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(Re)visiting the neighbourhood

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Abstract

Neighbourhoods are complex places, at once familiar and foreign, easily found on a map or bounded by rules only insiders know. Although neighbourhood is a concept, one that we experience daily, it remains conceptually challenging for geographers and planners alike. Nevertheless, and despite its complexity, the importance of the understanding the neighbourhood should not be overlooked, especially in the post-pandemic world. Understanding the neighbourhood as a concept, place and context, poses opportunities for geographers to think-with and think laterally across the demographic information we may have on who lives in a neighbourhood, and towards the integration of lived experiences to our explorations of it. In this paper, we critically review key literature on the neighbourhood since 2015, and discuss recurrent themes from that scholarship: belonging, place attachment, everyday interactions, and spatial formations. We argue that the neighbourhood be considered as a multilayered locale *and* a site imbued with emotions and meanings located with, in and stemming from place-specific conceptual, temporal, and spatial contexts of the neighbourhood. Our (re)visit of the neighbourhood occasions, we think, an opportunity for geographers to keep in touch with the neighbourhood and shape new discussions around these important 'lived in' spaces and places.

1 | INTRODUCTION: WHY (RE)VISIT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

A neighbourhood can be at once familiar and foreign. What comprises an understanding of the neighbourhood depends on who you ask, whether that person lives in the neighbourhood you are inquiring about, and perhaps also who is asking about the neighbourhood too. That we all live in spatially bounded areas, often–though just as vaguely–called a neighbourhood, renders our (re)visit of the term neighbourhood of far-reaching relevance across multiple and diverse scales and spatialities. Yet, returning to the notion of neighbourhood is also the type of academic inquiry that we can all connect to, and identify with in personal, and not just professional, capacities. Understanding what comprises a neighbourhood matters, not least because we all live in one, but because the neighbourhood frequently features as a scalar locale in geographical research (see e.g.: Andersson & Musterd, 2010; Haandrikman et al., 2021) – whether qualitative, quantitative and across the many sub-disciplines that comprise human geographical inquiry. Of direct import to the conceptual foundations of this paper, is a distinct research agenda within urban, cultural, and social geography that has sought to link residential context (read neighbourhood) to an individual's outcomes over their life course. Neighbourhood effects research focuses on determining how where we live matters to our life choices and life course outcomes (Clark & Coulter, 2015; Malmberg & Andersson, 2019; Malmberg et al., 2014). Such analyses lend further weight to the importance of understanding the neighbourhood–as a concept, place and context–because the neighbourhood, our neighbourhoods, can impact our lives in positive and negative ways.

Two decades ago, Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2103) attended to the question of what comprises the neighbourhood, concluding that 'there is no single, generalisable interpretation of neighbourhood'. Burrell (2016: 1603) has argued that 'neighbourhood is a notoriously difficult space to define, with official statistics not necessarily mapping easily onto perceptions of neighbourhood on the ground'. Catney et al.'s (2019: 736-737) contribution echoes a disconnect between an academic and felt definition, they suggested that: 'a flexible definition of neighbourhood, which has the potential to be socially meaningful, is more fruitfully defined by those who live, work and socialise in that environment'. While more recent scholarship on the neighbourhood, the aptly named, 'Freedom from the tyranny of neighbourhood', traverses the 'fundamental issue of the definition of the neighbourhood' (Petrović et al., 2020: 1104). Certainly, and as the scholarship we critically review in this paper shows, the neighbourhood has, and continues to be defined in multiple and fluid ways. Sometimes this definition has strong spatial bindings associated with visible material markers, such as certain roads, railway lines, and/or forested and green areas. Sometimes neighbourhood definitions comprise the requisite number of people to fulfil a census collector district, meaning that neighbourhoods can be small in spatial area in highly populated areas, but large and spatially disparate in less populated and/or rural and regional locations. From such demographic demarcations of the neighbourhood, neighbourhoods can be characterised by the people who live there–foreign born, high or low socio-economic, un/employed, family size, level of education, housing tenure type, and so on. Sometimes, the neighbourhood can mean more than how it is defined as a formal designation or address to places of residence or proximal landmarks. The neighbourhood can be place of respite, a place where our housing is, a place that we associate as home (because our home is in it). It can be a place that holds memories – good and bad (Buckle, 2017; Ratnam, 2018) – but one that may also trace temporal genealogies of our family/ies or be devoid of these connections. In our neighbourhoods, we (re)visit the neighbourhood spatially and temporally through everyday practices, like fetching children from school, by taking a leisurely route on a sunny day, or throughout our life course; we also, perhaps return to neighbourhoods of our youth to visit family or ageing close contacts. Neighbourhoods can also be familiar because we know 'in' them. We know people, other than our kin, who also live there. We know how the neighbourhood looks, including where certain things are, shops, parks, short cuts, walking tracks, fruit trees, our friend's houses perhaps. We know the 'place' of the neighbourhood through our lived

experience of it. This lived experience may influence what makes us attached to our neighbourhood(s), or not, *and* what makes us feel like we belong there, or not. Without lived experience of a neighbourhood, it may feel foreign, especially if demographic and/or spatial characterisations of the neighbourhood are unfamiliar. We consider this critical review exercise as both a visit and revisit; we employ the lexical parenthesis to highlight the concurrent processes of producing and (re)producing knowledge about the neighbourhood, especially in view of the new temporal and spatial lenses of our recent contexts. To (re)visit the neighbourhood, then, is to build, layer, and nuance what we already know about the neighbourhood, with different, novel and composite understanding of it, including perspectives of the neighbourhood as a lived space.

