

Geographies of Widening Participation: *Social and Spatial Im/Mobilities*



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



Key questions

- What patterns exist in the (non-)movement of students across **geographic** and **social** spaces?
- How do different groups frame ***their*** geographies at the point of university transition?
- What social, cultural and economic significance do places hold for different groups?
- How do these patterns relate to social (re)production / prospects for intergenerational social mobility?

Context

- Early analyses of university choice neglecting space/place (e.g. Reay et al. 2005, Ball et al. 2002)
- Growing literature on spatial aspects of university choice (e.g. Clayton et al. 2009, Holdsworth 2006)
- Gender and ethnicity: South Asian girls less likely to leave home for university - Khambaita and Bhopal (2015)
- Even after accounting for known factors of importance (attainment, university choice, social class), all minority ethnic groups less likely to travel far for university (Donnelly and Gamsu, 2018).

Measuring mobility 1: im/mobility from home and proximal distance

	Typology description			2009-10		2014-15	
Migration type	Stay living in family home	Move out of family home	Distance travelled (home to university, km)	n	%	n	%
1. Short distance commuter	Y	N	0-91 km	90103	23.1 %	93786	22.9 %
2. Short distance mover	N	Y	0-91 km	163672	41.9 %	159781	39.1 %
3. Medium distance commuter	Y	N	91km-244km	3646	0.9 %	5257	1.5 %
4. Medium distance mover	N	Y	91km-244km	97875	25.2 %	109121	26.7 %
5. Long distance commuter	Y	N	244km-	780	0 %	1176	0.1 %
6. Long distance mover	N	Y	244km-	33517	8.6 %	38588	9.5 %
Total				389593	100 %	407709	100 %

Measuring mobility 2: regional im/mobility

- Overall: 47% regionally mobile; 53% regionally immobile
- Higher **socio-economic groups** more regionally mobile – 62% for highest NS-SEC group falling gradually to just 28.2% for students from unemployed families.
- 51% of students with **degree educated parents** mobile, compared to 36% of students whose parents are not
- 75% **private** educated students mobile, 45% **state** educated are mobile
- Most **ethnic groups** equally likely to be regionally mobile/immobile, except for Pakistani (80% immobile) and Bangladeshi (70% immobile)
- University and course choices: greater regional mobility for **specialist courses** and **higher tariff universities**

		Origin													
		North East	North West	Yorkshire and The Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total	
Destination	North East	65.70%	3.90%	8.90%	3.40%	1.20%	2.50%	1.40%	2.20%	1.50%	0.80%	0.70%	3.10%	4.90%	
	North West	6.90%	62.50%	12.60%	7.60%	8.90%	4.00%	3.10%	3.40%	3.50%	10.50%	0.80%	9.20%	12.00%	
	Yorkshire and The Humber	12.80%	13.80%	54.70%	16.60%	5.80%	7.20%	3.20%	4.30%	3.20%	2.50%	0.40%	1.40%	9.80%	
	East Midlands	2.50%	3.50%	8.10%	42.60%	11.00%	12.50%	5.50%	6.50%	3.10%	2.30%	0.20%	1.00%	8.10%	
	West Midlands	1.50%	3.80%	3.20%	9.10%	51.50%	6.10%	4.90%	5.50%	5.70%	3.70%	0.40%	1.00%	8.80%	
	East of England	1.00%	0.90%	1.40%	3.80%	1.50%	28.60%	8.70%	4.90%	2.00%	1.00%	0.30%	1.00%	5.50%	
	London	3.30%	3.40%	3.90%	5.30%	4.40%	14.40%	50.30%	16.20%	8.20%	3.80%	0.90%	1.90%	14.30%	
	South East	1.60%	2.20%	2.30%	4.80%	4.40%	14.70%	14.80%	37.80%	14.40%	4.60%	0.50%	1.80%	11.40%	
	South West	1.10%	1.80%	1.80%	3.80%	5.90%	6.60%	5.30%	13.90%	48.20%	10.00%	0.40%	1.60%	8.60%	
	Wales	0.70%	2.40%	1.20%	1.90%	4.50%	2.10%	1.30%	3.70%	8.90%	60.10%	0.20%	1.10%	5.30%	
	Scotland	2.90%	1.60%	1.60%	1.00%	0.60%	1.30%	1.10%	1.30%	1.20%	0.60%	95.10%	6.70%	8.60%	
	Northern Ireland	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.30%	0.10%	0.60%	0.10%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	70.20%	2.60%	
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	

Problematising quantitative measures of im/mobility

- How else are university students (not) moving?
- What is the nature of their origin and destination locations?
- Can we measure the socio-spatial distance they travel? (in addition to the more concrete proximal distance)
- Are the so-called ‘mobile’ truly migrating and encountering the ‘other’?
- Challenge of capturing im/mobility in a more spatially meaningful way....



Problematising (non-)movement: *Proximal* and *social* distance(s) travelled

- The *qualities* of origin and destination locations.
- How to measure the **socio-spatial distance** travelled? (as opposed to proximal, binary distances)
- In what other **non-proximal senses** are those 'mobile' and 'immobile' youth (not) moving?
- Challenge of capturing im/mobility in a more spatially meaningful way...



- **Place as uniquely composed of multiple and fluid (dis-)connections to resources/identities circulating across space** (Massey 2005)
- **Maps as the map-makers' highly selective *versions* and *constructions* of space**

“Maps are about space; they are forms of representation, indeed iconic forms; representation is understood as spatialisation. But a map of a geography is no more than that geography – or that space – than a painting of a pipe is a pipe.” Massey (2005), p.106

- ***Social* space integral to understanding relationality**

“The idea of difference, or a gap, is at the basis of the very notion of space, that is, a set of distinct and coexisting positions which are exterior to one another and which are defined in relation to one another through their mutual exteriority and their relations of proximity, vicinity, or distance, as well as through relations of order, such as above, below, and *between*. Bourdieu (1998), p. 271

