dublin community. Three of the four interviewees in this study were such residents. One resident (Participant C) had only recently started attending, but had attended both of the weeks since she started and was interviewed. Across all of the interviewees, a sense of group attachment, commitment and identification was clear:

Participant A: The sanctuary runners is like family; always ready to support, give the bike. After parkrun, I love to sit and eating together like family.

Especially in light of a stroke that Participant B has suffered since arriving in Ireland, she thrives from the social support and encouragement and it has impacted her quality of life and access to the city. She noted the following in particular:

Participant B: I get so many friends at parkrun. Irish people, they are good to me. Ah, no. If my country, they will forget about me. If I stand, they look at me, they say "[participant B], are you well?" they come and carry me. I can't speak well, they say "[participant B], speak".

Participant C had been struggling with her mental health three months prior to this study has seen huge social benefits, that are coupled with mental and physical benefits; all of which are hampered by the prolonged experience of marginalisation under DP.

Participant C: Yes, definitely. [I]t's not just about exercising, but it's more about you know, that community, em, feel. You know, It's friendship, it's a place where people are there to encourage you. With the mental health as well, it helps , you know, to get out there do things and not focus on the negative things, you know stress and all that, so it helps too to go out and do things.

Participant D's enthusiastic commentary on his steadfast involvement with the "Dublin Devils", a men's LGBTQ+ football team in Dublin, as well as SR indicated the effectiveness that involvement in external initiatives, especially sporting ones, could enhance the daily lives of the DP residents, allow them to express and develop themselves, and also integrate and bring with them increased diversity to the social fabric of the city.

4.2.b. Contact and building intimacy with the wider Irish community

When asked whether being involved in Sanctuary Runners has been something positive for him, Participant A expressed that it had made

getting to know people both in the local and wider community easier, and the numbers and diversity of people attending from week to week make it easier and more comfortable to live daily life outside the DP centre.

Participant A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, to know more people and, eh, from there. Sometimes now you walk in the street and you see someone, they greet you, but no this time you just greet him back and you start to thinking “I know this guy” and sometimes he just say “Ah, you don’t remember me?”. I say, “no, please”. And the person L has met replies: “from parkrun, in Clondalkin”. I feeling very good, you know, because I start to know the people.

And that contact elicits positive feelings as the residents go beyond being stigmatised ‘others’ to being acquaintances, and more, between whom there is a deeper understanding and intimacy than is established when people “meet and greet in the street”. And, as was expressed in section one, people look beyond the identifying label of “Direct Provision” that they must wear.

When asked if he thought that being involved in initiatives like the SRs helps to integrate into Dublin, Participant D saw the chance that SR gives residents to have meaningful dialogue with the other participants in the runs who are not DP residents as hugely important.

Participant D: 100%! Because when you meet people, you meet Irish people, and you talk about yourself, you know how people live, and you're gonna know what kind of society you live (in) you're gonna be open. Talk to people.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the case study outlined above can be summarised as follows. Sanctuary Runners fosters a sense of inclusion which is a counterweight to the feelings of exclusion that residents of DP feel in the context of a neoliberal Dublin City. This qualitative study has given a preliminary answer to the research question that came under a right to the city framework: Do residents in Direct Provision feel

excluded from urban social life *and* does involvement in the Sanctuary Runners movement help to mitigate this effect and foster inclusion instead? There is grounds to answer yes to both parts of the question, certainly in this specific context, for these people.

Within the context of neoliberal centrifugal forces that come from a combination of state policy and market pressures, there are still refugees and asylum seekers designated to live in Dublin City (McMahon, 2015). Through the Sanctuary Runners movement, residents of the Clondalkin Towers Direct Provision Centre have been able to fashion a physical and social space for themselves in the city. Adding to the literature on the Right to the City, this study has showed the scope that a non-political social movement has to help what Lefebvre would term “citadens” who have been marginalised by the institution of Direct Provision, where they are spending prolonged periods of time, to claim rights for *autogestion* that come naturally with inhabitation in the city. This does not represent a move to self-management of the city at the level of governance, but it does represent the illustration of the Lefebvrian idea that “[t]hey are taking control of the conditions of their own existence” (Purcell, 2014, p150) and in the postcolonial sense of Roy (2011), this is one of the diverse and changing ways in which they are worlding themselves, centring themselves in space (Jonas et al, 2015, p51; Roy, 2011).

We may bear in mind, the findings of the 2015 Oireachtas Working Group Report, which indicated similar results on the limits to social integration in Direct Provision and observed that the results were similar in all parts of Ireland (see McMahon, 2015, pp.44-51). Therefore, an expansion of the Sanctuary Runner movement which started in Cork City and has gained traction in Dublin to as many centres as possible around the country – both urban and rural may be warranted and expected. This is especially the case if this everyday transformative pulse adheres to Lefebvre’s right to the city notion that the “engine of historical change is now located in the city” (Purcell, 2014, p148), not the rurality. From Cork City to Dublin and beyond, Sanctuary Runners and other such catalytic movements that foster inclusion may be valuable assets to the “new categories of persons without rights” in Ireland to which President Higgins referred to.

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Islands: A New Constructed Wilderness?

Ellen Treacy

Following Cronon's (1995) now infamous environmental paper, wilderness is a social construct and following the path laid out by the wilderness movement is all that is wrong with the modern conservation movement. Most important issue to take from Cronon's (1996) paper is that "the time has come to rethink wilderness". This may be viewed as "heretical" to many conservationists and environmentalists, however, according to others outside the science department, it is an important step. This will be discussed in this essay using an example of islands as an area of protected wilderness, and how any conservation is a human construct, a web of human and nature which cannot be untangled.

In its utmost values, wilderness is a human creation and a product of civilisation. This is true in a postmodern thinking, and it is important to separate nature and ecosystems themselves from wilderness. According to Merriam-Webster, wilderness is defined as being "a tract or region uncultivated and uninhabited by human beings", an "empty or pathless area". Foremost, this extracts humans from being a part of wilderness, which is why it is important to keep nature and wilderness as separate definitions. Humans are very much a part of nature, as all living organisms, including humans, have evolved from a common ancestor.

Wilderness was shown as a way to escape the perils of civilisation, to renew our minds with beauty, leaving the smoking, created city behind. It showed that not all of earth had been 'inhabited', that some was left to run wild, holding onto its prehistoric morals. "Civilisation, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth" and delving into the wilderness was an antidote to the symptom's disease (Cronon, 1996).

Wilderness has not always praised by society. In the 18th century, there was a dramatically different image surrounding the idea of wilderness, being described and viewed as deserted, savage, barren, a

waste area. It was the antithesis of all that was good, an area which one wouldn't venture of one's own accord. Wilderness had a biblical association, where it was easy to lose oneself in the midst of uncivilised beings. This connotation changed towards the end of the 19th century. During the Romantic period, wilderness began to be described as 'other worldly', in a positive sense of the idea. Thoreau, Muir and others likened wilderness to Eden, as it evoked emotions 'like no other'. The beauty and power of nature was seen in writing of poets and prose at the time. It was seen as 'sublime', and in an American sense it was seen as the Frontier, a place arrived at by settlers and reinvented, the "quintessential location for experiencing what is meant to be an American" (Cronon, 1996).

During the mid-1800's, National Parks began to be developed across America, seen as places of such 'wild' beauty people must travel to visit themselves, leading to the development of wilderness tourism as an industry. In 1872, Yellowstone became the first National Park in the United States, following Yosemite being awarded as a Wildland Park in 1864 (Runte, 1987). John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, was a major face in modern day wilderness preaching. He preached wilderness as 'home' to the "tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilised people" of the United States (Muir, 1900), while also excluding people from the wilderness to keep it 'pristine'.

The wilderness ideals of the romantic period are inextricably tied to the conservation movement seen across the globe in the current day. The spiritual and emotional connection to the land is still inherent, as conservation campaigns strike societies emotions with news of animals going extinct. By tying wilderness to conservation, it attaches the idea of 'pristine' nature to be protected. As written by Kareiva et. al. (2012), "conservation is failing"; the number of national parks, wilderness areas and reserves is increasingly rising, with human development restricted, but we are still losing biodiversity. Conservation is aiming to develop islands of pristine nature in a sea of urban development (Kareiva et. al., 2012), constricting humans to certain areas of the world, including facilitating the misplacement of indigenous peoples. This ecological imperialism ignores the complexities of the land it is trying to conserve, which is rooted in

cultural and ecological mazes (Pickerill, 2008). Conservation cannot promise to return the Earth to its prehistoric roots, as seen in the following case study.

