



Belonging and the inter-generational transmission of place identity: reflections on a British inner-city neighbourhood

Journal:	<i>Urban Studies</i>
Manuscript ID	CUS-660-19-07.R1
Manuscript Type:	Article
Discipline: Please select a keyword from the following list that best describes the discipline used in your paper.:	Sociology
World Region: Please select the region(s) that best reflect the focus of your paper. Names of individual countries, cities & economic groupings should appear in the title where appropriate.:	Western Europe
Major Topic: Please identify up to 5 topics that best identify the subject of your article.:	Community, History/heritage/memory, Inequality, Neighbourhood, Race/Ethnicity
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Abstract

This paper explores the subjectivities of neighbourhood identity and belonging. It considers how far, and in what ways, place identity and attachment are transmitted cross-generationally. Three broad themes have framed this research. Firstly, the ways in which the formation and reproduction of neighbourhood identities have been influenced by geographical, political, contemporary and historical contexts. Secondly, and relatedly, the roles played by intersectional factors such as race and class. Thirdly, the extent to which alternative neighbourhood identities challenge and contest ‘mainstream’ narratives that stigmatise and undermine disadvantaged inner-city communities. This paper draws on a case study area of ‘Liverpool 8’ (part of the wider Toxteth locale), a historically ethnically diverse inner-city area which attracted negative press coverage during the 1980s and 2011 riots. Drawing on a series of in-depth interviews with residents, the research reveals evidence of strong neighbourhood belonging and identity, shared and diffused across generations, based on subjective experiences, both positive (e.g., celebration of diversity, neighbourliness), and negative (e.g., racism, discrimination). To some extent, younger generation narratives reveal subtle changes that suggest a broadening of spatial horizons, beyond residents’ immediate neighbourhood. However, at the same time, socio-economic and ethnic inequalities act to temper and stifle socio-spatial networks and experiences outside the immediate neighbourhood, for younger – as well as older – generations.

Keywords Generation, belonging, identity, neighbourhood, inner-city

Introduction and academic context

Recent contributions to debates around belonging have deepened our understandings of attachment to place by encouraging the need to explore a *multiplicity* of belongings, including the inter-relationships between different ‘scales of belonging’ (Antonsich, 2010; May 2011; May and Muir, 2015: 2; Wood and Waite 2011). It has been demonstrated that everyday interactions and relationships can reveal contradictory displays of ‘conflict *as well as*

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3 conviviality’; of complex ‘ambivalences’ that challenge unidimensional descriptions of
4 community and belonging (Karner and Parker, 2011: 366). Using a micro-empirical study of
5 neighbourhood in Liverpool 8, an ethnically diverse working-class inner-city neighbourhood,
6 this paper examines cross-generational attachments to neighbourhood. It explores narratives
7 and experiences around racism, safety, activism and policing, particularly past experiences of
8 older generations, and explores whether these impact upon the spatial horizons of resident
9 younger generations. In doing so, the paper considers the continuities of experiences across
10 generations, as well as changes, situating these in wider societal and global forces.
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18 The originality of this work rests on exploring community belonging *across generations*, to
19 understand how this intersects with place, neighbourhood, class and ‘race’, and whether there
20 are qualitative differences between younger and older generations. It contributes to existing
21 research on neighbourhood and generation by highlighting the significance of locality to
22 intergenerational experiences of age (Hopkins and Pain, 2007). In exploring intergenerational
23 changes around belonging, this assumes an understanding of community that links to
24 imaginaries, place and materiality. The research is less concerned with notions of ‘performing
25 community’ (Blokland, 2017), but seeks instead to understand how young people balance the
26 contradictions and constraints from several quarters: firstly, the way neighbourhood narratives
27 are passed down from older generations, particularly around neighbourhood boundaries and
28 mobility that relate to racial hostility and safety. Secondly, the way young peoples’ attachment
29 to locality can be enforced through socio-economic restrictions placed on those from
30 disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is particularly pertinent given how British austerity
31 policies since 2010 disproportionately impact the most deprived neighbourhoods (Meegan et
32 al., 2014). Both processes – the intergenerational transmission of belonging and identity, and
33 the impact of inequalities – potentially have a stifling impact on some young people that leads
34 to a greater pull towards locality. At the same time, and thirdly, such restraints must be
35 managed against the demands and expectations arising from narratives that champion
36 globalisation (as against parochial locality) and the apparent greater opportunities for mobility
37 this brings (Harris, 2014). Grappling with these issues, demands an exploration of how young
38 people both perceive and engage with belonging to neighbourhood.
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55 Related is the growing body of research on studies that show how class identities can impact
56 experiences of neighbourhood. Case studies have demonstrated how articulations of class
57 manifest themselves differently (Jackson and Benson, 2014; Savage, 2005), though
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3 neighbourhood and locality appear to be more salient amongst working-class residents (Watt,
4 2006). However, this can vary across neighbourhoods in the same town or city, pointing to the
5 significance of micro neighbourhood-specific contexts. Thus, levels of neighbourhood
6 attachment can be contingent on historical and local developments (Cole, 2013). This resonates
7 strongly with the present study of Liverpool 8, where, as is discussed later, historical specificity
8 and development continues to impact on local and contemporary understandings of belonging
9 to neighbourhood.

