Moralisations of Space and the Spatiality of Morality: The Case of the Dublin Working-Class Neighbourhood Ballymun

Moralizacije prostora in prostorskost morale: primer dublinske delavske soseske Ballymun

Alina Bezlaj

ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship on morality highlights it as a communal and everyday achievement, rooted in everyday (spatial) practices and tied to places. In this article, I explore two distinct yet overlapping moral orders that shape life in Ballymun, a working-class suburb of Dublin built in the 1960s as a social housing estate and redeveloped in the early 2000s. I argue that these moral repertoires correspond to two versions of Ballymun: the pre-regeneration "Old Ballymun" and the post-regeneration "New Ballymun". Both places are morally charged and thus often generate conflicting understandings of the neighbourhood and its challenges. While regeneration, driven by the neoliberal politics of the Third Way, sought to materially and socially transform the area through new moral visions, these were not uniformly adopted by residents. Some embraced them; others resisted, drawing instead on affective and memorial ties to Old Ballymun and leaning on the moral repertoires tied to the past place. Although the moral logics of old and new often align, they also produce tensions – particularly around notions of individual responsibility, care, and the causes of local problems. I show in this article how moral values are embedded in everyday practices that shape the neighbourhood, and how different conceptions of place inform residents' moral interpretations of its transformation and ongoing struggles.

KEYWORDS: morality, place, memory, regeneration, ethics of care, responsibility

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IZVLEČEK

Nedavna znanstvena dognanja o morali jo označujejo kot dosežek skupnosti in vsakdana, zakoreninjen v vsakdanjih (prostorskih) praksah in vezan na kraje. V prispevku raziskujem dva različna, a prekrivajoča se moralna reda, ki oblikujeta življenje v Ballymunu, delavskem predmestju Dublina, ki je bilo v šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja zgrajeno kot socialno stanovanjsko naselje in nato prenovljeno po vstopu v novo tisočletje. Zagovarjam tezo, da tovrstni moralni repertoarji ustrezajo dvema različicama Ballymuna, »staremu« in »novemu«, pred in po prenovi. Oba kraja sta vsak po svoje moralno opredeljena in zato pogosto sprožata nasprotujoča si razumevanja soseske in njenih izzivov. Medtem ko je regeneracija, ki jo je vodila neoliberalna politika tako-imenovane tretje poti, skušala v materialnem in družbenem smislu območje preoblikovati v okviru nove moralne vizije, pa le-te prebivalci niso enotno sprejeli. Nekateri so jo vzeli za svojo, drugi pa so se ji uprli, pri čemer so se opirali na čustvene in spominske vezi s starim Ballymunom in na moralne repertoarje, povezane s krajem iz preteklosti. Čeprav se moralna logika starega in novega pogosto ujemata, povzročata tudi napetosti – zlasti ko gre za predstave o individualni odgovornosti, skrbi in vzrokih za lokalno problematiko. V članku ponazorim, kako so moralne vrednote del vsakodnevnih praks, ki oblikujejo naravo soseske, in kako različna pojmovanja kraja vplivajo na to, kako tamkajšnji prebivalci interpretirajo njeno preobrazbo in nenehne stiske.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: morala, kraj, spomin, regeneracija, etika skrbi, odgovornost

INTRODUCTION

Ethics and morality as aspects of human experience have recently gained a rising amount of interest in anthropology and social sciences (Cassaniti and Hickman 2014). Research, which understands morality as a societal dimension, rejects the idea that moral actions are driven by sets of fixed rules and normative standards that structure decision making; rather, it stresses the historicity of the moral, which is shaped and developed through social practices and is in a continuous process of transformation in changing social contexts. Such research, furthermore, does not construe of moral acts as based (exclusively) on beliefs and anchored in the cognition of an individual, but stresses, on the one hand, the way they are embodied and entangled with affects, and on the other, their dependence on practical communities, as morality is a communal outcome (Mattingly 2012). Das argues that moral work does not mean "orienting oneself to transcendental, objectively agreed-upon values", but is rather achieved through the "cultivation of sensibilities *within* the everyday" (Das 2012: 134). While morality is thus carried out in everyday practices, the evaluation of what is good and how to live is tied to normative frameworks of behaviour. Deeb and Harb (2013) take into account both these elements of moral actions in their definition of morality; they define it as conscious aspirations to live a good life, whereby morality is contextual (played out in practices) and tied to normative repertoires, i.e. standards which determine what behaviours or states are good and bad. Acts may find their justification, according to Deeb and Hard (2013), in various different normative

repertoires, which may (un)comfortably coexist. In their everyday practices, people thus choose different possibilities of action, which may then be evaluated as moral or immoral depending on which normative repertoire is being drawn upon.

