

# Where Heart and Home Reside: Changing Constructions of Place and Identity

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*Abstract: Globalization has expanded the scope and geographic scale of leisure and tourism practices and their consequent impacts on society. Yet studies of such topics as community, home, migration, and tourism remain infused with outdated assumptions of a geographically rooted subject. In the future, the changing nature of employment, retirement, and lifestyles are likely to influence not only amenity migration, but residence patterns, meanings, and identities more generally. Amenity migration research should focus on the impact of increasing geographic mobility on how people interweave home, work, and leisure to construct place-based identities.*

## Introduction

In documenting demographic trends in America, the decennial census is among the most important sources of information. Back in April of 2000, the cable television public affairs channel *C-SPAN* carried a news conference in which the director of the census defended the census against rampant politicizing. What was intriguing, given the topic of this session, was the way in which he described the task of enumerating all Americans. As he saw it, the fundamental goal of the census was to be able to assign every person to a precise geographic location, to give each person a singular place of residence. This is what the U.S. Constitution called for and, not only is the geographic distribution of seats in Congress at stake, but also the geographic distribution of federal aid and services. This may seem rather unremarkable, but the director went on to describe some of the challenges to enumerating and specifying the geographic location of each and every individual. These challenges included counting nationals living abroad, people living in traveling circuses, people living on merchant ships, military personnel and on and on. The point of relating this vignette is to note that simply because the U.S. Constitution requires a singular and unambiguous definition of residence, doesn't mean that people actually live that way. The Constitution, along with many other cherished notions of residence (e.g., what constitutes a household), are built on outdated assumptions about where and how people live that are increasingly problematic.

Like the census, much of the research and thinking in tourism and recreation assumes that what and where one calls home is straightforward enough, that our sense of home and identity are singularly rooted in a local place. This has long been reinforced in fields such as demography, geography, and anthropology where the movement of peoples, rather than being seen as an integral aspect of social life, has been regarded as a special and temporary phenomenon classified under such headings as migration, refugee studies, and tourism (Hastrup & Olwig, 1997; McHugh, 2000). But increasingly, modern forms of dwelling, working, and playing involve circulating through a geographically extended network of social relations and a multiplicity of widely dispersed places and regions (McHugh & Mings, 1996; Rojek & Urry, 1997; Urry, 2000). This unmooring of identities has important implications for how we think about recreation and tourism because these concepts take their very meaning as departures from the traditional anchors of identity, namely *work* and *home*. In modern society we can no longer assume that the traditional indicators of where one is employed, the amount and pattern of time spent in a place, or the nature and depth of community involvements signal the "primary" home.

The meaning of home, work, leisure, and tourism are mutually defining. While the focus of this paper is to examine the meaning and experience of home in an ever more globalized world, the question of where one lives or dwells, as noted above, is not a simple matter of residential geography. It is also a matter of emotional geography. Where does one's heart, one's identity, reside? Where is one's emotional home? To what extent can a second home, for example, be a source of identity or community? For those who are fortunate enough to have more than one home at any given time, can we even distinguish one home as the primary center of identity, work, or community and the other as a secondary base focused on leisure, holiday, or escape? And what happens to one's sense of home

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and identity when technology and mobility interweave the spatial and temporal patterns work, home, and leisure? In modern society we can no longer assume that people dwell in a single local community; work in a separate location from home; or that the traditional indicators of work location, amount and pattern of time spent, and the nature and depth of community involvements signal the "primary" home. For some the "second" home may, in fact, already be the enduring home in a highly mobile society.

The literature on the meaning of home is large (Altman & Werner, 1985; Benjamin, 1995; Després, 1991; Perkins & Thorn, 1999), but dominated by overlapping lists that categorize meanings (Tognoli, 1987; Jaakson, 1986; Sixsmith, 1986). Noticeably absent in what amount to the various "semantic concepts" used to talk about the meaning of home are any indications of the forces that shape these meanings (Després, 1991) or the social processes by which people make homes and construct identities (Massey, 1995; Perkins & Thorns, 1999). In addition to this interpretive bias of neglecting macro-forces, there is a selection bias in the types of households and residential settings studied toward a suburban ideal of middle-class nuclear families in detached single-family residences (Després, 1991). Our approach will not be to revisit old lists or compile an updated list. Rather, taking our cue from Després, it will be to explore the implications of modern ways of circulating and dwelling for how people construct and maintain a sense of meaning and identity in their lives. As a way to frame trends in meaning of home, our approach is to examine meaning-making through multiple residences and geographical affiliations in a modern world dominated by globalizing forces. The thrust of our argument is that we need to understand amenity migration within the context of changing mobility and new forms of place making and the ways both are being influenced by late-modern social conditions.