16 Changes in the way neighbourhood identity and belonging are articulated have been positioned
17 in broader social and political processes associated with globalisation that impact locally on
18 the way social connections across familial and friendship networks operate. It has been shown
19 that as social life becomes more spatially-dispersed through technologies of social and
20 communication media which traverse place-based allegiance, the effect is to loosen ties to
21 neighbourhood and place. This is particularly salient for younger generations (Cass et al., 2005;
22 Savage et al., 2005 cited in Warr, 2015). Yet for disadvantaged young people, spatial horizons
23 continue to be bounded and wedded to locality. Warr (2015) for example, highlights how
24 inequalities linked to economic marginalisation and poverty can strengthen local relationships
25 with family and friends, and thus militate against processes of detachment to neighbourhood.
26 Moreover, additional strains of place stigmatisation and racial discrimination experienced
27 outside the immediate neighbourhood reinforce social disconnections, whilst simultaneously
28 enhancing neighbourhood as a spatially and socially significant place of support, belonging
29 and attachment (Warr, 2015). Therefore, while concepts of community and neighbourhood
30 belonging depend on imaginaries, or 'being in common' (Jackson and Benson 2014; Neal et
31 al., 2018; Studdart and Walkerdine 2016), at the same time, neighbourhood identity cannot be
32 divorced from wider concerns around power, inequality, exclusion and privilege (Putnam,
33 2000). 'Place' construction, then, is both reflective of societal ideas, whilst also being
34 influenced by the socio-economic and physical materiality of society (Massey, 1995).

50 In Liverpool 8, historical experiences of racism, stigma and economic marginalisation,
51 alongside community activism (Frost, 2013), have reinforced attachment and identity as an
52 overtly political identity, particularly amongst older generations. This research explores how
53 specific 'moments' like the so-called 'riots', alongside more 'everyday' tensions, around racial
54 policing, stereotyping, and exclusion – both collective and shared – shape allegiances to place
55 for those who have experienced them 'firsthand', and are diffused to successive generations.
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3 Just as memory can play a crucial role in developing attachment to place (as Rishbeth and
4 Powell, 2012, explore for migrants to Sheffield; see also Hoelscher and Alderman, 2006, for a
5 review of the relationship between memory and place), the intergenerational communication
6 of memory can have a significant role in shaping political formations (Mitchell and Elwood,
7 2013). This paper thus aims to understand the role of the intergenerational transmission of
8 memory to subsequent generations in influencing place identity, neighbourhood attachment,
9 and young people's socio-spatial horizons.

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12 The paper develops original and innovative areas of enquiry around the *intergenerational*
13 *transmission* of neighbourhood belonging and place identity, by: strengthening our knowledge
14 of social change across generation, capturing the developing and dynamic nature of diverse
15 working-class neighbourhoods, and highlighting the relevance of micro local empirical studies
16 and their relationship to wider concerns around 'race' and class. This work derives from a
17 broader British Academy funded project on *The Role of People and Place in Neighbourhood*
18 *Identity: Belonging and Social Inclusion* that explores the inter-relationships between
19 neighbourhood belonging, identity and community in south Liverpool.

30 31 32 **Liverpool 8: the impact of history**

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34 The postcoded area of 'L8' or Liverpool 8 (used interchangeably with 'Toxteth') offers what
35 Gilroy (1987) and others label 'symbolic location' in terms of the distinctiveness of the area
36 based on historical events, 'charged meanings', or 'political and cultural associations' (Neal et
37 al., 2016: 497). The postcode L8 was initially used to describe a police beat in the 1970s
38 (Murphy, 2011). Its use since then by those inside and outside its boundaries to define this
39 ethnically diverse neighbourhood is particularly notable, and indeed distinctive, in the wider
40 city context. Liverpool 8 has historically been home to concentrated minority Black settlement,
41 long before the mass migrations of the 1950s and 1960s, and enhanced by its high rates of
42 historical inter-racial mixing (Frost, 2008; Christian, 1995; Costello, 2001; Small, 1991; Tabili,
43 1996). It composes two wards: Princess Park and Riverside which, according to the 2011
44 Census, were home to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations of 51.2 per cent
45 and 20.4 per cent respectively (Liverpool City Council, 2015). Both wards are home to long-
46 standing Black and White British working-class residents, as well as recent immigrant groups.
47 The area became the scene of urban unrest in the 1980s and in 2011. Parts of Liverpool 8 are
48 also being gentrified, as professionals and others are purchasing period properties in the now
49 sought after 'Georgian Quarter'. In 2015, the area attracted more positive media attention when
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3 it won the Turner Prize for its community regeneration project ‘Granby Four Streets’ (Foster,
4 2015). Whilst not *the* poorest area in Liverpool, its two wards constitute two of the most
5 deprived, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Liverpool City Council, 2015).
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9 Historical processes steering BAME groups to a bounded geographical area – Liverpool 8 –
10 (Frost 1996), dating back to before the Windrush generation of the 1950s and 1960s, went
11 hand-in-hand with exclusion from other areas of the city. Such spatial confinement was
12 augmented and policed by widespread experiences of racial abuse (verbal and physical assault)
13 from areas outside the neighbourhood. It is only in recent years that BAME groups, mainly
14 refugees and asylum seekers, have begun to disrupt these historical and entrenched settlement
15 patterns through enforced, managed migration settlement beyond Liverpool 8. Shirlow’s
16 (2003) work on ethno-sectarian and political violence in Northern Ireland demonstrates well
17 the complexities of fearfulness and how this has resulted in self-imposed spatial restrictions for
18 some communities, based on constructions of knowledge around ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ areas.
19 Whilst the social, political and historical context of Liverpool is markedly different from
20 Northern Ireland, there are echoes that resonate. Testimonies in Liverpool, as we shall see,
21 point to cross-generational knowledge and experience relating to historical spatial
22 circumscription and enforced self-confinement to the safety of one’s neighbourhood. Painful
23 and traumatic experiences have forged a tenacious sense of attachment to Liverpool 8,
24 particularly amongst the older generations (Catney et al 2018). Long after this spatial
25 concentration has been diluted (with the growth of Black communities outside Liverpool 8),
26 there continues to be ‘no-go’ (sic) areas in Liverpool, where Black people, both young and old,
27 will avoid venturing, for fear of racism.
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43 **Methodology**