1.1 | Writing from (our) neighbourhoods: contexts and positions

Our intersection into these existing ideas about what comprises the neighbourhood locates within specific conceptual, temporal, and spatial contexts too. Conceptually, our epistemological approach is one that recognises and appreciates that there are multiple ways of knowing place and that these involve complex, and often emotional, interconnections and relationships between people and place (Bradley, 2017; Drozdzewski et al., 2016; Petrović et al., 2020). Our explorations of these interconnections and relationships nudge towards exploring the affective components of belonging and place attachments, which also have temporal parameters.

The social distancing recommendations and physical lockdowns implicated by many governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have meant an intense refocus on home and its corollary, the neighbourhood (Devine-Wright et al., 2020). That we have either been confined to our homes, and by extension and depending on the level of restrictions, to short periods of recreational exercise and grocery shopping in our immediate neighbourhoods, has (re) directed much of our everyday lives to a smaller spatial area surrounding our places of residence. As Devine-Wright et al. (2020: 2) have recently asserted, 'the pandemic has elevated the power of place in our consciousness, reminding us that we live an emplaced existence'. While we have proffered the temporality of our investigation as a (partial) research motivation, perhaps we should also qualify the veracity of this claim too! Indeed, the pandemic has compelled, (forced?), us to curtail our everyday mobilities in ways that have refocused those mobilities on places closer to home. Thus, places in the neighbourhood where we might ordinarily not choose to walk, shop, or take the kids to play, have become the closest possible places to undertake such activities. Further, the pandemic may prevent us from visiting other neighbourhoods – perhaps in another region or country – or where we are not resident, but where people and places of significance and meaning are located. The COVID-19 pandemic coats our lived experience of the neighbourhood with a very different felt layers of encounter.

The temporal motivations for our neighbourhood (re)visit permeate into our conceptual parameters too. When we commenced our research project 'The Neighbourhood Revisited: Spatial Polarization and Social Cohesion in Contemporary Sweden' in 2019, we could not have imagined that each of us would be spend much of the project's second and third years working from home in our own neighbourhoods. The spatial and social transformations to our everyday mobilities meant that our research participants would have a different set of 'normal' parameters to reflect on when we asked questions about their neighbourhoods. Certainly, the pandemic has changed not only where we have spent substantial quantities of time in the past year, but it has also introduced new temporalities to our research project. We concur with Manzo and Devine-Wright's (2020: 1) contention that 'our current circumstances prod us to understand our relationships to place with even greater urgency'. However, we also remain cautious of not 'COVID-fying' our research; rather we seek to 'think-with' (cf. Drozdzewski et al., 2021) this specific temporal context to nuance our conceptual contributions on the neighbourhood, drawing focus on how (this) lived experience 'makes available different place and spaces from which to know' (Derickson, 2015: 650) *and* is itself critical to our knowledge production (Butcher & Maclean, 2018).

The spatial contexts of our exploration of the neighbourhood are multiple and fluid. As feminist geographers we acknowledge and affirm that we always write from certain positions. Our positions emanate from our situated

knowledges, encompass the embodied and emplaced spatial locations from where we research and write, and embrace 'reflexive approaches to knowledge production' (Parker, 2021: 219). In relation to this project, both of our positions incorporate lived experience of neighbourhoods across four continents, including at least a dozen national neighbourhood contexts. Our joint feminist praxis is 'grounded in a material, embodied, situated, and partial mode of theory-making … that mark[s] and produce[s] alternative subjectivities, spatialities, and temporalities' of and about those neighbourhood's past, as well as how they refract through where we currently live (Kern & McLean, 2017: 410). We reason that feminist geographic thinking related to embodied, emplaced and situated knowledge is unavoidably intertwined with the neighbourhood. We assert this position because neighbourhoods comprise the 'background to our private lives at home' (Rosenblum, 2016: 2) as well as being spatialities from where we leverage a 'sense of place, identity, and the meeting of daily life needs' (Talen, 2019: 4). This closeness influences how we think-with the neighbourhood and indeed how we write about it here. While our aforementioned situated knowledges and neighbourhood histories infuse how we relate the ideas in this paper, clearly our current neighbourhoods in Stockholm, Sweden, and the project that compelled us to think about neighbourhoods again, also have influence. Thus, while the paper contributes new understandings of belonging, place attachment, spatial formation and everyday interactions in the neighbourhood per se and possibly without direct spatial parameters, anchoring this paper's investigation is the distinct place-based considerations of the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond Program Grant: *The Neighbourhood Revisited: Spatial Polarization and Social Cohesion in Contemporary Sweden*, focused on Swedish neighbourhoods.