If we do not understand morality as abstract sets of values, but rather as something which arises through everyday (spatial) practices within communities of different scales, we can begin to also think about the relation between morality and space/place. On the one hand, morality is reflected in different spatial practices – Deeb and Harb (2013) demonstrate in their ethnography of leisure and morality in the context of Beirut's youth experiences that the young people negotiate and navigate between different sets of moral orders, which manifest themselves in different spatial practices in the city. On the other hand, the idea that places themselves can be morally significant is not new (see e.g. Basso 1996). Preston thus argues that both the physical contexts in which everyday practices are carried out and the practices themselves are "morally thick" (2009: 178). The moral significance of places is, however, as Smith (2007) points out, variable and reflects geography's relationship to history.

In this article, I focus on two different moral orders that coexist, often overlap, and sometimes conflict in the context of the North Dublin region under study.[1] I relate these different moral repertoires to two different manifestations of place, both of which, to quote Preston (2009), are "morally thick". I explore aspects of the connection between morality and place through the case of the Dublin working-class neighbourhood of Ballymun. This is a neighbourhood that was "regenerated" by the Dublin City Council at the turn of the millennium, changing both its physical and social structure. I will argue that this regeneration, which was anchored in the neoliberal political agenda of the Third Way, has appropriated the place and adapted it to its own moralising vision. This vision is sometimes also claimed by the residents, and at other times contested by reference to the memorial and affective place of the pre-regeneration Old Ballymun. The moral order of New Ballymun is in many ways consistent with that of Old Ballymun, but at times they lead to conflicting interpretations of the neighbourhood and antagonistic interpretations of its problems, which arise from different conceptions and valuations of individuals, their responsibilities, and their need for care.

In this way, I will demonstrate how moral ideas are enacted through the different practices that create and transform the neighbourhood, and on the other hand, how for the residents, the different manifestations of the neighbourhood's place serve as a source of their moral interpretations of the reasons for its problems.

METHODOLOGY

The research is based on ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in the Ballymun neighbourhood from January to July 2022, during which time I visited the neighbour-

[1] This article is a revised and lengthened version of the chapter "Two Places, Two Moralities" from the book *A Place of Ruptures and Bonds: The (Re)making of a Dublin Suburb* (Bezlaj 2024).

hood a few days a week, attending local meetings, volunteering in local activities, and getting to know the residents of the neighbourhood, with whom I had a series of informal conversations, and with some of whom I also conducted more formal interviews. In total, I conducted 22 structured and semi-structured interviews with 31 interviewees who were active in one way or another in the social fabric of Ballymun – either living in the area or involved in community life. One interviewee was a local councillor and two were representatives of the Dublin City Council Area Office. I conducted the interviews in person in cafés and pubs, while walking, sitting on benches, at the interviewees' workplaces or in their homes; at the insistence of the interviewees, I also conducted three interviews by video call and one by email. I tried to obtain a sample of interviewees of different ages, genders and educational backgrounds. In total, I interviewed seventeen men and fourteen women, most of whom were long-time residents of Ballymun or those who had been "born and bred" there, and four of whom had only moved into the neighbourhood in the post-regeneration period. The majority of the interviewees were in the 40–49 age group (mostly made up of those who had been born in Ballymun before its regeneration), while the second largest groups of interviewees consisted of people aged between 50 and 59 and people aged over 60 (these groups were mostly made up of people who had moved to Ballymun as children or adults in the period before the regeneration).

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH: BALLYMUN

The suburban neighbourhood of Ballymun in the north of Dublin was built in the late 1960s to address the severe housing shortage that was plaguing the city. The neighbourhood was built by using industrial, prefabricated methods of construction and comprised seven fifteen-storey tower blocks, which became the leitmotif of the neighbourhood, nineteen eight-storey blocks, ten four-storey blocks (Rowley 2018: 230), and some 450 houses; by 1970 the estate comprised 3,265 dwellings, most of which were in the form of block housing, exclusively for use by council tenants (Somerville-Woodward 2002). In the 1970s, another 1400 houses were added (Power 1997).