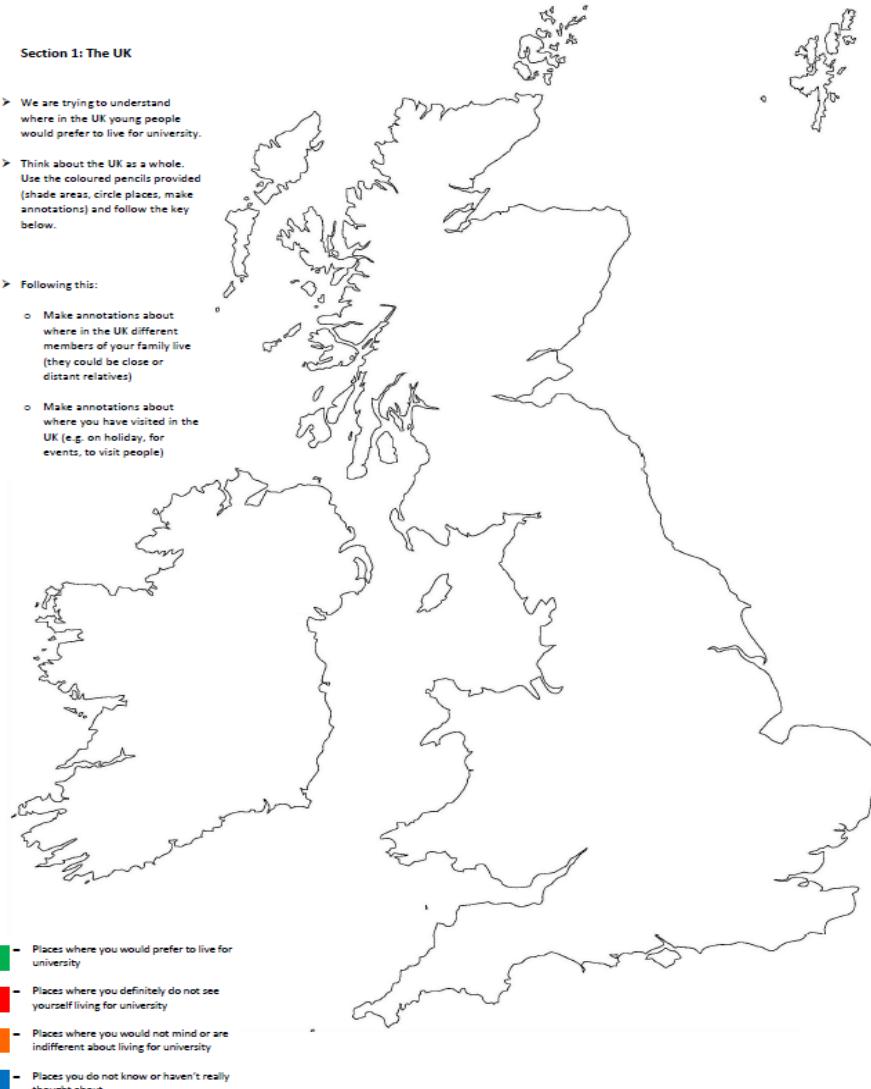


The mapping tool

- = Places where you would prefer to live for university
- = Places where you definitely do not see yourself living for university
- = Places where you would not mind or are indifferent about living for university
- = Places you do not know or haven't really thought about

Section 1: The UK

- We are trying to understand where in the UK young people would prefer to live for university.
- Think about the UK as a whole. Use the coloured pencils provided (shade areas, circle places, make annotations) and follow the key below.
- Following this:
 - Make annotations about where in the UK different members of your family live (they could be close or distant relatives)
 - Make annotations about where you have visited in the UK (e.g. on holiday, for events, to visit people)



Capturing geographic diversity of contemporary youth transitions

- 20 fieldwork locations crossing each 'home' nation
- Over 1,000 maps collected
- 200 interviews carried out with students
- 40 interviews carried out with school staff



UK Fieldwork locations

Elite private schools

Schools with different ethnic and socio-economic compositions

'Peripheral' places

- Post-industrial localities
- Seaside resorts



Schools with differing mobility propensities

Schools in each 'home' nation of the UK

Schools in urban metropolises close to many universities

Schools in isolated rural communities away from universities



Four key affordances

- 1. Foregrounding geography**
- 2. Accounting for relationality**
- 3. Subjective framing of space and place**
- 4. Subjective vantage points**



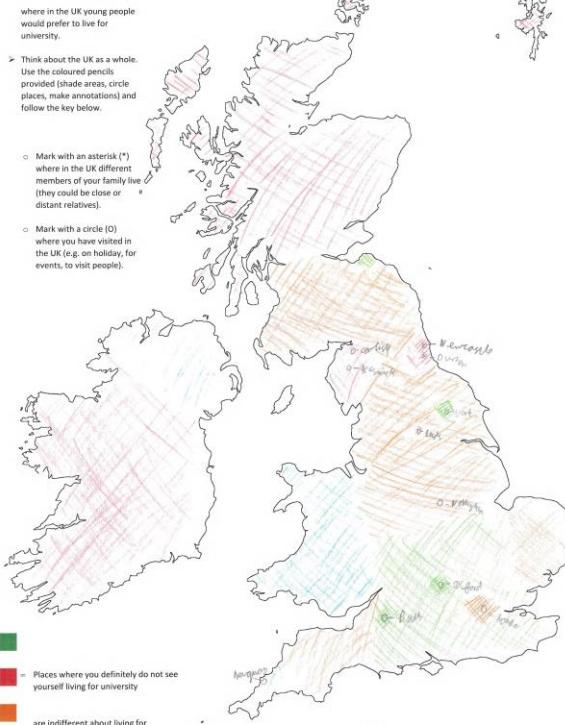
1. Foregrounding geography

- **Framing conversation around geography, conceptions, feelings and experiences of diverse places**

Coming back to the north south stuff again, and the community spirit a bit, could you tell me a bit more about it like, what do you mean by community spirit?

Um. So, like the miner's gala, I don't know if you've heard of it? The miner's gala every year, and people come together from all over, sort of the north of England. I mean most of it is usually for the alcohol, but (laughs) it, it is true! There are people, I mean, I'm sort of part of, so I played, I played in the brass band for two years as part of it. And there's people that we've been going down with, that have been drinking at like nine o'clock in the morning. But you don't sort of have that in, in like, further down south, it's all, it's all the mining communities. And that's the aspect of it that we've got that they don't necessarily have.

George, middle class, attending a state school in North East



Mobility and security in what is immediately known/familiar

I just think, like I said before, it's nice to not have to worry about figuring out where you need to go. It means you can focus on what you're actually doing at university.

Yeah, instead of sort of like you said trying to find ...

Yeah, 'cause I mean like, it just seems like another thing to worry about, mean if you're going to university you've got enough to worry about.

Yeah

you probably have to go down there before you even went to try and you know, get your feet a bit. And it just seems like it's too much hassle for me. Maybe I'm just lazy but it would just be too much hassle.

