Abstract

This paper draws on a multi-sited qualitative study of youth in regional Australia to explore the contemporary relationship between class, place attachment, and the imperative towards mobility and cosmopolitanism. The paper shows how local classed identities shape how young people situate themselves and their localities in relation to the rest of the world, and how experiences of mobility produce classed attachments to place. Here, place is made meaningful within the broader cultural politics of inequality in neoliberalism, in which the moral denigration of figures of the working class come to stand for the disadvantage currently associated with regional places. However local classed histories offer some young people the capacity for resistance, whilst others are unable to reframe their localities in positive terms. Moreover, whilst cosmopolitanism is a mode of classed distinction across the two research sites, this can be enacted either through practices of mobility, or through the repositioning of the local in cosmopolitan terms through the identity practices of middle class youth. The paper therefore reveals new ways in which local social and economic histories offer young people different ways in which to relate to notions of mobility as well as to reconstruct the meaning of their home.

Introduction

In recent years, the sociology of youth has seen a renewed attention to space, place and mobility in the lives of young people (Shildrick, 2006; Cuervo and Wyn, 2012; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013; Skelton, 2013; Farrugia and Wood, 2017; Farrugia, 2018). These developments have emerged in the context of a 'spatial turn' in social theory more generally (Appadurai, 1996; Urry, 2000, 2003; Sassen, 2014), in which debates about inequality have come to focus on distinctions between 'mobile cosmopolitans' participating in global economic and cultural flows, and those who are characterized as 'rooted' in place through 'expulsion' (Sassen, 2014) or marginalization from mobilities of capital and culture (Bauman, 2000; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013). Young people are positioned at the forefront of discourses of cosmopolitanism (Skrbis et al, 2014) and are encouraged to understand themselves as 'global citizens' in order to usher in a new cultural and economic order in which mobility and global connectedness are the norm (Farrugia, 2018). However, the most valorized ways of being young have come to be associated with the 'global cities' (Sassen, 2012) of the metropolitan north (Pedersen and Gram, 2018), creating new positions of geographical marginality that are only recently being recognised in youth studies (Cuervo and Wyn, 2012; Kiilakoski, 2016; Waite, 2018; Farrugia, 2018). For example, the experiences of rural and regional young people are shaped both by a 'mobility imperative' for connection to the urban 'outside' (Farrugia, 2016), and by strong and enduring forms of place attachment that are often regarded as synonymous with rural life (Cuervo and Wyn, 2012). Studies of place can therefore benefit from attention to young people beyond the global city, and are an important way that the sociology of youth can understand new positions of marginality and

privilege taking place through the contemporary imperatives for mobility, cosmopolitanism, and place attachment.

In this context, this paper explores how place attachment and class distinctions shape – and are shaped by – the ways that regional young people respond to the imperative to form mobile and cosmopolitan subjectivities. The paper goes beyond existing assessments of the degree to which young people hold cosmopolitan dispositions (eg Skrbis et al, 2014) to examine how the cultural politics of inequality interacts with the imperative to become cosmopolitan, shaping experiences of mobility and young people's relationship to place. The paper draws on a program of research on young people living in two parts of regional Australia – one rural town with an agricultural history and one regional city undergoing processes of post-industrial economic change. While the research sites have different economic histories, they can both be understood as 'peripheral' to the youthful identities available in global cities (Pilkington, 2003; Pedersen and Gram, 2018). In this context, the paper shows how the cultural politics of class interacts with the social and economic history of particular localities to produce grammars of place that either stigmatise or valorize local places and young classed identities. The paper also explores how cosmopolitan imaginations interact with class and how practices of mobility interact with attachments to place, examining how modes of middle class privilege that transcend place are enacted through positioning the self as either a global subject or a force for the cosmopolitanisation of the local itself. With this, the paper contributes a focus on social class to existing studies of rural youth and place, as well as exploring the way that the cultural and economic history of particular places interacts with the imperative towards cosmopolitanism and the formation of classed identities amongst young people.