However, due to the lack of management and maintenance of the estate by the municipality, the neighbourhood quickly materially deteriorated; the material decay caused the neighbourhood to be less desirable among the more well-off council tenants, and consequently the municipality began renting out flats to people who were considered to be less "desirable" tenants (i.e. one parent households, the unemployed, the homeless, and drug addicts). The material decay, in combination with the low socio-economic status of the residents and the marginalised population, caused the estate to become one of the most stigmatised and unwanted places in Dublin. This furthermore presented a push factor for the wealthier (i.e. employed) council tenants of the estate, who moved out in large numbers in the 1970s and 1980s due to the poor reputation and difficult living conditions, leaving the poorest (unemployed) council tenants less able to do so and consequently lowering the

spending power of the area.[2] Ballymun was further weakened, especially in the 1980s, by the onset of the heroin epidemic in Dublin, which hit poorer neighbourhoods like this one particularly hard (Montague 2021; Power 1997; Somerville-Woodward 2002).

However, in response to the deteriorating quality of life in the neighbourhood and all the problems that plagued it, a strong community and a large number of activist and voluntary groups developed to provide support among residents, care for children, tenant organising, etc., which both residents' narratives and academic/archival literature attest to (Boyle 2005: 185; Hayes and Greaves 1993: 2; Power 1993: 22; Power 2000: 254). The decade of the 1970s is described by historian Somerville-Woodward as a "training ground" for community activists who lobbied and protested for amenities in the area and for help from the municipality in maintaining the infrastructure (2002: 50). In the 1980s, which was a particularly bleak decade for Ballymun, the community response to the harsh living conditions became even stronger: by the end of the 1980s, there were already over ninety local community organisations established, of which 32 were officially recognised tenants' associations (Power 1997: 250; Somerville-Woodward 2002b: 54). It seems then that in the case of Ballymun, the community was formed and sustained out of the experience of a shared stigma, shared care and concern for the large number of children in the area, the experience of similar social circumstances by the inhabitants (young families, low-income social housing tenants), and out of a common struggle arising from the lack of affordances of the environment as well as daily-life limitations.[3]

Simultaneously with the growing number and level of activities of community groups, a new government policy took place, reflected in the increased municipal presence in the area (for example, local municipal offices were set up instead of managing the neighbourhood from their central position as before) and in supporting the engagement of the municipality in the civil sphere. Whereas in the past, the community in Ballymun used to take shape as a spontaneous configuration of angry residents, meeting together to express their discontent and plan action, it has since the late 1980s, and in particular the 1990s, started taking shape as a set of institutionalised groups, employing professional "community development workers" and taking on the nature of a "minibureaucracy" (Boyle 2005: 192).

In the 1990s, then, this strength of the Ballymun community played a central role in initiating the regeneration of the neighbourhood and in securing funding for the area's renewal (Carnegie and Norris 2015: 501). The initial decision to regenerate the neighbourhood and the beginnings of regeneration took place during the Celtic Tiger period of economic prosperity that followed the opening up of the free-market and foreign investments in Ireland, with

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[2]
The municipality wanted to facilitate the transition of the more promising social tenants to home-ownership by offering them a large subsidy (thus emptying its available housing stock and stimulating the stagnant private housing market). This option was taken up mainly by the wealthier tenants from the least promising neighbourhoods, including Ballymun, to escape the stigma and change their address. The poorer neighbourhoods consequently suffered a huge blow as a large proportion of working social tenants moved away, while the unemployed and the poorest remained there.

[3]
The initial "model" of the municipal tenants who got moved into the Ballymun flats was two-parent families with young children, so there was – throughout of the history of the neighbourhood – a large population of children and youth in the area.

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the funding for neighbourhood regeneration secured through public-private partnerships (Carnegie and Norris 2015: 500). Uneven urban development, low unemployment, and a shortage of skilled workers in Dublin as a result of the onset of Ireland's neoliberalisation "led to an incentive to re-integrate the reserve army of labour in places such as Ballymun" (Muir 2004: 961–962). The fundamental aims of the neighbourhood regeneration were to "lift the residents out of welfare-dependency, to reposition the suburb within the market economy, reattach the locals to the mainstream and accordingly to create so-called 'sustainable communities'" (Boyle and Rogerson 2006: 206), thus achieving the physical, economic, and social integration of Ballymun into the wider urban area (Kintrea and Muir 2009: 84). The main idea of the regeneration was to upskill the large number of unemployed residents and include them in the labour market, thus lowering the need for welfare support to the area, and to transform the area into a more desirable neighbourhood that could be profitable (in the context of the housing crisis in Dublin, where land and housing have a high market value), the idea being that a number of the new dwellings in the area would be intended for the private market.