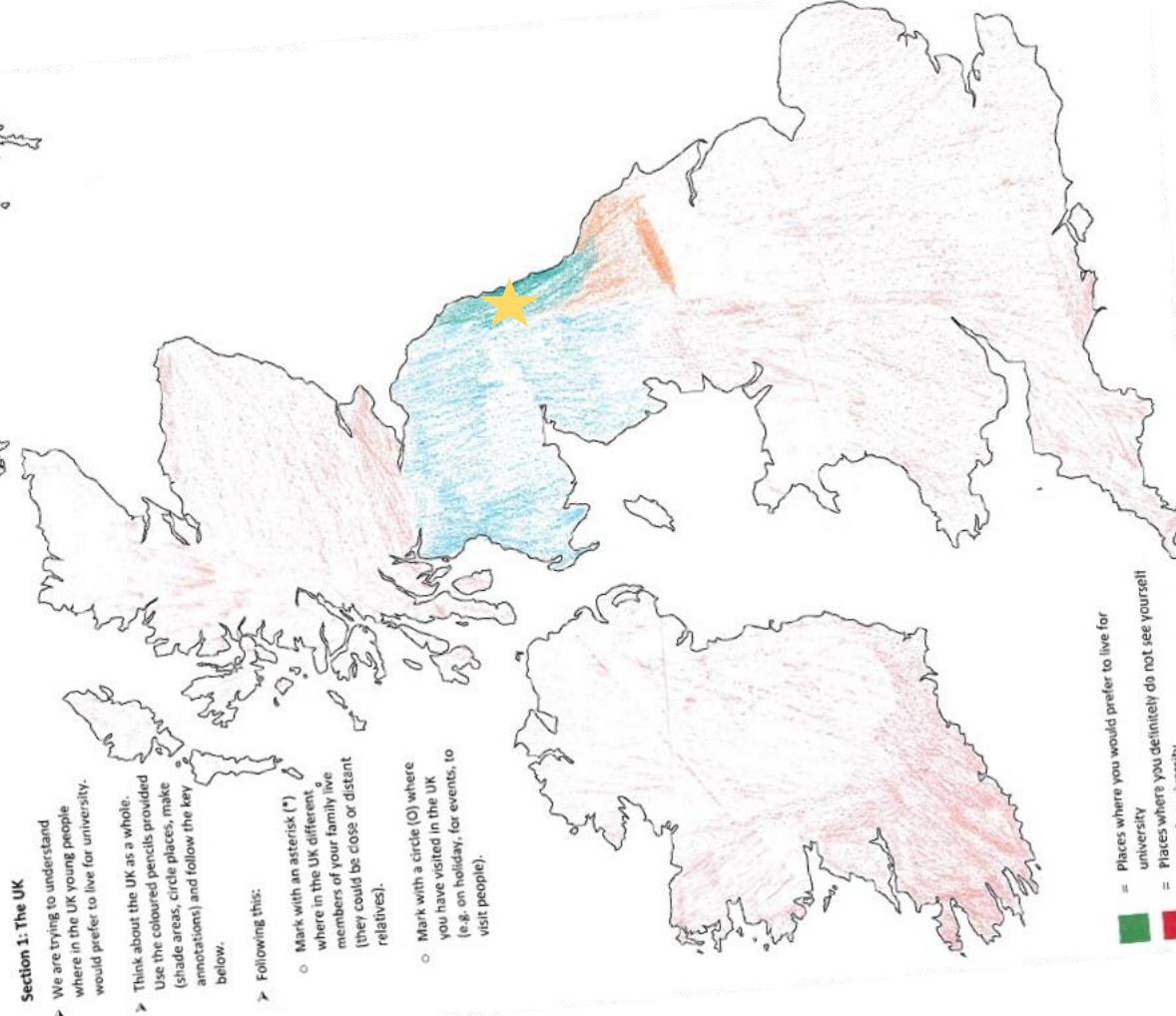
Too much hassle to find out about a certain place and -

Yeah. Especially, like, I mean, fair enough you can go online and find out what bus you would need and stuff like that but it's still like being confident enough to be able to go out by yourself every morning

yeah.

and get from point a to point b with no worries whatsoever

Tracy, working class, state school in North East of England



Choosing places *and* choosing universities

No, I didn't particularly see myself living in Wales. Having said that, I don't think I've actually been to Wales. ... it's stuff I can't really help but there's you know a strong reputation about Wales being completely dreary an raining the whole time. Honestly like, it's probably quite a poor reason for shading it all red but I haven't, I don't have anything else to base it off

....

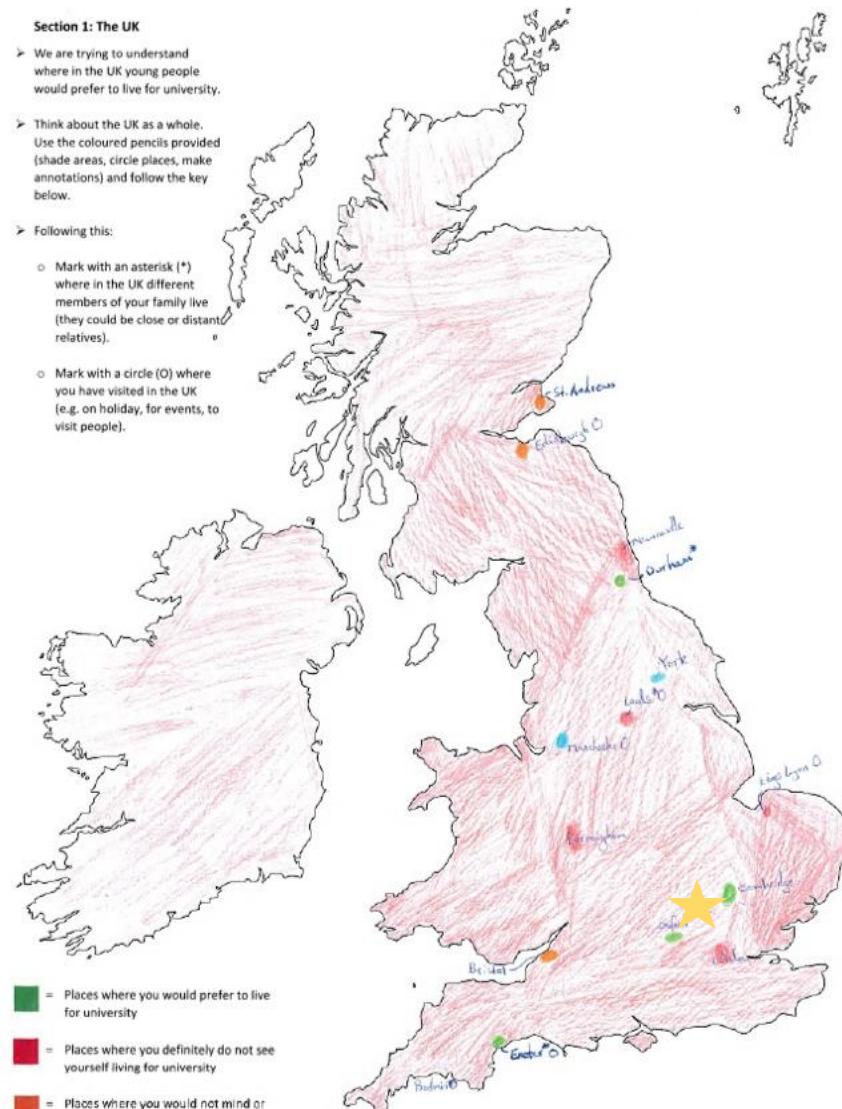
What do you mean the atmosphere, you mean

