

# Sense of Place, Health and Quality of Life

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## Chapter 8

### Place, Leisure, and Well-being

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#### Place and Leisure in Population Health

The Population Health Model (PHM) (Hamilton and Bhatti 1996) brings much needed attention to the critical role of environmental and community variables in the promotion of physical and mental health. However, it appears to neglect two facets integral to what is otherwise a rich contextual approach to health promotion. One facet, *place*, is the binding theme of this book and will be addressed accordingly. The other facet, *leisure* (and in particular nature-based recreation and tourism), is the specific substantive focus of this chapter. Few would seriously dispute that the quality of the environment plays a critical role in quality of life in all parts of the world in terms of providing basic material sustenance for life (food, shelter, etc.). Likewise, leisure and free-time activities are familiar venues for human development and quality of life. However, in the realm of public policy, with its inevitable bias towards tangible (demonstrable) outcomes, the role the environment (and more specifically relationships to place) in supporting the less tangible social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life quality – dimensions often manifest within the context of leisure and free-time pursuits – is easily overlooked.

The goal of this volume is to highlight the way the human/social geographic construct of *place* contributes to well-being and quality of life, with this chapter focused on relationships to the kinds of places that provide venues for leisure, recreation, and tourism (henceforth *leisure* will be used as a collective term for leisure, recreation, and tourism). In the health policy arena decision-makers generally want to know how the environment (variously defined and conceptualized) contributes (or possibly inhibits) human well-being and quality of life (also variously defined). Not unlike the population health approach, an important effort to frame these questions (albeit with an environmental policy focus) came out of the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA)* project launched by the United Nations (Alcamo et al. 2003). This assessment involved over 1300 scientists from nearly 100 nations directed by an advisory board representing various international scientific and non-governmental organizations. Their aim was to address the needs of decision-makers for scientific information on the links between ecosystem change and human well-being.

Within the MEA framework the penultimate state of well-being is defined as freedom of choice and action or “being able to achieve what a person values doing or being” (Alcamo et al. 2003, 74), which is seen as dependent on other components of well-being namely: security, material needs, physical and emotional health, and social relationships. Though not explicitly recognized within the MEA, this description of

well-being as freedom of choice and action mirrors the classic definitions of leisure grounded in Western thought. Accordingly, leisure may be viewed as both means and ends, with the MEA focused on leisure as an end. As an end “the time and activities spent in leisure may be profound expressions of culture and may be the most important part of life for finding relaxation, happiness and self-fulfillment” (Jackson 2006, 11). At the same time leisure is often seen as a means for achieving other goals at both individual and collective levels including physical and mental health, economic survival, human development and well-being, and environmental quality.

The MEA framework builds on the concept of ecosystem services taken from the emerging field of ecological economics to identify the major components of the environment that support this multidimensional concept of human well-being (Figure 8.1).

The various classes of ecosystem services include: supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; regulating processes such as climate, water purification, and waste treatment; provisioning services such as food, water, genetic resources, and raw materials production; and recreation and cultural services such as aesthetic, artistic, educational, spiritual, heritage, recreation, and scientific goods and services.

The overriding premise of the MEA – that the condition of the environment makes a vast and essential contribution to the quality of life and therefore protecting ecosystem services is paramount to ensuring human well-being – is consistent with a population health approach to well-being. Like the PHM, there are some

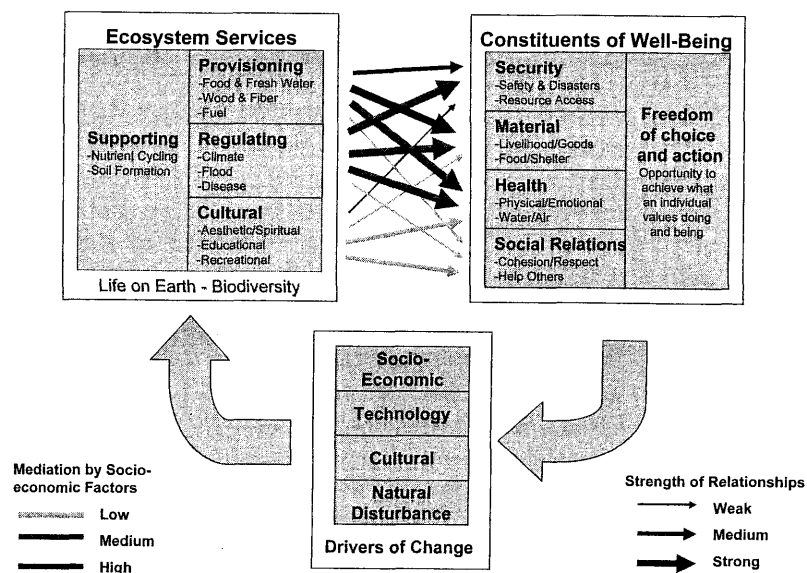


Figure 8.1 Ecosystem services and human well-being

Source: Alcamo, J. et al. (2003).