## Modernity

To understand trends in the meaning of home and amenity migration we have to understand how modernity has impacted the experience of dwelling and the process of constructing an identity. Modernity generally refers to period of time in Western civilization marked by either the emergence of Renaissance thought and the expansion of global trade or the somewhat later development of Enlightenment thinking (the Age of Reason) at the beginning of the 18th century and corresponding loosely with the rise of industrialization. Regardless of its precise pedigree, modernity is associated with certain attitudes toward the world (e.g., open possibilities, human intervention and construction, transformation, and scientific and human progress), an industrialized and market oriented economic order, and political institutions and practices organized into nation-states where political legitimacy is based on dialogue and reason giving (Giddens & Pierson, 1998). Giddens (1991) characterizes the industrialized West in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as existing in a condition of high or late modernity, marked by a reflexive or radical quality, contemplating the conditions and limitations of modernity itself.

Modernity has brought important changes in the way the individual experiences a sense of place and identity. In the premodern era, local conditions and culture were more predominant as constraints on how people adapted to and fashioned their world. Exploiting nature was limited by local knowledge, and the quantity and quality of locally available natural resources constrained economic and social activities. This tended to produce isolated local cultures with social patterns necessarily fitted to the contingencies of that place. Though not necessarily benign by modern ecological standards, the scope and scale of human-environment interactions were more directly embodied in a place. In other words societies were adapted to the opportunities and constraints of local place, with meaning and identity locally prescribed.

In the modern era, as Harvey (1989) argues, the cultural invention of capital accumulation freed production activities from the constraints of local place and began a process of transforming places around the logic of market economics. Modernization (whether in the form of industrial markets, mass communications, or more efficient transportation) liberated the individual from local constraints of place and allowed for more efficient use of resources. This has had profound implications for both nature and society. Nature was in a sense demystified and disenchanting (Taylor, 1992). Whatever inherent moral value nature may have possessed, it was supplanted by a view of nature as an instrumental resource to be exploited. Similarly, individuals were liberated from local ways of life, community mores, and parochial society. Socially, the condition of modernity – as the unmooring of social relations, production and consumption, and even one's identity from particular places – also led to greater freedom to contest the meanings people ascribe to both their immediate and more distant surroundings. Just as material life was no longer bound by local ecological limits, modern social norms and practices had become increasingly the province of the sovereign consumer/voter. While much has been gained in terms of material well-being and individual autonomy and liberty, modern forms of social relations have also led to the displacement of local community norms and standards of behavior by individual preferences as expressed in the marketplace or the voting booth (Wolfe, 1989). Thus, the meaning of a place is increasingly subject to a kind of ideological marketplace with all of the competition and instability that goes with it.

To return to the theme of amenity migration, there are two particular facets of modernity that we want to focus on that are important for understanding the dynamics of place-based identity and the meaning of home. One is the way in which modernity and its partner, globalization, restructure our experience of mobility, dwelling, and place. The other is the way modernity affects tradition and therefore the construction of identity. Both draw very heavily from Giddens' (1991) work, *Modernity and Self-Identity*. We will take each in turn.

## **Mobility, Dwelling and Sense of Place**

Modernity has restructured time-space relations by making possible rapidly accelerating rates of exchange, movement, and communication across space, what Giddens describes with the awkward phrase "time-space distanciation" and what most geographers refer to as "time-space compression" (Harvey, 1996). Globalization is an important geographic outcome of modernity that contributes directly to the unmooring of social meanings and identities from place. "Modernity, it might be said, breaks down the protective framework of small community and of tradition, replacing these with much larger, impersonal organizations" (Giddens, 1991, p. 33). Similarly, Gergen (1991, p. 215) notes that with each new symbolic connection to the larger world "the traditional face-to-face community loses its coherence and its significance in the life of its participants. . . Their sense of 'belonging' is no longer only, or even primarily, rooted in the local soil."

Globalization is often interpreted as reducing areal variations in the ways of life with ample commentary alerting us to its deleterious impact on local places (e.g., Kunstler, 1993; Mander & Goldsmith, 1996). However, such transformations do not necessarily lead to alienation and placelessness as many of these critics of globalization suppose. Certainly, as Sack (1992; 1997) argues, modernity changes how place meanings are created or constituted in modern, global life. The processes of modernization, globalization, and time-space compression have the effect of thinning the meaning of places. Modernity partitions space into smaller and finer units and assigns specialized meaning to each. "From the fewer, more local, and thicker places of premodern society, we now live among the innumerable interconnected thinner places and even empty ones" (Sack, 1997, p. 9). Under the conditions of modernity, meaning is increasingly created in a spatially decontextualized world of mass consumption and mass communication, a world in which market forces create and transform meaning at a rapid pace. Given the homogenizing forces of globalization, individuals are increasingly left to themselves to construct meaning and identity.

