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"Alive after five": Constructing the neoliberal night in Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Abstract

The development of the 'night-time economy' in the UK through the 1990s has

been associated with neoliberal urban governance. Academics have, however,

begun to question the use and the scope of the concept 'neoliberalism'. In

this paper, I identify two common approaches to studying neoliberalism, one

exploring neoliberalism as a series of policy networks, the other exploring

neoliberalism as the governance of subjectivities. I argue that to understand the

urban night, we need to explore both these senses of 'neoliberalism'.

As a case study, I take the 'Alive After Five' project, organised by the Business

Improvement District in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which sought to extend shopping

hours in order to encourage more people to use the city at night. Drawing from

Actor-Network-Theory, I explore the planning, the translation, and the practice of

this new project. In doing so, I explore the on-going nature and influence of

neoliberal policy on the urban night in the UK.

Introduction

In previous studies of the urban night in British cities, the nocturnal cityscape and governance practice have been explained by neoliberalism (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002, Hobbs et al., 2005). As such, the precise nature and role of neoliberalism appears key to understanding the night-time city. Neoliberalism is a description of contemporary relationship between governance and capitalism, in which the forces of the free market and competition have been given greater power, with a focus drawn away from forms of protection against some of the worst effects of highly fluid capital. In the UK, legislation which has previously helped local authorities protect city centres from excessive alcohol consumption has been removed (Hadfield, 2006), whilst multinational or nationwide chains have been able to proliferate over smaller or locally-based independent bars (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). By attempting to change consumption behaviour, these policies have focused on changing the type of people who use city centres at night, to varying degrees of success (Hobbs et al., 2005, Holloway et al., 2009).

More broadly, the related notions of neoliberalism, a 'neoliberal project' and neoliberalisation have been amongst the most contested terms in geography and social science in recent years. For some, the word neoliberal succeeds only in eliding a range of ideas, practices and policies into a single 'black box' signifier, which acts as either academic shorthand for a set of presumptions, or a catch-all

justification for an argument or research project (Barnett, 2005). For others, it remains a powerful description of the current logic of capitalism, even if that logic is "marked by compromise, calculation, and contradiction" (Peck, 2010:106).

In light of criticisms of the use of neoliberalism as a bogeyman or as short hand for the perceived evils of all who dare be capitalist, new approaches towards the neoliberal abound. In particular, two trends in the analysis of neoliberalism can be identified. The first, and perhaps most influential, has argued that what has become most central to neoliberalism is the circulation of key policies and practices. Here, policy networks in which ideas developed in one place spread quickly across other 'competing' cities have come to define contemporary neoliberalism (Tomic et al., 2006, Wacquant, 2008, Ward, 2010b, a, McCann and Ward, 2011, Peck, 2011, Robinson, 2011). A second set of responses to neoliberalism has sought to define it through the subjectivities that it has sought to govern and create, that is, through its attempts to create certain types of behaviour or identities in subjects (Dewsbury, 2007, Ruddick, 2007, Harris, 2009, Springer, 2010). According to this approach, the governance of subjectivities of neoliberalism is key because "a failure to accomplish [the] process of [neoliberal] subjectivation could result in violence or revolution" (Springer, 2010:934) against neoliberalism. In other words, people need not just to be encouraged to act in a certain way, but to be co-opted into believing that neoliberal policies will benefit them.

This paper seeks to makes connections between these two approaches towards studying neoliberalism. Through the case study, I attempt to show how these aspects of neoliberalism are mutually supportive. I will begin by reviewing in greater detail the work on neoliberalism which I have outlined in this introduction. I will then move on to discuss my empirical research, which is based around an initiative in Newcastle-upon-Tyne called 'Alive After Five' (AA5). This is a project attempting to encourage greater use of the city centre in the early evening 'gap' between the day-time and night-time city. AA5 will act as a case study of both mobile neoliberal policy and attempts to mould and govern subjectivities. This empirical material will be used to explore how both these approaches to neoliberalism are apparent within the British urban night. In order to bring these two approaches two neoliberalism together, I have drawn from a 'light' form of actor-network theory (ANT). As well as selecting a few key concepts from ANT, I follow its tendency to focus on the process of launching a project, from conception through to practice. In particular, I will explore a little as to why I feel this approach is well suited towards studying 'fast policy' objects.