conceptual gaps stemming from its origins in biological as opposed to social theory. Reflecting the dominance of ecologically oriented scientists in the assessment, the MEA model implausibly characterizes cultural services as weak in their contribution to overall well-being compared to other ecosystem services, as well as being subject to relatively low levels of mediation by socio-economic factors. However, cultural services are somewhat unique among the classes of ecosystem services in that they are socially derivative of other ecosystem services and in that way are already mediated through human/cultural systems. In other words, the impact and mediation of cultural services is built into the construct itself as an end served by the other ecosystem services.

A key aim of this chapter is to illustrate what the concept of place brings to the environmental/contextual side of these models and what leisure or recreation brings to the well-being side. What we hope to do here is to: (1) show how a place approach to environmental research can be distinguished from other efforts to model environmental experience and quality of life and (2) illustrate how our own work on place has evolved toward the latter and what we think this work suggests about place and well-being in a nature-based leisure context.

### Locating Place and Leisure within the Nexus of Environmental Well-being

The concepts of both place and leisure are typically peripheral considerations in theorizing about well-being and quality of life. Yet going back to at least Fried's (1963) classic study of grieving for homes lost to well-intended urban renewal projects, urban and regional planners have grappled with the notion of place as distinct from environment and its potential influence on well-being and quality of life. Likewise in ascribing “sentiment” and “symbolic” properties to urban spaces, Firey (1945, 140) challenged the dominance of a utilitarian or commodified view of the environment that presumed “the only possible relationship that locational activities may bear to space is an economic one.” Firey and Fried were in the vanguard, advancing the idea that people could develop sentiments and attachments toward places that transcended the more stringent assessments of urban planners focused on the ostensibly objective environmental properties of spaces (the word *sentiment* itself connotes an attitude conditioned more by feeling than reason).

At about the same time Fried and others were contemplating the idea of place in the urban condition, academics and policy makers in the USA were describing the public's lack of access to nature and outdoor recreation as a national crisis. It was so urgent a problem the federal government organized a prestigious national commission to investigate the matter thoroughly. Established in 1958, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission produced a 27-volume report that sparked two decades of landmark environmental legislation in the USA and inspired a worldwide environmental movement. Today that same sense of urgency is barely palpable, dampened according to Louv (2005), by the rising popularity of electronic amusements and an overprotective and litigious culture worried about dangers to children lurking behind every tree. While various urban crises of the 1960s instigated a train of commentary pointing to weakened ties to place and reduced and devalued

access to nature and outdoor recreation as grave threats to quality of life, they remain under-examined aspects of most models of well-being.

The key to understanding how place informs leisure and thereby well-being is to differentiate it from two alternative (and often dominant) paradigms in the study of environmental experience. First, the *adaptive* paradigm is a common (and very medical) approach that starts with the assumption that biological and psychological survival motivates behavior. Typical adaptive responses examined include how people cope with stressful environments and how certain environments or environmental features serve restorative or therapeutic needs. Research on how organisms cope with stressful environments typically looks for direct dose-response linkages between specific environmental stimuli (e.g., sound or temperature), and psychological functioning or well-being. Generalizing from community noise studies for example, a dose-response model was used to explain the negative impact of aircraft noise on outdoor recreation experiences (Mace et al. 1999). Leisure is recognized as both a context within which people find opportunities to cope with daily stressors (Hull and Michaels 1995), as well as a context in which people sometimes encounter stress (e.g., crowding, environmental threats) and must adapt or cope in some way with stressors in the recreation environment, which may diminish the stress relieving value of recreation (Iwasaki and Schneider 2003). Whereas the stress model portrays leisure as a way to overcome negative environmental conditions to maintain health and well-being, some research goes further to suggest certain environmental features and settings have an intrinsic capacity to promote physical healing and mental restoration (Hartig and Staats 2003). Accordingly, human responses to the environment are better adapted to natural stimuli, and therefore exposure to nature promotes well-being (Ulrich 1993).