Despite critics bemoaning the loss of place, globalization may actually make "place-bound identities more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement and communication" (Harvey, 1993, p. 4). Globalization creates a tension within local places between searching out ever wider spheres of exchange and movement and simultaneously provoking an inward and deliberate search for authenticity, a conscious effort to evoke a sense of place and cultivate connections. The globalizing and homogenizing tendencies of time-space compression spur the search for an authentic and stable place, which is most evident to people when place meanings appear to be threatened from the "outside." As Massey (1993, p. 63) put it, "in the middle of all this flux, one desperately needs a bit of peace and quiet: and 'place' is posed as a source of stability and an unproblematic identity." But such desires for the authentic can perpetuate social inequities. Acknowledging a palpable human need for authenticity and rootedness, the question for Massey (1993, p. 64) "is how to hold on to that notion of spatial difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want that" without it becoming exclusionary, xenophobic, or neo-fascist (see also Harvey, 1996, p. 199). Massey argues that even under modern, globalizing conditions, places are still unique assemblages of global and local processes. She notes that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations articulated together at a particular locus" (1993, p. 66). The identity of a place generally lacks the singular, seamless, and coherent qualities frequently attributed to the idea of sense of place, but multiple place identities can and often are both sources of richness and conflict.

Massey (1993) also reminds us that there is an important element of power to consider as the mobility of some actively weakens the mobility of others. It is not just powerful and mobile elites who are impacted by time-space compression; it has real meaning for the powerless, the locally constrained who lack the means to take advantage of spatial mobility, who often suffer the disruptive consequences. For example, the everyday actions of consumers can exert power over distant others. As Massey points out, every time we use a private car to drive to the "regional" shopping mall, what we potentially gain in convenience and choice from time-space compression comes at the expense of environmental quality and social groups who must depend on viable public transport and the success of neighborhood shops and businesses.

Within the context of modernity, tourism reflects both sides of this tension between the inward search for authenticity and an outward desire for exchange. On the one hand, tourism represents a potential vehicle for the preservation of traditional meanings. On the other hand, tourism is a major contributing factor in the transformation

of places and the thinning of meaning. The increased mobility and freedom of leisure created by modern life are important contexts for the search for meaning, yet tourism is the epitome of "consuming places" (Urry, 1995). Within tourism there is often a very deliberate and conscious effort to evoke a sense of place that, ironically, can lead to its artificial preservation in the form of staged authenticity, invented traditions, and phony folk culture. In MacCannell's (1976) view, tourism is largely motivated by the desire to experience the authentic, which modernity makes increasingly inaccessible. Similarly, Jaakson (1986) suggests it is a search for constancy in a sea of change that attracts many to seek out a rural summer cottage retreat -- an escape from modernity in pastoral settings. While communities often hold out the hope that tourism can sustain local economies and ways of life, there is clearly a transformational character to tourism development. Tourism, more than other forms of economic development, values and trades on the character of places. The question remains as to how much and under what circumstances tourism can balance the inevitable tension between the commodification of places and our desire to experience and live in unique "thickly" textured places.

Recognizing that circulation is perhaps no longer the disruption of normal settled life that it was once presumed, effectively deterritorializes or dislodges what have long been geographically bounded conceptions of culture, home, and identity. People, cultures, objects, images and ideas migrate and with modern communication technologies we can even experience virtual migrations (Urry, 2000). Just to illustrate the magnitude of human circulation, Urry (2000) notes that international travel has jumped from 2.5 million international arrivals in 1950 to 600 million in 1996 and that 300,000 people are in the air over the United States at any one time. The American Automobile Association estimated that nearly 34 million Americans traveled a distance of 100 miles or more over the recent Labor Day weekend. That represents about 13% of America on the move. In describing the impact of these changing mobilities, Urry (2000, p. 59) writes of the automobile:

"... it reconfigures civil society involving distinct ways of dwelling, travelling and socialising in, and through, an automobilised time-space. . . . Automobility necessarily divides workplaces from the home producing lengthy commutes; it splits home and shopping and destroys local retailing outlets; it separates home and various kinds of leisure site(s); it splits up families which live in distant places; it necessitates leisure visits to sites lying on the road network. . . ."

