Chapter 3

Liminal Spaces and Theorising the Permanence of Transience

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Abstract

Flux in our multifarious built environment gives rise to antagonisms in our lived experience of the spatial and temporal. Permanent space becomes temporary; temporary space becomes permanent, reflecting myriad relationships and conflicts. This chapter considers uneven development from the perspective of communities, localised action and national governance, explored through the concepts of liminality and temporality. Our chapter revisits grounding literature on places in time, through concepts such as heterotopia. We argue that critical temporalities bring new insights into these liminal, temporary uses by focusing on the evolving spaces of change in marginal neighbourhoods in the UK. We present two case studies that analyse community projects and food banks, spaces which represent what we call 'transient spatialities'. In our contribution we suggest how contemporary experiences of capitalism can be effectively understood, through liminality, temporality and transience in our case studies, which reflect experiences of poverty and deprivation at the economic margins.

Key words

Liminality, space, temporalities, transient spatialities, food banks, community activism, Foucault, Lefebvre, heterotopia.

Introduction

'Urbanism may be regarded as a particular form or patterning of the social process. This process unfolds in a spatially structured environment created by man. The city can therefore be regarded as a tangible, built environment – an environment which is a social product' (Harvey, 1979: 196).

To better understand the socio-spatial form of the city has been the pursuit of diverse theoretical disciplines, including, in particular, critical human geographers (Zukin, 1991; Allen, 2003), postmodern theorists (Jameson, 1991; Harvey, 1989), and sociologists (Castells, 1977; Hetherington 1997). The form of the city is dynamic, the social processes within it give rise to particular spatialities and patterns. At once, today, right now, the city is both a temporal and spatial representation of social processes (Harvey, 1979). Urban forms are spatio-temporal constellations of flux, fluid relations which create and mediate our ongoing context specific experience of the built environment.

Global capital continually and consistently ruptures our cities, affecting change and challenging how spatial form is both manifested and mediated. While we tend to consider time as an immutable force, the sense of time – the temporality – of the contemporary city is becoming ever more fractured. Space is becoming increasingly transient, and it is questionable whether *any* urban landscapes can be considered permanent today. Localised activism, political mobilisation, the influence of the state, and broader multiplicities of neoliberal spatio-temporal relations are reflected in the urban form. The influx of capital into cities in pursuit of profit maximisation under neoliberalism gives rise to an urban form which is experienced and lived, yet illusory and detached, as we experience shifting spatialities in contrasting ways. Our urban form is altering at pace, but how can we use a sense of time to conceptualise these changes?

The central theme of the chapter considers how the development of spatialities is influenced by local realities and lived experiences, and by the less visible, but no less powerful influences of non-local factors, such as the state form. Twenty-first century temporalities are situated through two case studies which examine the socio-spatial forms of food banks and the lived experience of residents in a deprived neighbourhood in Edinburgh, Scotland. The process of spatial change in time in these case studies is examined through theoretical literature, considering the following interconnected discourses in context:

- How the repercussions of social change, whether intended to be temporary or permanent, create a sense of permanence and a temporality of timelessness.
- How the historic past, the past, the present and the future are imagined and used by actors in processes of evolving spatialities to understand context and develop political positions.
- How the experience of different temporalities in the urban form give rise to political antagonisms from the local to the national.
- How local communities actively engage with such developments and how this is influenced by our concept of 'transient spatialities'.

The case studies represent 'transient spatialities' – spaces which may be permanent or temporary, but which reflect a liminal socio-spatial experience. Liminal spaces are described by Turner as being 'betwixt and between… [spaces] of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories' (1967: 97). The etymology of the word 'liminal' means 'threshold', from the Latin 'limin'. Such spaces represent transition, transformation, an intermediate state. The concept of liminality was further developed by Bhabha (1994) as an expression of cultural hybridity and by Zukin (1991), who applied the term to the urban form. This chapter examines the concept of liminality through French social theorists' interpretations of space (specifically Lefebvre, 1991, 1996 and Foucault, 1986, 1989). Of particular importance to our interpretation of 'liminal' are the concepts of heterotopia and of the spatial triad, discussed in detail in the following section. We explore the notion of liminality from three perspectives interwoven through the narrative of our case studies: the social (food banks as temporary institutions / experiences), the physical (material formations of the temporary, or perceptions of space as liminal) and the virtual (spaces of social media and public discourse).