The research explored in this paper draws from an extensive review of recent neighbourhood-related scholarship, undertaken to inform the development of a large-scale survey distributed to neighbourhoods across Sweden. Several definitively Sweden-based characteristics related to the neighbourhood comprise 'specific histories and geographies' of place (Valentine et al., 2015: 568), and which underwrite and permeate place specificity, these include that: Sweden has a disproportionally high number of sole-person households (SCB, 2021); many suburbs of Sweden's main cities grew as part of the now renown million housing project, which from 1960–1970s saw close to one million new residences in newly built neighbourhoods with the intention of alleviating crowding in inner city areas, and increasing the overall standard of housing too (Borg, 2015, 2018); a tightly controlled and 'monstrous' system of housing tenure, has created a housing market almost bereft of a private rental market, and in which decade long wait lists for access to social housing create significant dwelling shortages, which then aggravate 'price inflation' on the purchasing property market (Christophers, 2013: 885, 906; Christophers, 2019).

Cumulatively, these place-based characteristics have had, and continue to have, significant outcomes for Swedish neighbourhoods, with housing availability and affordability demarcating strong associative links to socio-spatial segregation across Sweden. The flow on effects of socio-spatial segregation veer towards the designation of vulnerable neighbourhoods and evince claims that privilege in urban landscapes is 'simultaneously historical and spatial' (Pudilo 2000: 16), they are also maintained discursively through media rhetoric and political governance too (Norquay & Drozdzewski, 2017; Östh et al., 2018; Svallfors, 2004). Indeed, a sizeable quantity of scholarship on the neighbourhood effects of Swedish neighbourhoods has focused on socio-spatial segregation, and the outcomes of specific histories of housing tenure and development in place (Abramsson & Andersson, 2015; Andersson et al., 2020; Malmberg et al., 2013, 2018; Strömblad & Malmberg, 2016; Wimark et al., 2019, 2020). With pressure on housing in Swedish neighbourhoods unlikely to abate soon, and recurring media and political focus on 'vulnerable' neighbourhoods, we argue that lateral and diversified approaches to (re)visiting (Swedish) neighbourhoods from experiential, embodied and emplace perspectives – including those that extend neighbourhood effects research through qualitative approaches – is paramount and pressing.

In this critical review, we have cast our lens over recent scholarship on the neighbourhood, mostly from the last five years, from 2016 to today (2021). We choose these temporal parameters both to maintain the journal's remit of offering perspectives on 'current research from across the entire discipline', and because within this more recent time frame we encountered recurrent themes related to, and influencing lived experience in the neighbourhood: belonging, place attachment, everyday interactions, and spatial formation. These themes, we argue, comprise a 'fresh perspective' to the state of the field of existing neighbourhood scholarship more broadly, but also a renewed approach

vis-à-vis the predominance of quantitative neighbourhood-effect research in Sweden too. In the sections that follow we delve into each of these themes and explore their pertinence to understanding the neighbourhood as concept, place, and context, while remaining mindful of our own neighbourhoodly gaze from our desks in Stockholm, Sweden, and across the national and global neighbourhood contexts too. In what follows, we detail and thread together these emergent themes, spotlighting on how the neighbourhood as concept, place and context, twists and turns through this lived space.

2 | BELONGING

Mee and Wright (2009: 772) have argued that 'belonging is an inherently geographical concept'; they go on to say that 'belonging connects matter to place, through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation'. Scholarship on belonging in human geography implicates and integrates two long-held geographical meta-concepts: place and identity (Antonsich, 2010; Clark & Coulter, 2015; Degnen, 2016; Mee & Wright, 2009; Tomaney, 2015). Preece (2020: 829) has contended that 'belonging operates at different scales … affecting how people belong, who belongs, and how people relate to places', and we would add, differently, and across and within different neighbourhoods, and, their communities. Local and neighbourhood assertions of belonging can extend across geographic scales toward the 'city and the nation-state … [as]… interconnected spaces of belonging that condition each other' (Pinkster, 2016: 889). Smets and Sneep (2017: 94) reaffirm the interconnectedness and synchronicity of belonging both to neighbourhood and broader spatial scales and they do so by highlighting the importance of neighbourhood in/to our everyday lives, arguing that 'the place where people reside plays an important role for finding a localised notion of being at home in an increasingly globalised world'.

Discussions of belonging often encompass the phrase, a "sense of belonging", which directs attention to how 'the affective aspects of belonging are mobilised, and the focus is on feelings of being in place' (Mee & Wright, 2009: 772). How and why, we feel a sense of belonging to our own neighbourhoods, is likely to be highly contingent and subjective on our own lived experiences and understandings of the place where we live (Degnen, 2016). This point on lived experience buttresses firmly to our aforementioned narratives regarding positions, and their spatial, embodied and conceptual underpinnings too. In the context of neighbourhood analyses, such contingency means that we may draw on similar material and/or biophysical features of our neighbourhood – such as services, parks, bodies of water, cafes and other lifestyle amenities – but our use and/or appreciation of these materialities are differently embodied, valued, and inscribed across our life courses and varying biographies.