as in, when I visited it did seem quite kind of, as if they were constantly living in a Sunday afternoon where it was very kind of slow pace and [sighs] it just seemed quite miserable if I'm being honest it just, everything seemed really grey and even in the busiest part of the shopping centre everyone was just looking really glum um and you know, it, it just, there just seemed no vibrance to it to be honest. I think, it really did play a large factor just the actual kind of character of the area

Jonathan (Middle class, elite private school, London)

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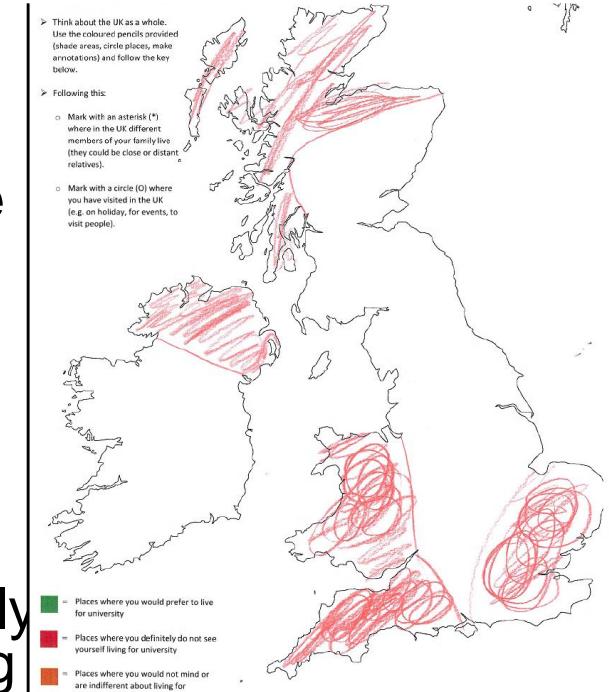




2. Relationality: social class differentiation

- The northern Middle class defined in relation to Southern Middle class identities through accent

... when the schools from down south come up you can see the difference in the accent ... Just even the posher more middle classed people from around here, just seeing them, like they have just come from the mines even the one that their parents are doctors and stuff when speaking to people really refined, their accents just sound like really northern, you don't hear it normally because you are so used to hearing it but you can pick it up subtly but then again when people from Liverpool come over then we mock them for theirs so its fine we are not the bottom of the pile. Martyn, working class, Northern private school





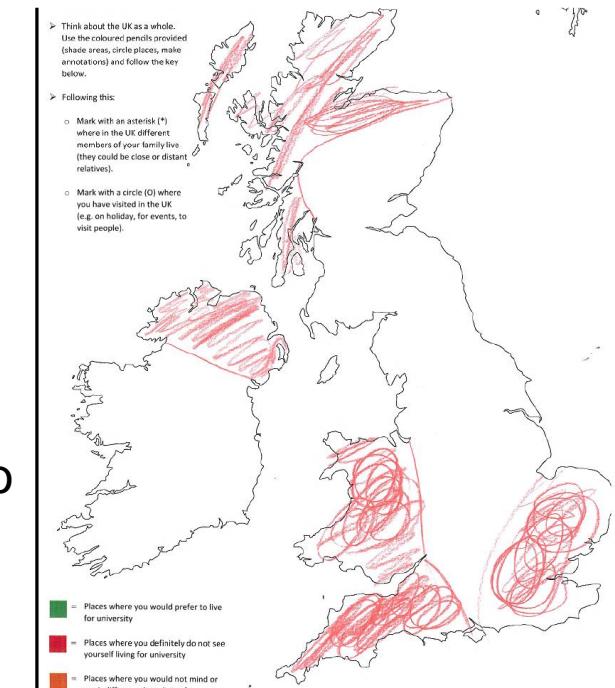
2. Relationality: imagining the city

- **The city of Manchester crafted and represented in *relation* to (and in *opposition* to) the city of London**

“it doesn’t seem the same level of like attitude or superiority north, it is kind of warm in the same boat together kind of thing. So you have people in Manchester, people walking in suits, and then some of them will stop and talk to homeless people and buy them a sandwich, or buy them a drink ,and it is that kind of ‘I have got your back’ and I would say the community thing that I don’t think you have in other areas...

In the areas you talked about, in terms of metropolitan areas [London]