This chapter presents initial concepts and thoughts developed around liminality and spatio-temporal relations. It accepts that time and space are inherently interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation from each other, nor can the multiple social relations which mediate our urban form at any particular time. As Massey states concisely, 'for there to be time there must be interaction, for there to be interaction there must be multiplicity, for there to be multiplicity there must be space...for there to be time there must be space' (1999; 5-6).

To this perspective of space-time, we bring the emerging concept of 'critical temporalities' (Bastian 2014). This highlights how time is experienced differently by individuals and groups in different contexts. In particular, it focuses our attention on the role of social institutions, such as the state and global neoliberalism, in imposing temporalities onto individuals and communities. Allied with work from urban sociology on the historic nature of place-attachment

and class differences (Watt 2009; Savage 2010; Matthews 2015), we have a rich repertoire of theory that has been underemployed in explaining the transience and liminality of contemporary spaces. The engagement with this literature informs the analysis of our cases, where the experience of food banks, and of Wester Hailes, a peripheral social housing estate in the south-west of Edinburgh, are interrogated as 'transient spatialities', reflecting particular temporalities of the social form.

Theorising transient spatialities

The juxtaposition of space and time in the development and lived experiences of the built environment presents us with myriad perspectives through which 'transient spatialities' can be interpreted. Massey (2005) encourages interrogation of what a place stands for and represents, and considers how we might re-imagine it. 'Transient spatialities' reflect antagonisms, conflicts and liminality. Such spaces may be permanent or temporary, but they each reflect a liminal socio-spatial experience. Our emerging perspective adopted in addressing 'transient spatialities' marries historic outlooks on space with current literature on critical temporalities, blending the work of French critical theorists with present day interpretations. It is an opportunity to revisit the work of prominent thinkers on space, in particular Foucault and Lefebvre, by considering whether our understanding of 'transient spatialities' can be enhanced through their theories.

In situating the notion of liminal space in the urban form, Zukin (1991) presented liminality as an increasingly present characteristic of modern cities. Such spaces are inconsistent and ambiguous, representing local manifestations of global market change and wider cultural shifts. Liminality 'captures the simultaneous advance and decline of economic forms, the sense that as the ground shifts under our feet, taller buildings continue to rise' (Zukin, 1991: 5). Conroy (2004) describes liminal spaces as eruptive and tension ridden, where transitions are inherently temporal, as relationships with time become representative of and yet distinct from the past, the present and the future. Such experiences of time also contrast and conflict, as people experience temporalities individually, as well as through the history of the evolving space. Our 'transient spatialities' are spaces of change and liminality.

How spaces are formed and represent social differences was considered by Foucault, who used the term heterotopia to enhance our understanding of the evolution of urban form (Foucault, 1986). Heterotopic, or 'other spaces', are 'counter-sites…absolutely different' (Foucault 1986: 24) spaces, which exist in a way which inverts and yet represents the social relations which mediate and reproduce space. They are unique spaces of conflict and tension,

'constellations of the in-between' (Heynan 2008: 322). Foucault however, provided only minimal literature on the concept of heterotopia, therefore it has been widely interpreted and yet heavily criticised as 'frustratingly incomplete' (Soja, 1996: 162) and 'too slippery a term to be of any fundamental significance' (Heynen, 2008: 311). Nevertheless, the principles of heterotopia offer a taxonomy of concepts, a number of which are drawn upon here to inform discussion of transient spatialities[1]. Foucault uses a subversive language when describing heterotopias as spaces of contestation and inversions, crises and deviation. These spaces of difference emerge somewhere between dystopia and utopia, anywhere at any time, juxtaposing spaces with diverse characteristics.

Foucault reflects on the nature of 'real' space, defining it as either that of illusion or compensation. The former are spaces which expose the fragile diversity of our lived experiences (for example, brothels). The latter are heterotopias of functionality, where we are regulated by enforced social norms (relating, for example, to age, labour, religion). Within both there is an implicit undercurrent of power relations, which influences the lived experiences of heterotopias at a particular time, in a particular place.