The adaptive model of the environment-experience relationship has been very influential in establishing important health benefits of leisure (Driver et al. 1991). However, while the quality of the evidence is strong and convincing, by conceptualizing the environment as a natural (as opposed to socially defined) phenomenon, studies following the adaptive paradigm tend not to address the larger context of place including economic, social, and political forces that structure environmental conditions and distributions of power to access and regulate these conditions within society. In the adaptive paradigm the environment has inherent capacities to promote well-being but, like the MEA, tends to assume little mediation by social, economic, and political conditions.

Second, the goal-directed or *utility* paradigm starts with the assumption that well-being derives from opportunities in the environment to satisfy specific social or intra-personal needs. In the context of leisure the environment is interpreted as a "setting for action" possessing the characteristics necessary for the pursuit of specific desired activities such as rivers for rafting, snow for skiing, paths for walking, etc. People are viewed as rational decision-makers, satisfying individual needs, rather than responders to the biological imperatives of the adaptive model. Research examines how people evaluate environmental attributes in arriving at a decision or action, which makes this approach well-suited to the instrumental and rational traditions of environmental and program planning (Williams and Patterson 1996). The specific goals people associate with various forms of leisure participation

are generally learned (as opposed to innate) and pursued in situations (times and places) that people perceive to offer good opportunities for their satisfaction. Because goal preferences are learned they are assumed to vary widely by personality, social background, culture, and geography. It is also the case, however, that people with similar backgrounds may still hold different preferences for environmental features to satisfy similar psychological goals and that different goals are often satisfied by similar environmental (setting) features (Knopf 1987).

Inherent in the utility paradigm is the notion that environmental features are theoretically interchangeable (i.e., substitutable) and even reproducible, so long as the replacement provides a similar combination of goal-fulfilling attributes. Psychological responses (e.g., satisfaction of leisure goals) are understood to be instrumentally dependent on specific properties of the environment. Evidence supporting this model is relatively strong for ecosystem or environmental services that are generic and homogeneous (e.g., recreation at an amusement park), but weak when applied to the environmental services that are more ambiguous (e.g., environmental awareness) or geographically unique (e.g., historical preservation). A key advantage of the utility paradigm is that it can be integrated with economic approaches to resource valuation (Loomis 2002) and allows for segmenting various social groups by environmental preferences to aid marketing and management (Mallou et al. 2004). The weaknesses of this model, however, are that it provides limited understanding of the socioeconomic and socio-cultural factors influencing the distribution of opportunities for individual goal attainment, reduces all environmental values to behavioral utilities, and generally ignores the symbolic construction (meaning) of the environment.

Both of these models provide strong support for the role of specific environmental qualities in contributing to health and well-being. Not unlike the PHM and the MEA, however, the adaptive and utility paradigms treat place as little more than a container of environmental features with well-being a more or less a direct affective response to those features. Within the *place* paradigm environmental preferences extend well beyond biological imperatives and individual goal-oriented opportunities. Accordingly, leisure experiences of a place are socially constructed within the cultural, historical, and geographical context of day-to-day life (Farnum et al. 2005; Williams and Patterson 1996). People are seen as social beings seeking out and creating meaning in the environment (Knopf 1987). From the place paradigm, any single environmental feature may be perceived from a variety of social or cultural perspectives. Wilderness may, for example, symbolize ancestral ways of life, spiritual contemplation, valued commodities, tourist experiences, or essential livelihood to different groups of people. Thus, the environment acquires varied and competing social and political meaning as a specific place associated over time with particular activities and groups (Lee 1972). As modern social relations have become more mobilized with sense of belonging and rootedness more diffused and fragmented across multiple places, leisure participation appears to offer people a way to negotiate multiple senses of place, home, and identity that enhance their sense of well-being (McIntyre et al. 2006). In addition, research is beginning to examine social and cultural differences in access to the economic and political resources necessary to

define and direct the use of leisure settings; the basis of much inter-group conflict (Stokowski 2002).