REGENERATION AND MORALISATION

The regeneration strategy covered five core programme categories: 1) housing, 2) employment, 3) education and training, 4) neighbourhood identity, and 5) the town centre (BRL 1998: 1). In terms of housing, the high-rise apartment blocks, idiosyncratic for the neighbourhood, were demolished and replaced by over 5,600 dwellings in low-rise buildings (houses and blocks), which were built at a higher density in the area (BRL 2006: 12). Of these, over two thousand were for the social housing tenants who were moved from the blocks into new homes; the remaining housing built was part of private, co-operative and

Figure 1: Old Ballymun. 1970: An aerial photograph of the Ballymun tower blocks in 1970. Photograph: The Irish Times.

Figure 2: New(er) Ballymun. Year unknown. Available from:
https://www.independent.ie/business/irish/potential-for-mixed-uses-on-ballymun-site/38138870.html.

other forms of housing stock (BRL 2006: 12), the aim being to create a more even mix of working and middle-class tenants. Indeed, at the end of the century, when the regeneration process began, 80% of housing in Ballymun was social and 20% owner-occupied (BRL 2008), in contrast to the national ratio of only 9.7% social housing (McGrath 2015). A key regeneration effort was to reverse this figure and increase the proportion of residents living in owner-occupied housing in the neighbourhood to 57% (Purcell 2007: 11).[4] The underlying assumption of such policies is that low-income individuals will benefit from social interactions with people of higher socio-economic status, as middle-class role models can help to instil 'better' values in their welfare-dependent council-tenant neighbours (cf. Crump 2002: 583); and with the help of role models, lower-class residents will come to know and accept middle-class norms, such as the normativity of two-parent families and the commitment to education, employment, and home ownership (cf. Carnegie, Norris and Byrne 2018; Crump 2002). Such a moralising argument seems to be, I believe, also clearly evident in the many discussions and accounts of tenure diversity in Ballymun. Geraldine Tallon, Secretary General at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, stated in a Public Accounts Committee debate in 2008 that "Ballymun is now evolving into a mixed tenure community, moving from a cycle of dependency to a

[4] The number of residents has been unstable since its inception due to the transience of inhabitants, who were being moved into empty flats in Ballymun but then requesting to be moved elsewhere. Power (1997) estimates that before the regeneration, the population was between fifteen and twenty thousand. At the beginning of the regeneration in 1998, the population was around seventeen thousand; this fell to slightly over fifteen thousand in 2002 and gradually rose afterwards. The rise in population may be attributed to the increasing number of private dwellings built in the area, which attracted members of the middle-class aspiring to homeownership. Before the regeneration, the population of Ballymun was extremely young due to the city council dwelling allocation priority (at first, two-parent families with young children moved in, later, when the neighbourhood started losing its appeal, followed by many one-parent families); it has been gradually ageing. Residents from Ballymun remained in the neighbourhood during and after the regeneration, but many were rehoused to other locations within Ballymun. The regeneration itself was conducted in a piecemeal fashion: once a certain amount of housing stock was built to rehouse the residents, an equivalent amount of old housing stock was demolished, thus making space for new development. The regeneration officially lasted for seventeen years, though at the time of my fieldwork, many places in Ballymun were still reserved for property development or were building sites. In the words of my interlocutor Stephen: "We were left on a building site for nearly twenty years".

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sustainable community in its own right" (Houses of the Oireachtas 2008). Moreover, one of the documents of the agency in charge of conducting the regeneration (Ballymun Regeneration Limited; BRL) stated that "in order to attract the private sector into Ballymun, the area must, somewhat, pertain to values of [...] the professional classes", and that the aim of artistic interventions in the area was "the education of a social group in line with ruling-class thinking" (as cited in Kelly 2018).