Neoliberal Policies: Fast Policy and Shaping Subjectivities

Fast Policy

> "In the long and winding path from its initial (re)articulation as an
>
> ideational-

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ideological project, through to its close encounters with (and enfoldment into) diverse forms of state and extra-state power over the past three decades, neoliberalism has demonstrated remarkable shape-shifting capacities" (Peck, 2010:106)

Rumours of the death of neoliberalism have been greatly exaggerated. As Peck argues, the strength of neoliberalism has been its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Neoliberalism, in which the "colonisation of non-market spheres of activity by the logic of commodity exchange" leads to "a set of paradigmatic changes in the relations between economy, state bodies, society and the nonhuman world" (Castree, 2010:1728), has been even more dynamic and changeable than previous iterations of capitalism. Major events such as the 2008-2012 recession have not resulted in its collapse: rather, new policies, new forms of best practice and new contingent and often contradictory forms of neoliberalism have instead developed. In this paper, the story of AA5 is taken as it shows another attempt to use neoliberal policies to govern subjectivities, that is, to get the 'correct' sort of people to make the 'correct' use of the night-time city.

As I outlined in the introduction, such a tendency has resulted in various responses from academics. One approach has been to question the validity of neoliberalism as a useful term at all. If 'neoliberalism' is so broad, so changeable, so difficult to define, perhaps it is not a 'thing' at all, but a useful academic fiction? As Barnett argues in a particularly scathing attack, "what we have come to

recognise as 'hegemonic neoliberalism' is a muddled set of ad hoc, opportunistic accommodations to... unstable dynamics of social change." A continued focus on 'neoliberalism' is therefore "compound[ing] rather than aid[ing] in the task of figuring out how the world works and how it changes" (Barnett, 2005:10). If neoliberalism was perhaps once an economic ideology which inspired politicians and economists in the mid to late twentieth century, the complexity of contemporary global capitalism renders the term meaningless, and indeed limiting to analysis.

The questions raised by Barnett require deeper analysis than is available in a brief summary. As Castree argues, they bring into question the nature of our concepts, and how we analyse the world (Castree, 2006, 2010). For now, then, I simply want to note that most writers on neoliberalism accept that it is not a single unitary force, with holistic aims and approaches (Larner, 2003, Gibson-Graham, 2008, Peck, 2010). Like these authors, I want to retain the term neoliberalism due to its strength in describing the remarkably similar policies and practices which have spread through global capitalism since the 1980s. Rather than rejecting the concept of neoliberalism, it must be used carefully, with its limits, contradictions and historical and geographical variances acknowledged alongside its spread to a position of dominance.

This need – to develop understandings of neoliberalism which simultaneously avoid the misleading portrayal of it as a hegemonic project, whilst capturing its

global power – has led to the two approaches towards neoliberalism that I have previously mentioned. If neoliberalism is dependent upon dynamic responses to events in order to avoid and correct its own pitfalls, then it requires fast and responsive policy networks (McCann, 2011, McCann and Ward, 2011), which incorporate and spread forms of 'best practice' (Larner, 2003, Bulkeley, 2006). This approach has identified the core of neoliberalism as consisting not of a particular ideology or set of rules. Indeed it emphasises that "for all the ideological purity of free-market rhetoric... [the] practice of neoliberal statecraft is inescapably, and profoundly, marked by compromise, calculation, and contradiction. There is no blueprint. There is not even a map" (Peck, 2010:210). Rather it has identified policy motion, and the networks and practices which support the transference of policies between diverse locations, as the heart of neoliberalism.