An offshore islet of Mauritius, Ile aux Aigrettes is a twenty-five hectare nature reserve, currently covered in secondary-growth forest. Mauritius and its islands were colonised by Dutch, French and English consecutively (Boswell, 2005), and each of these exploited the islands for their resources, leading to environmental degradation. The Dutch were the first to enthusiastically partake in the activities of extraction and exploitation of natural resources on the islands; cutting forests, exporting ebony and introducing non-native species which caused destruction to the native flora and fauna (Cheke & Hume, 2008). This continued with the following colonisers, leading to many species going extinct due to habitat loss and invasive species (Krieg, 2018).

Islands, due to their relative isolation and limited size, have a high rating on the biodiversity scale (Campbell, 2015), and usually these are endemic species, having evolved to suit the criteria of niches and abiotic factors on the island. Historically, they have been areas of scientific marvel and museums of nature during their colonisation (DeLoughrey, 2007). They are ahistorical paradises (Krieg, 2018), which are seen as still being temporally premodern, and lacking in human development (Hennessey and McCleary, 2011). Today, islands are viewed as places to be protected from human interference, a new perception of the American wilderness.

Islands are relatively closed systems, with water being the ‘permeable boundary’ surrounding them, meaning it is difficult for flora and fauna to migrate (Krieg, 2018), leading to higher genetic diversity within species, and high occurrence of speciation events on the island. In the Anthropocene, islands have added flows of connectivity to the mainland which did not occur in the Holocene and previous epochs. Processes such as global warming, pollution, sea level rise and green-house gas emissions permeate these natural boundaries, causing detrimental effects to these so-called areas of ‘pristine wilderness’. Humans have moved species into these isolated systems, either accidentally or purposefully; moving as ‘blind

passengers' on anthropogenic vectors or being introduced with intention to the ecosystem.

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) founded a restoration programme on Ile aux Aigrettes, designating the island as a nature reserve. The aim was to reinstate the 'wilderness' found on the island 400 years ago, before human invasion during colonial rule. As primary growth had been removed during colonisation, the MWF replanted what would have been the original forest species 30 years ago. The forest has been restored to 98% cover, and this has aided the ecosystem enough to bring many species back from the brink of extinction (Krieg, 2018). It has been proposed to be kept isolated, with movement to and from the island being monitored closely. This theory of isolation is not true in practise, as there is selective human and nonhuman mobility. The fluid movement of people, technology and ideas is essential for this project to be carried out, with scientists being allowed on the island with a permit, and groups of ecotourists regularly visit the island. There is also mobility which cannot be controlled; oceans being the main driver of this, controlled by nonhuman forcing's of solar insolation and ocean currents. This carries species to the island in the form of seeds, and by acting as a food resource. Birds are also impossible to control as a migratory class of animals. The non-native Asian musk shrew regularly stops on Ile aux Aigrettes (Krieg, 2018).

However, the even as MFW say the island is presently as it was before human activity, it is full of anthropogenic forcing's. Non-native species, such as the Aladabra giant turtle, have been introduced. The giant turtles have established themselves on the island, fitting into the food web, and have a positive influence on grazing and seed dispersal (Krieg, 2018). Hands on work occurs by scientists and volunteers on the island to control the ecosystem, carrying out activities such as weeding, capturing and killing of 'unwanted' species. Therefore, even though it is said to be an island restored to ahistoric times, there is no way to untangle humans from this 'isolated' nature, as they have created it and are still managing it.

How can the island be restored to its original prehistoric state when there are no biological records of species which were native to the island? Some species would have gone extinct before being noted, and others are unknown. According to MFW, even though their main statement of progress in the project is restoration to pre-human times, they are aiming to rebuild food chains and populations, and create an island which is more resilient to invasion. Resilience, naturalness and survival are key to MFW. But the idea of ‘pristine’ is used as a baseline to measure degradation, which is a fallacy, as there is no current ‘pristine’ nature to measure from (Collard et. al., 2015).

The wilderness and nature on Ile aux Aigrettes is entirely concocted by humans. The view of the island being isolated spatially and temporally drives the central dogma of the restoration project, but it is not isolated per say, as analysed above. The production of ‘pristine’ nature and wilderness on this island is reliant on global connections and flows (Kreig, 2018). There is an ignorance and erasure of the human interference, this island is not natural, it is created completely by human hands. The work on the island should be honoured, as it is incredibly important to preserve biodiversity for the future good of the planet, but it is dangerous to view nature as being separate from humans. Our history is tied to nature, we evolved from the same common ancestor, and without nature, none of our developments would be possible.

The wilderness perceived in islands resonated with the discourse found in Cronon (1996) and other critics of wilderness, such as Descola (2013). There is a new hybridity and entanglement to natural spaces (Descola, 2013), which hasn’t been seen historically in ecosystem. Conservationists view nature, especially when looking at islands, as being ‘other’, outside of modernity, areas of paradise and authenticity to be protected (Kreig, 2018). The island is different to mainland Mauritius, which is filled with modern infrastructure and cultural spaces, but is this due to the protection put on it?

Two islands emerge in this study; a biodiverse island and a ‘pristine’ island. Biodiversity has taken over the nativity of the land (Kreig, 2018), but can this land still be viewed as ‘pristine’, as it contains natural environments? A third could emerge; the

‘hyperobjective’ island. This island is located in the present, the Anthropocene, and is a product of its time. Morton (2013) has credited the Anthropocene as a time of hyperobjects (Krieg, 2018). The invasive species, non-native species and the conservationists of the Ile aux Aigrettes are hyperobjects, added to the landscape in modern times.

There is a paradox to wilderness thinking that needs to be assessed by conservationists following from the romantic vision of the movement. Wilderness embodies a dualistic vision of humanity and nature, viewing human as being entirely outside of nature (Cronon, 1996), when in fact the species cannot be. Wilderness is seen as a way to evade our current urban way of life, and by protecting areas of land we view as ‘other’ and far away from reality and implies a crude conflict between the human and the nonhuman. By denoting something as wilderness and choosing areas such as Ile aux Aigrettes to protect, there is a notion of belief that nature without humans is more valuable than nature with humans (Kareiva et. al., 2012). The standards for what is ‘natural’ are too high, and are based on ecosystems which belong in other epochs, before humans.

Going forward, the dangerous dualism of wilderness and society needs to be disentangled. The emerging theme of neoliberalism and post naturalism in conservation should be disregarded, and issues such as environmentalism of the poor, slow violence and sustainability need to be addressed when designating areas as reserves. “By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves for the homes we actually inhabit” (Cronon, 1996). Environmentalism and conservation focus on preserving areas of ‘wilderness’ far from our actual, urban homes, and lead to excusion of polluting activities and destruction of nature in urban areas.

The nature in the urban and developed world should not be considered less than then the nature in so called ‘wilderness’. In a world which is fast becoming covered in concrete, there is no reason to distinguish the protection needed for all natural beings, and there is the requirement to see all humans as natural, wild beings alongside plants and animals.

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The Hermitage and Alice and Gwendoline Cave Discoveries - Reassessing our understanding of the Irish Mesolithic Period

Molly Fergus

Recent discoveries at the Alice and Gwendoline caves county Clare and Hermitage county Limerick have altered our perception of the Mesolithic period and Ireland's first settlers. The Mesolithic period refers to the period preceding the onset of agricultural practices, and is understood to have begun in Ireland from circa 9,800-8,400 BP (Woodman, 1986). It has been commonly contended that human colonisation occurred in Ireland from circa 7700 BC onwards (Woodman, 2015), yet the discovery of a bear patella exhibiting human cut-marks located in the Alice and Gwendoline caves dating to 10,290-9,790 cal BP provides reasoning for reconsideration of this previous perception of colonisation. In conjunction with the findings of the Hermitage site, dating to 9,480-9,270 cal BP; which consist of three burial pits containing cremated human remains and grave goods consisting of a range of flint tools including a polished flint adze-head, these discoveries have granted enhanced insight into numerous aspects of the Mesolithic period - ranging from biota assemblages to belief systems. This essay discusses the ramifications of these discoveries on our understanding of the Mesolithic period; the Alice and Gwendoline cave discoveries give an indication of human activity in Ireland 2500 cal BP earlier than previously thought, and provides insight into a population capable of withstanding glacial conditions. Additionally, the evidence of human activity from as early as 12,800-12,600 cal BP, introduces the possibility of human influence on the colonisation patterns of species in the Irish Mesolithic environment. The Hermitage excavations contribute to this understanding of the Mesolithic by shedding light on the societal structure and belief systems of the Early

Mesolithic people, while exhibiting their sophisticated technological abilities which contrasts sharply to the lithics of the Later Mesolithic period. While these discoveries may lack the same degree of contextual support as later sites such as Mount Sandal. (Woodman, 1986), the significance of the findings of Hermitage and the Alice and Gwendoline caves are substantiated by the use of sophisticated modern carbon-dating technologies, and importantly behave as a primitive step to enhancing our understanding of Ireland's first settlers and the Mesolithic period and a cause for questioning previous assumptions of this era.