In thinking through how notions of belonging take shape in the neighbourhood, we have turned to geographers' examinations of how 'the neighbourhood becomes familiar and meaningful through everyday practices' (Pinkster, 2016: 872 and 873), how place-based belonging is often 'associated with past and present experiences and memories and future ties connected to a place, which grow with time' (Fenster, 2005: 243), and, how 'a feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood or feeling similar to others in the neighbourhood significantly reduces the desire to move' (Clark & Coulter, 2015: 2683). Taking up Clark and Coulter's (2015) focus on how the neighbourhood impacts on feelings of belonging, Preece (2020: 829) has argued that the 'role for neighbourhoods in belonging and identity-formation [ha]s often [been] neglected in theories of mobility', suggesting that as geographers we have not taken seriously how belonging to the neighbourhood may have bearings on choices we make further in our life courses, including choices to move or stay in particular neighbourhoods too. Familiarity, safety, and security contribute to a capacity to create feelings of belonging to place (Cabrera-Barona & Carrion, 2020; Kern, 2021; Sheringham et al., 2021). But, these affective aspects – to borrow again from Mee and Wright (2009) – are embodied differently, by different people, across and between different spatialities and temporalities (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019). We may, for example, feel safer during the pandemic in our neighbourhoods and at home; conversely, our neighbourhood may not be as a familiar or secure place as we would hope, but our choice of residence may be constrained by other factors. Belonging, and its corollaries

of familiarity, safety, and security, are frequently 'contested terrain, and not always straightforwardly positive' (Degnen, 2016: 1651).

Assertions of a right to belong (to a place) here manifest in a politics of belonging and can be operationalised as a 'signifier [not only] of classed identities', but also to spatialise certain racialised, gendered and sexualised identities to certain places too (Frost & Catney, 2020; Preece, 2020; Smets & Sneep, 2017; Verdouw & Flanagan, 2019). When belonging is politicised and affixed to certain places and identities, there is capacity for such assignations to be 'strategic and at times divisive' (Degnen, 2016: 1651). In their discussion of the spatialisation of belonging, Noble and Poynting (2010: 495) have suggested that a "pedagogy of unbelonging" operationalises strategically to determine how certain neighbourhoods 'are defined and how the boundaries between them are fashioned, or the various logics they embody'. These are the neighbourhoods we do not (want to) identify with, and where we do not (want to) belong, and such concurrent notions of (un)belonging demonstrate the complex relational signifiers between and within neighbourhoods too (Hess & Farrow 2010). We also hazard to guess that our readers can, without too much trouble, think of a neighbourhood in their own cities that has been typecast as either vulnerable, undesirable, problematic, and/or identified by the lower quality of housing, high incidences of foreign born, crime, and so on. 'Place or neighbourhood stigma — which disqualifies individuals on the basis of their residential location — is typically targeted at areas of socio-economic disadvantage' (Klocker, 2015: 422). Belonging, as a conceptual theme linked to neighbourhood, is never straightforwardly positive nor bounded solely within a neighbourhood, but feelings combine in various quantities and qualities to influence how we think and experience certain neighbourhood places, and perhaps attach to them, or not.

3 | PLACE ATTACHMENT

'Place attachment [can be] expressed through feelings of belonging and a perception of 'fitting in' with one's neighbours' (Clark & Coulter, 2015: 2698 and 2699). Place attachment is an oft-discussed concept for researchers talking about the interconnections people have with/to their neighbourhood (Clark et al., 2017; Lewicka, 2011). As such, research on/about place attachment with/to the neighbourhood has included contributions from both quantitative and qualitative focal points (see e.g.: Brown et al., 2004; Clark & Coulter, 2015; Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Lewicka, 2005, 2010, 2020; Maguire & Klinkenberg, 2018). In this paper, and drawing from this existing scholarship on place attachment, we consider place attachment as encompassing,

> 'person-place bonds [that] give rise to our connections to place, which are important in constructions of personal and group identities' [and then also indicative of] 'the way people are able to create a connection to their physical and social constructions of where they live' (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Ratnam et al., 2016: 62-63).

Drawing on Rowles' (1983) older typology of 'insideness', Degnen (2016: 1649) has reasoned that 'three forms of insideness work together to constitute place attachment' – physical insideness, social insideness and autobiographical insideness[1]. We have considered all three, though with slightly different articulations, in our research project with the intention of addressing Clark et al.'s (2017:6) claim that previous studies on place attachment have focused more on articulating how it is formed and its strengths, at the expense of investigating 'how people's behaviour relates to their place attachment'. Both previous and recent scholarship has explored the different combinations of the physical, social, and autobiographical characters of place attachment, and their influence, across a range of neighbourhood spatialities. Recurrent foci of this scholarship have two key trajectories, one, the length of time spent in a neighbourhood 'as an important proxy for place attachment' (Clark et al., 2017: 2), and two, the affective bonds characterise 'the emotional sense of deep connection with particular places that people experience' (Degnen, 2016: 1645; Lewicka, 2020: 65).

