**Beyond place attachment: Exploring the politics of belonging to commercial settings**

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Prior CCT research has explored how individuals develop and experience various forms of place attachment in commercial settings (Borghini et al., 2021; DeBenedetti et al., 2014; De Molli et al., 2022; Hill et al., 2022). These lines of research often perceive place as a lived and phenomenological concept which is constituted by material and symbolic dimensions that cut across the built environment, social processes, and cultural manifestations, amongst others (Casey, 1998; Creswell and Hoskins, 2008; Tuan, 1977). To these ends, place attachment refers to the creation of emotional bonds between individuals (or communities) and a specific location unfolding through a particular set of spatial and symbolic elements (DeBenedetti et al., 2014). These bonds include feelings of familiarity, authenticity, and security and an overall sense of homeyness (Borghini et al., 2021).

Although commercial place attachment has been previously theorized as a psychological construct which describes people’s emotional feelings with place, less attention has been paid to the variety of ways through which individuals establish a holistic sense of belonging in commercial settings and the emergent marketplace tensions associated with this process. We argue that belonging is more than place attachment, which has been the focus of investigation on CCT research. In the social sciences literature, belonging is often perceived as an active and rhythmic practice which includes creating and recreating relationships between people, place and history and emerges through an attachment to place over time and a set of spatial relations to other individuals and the materiality of place (Bennett, 2015). It is not only a feeling of being ‘at home’ in a specific place but also a discursive resource which relates to various forms of socio-spatial inclusion and/or exclusion (Antonsich, 2010). The politics of belonging further encapsulate a set of spatial practices which unfold through the diverse range of attachments that are forged and re-enacted through people’s relationship to a specific place (Jackson, 2020). Such practices give rise to a series of interpersonal and intrapersonal tensions which often revolve around fundamental processes of inclusion and exclusion (Yodovich, 2021). As such, the aim of this paper is to develop further insights into the variety ways in which individuals create a holistic sense of belonging in commercial settings and investigate the politics of belonging and resulting marketplace tensions *in* situ.

The study focuses on Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre and is part of a larger funded research project which aims to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with the making and consumption of craft objects. The Centre is supported by the Arts Council England and the Manchester City Council and is located in the city centre of Manchester, in a Victorian former fish and poultry market building. It hosts more than 20 studios of various craft makers and also acts as a retail platform to showcase and sell craft objects to visitors. Since its inception as a creative space for craft in 1982, the Craft and Design Centre has provided a home to local independent designers and makers selling textiles, jewellery, accessories, ceramics, and glass, amongst others. It also runs a series of craft-related exhibitions and workshops which aim to promote and disseminate craft making and celebrate local, national and international craft artists (Craft and Design Centre, 2022).

A two-stage methodological approach was employed which included a series of in-depth interviews with craft makers and visitors in the Craft and Design Centre. These individuals were recruited through the Centre and the sample included 37 informants between the ages of 18 and 64 with varied levels of engagement with the Craft and Design Centre (e.g. number of visits, time based in the Centre). Interviews lasted between 45mins to 2.5hrs and broadly aimed to deal with craft makers’ and visitors’ lived experiences within Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre and their role in the making, purchasing and consumption of craft objects. Data analysis followed an inductive approach which entailed using thematic coding as part of the process of moving back and forth between the data and extant literature; in line with the constant comparative method of coding, categorisation and abstraction (Spiggle, 1994). The coding process related to the nature of the lived experience of producers and consumers of craft and their relationship with the physical, socio-cultural, historical, and symbolic aspects of place (Casey, 1998).

The emergent findings of the study highlight that belonging comes into being as a result of situated lived experiences and acts that take place in Manchester‘s Craft and Design Centre along with the initial establishment of a more affective relationship with the material and perceptual components of place. However, belonging subsequently revolves around various forms of socio-spatial inclusion and/or exclusion illustrating how relationships evolve after the manifestation of attachment (Borghini et al., 2021). Craft makers and visitors establish a sense of belonging through their place-specific experiences in Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre that give rise to a series of marketplace tensions which cut across processes of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion. To these ends, belonging can be seen as articulated in terms of multiple social relationships and perceptions of place. More specifically, processes of marketplace inclusion and exclusion are all about how craft makers and visitors perceive, negotiate, and position themselves at the intersections of geographical and social space. The politics of different notions of belonging (Yodovich, 2021; Yuval-Davis, 2011) in Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre are the result of the multiplicity and situatedness of individual attachments which include social, imagined, and sensual-material relations to people and place. Emotional attachment to place is not stable but, instead, revolves around multiple kinds of processes via people’s lasting sense of belonging and moral ownership over place (Savage et al., 2005).

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