This approach helps hold in tension the spread of neoliberalism, and the local specificities of different neoliberalisms. It explores how neoliberalism manages to be simultaneously global in reach through policy networks, yet contingent and local as practices spread. This is exemplified by Ward's studies of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), the neoliberal policy object that this paper will consider in its empirical material. BIDs have a long history in North America, but over the last decade have been exported as a policy tool across the world (Graham, 2000, Ward, 2007). At their heart is an aim to manage city centre spaces in order to better serve the needs of local businesses. For Ward, whilst they are

an archetypal example of a policy which has spread using neoliberal networks, they also show the contingency of this process: it was neither the original nor the most common BID blueprint which was exported from the USA, but the particular form of BID that was used in a handful of areas of New York and Philadelphia (Ward, 2007:662). As Ward argues, these were able to spread through three key practices. First, policy-makers from these cities presented themselves as 'experts', selling their knowledge and experience to other cities and thus spreading their practices. Second, these cities were able to produce tidy and powerful visions of their own successes, attracting 'policy tourists' (Gonzalez, 2011) and presenting them with idealised representations of 'solved' problems. Third, New York in particular has the advantage of being an exotic and evocative name in neoliberal discourse, which local politicians were able to present as an attractive city to copy when importing the idea of the BID. What city would not want to be like the Big Apple?

Shaping Subjectivities

A second set of responses to studying neoliberalism has been to look at the role of neoliberalism in developing 'subjectivities'. Here, the term subjectivity is used to describe a particular understanding of the 'subject', that is, the combination of identity, body and behaviour that creates an 'individual'. Postmodern and poststructuralist uses of the term subjectivity see the subject as created, either in part or in whole, by its social, natural and symbolic context. In particular, I use this term in the context of non-representational theory and actor-network theory

(Harrison, 2000, Mol, 2008, Thrift, 2008, Wylie, 2010), although it should be noted that many of the authors whom I cite use the term within different academic backgrounds. In studies of neoliberalism, authors have argued that the construction and management of subjectivities is the defining characteristic of neoliberal capitalism. Larner describes the rationale behind this:

"the implication [from a series of presentations on neoliberalism] was that state somehow `forces' people to act in this way [as neoliberals]. The complex appeal of concepts such as `freedom', `empowerment', and `choice' was rarely acknowledged and even less likely to be theorised. The significance of these silences is profound. Because these issues were not explored, the tenacity of neoliberalism simply could not be explained" (Larner, 2003:511).

Developing her argument presented above, Larner argues that "the tenacity of neoliberalism" comes from its ability to govern subjectivities through attractive concepts such as freedom and choice. In other words, neoliberalism describes a capitalism that has become attuned to the need to encourage and persuade people to participate in it, and to do this through governing their subjectivity.

The case study of the neoliberal night-time economy in a UK context provides a good example of this, as I have argued elsewhere (Shaw 2010). To summarise: in the 1990s, academics and politicians in the UK combined to support the

liberalisation of night-related legislation, in particular that related to alcohol licensing, in order to encourage more economic activity in cities throughout the night (Comedia, 1991). The arguments varied from those which appealed to cultural sensibilities – "the UK is beginning to develop a cafe society similar to that in mainland Europe but new to the straight-laced streets of British cities" (Kreitzman, 1999:1) -through to those which appealed more directly to the economic -"there is [in increasing economic activity at night] the opportunity of `doubling' the city' s economy, starting perhaps from entertainment but then widening into other areas" (Bianchini, 1995:124).

This liberalisation of the night-time economy was based around a belief that if the proper urban legislative and built environment was created, people's subjectivities would alter so that they would behave differently, taking a new attitude towards drinking. With hindsight, the academics who at that time supported that belief have admitted that it was misguided (Roberts and Turner, 2005:190). Through the 1990s and 2000s, there was a well-documented increase in levels of alcohol-related violence and illnesses in the United Kingdom (Jayne et al., 2006). Citing Jane Jacobs' broader arguments about urban planning, Hadfield et. al. identify the cause of the failure of these legislative reforms to create the new subjectivities which they imagined was the "duplication of the most profitable use" (Jacobs, 1969:259 in Hadfield et al., 2001:300) which occurred in British cities. Night-time legislative changes did not open up a diversity of new nocturnal city centre activities. Rather, large 'mass volume vertical drinking

establishments' proliferated throughout the UK, selling large volumes of alcohol at low prices.