The point here is not so much to paint a negative picture of auto-mobility. Rather it is to point out that circulation, whether by car or other means, has profound impacts on meaning and experience of place, social interaction, and our very sense of self.

Modern mobility is not just a matter of daily or short term circulation around a fixed home place. As McHugh et al. (1995, p. 251) note, researchers "have a limited understanding of the incidence, determinants, and consequences of multiple residence and associated forms of cyclical mobility." They go on to illustrate the complex variety of possible human migration and circulation patterns (see Figure 1) using a life course perspective "that encompasses variegated forms of multiple residence" (McHugh et al., 1995, p. 253). What they call recurrent mobility between multiple residences can be initiated by abrupt events such as job loss or gradual transitions associated with completing education and establishing careers. Migration patterns can also take the form of oscillatory movements initiated by diverse factors from biennial movements between summer and winter residences, to circulations between residences over the life span. Not only does this create problems for demographers and census takers, it raises the question of how people develop a coherent and consistent identity in a world where people routinely circulate through thin and fragmented places. The very notion of home has long represented the geographic center for constructing a self-identity. How is a modern identity built from widely distributed places and social relations, when home and heart are less often rooted in a singular or stable place?

## **Self and Global Society**

This brings us to the second major feature of modernity, its impact on self-identity. Giddens (1991, p. 3) refers to 'self' and 'globalization' as "two poles of the dialect of the local and the global" where "changes in intimate aspects of personal life are directly tied to the establishment of social connections of very wide scope," As modernity sweeps away tradition, the self is no longer a passive entity given by the circumstances of birth and local culture. In traditional cultures, where things stayed more or less the same from generation to generation, the "passages" of life were clearly staked out. In modernity, the self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change. The self (identity) must be actively and reflexively

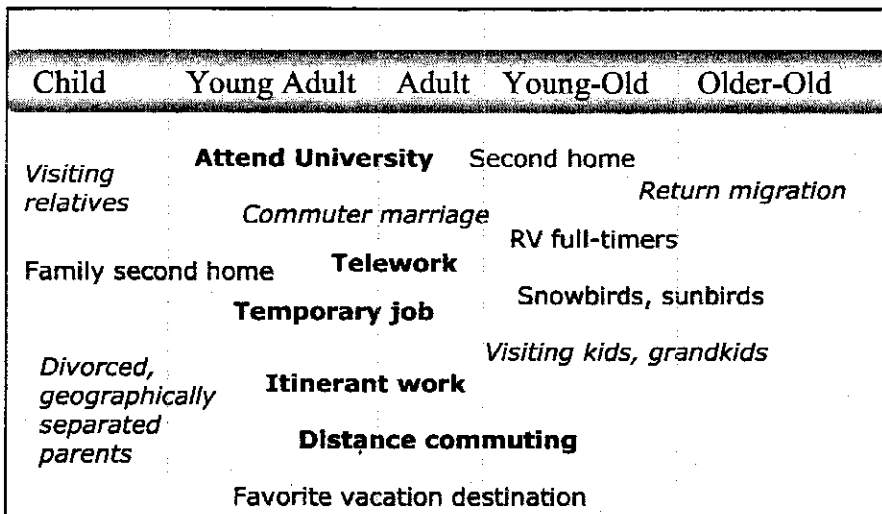


Figure 1. A life course framework of multiple residence.

Adapted from McHugh, Hogan & Happel (1995)

constructed. “Yet this task has to be accomplished amid a puzzling diversity of options and possibilities” (Giddens, 1991, p. 3). In such a world the self is saturated with meaning and images such that experiencing “a secure sense of self” or even a “bounded, essential identity” is much more problematic (Gergen, 1991, p. 15).

The condition of modernity sets up a “tension between the freedom and burden to fashion an identity for oneself” under circumstances where there are few, if any, external referents on which to base these life choices (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999, p. 215). This tension emanates, according to Giddens (1991), from three major features of modernity: the restructuring of time and space, disembedding mechanisms, and institutional reflexivity, all of which presume universalizing properties that transform tradition. As we have already seen, under conditions of modernity, local place is transformed by distant influences. In addition, what Giddens calls disembedding mechanisms (symbolic exchange and expertise) have the effect of lifting social relations out of their local contexts and re-articulating them across ever larger tracts of time and space. Taken together, time-space restructuring and disembedding mechanisms separate time and space and empty each of concrete meanings and social relations and replace them with more abstract forms. In addition, the modern economy has greatly expanded the scope of what Giddens calls *symbolic exchanges* into more aspects of life, especially leisure, adding to the disembedding of human relationships from everyday life. Similarly *expert systems* bracket time and space by applying technical knowledge having validity independent of the practitioners or clients who use it. These systems have grown in scope to the point where they impact virtually every aspect of modern life. Even in the professional area of “leisure services” we now have computer based “expert systems” designed to provide leisure participants with leisure needs assessments and recommendations for leisure time activities.