The notion of temporality is also referenced by Foucault, clearly defining heterotopias as spaces with restricted access. Enforcing temporal restrictions on spaces means that they are accessible and penetrable, yet isolated and controlled. Foucault suggests that heterotopias create 'heterochronies', a break with traditional time, which seems to be at odds with the notion of 'real' spaces, which are inherently temporal. It could be Foucault recognising the varied temporalities manifest in our societies (leisure time, holiday time, community time). However, the interpretation depends on the adopted definition of 'traditional time' itself. The inherent weakness in the taxonomy is that it offers no guidance on the extent to which a space must relate to Foucault's principles for it to be considered heterotopic. Can a space be heterotopic if it only reflects some, but not all of Foucault's principles? The rigid classification of 'heterotopia' somewhat undermines the interconnections in the very social relationships they seek to understand, by imposing a categorisation with apparently little room for overlapping characteristics.

Perhaps the principles of heterotopia should be explored in an open, interconnected manner, rather than as separate and mutually exclusive classifications. However, these principles are broad and there is also a risk that through the general, vague ideas presented by Foucault

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[1] For a complete reflection and more detail on all principles of heterotopia, see Foucault, M. (1986) "Of Other Spaces", Diacritics, A Review of Contemporary Criticism. Spring, Vol.16, No.1, pp.22-27.

every space adopts heterotopic characteristics. However, by considering the lived experiences of the people interacting and creating these spaces at a particular time, each space emerges as unique, alternative but everyday. Within these spaces there is not necessarily an expectation of transformation, but an element of difference. Heterotopias are spaces which are contradictory but not necessarily temporary, tension ridden but not essentially representative of change. They are spaces which can be liminal, but are not necessarily so.

Lefebvre offers a more nuanced interpretation of socio-spatial time, as an amalgamation of language, culture, nature, location and power. His work is concerned with dialectical relationships, spatial forms emerging from specific moments and, unlike Foucault's, less about defining external space. Spaces are diversified and fragmented, influenced by abstractions and specificities. Power, the 'worst of abstractions' (Lefebvre 1991: 208) influences our lived temporalities. Spaces of contemporary capitalism are spaces of power and poverty, culture and capital; in the UK they are neoliberal. Capital restructuring and redistribution drives the compression of space over time and space 'is not a thing, but rather a set of relations between things' (Lefebvre, 1991: 83), primarily influenced by power relations. Lefebvre terms such relations as 'near' or 'far' and the city is a particular amalgam of them. The near order in a city represents individuals and groups from a local, community perspective, the far order refers to the regulation of the city by institutions, legal codes and groups. Our 'transient spatialities' are part of this social form of the near and far, which reflect the individualities of local communities and also the omnipresent influences of national and global regimes of power. Space is a symbolic praxis, produced by history, the present day and the future.

In attempting to understand space and the practices which simultaneously create and destroy it, Lefebvre introduces us to the 'spatial triad' which, like Foucault's heterotopic principles, offers different ways in which space can be understood. 'Spatial practice' is the first aspect of Lefebvre's triad. This examines the formation of space through particular locations and societal relationships, and represents cohesion and continuity. 'Representations of space' are the second aspect, referring to the symbolic nature of space and place, the signs and order imposed by social relations. The third aspect of the triad is 'representational spaces', which reflect the complex symbolisms, specifically linked to clandestine elements of society. By examining spaces through one or more aspects of the triad, socio-spatial relations can be analysed through the social activities that create spaces without imposing an overarching term such as the broad, yet vague moniker of heterotopia. In terms of our 'transient spatialities', the triad presents an interesting lens through which we can observe the case studies, linked to the social form of deprivation in communities. Unlike heterotopia, the triad does not seek to

identify spaces specifically, but succinctly presents a means through which their 'near' and 'far' complexities can be interpreted.

Sociology literature on time recognises that people experience different temporalities: the immediacy of passing time; historic time; the not yet time of the future. There has long been a recognition that labour and work frame time, its flows and rhythms. In terms of community time, history is a shared cultural construct and part of creating the present (Blokland, 2009). Community time itself has been recognised as having rhythms that place it outside other structuring temporalities (Crow and Allan, 1995).

> 'the time of community [is not] compatible with broader social accounts of the past as something that is simply over … or the future as simply not yet … [and]… shared representations of the past and/or future shape how a community is imagined and legitimised' (Bastian 2014: 143).