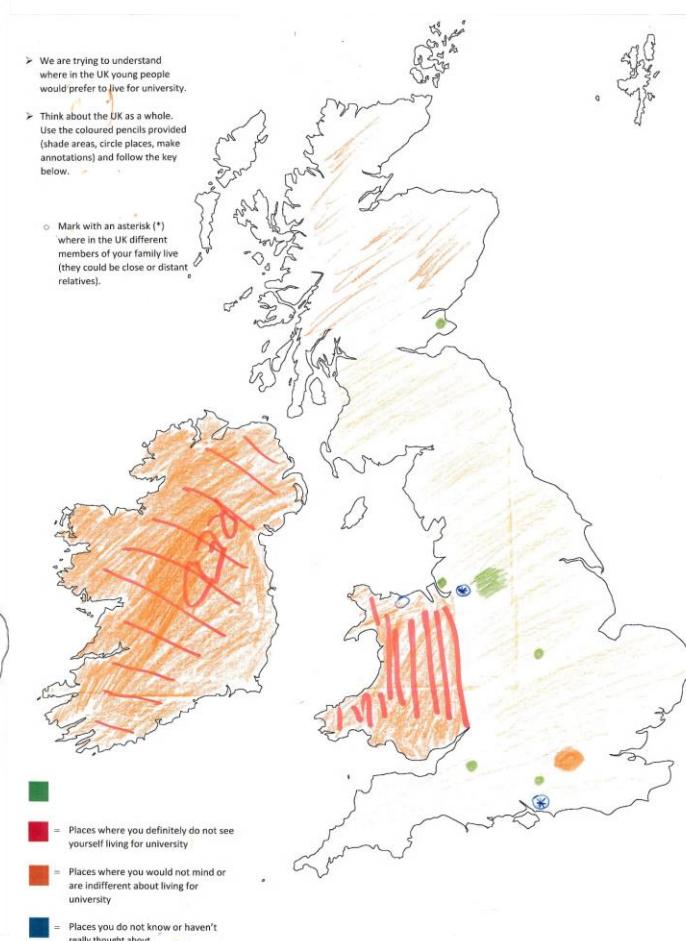
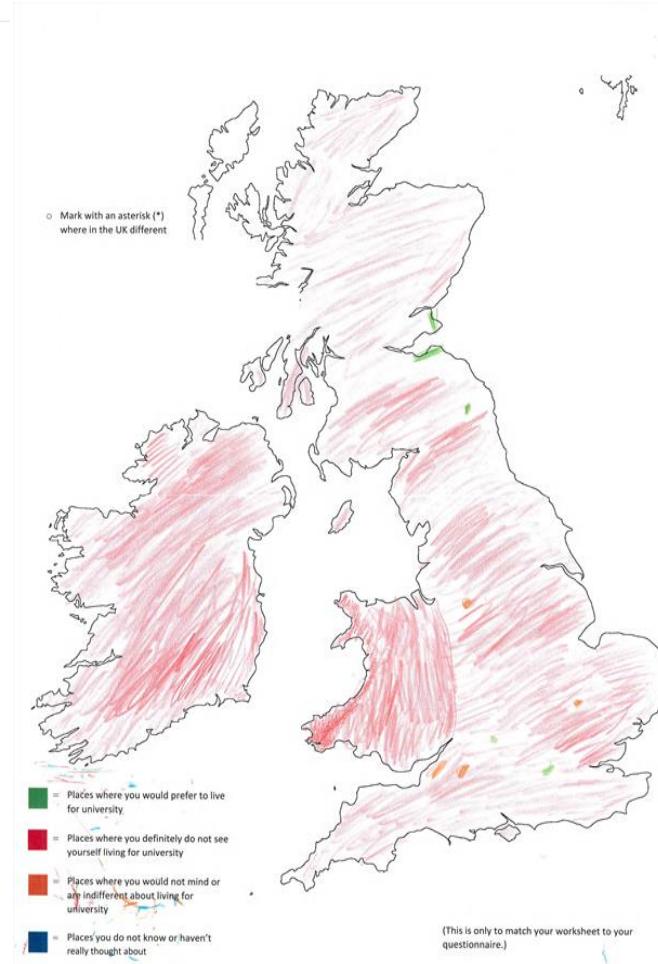
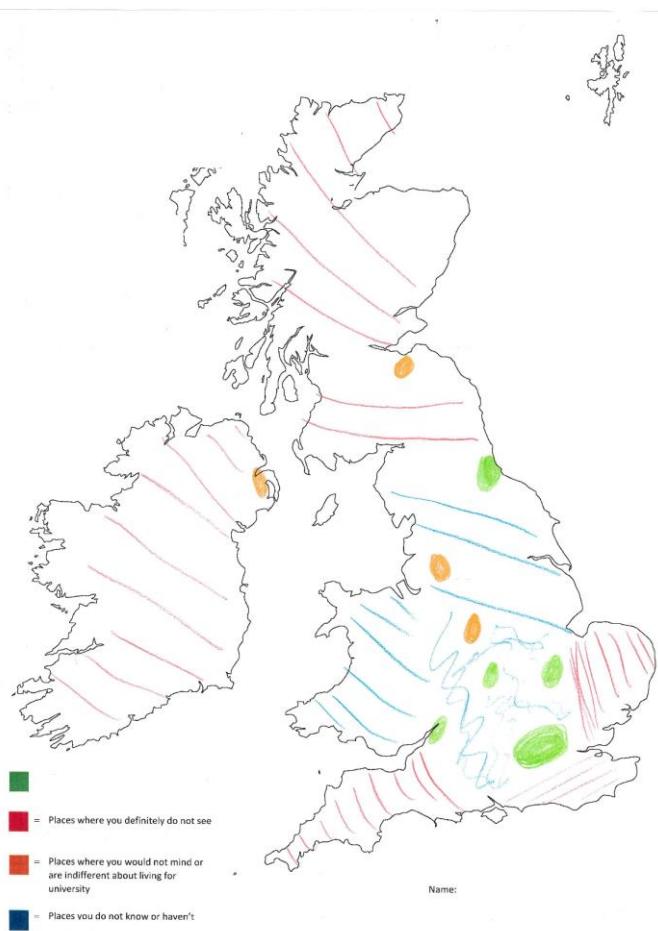
In terms of yeah, and in terms of the cities, I think Manchester, cause other cities don’t have that community spirit, where I think Manchester combines it quite well like ‘nah are you alright mate’ ‘how are you doing pal’ to people you have never met before, whereas I think in other cities it would be a bit like, in London it would be you know ‘what are you doing speaking to me?’ ... it is a bit more apprehensive” Martyn, working-class, Northern private school