Socio-cultural studies of place emphasize the way landscape features and settings are symbolically constructed as leisure places (Blake 2002; Stokowski 2002), both through the meanings ascribed to them by users, tourists, and local residents and by the intentions of designers, developers, and promotional and managing agencies (McCracken 1987; Mick and Buhl 1992). As a result leisure places are subject to complex, contested social processes in which various stakeholders struggle to manipulate and control place meanings, values, and uses (Williams and Van Patten 2006). These approaches are proving increasingly valuable to managers and policy makers as they try to balance the competing environmental priorities of diverse constituencies. Thus, for managing parks, protected areas, and tourism destinations, leisure can be a destabilizing force in the sustainability of landscapes and local culture or a potential vehicle for the their preservation (Williams 2001). While the quality of the evidence supporting the basic role of symbolic construction of leisure settings in maintaining and enhancing a sense of collective identity and community is substantial, this approach tends to overlook the role and value of individual meanings and setting specific attachments that users form with favorite leisure settings.

### Place and Well-being in Nature-based Leisure

Psychological well-being associated with leisure has long been a core research question within the professional practice of natural resource management. Through much of the 1970s and 1980s the work of Driver and associates championed a program of research to document and quantify the quality-of-life benefits of participation in outdoor pursuits (Driver et al. 1991). However, this model focused on the act of recreating largely independent of the place it occurred. Following the utility paradigm, preferences for environmental features were considered fungible<sup>1</sup> elements in a recreation decision-making process; absent was any consideration of the meaning the user attached to the specific places they were found. Much like Firey and Fried who elevated the study of place in urban planning, a few investigators studying recreation, nature, and park use developed parallel interests in the experience of place. The basic idea they began to explore was that people often value their relationships to natural landscapes and outdoor places not merely because they were useful settings for pursuing desired outdoor recreation activities, but because the specific places involved conveyed a sense of individual identity and group affiliation. Drawing inspiration from Tuan's (1977) distinction between space perceived as a territory for an activity versus place as a locus for feelings of attachment and belonging, they noted that over time people accumulate meaning and form emotional ties to specific places (Schreyer et al. 1981), establish "social

<sup>1</sup> No other word captures our intended meaning as well as the financial term, *fungible*. According to the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, fungible (especially as applied to goods) means "being of such nature or kind as to be freely exchangeable or replaceable, in whole or in part, for another of like nature or kind." The most fungible of all goods would be money itself.

definitions" (Lee 1972) and "feelings of possession" (Jacob and Schreyer 1980) about places, and seek out places where the norms of behavior and expressed values and lifestyles match their own (Lee 1972; Schreyer and Roggenbuck 1981).

### Place Attachment

Building on this work Williams and colleagues initiated an effort in the late 1980s to develop a psychometric instrument that could measure the strength of place orientations for use in management-directed public surveys of recreation visitors to national parks, forests, and other wildland and tourist destinations (Williams and Vaske 2003).<sup>2</sup> Over the years this psychometric instrument has been employed, sometimes in modified form, in various contexts (Farnum et al. 2005) ranging from leisure places (Williams et al. 1992), second homes (Kaltenborn 1997), local communities (Vorkinn and Riese 2001), and birthplaces (Nanistova 1998). Given that leisure affords the individual considerable discretion to affiliate with places and activities of ones choosing (Haggard and Williams 1991), attachment to leisure places has typically focused on positive relationships, with leisure places serving as powerful symbols of individual identity. Applied to other kinds of places, particularly at a community level, a sense of attachment sometimes may be experienced negatively as a sense of entrapment and inability to leave (Manzo 2003). Still, the psychometric approach to place attachment appears particularly well suited to measuring the strength of personal emotional bonds (e.g., meaningfulness or sentiment) as opposed to the meanings themselves (e.g., the place as symbolic of one's values or beliefs). They help investigators identify the places that may indeed serve as powerful symbols without getting too deeply into the origin and nature of those symbols and their impact on well-being. To study the more elusive and amorphously multifaceted notion of sense of place and the individual and socio-cultural meanings that go with place, we have turned to more qualitative, interpretive methods. The focus has been to examine how place relationships are an important part of nature experiences and how they contribute meaning, stability, identity, and ultimately enhance well-being.

### Experience and Meaning of Places

Recognizing some of the limits of the place attachment approach, we turned our attention more directly to meanings and sense of place. This shift stimulated deeper reflection on the ontological issues implied by the idea of place in the work of human geographers such as Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) and drew our attention to parallels between their phenomenological views of place and those social-psychological models of well-being that emphasize transaction and meaning (Patterson and Williams 2005). Specifically, Omodei and Wearing (1990) grouped

<sup>2</sup> The design of the scale built on Brown's (1987) suggestion of two forms of place attachment. One was Stokols and Shumaker's (1981) the concept of place dependence, which represented the importance of a place in providing features and conditions that support specific goals or desired activities. The other was Proshansky's (1978) concept of place identity, referring to the importance of a place in constructing and maintaining self-identity.

conceptual models of well-being into two broad classes: (1) telic or goal attainment models that view well-being as occurring when specific needs or goals are met, and (2) auto-telic or process oriented models that view well-being as arising directly from the nature of activity and from interaction with objects, places, and people rather than from attaining desired end states.