Various studies in geography, sociology and criminology show in detail the night-time economy which emerged from these policies (Hadfield, 2006). Chatterton and Hollands in particular focus on the process of the 'neoliberalisation' of the urban night (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001, Chatterton, 2002, Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). They argue, for example, that the neoliberal night-time economy created 'playscapes', whereby urban landscapes were created within which (limited) levels of 'play' could occur (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). The availability of play appeals to the desire of subjectivity to expand itself, test itself, and forget itself (Guattari, 1996), while the limitations created by the neoliberal backing of this project mean that the play occurs within safe, pre-defined limits (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

Hobbs et. al. suggest that this lead to a paradox, which they label a 'hypocrisy'. Specifically, the neoliberal aim of "suturing together of citizen and consumer" (Barnett et al. 2008:626), becomes impossible. Whilst promoting high levels of consumption is hardly unique to neoliberalism, neoliberalism has emphasised the need for all responsible citizens to be consumers, with an effort to place consumption at the heart of citizenship (Neil and Theodore 2002). The contradiction of alcohol consumptions lies in its effects on the responsibility of citizens: those consumers who become most enthralled to the product stop being

responsible consumers (Hobbs, Winlow et al. 2005). Here, alcohol fits in alongside other products such as fatty foods and tobacco which create a double bind for this discourse of the citizen-consumer. As such, government policy finds itself both encouraging greater consumption of alcohol through licensing deregulation, and punishing those who consumed more alcohol through punitive measures such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Hobbs et al., 2005).

Researching BIDS and Alive After Five

In the previous two sections, we have seen that the background to AA5 is embedded within two trends commonly identified as central to neoliberalism. On the one hand, it is a project enacted by a BID, an organisation that has spread along neoliberal policy networks. As we will see below, AA5 itself has also travelled along these same networks. On the other hand, it is also part of a continuation of the evolution of attempts to shape and mould subjectivities through the built and policy environments. Both of these trends have been central to neoliberalism, and how the neoliberal urban night has developed in the UK. In other words, AA5 serves as an interesting case study example of the nexus of these two well-documented trends.

AA5 was launched by the Newcastle-upon-Tyne based BID, NE1. In England and Wales, BIDs were facilitated in by the Local Government Act 2003. They draw their funds by an extra levy on the property taxes ('rates') of all businesses over a

certain size within their given geographical remit. This extra levy is compulsory, but the BID remains accountable to the businesses from whose tax it draws its finance: a vote on the continuation of a BID must occur every three to five years (Ward, 2007). This vote is not one of equals: rather, the weight of a business's vote is proportional to the levy that it pays into the BID. The BID, once created, takes over certain aspects of service provision, either as an alternative to local authorities or, more commonly, to supplement or improve the current local service provision. As well as being created by a BID, an example of neoliberal fast policy, AA5 is itself an example of policy mobility, having spread from a similar project in one of Newcastle's 'competing cities', Liverpool.

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) has influenced how I researched and analysed my empirical material. There were two major aspects of ANT from which I drew. First, ANT has long had a focus on following the process of creating a project (such as AA5). While the focus in the most famous accounts has often been on failed projects (Latour, 1993, Law, 2002), this orientation is also useful when looking at accounts of projects that are being put into place. Here, I was interested in looking at the process through which AA5 was created, in order to tease out the influence of neoliberal ideas on the management of the night-time city. In particular, then, the use of ANT is helpful in allowing me to draw from the two forms of understanding neoliberalism that have previously been discussed.

Second, and more importantly, ANT is drawn from as it is a strong tool for understanding how practices, organisations and spaces become ordered and organised together (Law, 1992). It therefore provides an orientation towards exploring BIDs that might seek to overcome the impasse in current literature. As Ward states, critical studies of BIDs have struggled to account for why they are so successful (Ward, 2007). This absence has resulted in ideologically-charged accounts of BID success taking centre stage: for example, "BIDs have harnessed private sector creativity to solve complex municipal problems and have made cities safer and cleaner" (Garodnick, 2000:1733). Garodnick, despite his ideology, expresses the key skill of BIDs: namely, the fact that they 'harness' in order to solve 'problems'. Using some of the language of ANT, we are able to overcome this impasse in the BID literature by saying that BIDs gain their power as they are able to act as intermediaries and enrol a number of different actors: businesses, local authorities, transport firms and other public-private service providers. By enrolling these various actors to act towards the same or similar ends, that is by aligning these actors, BIDs are able to achieve what these groups cannot either individually, or in unison without an adequate intermediary. BIDs thus gain their power by making more and more effective connections (Latour, 2005b).

