A neighbourhood of fragmentation.

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Chapter 28
A Neighbourhood of Fragmentation

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Abstract Once isolated as a bordered neighbourhood, the Raploch Council housing estate in Stirling, Scotland, has been regenerated through a gentrification policy that encouraged increased owner-occupied housing in an area previously dominated by social housing. As a result, new norms and values were reflected in the visual environment and architecture by creating new buildings and moving new residents into the area. To investigate these issues, an auto-driven photo-elicitation method was used. Area residents, both established and new, were given single-use cameras and asked to take photos of the places and spaces that illustrated the changing nature of the Raploch. Guidance to the participants was limited to allow their perspectives to emerge and to reduce the researcher's effect. Simultaneously, this method considered Foucauldian power relationships as the participants guided the discourse through their images. The interviews that followed focused on the participants' photos. It became clear that social boundaries between established and new residents resulted in an "*us* and *them*" discourse. These social differences were reinforced by the physical barrier of a road between each group's areas. In addition, the participants were acutely aware of another border—the different architectural styles of each area. Established residents considered the architectural style of the other group as *out-of-place,* and newer residents viewed the housing of the established residents as *old* with an underlying discourse of needing redevelopment by the new residents.

Keywords Social housing ⋅ Gentrification ⋅ Auto-drive photo-elicitation method ⋅ Raploch ⋅ Stirling ⋅ Scotland

28.1 Introduction

The urban space is read, interpreted, and created by influential stakeholders, inhabitants, and visitors. The discourse between these parties is embedded in the physical structures and contextualised in a particular place's social and historical context. This

becomes pertinent when considering the neighbourhood, Raploch, which is unique. Although Raploch is located in the periphery of Stirling, it is distinctly separate from the city. Its connection with Stirling, a place of great historical significance in Scotland, is reinforced by the towering mediaeval castle on a hill overlooking at the neighbourhood. Stirling, a university town, is located in central Scotland and within commuting distance of Glasgow, with Raploch adjacent to the motorway.

These unique features made the regeneration project of a public–private partnership economically attractive, primarily as the project was conceptualised before the 2008 economic crash within a housing boom. On the other hand, as a public body, the council was interested in creating social change as Raploch was within the most deprived 5% of residential areas on the index of multiple deprivations[1] in Scotland (SIMD 2022).

Public sector involvement has long been a feature in this area, with council housing built since the 1920s in various stages. However, even these early developments were criticised when the housing qualities were recognised as the slums of the future due to lower quality building specifications and relatively smaller accommodations compared with other developments of the time. However, long before the council's involvement, historical 16th-century sources had attributed negative characteristics to the area. These included low wool quality, deprivation and high crime rates. Furthermore, after the Irish potato famine, it was described as an Irish village with Irish immigrants moving to the area. The increase in the Roman Catholic population reinforced differences and separateness. This territorial stigmatisation was supported by moving the population in clearances from the slums around the castle to the council housing development starting in the 1920s (Waquant et al. 2014).

Over time, these factors led inhabitants to leave the area, which led to an increase in the number of vacant properties. In response, the council introduced a policy in the 1980s that encouraged a fast-track system of letting housing. Unfortunately, this resulted in a transient community using the area to base criminal activities, such as drug dens and housing benefit fraud. This further stigmatised the area, and it became what is described in a broader social and media context as a sink estate characterised by its notoriety; as one of the new residents of the research project explained from her childhood impressions of the area:

> "...you never went there you were not allowed to go down there when you were little you were not allowed to, you know? We did not drive through their cause there is no reason to drive through there to get anywhere it is just a housing estate you never went down that area, and you were not if you know if you accidentally walk down that way you got a bit freaked out, had to you know you run the other direction." (a new resident in their 20s)

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[1] The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivations across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivations. SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). People using SIMD will often focus on the data zones below a certain rank, for example, the 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland (Scottish Government 2019) https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD.