As noted earlier, until the 1990s goal-attainment models dominated research exploring the contribution of leisure to well-being. However, sense of place as conceived in human geography appeared to be more consistent with a process oriented model of well-being. Rather than beginning with a view of leisure participants as rationally processing information about objective attributes of a place in relation to specific goals obtained through participation in isolated activities or events with a definite beginning and end, they are viewed as participating in the ongoing enterprise of constructing a life and an identity (McCracken 1987). People are not seen as responding deterministically and/or passively to information that objectively exists in specific environmental attributes. Instead, meaning is viewed as an emergent property that is actualized through a transactional relationship between person and the place (Mick and Buhl 1992).

Ultimately, we came to believe that this more interpretive perspective on ontology (i.e., the view that meaning arises from a transactional process rather than resides inherently in places or their attributes) required an interpretive epistemology that was not reflected in the psychometric approach employed in both the dominant utility paradigm and the measurement of place attachment as summarized above. Indeed, much of the earlier work on place in human geography was from a phenomenological perspective, reflecting a qualitative empirical approach that is much closer to the hermeneutic approach we began to adopt (Patterson and Williams 2002).

Following this hermeneutic approach our first study explored leisure experiences while canoeing a slow moving, spring fed creek in a Florida wilderness area (Patterson et al. 1998). Rather than defining a predetermined operational model as we had done with the place attachment work, we started with experiential narratives (descriptions of the experience in participants' own words). This research yielded several insights relative to the origins of well-being and nature-based recreation. First it suggested that, in many cases, experiences had a storied nature best understood in terms of an emergent narrative rather than a set of expectations. That is, rather than a precise set of specific goals, many participants seemed motivated by a not very well-defined purpose of acquiring stories that ultimately enrich their lives. For example, challenge, which emerged as a salient dimension in virtually all the narratives, became not an end goal but a highly variable dimension describing the character of the experience. It was variable because the nature and meaning of "challenge" and the role it played in the experience varied across individuals.

A second insight was the dynamic nature of the emergent narratives as meaning often shifted over time. For example, in some cases those who experienced an intense challenge that had unpleasant aspects debated in their own narrative whether or not the experience was a positive one. Several participants ultimately came to see it in a positive light with a sense of achievement even though they would have liked to quit half way through. As another example, some participants who experienced the challenge less intensely initially complained about aspects of the setting that

contributed to the degree of challenge (e.g., snags and blow down trees) but upon reflection and discussion came to realize that these were precisely what made the experience an enjoyable story to relive. Finally, for yet another kind of participant, challenge was more appropriately described as a defining characteristic of the experience which served as a key aspect in building an enduring relationship to the place that was important both to their identity and quality of life.

Thus a more interpretive approach did seem capable of yielding richer insights into participants' meanings or senses of place. Challenge, just one facet revealed in the experiential narratives, seemed to be a key dimension defining the character and meaning of the place to visitors. Further, the study suggested another important place relationship-based distinction among respondents. Some respondents truly seemed to be well described by the label "visitors" (individuals seeking to add to their quality of life through a single, isolated experience at this place). Others clearly had a more enduring relationship to place, one so strong that the term visitor might actually represent a mischaracterization of how the place relates to their well being. A subsequent study of motorized users on a whitewater river (the River of No Return) in Idaho provided an opportunity to explore this type of more enduring recreational relationship to natural places.

Also using in-depth interviews and an interpretive (hermeneutic) approach, this study provided a more comprehensive characterization of relationship to place, encompassing the significance and nature of the place bond, how lives of those with significant bonds were organized around the place, and place meanings. Four different types of bonds were reflected in the interviews. The first two reflected highly significant bonds corresponding to the two primary conceptualizations described above in the discussion of place attachment: place identity and place dependence. The other two represented comparatively low intensities of attachment.