In this empirical analysis, ANT is thus chosen specifically because BIDs appear to fit in well with a typical ANT description of organisation, and because accounts of *how* BIDs function are currently lacking. It has also been used to help structure the analysis, by taking on its chronological approach to studying projects. As such, like

most uses of ANT, this account is not a full-blown ANT project: rather, it draws selectively from key concepts, particularly those which are oriented around organisation. My empirical data consists of interviews with three senior members of staff at NE1, and approximately one month's participant observation – spread over a two month period - of the project. In addition, this data builds upon a longer period of research with street-cleaners, bar staff and fast-food workers operating in Newcastle-upon-Tyne at night, as part of a larger project: inevitably, some aspects of this research will have bled into the specific research on AA5.

Planning Alive After Five

Bridging the 'gap' between the day and night time city centre has been one of the main concerns of city planners with regards to the night (Comedia, 1991). 'Traditional' urban rhythms, associated with a dominance of Fordist factory employment, have seen 'nine to five' workers use the city centre mainly for employment. The development of suburbia in the twentieth century exacerbated this, as workers travel into the city early on and back out either home or to the suburbs at the end of the working day (Karrholm, 2009). Leisure time is then typically spent either at local venues in the evening – such as local sports clubs, community centres or pubs – and then only in the city centre at the weekend. It is telling, for example, that Hägerstrand typically used these rhythms to illustrate his time-space diagrams (Hägerstrand, 1982). Of course, urban rhythms have always been more complex and heterogeneous than this. Nevertheless, these dominant

rhythms combined with the deindustrialisation and depopulation of city centres in the UK through the 1970s and 1980s to leave city centres empty, with little scope for entertainment, living and consumption (Gaffikin and Warf, 1993, Young and Keil, 2010). Though less prominent in the UK than elsewhere, this trend has even in some locations led to the suburbanisation of nightlife provision as well (Hubbard, 2005).

Reversing this trend was the initial concern of NE1. This came out in my interviews with their staff:

> "Specifically, in terms of attracting families in [to the city] and I suppose what stemmed from that [the initial aims of NE1] is Alive After Five and bridging this gap from the daytime economy where Newcastle closes from a retail point of view at around about half past five or six o'clock, or previously had done. And then Newcastle had very much a perhaps hostile perception is perhaps the wrong word but ultimately with the shutters down, lights off and nobody on the streets, not a nice place to be."

I am emailing to let you know that the library is still trying to resolve the online access problem to Progress in Human Geography. Thank you for your patience regarding this matter. We can only apologise for any convenience this has caused, clear image of the city centre as dead and inactive at this time. People,

particularly families and workers, would leave Newcastle at around 17:00 and 18:00 and not then return. The hours until the start of the 'night-time economy proper' were seen as not pulling their weight, that is, as offering an inadequate atmosphere and insufficient contribution to the economy of the city centre.

Certainly, this period sees less activity in Newcastle city centre as a whole. Some locations, however, such as the area around the Central Station are as busy, or even busier, during the early evening than at other parts of the day, as people travel in and out of the city. As such, it is clear that it was not a complete evacuation of the city centre that was the problem for the businesses which fund NE1. Rather, the problem was the reduction in the use of the city centre as a space of consumption, as a space which was economically active. Furthermore, the greater influence of larger businesses such as major retailers, due to the structure of power over NE1, emphasised this period as a time of economic downturn, whilst smaller businesses such as pubs and restaurants might experience this period as busier.