These characteristics, combined with economic factors, led to the inception of a regeneration programme in 2007. As part of the redevelopment, council housing was demolished and replaced by newly built owner-occupied and social housing. In addition, a new school facility that incorporated Roman Catholic and non-denominational schools, special needs schools, and community centres was built. The demolition took place on one side of the Drip Road, the main road leading through the area, reinforcing a physical boundary between the newly built and the traditional housing estate. Previous research, as well as a participant in this study, highlighted that even before the regeneration Drip Road was considered a boundary:

> ". .the Drip Road that road splits the Raploch in two. So it was just the other side, and people on this side would call our side the other side!" (an established resident in their 20s).

Therefore this road served as a boundary and enabled the population of different sections to differentiate themselves by focusing on other territorial names from the stigmatising discourse of Raploch and its territorial stigma. In addition to the physical changes, introducing new forms of architecture into the area and social changes brought a new social group of owner-occupier homeowners.

28.2   Methodology

The research project utilised auto-driven photo-elicitation to explore these social and built fabric changes. Established residents and new owner-occupiers were asked to take photographs of their neighbourhood. Only limited instructions guided them. These photos became the starting point of the subsequent interview, offsetting the Foucauldian power relationship. Rather than the researcher, the participants became the experts on their neighbourhood and its developments. This empowering process was particularly pertinent in areas with high deprivation and territorial stigmatisation. It allowed the community to be heard and seen. Within the findings, it became apparent that the photos not only portrayed the social world, but they also served to "betray the choices made by the person holding the camera" (Black 2009: 474). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, which involved professionals who worked with the community. This group was consulted to understand the community and its complexity better.

28.3   A Divided and Fragmented Community

From both oral and visual data, Raploch emerged as a place of division, segregation and fragmentation. These fragmentations lay along various fault lines that resulted from historical and social contexts, changes in the physical development of new buildings, and owner-occupiers moving into newly built houses. The participants often

referred to these disparities by focusing on the built environment and its architecture, cloaking the underlying discourse of divisions and fragmentation.

28.4 Buildings as a Discourse of Segregation and Fragmentation

Barthes (1997) views the urban space as part of the communication of the city "the city is a discourse, and this discourse is truly a language; the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak to our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it by looking at it" (Barthes 1997: 168). This perception is echoed by Dovey (1999: 1), who sees it "as a form of discourse, built form constructs and frames meanings"; hence he considers it as an expression of society which carries multi-layered meanings, thus "places tell us stories; we read them as spatial text" (Dovey 1999: 1).

As an urban place, Raploch is read and interpreted by its inhabitants. However, this interpretation differed between the participants who had just become homeowners and the established residents. Even though both groups juxtaposed changes in the built environment, their descriptions were fundamentally different. The former focused on the old and new, considering the new architecture out of place. This reflected a difference in understanding the place of Raploch and underpinned a sense of separation between these two groups.

28.5 New and Old—New Residents

The new residents considered the new buildings positive, whilst they viewed the old historical buildings negatively. This became apparent when a new resident described her photos of both sides of Drip Road (referring to Figs. 28.1 and 28.2):

> "...this is again the opposite side of the street and these flats here it does not show quite as much as what I have seen yet these are really run-down."
>
> "...this corner everything is just new. It is just really well it is just houses and flats and the fact that it is got this nice pavement...it is just very new. I just quite like it."

As the participants pointed out, this discourse was especially significant in the proximity between the new and the old Raploch on either side of the road. The new residents wanted to differentiate themselves from the old run-down territorial, stigmatised area of poverty and crime by focusing on the difference between the old and the new Raploch. This highlights their otherness to the outside world.