A key way we understand the future as "not yet" is through policy and planning – by evoking a future to reach. Importantly, the rhythms and pace of policy-making create a specific temporality (Fitzpatrick, 2004; Abram, 2014). Sensitivity to temporalities and time means that:

> 'Questions about the speed, pace and directionality of time are crucial to work exploring communal futures and pasts, the experiences of accelerating global networks and the timing of economic modes of production' (Bastian 2014: 138).

Through living, working and acting, we produce spaces (Smith; 1990) which are ever changing and fluid, and reflect our lived experiences through particular temporalities.

Food banks as spaces of the in-between

Today giving through charities has become an entrenched and accepted aspect of UK society (Livingstone, 2013). The beginning of the twenty-first century has seen rapid growth in food insecurity with various charities evolving to provide food banks as an emergency response to hunger. The 'transient spatiality' of the food bank has become an expansive element of contemporary society and food aid is becoming normalised in the charitable community. Food aid providers play a significant social role in raising awareness of food poverty and concomitantly helping those experiencing food insecurity with food parcels when in crises. All the evidence indicates that food insecurity is a prolific characteristic of deprivation (Cooper et

al, 2014; Sosenko et al, 2013) and an All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry recently published research on the extent of hunger and food poverty in the UK today (2014).

This research specifically considers the evolution of the Trussell Trust network of food banks as a transient spatiality. The Trussell Trust (launched 2004) operates as a 'social franchise', where religious organisations become affiliated with the Trust to operate food banks. The charity provides these organisations with business guidance and it is the key food bank organisation in the UK today. There are currently over 420 Trussell Trust food banks, with an average of two opening each week (The Trussell Trust, 2014a), predominantly run by a network of 30,000 volunteers (The Trussell Trust, 2014b). In 2013-14 the charity distributed 913,138 food parcels (The Trussell Trust, 2014b) providing an estimated 20 million meals and representing a year on year growth of 54% (Cooper et al, 2014). To acquire a food parcel from a Trussell Trust food bank the recipient must be referred by a professional, such as a doctor or a social worker. The Trust also strives to avoid dependency and typically will only provide three parcels in the course of a six month period.

The rapid growth in food banks has been much discussed in the media. They speculate that this growth is directly related to welfare reforms and austerity measures (for example, benefit sanctions) imposed by the previous and current UK Governments (Butler, 2014; Livingstone, 2014). With the ever increasing numbers of food banks the party line from the government has been a denial of links between reforms and food insecurity, with the state commenting on lack of 'robust evidence' to indicate a link (Downing et al, 2014). However, this has been refuted by research (Cooper et al, 2014; Sosenko et al, 2013). The wider repercussions of policies reflect the state's detached and dismissive position which, although disputed, has remained unchanged throughout the current term of the Conservative government. Following the global financial crisis of 2008, the imposition of austerity measures and reforms, bedroom tax, fluctuating employment and zero hour contracts, it is not just those out of work who access food banks, but also those in work who cannot make ends meet (Sosenko et al, 2013). The post-war welfare state is being reformed and dismantled; its apparent permanence is being eroded by the neoliberal position of the current government. The UK situation may soon mirror the experience of food banks in the US and Canada, where they are now a permanent feature in spatial and temporal discourses of poverty (Riches, 2002).

Food banks are representative of a temporality of detachment of the state, of disregard for the food insecure. So far, this has promoted the acquisition of more and more spaces for food banks. The spatial expansion of food banks inherently reflects Lefebvre's concept of the 'far', as the state directly influences their growth and normalisation in society. As a feature of our

urban form today food banks *should* be a temporary space, one which *should* become obsolete through the effective tackling of food insecurity. However transient and temporary we expect these spaces to be, the current temporal experience reflects a society which redistributes food to those in need in an emergency. Food parcels are distributed within a prescribed period of opening and closing, in line with Foucault's heterotopic principle relating to restricted access and functionality. The users of food banks are subjected to the specific ways in which the food bank functions, reflecting spaces which are potentially heterotopias. In the case of the Trussell Trust, you must have a referral voucher from a professional, food parcels can only be collected during a specific time and their distribution is formalised by the Trussell Trust's guidelines and the volunteers operating the food bank.