Perhaps most importantly for the dilemmas of self-identity is the reflexivity of modernity. This “refers to the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge” (Giddens, 1991, p. 20). Modern science, rather than leading to greater certainty and foundational truth as forecast in enlightenment thought, actually turns out to produced greater uncertainty regarding the truth. All knowledge, even the most exalted knowledge of natural science, is subject to revision. As Giddens points out this condition of “radical doubt” is not only disturbing to philosophers of science, but is existentially troubling for ordinary individuals. Thus, under conditions of modernity, self-identity becomes a more deliberate and reflexive endeavor requiring the “sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives” ordered “in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems” (Giddens, 1991, p. 5). Moderns live in a global world offering a profuse (some might say profane) collection of life choices, much of it commodified into standardized units.

Tensions between the freedom and burden to fashion an identity for oneself, what Giddens (1991) describes as the “tribulations of the self,” require moderns to navigate four dilemmas for constructing a coherent narrative of self-identity: Unification versus fragmentation, powerlessness versus appropriation, authority versus uncertainty, and personalized versus commodified experience. Underlying each of these is the “looming threat of personal meaninglessness” (Giddens, 1991, p. 201).

First, the dilemma of unification versus fragmentation involves steering a course through and selectively incorporating the numerous contextual events and mediated experiences that modernity presents. Mobility, multiple residences, and leisure present a dizzying array of possibilities and options. With respect to owning a second home or cottage, Williams and Kaltborn (1999, p. 227) described the dilemma of fragmentation versus unification as:

“...an attempt to thicken the meanings we associate with places in response to the modern tendency for places to become thinned out. It emphasizes continuity of time and place, a return to nature, and convergence of spheres of life such as work and leisure. [On the other side, however,] it necessarily re-creates the segmented quality of modern identities in the form of separate places for organizing distinct aspect 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 (i.e., work and subsistence of urban daily life versus recreation and rejuvenation of cottage life). It also segments identity around phases in the life cycle with youth and retirement focused more on cottage life than working adulthood.”

For some, modern life may be experienced as irreparably fragmented. The diversity of available lifestyles, however, may also be an opportunity to create a distinctive self-identity which positively incorporates elements from different settings into an integrated narrative. “Thus a cosmopolitan person is one precisely who draws strength from being *at home* in a variety of contexts (Giddens 1991, p. 190 emphasis added).

Second, modernity gives moderns greater power to appropriate various lifestyles and meanings from a wider range of possibilities, yet there is also a sense that globalization, or the interweaving of local and global, and the necessity to transfer control of some aspects of life to abstract or expert systems can leave one feeling powerless in the face of modernity. Home, for example, is the terminus for all manner of expert systems and technologies that efficiently deliver warmth, sustenance, rejuvenation, entertainment, and information. It is not until these systems go “off-line” or seem threatened in some way (remember Y2K?) that we notice how dependent we are on an incomprehensibly complex network of systems. But moderns also have greater power to build or restore meanings and sense of home undermined by globalization. For example, as what might traditionally be called the primary home is thinned of meaning – reduced as it were to a staging area for daily life; as a feeding, laundering, and sleeping station; storage container of personal goods; and designated meeting place from which to coordinate the disparate paths and projects of individual family members (see Chaplin, 1999) – an alternative thicker, mythic second-home may be cultivated to recreate a place of attachment, identity, continuity, tradition, and refuge otherwise undermined by modern lifestyles. Similarly, leisure has been shown to be an effective arena for appropriating various lifestyles and around which one can build a coherent narrative of self (Kuentzel, 2000; Haggard & Williams, 1991), but it has also developed into professional discipline with the aim of securing the public benefits of recreation. As parents we increasingly turn over to experts the leisure education of our children.

Third, an identity narrative must navigate between authority and uncertainty. For many moderns it may be “psychologically difficult or impossible to accept the existence of diverse mutually conflicting authorities. They find that the freedom to choose is a burden and they seek solace in more over-arching systems of authority” (Giddens, 1991, p. 196). Thus people are often willing to sacrifice their own capacity for critical judgment in exchange for the convictions or assurance supplied by an authority who provides rules and guidelines for living. We seek out authorities on how to manage our leisure and leisure therapy is a tool at the disposal of human development experts. The dilemma of authority versus doubt, however, is in part resolved “through a mixture of routine and commitment to a certain form of lifestyle” (Giddens, 1991, p. 196). Home making, holidays, and family celebrations often serve as a locus for constituting such routines and traditions, but they may be harder to maintain through diverse and mobile life courses.