Those respondents with deeply rooted place identity and place dependent bonds tended to organize their lives around recreational use of the river in multiple ways. First, the river provided both a setting and a community of users in which strongly bonded respondents actively constructed highly valued identities. This sense of identity was not merely a personal one. Respondents' relationships to the river were capable of promoting a broader family identity – a sense of connectedness that transcended generations and became an important link to the past and a valued heritage to be passed on to the next generation.

The high degree of investment in place in terms of self and family identity exhibited by those with deeply rooted bonds is mirrored by other forms of investments that are more tangible in nature and that have significant implications for other dimensions of life. Examples include choosing a life of lower wages to have the opportunity to recreate in this way in this place, making a long term family commitment to a particular form of recreation as a result of the significant financial investment motorized whitewater boating requires, and choosing an insurance company due to the adequacy of their coverage for their recreational boats. Additionally, many attached boaters joined a regional power boating club, not only for social opportunities but also as a means to establish an effective political voice to represent their place interests in the area planning process. Further, one of the clubs sought not only to

establish a political means to protect their access interests but also to promote a use and stewardship ethic among its own members and motorized boaters in general.

The study of motorized whitewater boaters shows that people can form strong emotional bonds with nonresidential nature-based recreation places through place identity or place dependent processes that are so central to a sense of self that individuals come to organize their lives around these places in very tangible ways. These transactional relationships may generate meanings for a place that conflict with other meanings and must be resolved in a political process in which place-based bonds (this place as unique) may conflict with meanings arising through other sources (e.g., as national parks or protected areas). This conflict may significantly impact quality of life. Both the canoeist and motorized boater studies suggest that an interpretive epistemology employing descriptive narratives can yield significant insights into relationship to place and quality of life not attainable through quantitative psychometric approaches. Just as important, these approaches are capable of yielding insights into how policy and decision-making may affect well-being and quality of life.

### *Mobility and Multicentered Place Identities*

As we have seen, place-based sentiments and symbolism associated with leisure and nature contact provide opportunities to establish and express individual identity, maintain a coherent self-narrative, and provide a sense of rootedness. However, these findings also suggest a paradox. Much social inquiry of the past three decades has emanated from critiques of globalization and the associated fragmentation, if not dissolution of self and identity (McIntyre et al. 2006; Giddens 1991). Yet, our work with leisure participants suggests that greater mobility also enables a wider search for thicker place meanings and deeper ties to place. This search can be likened to what Giddens (1991) calls the "reflexive project of the self" and, in particular, exemplifies various emerging social mechanisms he describes for crafting coherent identities under the turbulent, fragmented conditions of late modernity. For Giddens, constructing an identity under these conditions is a more deliberate and cognitively demanding project because it must be accomplished amid a greater diversity of lifestyle options, competing sources of authority and expertise, and extensive access to multiple localities thoroughly penetrated by distant global influences.

To better understand how people might use leisure to negotiate this tension between freedom/mobility and attachment to place, Williams and colleagues initiated a series of studies examining the use and meaning of second homes (Williams and Kaltenborn 1999; Williams and Van Patten 2006; McIntyre et al. 2006) as a strategy for organizing and maintaining coherent identity narratives amid the disorienting and fragmenting din of modernity. A common theme in interviews with second homeowners involves escaping modernity by seeking refuge in nature. In many cases the second home affords greater access to nature, not only because of its typically rural location, but also by virtue of the spaciousness of most cottage developments relative to suburban living. It also affords an immersion in the rhythms of nature with a corresponding shift in awareness and a mental refocus on simpler ways of living.

Another theme in interviews with second homeowners is continuity and rootedness. To the extent that modernity thins the primary home of meaning, people

seem to cultivate alternative mythic places such as second homes or favorite vacation spots to recreate a seemingly thicker place of attachment, identity, continuity, and tradition otherwise undermined by modern lifestyles. Second homes provide centers of meaning or an emotional base across the life course even as people relocate their so-called permanent residence. Thus the second home is often the locus of important family memories and provides for a more consistent and enduring territorial identification for families across generations. However, these oft cited virtues are to some degree mitigated by a sense of obligation and burden that comes with maintaining a second home (e.g., yard work, repairs etc.).

