Urban regeneration and social exclusion in sheffield geography essay

GEO 151: Assessment I

In this essay we will be discussing urban regeneration and social exclusion in Sheffield. The research for this essay was conducted as a series of 2 walks and information comes from observation of these areas. The walk chosen was walk 3 which included Netherthorpe, Kelham Island and the Inner City – but the focus of this essay is on one section of the walk – Kelham Island.

Like many areas in Sheffield, Kelham Island was originally an industrial area, particularly in the manufacture of steel. There are still numerous factories and workshops still standing and their proximity to the River Don suggests the river would have once been used to power the industry in this area. To me, these buildings portray the traditional origins of Sheffield as being a highly industrial city, vast non-descript buildings with many large windows which could accommodate the large space required for heavy industry. From observations made whilst undertaking the walk, it becomes clear that these original buildings can now be divided into different types due to urban regeneration. The first of these is residential. Around Kelham Island many of these former factories have been converted into modern flats and apartments. It is great that the developers are choosing to retain the original look of these buildings whilst totally changing their function as I believe it is important to try and retain the historical character of a city.

The second main usage of these factory buildings is business- mainly offices, although one of the factories is still used for its original function as a factory, and another has been converted into the " Kelham Island Museum" which contains many historical artefacts from the area and gives visitors the

chance to experience the heritage of Kelham Island. This shows 2 other new land uses in the area – business and tourism. The remainder of these factories are currently derelict but in the future may be redeveloped or demolished to be replaced by modern apartments or office blocks.

Elsewhere in Kelham Island there are a number of large, highly modern looking apartment and office blocks; this area is known as " Kelham Riverside" and is described by the Kelham Island website as " a stylish mixed use development in a picturesque waterside setting" (http://www. kelhamriverside. com). This area is more aesthetically pleasing and in total contrast to the factories nearby – it is strange to see these 2 types of buildings sitting side by side. This is the main site of urban regeneration, but also evokes images of social exclusion. It is clear that this entire area has been totally redeveloped recently; all of the buildings looking less than 10 years old and the focus of employment here has shifted from primary to tertiary. The new apartment blocks which overlook the river are very modern, even futuristic looking incorporating chrome and glass into the design – it could be said that these buildings, however, have little ' character' whilst the older factory buildings do.

From simple observation, this area looks like a particularly nice area to live, but it becomes apparent that social exclusion comes into play here. Firstly, there are no gardens and very little green space at all and there were no parks or even many benches in this area. Facilities included a small number of pubs and upmarket bars and restaurants, a museum for tourists, and little else other than office blocks. The apartments look expensive and seem to be targeted at affluent young professionals without children as there are no

apparent facilities that cater towards the needs of children or the elderly (not " family orientated"). This idea was backed up during walk by the absence of any youths- the only people to be seen were men and women in suits and a few builders who were working on more developments on the riverside. The presence of the builders did however indicate that further development of this area was underway, which may in the future lead to more facilities for other social groups in order to incorporate them more into this area.

The atmosphere in this area was one of peacefulness, although I believed this to be due to the fact that the only people that lived in this area were at work, considering it was in the middle of the day. There was a significant lack of any old or young people- just middle aged people in suits. In the most modern part of Kelham Island it seemed eerily quiet and the environment almost sterile due to the large modern yet plain buildings and lack of any graffiti, litter and advertising. It also gave the impression of being a relatively safe area with the availability of secure underground car parks and high CCTV presence. In my opinion, however, such a high CCTV presence could lead to oppression and fear due to constant surveillance by an unknown authority. Many people are very against this form of security and so is another example of social exclusion against those who do not wish to be recorded constantly.

One important thing which was noted during the walk was that on one of the walls of the new buildings in Kelham Island was a large plaque which had the name " European Regional Development Agency" on it. This agency belongs to the EU and is involved in allocation of the European Regional

Development Fund; according to the EU website (http://ec. europa.

eu/regional_policy/funds/feder/index_en. htm):

" The ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the

European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. In short, the

ERDF finances:

- direct aid to investments in companies (in particular SMEs) to create sustainable jobs;
- infrastructures linked notably to research and innovation, telecommunications, environment, energy and transport;
- financial instruments (capital risk funds, local development funds, etc.) to support regional and local development and to foster cooperation between towns and regions;
- Technical assistance measures.

So, based on this information it seems that the EU thought of South

Yorkshire as being less developed as neighbouring regions and have

therefore directed a proportion of the ERDF at Kelham Island in order to fulfil

the points described above.

There were limitations to this study. Firstly, the 2 visits we made were

possibly not at the most suitable times, particularly for this area where most

of the people living here would have been at work, and any children that do

live in the area would have been at school. Another thing was that in this

observational walk there was little importance put on personal emotion, or

how individuals felt whilst in that particular area. There was also no record of

any smells along the walk which is one thing that could possibly be investigated further in any subsequent walks.