Regarding the former, length of time in the neighbourhood is thought to contribute to one's propensity to build attachment to place; as one also progresses through their life course as time passes in that place (Song & Soopramanien, 2019). Coulter et al. (2016: 358) have reasoned that 'life-course perspectives are implicitly relational through time (events derive meaning from their biographical position) and space (individuals' lives can only be understood through their links to others and their connections to structural conditions)'. Through and over time, the 'neighbourhood becomes familiar and meaningful through everyday' encoutners (Pinkster, 2016: 872 and 873). A narrative biography of self becomes intertwined to place (home and the neighbourhood), as significant life course events (births, marriages, leaving school) occurred while living in those same places. This intertwining of the relationships between people and place is not only core to geographical enquiry, but it also involves people reflecting on memories of place too (Degnen, 2016). 'As people pull past experiences into the[ir] present' day expressions of place attachment, time spent in the neighbourhood becomes much more that the actual number of years of residence there' (Preece, 2020: 6 and 7). Time spent there takes on an emotive and affective qualities because it is also imbued with experiences; time, then, can act 'as a trigger for the creation of place meaning, contributing to a positive perception of place' (Casakin et al., 2021: 3). In this vein, 'time spent *and* experiences made in a locality are important for deepening the meanings and emotional ties central to the perso-place relationship' (Kohlbacher et al.: 449, our emphasis)'.

Beyond merely identifying positive and/or strong sentiments of place attachment forged through longevity in place, Dahlberg (2020: 2239) has also contended that for elderly residents ageing in the same neighbourhood where these attachments were built reveals 'strong emotional investments in their surrounding area'. Furthermore, existing neighbourhood relationships are increasingly relied on for support through this latter stage of the life course (see also van Hees et al., 2017). In a similar vein, Frost and Catney (2020: 2836) have also reasoned that 'just as memory can play a crucial role in developing attachment to place … the inter-generational communication of memory can have a significant role in shaping political formations' and in turn, perpetuating stereotypes and stigma towards/about certain neighbourhoods too. The 'inheritance' of a neighbourhood's (perhaps negative) history has varied implications for those who have live and continue to live in such neighbourhoods (Ewards-Öberg, 2020). Such varied implications have related to 'time spent in a place' as contributing to a 'sense of "feeling right"' (Preece, 2020: 6 and 7), and to strong social bonds linked to temporal and genealogical narratives of neighbourhood adversity, which have 'strengthened pride of place and greater attachment to neighbourhood across generations' (Hoekstra, 2019; Frost & Catney, 2020: 2844; Kim, 2021). What is clear from this recent scholarship is that '… place attachment [to the neighbourhood] is bound to social memory, embodied knowledge, and the significance of the passage of time' (Degnen, 2016: 1646), and again not always straightforwardly, nor with predefined adhesive qualities.

We think that Degnen (2016: 1655) best described this complexity of neighbourhood place attachment by using the analogy of one's embodied knowledge of place, she stated that an embodied knowing,

> can only accumulate through the passage of time and via repeated navigation of intimate and daily spaces and routines – how the stone steps feel underfoot, how they are dangerously slippery when wet, how sometimes the extra effort to get up or down them is a nuisance.

Her position, that 'the body matters in the deep emotional connections that people come to have for and with place' (Degnen, 2016: 1655), returns us to the second of our identified trajectories in recent place attachment scholarship – the affective and emotive character of people-place bonds. These bonds both thicken and complicate our understandings of how people connect and form attachment to the places they live. This thickening provides nuance and depth to (the often numerically calculated) descriptions of place attachment (Bradley, 2017; Lager et al., 2019; Preece, 2020; Wang & Ramsden, 2018). Such nuance involves narratives that 'encompass nostalgia, a sense of belonging, and emotional solidarity in strengthening their bonds between people and place' (Kim, 2021: 133) and opens space for 'critical engagement with how people's pasts influence how they react to their surroundings and how the processes of memory effect the body' (Osborne, 2019: 68).

Despite the rich scholarship exploring these affective and emotional characteristics of place attachment, less prevalent among it is the disclosure that such emotive data requires more intensive and interpretative method tools necessitating in-place and emplaced time in the neighbourhood. There is less overall focus on emplaced and emotive methods in the neighbourhood scholarship of/about place attachment. Rather, it is the veracity of this type of emotive data, given its foundation in subjective feelings towards/with place, which is more commonly called into question when proffered as a possible remedy to interpreting quantitative assessments of place attachment (Shelby, 2017). Our position is that how we feel in our neighbourhoods has significant bearing on our propensity to stimulate and foster strong attachments and sense of belonging to those same places. While place attachment literature, including the more recent scholarship reviewed in this section of the paper, substantiates the importance of neighbourhood temporalities and affective bonds to place, in the final discussion sections of this paper, we also contend that attuning to everyday interactions in the neighbourhood and to its spatial morphology can sharpen our understandings of the interplay of the material and immaterial layers of neighbourhood – as a concept, place and context.

4 | EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

Integral to investigations of neighbourhood place attachment are concomitant inquiries relating to social interactions, a relationship that Kohlbacher et al. (2015: 446, 448-449) have noted as being 'strongly interrelated' because 'proximity and continuity promote the development of these social contacts, which can be easily established in the vicinity'. Recent research on neighbourhood types using sorting and cluster analyses (Foote & Walter, 2017; Malmberg & Andersson, 2021; Malmberg & Clark, 2021; van Gent et al., 2019) has indicated the predominance of individuals with similar socio-economic, demographic, and housing tenures, leading to increased like-mindedness in similar neighbourhoods. This research suggests that neighbourhood choice can also be made based on preferring neighbourhoods where one perceives there to be people like them, in terms of profession, family structure, education and housing tenure (Rosenblum, 2016). We nod to this research on neighbourhood sorting here, because 'many of us want to live in a comparatively homogenous home environment', where one may perceive themselves as fitting-in, (by way of the aforementioned social categories), and these categories may in turn have bearing on our propensity to interaction with other people in that proximal vicinity too (Rosenblum, 2016: 8). Social interactions, with other people in the neighbourhood, comprise an important component of generating and maintaining a sense of belonging and attachment to place (Weck & Hanhörster, 2015; Casakin et al., 2015). While Kohlbacher et al. (2015: 448) have reasoned, 'social interactions can provide subtle support and thus are usually experienced positively, as they help the individual to maintain bonds and to produce higher levels of trust', Sheringham et al. (2021: 8) have also shown that a 'sense of familiarity and shared history becomes a strong basis of connection' that can circumvent 'having the same views as one's neighbours'.

