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Three ways social identity shapes climate change adaptation

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1 **Three ways social identity shapes climate change adaptation**

2
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4
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12 13 **Abstract**

14
15 Adaptation to climate change is inescapably influenced by processes of social identity – how
16 people perceive themselves, others, and their place in the world around them. Yet there is
17 sparse evidence into the specific ways in which identity processes shape adaptation planning
18 and responses. This paper proposes three key ways to understand the relationship between
19 identity formation and adaptation processes: 1) how social identities change in response to
20 perceived climate change risks and threats; 2) how identity change may be an objective of
21 adaptation; and 3) how identity issues can constrain or enable adaptive action. It examines
22 these three areas of focus through a synthesis of evidence on community responses to
23 flooding and subsequent policy responses in Somerset county, UK and the Gippsland East
24 region in Australia, based on indepth longitudinal data collected among those experiencing
25 and enacting adaptation. The results show that adaptation policies are more likely to be

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3 26 effective when they give individuals confidence in the continuity of their in-groups, enhance
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5 27 the self-esteem of these groups, and develop their sense of self-efficacy. These processes of
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7 28 identity formation and evolution are therefore central to individual and collective responses
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9
10 29 to climate risks.
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14 31 **Key words:** continuity, flood, sea-level rise, self-efficacy, self-esteem
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18 33 **Introduction**

19 34

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23 35 Identity is the emotionally significant self-image of an individual which is derived from their
24
25 36 membership of social groups, often referred to as in-groups (Tajfel 1974). A positive identity
26
27 37 is the product of confidence in the continuity of in-groups, and a sense of self-efficacy (belief
28
29 38 in capacity to exert control), distinctiveness, and self-esteem (sense of worth) (Breakwell
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31 39 2015). It is a key factor in individual behaviour as people seek to act in ways that are
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33 40 consistent with the norms of their in-groups.
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40 42 People are aware of and sensitive to threats to their identity, which can arise from changes in
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42 43 social or environmental circumstances, or through labelling by others. Faced with such
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44 44 threats, individuals can respond in several ways, including by changing their behaviour,
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46 45 adapting their identity, denying the existence of the threat, or accepting the existence of a
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48 46 threat but not otherwise changing their identity or behaviour (Breakwell 2010, Jaspal et al.
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50 47 2014).
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56 49 Identity has been highlighted as an important factor in many environmental domains,
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58 50 including on ethical consumption, pro-environmental behaviours, climate change activism,
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3 51 leadership of environmental change initiatives, and sharing of information about
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5 52 sustainability (Whitmarsh and O'Neill 2010, Jaspal et al. 2014, Unsworth and Fielding 2014,
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7 53 Sapiains et al. 2016). Emerging research suggests that social identity, and its sub-dimensions
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9
10 54 of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, can also affect climate change
11
12 55 adaptation (Frank et al. 2011, Fresque-Baxter and Armitage 2012, Quinn et al. 2015,
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14 56 Wernersson 2018, Ruoso 2019). We therefore posit three key mechanisms through which
15
16 57 identity formation and climate adaptation interact. Specifically, social identities can be an
17
18 58 objective of adaptation, they can change in response to climate change information, and they
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20 59 can constrain or enable adaptive action. The dimensions of relationships between identity and
21
22 60 adaptation are outlined in Table 1.
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28 62 Maintaining and defending identity can be an objective of adaptation, for example among
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30 63 Indigenous groups who are struggling to hold tight to place-based and long-lived cultures that
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32 64 distinguish them from Western and settler cultures (Frank et al. 2011, Rotarangi and
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34 65 Stephenson 2014, Eakin et al., 2019). In cases where communities are tied to specific
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36 66 localities, social constrictions of place, or place identity, include the identity of people that
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38 67 belong to them and so place identity has a strong influence on identity (Adger et al. 2011).
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40 68 Nevertheless, social identities are not necessarily based on place, identities are intersectional
41
42 69 in that they arise in response to multiple social constructions of difference (such as class,
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44 70 gender, nationality, and race), and this transpires at the collective (in-group) level as well as
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46 71 the individual level.
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53 73 Maintaining identity is also critical to responses to climate impacts among groups whose
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55 74 occupational identity is tied to natural resources and management practices (Warner et al.
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57 75 2015, Hyland et al. 2016), such as fishers (Coulthard 2009), farmers (Ruoso, 2019), ranchers
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3 76 (Murphy et al. 2017) and pastoralists (Wernersson 2018). The observation that experience of
4
5 77 environmental change is a good predictor of adaptive behaviours may be explained by
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7 78 understanding those experiences as threats to identity that stimulate adaptive responses
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10 79 (Demska et al. 2017).