44 We use in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore several inter-related factors involved in
45 the complexities of neighbourhood attachment and identity. Interviews were conducted with
46 16 local residents over an 18-month fieldwork period. Interviews lasted for up to an hour,
47 drawn from a mix of genders¹, age groups and self-identified ethnic backgrounds. This
48 purposeful sample included long-standing residents, recent newcomers and those who, despite
49 moving away, retained an affinity with the area. Given the relatively small sample size,
50 generations are defined intentionally broadly as ‘younger’ (30-39 and below; n=6) and ‘older’
51 (40-49 and above; n=10). Thematic analysis based on coding (for example: safety, belonging,
52 racism, generation, mobility) of transcribed interview text was used to map the data against
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3 conceptual and theoretical questions. Whilst our sample cannot claim to be representative,
4 rather our aim is to explore some of the experiences of those with a connection to the area, in
5 relation to several particular themes. We draw on testimonies gathered from residents to
6 consider the extent to which, firstly, a sense of history has been transmitted across generations.
7 Secondly, whether such historical experiences and narratives influence younger people's
8 feelings of attachment with Liverpool 8. Thirdly, whether the latter has influenced their spatial
9 horizons in terms of mobility outside Liverpool 8, and indeed the wider city. Answers to such
10 questions will be informed by broader contextual factors relating to socio-economic structures
11 and (un)opportunities. In considering the relationships that exist between place, community
12 and belonging, and their salience on neighbourhood identities, the 'voices' of communities
13 themselves have an important role to play, particularly in the context of urban social policy.
14 Utilising Frost's long-standing association with the area and its residents helped with the
15 sampling. In using residents' narratives, we are purposively attaching value and meaning to
16 individual and neighbourhood experiences whilst consider a wider structural context to
17 position and highlight the importance of these. Some participants also undertook a mental
18 mapping exercise as a means of understanding place as imagined, lived and reproduced (Lynch,
19 1960). This method, the results of which are reported elsewhere (see Catney et al, 2018),
20 encouraged a more participatory approach to the research, and formed part of the interview
21 process, enabling the integration of personal experiences and perspectives, and their influence
22 on how the area is defined and understood.
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39 Powerful and all-consuming discourses that have pathologised, labelled and stigmatised
40 neighbourhoods as deviant and 'threatening' (Butler, 2019; Devereux et al., 2011), particularly
41 by those in positions of power and authority (McKenzie, 2015; Wacquant 2007), can have a
42 destructive impact on individuals and communities, causing even greater social exclusion,
43 marginalisation and discrimination. Such processes attempt to silence or distort alternative and
44 marginal narratives, so that the task of making more visible such voices continues to remain a
45 challenge. They also aid in rendering these communities 'unimportant', 'problematic', and thus
46 voiceless. Similarly, marginal communities have been largely absent in processes and
47 developments around urban planning and policy. Initiatives encouraging participation have
48 been problematised (Harvey, 2008: 32). Thus, regeneration developments in 1980s and 1990s
49 Liverpool resulted in 'no sense of a real engagement with communities, either through existing
50 structures of representation or in new arrangements, even though that would have been
51 claimed....' (Rooney, 2003: 218).
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5 Research in this context can impact on place through respondents asserting more positive
6 aspects of neighbourhood in its defence (Neal et al., 2016), whilst rebuking place stigma.
7 Consequently, this demands a greater need to undertake empirical work that attempts to capture
8 *some* of those marginalised voices that would otherwise go unheard. Yet attempts to ‘do’
9 community-based research can also backfire, particularly for White academics researching
10 ethnically diverse communities. Amongst others (for example Gallaher, 1964), Moore’s (2008)
11 research on Liverpool 8 in the late 1980s was thwarted because of previous vilification by
12 academics of this community. A sense of elitism and privilege served to contest the motives of
13 academics undertaking research here. Combined with accusations of exploitation and the
14 resulting mistrust, hostility and obstruction has indeed been problematic for previous
15 researchers and raises broader issues around future research. Fortunately, the research
16 presented here did not encounter such problems.

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27 We have simultaneously seen an increasing number of studies centred on documenting the
28 experiences of, and voices within, diverse marginal communities. This study on Liverpool adds
29 to these burgeoning studies by highlighting a geographically distinct micro-study of
30 neighbourhood that is both unique *and* universal in terms of its findings. Contextualising
31 Liverpool 8 (within its unique socio-historical and political framework) with the inclusion of
32 previously unheard neighbourhood voices, can aid in establishing a more meaningful
33 understanding of ‘mainstream’ narratives and discourse. Grassroot voices add an important
34 local empirical study to existing ones. In doing so, this increases the voices of those that offer
35 alternative and ‘authentic’ narratives that serve to enrich and enhance the material gathered,
36 and significantly challenge ‘some of the assumptions and accepted judgments...’ (Thompson,
37 2000: 29; Rogaly and Taylor, 2009; Butler, 2019).