In planning AA5, NE1 faced the task of enrolling various agents towards this end of increasing consumption behaviour, and of changing the sort of people using the city centre between 18:00 and 22:00. Enrolment is a key concept of ANT, particularly of early ANT. It describes the process by which actors achieve goals through the co-option of other actors into their network; in doing so an actor "succeeds in ordering a larger section of the social world in terms of its

simplifications" (Callon and Law, 1982:620). Enrolment occurs when one actor can align others towards its aims. NE1 was in a strong position to achieve this enrolment through its pre-existing connections: members of local transport groups and the local council sit on its executive board. The funding that NE1 receives from local businesses meant that there was already mutual interest in businesses following NE1's lead. NE1 were also able to use marketing data, which showed high levels of public support for extended retail opening hours, to help align the interests of major retailers with NE1. There were some difficulties in enrolling companies, however. Most notably, many of the chain shops had complex management structures, in which it was not clear who had the authority to allow for later opening. Furthermore, NE1 had no particular power to oblige companies to open: as such, there was no guarantee that shops would fulfil their promises. Indeed, as a staff member that I interviewed commented, on the first night of AA5 some shops were shut that he had been told would open, whilst others which had given no promise decided to stay open. Enrolment here was thus only able to achieve so much.

Infrastructurally, NE1 also made use of an advantageous situation – that Newcastle City Council own most of Newcastle's central car parks – in order to offer free parking in the city centre after 17:00. However, despite close network connections, they were largely unable to enrol local transport companies into AA5. The staff at NE1 with whom I spoke explained this by the popularity of day or week tickets, which are valid at any time: the result of these is that any extra

services that would be provided to support AA5 would generate little extra income. Here, then, being closely connected to another actor was insufficient to persuade them to take part in AA5.

This planning stage was thus a question of how behaviour in the city might be altered through the enrolment of more actors. NE1's organisational form, which incorporates businesses, local authority representatives and other powerful actors, left in a strong position to conduct the task of enrolment. By pointing to examples of 'best practice' or to the experience of competing cities, NE1 were able to show to their constituency – businesses – that AA5 could provide them with more profit. Fast policy circuits, then, are shown through this example to be a major part in the process of enrolling: key actors use these circuits to enrol others and effect changes.

Advertising and Promoting AA5

Following the creation of AA5 as an idea, it required 'translation' into a project. In the context of ANT, translation refers specifically to "a relation... which induces two mediators into coexisting" (Latour, 2005b:108) In other words, NE1 had to bring enrolled actors together so that they might interact. In doing so, the actors must be aligned or translated so that this interaction is possible. At a mundane level, then, it can be said that AA5 had to be translated from a plan and set of

ideas into a series of actions, regulations and practices which would together the people of Newcastle to use the city centre in the early evening.

One interesting aspect of translation which occurred to AA5 can be seen in its marketing and promotion. In the run up to the launch of AA5 in October 2010, various members of NE1 appeared on a series of local media platforms. In all of these appearances, NE1 pushed the message of a new, open and cosmopolitan city centre. As repeated in interviews with me, NE1 staff spoke of the unfairness of the current set up, with customers being "turfed out" of shops at 18:00 and the city centre being "dead". By contrast, AA5 would be active and make the city 'cosmopolitan'. In my research interviews and in publicity for the event, NE1 were quick to liken AA5 to Sunday shopping, which was legalised in the UK in 1994. On Sundays, we are told, "the pace of shopping is slower, people feel less hurried, there's a more cosmopolitan feel": this, we are assured, will also be the case with AA5.

These different advertisements and publications that AA5 was translated into a project via an appeal to the discourse of 'cosmopolitanism', drawing on the positive connotations of practices of consumption which encourage new ways of relating to the city (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004). In particular, it drew from aspects of cosmopolitan discourse which emphasise a different speed or rhythm of the city – one based around a so-called slower pace of living. In fact, this more than simply just a slower pace. Rather than less being done, or the same amount of activity

being done more slowly, this sense of 'slower place' suggests more time being given over to consumption. This new rhythm of using the city is considered more cosmopolitan as it implies a cultivated self, proactively finding new ways to engage with the city (Young, 2006). The cosmopolitan city centre user of AA5 is further differentiated from the 'traditional' working-class identify of Newcastle through their working-identity. In his article for the Evening Chronicle, Sean Bullick, the Chief Executive of NE1, wrote that workers will be:

"staying longer in the city after work to do a spot of shopping, getting something to eat or drink before heading to the cinema or theatre or back home later than usual to avoid the traditional, mad rush-hour dash" (Bullick, 2010)

The users of AA5 are thus positioned as members of the middle classes who have the luxury of leisure time to spend in the city centre (Ward, 2010a). They are workers involved in a range of professional and service-sector city centre occupations; this contrasts with the traditional image of Newcastle's urban night, based upon an industrial working class drinking culture (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001, Ward, 2010a). The quote indicates that, in Bullick's view, these people are already there in the city centre – with AA5, they will simply be staying out "later than usual". Here, then, NE1 are not thinking of attracting new people to the city centre. Rather they are seeking to at first alter behaviour, and eventually alter subjectivities, to create new 'cosmopolitan' urbanites. In other words, to achieve

AA5, it is both the project itself and the people of Newcastle which required translation. To achieve the latter required a change in city centre atmosphere, which was the key element in practicing and producing AA5.

Practicing and Producing Alive After Five

So, to the city streets. In practicing and producing AA5, the atmosphere of the streets became a key target. 'Atmosphere' here is taken as the cumulative result of the various affectations that come to envelop a site as the different bodies – taken broadly, referring to humans, non-humans and ideas – within it interact (Anderson, 2009). The atmosphere is thus the overall sensation that individuals get from interacting with a space and it is, in turn, something which then goes on to affect their subjectivities (Latour, 2005a). The atmosphere is a key emergent feature of the practice of a project such as AA5, where the goal is the translation of a project and a population together.

AA5 launched with significant support from many of the city centre businesses, though there were some who kept their shutters down. Street performers were hired by NE1 to provide support to the event. This first extract from my research diary describes the third day of AA5:

Atmosphere – not much, note the closed shutters, staff cleaning up, lights off, end of day, closing up time, darkness, relatively quiet, feels like a quiet Sunday. One slightly forlorn juggler, first goers out on the scene.

8 – some nightlife, first people in uniform[1] about, Blu Bambu has music blaring out, some bouncers and lights are on at takeaways, but I'm one of just 6 people in Bigg Market [a popular area of bars and clubs]. Late night-shopping atmosphere, conspicuousness of cleaners.

Some two months later (14th December 2010) I took the following notes:

Northumberland Street at 6. Pre-Christmas. A few stalls set out in road selling flowers. Very busy. Lights are on everywhere & all shops are open. Police on horseback. Fenwick's window attracts a crowd. Band playing and light. Like the Day-time.

This research only covered the early stages of AA5, so it is impossible to evaluate its success or otherwise in increasing numbers in the city centre, particularly because of the need to distinguish seasonal effects from those created by the

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[1] It is common in Newcastle for large groups, often celebrating birthdays, stag parties or hen parties, to go out in 'uniform', that is dressed in the same or similar clothes, as part of their night out

initiative. Nevertheless, it is clear that by the second quoted visit at the end of the main period of research, the number of people in the city centre and the number of businesses opening had increased. The distinction between shutters on shops and the lights of open businesses is marked, and one which greatly alters the city atmosphere. Subsequent return research visits in the spring of 2011 suggested that AA5 has retained its presence in a concentrated area of Northumberland Street and Eldon Square. Whilst the city centre as a whole was not as busy as in the pre-Christmas period, these areas have succeeded in retaining a 'day-like' atmosphere.

One example of how NE1 went about this was through the presence of street performers. Street performers are often a key part of attempts by city authorities to create a certain experience or atmosphere in the city centre (Simpson, 2008), contributing to what has been labelled a consumption-led 'playscape' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). Their actions have the appearance of spontaneous creativity, and whilst they do attract crowds based on the affective appeal of applause and other appreciative noises, their performances are also within neatly delimited spaces. During my research visits, the acts which appeared to generate the most success were those which caught the attention of children – highlighting the number of families present. These street performance acts thus helped shift the atmosphere away from one dominated by adults and the end of the day, or beginning of night, and retained the various elements which make a 'day-time atmosphere'.