Youth and Place Beyond the Global City

The relationship between place, place attachment and mobility has a particular significance for young people living beyond the large urban metropolis. In the global north, economic globalization governed through neoliberal economic policies has benefitted the growth of urban service economies concentrated in global cities, whilst the manufacturing and primary industries that sustained life in regional areas have become less labour intensive or have moved overseas. The consequences of this have been very high levels of regional unemployment (especially youth unemployment) (Bourke and Lockie, 2001), the widespread association of rurality with disadvantage (Cuervo and Wyn, 2012), and anxieties about youth out-migration from regional areas (Gabriel, 2002; 2006). Regional young people relate to their localities and their lives in the context of a 'mobility imperative' (Farrugia, 2016), in which young people must migrate out of their home towns in order to access education and work, and in order to participate in globalized modes of youth consumption and 'cool' only available in large cities (Pedersen and Gram, 2018). Rural and regional young people have been documented describing their own localities in terms of absence or the lack of opportunities available in the city, as a place in which 'nothing happens' (Farrugia et al, 2014; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2003). While rurality is associated with an idyllic childhood, young people often describe experiences of social exclusion (Alston and Kent, 2009; Shucksmith, 2004) and the absence of lifestyles associated with urban youth cultures

(Farrugia et al, 2014b). Leyshon (2011b) describes young people whose engagement with youth and popular culture means that they feel more 'at home' in large cities, or spaces which may be connected with modes of urban cosmopolitanism that increasingly signify the most idealized youth subjectivities (Ravn and Demant, 2017; Farrugia, 2016).

This imperative is producing a cultural politics of place in which mobility and cosmopolitanism become signifiers of distinction amidst the devalorisation of local rural places and the identities of young people who live there. Contemporary political education programs encourage young people to construct their social and ethical identifications in relation to a cosmopolitan 'global', and understand successful youth development as overcoming parochial identifications with particular places (Farrugia, 2018). In this sense, cosmopolitanism can be understood as more than a set of dispositions (Skrbis et al, 2014; Delanty, 2012), but as a cultural imperative that is mobilized by differently positioned young people in the attribution of meaning and value to place. In this vein, Skeggs (2004) has critiqued the celebration of mobility and cosmopolitanism as a middle class affair that celebrates modes of disembedded subjectivity characteristic of middle class intellectuals. In the work of Allen and Hollingworth (2013), these discourses positioned working-class young people in post-industrial towns are as marginal to the cosmopolitan identities said to be available through living and working in the urban metropolis. Writing about the cultural politics of youth and class in contemporary popular culture, Threadgold (2018) shows how attachment to the local is characteristic of figures such as the 'chav' (United Kingdom), 'redneck' (United States) or 'bogan' (Australia) whose parochialism becomes a marker of stigmatized difference as opposed to the 'progressive' and open-minded middle-class cosmopolitan. In this paper, I explore how the imperative towards mobility and the association of cosmopolitanism with classed distinction is creating new forms of inequality that connect with the cultural politics of inequality in contemporary neoliberalism (Tyler, 2013; Skeggs, 2004) and with the modes of classed subjectivity that are produced in particular localities.

This valorization of cosmopolitanism raises questions about established modes of local place attachment experienced by young people beyond the global city. Cuervo and Wyn (2017) have theorized rural places in terms of affective and relational practices performed repeatedly over time to create unique and modes of belonging that transcend established markers of adulthood in late modernity. Some regional young people maintain idyllic notions of their locality in terms of social cohesion and connection with the natural environment (Leyshon, 2011a; Power et al, 2014), creating what has been described as enduring modes of rural embodiment formed through engagement with nature (Farrugia et al, 2016). The longitudinal work of Cuervo and Wyn (2012; 2017) shows that even young people who leave their rural home for study and employment maintain connections with rurality, including especially to the natural environment and rural lifestyle. However, Kraack and Kenway (2002) argue that rurality has increasingly become a stigmatized position synonymous with notions of 'disadvantage'. Holdsworth (2009) has suggested that mobility is becoming intertwined with notions of adulthood through independence amongst middle class young people, and capacities and inclinations for migration have become deeply intertwined with class inequalities in rural areas (Jamieson, 2000; Skrbis et al, 2014). The interaction between

cosmopolitanism, mobility and local social distinctions produces what Thompson and Taylor (2005) describe as 'economies of mobility'. These are constellations of practices, cultural signifiers and personal fantasies that are enacted biographically as young people engage with the world from social locations specific to the structural conditions differentiating rural and urban young people's lives in different national contexts.