48 **Findings across the generations**

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50 Our analyses found that the importance of place runs through several inter-linked themes which
51 are inclusive of physical and perceptual characteristics, as well as social relationships, that can
52 be: ‘politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions’
53 (Rodman, 1992:641 cited in May and Muir, 2015: 4). A co-existence of multiple forms of
54 belongings was noted. Some of these were common across generations, others were inherited
55 or passed down from older generations, and some reflected different generational experiences.

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3 As with allied studies on disadvantaged communities (see McKenzie, 2015; Slater and
4 Anderson, 2012; Wacquant, 2008), Liverpool 8 residents have battled with negative portrayals
5 of their community in mainstream discourses. Alternative narratives from interviews with
6 residents emphasised belonging as rooted in a history and culture around diversity and local
7 struggles that imbued a strong sense of pride of place. Such views not only challenge and resist
8 negative stereotypes, but are the very characteristics that have *created* strong social bonds here.
9 A sentiment articulated across generational groups was ‘belonging through discrimination’,
10 particularly the ways in which neighbourhood stigma impacts on residents. One respondent
11 commented: ‘People used to say “don't go into the 8” (40-49, male, Black), and another: ‘[...]’
12 because Liverpool 8 is [...] Black and it’s Toxteth, it’s been labelled and it’s very difficult to
13 get rid of that’ (50-59, female, Pakistani, Muslim). This latter respondent also discussed how
14 the postcode of Liverpool 8 is associated with certain barriers:
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26 Personally, I’ve experienced trying to get insurance for the shop and it has been a
27 nightmare [...] because of the riots and what’s happened over the years, [...] insurances
28 for property and cars, access to education and housing, because it’s Liverpool 8 and its
29 Toxteth and the stereotyping around that area, [...] (50-59, female, Pakistani, Muslim).
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34 Negative images around crime and safety continue to be held by some younger people outside
35 of Liverpool 8: ‘that stigma is still there, oh yes, very much so, especially with young people I
36 work with. They associate a lot of the violence with Toxteth [...] if they are travelling through
37 Toxteth they will carry knives, [...] they’ve heard bad things about the place (40-49, female,
38 Black Mixed heritage). Across generations, many residents challenged such views by
39 emphasising safety in L8 compared to other areas of the city: ‘[...] I get very defensive about
40 the place because I’ve lived there a long time now and I’d say it’s one of the safest places I’ve
41 ever lived in Liverpool’ (40-49, female, Black Mixed heritage). Others commented: ‘I always
42 felt safe, we moved to L15 and got robbed’ (30-39, female, Black Nigerian); ‘[...] it was more
43 than just a postcode [...], well, it’s just got more warmth to it. I feel totally safe there. I can be
44 myself’ (60-69, female, Mixed heritage Jewish and Chinese); ‘it was like a security blanket,
45 that’s where you go to be safe’ (30-39, female, Black Nigerian), and with reference to violence:
46 ‘I feel safe, I’ve got no fear. No fear of people with knives, guns, nothing. But I’d be scared
47 more so outside of my Liverpool 8 of guns and knives [...]’ (50-59, male, Black Mixed
48 heritage).
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3 Yet despite these positive accounts, residents' discussions about safety *outside* of Liverpool 8,
4 relating to either direct experiences or fear of racial attack, were prevalent. Articulations of
5 racism and safety were in turn interspersed with narratives around socially-constructed
6 boundaries, acceptance and diversity. Some of these social boundaries, based on negative
7 experiences, have been passed down generationally, while others are based on first-hand
8 experiences: 'People would tell me you can't go past Windsor Street and I'd be like, why? cos
9 you will get your head stoved in, get beat up. Why? cos you're Black. I couldn't go down Mill
10 Street where I went to school, I couldn't go into town [...] I couldn't go past Wavertree' (40-
11 49, male, Black) Another explains:

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21 [name of school]: that is probably classed as L8 [Dingle Lane]. I would never have
22 classed that school as L8, was horrible, rough. We were the only Black kids [...]. We
23 got so much racism. Imagine being like 6, being called a n*****, a c****, a P****. Not
24 even understanding what these words were. [Mum] took us out because of the racism.
25 (30-39, female, Black Nigerian).

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30 Feelings and imaginaries around safety and boundaries, that might include postcode labels,
31 were often passed on to younger generations:

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36 I was very mindful when my kids started applying for jobs. I did say about changing
37 their address to their Nan's postcode, which is Liverpool 6, cos if they see a Liverpool
38 8 postcode they start associating that with negative connotations. [...] when I was
39 younger [...] a lot of people from Toxteth just weren't getting any jobs, [because of]
40 the L8 postcode... (40-49, female, Black Mixed heritage).

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46 Boundaries are social constructions in the imaginaries of those who reside or have connections
47 with place (Jackson and Benson, 2014). These do not always mirror 'official' ward or postcode
48 boundaries, and in the context of Liverpool 8, represent protective frontiers in response to
49 painful experiences of racism, and fears around safety. Living in an ethnically diverse area has
50 instilled safety and accentuated feelings of acceptance, including for White people: 'I just feel
51 safe and secure in that area, [...] anything goes no matter who or whatever your identity, there's
52 a place for you there [...]' (40-49, male, White). For one woman, growing up in the Dingle (a
53 White working-class area), she gravitated to Liverpool 8:

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3 My friends were all based there, [...] because there was a community that didn't judge
4 me and [...] encouraged me to be me; I was seeing people from mixed race families
5 who looked like me [...] I didn't feel like I was the only one, it was great (50-59, female,
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7 Mixed heritage Irish and Chinese).
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11 Another commented: 'I definitely feel part of the Liverpool 8 community [...] to just be
12 somewhere where you could be and not have to explain who you was, what you was. Why you
13 was what you was!' (40-49, female, Black Mixed heritage). Another respondent explains: 'For
14 me L8 is where Black people lived [...]: you could buy African and Caribbean food [...] coming as migrants, this was where we were told to move to [...]' (30-39, female, Black Nigerian). Some accounts reflected feelings of belonging to the neighbourhood rather than the city of Liverpool: 'I don't feel part of this city. I'm part of L8 but not part of the city [...] I feel like I fit in, except when I go to town [...] there are no Black people working in town.' (50-59, male, Black Mixed heritage).
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29 Liverpool 8's sustained ethnic diversity, including the coexistence of established and emerging communities, is for many, the key to its strong neighbourhood identity. This was important across generations, from participants in their 20s: 'The basis of L8 to me is people who are all different [...], mixed race, Somalian, Nigerian or Ghanaian backgrounds or English backgrounds.' (20-29, female, Black), to participants in their 40s (and older): '...a place of many different diverse cultures; it's a melting pot of different people. With that brings lots of different things, brings different culinary tastes and expertise, a lot of family values, a lot of good people' (40-49, male, Black).
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45 Belonging to neighbourhood for many of these respondents was not 'freely chosen' (Antonsich, 2010) and did not constitute the 'elective belonging' identified by Savage et al. (2005), reminiscent of some middle-class neighbourhoods. Rather, belonging in Liverpool 8 emerged out of class and racial inequalities, and subsequent hardships and discrimination. Such attributes became the very basis upon which strong neighbourhood identity and belonging was positioned: 'Liverpool 8 is a unique part of Britain [...] so much character and so much has gone against it in terms of poor people being [...] neglected. When you have that situation, great people come from there' (40-49, male, White). Pride of place was an important attribute that was repeated by many respondents: '[...] there's like a unique kind of enthusiasm [...] like a proudness that they come from Liverpool 8, that no one's better than you and you are as equal
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3 as anyone else' (50-59, female, Mixed heritage Irish and Chinese). One respondent was careful
4 to distinguish between pride in Liverpool (that was tempered by an unpredictability of
5 acceptance), and pride in Liverpool 8:
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10 [pride in Liverpool?] No, for example in town, I can go out and get called a n***** or
11 I could get called beautiful. Have a brilliant conversation. It's just a mixed bag. I'd
12 rather be a Scouser [regional nickname] than any other city in the UK. But I'm not
13 going to say there is anything brilliant about being a Scouser other than being from
14 Liverpool 8 (30-39, female, Black).
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20 Adversity, then, has strengthened pride of place and greater attachment to neighbourhood as
21 'home'. Such developments connect with Slater and Anderson's (2012) work on St Paul's in
22 Bristol, and McKenzie's (2015) on the St Ann's estate in Nottingham, where neighbourhood
23 pride and solidarity can be a response to 'external defamation' (Slater and Anderson 2012:
24 540). Neighbourhood belonging in L8 has assumed a more meaningful and elevated position
25 in relation to residents' simultaneous attachments to Liverpool and the UK. Such identity
26 attachment acts as a form of symbolic struggle (Bourdieu, 1991) in the context of
27 neighbourhood, by challenging imposed negative labels from above that 'blemish place'
28 through enforced 'territorial stigmatisation' (Wacquant, 2007: 67). The empirical findings from
29 Liverpool, like those from Bristol and elsewhere, contribute to debates on how residents
30 themselves counter harmful stigmatising narratives.
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41 **Belonging, social change and generational differences**

42 Elements of neighbourhood belonging have been drawn from different influences and
43 experiences based on generation, ethnicity, and length of residency. Some continuities were
44 apparent in experiences across generations. For example, the historical legacies of oppressive
45 neighbourhood policing were a dominant theme. A younger informant explained: 'I think the
46 one thing I can definitely say is the police situation probably hasn't changed at all [...] I noticed
47 the meetings after the [2011] riots, it was that the fathers of the sons who were complaining
48 had the same complaints 20 years before' (20-29, female, Black). An older informant had
49 similar views: 'Oh no, [the police] still look down on us' (50-59, male, Black). Another
50 explains:
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3 The older generation were on the frontline really, taking all the racism and prejudice
4 [...] but there are things we have had to deal with [...] to do with class as much as race.
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6 I spent time in Garston as a teenager, and the police wouldn't have treated the poor
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8 Garston kids any different to the Liverpool 8 kids, the only difference would be they
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10 couldn't call them Black b*****s. But a Garston kid would get picked up, locked in
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12 the cells, given a kicking as much as a Liverpool 8 kid. The only difference was not
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14 calling one a n***** (30-39, female, Black).

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17 Younger generations make clear distinctions in terms of the way Liverpool 8 identity was much
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19 more politicised amongst the older generation:

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22 I think [...] older generations had it a lot harder than us, [...] they were the rioters and
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24 stuff, they have a [politicised identity with L8] a lot stronger [...] younger people don't
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26 see activism and rioting or protesting in the same way. [...] the older generations seem
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28 a lot more passionate, [...] have a stronger idea or vision of what Toxteth is or it should
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30 be [...] (20-29, female, Black).

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33 These narratives reveal how such politicised history and its legacy is not only understood by
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35 younger generations as important, but also how this is distinct from their own experiences.
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37 There was also some recognition amongst younger groups of the way the area's stigma is
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39 changing: 'well it's not like the old days when I was a kid and say you'd go to Brighton Beach
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41 [Wirral] and you are playing with other kids, where you from – Toxteth – aaah, sharp intake of
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43 breath. I don't get that reaction anymore!' (20-29, female, Black).