Degnen (2016: 1663) has affirmed that 'who we are and how we come to feel connected to place' can be explored in 'terms of experiential everyday social relations'. As Vaiou and Lykogianni (2006) have shown through women's local activities in Greek neighbourhoods, everyday practices can connect and comprise the multiple scales and constellations of spatial relations. It is this everyday character of social interactions that we are keen to highlight here because, and in line with Weck & Hanhörster (2015: 457), we also affirm that 'everyday spatial practices' comprise evidence of 'meaningful contact'. Among the scholarship addressing social interactions in the neighbourhood, the everyday component of these interactions has been highlighted as influential in facilitating connections and building cohesion in-place (Sheringham et al., 2021). In delineating what we mean by 'everyday', we draw from Pinskter's (2016: 875) notion of 'doing' neighbourhood, which includes the everyday routines embedded in the neighbourhood. Degnen (2016: 1655-1656) has reasoned that such everyday doings necessitate attentiveness to an experiential and the subjective everydayness, one bound up 'mundane minutiae of daily life, emerging only as small clues in casual conversation, and need careful attention to discern and detect'. Everyday and social interactions can take a number of forms, and be

enacted with close contacts and/or those (self)defined as neighbours. Lewicka (2010:8) has classified such social ties as being operationalised in several ways, including with friends and relatives through networks and activities. Often, the type of everyday interaction is classified as either weak or strong. For example, weak everyday interactions could encompass greeting your neighbours in the stairwell or foyer, or on the pathway to your house. These interactions could be verbal, they could be gestures such as nods and waves, and/or they could be a signal of acknowledgement to a familiar face at the local playground.

Several scholars (Rose et al., 1998; Henning & Lieberg, 1996; Kohlbacher et al., 2015: 448 and 449) have argued that 'weak' interactions in 'the neighbourhood context form the only connection between individuals who may not really know each other very well but nevertheless are able to foster some kind of cohesion'. Strong(er) everyday interactions may encompass (at least in non-pandemic times), sharing coffee with a neighbour and/or friends who live locally, offering to water plants while someone is away, sharing house keys, or providing other extended means of help and support. Adding to this existing typology, Felder (2020: 681) also examined invisible ties, 'relations with known strangers [which may be] anonymous yet recognisable people we pass on the street on a regular basis'. Her research showed that invisible ties are an 'impersonal-yet-durable' form of relation important for bolstering familiarity in the neighbourhood.

Regardless of whether these everyday interactions are enacted with neighbours, friends and/or family, they help to establish a 'sense of community where friendship and family ties *and* both formal and informal relationships rooted in family life … [are] important functions of urban society' (Clark et al., 2017: 2). As Clark et al. (2017) have reasoned, this importance not least relates to feelings of inclusion, but it also has spatial implications too. Everyday interactions – invisible, weak or strong – generate place-based markers of connection between people and the place through neighbourhood. Burrell (2016: 1611) has suggested that the real meaning of neighbourhood is as a place for 'social contact … that … makes people feel secure about where they live'. Another Canadian-based study, has shown a positive relation between feelings of belonging and life satisfaction and when individuals knew their neighbours (Lu et al., 2015). The temporal accretion of these place-based markers lay and overlay, creating neighbourhood biographies over the lifecourse that narrate 'one's history and those of others [that] become bound up in place and the embodied spatiality' (Degnen, 2016: 1663; Rosenblum, 2016), and that may also contribute as 'pull' factors that reduce mobility out of the neighbourhood across the lifecourse too (Clark et al., 2017). While long(er) place-based, and perhaps generational neighbourhood biographies have certainly been shown to increase the propensity to attach to place and generate belonging too, and often overlooked variable in thinking about the value everyday interactions is space. Neighbourhood design has bearing on where everyday interactions happen.

5 | SPATIAL FORMATIONS

The spatial formation of the neighbourhood is a contingent factor when considering the neighbourhood as a concept, place, and context. Spatial formation has often also been linked to a neighbourhood aesthetics (Pinkster, 2016), its environmental attributes (Lewicka, 2010), its walkability (van den Berg et al., 2017), layout and planning (Talen, 2019), and its architectural styles too (Kim, 2021; Qian & Li, 2017). Talen (2019) has reasoned that a neighbourhood's shape and form – including ease of mobility, access, quality public spaces, green spaces and multifunctionality – enables social connections in the everyday neighbourhood. In this final discussion section, and especially as geographers, we seek to spotlight an often-overlooked aspect of the neighbourhood's spatiality, that is its morphology and how its layout in material and physical form create spaces, or not, for everyday interactions and for attachments to neighbourhood(s) too. Strandbygaard et al. (2020a: 4) have defined this spatial and urban morphology as,

> 'the study of patterns and the collective form of things. The scale can range from buildings to cities and territories, but in its narrowest sense urban morphology refers to the study of the urban fabric of buildings, plots, and street patterns'.