Dating to circa 12,800-12,600 cal BP, inferences made from the discovery of a humanly-modified bear patella in the Alice and Gwendoline caves push back the date of human footfall to Ireland by 2500 cal BP and alters our interpretation of the later sites as the first example of human activity in Ireland (Dowd and Carden, 2015). Prior to these discoveries, the hunter-gatherer Mount Sandel site dating from circa 7700 BC was regarded as providing the earliest unequivocal traces of human activity in Ireland (Bayliss and Woodman, 2009). Yet due to the favorable environmental conditions in Ireland (Woodman, 1985), in addition to substantive evidence of Palaeolithic settlements located in proximity to the island, for example; Iberia (Birks et al., 2015) and Scotland (Mithen et al., 2015), the suggestion that colonisation in Ireland took place as late as indicated by the Mount Sandel discovery has been deemed improbable by those such as Woodman (1986). This grants greater contextual support for the evidence of earlier human activity from the Alice and Gwendoline caves. The radiocarbon dating of three brown bear bones located within the caves, two of which have been humanly modified by cut marks, gives calibrated dates of circa 12,800 - 12,600 cal BP, undermines the contention that colonisation occurred in Ireland following the flooding of land bridges to Britain circa

6,000 cal BP (Woodman, 2015) (Dowd and Carden, 2015). The dating of the humanly modified bear patella is supported by robust AMS dating from two independent laboratories, and analysis suggests that the bear patella was not transported into the cave by natural processes possibly from another location, but indicates that human activity took place within the cave (Dowd and Carden, 2015). Bone diagenesis indicates that the cut marks were made on fresh bone, and that the lacerations were a result of a lithic tool, possibly made of flint (Dowd and Carden, 2015). Yet while analysis of the bear patella, both in terms of its dating and its human modification, provides substantive evidence of human presence in the northeast of the country, the isolation of the Alice and Gwendoline caves discoveries impedes greater investigation into the first settlers to the country and the nature of their settlement. Much of the surviving artefacts and ecofacts from the Alice and Gwendoline caves is nondiagnostic and the initial excavation took place in 1903, during this time a number of initial undated discoveries were misplaced and others possibly overlooked (Dowd and Carden, 2015). Yet similar discoveries in BallyBoran Bog, Co. Cork of a human modified deer antler piece associated with the Early Mesolithic (Tierney et al., 2013) has already provided support for the discoveries made in the county Clare site. Thus while Dowd and Carden (2015) contend that these are indicative of Paleolithic human activity in Ireland, it is evident that additional evidence beyond this isolated biofact is required before substantiating this claim. The Alice and Gwendoline discoveries are significant in the fact that they push human colonisation to Ireland back by 2,500 cal BP, and indicate the need for sourcing of evidence dating to the time-frame between this Ice Age population, and the later Mesolithic settlements such as Mount Sandel.

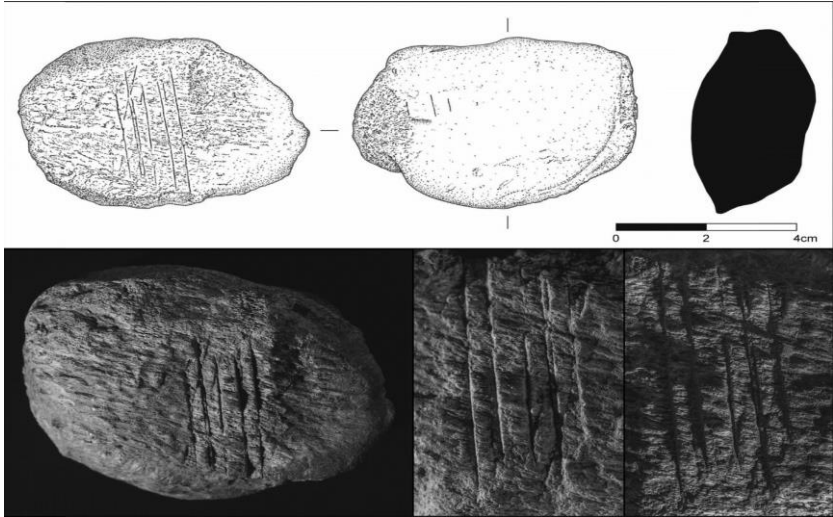


Fig 1. Humanly modified bear bone from the Alice and Gwendoline cave site. (Source: Dowd and Carden, 2015)

This new evidence of human activity in Ireland provided by the Alice and Gwendoline cave discoveries has contributed to our understanding of the potential sources of Mesolithic species assemblages in Ireland, raising the possibility of human-mediated introductions of certain biota into the country from as early as 12,800-12,600 cal BP onwards (Dowd and Carden, 2015). The question of where Ireland attained its biota is complicated by its geographical position as an outlying island in the West of Europe (Carden et al., 2012). Due to its proximity to Britain, it would be within reason to assume that Ireland would share similar biota to Britain, yet there are numerous species that exhibit origins from continental Europe that have been suggested to have been transported by humans (Reich et al., 2015) (Grindon and Davison, 2013). The recent discoveries of human-modified brown bear bones in the Alice and Gwendoline has strengthened the contention held by Corbet (1961) that Early Mesolithic human colonisation of Ireland may have contributed to the

country's distinct terrestrial fauna following the Last Glacial Maximum (Mascheretti et al., 2003). Previous research by Corbet (1961) suggests that aspects of Ireland's terrestrial fauna, namely the 'Lusitania element', are best explained by unintentional human transport. The evidence of human activity in Ireland provided by the Alice and Gwendoline discoveries indicates that investigation of the origins of the Mesolithic species assemblages, warrants consideration of a human influence. For instance, the disappearance of certain deer in Ireland can be dated to the same period human activity was inferred from the Alice and Gwendoline cave discoveries (Dowd and Carden, 2015). While speculative, Montgomery et al. (2014) have noted reasonings for human transportation of biota to Ireland, could have been resource driven, cultural or purely accidental. The earliest evidence of human activity in Ireland inferred from the findings in the Alice and Gwendoline caves alters our understanding of the origins of the biota that inhabited Ireland during the Mesolithic period, by introducing the possibility of anthropogenic influences on the formation of Ireland's unique species assemblages.

The discovery of cremated remains dating to the Early Mesolithic period in Hermitage has further contributed to our understanding of Ireland's first settlers; analysis of the cremated remains and accompanying objects have provided enhanced insight into the social practices of these Early Mesolithic settlers and indicate that funerary rites during this period were more complex than originally perceived (Little et al., 2016). The Hermitage discoveries, dating to 9,480-9,270 cal BP, present the first recorded evidence of human burial in Ireland. While single-event inhumations are traditionally perceived to characterise Mesolithic burials within the European context (Little et al., 2016), the Hermitage discoveries join a growing list of evidence of Mesolithic cremations in Europe; including sites in the Netherlands (Arts and Hoogland, 1987), Greece (Cullen, 1995) and Britain

(Gilmour and Loe, 2015). Yet the Hermitage site maintains particular notoriety within the European context due to the sophistication of its cremation and the complexity of the funerary process Little et al., 2016). Analysis of the human remains found in pit A indicate that the body was expertly cremated at extremely high temperatures (Collins, 2009). Microwear analysis of a polished stone adze head suggests that the artefact was used specifically made for the burial and used briefly, possibly to fell the tree used to construct the grave marker that was located beside the pit, before being buried with the remains (Collins and Coyne, 2003). The commissioning and subsequent decommissioning of this complex object gives enhanced insight into the mortuary rites of the Early Mesolithic period, while previous Mesolithic research has viewed grave goods as belonging to the deceased (Brinch Peterson 2015), the blunting of the adze can be alternatively interpreted as forming part of the mortuary rites, behaving as a symbolic closure of the paths between the world of the living and the dead (Hodder, 2011). While this analysis is speculative in nature, the Hermitage findings can be viewed as giving an insight into a more complex Mesolithic belief system than originally known. Additionally, the length of time that would be required to prepare the adze and perform the cremation suggests that those buried held a prominent position in society. Thus it can be argued that the findings at Hermitage not only gives an indication of a hierarchical society with complex funerary practices and belief systems in Ireland, but the site's early dating contributes to a broader understanding of sophisticated Mesolithic belief systems in Ireland.