2. Relationality: positioning of places in social space

**Why is Wales
a non-place
for university
study?
Especially
for students
at elite
schools.**

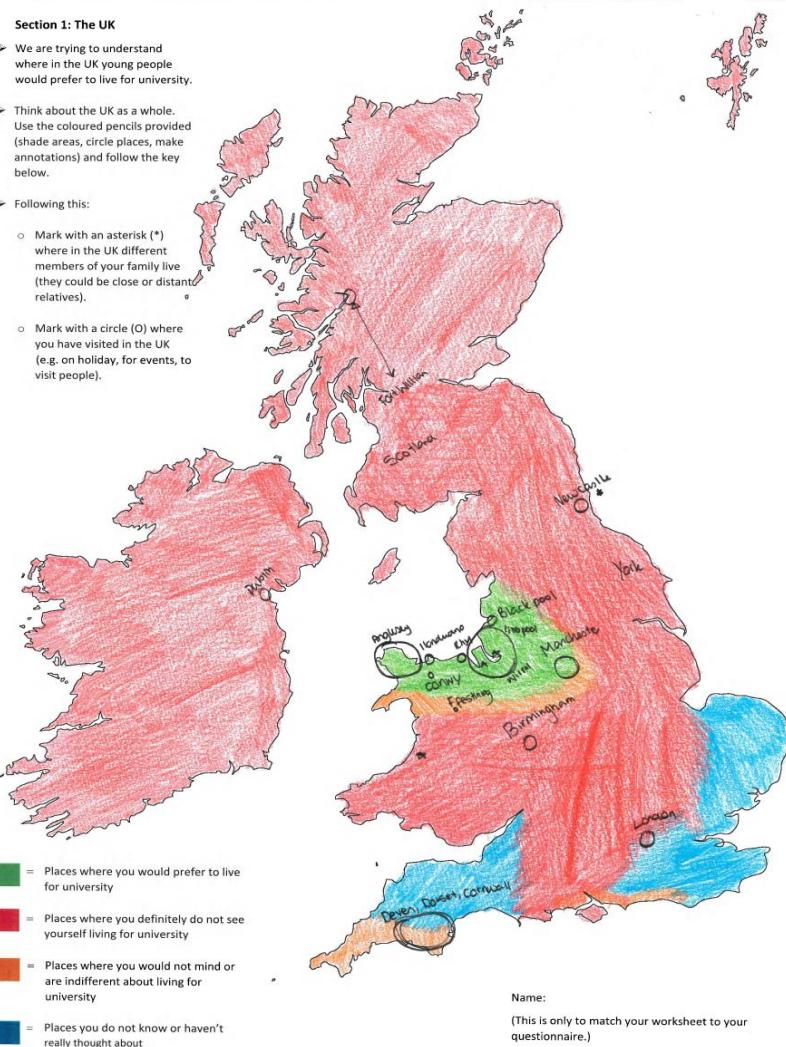




2. Framing of space and place: imagining the 'region'

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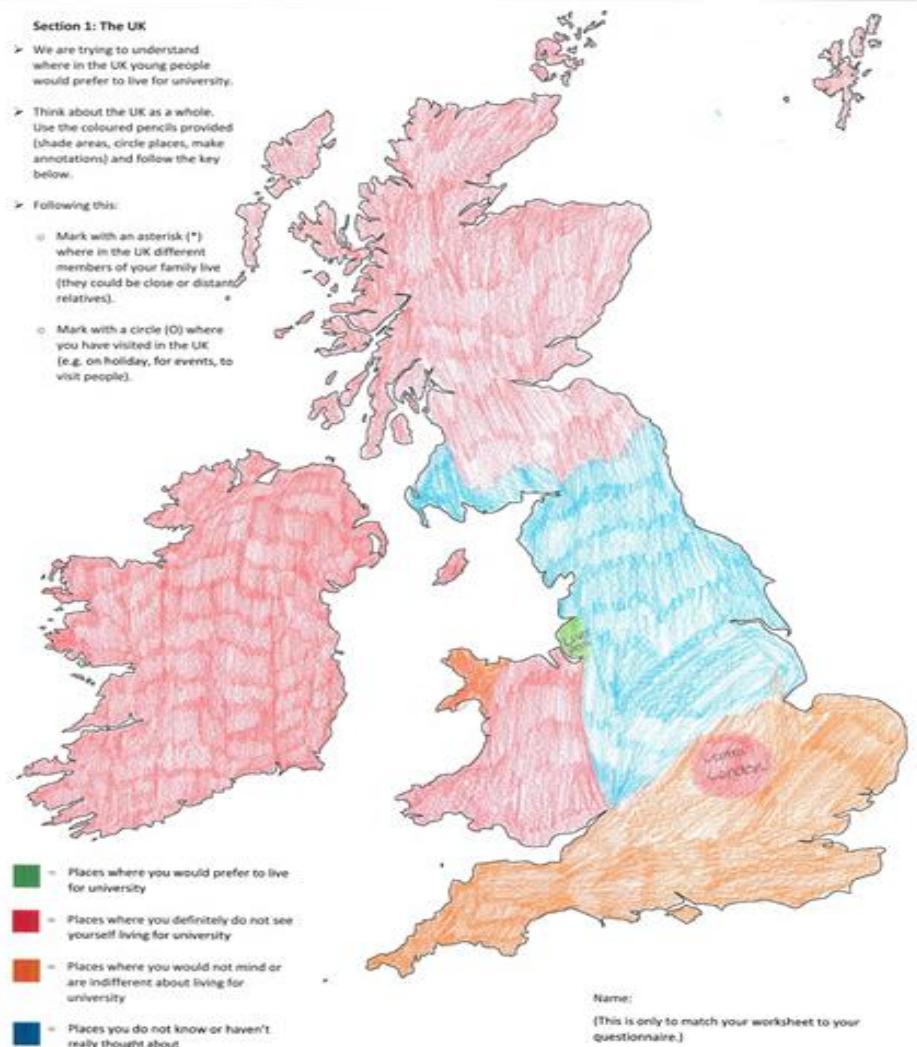


What are the limits to Merseyside identities? Is it Liverpool only or does the zone of Merseyside comfort extend to include Chester, the Wirral, parts of North-Wales or even bits of Lancashire?

Keeping space open and loosely framed made possible unique understandings of where attachment to regions and localities began and end.

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The Celtic Triangle: mobilities that traverse the Irish sea

Then there's [pause] Liverpool, I wouldn't really wanna go to because, like my brother goes to Liverpool and he loves it, but he [pause] has always been like, a Derry boy kind of thing. Like he always [laughs] he has like, there's so many of his friends that are over there now. So he's now like going into a house with all Derry ones. So, but I just wouldn't - that wouldn't be for me really.

What's a Derry boy? How would you describe a Derry boy.

[both laugh]. I don't know he's just very [pause] he's just, I don't know he loves like, the atmosphere of Derry and like I love, I love it too but it's just not what I, I don't wanna be like, I don't want to be like that for another like, four years or so.

How would you describe like, the atmosphere of Derry, would you say?

Um [pause] I'm not sure, like it's a really really friendly city. But I just, like there's a certain kind of [pause] feeling about it that I kinda wanna, I think it's just 'cause I kinda wanna like, get away and experience a new culture. And I don't think Liverpool would really do that, because so, like, so many people from Derry go there. So yeah. And then Glasgow, I went to Glasgow open day, Uni of Glasgow and absolutely loved it. Like, yeah. So I'm kind of thinking of going there. Only thing about that is the weather [laughs].