In this context, this paper draws on a multi-sited qualitative study of young people in regional Australia to explore how regional youth define their localities, and how class, mobility and notions of cosmopolitanism shape their identities and relationships with place. The study was conducted in areas with different social and economic histories, producing important divergences and convergences in the relationship between place, mobility, and youth identity. In this context, this paper describes first how the cultural politics of place and class was negotiated by young people living in the two research sites, and second how cosmopolitan dispositions and imaginations of mobility were mobilised in attributing value to place and to the self by differently positioned youth. The study is described in more detail below.

Methodology

This project draws on a program of research on young people, place, and identity conducted in two regional Australian sites. The first research site was a rural city with a population of around 30 000 people. The rural city is on the banks of a large Australian river and situated four hundred kilometres from the nearest major city. It is serviced by a local airport that runs flights from major cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. Economically it is dependent on surrounding agricultural and horticultural industries, both of which rely primarily on migrant labour provided by labour hire organisations which often consists of backpackers with no connection to the local town. The town also attracts some regional tourism due to the natural beauty of the local area and river. There is strong local anxiety about youth out-migration from the town due to high levels of youth unemployment and local disadvantage, as well as public discussions about poverty and drug use amongst young people that tie in to broader anxieties about the use of the drug 'ice' in regional Australia (Bennett, 2017; Fraser and Moore, 2011). The second site consisted of a large regional city (population of 500 000) and surrounding peri-urban fringe. The regional city is around two and a half hours drive from Sydney and a former manufacturing hub that is now transitioning into a mixed economy consisting of services and primary industry. The region is also characterised by elevated levels of youth unemployment and substantial geographical inequalities within the region.

These research sites have important similarities and differences. Both are peripheral positions in relation to the urban service economies that are so critical to the contemporary youth labour markets, and frequent discussions about youth out-migration reflect parallels in the kind of mobility imperative that confronts young people in both localities. However, there are also important differences in the geography and economic history of the sites that will be reflected in the analysis below. While both sites are undergoing a period of rapid economic transition, in the rural site this is reflected in a reorganisation of the agricultural and horticultural sector, whereas in the regional city this is reflected in the shift to a service economy from a manufacturing base. In this respect, the regional city and surrounds are part of economic changes associated with deindustrialisation and the transition to a post-industrial

service economy also documented by authors in the United Kingdom (Allen and Hollingworth, 2013; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) and the United States (Weis, 2004). However, the rural site reflects changes in the nature of rural economies, including changes in the social organisation of agriculture that have made this industry less labour intensive, and the increased vulnerability of regional economies to fluctuations in global prices for agricultural products (Bourke and Lockie, 2001). These points of convergence and divergence in the social and economic history of the two sites shapes the analysis that follows.

The sample included 74 young people aged between 17 and 29 (44 young women and 33 young men), and included those still in education or training, those who were working, and those who had experienced unemployment. The rationale for this age range reflects the consensus in the sociology of youth that the experiences normally designated as signifying adulthood (including the end of education, engagement with the labour force, and family formation) becoming desynchronised and stretching out into the late twenties or early thirties (Woodman and Wyn, 2015; Blatterer, 2007). Participants were recruited via educational and training institutions, community organisations, professional organisations, and recruitment companies and companies contracted to offer welfare services. The study drew on qualitative interviews which discussed young people's understanding of their local place, their experiences of place, their experiences and aspirations for mobility, and the way that these matters related to their experiences of work. Interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two and a half hours, with an average time of around an hour. My analysis below is divided into two sections, the first of which explores the cultural politics of place in terms of the local social and economic histories of the two localities.

Class and the Cultural Politics of Place

In young people's narratives about their localities, stigmatised definitions of regional disadvantage are articulated and negotiated in relation to the forms of classed subjectivity historically available within each locality. While these narratives draw on elements that are globally recognisable in existing literature on the moralised figures of poverty, comparing these Australian sites reveals similarities and differences in young people's symbolic coding of place that relate first of all to the parallel position that these sites occupy as peripheral to the global city, and secondly to the different and particular social and economic histories of the two localities in an Australian context. One of the overwhelming themes in narratives from young people living in both research sites was the use of classed terms as signifiers for abject or stigmatised definitions of place. In the rural site, the term used to describe the place and those who lived there was "feral". This term is ubiquitous in the narratives from young people in the rural site, and describes the moralisation of unemployment and its association with drug use and individualised moral failure. The following quote is from two young women living in the rural site aged 20 years old interviewed together:

> Cassy: *I don't know it's pretty much a crap hole at the moment…The drugs and the ferals and the… The dole bludgers that actually don't work…*
>
> Lisa: *Got pregnant.*

Cassy: *You're on the dole, get pregnant make some money…Living with hoods, when your baby gets old enough have another one…You can tell around town if it's a feral street or not feral street.*

Lisa: *Front yards are messy.*

Cassy: *Really crappy cars*

This quote above reflects Tyler's (2013) analysis of the cultural politics of class in neoliberalism, in which the figure of the feral is inflected with gendered notions of fecklessness and disgust that have become typical of the characterisation of the contemporary working class. In this respect, the stigmatisation of place in the rural site reflects trans-national cultural processes in which disadvantage is individualised and moralised, this time applied to figures in place rather to class in a general sense. The follow participant was a 22 year old woman in the rural site who described a background of extreme disadvantage and familial unemployment, but who had managed to attend the local university and attain professional employment as a junior accountant in the town. She connects the notion of 'feralness' with the term 'bogan', an epithet that refers to the figure of the 'disreputable' working class in Australia (Threadgold, 2018):

> *It's hard because I know so much bad…But obviously the river is really nice and there's lots of good people here and good opportunities for a rural town and stuff like that. But there's also heaps of drug problems and theft problems and just overall feral-ness. It's probably a good way to describe it…The term 'bogan' comes to mind and 'racist'.*

The figure of the 'bogan' is an Australian parallel to terms such as 'chav' in the United Kingdom and 'redneck' in the United States (Threadgold, 2018; Hollingworth and Williams, 2009; Nayak, 2006). Threadgold (2018) has analysed the figure of the bogan as constructed within the cultural politics of class in Australia, standing in for the lack of reflexivity that is attributed to stigmatised figures of the contemporary working class internationally. In the narrative above, the 'feral' is aligned with the 'bogan', and both are connected with a general narrow-mindedness (such as racism) that is an outcome of their disadvantaged position.

The term 'feral' was specific to the rural site. Moreover, in the rural site, the stigmatisation of place through the moralisation of class was articulated by participants across the class spectrum. In the rural site, the denigration of the locality as 'feral' was articulated even by those young people who had experienced substantial unemployment themselves, and who came from family backgrounds without experience of post-compulsory education and with experiences of parental unemployment. The participants Cassy and Lisa above were a key example of this. These participants were sisters whose father was unemployed after an injury sustained whilst working as a labourer. Cassy was working in fast food and Lisa unemployed at the time of the interview after a long history of short term precarious work. Despite this, their description of their rural home as 'feral' was virulent and extensive, including areas and streets that were particularly feral, and schools that produced the largest number of 'ferals' in the town. This was not the case in the regional city and surrounds, and the differences are significant for understanding the changing nature of class and rurality.

In the regional city and its peri-urban surrounds, the term 'feral' was not used, and classed epithets such as 'bogan' – while extremely common – were only used by participants from relatively affluent or middle-class backgrounds. Often, this was intertwined with the more abstract language of 'socioeconomic status' such as in the case of the following participant whose parents were both professionals educated at the university in the region, and who was studying education at university at the time of the interview:

> I'll word it like this – there's just bogans everywhere…because there is a high element of lower-socioeconomic…There's a lot of people on that end of the scale…You do see the presence of homelessness, people that are clearly drug abusers.

However, when young people from working class backgrounds described their locality, they did so aware of the pejorative images often associated with their home place, and used language that was designed to reposition the value of the locality and of the people who live there. In the following quote, a young woman (18 years old and in her final year of college) describes those who live in her locality as 'working class', and as having worked hard for any success that they have achieved, and does not draw upon the figures of the 'feral' or the 'bogan' in her discussion of place:

> Oh, on the socio-economic scale. It's not your very rich, rich people or your very poor. It's got a bit of both. But it's just working class…it's people who have to work for what they've got. It's not just handed down or whatever I guess which is what's slowly becoming - what's happening I see a lot. But yes, my mum and dad both come from very - not poor, poor - but dad more so than my mum. Just very - started from the bottom kind of families. They've worked for everything they have.