Fig. 2. Hermitage site Pit A assemblage: large polished shale adze, flint microlith and microblade. (Source: Little et al. 2016).

The polished flint adze uncovered at the Hermitage site not only grants insight into Mesolithic funerary rites, but has a notable technological significance for the Mesolithic period. Polished stone axes have traditionally been included within the ‘Neolithic package’ of particular cultures and materials seen to have been suggestive of an agricultural society (Cooney, 2015). Yet even prior to the discoveries made at Hermitage, this periodic inclusion of polished stone adzes within the Neolithic has been called into speculation by discoveries made in Ireland and Europe (Little et al., 2016). Yet the secure dating of the Hermitage adze; the congruence of the two radiocarbon chronologies and the stratigraphically secure setting of the object, mean that the Hermitage adze behaves as the earliest and most definitive example of polished stone axe making in the European context. Neither the Scandinavian Maglemosian examples of polished adze-making (Sorensen and Casati, 2010), nor the sole British example found in Nab Head, Wales (David, 1989), exhibit the same sophistication of polishing or refined radiocarbon dating as the

Hermitage artefact. From an Irish perspective, evidence of Early Mesolithic polished adze making already exists from the Mount Sandel and Lough Boora excavations, although at a later, and more contested date (Little et al., 2016). Yet the sophisticated microlithic technology evident from analysis of the Hermitage adze exemplifies the contrasts between Early Irish Mesolithic microlithic technologies and the more rudimentary macrolith tools that characterised the late Irish Mesolithic. (Woodman, 1985) (Costa et al., 2005). It can therefore be argued that not only did the discoveries at Hermitage represent one of the earliest examples of polished axes in Europe, within an Irish context it represents the onset of axe polishing as a technological practice as earlier than previously believed. The discoveries grant insight into an Early Mesolithic community of advanced technical capabilities, highlighting the disparities between the material culture of the Early and Late Irish mesolithic.

Not only have discoveries made at Hermitage and the Alice and Gwendoline caves provided the earliest examples of human activity in Ireland, they have called into question our previous understanding of the Mesolithic in both an Irish and European context. The Alice and Gwendoline findings have pushed back the date of human footfall in Ireland to the Younger Dryas period (Dowd and Carden, 2015)., and while this well dated yet isolated biofact is not substantial enough to confirm Paleolithic presence in Ireland as of yet, it highlights the need for further investigation in this area utilising contemporary radio-carbon technologies, and shifts our previous understanding of the Mesolithic as characterised by human colonisation 2,500 cal BP years later. Additionally, the Alice and Gwendoline cave findings introduce the possibility of human mediated introduction of the species that inhabited Ireland during this period (Dowd and Carden, 2015). Hermitage offers enhanced insight into the settlers of the Early Mesolithic, providing evidence of a more sophisticated belief system

and technological practices than originally thought, that holds significance not only within Ireland, but for the wider European Mesolithic period (Little et al. 2016). Most importantly, these recent findings have caused notable reconsiderations of our previous perception of Ireland's first inhabitants, and while there is uncertainty regarding the significance of these discoveries, they behave as a primitive step to grasping the complex development of human settlement patterns in Ireland and highlight the vital importance of continued investigation of the Mesolithic period in Ireland.

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Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts of the Ready Made Garment Industry (RMG) in Bangladesh.

Lisa Fay

Introduction

This essay will explore the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Ready Made Garment (RMG) industries in Bangladesh. To do so, a Marxist political economy will be employed to explore the consequences of global trade on these processes. The current economic, environmental and social climate in Bangladesh are very much interconnected. Therefore, a theory is needed to effectively explore their interwoven relationship and their interactions with one another. Political Ecology is a sufficient example of a theory which attempts to explain the workings of these processes and their interplay. Political ecology operates as a branch of knowledge, rooted in political economy and cultural studies and is therefore useful when exploring connections between the society of Bangladesh and its natural world (Keil et al, 1998, p1).

The economy of Bangladesh has grown substantially under a capitalist mode of governance over the past three decades, particularly evident when examining growth trends in GDP. In 1972, the recorded GDP of the Bangladeshi economy stood at \$6,29 billion. In 2014, the GDP jumped substantially to 173.8 billion (WTO, 2018). However, this continued accumulation of capital and continuous demand for product for export has placed pressure on both nature and society (Robbins, 2012).

The Economy of Bangladesh is heavily reliant on their export oriented industries, 75% of which is made up of garments (Kabir et al., 2016). This reliance on western consumer demand for product has led to the extreme exploitation of women within this industry, as they are forced to produce copious amounts of clothing within limited time, in factories that have been referred to as “prison houses of labour” (Prashad, 2013). This profound impact on women is the most pressing *social* consequence this essay will explore.

Marx believed the accumulation of capital required the exploitation of land and labour, which is particularly evident when we look at the *environment* of Bangladesh. He believed social organization to be rooted in social production, and therefore can be explained by how we use nature (Robbins, 2012). Demand for clothing, leads to demand for capital.

The continued accumulation of capital has led to transformations of the natural environment. The most pressing issue at hand, is the contamination of natural water systems in the surrounding area of Dhaka (Alom, 2016). Textile dyeing effluents have been discharged directly into The Shitalakya river, which has directly impacted marine and aquatic life within this river, and has indirectly influenced the health of habitants in nearby villages (Kabir et al., 2016).

Political Ecology

The study of political ecology is diverse in nature and therefore lends itself to multiple definitions (Bebbington, 2015). In short, political ecology assesses the links between society and environmental change (Forsyth, 2003). It can also be defined as a more specific analysis of Marxist debates about justice, materialism, nature and capitalism (Lipietz, 2000), This theory, therefore is very useful when examining social and political processes in Dhaka and its influence on the surrounding natural environment.

The definition of political ecology, I believe to be most applicable to the study of Bangladesh, is the one produced by Creswell in 2013. He believed political ecology to be “A body of work that focuses on the connections between environmental change on the one hand, and social, economic and political systems on the other” (Creswell, 2013, p. 280). His understanding of the theory has enabled the exploration into important issues regarding industrialisation and its impact on the uneven distribution of natural resources, very much prevalent in peripheral capitalism dependant countries (Romanova, 2010, p.2).

There are nine critical tools in the Study of Political Ecology built upon by Robbins (2012) in his book. The nine include, “Common

property Theory”, “Marxist Political Economy”, “Dependency Theory”, “Peasant studies”, “Critical Environmental History”, “Foucault’s Power and Knowledge Thesis”, “Urban Metabolism”, “Feminist Development Studies” and “Environmental Justice” (Robbins, 2012). All nine of these critical tools comprise a robust tool kit required to tackle current socially induced complex environmental issues, from the over exploitation of available resources to the deforestation of trees in woodland areas, to the construction of oil pipelines in coastal areas (Ingalls & Stedman, 2016).

It is of key importance to differentiate between apolitical ecology and political ecology. Political ecology arguably represents an alternative to apolitical ecology, that being it operates from a universal set of assumptions and that it employs consistent explanations and arguments (Robbins, 2012). In relation to Bangladesh, Sanyal, (2006), believe their current environmental issues affect both human and non-human environments. Such issues have been previously examined using non-Malthusian, neo colonial and most importantly apolitical approaches. Taking a political ecological approach for the study of contemporary social and environmental issues in Bangladesh, provides a holistic framework, under which their environmental governance can improve (Keil et al., 1998).