Both food bank users and volunteers have a temporary and transient experience of it, wholly dependent upon the specific operations adopted by the Trussell Trust, in a specific time period, at a spatially specific location. Although a food parcel can be useful in the short term, what happens after the three days of food is consumed? Those experiencing hunger will continue to experience it and will be limited in their access to further food parcels. The experience of food banks is a temporality of discontinuity and of disruption. The individuals accessing the food aid could be said to be experiencing a heterochrony (as above), a break in their traditional use of time – which in this case reflects a contemporary experience of poverty. The users accessing the more formalised Trussell Trust food banks are entwined in an intermediated, alienated experience of hunger, via a restricted experience accessible on an irregular basis, and in a space which emphasises poverty, a space akin to somewhere timeless. Food banks to the individual are not habitually used or normalised, but are restricted spaces which indicate deprivation. In this respect they can be considered representative of the three elements of Lefebvre's spatial triad, as spaces of the clandestine, of symbolism, and of social codes and practices represented in the reproduction of space.

From the perspective of the local community, food banks are spaces of community mobilisation, empowerment and integration of human capital. Continuing distribution of food parcels will not stimulate change in the lives of those experiencing hunger, but will merely provide a temporary respite. Food aid from the 'near' in society, the local neighbourhood, actively engaging with the community to assist those in need, is certainly a short term benefit to the food insecure, but it *should not* be viewed as a long term solution. Effecting the eradication of food poverty and influencing the 'far' state from the local level is essentially illusory in the current temporality, because food banks are a response within the neoliberal system itself. That is not to imply that there is no possibility for change, because the continual

reinvention of space and the lived experiences associated with food banks presents an implicit opportunity for their reconstitution.

The spatial form of Trussell Trust food banks is symbolic of social relations. They are spaces of polarisation, but they are also spaces of community engagement, inclusive spaces which simultaneously reinforce exclusion. Food banks are a juxtaposition of incompatible spaces (after Foucault, 1986). The food bank creates a space of illusion by providing short-term nourishment and comfort, which exposes every real space of poverty and hunger. The spaces themselves are indicative of the power of the 'far' state, but at the same time their spatiality is a curious one which, because of the association with religious organisations, typically sits outside the processes of capital accumulation and profit maximisation.

Food banks are politicised spaces, where the possibility of both effective change and ineffectuality in addressing hunger today are potential liminal and heterotopic experiences. Such experiences allow the complex and contradictory nature of the 'transient spatiality' that is the food bank, to be perceived through a multitude of relations. It will be interesting to see how these spaces continue to evolve through the 'far' and the 'near', as temporalities shift into the future.

Temporalities and "yet-ness" in Wester Hailes

Wester Hailes in Edinburgh, can be regarded as an archetypal liminal space. It is a peripheral social housing estate that has, throughout its 50-year history, either been on the edge of urban consciousness or been brought to the fore by deprivation or criminality (Wacquant 2008). Historically, in response to the stigma attached to the neighbourhood by wider society, the residents created the neighbourhood as a representational space, of activism and local democracy, against the representation of the space in wider society as deprived and marginal (Lefebvre 1991). Community organisations, the Wester Hailes Representative Council, and a community newspaper, *The Wester Hailes Sentinel*, contested the negative representations of the neighbourhood and helped offer new futures through critical engagement in "regeneration" policies and practices (Matthews 2012).

This activism was taking place in a world that has become networked, yet excepting a brief period when Wester Hailes had Scotland's first internet cafe, the neighbourhood was excluded from these networks as they went online. The use of new network technologies has disrupted traditional geographies and temporalities (Castells 2000). Instant communication around the

globe has led to the distanciation of propinquity (Amin 2000) and, for many, these technologies offer new opportunities for creating democratic spaces (Couclelis 2004). While a lot of the enthusiasm of the early pioneers has been tempered, there continues to be a belief that new technologies can revive democracy. The growth of social media – Facebook, Twitter and so on – and sophisticated campaigning organisations such as 38degrees and AllOut, has led many to view the current networked age as different. Others dismiss such activity as barely engaged "clicktivism" that ignores the political realities of global neoliberalism.