Word count: 1111

GEO 151: Assessment II Part I

For this part of the assessment a series of photos were taken along a route (walk 3) which intended to represent the feel or sense of place in the area regarding social exclusion and regeneration. The 2 photos chosen to be analysed can be seen on the next page (figures 1 and 2). They were both taken at the same time of day (Around 1pm on a Thursday afternoon) and show 2 contrasting areas which are actually only 1-2 minutes' walk away from each other, in the area of Sheffield known as Kelham Island.

Fig 1 shows one of the more modern looking areas of Kelham Island and demonstrates very obvious urban regeneration as the apartment block buildings on the right hand side of the image are clearly very new. In fact, this whole area looks very clean and tidy, although the lack of people makes the area seem as if it is not inhabited. Behind the apartment buildings and to the left of the image are old factory buildings. It is not clear from the image whether these buildings are currently in use or not but some of the factories in this area have been converted into offices and apartments so it is very likely that being so close to other new developments, urban regeneration would have taken place within these buildings too. I like the fact that these buildings and even a chimney from an old industrial furnace are still standing regardless of the ultra-modern apartments right next to them, it acts to retain the character of the area- being able to market this area to a whole new audience without totally destroying the history ingrained in the factories

and workshops which once would have employed the majority of people living here. The river which runs through the centre of the image would once have been used to power these factories, but has now been developed into a feature and the new pathways and hand railings provide the opportunity to look at the river and brings much character to the area. Social exclusion also comes through in this image, as there is no green space or playing areas for children, no benches or shops – very little facilities to support a community. This excludes those who thrive off the community around them which are children and the elderly. Children need other children and spaces to play to fulfil their childhood whilst the elderly require a range of facilities including those which promote sociability with others in the community as they often lead lives of loneliness. This area is not accommodating for either of these types of people.

I chose to take a picture of this particular area as I believe it incorporated several elements which were important in portraying Kelham Island – the modern apartments, the factories and the river. I also thought this image was an accurate representation of the area during my visit, that being very quiet with few people to be seen. If a person who was not from Sheffield i believe this image would give them a good idea of what Kelham Island was like, which in my opinion can be described as a cultural mix of historical factories and modern apartments and offices developed to be functional whilst staying true to the heritage of Sheffield. This would be a good image to show to people to give a good idea of what Sheffield looks like – a combination of old industry and new development.

The second image (Fig 2) shows a totally different scene to that of Fig 1. This is a large industrial looking building which was probably once used as some sort of factory in the past when Sheffield's steel industry was booming. Now this building lies empty and disused with windows broken and doors boarded up. Given the fact that this building is disused, the exterior (except the windows) is still in relatively good condition, presumably because these types of buildings were built to be strong and resilient. It is strange in this area how quiet it was considering when this building would have been in use, the sound coming from it and the many other factory buildings in the area would have filled the area. This is a contrasting image as it shows a totally different type of building to Fig 1. Here, it looks as if there has not been any urban regeneration whatsoever as the road is empty apart from one car, the building is disused and the pathways are old and damaged. It does not look like a particularly " run down" area, although it is clear that little if any money has been spent on this site in a long time.

If this image were to be shown to a person who was not from Sheffield it would probably serve to confirm the perception that many people have that Sheffield is still a highly industrial city with many ugly buildings. This perception of Sheffield is based on history but is now an outdated view with the amount of money that has and is currently being spent on new development in the area. This image fails to show any of the modern developments which are visible all around the city.

GEO 151: EXERCISE 2, PART 2

In the workshop we discussed how the images we took differed from those which we were shown from the pages of tourist guides of Sheffield, local

magazines and adverts for places around the city. There were many differences between these images and the photos we took our self, some of them were very obvious (such as the image itself and what it included, what activities were happening and what people were included) and others were more subtle (such as the angles the photos were taken, the time of day, the lighting, etc). We discussed the way that people would perceive these images, particularly if they had never been to Sheffield before and the impression they would get of the city based on these images.

The reason why these differences were so apparent was because of the intention of the image and what it was trying to portray. For example, the photos we took ourselves were trying to capture images of social exclusion and urban regeneration so the imagery reflected this. Although they were taken with an aim in mind they were totally natural images as they were not staged, and they were not taken with the intention of implying anything in particular- rather they were accurate representation if the things we saw on our walks which we personally felt reflected urban regeneration and social exclusion.