The built environment council housing is a visual reminder of Raploch, something Wacquant, Slater and Bores Pereira (2014) refer to as "blemished of place" associated with a sink estate. The old Raploch architecture represents, for new residents,

Fig. 28.1 Run-down area
(participant)

Fig. 28.2 Newly developed area (participant)

a cultural phenomenon, as Eco (1997) describes. Both areas are primarily residential, however, the architecture of the houses is fundamentally different in terms of design, which is interpreted within a social context. Thus, the social context includes the historical stigmatisation of Raploch per se as a stigmatised place and the generally negative perception of council housing. This perception is influenced by factors such as damaging media representation, positive portrayal of homeownership, and

perception of council housing as a last resort for the economically excluded, especially in an area with limited sales of council housing (Cole and Furbey 1994; Forrest and Murie 1991; Malpass 2005).

For the new residents, this is particularly pertinent, as homes and neighbourhoods are considered identity markers. This is especially as property owners have bought into the new Raploch and its associated place identity as a place of regeneration rather than the old, territorially stigmatised Raploch. Simultaneously, this highlights that both places, old and new Raploch, are not understood as a single entity. Instead, the new residents interpret each place in context with the other. Therefore, as a place, the new Raploch is understood as the old Raploch, and vice versa.

28.6   *Out-of-Place* and *In-Place* Architecture

Conversely, the established residents had a very ambivalent perception of the newly built environment. Whilst they found the new houses and flats aesthetically pleasing, they also thought it was out of place in Raploch. Several established participants compared the architecture of the latest buildings in Raploch with buildings abroad.

> "I do not know, these flats put me in mind of flats you get in the likes of Spain and the hot countries, you know when you go into an apartment because the ones around the corner they have wee verandas that they can come out and sit on." (an established residence in their 50s)

Similarly, another established resident considered the architecture out of place:

> "...set of flats just right down…across from the school and I am not too keen on them. I think it is the layout of them, it is like…its like being in Benidorm!" (an established resident in their 50s)

This perception of *out-of-place* architecture resonates with various theorists who argue that post-modern architecture has limited reference to the local. In this case, many participants discussed that neither balconies nor flat roofs are an architectural feature within the Scottish context. In architectural terms, the regeneration process of repackaging the area entailed aspects of what Dovy (1999) referred to as "power over." In the repackaging of Raploch, it became evident that established residents noted a *foreign* architecture rather than a sense of blending and merging with Raploch. There was also an underlying notion and fear that through the regeneration and the construction of new buildings, the character of the neighbourhood was fundamentally altered and became an unknown foreign territory to the established community. *Out-of-place* represented the established community's reinterpretation of Raploch as a place. Therefore the established community realigned their place perception with the redeveloped physical place Raploch.

This sense of *foreign* architecture also needed to be seen in that housing for the working classes is primarily a utilitarian aspect of life, a place to live. Whereas for the middle classes, it is seen as a consumer good that reflects identity (Allen 2008; Zukin 1993; Bourdieu 1990). These changes in the built environment can also be understood in terms of displacement, which Davidson and Lee (2009) saw as a physical

displacement with old residents moving out and as changing the place to exemplify security and home. Thus, transforming a working-class place into a new middle-class community is indirect displacement. Again this resonates with gentrification. In this case, it can be described as "new-build gentrification" (Davidson and Lee 2009). The sense was that the new buildings in Raploch were aesthetically pleasing. Simultaneously, being *out-of-place* resonates with Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007: 122), who have argued that in a similar context, changes in the built environment "may well be accompanied by growing feelings of relative deprivation; on the part of existing residents." Consequently, it could be argued that the *out-of-place* architecture is a physical representation of wealth and, therefore, highlights the relative deprivation of the old Raploch, which explains its rejection by the established community.