Sinead (Roman Catholic Grammar School, Derry)

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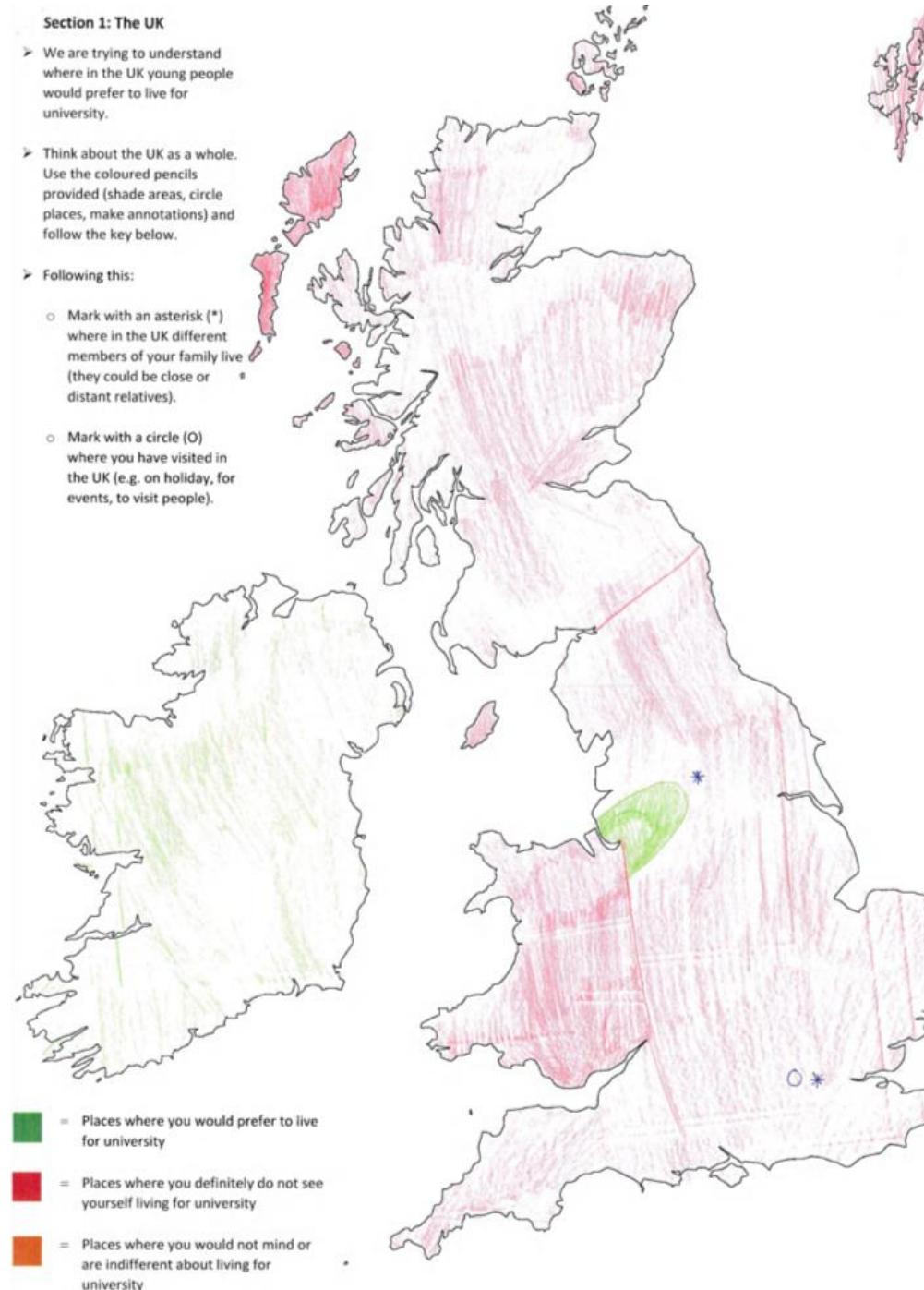
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3. Subjective vantage points: segregation and mixing in different places

Could you say a bit more about the places that you've highlighted in green?

I highlighted, like, all the cities I've been to like Bradford, Leeds. Manchester. Birmingham and London. Its, because, like, Bradford and Leeds, I live, like close to it so they would be, like, ideal situation. But Birmingham, that's, like, a bit far but I don't mind staying that far away from home. And the things is because I've been on Open Days to them unis so I know how it is. So that's what interests me about them unis.

Yeah. And, urm, could you say a bit more about... How did it feel visiting these other cities?

It was good, yes. A different experience. Because, like, they got other stuff there that you don't see in Huddersley, like...

What kind of other things?

A different, it's a very diverse community because... In Huddersley there's mostly Asians. There you got people from all different backgrounds. And its, and like you see people getting along. And its good to have that feeling.

Yeah. And, urm, why do you think its good to have that feeling?

It all makes you feel more comfortable. Like, around there, like, you that everyone gets on with each other. There's no, like conflicts. 'Cus you don't want it to be like segregated, where people are not getting on with each other and look down upon each other. Over there they treat like everyone the same no matter what they are.

And how does that compare to Huddersley?

Huddersley is mostly segregated because, like, most Asian people stay with the Asian people. And there's like a very few white people and their neighbourhoods are absolutely white and the Asian ones are absolutely Asian. There's, like, no mix.