Indeed, young people from this region were aware of the possibility of classed epithets being directed towards their localities and were defensive about this. This young woman was 18 years old and living on the peri-urban fringe of the regional city:

> Like some people reckon that [it's] heaps like gross…but it's not that bad...

Differences between the rural site and the regional city in the way that classed subjects described their localities are a reflection of the different economic histories of the two places. In particular, the regional city is a former manufacturing centre of Australia, and is described by participants in terms that reflect a pride in and nostalgia for the working class history of the area. The following participant was 29 years old and in professional employment, although originally from a working class background in which his father had worked in manufacturing prior to the deindustrialisation of the city. He described the city in the following terms:

> The underdog, the pride in place, the balance of being relaxed and jovial and a larrikin with the tenacity and work ethic of an underdog. It's probably being bold and backing yourself...We are knowing for being pretty bloody proud of the place, and we're underdogs.

The romanticisation of working class masculinity has long been a part of Australian nationalism (Lake, 1992), and the language of the 'underdog' is typical of popular myths

about the 'Australian character'. In the regional site, this becomes a source of pride in place that is absent from rural narratives, a finding that reflects the uniqueness of class relationships in areas dependent on agricultural production both in Australia and internationally. In particular, the longstanding association of rurality with agriculture – and the continuing reliance of the rural site on horticultural production – has meant that the most valorised and quintessentially 'rural' figures have been those of landowners, who exercise high levels of political influence and enjoy high levels of social status in rural areas (Bourke, 2001; Lockie, 2001). Farm workers – who have traditionally been seasonally employed and who are now often provided to landowners via labour hire companies – are excluded from the valorisation of working-class masculinity in Australian popular nationalism. For this reason, young people who experience disadvantage in the rural site do not have a working class history to valorise and articulate in feelings of pride in place, and so rearticulate the figure of the 'feral' alongside the notion of the 'bogan' that currently figures as key to middle class disgust at the contemporary working class.

Here, place is defined through the mobilisation and contestation of signifiers drawn from the global denigration of working class figures as part of contemporary popular culture (Threadgold, 2017). This is an interaction between the metrocentric economies of cultural distinction described by Farrugia (2015; 2018), as well as the classed notions of personal value that have become critical to the cultural politics of neoliberalism (Skeggs, 2011). Writing about the production of these classed figures in a global context, Threadgold (2018) argues that these figures reflect the denigration of localised and parochial identities as opposed to the 'cosmopolitan' and progressive middle class to which they are so often opposed. With this in mind, the figure of the rural 'feral' as well as 'bogan' positions young people's homes outside of (and in opposition to) the progressive forces of a globalised modernity, and associates places outside of the city with moralised notions of disadvantage and stigmatisation. This is produced through an interaction between local classed histories, and the processes of regionalisation and peripheralization that currently contribute to the meaning and experience of life outside of large urban metropolises. Whilst middle class young people across both research sites are unanimous in their denigration of their locality and figures of the abject working class, it is only in the rural site that this is endorsed by working class youth. In this sense, whilst middle class privilege appears to transcend the economic specificities of place, it is only in particular localities that this can be resisted by working class youth.

Place and the Cosmopolitan Imperative

The moralisation of disadvantage as exclusion from the progressive forces of a globalised modernity reflects the broader imperative to become mobile and cosmopolitan that is shaping relations of privilege and disadvantage amongst youth (Farrugia, 2018, p 65-85). With this in mind, in this section I describe the relationship between place, class and mobilities both real and imagined in the way that young people construct their localities in relation to themselves. Here, I want to suggest that as well as the mobility imperative described in previous research (Farrugia, 2016), young people must contend more generally with a kind of cosmopolitan imperative, in which notions of privilege and social mobility are connected with places

outside of their locale, including especially an engagement with 'the global'. With regards to mobility, migration for the purposes of education and work was widely regarded as common in both sites, and regardless of place or class background, mobility is something that all young people must imagine or contend with to some degree. However, the way in which mobility is imagined and the place meanings that are produced through migration contribute to the creation of new classed relationships with place. In general, it was not uncommon for young people in both sites to describe migration of some kind as compulsory for moving forward in their lives. One key way in which this was described was in terms of ambitions for social mobility, which were seen to require engagement with 'big things' that were happening outside the locale. The following participant was 18 years old from a working-class background in the regional site, living with his stay at home mother who had recently trained to be a teacher. He describes his locality in classed terms in terms of a lack of ambition, and describes aspirations for social mobility via higher education that require mobility:

> I think it's a very mixed group of people. They're probably not the most ambitious or anything though. I feel like they're very laid back…I feel like if you wanted to actually do something important or big, you would have to move…Just being a part of something more important than just stacking shelves or working at a counter somewhere…I want to innovate.