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14 81 There is some evidence that identities are responding to exogenous framings of in-groups as
15
16 82 being more or less vulnerable to climate change (Table 1). For example, people from low-
17
18 83 lying islands framed as future climate migrants have shifted towards understandings of self
19
20 84 that are more fixed in place or towards identities that are oriented towards transnational
21
22 85 mobility (Farbotko et al. 2016). The identity of places and the people tied to them may also
23
24 86 be changing in response to climate impacts (Brown et al. 2011). Nightingale (2017) shows
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26 87 how adaptation policy intersects with identity politics in Nepal, with political framings of
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28 88 diverse groups as being similarly vulnerable mapping onto the positions of political parties
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30 89 impeding recognition of the particular needs of local actors. Thus, because identity is
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32 90 intersectional, the response of identities to climate change is shaped by more than climate
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34 91 change's materiality, but also in response to the discourses of vulnerability and adaptation
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36 92 that redefine the positions of subjects and shape their entitlements to resources (Eriksen et al.
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38 93 2015, Nightingale 2017).

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42 95 Identities are further implicated in enabling and constraining adaptation. Adaptation policies
43
44 96 and practices receive greater support when climate change is portrayed as a threat to issues
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46 97 that are important for identity and when information about climate risk and responses is
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48 98 exchanged between groups with similar identities (Frank et al. 2011, Sapiains et al. 2016,
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50 99 Eakin et al. 2019). By contrast, adaptation policies and practices that threaten the continuity
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52 100 of Indigenous and local identities are often strongly resisted (Eriksen et al. 2015, Mortreux
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3 101 and Barnett 2009, Neilsen and Reenberg 2010). Similarly, dramatic messages of climate
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5 102 induced catastrophe threaten people's desire for continuity, control, and self-efficacy, and so
6
7 103 are often denied or minimised, especially when no information about ameliorating
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10 104 behavioural change is available (O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole 2009, McCright and Dunlap
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12 105 2011, Jaspal et al. 2014).

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17 107 There is mixed evidence about the effects of identifying with proximate and distant groups on
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19 108 support for adaptation policies and practices. Some studies have shown how a strong place
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21 109 identity can inhibit recognition of local environmental changes, and erode the legitimacy of
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23 110 adaptation at local scales (Bonaiuto et al. 2002, Quinn et al. 2019). Other studies have
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25 111 highlighted that sharing a sense of common cause with distant others who are risk from
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27 112 climate change can stimulate changes in individual behaviours and a sense of solidarity
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29 113 (Fresque-Baxter and Armitage 2012, Devine-Wright et al. 2015, Adger et al. 2017).

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35 115 Understanding how climate change affects identity, and identity in turn affects climate
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37 116 change responses is, we suggest, a critical knowledge frontier, and there is a strong call for
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39 117 more empirical research to further understanding of these connections (Fresque-Baxter and
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41 118 Armitage 2012, Adger et al. 2013, Eakin et al. 2019). Table 1 therefore outlines the key
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43 119 research questions and associated theoretical propositions that help guide this contribution as
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45 120 well as further research.

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48 122 **Identity and adaptation in two vulnerable communities**