Three key fundamental assumptions have been devised, that have aided its development and subsequent consolidation (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). The first being, the assumption that alterations in the natural environment are not homogenous and are characterised by an unequal distribution of costs and benefits (Bebbington, 2015). Transformations of the natural environment are not uniform in manner, they vary in time and place. This is of particular relevance when we look at the degradation of surrounding rivers in the industrial city of Dhaka, a consequence of global trade. The second key assumption, is that these alterations effect both the economic and social status quo of a region. The third being that pre-existing inequalities are re-enforced, particularly evident when the explore the role of women within RMG industries (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). These key assumptions have enabled political ecology to contribute to environmental governance and has also led to the understanding of the decisions made about the

natural world in the context of both its social and political environment (Keil et al, 1998).

A structuralist approach was taken to the study of political ecology in its nuisance stages in the 70's and 80's. This approach maintained the importance of ecology, in contrast to post structuralist approach which places importance on the politics (Walker, 2005). Philosophers in the 18th century such as Karl Marx, Adam Smith, and Thomas Malthus, made efforts to explain connections between economic production and political action (Ritzer, 2008). The political economy of Karl Marx has been interpreted and built upon by political ecologists to address causal relations between society, economy and the environment.

Marxist Political Economy

Karl Marx (1818-1883), was a German philosopher, sociologist, economist and political theorist. Marx believed the accumulation of capital shapes a society and its social system (Creswell, 2013). His evolutionary model perpetuated the belief that production should be free and creative, which throughout the passing of time evolves to become more and more coerced and de-humanised, an occurrence very much evident in industrialised Bangladesh (Marx, 1867). Through this approach, Marx predicted great tension and struggle would ensue, with inevitable consequences such as self-destruction and a replacement of a new social structure and order (Robbins, 2012). He believed the working class would become "class conscious". Aware of their exploitation and the discrimination against them, they would rise up against the Bourgeoisie, those who control the means of production, and a classless society would emerge. In simple terms, Marx believed, society would progress through several stages: from feudalism, to capitalism and eventually to communism (Creswell, 2013: 127).

In order to understand fully the relationship between forces and relations of production, we must take into account his ideological superstructure, consisting of the base and its superstructure (Harman, 1986). Within production there is a relationship between both forces

and relations. This correspondence appears to be one where the forces of production are primary, the relations of production are determined by the forces, and they themselves determine the super structure (Bottomore,1985). Therefore, the economic base determines culture, institutions and power structures (Creswell, 2013: 127). As said by Marx, *“In the social production of their lives men enter into relations that are specific, necessary and independent of their will... The totality of these relations of production forms economic structure of society, the real basis from which rises a legal and political superstructure”* (Marx, 1896: 159-160).

A key concept built upon by geographers David Harvey and Neil Smith is that crisis is integral to capitalism. In terms of space and place, uneven development is a key component and consequence of capitalism (Smith, 1991). Capitalism tells the story of both winners and losers, those who benefit and those who derive the negatives of a starkly greedy system. The study of political ecology accepts the idea that costs and benefits are distributed unequally, which inevitably reinforces both social and economic inequalities (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). Four million women in 5,000 factories across Dhaka produce garments for export, while avid western shoppers enjoy the fruits of this labour (Islam et al, 2013). As said by Moltoch (2002:677), *“goods contain – in the details of their fabrication and outcome, the places of their origin”*. The labels stitched on garments are the only indicator of their origin. This discrepancy in product and place is of obvious importance when taking a Marxist approach to study of Bangladesh, considering they are the second largest garment exporters in the world (Islam et al, 2013).

Historical Materialism is a methodological approach enabling investigations into the relationship between nature and society. It allows for the possibility that there is a deeper reality to than the world of appearances (Creswell, 2013). It asserts the belief that capital accumulation requires extraction from both the land and labour. As countries become more and more industrialised and the demand for capital grows, this extraction will intensify (Robbins, 2012). Capitalist squeeze resources from both society and the environment, however underinvest the restorations needed to restore any degradation,

particularly evident when we look at the lack of pure, clean water in Bangladesh. Marxist theory, believes humans are confronted by nature, and transform it, through their labour in an attempt to survive (Creswell, 2013). Robbins (2012), believes that the rate of extraction from nature will always be greater than restorations required to rectify damages.

Three core concepts have been taken from Historical Materialism, which have been utilised in the study of Political ecology (Robbins, 2012). The first being, that social and cultural relations are rooted in economic interactions between people and systems. The second core concept, is that social and environmental stress occurs, as extractive regimes are employed. As western consumer demand grows and intensifies, more pressure is placed on the RMG industries to produce garments. This has inevitable consequences on those who produce clothes and the natural resources they exploit to meet demands (Robbins, 2012). The third concept asserts the belief that through this continued articulation between core and peripheral countries, dependencies and contradictions emerge.

The current Bangladeshi economy is reliant upon more vibrant economies and has a history of dependency and reliance on others dating back to pre-colonial times (Robbins, 2012). Bangladesh was a member of the British Commonwealth, then comprised East Pakistan and is only Bangladesh as we know it, as of 1971. Global trade highlights how developing countries like Bangladesh become tied to the fortunes of exploitative developed nations (Creswell, 2013). Another key component of this third concept is the development of contradictions. As capital continues to accumulate barriers to growth will eventually develop, which can lead to the fracture and collapse of the system (Robbins, 2012).

David Harvey argued that current industry “*is both the crowning glory of past capitalist development and a prison that inhibits the further progress of accumulation*” (Harvey, 1996: 610). The power of the contradiction that emerges between forces and relations act as the motor of history (Bottomore, 1985). Barriers to growth will be examined later in this essay, as we explore the revolt of women in factories in Dhaka.

Ingalls & Stedman, (2016) believe that socially induced changes in the environment bring awareness to the vulnerability of contemporary governance regimes as they attempt to manage complex issues. In the current context of Bangladesh, we can assume Marx believed their social, and economic standing to be unstable and its collapse inevitable.

The RMG and Textile Industries in Bangladesh

Today, The RMG industry is one of the most highly competitive manufacturing sectors in the world (Islam et al, 2013). The fashion export-oriented sector in Bangladesh started as a small non-traditional sector of export in the late 1970's (Islam et al, 2013). Bangladesh has the most free market orientated economies in South Asia, and has a low wage, non-unionised, female work force, making it extremely attractive for corporations to set up here (Abdin, 2016). Export oriented Industry developed rapidly, with garments soon comprising 80% of total exports (Islam et al, 2013). Large fashion corporations such as Inditex, Zara, Primark, Wal-Mart, and The Gap, all have factories sent up in the Industrial heart of Dhaka. These fashion houses do not want to invest in factories, and therefore, employ sub-contractors, who offer very narrow margins for profit, producing copious amounts of clothing in limited time (Ayles, 2014). This has enabled prominent fashion house to deny culpability for the exploitation of women and the surrounding environment. Consultancy firm McKinsey and company estimate that garment exports could double in the next 10 years, as industry continues to grow (Islam et al., 2013).

Economic Impacts

The readymade garments (RMG) sector is one of the most significant strengths of the economy of Bangladesh (Hasan et al, 2018). The RMG and textile industry also accounts for 16% of National GDP and is a principal source of foreign exchange earnings (WTO, 2018). It achieved its highest ever GDP growth in the 2017-2018 fiscal year,

hitting 7.8%. Per Capita income has also increased significantly, and now averages at \$1,751 (WTO, 2018). This can be attributed to the continued growth of RMG industries in Dhaka, which has an estimated worth of \$28.14 billion (Textiles Intelligence, 2003). This continued development has enabled female economic empowerment, employing over 4 million women within 5,000 industries located in the city (Atiqur, 2015). Despite their mal-treatment within the industry, an occurrence explored later on in this essay, many believe this industry has alleviated poverty and provided employment and an economic standing for women who would otherwise be confined to work within the home, or in less desirable industries (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2004).