The difference between this and the images we were shown is that most of these had some sort of intention. Those that were on printed materials from organisations such as the Sheffield City Council and Travel South Yorkshire were obviously aimed at attracting tourists to the area. They were taken by people who are looking to give a good impression of Sheffield and their target audience would be those people who may never have visited Sheffield before and wanted to find out more before they decided to visit. These images focused mainly on either the new, vibrant, modern developments in

Sheffield such as the millennium galleries; or the beautiful rugged countryside of Sheffield's surrounding areas such as the peak district. The images looked as if they could have been digitally altered to make colours appear more vibrant for example and to give the impression of Sheffield being a clean, modern city – which it is in certain areas, but chose not to portray the more deprived areas of Sheffield such as those from the photos we took ourselves.

The images on the next page are a sample of those taken from the recommended websites. They show a range of images from around Sheffield and were taken by different people/organisations for different reasons. The 4 large landscapes came fromwww. creativesheffield. co. ukwhich is described as " Creativesheffield is the UK's first ever city development company, charged with delivering Sheffield's economic transformation". The images come from different pages which have individual aims, the headings of which I have written on the images. The first, ' Live in Sheffield' portrays an idyllic, quite countryside area with most of the focus on a family taking a bike ride. The image itself is quite simple and the colours used are earthy and green, again conveying the idea of nature and countryside. There is little going on in the picture, suggesting peace and quiet in the countryside, where families can enjoy a nice day out to escape the hustle and bustle of city living, yet this area would not be too far away from Sheffield's city centre. This image is aimed at families, such as the one in the image who may be looking to relocate to a city nearby idyllic countryside – this image shows that Sheffield can be that place as the peak district is on your doorstep. On the CreativeSheffield page this image is shown at the top of a page where it lists

the many benefits of living in Sheffield, and is obviously aimed at people looking to move to Sheffield but maybe wanting some more information. The ' Develop in Sheffield' image is the most obvious image of urban regeneration as it shows a whole landscape of Sheffield showing development. I believe this is an accurate representation of Sheffield as it is currently undergoing a huge amount of regeneration and it is evident that there is a lot of money being spent on the heart of the city redevelopment which is making huge changes to the centre. It shows Sheffield as a sprawling metropolis, but one which is currently being given a total makeover, with a vision of the future.

The next image, ' Locate in Sheffield' is aimed at businesses looking to locate in Sheffield. It shows an area of Sheffield which looks extremely clean and modern, almost futuristic with the large stainless steel balls dotted around. The large inclusion of glass and steel complements this idea of modernism as they are 2 materials which make a building look sharp and modern. The inclusion of people moving (blurred) in the image is trying to give the impression of Sheffield being a busy commercial centre with people constantly on the go, with a lot going on around Sheffield.

All of these images have one thing in common – a target audience. Each of them have been taken specifically with a certain audience in mind, rather than randomly as my photos were taken. Even though the photos which I took had a purpose, which was to portray social exclusion and urban regeneration in different areas around Sheffield, they were taken in a totally natural way and were a reflection of what I saw. I did not intentionally omit anything from the images, however I did intentionally try to incorporate all

aspects of what I could see in my surroundings into my images- as a photo is just a snapshot of what I was surrounded by. Also, the images from the website (in most cases) had the intention of marketing Sheffield to a specific market, be that families looking to relocate, or new businesses deciding where to locate their offices.

GEO 151 Assessment 3 Part 1

To prepare for the interview i made sure i had all the main questions that i was going to ask the subject ready. I typed these out and left large gaps underneath the questions so that i had enough space to write plenty of notes from the interview. I contacted the subject and arranged a time that was convenient for them, and so that i could get their consent to conduct the interview. I then met up with the subject in my flat so that it would be in a comfortable, quiet environment that was convenient for the subject. I took notes on the interview rather than recording it, which i would probably not do in the future. The conversation flowed well as the questions were well structured and i made a point of using prompts to promote further conversation into a certain topic (for example, " what do you mean by…" or " can you tell me a bit more about…") However, because i was taking notes the conversation became slightly disjointed as i was having to make notes on interview whilst asking questions, so at points i had to pause to catch up on my notes before i could ask the next question. Also, this meant i didn't have a full record of the interview, just brief notes. If i were to do this in the future i would record the interview and make a transcript as this would be more useful for analysis of the data.

GEO 151 Assessment 3 Part 2

1. The data we were provided in the transcribed interviews followed the themes already being analysed throughout this course – urban space (and regeneration) and social exclusion; but they also touched on issues of crime and disorder- particularly among the youth and talked extensively about housing and other projects which were being implemented into the community in order to improve the social wellbeing of the people living in these places. In addition to the theme of community, the theme of family was also discussed often in both the interviews and how families help shape a community. The 2 interviewees were from different areas in Scotland – one a deprived anonymous area (EDDEP), the other an affluent anonymous area (EDAFF), but looking at similar issues throughout, therefore giving 2 different perspectives.