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54 124 We provide answers to the research questions in Table 1 by synthesising findings from two
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56 125 detailed datasets about the responses of individuals to immediate risks from flooding and
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3 126 subsequent policy action in Somerset county (UK), and to long-term changes in sea-level and
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5 127 associated policy responses in Gippsland East (Australia). As explained below, these studies
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7 128 were conducted independently, but the studies have common characteristics that make
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10 129 synthesis across them meaningful. Both studies were conducted by social scientists who have
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12 130 a shared understanding of the social dimensions of climate change adaptation (e.g. Adger et
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14 131 al. 2013, Adger et al. 2017, Graham et al. 2018, Quinn et al. 2015), and both used a similar
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16 132 methodology (see below). Further, in both places, flooding is the principal hazard, both are
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18 133 rural communities, and climate change is the overarching discursive and governance frame
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20 134 through which flooding has been understood. We do not claim that these results can be
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22 135 generalised across climate risks in all locations, not least because both studies were of
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24 136 communities in high-income countries. Nevertheless, our comparative synthesis of in-depth
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26 137 interview data from these two studies enables identification of the common and distinct
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28 138 elements of identity that are threatened across these different cases, and the responses of
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30 139 varied identities to different climate threats.
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38 141 In Somerset, flood-affected residents were interviewed in September-October 2014 (six to
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40 142 eight months after the floods) and in April-May 2015. In the first round, 35 residents were
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42 143 interviewed (P1), and a subset of 25 residents took part in the second round (P2). Interviews
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44 144 were conducted with residents who had been flooded in their homes directly, and those living
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46 145 in affected villages but who had not been inundated in their homes. Interview questions
47
48 146 focused on residents' relationships with the place where they live, and how social and place
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50 147 relationships were affected by flooding. Stakeholders with a professional interest in flood risk
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52 148 management were also interviewed (n=52) (for more details see XXX et al. 2018 masked for
53
54 149 blind review).
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3 151 In Gippsland East, two sets of face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted.
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5 152 Between November 2010 and March 2011, interviews were conducted with 30 key
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7 153 stakeholders with an interest in adaptation to sea-level rise, including policy makers,
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9 154 members of key community groups, and local government representatives. The key
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11 155 stakeholder (KSI) interviews included questions about climate change risks of concern, with
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13 156 a focus on understanding people and places vulnerable to sea-level rise. In April-May 2012,
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15 157 interviews (I) were conducted with 42 coastal residents who had been flooded in their homes
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17 158 directly, and those living in affected villages but who had not been inundated in their homes.
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19 159 Interview questions focused on residents' relationships to the places they live and visit, the
20
21 160 social groups they engage with, and how social and place relationships are affected by
22
23 161 flooding. Alongside the interviews, eight focus groups (FG) were held with residents (n=49)
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25 162 in at-risk communities in March and April 2013. Questions in the focus groups explored
26
27 163 residents' relationships to the places they live, their experiences with flooding and how sea-
28
29 164 level rise may affect their relationships to these places and the people who live in them (for
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31 165 more details about the methods see XXX et al. 2018 masked for blind review).
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40 167 For the analysis here, interview transcripts were analysed thematically using NVivo
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42 168 qualitative data analysis software. Two authors coded both English and Australian datasets.
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44 169 The data were analysed under a pre-determined coding framework based on the orienting
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46 170 concepts (Layder 2013) that constitute identity, as defined above, i.e. self-efficacy, self-
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48 171 esteem, distinctiveness and continuity. Data were coded according to whether it reflected in-
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50 172 group or out-group identity (groups that the respondent does not identify with), and whether
51
52 173 it captured how identities changed with flooding and adaptation processes. The direct quotes
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54 174 reported are primarily selected to be as diverse as possible to show the range of ways
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56 175 identities were expressed by residents and stakeholders.
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8 178 *Floods and Identity in Somerset*9
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12 180 Somerset has a long history of living with water: the name derives from Old English meaning
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14 181 land of summer lakes: low lying parts of Somerset have been drained and reclaimed from
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16 182 seasonal wetlands and lakes over centuries. Even with this drainage, the long association with
17
18 183 flooding in the area is documented following draining from 1400 and references to flooding
19
20 184 from the 1700s (McEwen et al., 2014). This history and the landscape associated with
21
22 185 wetland areas has led to residents developing a sense of place that reflects living with water
23
24 186 (McEwen et al., 2014). The present population in Somerset is older than the UK national
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26 187 average, and many respondents in the analysis here referred to retirement plans in the area, or
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28 188 relocation from urban areas. The perceived rural escape alongside the topography forms part
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30 189 of a distinct identity of place.

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37 191 Living with localised flooding is part of the landscape, culture and history of lowland
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39 192 Somerset, with parts of agricultural land commonly being inundated in winter. However, the
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41 193 nature (flooding of homes), duration and spatial extent of the floods in winter 2013/14
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43 194 marked these floods as a new experience for locals. Unlike previous flooding in the area,
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45 195 these extensive and catastrophic floods were the subject of nation-wide media reporting,
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47 196 which has entangled residents in local, national and global discussions of climate change
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49 197 risks and responses (Demski et al. 2017).