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45 Changes across generations can also be gauged in terms of the subtle ways respondents
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47 negotiate space. Younger people's spatial horizons appeared to be wider, going beyond the
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49 confines of immediate community and neighbourhood. Whilst belonging to neighbourhood can
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51 be passed down generationally, there are additional broader social and political factors that
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53 come into play which impact and influence strength and degrees of belonging. The increasing
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55 importance of social media networks beyond immediate community is particularly germane
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57 with reference to younger generations. Likewise, young people tended to have more activity
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59 spaces outside the neighbourhood, which widen not just their physical horizons, but their socio-
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perceptual boundaries. Working, studying and socialising outside of the Liverpool 8 area was
an important part of some young people's experiences, often whilst retaining social links with

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3 Liverpool 8. One young man, for example, worked in the city centre and had a wider
4 geographical perception of 'his' Liverpool 8 because of his broader connections through work
5 and social circles. This was supported by two other 'younger generation' residents: 'I don't
6 venture more than my area south-central sort of thing. I shop [and work] in town, [...]' (30-39,
7 female, Black).
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13 [I visit town] more or less 5 days a week. Town to me is an extension of where I'm
14 from [...] where I live, [...], University, work, meeting up on nights out, meeting
15 friends, going for food. It's a big part of my life, definitely [...], I would say town and
16 Toxteth are my main areas [...] (20-29, female, Black).
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22 Reference was made by several respondents to the perceived greater spatial mobility of
23 younger generations today compared to older generations. 'A lot of people who I knew
24 growing up have moved on, but the older people are still there' (30-39, female, Black):
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29 I think it's a Liverpool thing to think you have to leave the city to get on [...] there is
30 that thing about you don't see Black people working in town, etc [...] A lot of people
31 are worried about the racism. How difficult it is to get on and a lot of people move on
32 because of that (20-29, female, Black).
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37 A lot of the young ones have left, gone to uni outside of Liverpool. They don't want to
38 stay [...] but there are people who I grew up with who are still there [...]. Some friends
39 have left completely, [...] in America, London, Leeds, Birmingham (30-39, female,
40 Black Nigerian).
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46 However, wider spatial-social boundaries within Liverpool were tempered by caution:
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50 There are places I still wouldn't go to [...] places in Liverpool [...] I just wouldn't feel
51 comfortable to be there as a Black person [...] Croxteth, [...] Huyton. When I hear
52 Black [people] say they live in places like that, my instant reaction is: why?... it's still
53 got massive barriers to overcome for me personally but [...] it is very different to what
54 it used to be... (20-29, female, Black).
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3 I love being Scouse. I'm not really comfortable in all parts of the city though, [but with
4 work] I have to go to different parts of the city. But before [...] you would never catch
5 me in Huyton or Fazakerley or Mossley Hill. I was always around here, [...] [with] this
6 job I go to places and I spot the odd Black face and I think, oh my God, who housed
7 you here? Why would they do that? (30-39, female, Black Nigerian).
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13 Another young respondent harboured different concerns:
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17 I work in a bar [in town] so I'm there like 2 or 3 times a week, I shop [...] go to town
18 with my mates on the weekend [...]. To be honest I only go where I have to cos my
19 family or friends are there, so like Woolton, Wavertree, Allerton, Garston, Aigburth.
20 Other than that [...] I probably wouldn't [go to] Norris Green and them ways, they
21 sound like proper gun lands (18-29, male, Mixed heritage).
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27 A young man who had been subject to racial abuse was less worried about travelling to different
28 parts of Liverpool through work:
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32 It has never put me off going into all the other areas though, out of all my friends I'm
33 probably the most travelled around Liverpool [...] My Mum would be like 'be careful'
34 [...]. I think when I go to North Liverpool or Halton or the Wirral [...] I'm waiting and
35 expecting for something to happen because those areas aren't as diverse [...]. I was on
36 the train in Prescot [...] and [was told to] 'f*** off you n*****'. [...] it's one of those
37 areas I would expect it to happen. So, no I'm not scared of going to new areas (20-29,
38 male, Black Mixed heritage).
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46 Younger peoples' spatial horizons continued to be constrained by their experiences or fear of
47 racism. Warr (2015) has argued that socio-economic marginalisation, made worse by place
48 stigma and racism, can lead young people to have greater dependency on local networks and
49 neighbourhood. Whilst our sample is too small to draw any significant conclusions from this,
50 younger generations appeared to be more likely to frequent the city centre and other areas
51 outside L8 that older generations would perhaps avoid, whilst still being constrained by clear
52 'no go' areas for a variety of reasons, including safety. This also relates to preferences around
53 areas to live:
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3 'Yes, I feel comfortable in town and city centre [...] My Mum, she doesn't go to town.
4 There's no reason for her to go to town [...] other people that I know are just in their
5 little bubble [...] and that's their Liverpool, whereas my Liverpool is a lot bigger than
6 that I think (20-29, male, Black Mixed heritage).
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11 I wouldn't live in any majority White area. [...] I wouldn't move far out of Toxteth.
12 [...], to Garston, Kirkby, Speke – never. I'd live in Wavertree. I've got a son going to
13 be a teenager soon and I'm not having him where someone will call him out for stuff
14 he doesn't need to be called out for (30-39, female, Black).
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21 If I had the money, I'd probably still buy around the L8 area [...] never will you see me
22 buy a house down Park Road – Dingle is where I've had the worst experience of racism
23 in my life. You still hardly see Black faces. I could not put my child in that situation.
24 So, I'm limited in where I would choose to live (30-39, female, Black Nigerian).
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29 These narratives demonstrate how the strength of neighbourhood solidarity and belonging is
30 rooted in an array of experiences shared cross-generationally, and include knowledge of the
31 history and culture around local struggles and conflicts, particularly racism. Moreover, place
32 stigma historically attached to Liverpool 8, particularly as regards safety and crime, and the
33 barriers associated with such stigma, have seen residents responding with alternative narratives.
34 Their emphasis on safety, diversity and pride in Liverpool 8 not only challenges and juxtaposes
35 more powerful, mainstream and negative discourses, but act to reinforce residents' identity and
36 belonging.
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44 Allied to the theme of safety is residents' social construction of boundaries that transgress
45 'their' Liverpool 8. Residents identified locations where acceptance of diversity and 'safe
46 boundaries' could be assumed, whilst other areas beyond Liverpool 8 were labelled 'no-go',
47 particularly for BAME groups. The way such areas have been experienced has a long historical
48 trajectory that persists amongst younger generations today. This might be explained in terms
49 of local historical specificities, where historical Black settlement in Liverpool 8 led to hostility
50 from surrounding White areas. In more recent years, racism and racist attacks have been
51 increasing nationally, directed at immigrant groups, but also at long-established British born
52 BAME communities. National debates on ethnic diversity and immigration, community
53 cohesion and integration, the 'war on terror', national identity, and more recently Brexit, have
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3 informed hostile policy and public discourses that have fuelled tensions and in some senses
4 normalised, and even legitimised, racial intolerance (Burnett, 2013; 2017).
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8 Perceptions of social boundaries fall outside ‘official’ administrative boundaries such as
9 postcodes or electoral wards, but represent significant defensive reactions to painful
10 experiences of racism and fears around safety. This ‘belonging through discrimination’
11 emerged out of socio-economic and racial inequalities and subsequent hardships, whereby a
12 sense of belonging can mitigate the negative effect of discrimination by offering a degree of
13 emotional protection and resilience (see Yip, 2018 and Rivas-Drake et al., 2014 on ethnic and
14 racial identity; Daley et al., 2018 on disability). Such adversity has strengthened pride of
15 place and greater attachment to neighbourhood across generations.
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23 Recent demographic and social changes might have an impact on the ‘communities of memory’
24 solidarities observed. The settlement of new migrant groups, alongside separate processes of
25 gentrification, have presented challenges to some residents:
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30 ‘[...] immigration is always a hot issue. A lot of non-English speakers have moved in
31 [...] people are worried about the identity of Toxteth [...] I hear people who are the
32 descendants of immigrants moaning or being threatened by immigration. It’s
33 hypocritical to me. [...] (18-29, Female, Black).
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38 This mirrors the work of Phillips (2015) and others (Amin, 2006) in demonstrating how
39 established communities may respond to newcomers with ambivalence and fear. Negotiating
40 social change can be challenging, particularly where one’s sense of national belonging is
41 precarious (Phillips, 2015). However, the impact of new migration does not appear to have
42 seriously disrupted neighbourhood solidarity, collective memory and the sense of pride and
43 celebration around diversity, and others were more positive about these changes, positioning
44 new migrant settlement as part of a longer historical trajectory: ‘I think Toxteth has always
45 been a place where immigrant families have come to. It’s always been negotiated [...] where
46 people become part of the community. [...] as has been the case for generations (18-29, Female,
47 Black); ‘I’m seeing a new Toxteth being born. [...] Toxteth is aesthetically getting better in
48 terms of the mix of people [...] White Polish, Irish, ... Greek, White Muslims [...]’ (40-
49 49, Male, Black). :
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Conclusions