However, actual experiences of migration by young people from less affluent backgrounds were precarious, and rather than an increased cosmopolitan sensitivity, these mobilities often produced new local attachments with complex and ambivalent consequences for young people's biographies. Previous literature on young people and place in rural Australia suggests that mobility practices are imagined and organised around actually existing social connections and experiences of place, in which family members and other social connections represent possibilities for viable mobility and offer material support to young people who migrate (Farrugia et al, 2015; 2016). In contrast, Clara lived in the rural site and came from a working-class background which she described in terms of familial unemployment. Clara migrated to Melbourne when she finished her compulsory schooling without social connections or a clear idea of what her life would be like. Clara wished to experience 'the city' and found it relatively easy to find work in the hospitality industry, as well as accommodation in a share house with one other young woman. However, she was uncomfortable in this living situation, precariously employed, and unable to make friends. After a few months, she came to a new appreciation of her rural place, and she moved back:

> It was a share house. So that made it weird, and then I missed home. Hard to leave this town…I don't know [why] – just like it draws you back. I think the comfort, really, of knowing everything and everywhere.

In Clara's discussion of moving back 'home', she also described a renewed appreciation for the natural environment and what she saw as the lifestyle available to her in her rural home. This was common to many participants in the rural site, and goes against the grain of previous literature which suggests that enjoyment of the natural environment is part of a middle-class rural lifestyle (eg Wiborg, 2004). Instead, Clara's experience of place is an outcome of biographical practices, including practices of mobility that are themselves

classed. In particular, Clara's appreciation of nature is a part of her renewed appreciation of the comforts of home, an appreciation produced through the precarity of her mobility practices as a result of an absence of social resources in the city. However, at the time of the interview Clara was unemployed, and had been applying for work in the local area for months without success. In this respect, Clara's experience of mobility creates a stronger attachment to her local place, despite the unemployment that she is experiencing due to the absence of jobs in her local area. A parallel process is described by Rose, whose parents ran a trucking business in the rural site. After finishing school, Rose migrated briefly to go to university, but quickly returned:

> Yeah, I moved to [a regional city] to do a science degree. I'd always been interested in science and then I did year 10 work experience in a milk factory, of all things, in the lab there and I loved that work. I [migrated] to do that, but about halfway through the first semester I realised I'm probably not going to get a job in [my home town] and it was probably a silly idea, which Mum had been telling me for months before I went, but I did it anyway.

In this narrative, Rose takes her rural place for granted as the site where she will eventually find work. She describes her network of social connections, as well as her involvement in community organisations such as a local 'speedway' racing organisation, as factors that make her reluctant to migrate again. Rose is also deeply attached to the natural environment of her home town:

> I love being able to just walk my dog down the river, the river here is totally different to the river in Melbourne…I like that sort of country style…I have my dog and she's like a child to me, so I want a big backyard with her and I can imagine the lifestyle of having a big backyard. My parent's house has got 18 acres, so I am used to the space…And my aunty is next door and there is no fence in between us and she has got 21 acres.

However, Rose is also unemployed, and studying a series of technical education certificates that have an uncertain relationship with the local labour market. In this respect, her attachment to her home place has ambivalent consequences for her own biography, both facilitating feelings of togetherness and connection with place, and foreclosing her possibilities for engaging with labour markets outside her locale that may have corresponded more closely with her initial aspirations. Despite the difficulties that they had faced, experiences of migration and return resulted in a re-attachment to home for these participants, and underpinned the revalorisation of place in terms of home, comfort and the beauty of the rural environment that were absent from their experiences prior to migration. Mobility here becomes a classed experience that produces new forms of place attachment and connection to home. These attachments run contrary to both the stigmatised and moralised definitions of place described above, and to the valorisation of the cosmopolitan 'outside'. This is despite often entailing experiences of disadvantage that align young people with the unemployment and disadvantage that contributes to the stigmatisation of their local place.