Thus, neighbourhood morphology impacts how one may move around the space(s) of the neighbourhood. Mobility, then, provides an important link to neighbourhood morphology because it can be investigated in terms of its possibility, frequency, safety *and* its corollary outcomes of interactions and social cohesion too (Burrell, 2016). Indeed, Thijssen and Van Dooren (2016: 91) have affirmed that,

> the spatial morphology of the neighbourhood can increase the chances of interpersonal contact. Neighbourhoods should have mixed uses in order to have lively streets at different times of the day and have short blocks with high permeability for pedestrian use.

Walkable neighbourhoods, where one can walk to public transportation links, service amenities, schools, friends and family, and/or recreational facilities, are exemplars of the type of neighbourhood spatial morphology that not only facilitate social and everyday interactions, but that also contain many of the 'non-work-related aspects' of our daily lives within the neighbourhood too (Catney et al., 2019). As Hess and Farrow (2010) have found, even in neighbourhoods with decreased walkability, walkability is highly valued by residents because of neighbourly and neighbourhood connections in (Toronto's) high-rise neighbourhoods. 'Inhabiting the neighbourhood, in this regard, implies choosing to stay inside its limits during everyday activities' (Clark et al., 2017: 5). In cognate transport research, van den Berg et al. (2017: 311) sought to assess the subjective quality of people's neighbourhood interactions premised on the assertion that 'people who are living in a more walkable neighbourhood are more socially involved in the neighbourhood, have a higher level of social capital and thereby a higher quality of life'. These spatial aspects of the neighbourhood's form are, of course, highly contingent on lifestyle choices, but also their perceived importance can vary through the life course. For example, having early childhood school facilities, as well as parks and open spaces close by may be particularly important for families with young children, but perhaps less important for households with young adults. These contingencies highlight the shifting character and experiences of neighbourhoods, where emplaced (re)visiting reveals as processual understandings of place and spatial relations. In their research concerning neighbourhood walking with elderly residents, Lager et al. (2019: 2) have showed that for older age residents 'decreasing activity space heightens the value of the neighbourhoods for daily living and social interaction'. In their research a walkable neighbourhood revealed 'the significance of local contacts for the participants' wellbeing was particularly clear in the exchanges they had with passers-by' (Lager et al., 2019: 2).

In their research on the Stele Forest Historic Neighbourhood in Xi'an, China, Qian and Li (2017:105) have noted the importance of the traditional laneways in the neighbourhood's morphology, stating that 'strong social networks among neighbours for generations are appreciated by native senior residents who cite them as one of their major reasons for remaining in the neighbourhood'. Further, and in congruence with the structure of many European inner-city tenement and apartment complexes, Qian and Li (2017: 105) have also highlighted the how inner courtyards provide an 'open space for social interaction, leisure, and recreation exclusively for a small number of beneficiaries'. Qian and Li's (2017: 105) contention that these inner courtyard spaces serve 'as a resilient spatial component for the extension of household private life when the space demands of local residents' daily life exceed the capacity of their housing units' certainly offers insights in other contexts where the pandemic has forced more use of common space. In less historic Chinese neighbourhoods, creating belonging has been a central planning and political question (Hamama & Liu, 2020; Lu et al., 2018; Xu & Yang, 2009). Studies in Thailand and Malaysia have also suggested that group and individual everyday practices shape feelings of belonging in shared communal spaces (Amine, 2018; Phetsuriya & Heath, 2021).

Also discussing the blurring of private/public spaces of buildings, Zumelzu and Barrientos-Trinanes (2019: 902), have argued that 'such spaces form the interface between private and public … [and they] encourage social encounters and street life in neighbourhoods and can have varying significances among cultures'. Similarly, the same authors have noted that 'spaces between the street and the building create the possibility for residents to spend time together and socialize' (Zumelzu and Barrientos-Trinanes, 2019: 902). Looking out of Danielle's six-story apartment window to the public space between apartment buildings and a metro entrance too, a confluence of such meeting places have been

built into that thoroughfare in the form of park benches, concrete steps leading to a fountain, and a nearby children's playground too. Natasha's ground floor apartment overlooks a shared courtyard green space with a children's play area sheltered from the main public areas of the neighbourhood. These 'physical sites become stages for social interaction, stages that are both physically and socially constructed' that provide opportunities to interact, to pass and nod to familiar faces (and especially in warmer weather) (Kohlbacher et al., 2015: 448). These glances out the window also remind us that sensory connections with the neighbourhood can also be experienced 'from *within* the home' (Sheringham et al., 2021: 14).