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55 199 Interviews in Somerset suggest that the floods had two principal effects on identities. First,
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57 200 many respondents suggested that the floods undermined their confidence in the continuity of
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3 201 their local communities. One respondent explained that flooding is *“like this big black cloud*
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5 202 *that hangs over the whole village, the whole time. I just don’t see a way out of that really”* (I5
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8 203 P2, Somerset). Second, the response of emergency management agencies during and after the
9
10 204 floods was a threat to the sense of self-efficacy necessary for a positive identity: *“one of the*
11
12 205 *things that engenders fear if you like, in people and stress and all the other things, is not*
13
14 206 *having any information or being condescended to by the authorities”* (I12 P1, Somerset).
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16
17 207 Fears over the loss of continuity in and control over their local communities and places of
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19 208 dwelling resulted in receptiveness to adaptation processes that were subsequently proposed
20
21 209 and enacted, including residents becoming actively involved in developing adaptative actions
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24 210 at different scales.

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28 212 The evolution of identities in Somerset in response to flooding was two-fold. First, while the
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30 213 floods did not transform identities, they contributed to new bases for identity formation, i.e.
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32 214 people began identifying with others in their communities according to whether or not they
33
34 215 had been flooded: *“even people a couple of doors down who weren’t flooded, they didn’t*
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36 216 *have much of a clue, really....[so] it was nice to be able to go and talk flooding with people”*
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39 217 (I22 P1, Somerset). Second, respondents expressed new bases of identification with others
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41 218 outside of their communities in similar circumstances: *“we felt like refugees, you could*
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43 219 *empathise what refugees were like and what the situation’s like for them”* (I2 P1, Somerset).

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48 221 Residents accepted the need for adaptation, which was enabled in part by these processes of
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50 222 identification with distant others at risk of flooding, including with those that were taking
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52 223 adaptive action: *“why aren’t we engaging more with the Dutch who historically helped drain*
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54 224 *the land here [and are now] looking at more radical solutions?”* (I4 P1, Somerset).

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5 227 *Floods and Identity in Gippsland East*6
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10 229 The research here reveals core characteristics of community identity in the study areas in
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12 230 Gippsland East. Notwithstanding quite distinct social positions and associated identities
13
14 231 within each community (see XXX et al. 2018 masked for blind review), across the five towns
15
16 232 involved in the research there was shared sense of people and their ancestors having made
17
18 233 these communities during the settler period through hard work, and that that work had
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20 234 produced peaceful and amenable social and natural environments (XXX et al 2014, 2015
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22 235 masked for blind review). Thus there was very much a sense of shared colonial history, self-
23
24 236 efficacy, and pride in the communities involved in the study.
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31 238 Part of this identity involves controlling and living with environmental perturbations,
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33 239 particularly flooding (but also fire). Indeed, many towns around the Gippsland Lakes are
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35 240 prone to coastal and riverine flooding and these can be most disruptive. The most recent
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37 241 disruptive flooding occurred in 2007, with some minor flooding in 2012. Other minor coastal
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39 242 flooding from king tides is a semi-regular occurrence. Disruptive flooding is expected to
40
41 243 become more frequent with climate change as sea levels continue to rise (DCC 2009). Almost
42
43 244 all local communities are socially disadvantaged, and the region is stigmatised for being both
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45 245 flood prone and in decline, which conflicts with local people's sense of pride and efficacy.
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51 247 Between 2010 and 2012 the town of Lakes Entrance became a test case for planning for
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53 248 climate change after a state planning tribunal found that the local government had failed to
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55 249 take account of sea-level rise in its decisions, and restrictions on development were then
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57 250 imposed (Hurlimann et al. 2014). Amid local concerns about economic and population
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3 251 decline, these adaptation decisions can be seen as having undermined people's self-efficacy,
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5 252 and their confidence in the continuity of their local in-groups. Policy makers "*came in with a*
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7 253 *baseball bat... They just destroyed everyone's confidence*" (I1, Lakes Entrance). The planning
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9 254 decisions also undermined self-esteem of the local community: "*[they] put a really negative*
10
11 255 *spin on the town*" (I1, Lakes Entrance) and "*the doubts about rising water levels, which are*
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13 256 *affecting planning decisions, have stopped any prospect of anybody spending any money*
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15 257 *upgrading the place*" (I2, Lakes Entrance). Similar effects on in-group identities were
16
17 258 observed in the other communities, where planning decisions were described as "*destroying*
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19 259 *us*" (FG1, Seaspray), "*unsettling for everyone in the community*" (I2, Port Albert), where
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21 260 residents feel they've been "*blacklisted*" (I2, McLoughlins Beach) and can't move on in their
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23 261 life "*because of everything that's been publically said*" (I1, Manns Beach).
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31 263 Yet the decisions did not undermine self-efficacy. A principal response to the threat to local
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33 264 continuity in all five towns was the construction of narratives of resilience to flooding. For
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35 265 example, respondents said "*it was happening when our grandfathers were here... it's not a*
36
37 266 *new phenomenon*" (I3, Lakes Entrance) and "*if I get flooded out, so be it... you let it flood...*
38
39 267 *I'm not stressed about the floods.*" (I1, McLoughlins Beach). Others stressed the importance
40
41 268 of flooding to the local environment, and normalized it, saying "*I find floods very interesting,*
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43 269 *quietly entertaining events*" (I5, Lakes Entrance), and "*I love the floods... it just brings all*
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45 270 *this beautiful fresh water down into the lakes*" (FG3, Lakes Entrance).
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51 272 Another response of people was to identify with other groups in Victoria similarly at risk but
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53 273 not subject to planning restrictions. For example, respondents referred to a wealthy
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55 274 Melbourne suburb saying that "*the risks that face towns like Lakes Entrance, are no different*
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57 275 *to the risks that face St. Kilda esplanade*" (KS1, Lakes Entrance). Through these logics most
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3 276 respondents effectively denied the threat of flooding to the continuity of communities, and in
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5 277 so doing rejected the need for adaptation: “*we don't need all this crap that they sit there and*
6
7 278 *put on us. They don't live here. They don't see what is going on here. It doesn't flood. It*
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9 279 *doesn't do all these things. It's just a normal place*” (FG1, Port Albert).
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24 281 Table 2 summarises how climate change impacts and adaptation processes can both threaten
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26 282 identities and cause them to evolve and adapt across these different locations. As we explain
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28 283 below, these findings have important implications for adapting to climate change.
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285 **Discussion**