Fourth, for all the choice and freedom for constructing the self, modern options are nevertheless highly standardized by the market-driven modes of consumption. Our personal appropriation of life choices and meanings is influenced by standardized forms of consumption. Residing temporarily, cyclically, or consecutively in a series of homes makes personalization more problematic. We shop for homes by selecting from a small set of show-models and option packages. Similarly, media often give us a series of pre-packaged lifestyle options to choose from. With respect to home, several have noted the role of soap operas in giving us home myths and morality tales (Shurmer-

Smith & Hannam, 1994). In soap operas one gains “a feeling of a coherent narrative which is a reassuring balance to difficulties in sustaining the narrative of the self in actual social conditions” (Giddens, 1991, p. 199). But rather than passively taking up such narratives, moderns actively discriminate among the types of information available as well as modifying pre-fabricated storylines to suit individual tastes. Much the same applies to leisure and tourism which may be variously experienced as authentic and personalized or increasingly manufactured and commodified (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999).

Navigating through the identity dilemmas of the modern life course may seem a dismal prospect! But Giddens doesn't see “personal meaninglessness” as inevitable or all-pervasive. Rather, the question is what strategies people have available and use to assemble a coherent narrative of self in the face of the modernity's fragmenting and disorienting qualities. For Giddens, the reflexive self is built from a series or pattern of “lifestyle sectors” (consistent and ordered sets of practices within a time-space slice of an individual's overall activities e.g. leisure, work, marriage, friendship). The things that we do, the projects we become involved in, derive their significance from their capacity to represent or reflect various aspects of self. Much like Giddens, Bruner (1990) develops this concept of self as a reflexive, but coherent narrative. He envisages the “self” as distributed through our deliberative acts and personal undertakings and suggests that meaning in life is created reflexively through such narratives, both as the stories we tell our “Self” and the stories we tell to others. The “‘Self of Life’ [is] a product of our narrative rather than some fixed but hidden ‘thing’ . . . The object of a self narrative [is] not its fit to some hidden reality but its achievement of external and internal *coherence, livability and adequacy*” (Bruner, 1990, p. 112, emphasis in the original). In other words, the stories we tell provide the “glue” that binds together the various aspects of self played out in our actions and enable us to negotiate our way through the tribulations of modern life.

To summarize our discussion thus far: the topics of migration, dwelling, working, and playing need to address the reality of modern spatial and social relations. Under late modern conditions we can no longer assume a geographically rooted subject as the starting point from which we build social theories of migration, tourism, culture, home, community, or identity. A more apt metaphor for the way subjects are tied to places is not in terms of roots but rhizomes.<sup>2</sup> In a globalized world, marked by high degrees of geographic mobility, home and identity-making are more widely distributed spatially and temporally. Modern (some would say postmodern) identities are not given by tradition. Nor are they fixed, authentic, hidden essences to be discovered through the course of life. Heart and home must be rethought or “problematized” as something distinct from legal residence. Similarly, because leisure and tourism are intimately bound up in the concepts of home and identity, they too become problematic. This calls for some revisions to the way we study leisure and tourism in modern life. In migration research, for example, McHugh and colleagues (see McHugh, 2000; McHugh & Mings, 1996; McHugh et al., 1995) have suggested more emphasis on ethnographic studies of migration as one strategy for “revealing the play of migration and mobility in spatiotemporal reorderings and transformations” of modernity (McHugh, 2000, p. 83). Similarly for leisure research, this requires new concepts and approaches to the study of leisure in identity formation and the role of leisure places in creating a sense of home.

## Constructing Heart and Home: Researching Identity Projects

### Regrounding Identity: From Roots to Rhizomes

The interpretation of self-identity as a biographical narrative suggests that “we can discover something of importance about the nature of selves in the tasks and commitments, projects and relationships that constitute the daily ecology of individuals” (Little, 1993, p. 159). Among the “projects” or “lifestyle sectors” around which we might cultivate such self-narratives is the selective appropriation of “pre-modern practices” into one's choices of leisure activities and lifestyles. A sense of authenticity, involvement, and meaning in life may be constructed through individually managed outdoor recreation activities (e.g., camping, hiking, kayaking, etc.), the annual retreat to a second home, or regular visits to favorite places. Linking appropriated lifestyle sectors (leisure repertoires) to “special” or favorite places is one possible strategy for “sustaining a coherent biographical narrative” that, in addition, gives identity the geographic grounding often associated with notions of home. In addition, the study of leisure projects (e.g. annual visit to the summer cottage) needs be viewed in conjunction with other projects (e.g. work, family, study, friendships) in which an individual is involved at a given time. In turn, these projects must be

<sup>2</sup> We are pretty sure we are not the first to employ this metaphor to describe multiple place identities, but we do not recall precisely where we encountered it or who may have already used it.

set in the societal milieu of modernity in which the “reflexive project of self” is embedded and by which it is intimately affected.