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3 This paper has focussed on cross-generational belonging in an ethnically diverse working-class
4 neighbourhood in south Liverpool. The findings from interviews with local residents contribute
5 to our understanding of the complex processes involved in neighbourhood belonging, identity
6 and inclusion. The wider literature around community, place, memory and neighbourhood
7 belonging has informed our understanding of the issues and complexities involved in
8 neighbourhood identity. This has helped identify similarities as well as differences between
9 Liverpool 8 and other ethnically diverse working-class neighbourhoods. Similarities exist
10 whereby portrayals of neighbourhood were ‘bounded’ into geographical borders that were not
11 commensurate with socio-perceptual boundaries (see Massey, 1995: 54; Rogaly and Taylor,
12 2009). Interview respondents’ definitions of Liverpool 8 were found to differ significantly from
13 official administrative boundaries. This serves as an important reminder to neighbourhood
14 researchers of the need to be sensitive when defining boundaries (see Catney et al 2018 for
15 more on the methodological nuances of neighbourhood definitions), but this also has wider
16 socio-policy implications. The results show how the ‘everyday’ geographies experienced and
17 perceived by residents can be very different to those which are used to allocate resources (e.g.,
18 funding for deprived locales), or for electoral purposes. Alongside the similarities between
19 working-class locales, unique neighbourhood-specific characteristics can be identified that
20 have helped nurture, sustain and strengthen attachment and belonging in Liverpool 8. These in
21 part rest on its long history of Black settlement that stretches back to at least the nineteenth
22 century. The longevity and physical rootedness of the community have provided the basis upon
23 which social mechanisms have shaped identity and added depth and meaning.