Such activities find their local expression in the growth of hyperlocal media sites. These have a long tradition as photocopied local newsletters, or small commercial newspapers, that report local news and are supported by volunteers or local advertising. Free, easy to use technologies like blogs, video and audio hosting sites, as well as social media, mean these traditional sources of local news have either been supported or replaced by online equivalents. Research suggests that many of these sites are not linked to existing media organisations and grew out of specific local campaigns relating to such issues as school closures or controversial planning applications and new developments (Williams et al. 2014). In the UK, the massive decline in engagement with local politics has led many to associate the growth of hyperlocal web-based news sites with broader aims to renew local democracy. Our second case study – the revival of a local newspaper as an online hyperlocal news source – helps us to interrogate further our questions around contemporary disruptions of geographies and temporalities.

In 2008 the newspaper *The West Edinburgh Times*, formerly *The Wester Hailes Sentinel*, ceased publication after its funding was withdrawn. As *The Sentinel* it had, since 1976, been a leading local voice in the fight to improve the neighbourhood. In 2010 the local housing association, inheriting the archive of *The Sentinel*, began posting photos online in a Facebook group, eliciting engagement from residents past and present (Matthews 2015). This site created an online neighbourhood – a page containing reflections on history and place-attachment – in a global cloud. To flip the notion of the distanciation of propinquity, the deep sense of propinquity that was created was held on server farms around the globe. Interest in this site led partners to hope that the engagement could be turned into a self-supporting online hyperlocal news site, *The Digital Sentinel*.

However, *The Digital Sentinel* struggled to replicate this success. In its first years most stories were produced by a paid worker, not by local community activists or residents (a not uncommon experience: Harte & Turner 2015). Hits to the site were low and it was struggling to develop a stream of news from local community organisations. There was also the challenge of digital inclusion. Data for Scotland showed that residents of social housing living

in deprived neighbourhoods were much less likely to access the internet (Scottish Government 2014). However, unpacking this "failure" of *The Digital Sentinel* can also help us to understand the transient spatialities and critical temporalities that are at the core of our thesis. For community activists, the aim to revive the *Sentinel* came from a desire to revive local democracy, to draw on the shared history of community activism that was often evoked on the Facebook page. There was a hope that new technologies could allow a revival of the spirit of activism that had, in the past, created a contesting representational space. Specific challenges were the lack of local "big" issues for the news site to engage with (Williams, Barnett et al. 2014).

The much broader challenge was the concentrated social deprivation in the neighbourhood. Extensive evidence suggests that more affluent people are much more likely to engage in such activities (Matthews and Hastings 2013). They are more likely to have the skills, confidence and abilities to engage. They also have networks to people with knowledge and influence. Conversely, evidence from Scotland shows that residents in deprived neighbourhoods, lower-income households, or who live in socially-rented housing have lower rates of internet access so they were less likely to access an online news source. They are less satisfied with their neighbourhood conditions than others, but in turn they are less likely to feel that anything can be done about, so they are less likely to be engaged in local activism (Scottish Household Survey data, cited in Matthews et.al. 2015).

This presents a negative case for why efforts to revive democracy through digital engagement were not successful: the residents of Wester Hailes were not affluent homeowners and their immediate interests were not threatened. But, more positively, why were residents engaging in discussion about history on the Facebook page, but not engaging in contemporary activism? The reminiscence on the Facebook page reflected a homely sense of place commonly held by working classing communities (Matthews 2015). This is opposed to the middle class sense of home as a position within a world of positions, which requires the "work" of activism and place-making to create a sense of belonging (Allen 2008; Watt 2009). The working class sense of home-belonging meant that the residents had a much longer-term and general sense of place-attachment.

A good example of this was the local time bank. Time banks are a form of non-monetary exchange. Volunteers get time credits by offering their skills to other members to use. These credits can be "cashed-in" by buying the time of other volunteers. Time banks rely on direct reciprocity in a quite immediate sense, with the management of time credits by a time broker adding trust to this system. However, the West Edinburgh time bank struggled to get

volunteers to take time credits. People were more than willing to give their time and skills, but unwilling to accept help and be a burden. The sense of home of the residents extended to a sense of generalised reciprocity – they were willing to provide support to the local community in the knowledge that they might get something back sometime in the future, with very little concern as to when this was. The longer-term temporality of this generalised reciprocity and commitment to the neighbourhood was incompatible with the immediacy of the time bank model.