When considering architecture as *in-place* or *out-of-place*, several established participants compared and contrasted the built environment of newly built and established housing areas. This aspect becomes particularly apparent in the comments of an established resident (in the 40s) when he referred to photos of the newly built flats,

> "...ah but I think they look out the place there if it was a brand new scheme brand new area and all the houses were like they are and there was a gap before you get the normal house and you would say fair enough, but them being right across from there looks out of place. It always looks it is run-down they have any thought to try and blend it into the rest of the area; that's my opinion anyway." (an established resident in their 40s)

He did not only consider the physicality of the built environment in Fig. 28.3, but the cleanliness around Raploch Campus, a building frequently photographed, stating,

Fig. 28.3 Raploch Campus (participant)

"I said I think as a stand-alone it looks quite nice and it looks clean and organised, and so does the campus. The campus looks very well maintained cause something there is one paper nae rubbish or anything, so it is so mean it is very clean, and everything looks very functional, and I do not think it brings anything new to the area I still think like the sandstone buildings are far nicer than these wooden and concrete monstrosities, but eh if it was just the campus and nae flats I would not think too much about it, but the clash between the two is quite jarring especially it is on one side it is like left side good and right side bad you know..." (an established resident in their 40s)

These comments also highlight that such comparing and contrasting was a value judgement, the left side good and the right side bad. This value judgement was physically expressed for the established residents not only by the architecture, the decision not to build average houses, and the cleanliness around the campus. This *out-of-place* notion of the established working-class residents can be understood within Bourdieu's (1987) concept of *habitus*.

The planners and architects incorporated their middle-class *habitus* into the architecture through their sense of aesthetics and overt intent to attract middle-class people to buy these new buildings in Raploch. This, in turn, gives their own different *habitus* and repels the long-established working-class residents. These new buildings physically legitimise the new residents' *habitus* by discrediting the culture of the established communities. This architecture can be seen in the context of what Bourdieu (1990; 1984) described as *"symbolic violence",* whereby a sense of intrusion and rejection is expressed through the design of a redefined built environment that does not incorporate *normal houses*. Consequently, such *symbolic violence* can be considered a criticism of the established working-class community and its taste and lifestyle. This expresses a sense that the *old* Raploch is still in need of regeneration.

This was seen as a further threat to the established community. *Symbolic violence* is arguably enacted in the established community by being *gifted* by elements such as the campus. For Bourdieu (1992: 23) such giving was also "*a way of possessing: it is a way of binding another whilst shrouding the bond in a gesture of generosity.*" The underlying discourse is that regeneration demands a reciprocal act from the established community, the need to change.

Considering the Raploch Campus and the established residents' perception of it, it is pertinent to consider another building mentioned by the same group of participants as architecturally different (Fig. 28.4) and not fitting in. Nevertheless, the established resident described it as fitting in very well:

"I just think its a nice looking building it just seems to tie in really well with the area, and it looks historical even given its age kind of as I said 1930s there...there about and obviously has a bit of history and has always been planted there ehm it kind of fits in with the rest of the place." (established resident 40s)

This is further evidence that the sense of a building fitting or seeming *out-of-place* is understood in terms of physical differences and social contexts, such as the regeneration process and the historical background.

The interrelationship between *in-place* and *out-of-place* and social context becomes apparent by the absence of photos and the lack of discussion of build- ings by both new and established residents. One such building is St. Mark's Parish

Fig. 28.4 Distinct character (participant)

Church, situated in a prominent location on Drip Road. Another is a 1960s modernist building that is significantly different in the architectural style typical to the area.

Conversely, being *out-of-place* or *in-place* is, to a great extent, socially contextualised rather than merely the result of architectural form. Without minimising the significance of buildings, their form, materials, and their position in a place display social power relationships. The importance of architectural expression becomes particularly pertinent when it does not consider the social-cultural context, as seen in Fig. 28.5 and discussed in the subsequent section. This highlights another fragmentation within the community: religion and religious sensibilities. This warranted consideration, although as other participants took photos of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church Hall, it could be argued that it had limited impact.