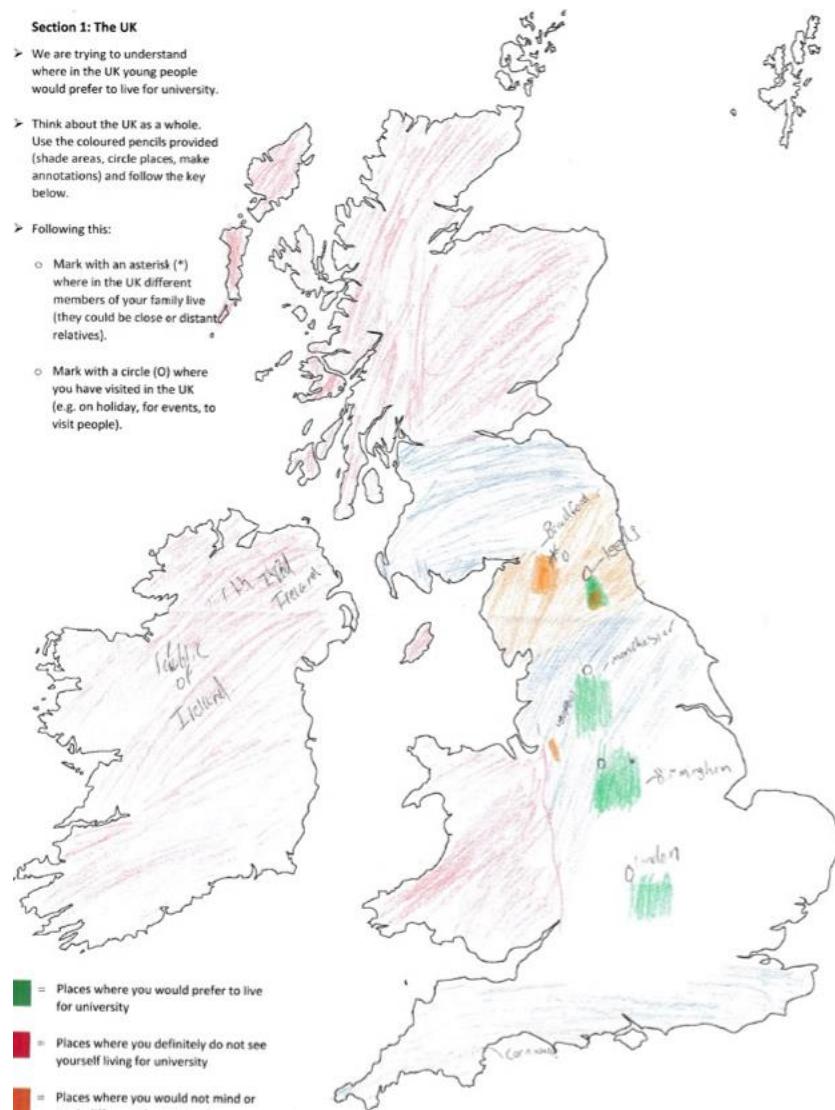
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Choice-making embedded within unequal geographies of power and capital

And, and what is it, that appeal about staying local, what, why is there that strong appeal do you think in this area?

It makes life much more easier

Yeah?

Yeah. People like, especially, people's life in this area is already hard as it is so I don't think they're trying to make it more difficult. By like, taking out loans

How is it hard in this area, like people's lives and stuff?

The poverty here is disgusting like, you can just tell when people are walking down the street they're not happy and like, people don't have enough money and it's not nice to see.

Yeah. Do you know people that are in that situation or like, friends here or a bit?

I don't know. Like, in terms of friends I can tell that some are struggling but it's not, it's like a taboo subject, like nobody brings it up, nobody tal - nobody wants to talk about struggling, you know.

Institutional and place-based stratification: Wales not on the 'elite circuit' of universities/places

And you said you'd ruled out Cardiff and Swansea, because you didn't feel like they were places where you'd want to spend 3 or 4 years?

Yeah, well cuz I know they're quite good for medicine, but for like the courses I'd want to be doing, they weren't- they weren't like standout universities. So yeah.

What do you mean they weren't standout universities?

Well they weren't, there were other universities that I'd already- that I'd already like considered and looked at because, I just knew people that went there, and I just looked at those courses that were higher rated. So I thought if there were universities where I, prefer the city. I think that Edinburgh's a nicer place. Than, Cardiff. Just from when I've been there, and I think that Durham is a nicer place than Swansea. And so because uh, those universities were in cities where I had deemed with my experience to be like nicer cities there, and because I knew people people there, and I felt like the fact that also their courses were rated higher meant that I'd prefer - I'd prefer to go to those universities kind of outright.

Yeah, yeah. What do you mean that Durham and Edinburgh are nicer places?

Uh, just kinda I've kinda, I've seen them [...]. And I've kind of like, I've only spent a couple days, I've only spent one or two days visiting Cardiff and I just like, I just I liked, almost the feel of the cities. Like, Edinburgh felt a lot cleaner? I don't know if that's the right word to say it, and also it's a lot closer to London, I think, than like Swansea, so I kind of, kind of felt more at home there. I just prefer the feel of that.

In what ways is it a lot closer to London or?

Well because a lot of students from London, um go to Edinburgh, and it's almost like, been described as this like, middle class, um, city, very similar- in a very similar way to London. And so, I just felt like there were a lot of like, a lot of similar amenities sort of.

Yeah. Oh so you mean a lot closer in terms of like-

Yeah, like- similar. Probably. It's obviously not closer in vicinity.

Yeah yeah. Similar in terms of the amenities that are there and -

Yeah, and like uh, just kind of, almost the kind of look of it as well. It almost seemed a bit similar. [...] just cuz like Edinburgh's like where all the parliament buildings are in Scotland so like kind of similar in that way, if you understand what I'm saying? [...] and it just seems like a centre, to be honest.

Right. What do you mean a centre?

Well because it's like, where the parliament is and its, um, yeah that's basically what I meant yeah.

Samuel, white British, St Alexander's Boys' school, London.

Ontological security – seeking out similar classed and ethnically diverse spaces

You were saying before about being close to London and feeling sort of secure and safe

Yeah

What do you mean by -?

um, compared to for example I went to North London once; and how I get looked at, or how people talk to me, or think like, I'm very different and I'm not someone they see every day.

But in London it's not like that for example where I live, [area in East London], and outside [area in London], people don't look at you that way it's like, it's a bit normal to see....

...even white people how they treat us in the hospital and everywhere, in London it's different to people in that part, in, elsewhere.

What do you mean it's different, can you say how you think it's different?

It's just that they talk to you as if they know you, they understand you it's like, you're similar to them but if you go elsewhere it's like, I find it difficult to speak to you, I'm not sure if I can communicate with you that well

Yeah. It just people from around this area are used to us, and we're used to them so it's like, we're more closer we understand each other

Shamim, first generation migrant, British Bangladeshi, ethnically diverse inner city East London school

Towards a geography of student (im)mobility

- Geography matters: Significance of internal geography of countries – *intranational* just as significant as *international*
 - Ethnicity; Social class; Regional structures of feeling; Accent and language
- Relationality
 - Defining places and self-identity in relation to others – driving mobility choices
- (Mis)measurement of (im)mobility: need for spatially sensitive methodologies (challenge for quantitative methods)
- Implications for understanding divisions in UK society that have an intrinsically spatial *and* social form

Michael Donnelly (m.p.donnelly@bath.ac.uk)

Website:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/projects/geographies-of-higher-education-spatial-and-social-mobilities/>

Twitter: @HEMobilities / @Dr_M_P_Donnelly



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