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41 The findings demonstrate that, firstly, strong neighbourhood belonging and identity is
42 transmitted between generations through narratives of past experiences of older generations.
43 Secondly, shared contemporary experiences of class and racial disadvantage through continued
44 social and economic marginalisation, policing and overt expressions of racism (verbal and
45 physical attacks), serve to sustain and reinforce historically-based notions of belonging. This
46 was common across older and younger generations, and between diverse ethnic/social groups.
47 Shared experiences of inequalities in Liverpool 8 have cultivated strong social solidarity,
48 articulated through cross-generational and widespread narratives around pride, safety,
49 allegiance and affection for neighbourhood. This serves to challenge and contest ‘common
50 sensical’ discourses and academic and policy research (e.g., Casey, 2016) that suggests
51 diversity leads to conflict *and* lack of cohesiveness in communities (see Karner and Parker,
52 2011), as well as stand in sharp contrast to powerful mainstream accounts that stigmatise and
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3 undermine disadvantaged inner-city neighbourhoods like Liverpool 8 (and elsewhere). The
4 strength of local empirical studies rests on the detail they provide in shining a light on how
5 wider national and global processes play out at a micro-neighbourhood level.
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10 Thirdly, our findings also reveal nuanced and subtle between-generation distinctions in some
11 of the narratives. The interviews revealed a deeper politicised identity and attachment with
12 Liverpool 8 amongst older generations; differences in the way younger generations observe
13 and perceive changes relating to the diminishing stigma of Liverpool 8; and changes in the
14 negotiation of space, seen in the beginnings of younger people's apparent and perceived greater
15 spatial mobility and widening spatial horizons. This was expressed through accounts of social,
16 educational and working lives that extend beyond neighbourhood to encompass city centre,
17 suburban, and in some cases regional locations. Such changes relate to wider political processes
18 in terms of the way global capitalism impacts on the local, particularly in the operation of
19 familial and friendship networks. Changes in technologies of social and communication media
20 may explain the more spatially-dispersed social interactions and experiences that undermine
21 and dilute neighbourhood and place attachment, especially amongst younger generations
22 (Savage et al., 2005).
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33 Fourthly, whilst expanding spatial and social horizons weaken neighbourhood ties for some,
34 the particularities of unequal power relationships at the intersections of 'race' and class can see
35 global processes impacting locally in a plurality of ways. Disadvantaged socio-economic
36 relationships can limit young peoples' spatial boundaries, where social networks outside the
37 immediate community can be thwarted by enduring class and racial discrimination and place-
38 based stigma. For example, while the expansion of UK Higher Education is associated with an
39 increase in young people from disadvantaged backgrounds going to university, there are
40 persistent inequalities in enrolment rates, rates of acceptance into prestigious institutions,
41 educational attainment, and subsequent success in the labour market (Crawford et al., 2016).
42 This can encourage greater reliance on familial and friendship networks at the neighbourhood
43 level, so that local and community networks become *stronger* and *more* important as they
44 represent significant relationships of support, belonging and identity (Warr, 2015).
45 Community relationships appear, then, to be increasingly negotiated through the prism of both
46 local and global exchanges (Clayton, 2011). Allied research on belonging and place illuminates
47 how youth identities overlap with a myriad of life experiences (religious and cultural
48 communities; youth cultures, virtual networks and social media), where practises of belonging
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3 locally are produced and reproduced through trans-local movement and influence (Condry,
4 2006). Such developments are imbued with issues of power and powerlessness. Some younger
5 peoples' spatial horizons in Liverpool demonstrate continued constraint through experiences
6 or fear of racism, and unease around defined 'no go' areas. Young people in Liverpool as
7 elsewhere 'are seen to navigate landscapes of risk and opportunity' and draw on identities and
8 resources from the local and the global 'within everyday contexts of relative powerlessness'
9 (Clayton, 2011: 1689). Indeed, a hyper-awareness of the (perceived or actual) need to be
10 vigilant in particular neighbourhoods outside Liverpool 8 represented a limitation to the
11 increasing spatial mobility of young people, particularly those from BAME groups.
12 Negotiations of 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces, determined as such either by first-hand experience
13 or through intergenerational transmission of local knowledge and perceptions, served to render
14 particular locales persistently 'out of bounds'. Fears expressed on behalf of future generations'
15 exposure to racism, which limited where participants were willing to move to with their
16 children, suggests further intergenerational transmission of area perceptions in the future.
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29 This research has been exploratory in terms of gauging levels of neighbourhood belonging and
30 attachment at a time of unprecedented global social change. The paper demonstrates how the
31 particularities of working-class neighbourhood identity, and the processes that shape it, are
32 significant in providing important and alternative narratives that have either been silenced,
33 delegitimised, or unheard. Positioning local narratives in broader structural processes is
34 imperative if we are to make sense of these grassroots perspectives, as well as understand their
35 significance for wider society. It is hoped that this micro-level neighbourhood study can shed
36 light on some of the ways in which wider social changes are impacting locally, as well as to
37 highlight issues that will stimulate further social enquiry.
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46 **Footnote**

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48 1. Gender here refers to social and cultural distinctions associated with being male or female
49 and does not necessarily correspond to biologically-determined sex.
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Acknowledgements

We are indebted to all the participants who were generous with their time. Thanks to Leona Vaughn (Research Assistant) for undertaking the interviews and mental mapping and to the British Academy for their financial support for this work. Thank you to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive suggestions and support that have helped strengthen the paper.

Funding

This research was funded by the British Academy as part of the wider project ‘The Role of People and Place in Neighbourhood Identity: Belonging and Social Inclusion’ (Grant Reference: SG142055).

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