Other changes brought about by the physical regeneration of Ballymun include the development of new community facilities such as an arts and culture centre and sports and recreational centres (Purcell 2007: 4). Each of Ballymun's five neighbourhoods has also been given its own neighbourhood centre, with the aim of creating a "village buzz'" (Kapila and Finnan 2019). In addition, new parks and infrastructure were built (Purcell 2007: 4), new employment opportunities were created in the area (Kintrea and Muir 2009: 93), and training and education were provided by local organisations to equip neighbourhood residents with new skills (BRL 2006: 72–76). Despite some improvements, the project was not generally considered an unquestionable success. The promised business and technology centre did not ultimately come to fruition, nor did the metro line that was supposed to connect Ballymun to Dublin city centre (Purcell 2007: 26). Most painfully for the residents, the existing shopping centre was demolished to make way for a new one, which has also not yet been built, as the economic crisis of 2008 caused a shortage of funds that hindered the completion of the project (van Lanen 2017). The regeneration process took much longer than planned – intended initially to be finished in less than a decade (Kintrea and Muir 2009: 85), the regeneration actually took seventeen years and officially ended only in 2015 (LAP 2017: 1), though many of the residents claim it has been left unfinished.
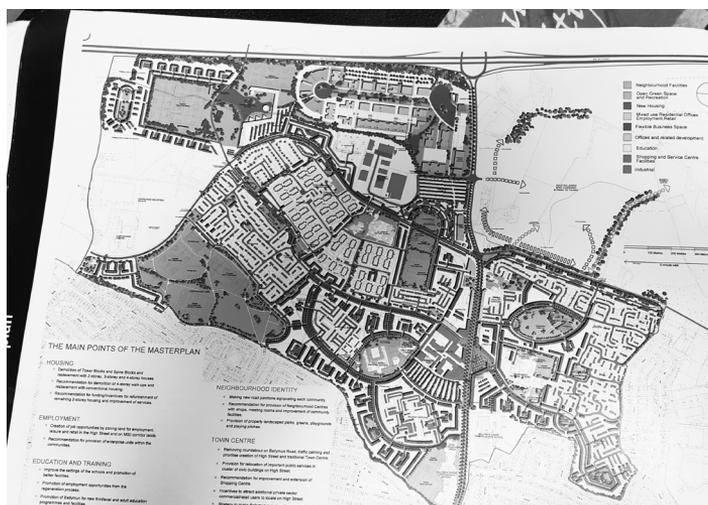

Figure 3: Masterplan for the regeneration of Ballymun. Photo: Alina Bezlaj. Ballymun Community Archive, Ballymun Library.

The changes introduced in the neighbourhood meant that the residents had to get used to new ways of living, and these required a different type of individual. Regeneration thus not only physically and socially transformed the neighbourhood, but also, with hidden moral undertones, attempted to simultaneously transform the inhabitants who did not fit the model of the neoliberal subject. Thus, in the process of transforming the environment, they also sought to transform the residents, using techniques of control and responsabilisation to create responsible, self-sufficient, and active citizens who are successful in managing their resources, responsible for themselves and their circumstances, but also active in the community – repaying their debt to the state (and its aid) by being active in caring for themselves and the community (see Bezlaj 2024). The consequence of such changes is that some of the responsibilities that were previously in the domain of the state shifted to other entities such as the family, civic groups and individuals (Trnka and Trundle 2014). The regeneration which enacted such moralising visions about the behaviour of the residents of Ballymun was rooted in the ideas of Giddens' (1998) "Third Way" political programme, which posits an image of the person-citizen who is self-sufficient and independent. The regeneration process, which implemented in Ballymun the broader changes in Ireland's economic orientation towards neoliberalism and the political propagation of the Third Way agenda, is often criticised not only by the locals living in the context of its consequences, but also by the academics writing about it. The latter have described such Third Way urban programmes, which presume and create "good" communities (Boyle and Rogerson 2006: 201), as a "thinly veiled moral crusade" (2006: 203), arguing that they are ideologically grounded in "moral elements of control", and build their vocabulary on "moral scolding" (Crawford 2001: 74) that foregrounds individual and community responsibility (Crawford 2001). "Morally commendable communities" within such a viewpoint, as Boyle and Rogerson explain, "are defined as those who can reattach themselves to the 'mainstream' and stand on their own two feet within the terms set by neoliberal market economics" (2006: 201).

The moral undertones of regeneration processes that transform communities and their spaces are thus not limited to Ballymun; as Ruppert puts it in his study of a Toronto neighbourhood, "problematizations of space are euphemisms for problematizations of the conduct of groups", so that "rather than on the overt moralization of conduct, practices focus on space, thereby concealing their foundations in moralization" (2006: 228). Cully, furthermore, makes a strong claim that all urban renewal is informed by an "idea of the poor as 'undeserving' and 'immoral'" (Cully 2019: 20), while Manzo adds that regeneration is itself "irredeemably bourgeois" and can lead to the "moral displacement" (2012: 23–24) of residents, as they experience a diminished sense of belonging in gentrified neighbourhoods that encourage bourgeois practices of consumerism.