The imperative towards cosmopolitanism was strongest for young people from relatively affluent or middle class backgrounds who either aspired to mobility or who had experiences of successful migration. Here, their local places were described in terms of smallness, parochialism, and conservatism, as opposed to the cosmopolitan ambitions that these young people articulated for their own lives. The following participant was from an affluent family in the regional city, and described ambitions to study international relations at a well regarded Australian university in Canberra, the country's capital city. She anticipated working for bodies such as the United Nations and various NGOs doing aid work overseas, and articulated her own future in terms of an ethic of cosmopolitan engagement with matters of global significance:

> *Something different, something not what I have here. This is just my experience, and I can't say that it's the same for everyone, but I'm in an upper middle to upper class white society that everything is the same, everyone does the same things, and it just kind of doesn't appeal to me at all. Yeah, and I also like, it sounds cheesy, but I would like to have a job where I do make a genuine difference… whether it's working for an NGO in the Middle East, or Africa, or like policy making, that sort of thing, to the masses, I guess, yeah.*

The notion of 'making a difference' on a global scale was referred to a number of times by this participant, and in relation to these ambitions her home site is 'too small' to contain her future life:

> *It's safe, it's friendly, I grew up in a great area, I had every opportunity in the world, yeah, it's a nice place, and it's beautiful, like I lived on the beach and all that sort of thing too. I guess it's just small, for me. It's too small for what I want to do and where I want to go.*

In this quote, the beauty of the local natural environment is acknowledged but sidelined within a narrative of cosmopolitanism, mobility, and identity construction on a global scale. Something similar is the case for the following two participants both aged 22 from the rural site, interviewed together in a large metropolitan city (Melbourne) after having migrated from the rural site the year before. For Philippa and Megan, the rural site was associated with conservative ways of living that were counterposed to issues of global significance that these participants wished to engage with:

> Philippa: *Well, I think that some of our friends...they have mortgages and they have partners...they're doing renovations on their houses, they've like done all their stuff...but then I've got all these life experiences that they don't have.*

> Megan: *The house, their family, a nice life in [rural site], if that's what makes you happy that's fine. I would rather travel and use my privilege in life, like not being born in the Gaza Strip or something, to help others. I actually don't care about, yeah, I don't like money.*

In pursuit of these cosmopolitan ideals, these participants had undertaken periods of volunteer tourism and one had recently completed an internship in Jerusalem. At the time of

the interview, one participant was searching for work as a human rights lawyer after having just finished her law degree whilst another was hoping to carry out a philanthropically funded trip across South-East Asia to raise awareness of regional poverty. Whilst they felt established in Melbourne, they nevertheless visited their rural home on trips that were primarily about reconnecting with the natural environment and getting out of the 'claustrophobic' city':

> Yeah. And I don't like, I don't really like living in the city. Like I've been in Melbourne for almost 10 years now off and on, and I find it a bit claustrophobic. I really like, because we got to grow up with so much freedom, like you could go for a walk for seven hours without seeing someone. I could watch the sunrise and sunset, and go kayaking and swimming, and yeah. [Megan]

These participants also described their rural home as a place of 'cleansing' which they could return to after time away either in the city or overseas. It was in this context that their connection to the natural environment of their home town was experienced as a significant part of their lives and identities. In this sense, their rural home town remains a place that these participants can return to for the embodied experience of 'home' that it offers, whilst these young people nevertheless position themselves as acting in a sphere 'beyond' that of their home, which is defined as limited and conservative. In this respect, this experience of middle class rural mobility is what defined their local places as conservative, and situated these young people's lives within the sphere of the cosmopolitan 'global'.