During this time partners in Wester Hailes also erected a "digital totem pole". This included quick-response codes (QR codes) for people to access online information about the neighbourhood, including the social history Facebook page. In First Nation cultures totem poles were traditionally temporary. Once erected at potlatch ceremonies, they were left to slowly rot away. For some Nations, their dead were placed in boxes atop totems and were left to decompose and be scavenged. Wester Hailes' totem pole was prominently placed in the neighbourhood yet, as with *The Digital Sentinel* to which it is connected, it is rarely used for its intended purpose. Unlike a First Nation totem, it has become valued for its permanence. For example, it is often remarked that it has not been vandalised over many years, in a neighbourhood where street furniture and similar public art is vandalised and left to decay. That the totem pole had resisted the passage of time meant it was associated with a positive sense of place among residents. Further, as a part of the public realm, the totem pole and associated activities have helped to foster the creation of the representational space of activism within Wester Hailes. This has enabled residents to further their efforts in contesting heterotopic spaces, such as local food banks, the shopping centre, the Job Centre Plus and Police station, that seek to regiment the lives of residents through control of spatiality and temporality.

At their root, the problems of deprived neighbourhoods like Wester Hailes are long-term. They are born of housing policies; the operation of housing markets and concomitant international finance markets; local economic development and the shifts in global capital as the economy restructures. Yet projects like those discussed have at their heart a catalytic view of time – that a small investment will unleash unrecognised potential in the community. This leaves community workers and activists with a feeling described as "yet-ness" – that the projects will deliver their potential, but have not managed to do so yet. In regeneration policy, this belies a failure to recognise the long-term structural causes of neighbourhood decline and deprivation (Hastings 2000; Kintrea 2007; Matthews 2010). However, this belief in community transformation was also genuinely held by the community workers and activists. Hope for the future shaped short-term visions for transformative change, while the reality of public spending

cuts, continued economic depression and long-term structural problems stymied efforts to change the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have begun a theoretical discussion that brings together the geographical literature on spatialities with the literature on the sociology of temporalities, in a move to better understand the complex and nuanced marginal and liminal spaces of deprivation being created in the UK's contemporary urban form. More research on the notion of 'transient spatialities' is needed to build on the initial conceptualisation presented here. Our current empirical findings support a view of temporalities as social 'constructs' which are contingent and power-laden. The temporalities created by policy impose a time framework upon individuals and communities – be that the imagined future of Wester Hailes as a "better place"; the time of the month-long budget in Universal Credit; or the time of desperate hunger created by benefit sanctions and maladministration. The temporalities experienced by communities and individuals rub up against those produced by policy, resulting in conflict and contestation. The latter, are in turn reflected in their spatial forms, which are liminal, laden with opportunities for future change and activism, but are reduced to spaces which consistently reproduce the neoliberal relations of power imposed upon them. The lived experiences of the spaces in the Wester Hailes community and those of food banks and their users may be limited due to the effect of the 'far', but the latent potential for change at a micro-level and beyond is potent. By thinking of these spatialities in line with Lefebvre's triad, Foucault's heterotopia and critical temporalities, a context-oriented perspective on particular spatial and temporal urban forms can be presented and understood as 'transient spatialities' of poverty and deprivation.

By integrating critical temporalities, our approach allows us to rethink these spaces and temporalities and to identify new opportunities that are empowering rather than to resort to the negativity that dominates some theoretical approaches. For example, the temporality of temporary starvation embodied in food banks can be rethought along the lines of the slow-food movement, as community groups in Wester Hailes are doing. They are re-appropriating green spaces the local authority can no longer afford to maintain to develop community gardens growing fresh vegetables and fruit for the community. Further, the futures of regeneration for Wester Hailes, and similar communities, could be based on their social reciprocity and the temporality experienced by their residents, rather than on the imposed temporality of plans and policies, or the spaces of food banks and the temporalities of hunger. Although the spaces we have considered are spatially and temporally contested, there are inherent opportunities for future activism and development within the spatio-temporal relations

of the not-yet. For example, through urban food production social relations and human interactions adapt and strive to provide a more optimistic and empowering experience of both local community life and food insecurity.

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