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287 The research here provides evidence for three key mechanisms through which identity
288 formation and climate adaptation interact, namely that: social identities can be an objective of
289 adaptation, they can change in response to climate change information, and they can
290 constrain or enable adaptive action. These mechanisms are evident in the specific cases of
291 flood risk and externally imposed government responses to future risks.

292

293 First, in both Somerset and Gippsland East cases identities are explicitly an object of
294 adaptation. In both cases the continuity of in-groups, in-place, are threatened, by flooding (in
295 Somerset), and by government responses to anticipated amplified flood risk due to climate
296 change (in both Somerset and Gippsland East). The desire to maintain in-group continuity
297 thus appears to be key to understanding community responses to adaptation imperatives,
298 which were somewhat accommodating in Somerset in response to the experience of flooding,
299 and somewhat resistant in Gippsland East in response to Government directives.

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3 301 Second, identities change in response to climate change information. In Somerset there is a
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5 302 long association with flooding but the 2013/14 experience exceeded and surpassed previous
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7 303 experiences and expectations. The increased discussion of climate change, and exchanges
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9 304 with agencies on future adaptation plans framed by climate change projections re-situated the
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11 305 perception of living with water in Somerset. In particular, respondents frequently mentioned
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13 306 other populations experiencing the impact of climate change, including displaced people
14
15 307 elsewhere, and the work of Dutch engineers was mentioned in discussion of responses. This
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17 308 identification with distant others was used to frame the respondent's own experience, and
18
19 309 positioned the residents themselves withing a wider geopolitical landscape. In Gippsland
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21 310 East, government attempts to facilitate adaptation led to a reinforcement of the existing
22
23 311 colonial identity in as much as historical associations and self-efficacy and self-esteem were
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25 312 strongly reasserted as reasons to deny that flooding was a problem and so, in turn, to resist
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27 313 the idea that adaptation interventions were necessary. This strong reassertion of communities
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29 314 being in control, and good places to live, was also stimulated by the stigmatisation of these
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31 315 communities as being in decline.
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40 317 Third, the research here shows how identities can enable or constrain adaptation. The
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42 318 experience in Somerset suggests that elements of identity tied to belonging to and confidence
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44 319 in the local community can enable adaptation. When people observe climate threats to their
45
46 320 in-group they appear more likely to accept the need for adaptation to sustain the continuity of
47
48 321 their communities. This implies that interventions for adaptation can be enabled after extreme
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50 322 events, and through engagement processes that work with the self-efficacy and self-esteem of
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52 323 communities. They may also be enhanced by building a network that enhances solidarity
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54 324 among similarly adapting communities, through which knowledge and empathy can be
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56 325 shared.
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5 327 The experience in Gippsland East suggests that identity can also present challenges for
6 328 adaptation. When adaptation policies are not calibrated with local acceptance of climate
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8 329 change, communities may perceive such policies as threats to their continuity. Desire for
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10 330 continuity and damage to self-esteem leads to denial of the existence of climate risks, in part
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12 331 by stressing their resilience and by downplaying the distinctiveness of their circumstances.
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14 332 Adaptation processes must recognise local identities and experiences and tolerances of risk,
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16 333 and work with communities to find solutions that provide confidence in continuity and which
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18 334 build on senses of self-efficacy.
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25
26 336 Our study has demonstrated the value of understanding climate change adaptation through a
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28 337 social identity lens. Such a lens includes analysis of shared place identities - which ours and
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30 338 other studies show are important for climate change adaptation (Cunsolo Willox et al., 2012,
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32 339 Geoghegan and Leyson. 2012) – but also draws attention to the way multiple constructions of