The phasing out of the Multi Fibre agreement in 2005, enabled this rapid development, particularly evident when examining growth trends in GDP. The Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA) was a multinational trade agreement, placing quotas and tariffs on the amount of clothing and textiles developing countries could export to developed countries. The end of such an agreement, created a wave of uncertainty and panic, increasing global competition and eliminating any guarantee of access into key developed countries (Ragoobar & Ayrga, 2012). It was estimated that Bangladeshi exports could drop by 20%, potentially losing 13% of their female workforce. However, in post MFA era, export value has accelerated to 176.5% (Ahmed, 2012). This surprising stability can be attributed to the development of the new “Lean Manufacturing System”, which enabled the industry to produce clothing of a higher quality, at a lower price, and within a shorter time frame (Manufacturing Research Alliance, 2005). The main aim of Lean production is to increase productivity and manufacturing cycle time and eliminate any value added waste. To eliminate this waste, improvements in the entire value chain in the organisation is required. These improvements enable the continuous flow of product through rearrangements and control mechanisms (Russell, & Taylor, 1999). This is accurately reflected in GDP growth trends, jumping from \$70,921 billion in 2005, to \$274.11 billion in 2018 (WTO, 2018). However, vibrant economies have within them the seeds of ecological and social crisis (Robbins, 2012). Continued and intensifying development leads to more and more demands on both these women

and of the natural resources required to produce clothing. This has both adverse effects on the women who enable these means of production and on the natural environment they exploit to accumulate capital (Robbins, 2012).

Social Impacts

Greater autonomy and freedom is a privilege of the wealthy women and a necessity of those very poor. Extreme flooding, a result of global warming has forced impoverished rural women to migrate to Dhaka and work in sectors such as the RMG and textile industries (Faruky et al, 2011). When analysing the RMG industries, it becomes clear that women are more impacted by the current state of affairs in Bangladesh than men are (Rhaman & Islam, 2013). They are doubly oppressed by social, economic and environmental processes, particularly evident when exploring their role within industry (Nagel, 2012). This is an example of the application of the third assumption of Political Ecology, that being preexisting inequalities are re-in forced (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). These women earn 57% of a man's earnings, despite undertaking more menial work (Muhammad, 2011). "Women cut, sew and clean what men design; women operate machines that men service, women work on the factory floor whilst men stand guard" (Evans, 2017: 4). They receive a monthly wage of 45 taka, the equivalent of €62, however, basic living costs amount to €104, implying many of these women are living below the poverty line (Muhammad, 2011).

Factory owners take advantage of their relative disadvantage that being their social and economic subordination, their docility, and low bargaining power (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2004). These rural women have been living in patriarchal and male dominated families, where they have little self-autonomy and freedom to make self-determined decisions (Ahmed, 2004). With only a small but growing percentage of women in trade unions, their rights as both workers and women are not being protected, and thus they are easily manipulated (Ahmed, 2004). A recent comic relief campaign was headed by the Spice Girls, with an aim to "champion gender equality". T-shirts were produced to

encourage and celebrate female economic empowerment. Despite, gender equality being at the forefront of the campaign, the women producing these garments, were in fact earning just 35p an hour, in what has been described as “inhumane conditions” (The Guardian, 2019). The irony of this case is perhaps indicative of just how complex the global supply chain can become, and how the rights of these women can become lost in translation, in a web that is becoming more and more intrinsic (The Guardian, 2019).

A key concept of materialism is that, as demand for capital intensifies so does the exploitation of labour. Having just examined the economy of Bangladesh it’s accurate to assume, that their continued development leads to added pressure on these women. As more and more incidents, from the Rhana Plaza complex collapse to the more recent example of the spice girls come to light, political and social movements are gaining prominence (The Guardian, 2019). Today, an estimated 200,000 women are now members of Trade Unions, protesting on streets, demanding better conditions of work and fair wages (Evans, 2017). *“If the working class has conquered power, it is under the necessity of struggling against the capitalist governments of other countries, as well as against the remnants of counterrevolution at home”* (Bukharin, 1926: 2). These women are protesting on the streets of Dhaka, fighting against not only local forces of exploitation in factories, but also against the intrinsically complex phenomena of global trade and fast fashion. The latter being referred to by Sombart as “capitalism’s favourite child” (Kawamura, 2004 p. 5). Compelled by the imperative of low labour costs, the garment factory owners are ever vigilant to the threat of unionisation (Ahmed, 2004). Clothing companies in Bangladesh are extremely hostile towards recognition of workers’ union rights, (Iqbal, 2008). In a recent report by RTE, 5,000 women lost their jobs over recent protest, demanding better pay (RTE, 2019). A total of

4,000 factories have been on strike and sixteen burnt down by protesters in recent years (Iqbal, 2008). Taking a Marxist approach to recent events, it can be argued that these women are becoming ‘class conscious’, aware of their maltreatment and are beginning to question the authority which governs them. These protests can be considered as

barriers to growth, with many Marxists believing such occurrences can lead to the weakening and subsequent fall of capitalism (Robbins, 2012). Karl Marx wrote in 1859, *“at a certain stage of their development ...forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production ... initiating social revolution”* (Marx, 1859:12). As social theorist, James Coleman (1997), argues, changing values at an individual level, impacts aggregate behaviour. Through this new context under which social action takes place, accumulative aggression leads to revolution and subsequent social change.

Environmental Impacts

Political Ecology has also focused on underlying and widespread political explanations for transformations of the natural environment and its subsequent degradation (Forsyth, 2003). As western demand for garments continues to accelerate, the accumulation of capital will intensify, with profound negative impacts on natural ecosystems and resources (Robbins, 2012). A key concept taken from the work of Marx, asserts, that as extractive regimes are employed, environmental stress will ensue (Robbins, 2012). The most adverse effect of the RMG industry in Dhaka is the pollutions of natural water system (Alom, 2016). 120-125 tons of waste is produced in the Narayanganj region alone. Poor waste management procedures and unplanned development, being the main cause of the contamination of rivers (Begum, 2010).

Throughout processing, chemicals such as alkalis, acids, inorganic chlorinated compounds, bleaching agents and thickening agents are used (Dey & Islam, 2015). With only 20% of industry treating their waste, The Shitalakkhya river is becoming increasingly contaminated with both organic and inorganic toxic waste. There are currently six major waste water drains flowing into the river, five of which drain directly from the industrial Narayanganj region (Haddiuzzaman et al., 2006). Textile dyeing effluents are discharged into surrounding channels, sewers, agricultural fields, irrigation channels, draining into the Shitalkkhya river. This waste comprises 21% of the recorded waste present within the river (Alom, 2016). The dyeing industry is also

characterised by the high consumption of resources like water, fuel, and a variety of chemical pollutants. 30-40% of water used within industry, is used in dyeing and chemical processes, making it one of the most water intensive industries in the world (Dey & Islam, 2015). Up until the mid 19th century, the dyes being used to colour garments were from natural sources such as plants, for example the red dye alizarin from indigo. However, by the mid 20th century, synthetic sources became more popular, (Dey & Islam, 2015). The lack of Effluent treatment plants (ETPs), renders it difficult to treat toxic pollutants within these dyes before they are discharged (Islam et al, 2011).

These effluents effect the chemical and physical properties of the river by continuous changes in temperature, pH, noise and odour (Islam et al, 2011). The heavy metals present within the Shitalkkhya river pose serious implications for marine and aquatic life. The level of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) in an a river is a good parameter for the availability of life within waterbodies. The Department of the Environment estimates that the DO in a river should be at 6 parts per million (Islam et al, 2015). Throughout monsoon season, this falls to around 2 parts per million. However, through the dry season, persisting through April and May, this can fall to 0 (Islam et al., 2015). Consequently, fish stocks have become depleted. This toxic waste can cause pH within the river to rise, becoming more alkaline. This rise in pH coupled with rising temperatures adversely affect fish, leading to their decline. Fish both absorb and consume small fragments of plastics, synthetic materials and microfibers, enabling such toxic substances to subsequently enter the food chain (Brooks et al, 2017). It is estimated that the environment is to blame for 22% of disease within Bangladesh (Kabir et al. 2016). Women who work with synthetic fibres within the RMG industry are seven times more likely to develop breast cancer than those who do not (Raby, 2012). It is thought that 40% of colourants used within industry are also thought to be carcinogenic, contributing to the risk of cancer (Raby, 2012).

To Improve the current environmental state of Bangladesh, improved waste management systems need to be implemented and enforced. Alom (2016), put forward five main and key components to

a waste management system. These include, generation, storage, collection, transportation and disposal. A new conservation method called, “Closed loop recycling” has been employed. In this instance, clothes are recycled and are used as the raw material for the production of newer clothes (Brooks et al, 2017). Robbins (2012), asserts that in capitalism’s excess, lie the seeds of more sustainable and equitable practices. By enforcing better waste management procedure and employing sustainable practices, damages to the environment can be eased.