2. The process of analysis and coding involves carefully reading through material transcribed from an interview and selecting labels to associate with specific parts or whole sections of data. This can apply to single words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs and the codes relate to certain themes or ideas expressed through the text. It may also relate to specific words and phrases. The coding itself involves marking specific part of the text based on these themes or ideas to make it easier to compare and analyse parts of the text that may be relative (for example, sections that discuss similar ideas). This also makes it easier to search the data and find any patterns emerging throughout so that this can be further investigated.

To code the interview i was provided, i read through the text twice to make sure I had a complete grasp of the text, and the concepts involved in the interview. After this, i carefully went through the text, picking out common words or themes which i then annotated at the side of the page by hand. Some of these tags were of particular words or simple sentences or references to a theme, but often the tags applied to whole sections of the text – and often these tags overlapped.

3. My interpretation of the first interview is that the subject is someone who lives in a deprived area of Edinburgh (EDDEP), talking about their experiences working as a project staff member in this area of Scotland. Throughout the interview, she talks about housing and new developments in the area and the effect this has on social and community problems. In particular the topics included alcoholism and their exclusion from society, however the subject felt that although these alcoholics were excluded from conventional society, they had created their own community and had their own issues and conflicts within this segregated community. Topics also included youth crime and disorder. The subject felt that this crime and disorder among the youth population maybe a result from social exclusion, as EDDEP is a deprived area which offers little to stimulate the youth. They also mention how family can greatly influence the community in which they live due to the way they deal with youth and the elderly.

The second interview is taken with a councillor for the more affluent area of Edinburgh (EDAFF) and also touched upon housing issues in Edinburgh, with reference to families. In this interview the subject talks more about the

boundaries between the affluent and deprived areas of Edinburgh, and the fear in the community of some of the people living in the deprived areas due to the division between them. Again there is a lot of emphasis on crime and disorder, particularly among the youth of the area, however the problems in this area seem more trivial, as oppose to the serious crime mentioned by the subject in the first interview

4. The strengths of my analysis and interpretation are that I believe that from reading through the interviews several times I managed to get a firm grasp of the issues being covered throughout and was able to find patterns of topics throughout through coding the transcripts. In the future I think I could code the transcripts slightly better as i feel that my labels may be slightly superficial – many of them simply describe the topics being discussed in that part, and could be more in depth. However, i think this form of data is quite valuable as a lot of the topics featured can be explored a lot more in depth than with other methods such as questionnaires.

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GEO 151 Assessment 4

The first section of this module was based on observational methods in qualitative data research. This visual method involved observing the " real world" – the built and natural environment whilst walking a route through Sheffield, specifically taking note of scenes which represent social exclusion and urban regeneration. Although mainly focused on the visual observation of a place, this can also include observation of sounds and smells. The task was to undertake this walk and observe the surroundings, while keeping the themes of social exclusion and urban regeneration in mind, and recording the observations in an appropriate manner. During this walk I mainly focused on the built environment of the area when thinking about urban regeneration, and the people in the area and the facilities available to them for social exclusion. I then had to do a write up of these observations and discuss. I believe this method is an important way to get a good impression of an area, so would be an effective way to start a research project about an area. It provides good basic ideas about an area, such as those mentioned. The negatives of this method are that it is not a particularly ' in-depth'

method, and much further investigation into an area would be required via other methods.

The second section involved visual methods. The task for this section was to photograph scenes of urban regeneration and social exclusion from the walk, so that they could be referred to at a later date and used to compare to other images of Sheffield taken from various sources (magazines, websites, etc). From these photos we could also analyse the impressions that these photos gave of Sheffield, especially to someone who had never visited Sheffield before.   I felt that this method was fairly effective, and a very good way of conveying ideas of urban regeneration more so than urban exclusion to other people through showing them photos that were took. I do feel however that a weakness of this method is that it is highly variable, as the photos represent one snapshot of an area and are not totally representative of a whole area. Also, the images taken would be very different depending on the time of day and even the weather, as poor weather in images can often convey a sense of unwelcoming. In the future I would try to take some panoramic photos which would include far more of the surrounding than by a standard size photograph, and would therefore be more representative of the area.

The third method used was " in depth interviewing". To prepare for this the task we were asked to carefully read through a transcribed interview and then use coding in order to analyse themes and patterns throughout the text. This gave me an idea about how in depth interviews would slow, and about how I would go about analysing it afterwards. To conduct my own interview, I first had to write a framework for the interview, and contact the

subject to make sure I had permission to conduct the interview and to

arrange a suitable time and place. Throughout the interview I made sure I

used plenty of prompts as well as just questions when I wanted to discuss a

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