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34 340 social difference combine to create forms of identity that enable or impede adaptation
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36 341 practices (e.g. Osborne 2015). Knowledge of how social identities are at risk from climate
37
38 342 change and from climate change responses is key to the broader endeavour of understanding
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40 343 the way climate change affects the human experience, because they are central to many
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42 344 psychosocial phenomena, including well being (Walker-Springett et al., 207), and mental
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44 345 health (Cunsolo and Ellis 2018). They are also a key motivator for of adaptive behaviours
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46 346 and support for or opposition to adaptation policies and programmes, and so a social identity
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48 347 lens can help advance knowledge of barriers and enablers to adaptation, particularly at the
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50 348 community level (Ensor and Berger 2009). Finally, mapping social identities can help explain
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52 349 degrees of cooperation within and between communities who may be expected to act
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54 350 collectively because they share common climate risks, but who struggle to do so for reasons
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3 351 socially constructed differences based on religion, race, or class; and conversely who may be
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5 352 amenable to cooperation and collective action on climate change despite such social
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7 353 differences because they share a concern over climate change (Ide and Fröhlich 2015, Slevin
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9 354 et al., 2022). Attention to differences in social identities between governance actors such as
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11 355 those from government agencies or international NGOs may also help explain enablers and
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13 356 barriers of adaptation policies and plans.
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18 19 358 **Conclusion**

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21 359 Identity can be harnessed to support the social acceptability of adaptation policies and plans.
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23 360 Conversely, efforts to initiate adaptation are likely to face challenges of legitimacy, to lack
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25 361 popular support, and to be resisted if they threaten social identities. Yet the same
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27 362 interventions could be highly effective in cases where maintaining social identity is
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29 363 recognised as a goal, and where policies enhance self-esteem and develop their sense of self-
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31 364 efficacy.
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3 375 0552). We also appreciate the time that the respondents took to participate in the interviews
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5 376 and focus groups.
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Table 1: Critical issues on the relationships between identity and adaptation and relevant theoretical approaches

<i>Identity</i> is the emotionally significant self-image of an individual that is derived from their membership of in-groups.	
Research question	Theoretical Proposition
<i>How does climate change threaten identities?</i>	Identities may be threatened by: potential or direct experiences of climate impacts, or climate change policies, which put at risk the continuity or distinctiveness of in-groups, and senses of self-esteem and self-efficacy.
<i>How do identities respond to climate threats?</i>	Identities may respond by: denying the existence of climate change threats; accepting the need for behavioural and policy change; transformation through changes to in-group and/or self-images.

Table 2: Summary of identity responses to climate change in Somerset and Gippsland East

<i>Identity</i> is the emotionally significant self-image of an individual which is derived from their membership of in-groups.	
Research question	Evidence from cases
<i>How does climate change threaten identities?</i>	In Somerset the magnitude of flooding threatened the community's confidence in its ongoing continuity, and the disaster response and recovery processes threatened the community's self-esteem and self-efficacy. The distinction between those who were flooded and those who were not also created new bases of distinctiveness and solidarity with local and distant others.
	In Gippsland East the imposition of planning restrictions to manage flood risk threatened the community's confidence in its continuity and its sense of self-esteem.
<i>How do identities respond to climate threats?</i>	In Somerset identities evolved to include flood risk as both part of the local identity within the community and increasingly with distant others, and to accept that adaptation is necessary. There was little evidence of significant change in identities.
	In Gippsland East local identities related to resilience were challenged and this resulted in the rejection of warnings of climate change risks, with locals asserting their capacity (self-efficacy) to adapt, and identifying with distant others who share flood risks but not planning responses to those risks. There is little evidence of identities evolving to accept the need for change.