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has explored the interconnected relationships between the Bangladeshi economy, society and environment. The concept of political ecology was explored, and applied to the analysis of RMG industries in Bangladesh. The impact of industry was explored through a Marxist political economic lens, a prominent tool in the study of political ecology (Robbins, 2012). Rapid development of industry within Dhaka has placed a strain on both its society and its natural environment. Key concepts of both Political ecology and Marxian materialism have been employed to analyse the exploitation of women within industry and recent trends in their behaviour, as well as the contamination of The River Shitalakhya. The term “Capiocene” has been brought forward, arguing that global trade and capitalism in recent times, are the most prevailing conditions under which human induced transformations of the environment take place (Brooks, et al., 2017). As growth accelerates, so does the strain placed on both women and on river and water system. As said by Karl Marx in Volume I chapter 10 of *Capital*, “*Capital is dead labour, that, vampire like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks*” (Marx,1867:257). Protests in recent years regarding pay discrimination, as well as the lack of clean water, can be regarded as barriers to growth, which will inevitably undermine the economy of Bangladesh. Despite the overwhelming advancement in the economy, this growth is not stable nor sustainable. As these barriers to growth become more prominent, the fracture and collapse of capitalism in Bangladesh is inevitable (Robbins, 2012).

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The Financialization of Housing in Sandyford's Beacon South Quarter: A Case Study Analysis of Irish Residential Properties Reit and it's Intense Investment in the Sandyford Rental Market.

Conor O'Beirne

Introduction

Ireland's property market has been in crisis for a number of years. The hangover from the financial crash of 2007/2008 and the legacy of austerity policies that came after has resulted in property market characterised by high prices, high demand, and undersupply. Over 6,000 adults and nearly 4,000 children are currently experiencing the physical and emotional trauma of not having a home (Focus Ireland, 2019). 1 in 10 Irish people are paying over 60% of their disposable income on rent and more than 1 in 20 paying 75% (Social Justice Ireland, 2019). Simultaneously, the government is pursuing neoliberal policies in the housing market, along with investment from foreign trusts generating high yields and returns for those firms and its investors.

This paper presents a case study of Beacon South Quarter in Sandyford, Dublin and the activities of Irish Residential Properties Reit (Ires Reit hereafter) as a means of demonstrating the wider processes of financialization of the housing market which is evident in the greater economy today. The case study represents an example of this process, but also demonstrates the effects of it on residents and the community.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a review of the literature in regard to the financialization of housing and how it has manifested itself in Ireland through interaction between the government and NAMA and the introduction of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs hereafter) into the property market. Section 3 outlines the methods used in undertaking the research of the case study. This is followed by section 4 which presents and discusses the results of the research. Finally, Section 5 concludes.

Literature Review

Financialization refers to the process of “increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements and narratives at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms, states and households” (Aalbers, 2016: 1). Due to a slowdown in the real economy, capitalism has become increasingly reliant on the financial sector in order to create profits and enlarge sums of money. The capital accumulation process becomes financialised and the focus on the growth of finance is not to the benefit of those in the real economy but financial actors and investors (Lin and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2013). However, financialization is not necessarily limited to financial markets, but is rather a conversion of the way in which profits are made in the real economy from production and consumption into a reliance on financial products, including the interaction of previously non-financial sectors in financial activities. The financial sector has moved from one in which enables physical investment in the real economy, into a system where profits are made from financial investments (Aalbers, 2016).

David Harvey (1985) posits financialization as a stage in the process of capital switching where capital flows from one sector of the economy into another. Harvey divides the economy into three circuits where money can be invested. The primary circuit involves production, manufacturing and the industrial sector. The secondary circuit includes the built environment and infrastructure. Social infrastructure, science, conditions of employment and health make up the tertiary circuit. Harvey argues that when opportunities for profitable investment reach an upper limit in the primary circuit, investment is ‘switched’ into the secondary circuit.

Financialization has been significant in the housing market. As Harvey argues, significant amounts of capital have switched into the secondary sector in today’s economy and this can clearly be seen in the housing and property markets. Aalbers (2016) posits that housing and finance are becoming increasingly interdependent and that the impacts of this have been unequal. The central idea is that the approach to housing has changed from one where it is considered to be a fundamental human right and a basic necessity, and its use values of

home, shelter security, community and neighbourhood are paramount. Households are shielded from the market in order to be protected from externalities that may result in them losing their home or having undue stress put on them in order to keep it. This was the approach to housing taken after the first world war and up until the 1970s (Aalbers, 2016; Hearne 2017). However, from the 1980s onwards, there was a dramatic shift in how housing was seen, towards the commodification of housing where the private property market was dominant and property was viewed not for its use values of home and shelter, but for its exchange value. It is now seen as a means of extracting profit rather than place of shelter (Hearne, 2017).

The housing market used to be seen as an illiquid one, where profits were slow to materialise due to the time it took for developments to begin making returns through mortgages. Most of the literature focusing on financialization deals with homeownership and financial products involving mortgages such as mortgage backed securities (Aalbers 2008; Sassen, 2008). Fields (2017), however, explores how rental market has become a new frontier in financialization through her examination of the role of private equity firms have played in New York city's affordable rental market and the impact this can have on tenants who have become the subjects of financialization without the residents themselves ever having a mortgage (Fields, 2017). Fields narrow the focus from economy wide processes, to individual buildings in Brooklyn in order to demonstrate the effects of those wider change in the national and indeed global economy. Her focused approach allows her to display the local effects of a global process. This is a methodology not fully explored in the literature on the effects of financialization in the Irish housing market.

In Ireland, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) have been major players in the housing market allowing it to become much more liquid and profitable. Arriving at a time where the opportunities for investment in the primary circuit were beginning to become limited and there were signs of over accumulation, REITs are emblematic of both financialization and capital switching. REITs are publicly listed companies whose engage in the ownership and management of income producing real estate. This allows investors to hold property through

their shares in the REIT rather than directly investing in properties (Waldron, 2018; Chang et al., 2003). REITs work by attempting to transform property into a liquid commodity by identifying and acquiring property, and then renting or leasing it out to tenants as a source of income. The profits are then distributed among shareholders in the form of dividends, typically the minimum percentage of profits which must be distributed in the form of dividends is very high at around 90%. REITs were established in Ireland in 2013 and were developed in order to “assist NAMA in deleveraging its portfolio and allow it to bring more sustainable activity to the commercial and residential property markets” (Minister for Finance, 2012). Irish REITs acquired assets from the NAMA and then completed development or redeveloped them in an attempt to add value. Given that the revenue required to repay investors is contingent on rental income, rents tended to be high in units owned by REITs and they often owned so many units in an area they were able to set the rent for that area (Waldron, 2018). For instance, Ires Reit, whose largest shareholder is CAPREIT Ltd a Canadian wealth fund, is now Ireland’s largest private landlord.

Kitchen, Hearne and O’Callaghan (2015) outline how housing in Ireland has been in a state of perpetual crisis. The authors argue that in the post-crash era NAMA and REITs have been pursuing the objectives of bundled together property portfolios because they are less risky, and the rate of return is high. As such, NAMA is seeking rental growth which could be harming the ability of Irish property developers’ efforts to raise finance for new projects, in effect hindering supply. NAMA’s search for maximum returns on investment has resulted in it working against the interests of those searching for affordable housing and facilitating a massive transfer of wealth from the Irish people to foreign and domestic investors (Kitchen, Hearne and O’Callaghan, 2015).

REITs are clearly an agent of financialization and are engaged in investments seeking the highest exchange value of housing rather than its use values as it is seen a method of returning profits to investors. While it is argued that REITs are increasing the supply of housing, the type of rental they provide is usually high-end luxury apartments with

high rents. This tends to reduce the supply of affordable and social housing (Hearne, 2017). A gap in the literature exists in the context of taking a similar approach to that of Fields (2017) and applying it to the rental market in Dublin, focusing on the impact of REITs on a smaller scale in order to demonstrate a wider process.

Methodology

Case Study

The research undertaken has employed a case study methodology. Clifford et al., (2016: 583) outlines the usefulness of a descriptive case study in understanding a wider concept by describing a phenomenon within its context. Fields (2017) employs the use of a case study in the context of the New York rental market. The case study in this paper takes a similar approach but focuses on the activities of Ires Reit within the rental market in Sandyford, Co. Dublin and the Beacon Soth Quarter development.