Our goal is to understand the role of geographic mobility, amenity migration, and multiple dwellings in managing life and identity in late modernity; that is, how one navigates, negotiates, and capitalizes on the “freedom” of modernity while minimizing the sense of “burden” in identity formation. As Williams and Kaltenborn (1999) suggest, “cottaging” is a particularly rich context for examining how people work through the modern dilemmas of identity by showing how “leisure” that is constructed and practiced in at the summer cottage figures in the totality of a person's life. Similarly, nature contact, which is often seen as a refuge or escape from modernity, further underscores the significance of second homes in amenity rich natural landscapes as sites for constructing modern identities. For example, “cabin stories” appear to have a special role in the myth-making of individuals and social groups be they family or others (Watson, 1995). These stories are enacted in the cabin, but are also re-created and negotiated at the “primary” home. In addition to tapping into these stories, we also need to ground them in the reality of everyday actions and set them in the various lifestyle contexts (e.g., the “cabin photographs” in the office, the family reunions and holiday celebrations at the cabin, the reminiscing about childhood memories, the handing down of traditions). Cottage stories, myths, and practices also help us to understand the ways in which people resist commodification and homogenization and recapture tradition, home, family, community, and nature. Still, while second home ownership affords a lifestyle sector for constructing a distributed identity, it is important to understand how much of this traditional cabin culture is being besieged by the forces of modernization as well (e.g. rising land prices, changing home styles, “time squeeze,” and spatial diffusion of family members).

To understand amenity migration and second home meanings requires an approach that looks at how leisure, work, dwelling, and identity permeate one another and how these aspects of a modern life are constructed across space and the life course. Modern distributed identities may draw on a wide variety of lifestyle sectors and patterns of dwelling and circulating. The challenge is to develop research strategies that allow investigators to examine how moderns interweave dwelling and circulating patterns into a coherent identity narrative. We think that studying the meaning and use of second homes provides a rich context for examining these questions. It is not the only context for examining these processes (we could look at tourists in similar ways). For example, McHugh and colleagues (McHugh & Mings, 1996; McHugh et. al., 1995) focus on people in later life stages and how they circulate through multiple residences in retirement. We share a common focus on understanding the process of constructing modern identities in which multiple residence, leisure, and work are being restructured in time and space. Thus, research on amenity migration and other forms of modern distributive living might focus on the following questions:

1. In what ways are activities at the second home different from and similar to activities at work and the primary home and how are these perceived?
2. What are the meanings attached to second homes in terms of mythical and cultural designations association with tradition, place and identity; how are these gendered and age differentiated; and are they changing or besieged?
3. How does the selection of personal projects or lifestyle sectors (and the meanings attached to them) act as ways of managing and negotiating identity in late-modern times?
4. What is the role of extended commitments (itself becoming increasingly rare in late modern life) in leisure activities and place relations in late modern times?

Theorizing identity and sense of place as creating rhizomes or multiple connections rather than singular roots requires an integrated research approach to the study of leisure experiences. In the following section we want to briefly sketch out some suggestions for studying how people make meaning, create a sense of home, and anchor a sense of identity in a world where geographic circulation over the life course is common and wide ranging. Building on some preliminary work (McIntyre, 2000), we propose a set of methods that include project analysis, personal accounts or narratives, and experience sampling.

### **Projects, Stories, and Life: A Research Approach**

Goal-directed behavior is characteristic of humans and the way they manage their lives whether it involves going to the summer cottage, learning to be more sociable or getting the car fixed (Little, 1989). In the late 1980's and early 90's there was a resurgence of interest in goal directed behavior in the form of “personal projects” (Little, 1989). Personal Projects Analysis links closely with the notion of “distributed self” as discussed by Bruner (1990), in that, aspects of self are theorized as being represented in the variety of goal-directed behaviors of the individual. According to Little (1989, p. 15) Personal projects represent:

“extended sets of personally relevant actions, which can range from the trivial pursuits of a typical Tuesday (e.g. ‘cleaning up my room’) to the magnificent obsessions of a lifetime (‘liberate my people’). They may be self-initiated or thrust upon us. They may be solitary concerns or shared commitments. They may be isolated and peripheral aspects of our life or may cut to our very core. Personal projects may sustain us through perplexity or serve as vehicles for our own obliteration. In short, personal projects are natural units. . . .that deal with the serious business of how people muddle through their complex lives.”