However, the final theme I introduce here demonstrates ways that middle class participants could position themselves in line with the imperative for cosmopolitanism without necessarily leaving their home place. In particular, middle class participants in both the rural site and the regional city described themselves, their social lives, and their career aspirations as ways that their home place could itself be made more progressive, dynamic, and cosmopolitan. For these participants, they themselves offered their home towns a connection with the outside that would increase the value and global connectedness of their localities. The following participant was 24 and working as a junior accountant in the regional city after having studied at the local university. During the interview he often emphasised his local connectedness including his involvement in local sporting teams and community organisations. He describes his desire for his city to be come a 'destination city' for businesses, and positions himself as part of a 'change process' that is driven by the presence of those like him:

> I feel like I have a lot to offer [this place] in terms of my energy…I feel that even by being a part of the city I'm actively contributing to its change process. That to me is quite valuable…I'd ultimately like to see [this place] as a destination city. By that I mean not only destinations for tourists but a destination for professionals. I would like to see [us] become home to a number of head offices whereby young professionals and experienced executives can remain here, embrace the…lifestyle whilst getting the challenges of that higher level

In both sites, middle class young people who were able to complete education and find professional work in their home towns described themselves as contributing to progressive social change within their own localities. These changes were described primarily in terms of increasing economic opportunities for professional employment, and the emergence of new opportunities for consumption and nightlife that resembled those available in large cities, especially the emergence of 'boutique' bars and cafes. The following participant Dale had recently returned to the rural site in order to work as an engineer for a mining company operating in the state after completing an engineering degree in Melbourne. Dale was initially reluctant to return, motivated only by the availability of work that he found difficult to find in the city. However, having returned to the town, Dale became president of a 'Young Professionals' network, and describes this organisation as reflecting processes of change in the town that make it a more 'progressive', moving beyond the notions of rural places as conservative, limiting, and isolated from the rest of the world:

> So the young professionals are basically just, in essence, a networking group. I want to try to make it lean a bit more towards connecting like the young people in [this town] Not so much the new people but all the existing people. I find a lot of people are moving in and starting up businesses, taking up management positions [here], which is really I guess going to be a bit more excited about the town. Well it shows we've got a bit more of a future now and I want to be able to make a way for us to actually get together, use the power of numbers to actually have an influence on the town…Make it a bit more progressive. So because [this town is] traditionally farming, everyone's very set in their ways…It'd be nice to actually get some forward thinking happening and actually get some growth…

Here, Dale articulates a new, classed mode of place attachment in which middle class young people relate to their rural localities as increasingly cosmopolitan places, and understand themselves as creating new connections between their localities and broader cultural and economic changes. Dale describes his rural home as becoming more progressive through the presence of himself and his organisation, positioning himself as part of processes of economic change that include a shift away from a traditionally agricultural economy. In this narrative Dale produces a middle class subject position by positioning his locality as increasingly cosmopolitan and positioning himself as participating in the cosmopolitanisation of the local through his social life and his own professional career. In this way, Dale describes his town as 'having a future', and as a 'forward thinking' place where young people can look forward to building professional careers and interesting lives. Describing his locality in this way, Dale's narrative dissolves both the distinction between the cosmopolitan urban and the backwards rural, and the association of rurality with stigmatised and moralised notions of disadvantage. Instead, Dale's narrative achieves cosmopolitan distinction through new forms rural place attachment.

Conclusion

Beyond the global city, the valorisation of mobility and cosmopolitanism in the lives of young people is producing new and complex relationships with place that emerge from the social and economic histories of particular localities and the classed experiences of

differently positioned young people. The moralisation of regional inequalities is negotiated and resisted through classed signifiers that reflect local industrial histories as they interact with the international cultural politics of class. Relatively affluent young people across both research sites in this paper participate in similar processes of the denigration of their local areas and an endorsement of the drive towards cosmopolitanism. Whether this is practiced through actual mobility or through the cosmopolitanisation of the local through their own identity practices, the imperative towards cosmopolitanism is reflected in middle class young people's narratives across both research sites despite their different histories. In contrast, forms of working place pride in place were available to young people in the regional city that were unavailable to the rural youth due to difference in the class structure of agriculture as opposed to the history of industrial manufacturing. Moreover, despite the association with cosmopolitanism, mobility and the denigration of place, the precarity of actual migration practices for working class young people produced new forms of place attachment, including especially new experiences of 'home' in an otherwise stigmatised town. On the whole, the research sites under study here are produced and given meaning by complex and ambivalent modes of place meanings and place attachment that interact both through the cultural politics of inequality in neoliberal capitalism, and with the biographical experiences of mobility and place attachment that shape young people's lives.

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