COTTAGES AND TOWERS, (SELF-)RESPONSIBILITY AND CARE

As council residents were moved from blocks of flats into cottages (many with terraces or small gardens), they had to take on the care of their homes (and their gardens), more so

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Figure 4: Flats at Ballymun, Dublin (1968). RTÉ Archive.

Figure 5: Terraced cottages. Source: Google maps.

than was necessary in the previous block housing. In the new low-rise houses, they have to take care of their own heating costs and pay for their own utilities, which was taken care of (almost free of charge) by the municipality when they lived in the high-rise blocks (see e.g. Brady 2016). To this end, workshops were organised for the residents during this transition to teach them about the responsibility of taking care of their own households and managing their monthly finances (see e.g. Combat Poverty Agency 2008: 3). The terraced cottages, where the residents of the neighbourhood were relocated after the regeneration, are, I argue, thus one of the symbols of New Ballymun and represent a new way of living and of transforming individuals into (self-)responsible and active citizens, the kind that the neoliberal moral framework presupposes (Clarke 2005: 448).

New Ballymun, which presupposes such new – transformed – inhabitants and which is the vehicle for the neoliberal visions of moral (self-)responsibility, is however often the target of criticism and antagonistic narratives by the long-term residents. These narratives see the local authorities as responsible for the problems that the neighbourhood has faced since its inception; moral engagement is not seen as a need to change one's own self and habits, but rather to maintain the caring (community) networks that have been established in Ballymun since it was build, and which, as the residents themselves say, have been weakened by the regeneration (as residents were moved around to new homes, the social bonds dispersed). For them, New Ballymun is unsatisfactory: they see it as a place where fewer and fewer public spaces are accessible to them (van Lanen 2020), where the new middle-class residents more or less keep to themselves, where the promises made to them by the local authority have been broken, and above all, they see it as a place where the community ties have weakened and care for others has diminished.

> People become very isolated, they close the door, they're not involved in what's happening around anymore. (Matt)

> We were promised all these things by the BRL, and there was nothing. I reckon it was an experimenting social engineering of people basically, how you can replace one population with another. (Stephen)

As a counterbalance to New Ballymun and the broken communal bonds and moral visions of self-responsibility that emerge from it, Old Ballymun and its idiosyncratic blocks that represent the distributive Keynesian welfare state is often evoked in the memories and narratives of the residents. They evoke memories of the amenities in these blocks, which were almost free of charge, provided by the municipality (heating in the blocks was centrally organised and part of the extremely low municipal rent, municipal waste collection was shared by the block and organised by the municipality), and above all of the community that was formed in these blocks (see Bezlaj 2024).

> Patrick: Ah, I miss my flat terrible. Dylan: There was constant heating and everything. Patrick: The community was more closer. Dylan: Yeah it was, he's right. Patrick: The community was more closer, like. (Patrick and Dylan)

> Everybody knew each other, you could walk into each other's flats. There was a lot of people helping each other, there was always someone out there to look out for the kids… (Nimah)

The blocks they used to live in, and the Old Ballymun of which these are a part, are thus, I claim, the bearers of narratives antagonistic to New Ballymun; these narratives foreground the strong community of the past and the ethic of care that is part of it, in contrast to the isolating tendencies of the new neighbourhood. Old Ballymun is a place that exists purely as an assemblage of memories and affects – it brings together multiple timelines and different places into a unity (cf. Hamilakis 2017) in which the presences and absences of the spatial features of Ballymun's various temporal manifestations overlap and intertwine; some elements of place are selected and pushed to the fore, while others are forgotten.[5] As a place, it acquires its existence through affective memory and narratives of the past.

Acts of remembering that evoke this idealised place with strong community ties can "take on performative meaning within a charged field of contested moral and political claims" (Antze and Lambek 1996: vii). Preston argues that "the places from which we speak often give expression to our moral commitments" (2009: 178). At once real and intangible, Old Ballymun represents an oasis of meanings from which the residents can draw on a daily basis; and grounded in this oasis of meanings is an alternative repertoire of moral engagement to that imposed by Dublin's local authority through the regenerated neighbourhood. The long-time residents of Ballymun, who encounter, live in, and draw from Old Ballymun every day, thus speak from a place that is their own and not fully accessible to anyone but themselves. However, the overlapping manifestations of the places from which the residents speak, and the partially different moral repertoires which they may draw upon, can lead to potentially antagonistic moral interpretations of place in their narratives.