Though cottage life offers a seemingly thicker place of identity, continuity, and tradition, there is also a contradiction in such efforts as suggested by Giddens' identity dilemma of unity versus fragmentation. As noted earlier organizing a coherent and secure sense of self in modern times must be accomplished amid an increasingly fragmented and puzzling diversity of options and possibilities. The second home is to some extent a modern expression of this dilemma as a concrete manifestation of a segmented, isolated self living in more than one place, but also needing to have an authentic, rooted identity somewhere (Williams and Kaltenborn 1999). It necessarily re-creates the segmented quality of modern identities in the form of separate places for organizing distinct aspects of a fragmented identity. It narrows and thins out the meaning of each "home" by focusing the meaning of each on a particular segment of life and it segments identity around phases in the life cycle with youth and retirement focused more on cottage life than working adulthood.

At the same time cottage life provides opportunities to create distinctive identities by incorporating elements from diverse settings into an integrated narrative that some have described as a "cosmopolitan identity" (Gustafson 2006). The cosmopolitan person is one who possesses the distinct knowledge and competence to handle cultural diversity and who draws unique strength from being at home in a variety of contexts. Much like Giddens, Bruner (1990) envisions self-identity as distributed through our personal undertakings and suggests that meaning in life is created reflexively through narratives, both as the stories we tell to our "self" and the stories we tell to others. While recognizing modernity's fragmenting and disorienting qualities, leisure and various forms of multiple dwelling constitute strategies people have available and draw on to assemble and narrate a coherent yet multicentered identity.

### **Conclusions**

Our studies of sentiments and symbolism associated with places people seek out for leisure grew out of a critique of the utilitarian ethos that has long dominated the professions of forestry and natural resource management, an ethos reflected as well in the rational planning ideologies underlying other realms of practice such as urban development and health promotion. In contrast, our initial aim was to document the attachments people felt toward particular outdoor recreation places as a way to demonstrate that the benefits people sought from experiences in these places went well beyond the commodity or consumer metaphor embedded in need satisfaction theories widely used to explain outdoor recreation participation. Recognizing that

measuring the intensity of attachment only scratched the surface of deeper questions concerning how people derive meaning from outdoor experiences, we began to employ interpretive epistemology to investigate the meanings people associated with single events or experiences of a place. From these studies we noted how, for many people, relationships to specific locales were a central organizing facet of their individual and group identities. At the same time we began to explore how people take advantage of modern mobility through leisure and construct ties to multiple places (e.g., second homes) as a modern way to anchor an identity in an age of globalization.

In trying to show how people indeed seek place-based meaning and identity through interactions with multiple distant locales, we took inspiration from those who criticized the disruptions to spatial relationships and experiences that followed in the wake of urbanization and globalization. This had more to do with a shared concern over the corrosive effects of narrow instrumental thinking on the modern conception of the meaning and value of places than the belief that mobility constituted a threat to traditional sources of identity and social cohesion. Like Gustafson (2001) and Lippard (1997) our work has tried to go beyond the simple opposition between mobility and attachment to demonstrate alternative ways people might create place-based meaning and identity in this late-modern age dominated by global spatial and social relations. Ties to place continue to be desired and necessary even in the globalized age. At least for some, this does not necessarily occur solely by sinking roots even deeper into local soil. Rather, the idea of multicentered place identities offers a more flexible notion of place-based well-being, one suited to modern (global) social relations.

Broad deterministic frameworks on human well-being such as the PHM and the MEA tend to favor biological, adaptive, and/or instrumental models of environmental effects in which the environment is conceived as a constellation of separable and generally substitutable (fungible) properties that have consequences for human health and well-being. Such an assumption goes back, for example, to 1960s urban renewal projects in which urban planners presumed that forcing people out of slums and into objectively superior housing would make their lives better (Fried 1963). In contrast the concept of place as developed across a number of environmental fields presumes that well-being involves, in addition, a sense of belonging or identification with an environment as a specific place and that places contribute to well-being in ways that are not easily managed or reproduced by the intentions of planners and designers. Moreover, this chapter has attempted to show that people benefit from a sense of involvement, belonging, and/or identification with places they use for leisure or free-time pursuits. From our studies we noted how, for many people, relationships to specific locales were a central organizing facet of their individual and group identities. At the same time we have sought to show how people take advantage of leisure and modern mobility to construct ties to multiple, often distant places (e.g., second homes) as a modern way to anchor an identity in an age of globalization. In the health promotion world, we need to recognize not only the more instrumental effects of environmental conditions and designs on well-being, but the needs of people to establish and maintain some control over their relationships to specific places that contribute to their sense of belonging and identity. Leisure,

recreation, and tourism are important venues for building and maintaining such relationships to place.

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