Ires Reit was chosen to be the subject of the investigation as it is now Ireland's largest landlord and holds a portfolio of over 2,000 apartments in the country. Given the nature of REIT's activities and the potential impacts of them outlined in the literature review, choosing the largest REIT with the most apartments in its portfolio made it the standout choice. Ires Reit has the most potential for impact on both tenants and the wider market and is hence the subject of this case study. The fund is the dominant player in the rental market in Sandyford, currently owning over 600 apartments in the area, with planning permission granted for a further 628.

Sandyford was chosen as the location for the case study as it represents the highest geographical concentration of Ires Reit's assets in the country. Additionally, in recent months there has been a number of fire safety concerns in the buildings as well as complaints over poor build quality and leaks, adding another dimension to the investigation.

Media Analysis

Given the scale of this project, a methodology similar to that of Fields (2017) would be impractical. Instead, a comprehensive media analysis was used in order to create an account of the area of study. In order to conduct the media analysis, LexisNexis was used. The search engine gives access to a huge database of news and business sources enabling the search of results within certain parameters including keywords, timeline, type of publication or to search for an exact phrase. The search engine was used to create a media archive regarding Ires Reit's assets in Sandyford. These articles were then analysed for pertinent information to gain a holistic insight into the case study.

The media archive was created by searching a variety of terms and timelines within the search engine. After conducting background reading on the case study it was discovered the developments in Sandyford came under a variety of names over the course of its construction and development. Initially, what is now known as the Beacon South Quarter, was first termed "Beacon South development". Articles referencing the development under this name tended to be published in the early 2000s such as (The Irish Times, 2005). Searching under this term yielded results that were useful in determining the project's early development.

A particular focus of the media analysis was to uncover comments from both the Ires Reit and tenants made to newspapers. This was done in order to discover more about the individual tenant's experiences of living with Ires Reit as their landlord. While all comments may not be directly applicable to the scope of this case study, particular attention was paid to direct quotes from tenants as well as Chief Officers of Ires Reit, both of whom have been relatively vocal in the media. While a direct comment from the tenant organization or from a representative of Ires Reit may have been useful, the fact that the two groups were so vocal in the media meant that this challenge was easily overcome and comments extracted from newspapers were particularly useful in building an overall picture of the case study.

Results and Discussion

Presentation of results

From the media analysis, it was gathered that Ires Reit currently own 628 apartments in Sandyford. Beacon South Quarter, which is comprised of multiple blocks, is where they own the most units with 225 apartments. The company also owns 68 units at the Maple which was a building of their own construction. Grande Central, Rockbrook Grande Central and Rockbrook South Central are blocks within Beacon South Quarter which were not constructed by the company but where they own units within the buildings, along with other owners. They hold the majority stake in Beacon South Quarter.

Beacon South Quarter first got planning and was partly constructed by Landmark Developments in 2005. There was a sense of positivity around the 500 million development at the time with newspapers praising Paddy Shovlin's, the Chief Executive of Landmark Developments, business sense and "ability to strike up the right partnership at the right time" (The Irish Times, 2005). However, the development was only partly constructed because Landmark Developments went into receivership in 2010 and the cost of completion was left with the National Asset Management Agency which was appointed as receiver of Beacon South Quarter. Shovlin also declared bankruptcy in the UK (Quinlan, 2012; The Irish Times, 2005). At the time, it was anticipated that NAMA would control over 200 apartments at the Beacon development (Carey, 2014a).

By 2011, the apartments in Beacon South Quarter were still partially constructed. Some were finished while others had been completed in shell but had not been fitted out. In the summer of 2011, Cluid, a voluntary housing organization bought 58 apartments at an average price of €177,000. 34 of these units were designated for affordable and social housing (Carey, 2014b).

In 2014, Ires Reit entered the market by buying 338 apartments across Dublin in a single sale, in which apartments Beacon South Quarter was a significant part of the deal, for 42.2 million euro, an average of €124,852 each (Reddan, 2016). As noted by the Chief Executive of the company NAMA has been the key to its success and

it would not have been able to enter the marketplace had it not been for them selling of large blocks of apartments in single large sales (Reddan, 2016).

Today, Ires Reit owns 225 units at the Beacon South Quarter, including its own 68 unit building ‘The Maple’ and rents are at the premium end of the scale. In 2018, when average rents in nationwide were 1,094 Eur, single bedroom apartments in The Maples were being advertised for €1,925 and €2,570 for two bedroom units. Ires Reit also attempted to increase rents in certain units in Beacon South Quarter by 25% in 2018, but it eventually backed down on this threat after a media backlash and protests from residents. It did, however, continue to raise rent prices just not to the same extent. The average turnover in their units is only one year, allowing them increase prices regularly.

In 2017, fire safety and water damage concerns were raised for over 600 apartments in BSQ, of which Ires Reit owns 25%. (Kelly, 2017). Ires has undertaken fire safety remediation works to the value of €2,500 per apartment, but further work is still required and is expected to reach €15,000 per unit. The issue of liability took considerable time to resolve as the developer of the apartments, Landmark Development and Paddy Shovlin, have gone into receivership and bankruptcy. During the interim of when the fire safety concerns were discovered and a subsequent vote for the owners of the apartments to pay for the remediation, residents reported “extreme stress, worry and strained relations” both financially and emotionally as they were now living in potentially unsafe apartments and, at the time, there was potential costs to the residents. Having spoken with residents, Green Party TD Catherine Martin described the situation:

“Families living in defective buildings are terrified. They are facing huge bills because of corners cut in construction by cowboy developers, and many are living in fear as their families are stuck in potentially dangerous homes.” (Ryan, 2019).

These fears were exacerbated when in April 2017, a fire broke out in the complex resulting in total evacuation of the buildings. While the fire was minor, it undoubtedly added to the concerns of residents with the knowledge that their building was not fully compliant with fire

safety regulations (Kelly, 2017a). BSQ has suffered eight fires over a three year period and is indicative of wider trends in the country where approximately 92,000 Celtic-Tiger era homes could be affected by fire safety issues and building defects (Horgan-Jones, 2019).

Discussion

The key features of financialization of the housing market, as outlined in the literature review, are present in the case study. Investment from Ires Reit into Sandyford's rental market has been to the benefit of the firm and its investors and at the expense of both tenants living in the units who are faced with high rents, and also of those who cannot afford the premium rents and are priced out of the market. Households have not been shielded from the market and are instead faced with the prospects of losing their homes due to rent hikes, having undue stress put on them in order to keep them and, in some instances, left with potentially dangerous homes.

A key aspect of REITs is the ability for investors to hold property through their shares rather than directly investing in properties. This is evidenced by the quotes from the chief executive in the media rather than those of the investors. The tenants' landlord is a firm rather than an individual, reflecting the impersonal nature of the business.

As Ires Reit's only goal is to ensure it is profitable in order to provide a return for its investors, their strategies in regard to its rent prices reflect this goal. Ires is the majority stakeholder in Beacon South Quarter and the sole owner of the units in the Maple building. Their preponderance in the market, combined with an overall lack of supply in the market, allows them to set the rent in the area. This rent price, naturally, reflects their interest in generating profit for its investors rather than the interest of those seeking shelter, community, safety and a sense of neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The case of Beacon South Quarter and Ires Reit's intense investment in the area illustrates the wider process of the financialisation of

housing in the modern economy. Following their initial investment in Ireland in 2014, Ires Reit has pursued a strategy of acquiring distressed properties, mostly from NAMA, and renting the units out at high prices. The lack of supply in the Dublin property market allows them to charge this price. The state's decreased role in the provision of housing and its desire for rental market growth have also facilitated this. As outlined in the literature review, a decreasing role of the state in the provision of housing, and an investment firm extracting exchange value from housing are key aspects of the sector's financialization. Hence, Sandyford's rental market has been the subject of financialization. A process that has massively benefited investment firms such as Ires Reit and coming at the expense of people seeking affordable housing. The dominance of Ires in the Sandyford rental market is one of the factors that allows them to extract this profit. Given Ires's growing dominance in the Dublin market (it is now the country's largest landlord), a city in the midst of a housing crisis defined by upward spiralling rent prices, it certainly raises the question of at what stage the state will step in and play a larger role in regulating REITs? In order to facilitate an exit from the country's housing crisis, the state's involvement in the market is essential. Instead of selling the country's housing stock to investment firms, the state should be working to facilitate the repurposing of those units into affordable housing.

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