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An example: while the flats in the high-rise blocks were consistently remembered extremely fondly by the residents and longed for, the interlocutors would also – though rarely – bring up how harsh life was in them and the difficulties they faced. This translates into sometimes ambivalent feelings about the flats: "The flats, no no. I'm fucking glad them flats are gone. Now I did love my flat, I loved my heating, I loved my big huge flats, like huge, big huge flats" (Caoimhe). Most often, however, the negatives are not actively remembered and the flats and blocks are talked about exclusively in positive and nostalgic terms.

The (*self-*)*responsibility* that stems from the form of life in the terraced houses and the *relational care* that stems from the memories of life in the blocks of flats are two core elements of two different moral repertoires that presuppose two different types of selves, the atomised and autonomous individual of the neoliberal Third Way and the relationally dependent individual of the Keynesian welfare state (Sevenhuijsen 2000; Trnka and Trundle 2014). These two distinct moral repertoires are often compatible. The Third Way programme applied in the neighbourhood through regeneration did not make a cut with or a turn away from past morality; rather, it aimed to intensify the forces that bind individuals in relationships and to exercise power through the community that these forces have shaped (Rose 2000). In this way, many of the practices of solidarity that residents carry out on a day-to-day basis find their grounding in both repertoires. However, the moral vision of the Third Way is also sometimes different from its predecessor, which was rooted in the Keynesian welfare state. The conflict between the two visions of morality manifests itself in the processes of assigning blame for the problems that have plagued the neighbourhood since its inception – and are still present today.

These problems are manifold: they concern the presence of drugs and crime in the neighbourhood, the degradation of the environment and the lack of maintenance of the dwellings; additionally, many of my interlocutors stressed the lack of services and spaces for leisure activities, socialising and community bonding. They particularly highlighted the need for a new shopping centre in Ballymun, which in the past served as the main socialising point in the neighbourhood, before it started to deteriorate and was demolished in the regeneration (van Lanen 2017).

Assigning responsibility for the problems facing a neighbourhood to individuals who are not-good-enough and emphasising the need to change them – the narratives on which the regeneration was grounded – are thus one way of constructing blame. It is common to hear statements from the residents about the need to change people and about their laziness or bad habits, resulting from an inappropriate upbringing.

> The place still struggles with people who, for whatever reason, are not good at being sociable, being clean, not using drugs, not letting their houses go in decay… (Matt)

> They don't know how to have a kid. So that's the problem, how do you solve that then? Then you have to educate the parents… (Ryan)

> The area looks better, they've built new things, it looks nicer. You see, but none of that is gonna change people's attitudes. People have to change from within. (Ryan)

The pre-regeneration residents (mostly social tenants) often viewed the pursuit of a greater mix of tenures as a positive and beneficial municipal policy and as key to the successful development of the neighbourhood. However, some interviewees also explicitly

stated that such a policy is beneficial because it directly affects the transformation of the people themselves:

> You should make sure you have a mix of different type[s] of people, not the same type of people, not all rich, not all poor. It has to be rich and poor so that one rubs off the other. I know they say one bad apple spoils the whole thing. If you have a bad family, make sure you have five good families around, so that child has a chance not to become like their parents and to see how other kids are treated. (Caoimhe)

The vision of morality and human change expressed in these narratives to a certain extent and in the residents' own way mirrors the official vision of the local authorities. This vision perceives the place and its community as inadequate compared to ideal neoliberal areas and communities, and the concern for the place is thus directed towards calls for moral change from the people of Ballymun – who need to start taking better care of themselves, their houses, their children, and their aspirations in life.

On the other hand, the moral repertoire of care that many residents adopt places the blame for the problems of the neighbourhood on the insufficient care shown to the place and its inhabitants by the local authorities. The care that should have been given to the place and the community by the local authority and the residents themselves is lacking, and this has negative consequences. The local authority's moralising visions of the need for residents to be self-sufficient are challenged by the residents for whom care – both from the local authority and from other residents – is a fundamental normative element. The absence of care felt by the residents is thus negatively evaluated and goes against their normative expectations.