Not all neighbourhoods have these spaces of opportunity for everyday interaction, *and* even if they do, not all these spaces are available in the same capacities to a full range of the neighbourhood's inhabitants either. Certain spatial morphologies, in differing spatial and socio-cultural *and* gender contexts, are unsafe, predicate fear, and are associated with crime and/or deviancy. As Thijsen and Van Dooren (2016: 91) have cautioned, 'the spatial morphology of a neighbourhood may either support or obstruct the formation of social capital'. For example, in their aptly named paper *Fear follows form* … Strandbygaard et al. (2020b: 585) have showed that a 'sense of security is connected to neighbourhood type and the city's planning characteristics', as well as a 'significant positive correlation between low income and fear of crime; the lower the income in an urban area, the more unsafe passengers feel at the station'. To demonstrate the importance of attending to 'specific physical attributes of public space surroundings', Lee (2021: 16) investigated neighbourhood park planning in the context of crime rates correlated against specifically chosen variables such as urban form, canopy cover, mixed use streetscapes and intersections and density.

6 | CONCLUSIONS

Our review has highlighted a rich scholarship engaged with the complexity of neighbourhood(s) and has underscored the potential role of geography in boosting the importance of conceptualizing neighbourhood. Following the pandemic, neighbourhood(s) should continue to take on new importance giving an opportunity to geographers to claim place in these debates. Our (re)visit has sought to develop how we understand neighbourhoods as lived space by exploring the connections and fissures between belonging, place attachments, the everyday and spatial formations. Expanding on lived experiences and emplaced knowledges of the neighbourhood means also embracing the mundanity of daily life, the boring, the ugly as well as the dramatic and exceptional. Conceptualizing neighbourhood, as shared and diverse experience, will add to future discussions and service communities by refracting complexity into planning and service programming.

Thinking about neighbourhoods is vital, not least as because the people who plan neighbourhoods may not have lived, or intend to live in them, but other people will, and do. How those people may feel belonging and attachments to their neighbourhoods requires further study, meaning that while the planning neighbourhood morphologies (as we have shown in this review) is crucial to creating opportunities of interactions, planning also needs to engage (more) with asking how people feel about their neighbourhoods and while in them too. Neighbourhoods are emotive – with ideas and understandings being formed in and out of the neighbourhood, and by a confluence of emplaced identifications. The neighbourhood can reveal 'how emotions shape the formulation, implementation, and consequences of public policy' (Hoekstra, 2019: 483) and affirm the need to embrace the complexities within neighbourhood to create policy (Jupp 2014). Of course, there are many ways we, as geographers, are well placed to explore the palimpsest of neighbourhoods as a concept, and in theorising place and context. Such a thickening of neighbourhood data would capture the subjective involvedness of daily neighbourhood life. In the coming post(ish)-pandemic world, our thinking around neighbourhoods have changed, both as a locale where we live/work/recreate, and as sites of opportunities or obstacles to our normative understandings of these practices. Neighbourhoods will and must be highly localized, yet connected to multiple geographies, physical and digital, indicating new roles and processes shaping the lived lives of neighbourhood residents.

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We reason that to attune to the influence and impact of everyday interactions in the neighbourhood, our method tools and methodological focus certainly need to extend *into* neighbourhoods themselves. While much quantitative scholarship has mapped and enumerated the importance of strong and/or weak ties in the neighbourhood by focussing analyses on frequency, quality, and spatiality of everyday interactions (Thijseen & Van Dooren, 2016), our contention is that emplaced, mobile and embodied methods can provide further nuance and scope to our understandings of this relationship too. Such qualitative approaches key into the long-standing ethnographic foci of practice and process in the context of the everyday. Linking together existing numerical research with qualitative emplaced neighbourhood methods, will thicken our descriptions of how 'the habitual use of places contributes to people's experiences of everyday life, whilst the performance of everyday life creates a sense of 'feeling right' in place' (Preece, 2020: 6). We are interested in how our survey-based research data, coupled with the ensuing in-depth and place-based qualitative inquiry can reveal nuances and add vibrancy to our understandings of person to neighbourhood connections, as well as to the shape and consistency of these bonds too. Methods for this type of emplaced and embodied neighbourhood research need to be multilayered; they need to be ready to embrace dialectic spaces and places and to engage more thoroughly with the multiplicity of perceptions, experiences, and feelings evoked in and through place, be it through established methods like interviews or focus groups or evolving methods such as film, bio-sensory and other digital tools.

While there are similarities in the spatial neighbourhood formations across nation-based contexts, as we noted in our inclusion of the courtyards of apartment complexes, certainly our readers' interpretations of these discussions of belonging, place attachment, everyday interactions and morphology will differ in line with national and regional context. We all live in an area variously defined as a neighbourhood. During the past year(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic, those with the opportunity to stay at home have also spent more time in and around our neighbourhoods due to social distancing restrictions, while those working outside the home, have also developed new understandings of the role of neighbourhood. Certainly, this temporal context has enabled unique insight into the concepts of belonging, place attachment, spatial formation and everyday interactions on our neighbourhoods. How such insights sit comfortably, alongside, or not at all, the broader theorisations of the neighbourhood will provide productive and rich ground for our ongoing explorations of the neighbourhood, as a concept, place and context.

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ENDNOTE

[1] In our project we have sections addressing housing history as autobiographical insideness, naming and evaluating important neighbourhood places as physical insideness, and, close contacts, everyday interactions in the neighbourhood and with neighbours as social insideness.

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