28.7   Religious Fragmentation

Raploch has a long history of being religiously mixed with two significant religions: the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholics. The most recent census in 2011 stated that 23.5% of the population in the area considered themselves members of the Church of Scotland and 23.0% Roman Catholics (Scotland's census 2022). This is a relatively high proportion in a Scottish context, as Roman Catholicism is a minority religion in the general population. This stems from Irish immigration during various intervals, particularly after the Irish potato famine. It is essential to remember that fundamental power inequalities between majority Protestant and minority Roman Catholic groups led to historical discrimination, sectarianism, and

poverty (Dimeo and Finn 1998). The historical existence of sectarianism in Scotland has been attributed to Protestant and Roman Catholic Irish immigrants that brought rivalries between them in Ireland and Scotland (Rosie 2004; Bruce et al. 2004). At the same time, Robertson et al. (2008a: 94) suggest "that religious rivalry has been displaced by football, or that the two have become so intertwined as to be inseparable" with the two Glasgow football teams reflecting the two sides, Celtic being associated with Roman Catholicism and Rangers with Protestantism. A previous study found that religious identity had been historically significant, though it had lost relevance in the area, and sectarian tensions have subsided (Robertson et al. 2008a).

Nevertheless, whilst considering the building shown in Fig. 28.5, which participants frequently discussed, it became apparent that religious fragmentation was still a consideration to the participants:

> "the reason why I do not like this one is because of the colour I just cannot understand why they painted it green it is green ehm not that I do not think the Raploch is particularly bothered about ehs peoples whether people are Protestant or Roman Catholic" (an established resident in their 40s)

Similarly, a key informant wondered how the community would react to the green wall of the newly built house, as green is associated with the Celtic football club. Conversely, blue is associated with the Rangers Football Club and has a Protestant-Unionist identity (Bruce et al. 2004). Hence these colours are linked to a particular tribal identity, allowing associations to develop a marker of separation that could lead to conflict. He reiterated a historical incident when the council had painted metal fences in Raploch according to council tenants' wishes, either green or blue. As a result, houses were targeted depending on the colour of their fence:

Fig. 28.5 Religiously distinct community (participant)

"...to begin with they asked them what colour they wanted and you would go to the street there, and it was green and blue-green and blue all the way down, and it was causing numerous problems because if you were a sectarian person, you would just go and look at the window and see oh there is a greenhouse and I just go round egg them or graffiti on their house making people really easy targets." (a key informant)

Even though this building may be seen as aesthetically pleasing, in a different cultural context within Raploch, it was a physical representation of various discourses that were loaded with tensions (Rapoport 1982). This building may be seen within post-modern architecture, often detached culturally from its surroundings. The interpretation of this building is influenced historically by Irish immigration and a community that supports two opposing religiously defined football teams. As various theorists suggest, it could be argued that the primary aim was to attract capital in a globalised world (Zukin 1993; Harvey 1989). By being detached from the cultural context, the colour and, consequently, the building could have further encouraged the discourse of *out-of-place* architecture, which the established community frequently voiced.

Both residents and the critical participant voiced misunderstanding and disbelief about the choice of the colour green. Furthermore, they expressed concern about the consequences this choice would have. This is illustrated in a key informants' comment in which he expresses the concern that Protestant sectarian slogans would soon appear on the wall:

"...big green wall obviously you have to remind that there are still sectarian issues in the Raploch because many people different side of the line ….ehm we are kind of waiting to see basically we can see out of our window because we are down at the end of the building and we are just waiting to see the slogans start appearing UDP and everything suddenly appearing a big green wall seems a bit tempting for certain people..." (an established resident in their 40s)

The large green wall was understood as a symbolic provocation to the Protestants and Rangers fans through its association with Roman Catholicism and the Celtic Football Club. Consequently, participants were concerned and thought this would lead to a reaction to redress the significance and power expressed through the wall's sheer size and prominent location, which could be perceived as belittling the Protestant Rangers fans. Consequently, there was a strong sense that the wall could encourage a protest in the form of religiously motivated sectarian graffiti (Cresswell 1996).

28.8   Photos as a Separate Entity

The photos conveyed the separation of the two communities on either side of Drip Road. Within this context, it was significant to understand the participants' social context and whether they were established or new residents in Raploch.