> The City Council here is crap […]. You can phone them up and you say, "Right, I need this, I need that, I need that." "Yeah, I'll get back to you." Two years later you're still phoning up. (Marie)

> In Ballymun they've all learned to just go into themselves and not help anyone else. (Caoimhe)

Whereas in Old Ballymun the municipality provided basic services, and the rest was left to solidarity and mutual aid organisation among the residents themselves, in New Ballymun this care has increasingly turned into municipally funded local organisations, while municipal care for the residents themselves has diminished. Furthermore, according to the long-term residents, the care and community ties between themselves have weakened as they have been rehomed to different areas around the neighbourhood, which affected the bonds that had existed among them before. This is perceived by some of the residents as a moral degradation that has occurred as a consequence of the regeneration and its disruption of community ties. Thus, the residents' outlook that counters that of the Third Way moral repertoire emphasizes the importance of care, and the nostalgic narratives of the past that evoke memories of Old Ballymun and its community and solidarity serve to recuperate care as the main moral element of living in the neighbourhood. Caring, when it appears as an element of the relationships between the residents themselves, is also highly valued in the context of the Third Way, as it serves to relieve the burden of the welfare

state. However, if it is an element of the welfare state's relationship with the inhabitants, it is strongly condemned by this neoliberal framework, which puts in its place the need for self-sufficiency and individual responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have explored the interplay of morality and space, which have both changed over time as the country experienced both political and economic transformations. I have shown how the neoliberal moral order permeated a space through its regeneration; and the ways in which the residents assumed moral repertoires of (self-)responsibility that emerged from this place of New Ballymun. At the same time, I have also focused on the memorial and affective presence of Old Ballymun, in which an alternative moral order for the neighbourhood is embedded and foregrounds the element of care. I have argued that the moral orders overlap in many ways, just as New and Old Ballymun overlap in the experiences of long-time residents, but that antagonisms can also arise between them, especially when it comes to the moral question of the welfare state's care for residents and the ways in which that care might be exercised.

An important part of the moral engagement of the inhabitants of Ballymun is the revival of care, an element of moral repertoires prioritised by both the old Keynesian moral order and the post-regeneration Third Way moral order. However, because of the severed social and community ties that the regeneration has caused by cutting into the continuity of place, the long-time residents feel a sense of moral decline in the neighbourhood, where people are increasingly isolating themselves and turning away from caring for each other; this is left to the professionalised community services into which the municipality and/or government have begun, since the regeneration, to funnel financial support for the neighbourhood. The residents feel anger and resistance towards the local authorities who have caused this moral decline in the neighbourhood, and occasional frustration towards the new middle-class residents who are not involved in (re)building care and community ties in the neighbourhood (though, as I have shown, they at other times seem to appreciate having them as a model of morality). In this way, narratives about memories of Old Ballymun both revive and revitalise elements of the old moral order, and establish moral boundaries between the long-standing residents of Ballymun, whose nostalgic narratives of the past construct their membership in the moral community of the place, and others who are denied this membership.

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POVZETEK

Članek obravnava prepletanje in povezanost morale s prostorom na primeru delavskega predmestja Ballymun v Dublinu, ki je bilo zgrajeno v 60. letih 20. stoletja kot stanovanjska soseska za (izključno) občinske najemnike in prenovljeno v zgodnjih 2000-ih. Avtorica analizira, kako se v Ballymunu prepletata dve moralni ureditvi: tista iz časa »starega Ballymuna« in nova, oblikovana skozi neoliberalno prenovo soseske, ki je utemeljena v načelih političnega programa t. i. »Tretje poti«. Prenova ni zgolj fizično in socialno preoblikovala soseske, temveč tudi poskušala preoblikovati njene prebivalce v (samo)odgovorne, aktivne državljane.

Prebivalci so te nove moralne vzorce sicer v določeni meri sprejeli, vendar pa jih pogosto v vsakdanjih praksah in pogovorih tudi zavračajo, pri čemer se opirajo na spomine in čustvene vezi s starim Ballymunom, ki sta ga zaznamovali močna skupnost in normativnost skrbi za druge. V članku avtorica pokaže, kako dva različna moralna repertoarja, ki se vežeta

na dve različni manifestaciji kraji, vodita do različnih interpretacij preteklosti, sedanjosti in težav v soseski, kot so revščina, kriminal, pomanjkanje storitev ter razkroj skupnosti.

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