Running contrary to these attempts was infrastructural work which was going on at the time. During the period of 17:00-20:00, lighting engineers, street cleaners and shop cleaning staff become more visible in the city centre as these instruments which maintain the city are brought out (Latour, 2003). Figure 1shows some of the problems that this created for AA5. Here, shoppers walk through litter. This litter has built up as city centre cleaning staff had developed a practice of using the relative emptiness of the early evening period to have a change-over in shifts. However, increased footfall in shopping districts during this time will cause more waste to develop.

Insert Fig1 here

Figure 1 also shows a delivery lorry using this normally pedestrian street. Here, the institutional practices of organisations' deliveries had not yet been changed, so that they presented a barrier to the development of new atmospheres, and thus subjectivities. Drawing again from ANT, it emphasises the role of practices and materials in creating atmospheres, as well as the presence of people and the design of space. In developing the subjectivities of AA5, there were thus also these infrastructural and organisational barriers which emerged at the stage of translation to practice.

Conclusion

This study took place before and during the launch of AA5 in October 2010-January 2011. NE1's own evaluation of the project suggests that, outside of specifically marketed event or promotional weeks, its success is largely confined to Newcastle's retail heart around the Eldon Square shopping centre (NE1 2011). This supports my own qualitative experiences of the city centre, as well as the longer history of attempts to alter the rhythms of the use of city centres in the UK. AA5 has certainly been successful enough to continue the chain of policy transfer, with Newcastle's experiences being used to justify the creation of a similar project, with the same name, in Edinburgh.

AA5 in Newcastle indicates the on-going attraction of shaping subjectivities and using policy politics in the formation of neoliberal policy. It is a clear attempt to encourage new ways of using the city. Specifically, it shows the continued belief that implementing correct practices, in the correct places, at the correct times will result in new predictable new subjectivities: in this case, the same 'cosmopolitan consumers' who failed to emerge after changes to the NTE in British cities through the 1990s and 2000s (Roberts and Turner, 2005). Second, it shows the resilience of neoliberal policy networks (Peck, 2010). AA5 has spread through these networks, and continues to spread onwards. Furthermore, it is indicative of how these two ways of understanding neoliberal policy support one another. Despite the media, academic and political discontent with the rise of anti-social behaviour

and heavy drinking in Britain's cities at night (Hadfield et al., 2009), the response to this problem in Newcastle has been more of the same: new shifts in regulations, new opportunities for consumption, new subjectivities. An appeal to new subjectivities is supported by the claim that this has been achieved 'elsewhere', with the elsewhere ideally somewhere more cosmopolitan or at the very least a competing city. The very fact that a policy has spread via policy networks becomes part of the explanation for its success and attraction. Local authorities in the UK thus continue to respond to the supposed challenge that "city centres in the West are becoming, in many cases, day-time office and shopping districts, almost a wilderness after the afternoon rush hour" (Bianchini, 1995:121) through measures which seek to encourage consumption and to promote a small range of nocturnal entertainment activities (Hadfield et al., 2001).

The use of ANT in this analysis has helped to show this. In particular, it has helped indicate how the two identified forms of neoliberalism – fast policy networks, and the manipulation of subjectivities – come together. By focusing on how NE1 went through the process of enrolment and translation to produce new atmospheres in the city centre, this has explored how it took an example of fast policy and used its specific skills as a BID – its connections into neoliberal policy networks – to produce a new initiative whose aim was to develop new ways of engaging with the city, and ultimately new subjectivities. As such, I argue that, the two strands of research would benefit from being more closely connected. Actor-Network

Theory and other practice-based forms of social theory offer the capacity to focus on a currently overlooked gap in studies of the urban night in particular, and neoliberalism in general, that is, the move from policy to practice. Such an approach retains the concept of neoliberalism, whilst attempting to account for its dual ability to maintain a coherent whole, whilst also being flexible and fragmented.

Figure Captions

Fig. 1: Northumberland Street during Alive After Five

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