When taking a photo, the photographer's position provided insight into where they positioned themselves in terms of Raploch as a place. This was especially evident

Fig. 28.6 Photo of historical council housing (participant)

in terms of the respective *other side* of the community. In this context, the photo in Fig. 28.6 may also be seen as an expression of the *lifeworlds* of participants, and a reflection of the experience of being in the place *Raploch* and the places entered and those to be avoided. Thus, even though photos can be seen primarily in a semiotic tradition, they also provide glimpses of the experience of being in a place within a phenomenological tradition (Lefebvre 1991; Markus 1993).

28.9 New Residents

All the new residents took photos of the historic council housing estate within the Raploch. These were taken primarily from a peripheral position or at a distance by standing either on the other side of Drip Road or the pavement rather than entering the estates themselves. Figure 28.6 shows a photo taken by a new resident.

Avoiding entering an area resonates with Newman's (1972) observation of symbolic barriers, which can be as subtle as a changing ground surface such as Drip Road. These barriers can result in a person's reluctance to cross. Simultaneously, this barrier can be a consequence of the social memory of Raploch as a stigmatised territory, a "sink estate" associated with poverty, drugs and crime. This memory creates fear and a perception that the new residents will avoid the area as a territory. It could also be argued that because new residents did not take photographs within

Fig. 28.7 Photo of historical council housing (participant)

the heart of the historical council housing estate, they did not consider it part of the new residents' Raploch.

Only one of the new residents entered the area; however, she did this by car, whereas others took photos whilst walking. It could be argued that the vehicle, with its sense of security provided by the enclosure, allowed her to cross the Drip Road boundary (Fig. 28.7).

28.10   Established Residents

Established residents choose to take photos of the new houses from a distance or the periphery, as illustrated in images Figs. 28.8 and 28.9 with a view from the newly created Village Square.

Photos by established and new residents reveal aspects of l*ooking in* rather than entering the other community's sphere. Both felt uncomfortable taking a picture of the *other community*, which could be due to respect for the other's space and privacy and equally due to their lack of familiarity with the other's area. This resonates with the social construction of place where each section of society, through socialisation, comes to *know their place* within a physical and a metaphysical context. Considering Bourdieu (1987), the Raploch can be understood as two *fields* or social worlds, the established Raploch and the new Raploch. Each community avoids the other's field because of their social and cultural capital, reflected in their *habitus*.

Fig. 28.8 (participant)

Fig. 28.9 (participant)

28.11 Conclusion

The new and the established residents' interpretation of Raploch and its incorporation of the regenerated and historical council housing areas differed fundamentally. Both established and new residents observed the same phenomena of difference and

segregation; however, they described it differently. The former focuses on the *out-of-place* discourse and the latter on *new* and *old*. The established residents tended to reject the new buildings, not on aesthetic grounds but because they were *out-of-place* in their area. The established residents' reaction to these new buildings could be seen as a response to *symbolic violence*, devaluing their built environment and creating a sense of indebtedness (Bourdieu 1992).

The new residents conversely wanted to differentiate themselves from Raploch's stigmatised council housing by highlighting that they lived in the newly built Raploch. This was especially evident as they had bought into the area as owner-occupiers. At the same time, the new residents considered that the *old* Raploch still needed regeneration. Again, this highlighted a sense of moral ownership of the area.

This different interpretation of the physical environment provides insight into the social relationships between communities and their understanding of a broader social context. The buildings become the physical expression of the underlying social discourse. This became apparent in the residents' perception of the building with a green feature wall as a religious and football symbol. It became a physical manifestation of the Celtic-Rangers and Roman Catholic-Protestant tension.

The sense of segregation and difference between the established residents and the new owners was reinforced by the physical barrier of Drip Road that separated the newly built development from the pre-regeneration area. This separation also became apparent when considering the photos as a single entity where neither community entered the other's realm.

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