Little (1989) has developed a Personal Project elicitation survey in which participants are requested to list ten current personal projects each of which are then related by the individual on a ten point scale using a series of dimensions which reflect potentially important characteristics of personal projects. Some of these dimensions are derived directly from the sequencing of the stages in a project (e.g., initiation, control, outcome likelihood, time adequacy). Other dimensions such as self-identity, self-worth, challenge, stress, enjoyment and importance may be included because of their potential relevance to leisure projects. Two important contextual variables included namely, “where” and “with whom.” Project analysis has a number of advantages: (1) it focuses on “natural acts” that are of relevance to the individual rather than projects that arise from the researcher’s interest; (2) it provides a comparative profile of each personal project which indicates both the nature and degree of involvement in each project on dimensions that are relevant to leisure experiences; and (3) it provides data that can be analyzed at the individual level and group level.

Personal stories or narratives involve extended and multiple interviews focusing on recollection of the history and events associated with repeated leisure experiences over a number of years (e.g. annual visits to the summer cottage). Such interviews can be conducted both with individuals and also with family and family and friend groups in the case study areas. Narrative approaches are increasingly common in recreation and tourism studies (Patterson et al., 1998; Schroeder, 1994). Narratives are often collected by asking participants to write about a particular experience as if “telling it to a friend” (McIntyre & Cattermole, 1997) or by conducting tape recorded interviews (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). The purpose of these studies has been to collect information during the immediate recall stage of the experience. Hence, these have been termed personal accounts.

The Experiential Sampling Method was developed by Csikszentmihalyi and associates in the early 1980’s. It involves detailed monitoring of respondent’s day-to-day behaviour through the use of pagers which are activated by the researcher on a random basis up to twelve or more times a day. Until recently, experiential sampling has been little used in outdoor recreation research. But, as interest in complex unfolding of outdoor experiences has increased, a number of studies have now been reported that have used variants of this approach in outdoor contexts (Hull et al., 1992; Lee et. al., 1994; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Responses to experiential sampling prompts can be timed to capture people in various settings including primary and secondary residences. Responses sought might include such things mood (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987), focus of attention (e.g., the degree of focus on *self, others, nature, and task*; see Borrie, 1995; Williams et al., 1992), perception of leisure states (Samdahl, 1991), and current activities and contextual aspects (e.g. place description and companions). The purpose of the ESM is often to document the ebb and flow of experiences in a variety of contexts.

## Conclusions

Modern ways of living give the old adage “home is where the heart is” new meaning. While it has always suggested that the notion of home is inseparable from one’s sense of self, it also implies that home is not necessarily where one physically (or legally) resides. The forces of modernization and globalization not only make this more true, they also tend to dislodge one’s heart (identity) from singular roots and redistribute it across space like so many rhizomes. In this paper we have tried to explain how modern life – increasingly dominated by circulation of people, goods, and ideas – on the one hand displaces our identities and spreads them all over the map, and on the other hand, leads to new forms and models for constructing senses of home, place, and identity. Moreover, because modern mobility provides the means for amenity migration and is often bound up in leisure travel, the domains of leisure and its opposite, work, are significant lifestyle sectors within which identity and place-making predominate.

Modern forms of mobility and therefore dwelling, working, and playing require researchers to reexamine the traditional meanings or dimensions of home. Home has always carried idealized, mythical, but also gendered meanings. These dimensions include notions of centrality, and rootedness, continuity and order, refuge and appropriation, identity and gender differences, social and family relations, and position and others within society (Tognoli, 1987). Each of these needs to be rethought in terms of multiple residence, changing scale of social relations in space and time, the disembedding mechanisms of modern life, and the reflexive nature of identity making.

In conclusion, the problem of how people create meaning through leisure and amenity migration needs to be set in the larger context of modernity. One cannot completely opt out of these forces, though some lifestyle practices may be motivated by resistance to modernity (Ritzer, 1998) or a desire for temporary escape (Cohen & Taylor, 1992). Project analysis helps to understand how people weave together leisure, travel, work, and multiple homes by looking at the way "identity" is distributed among a collection of on-going projects tied to these various aspects of life. Narrative analysis provides access to deeper thoughts and feelings about these lifestyle sectors and also aim to address the effects of modernity on each sector. The experience sampling and related diary methods help to uncover what people actually do, how they feel about what they are doing and how these activities are distributed across various sectors.

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