Environment and Behavior

Roots and Routes : Exploring the Relationship between Place Attachment and Mobility

Per Gustafson

The online version of this article can be found at:

Published by:

⑤SAGE

http://www.sagepublications.com

On behalf of:

Environmental Design Research Association

Additional services and information for *Environment and Behavior* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://eab.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://eab.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations: http://eab.sagepub.com/content/33/5/667.refs.html

>> Version of Record - Sep 1, 2001

What is This?

ROOTS AND ROUTES
Exploring the Relationship Between
Place Attachment and Mobility

PER GUSTAFSON *is a Ph.D. student, currently holding a doctoral studentship at the Department of Sociology, Göteborg University, Sweden. After conducting the exploratory study presented here, he has investigated seasonal retirement migration between Sweden and Spain and issues of dual citizenship.*

ABSTRACT: Social and behavioral science has often described place attachment and mobility as opposite and mutually exclusive phenomena, has regarded one as better or more important than the other, or has done both. This article presents findings from a qualitative interview study that suggest that people may regard place attachment and mobility, and the relationship between them, in several different ways. Some regard place attachment and mobility as contradictory and feel they have to choose between them; some regard them as opposites but try to find an equilibrium; some regard them as complementary and enjoy both. This article suggests a "roots/routes" perspective, investigating the perceived meanings of and relationships between place attachment and mobility, and argues that further research along these lines would contribute to current debates about the roles and meanings of place.

Recent social and behavioral research has raised important questions about the role of place in today's society. This article examines two phenomena related to place—place attachment and physical mobility—and in particular the relationship between these two phenomena.

667

The concept of place is commonly used to signify a spatial entity that is experienced and perceived as meaningful by one person alone or by a group of people (Canter, 1997; Groat, 1995). Places may be of differing territorial scale, ranging from rooms, home settings, and neighborhoods to nations or even continents (Low & Altman, 1992; Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992). Place attachment refers primarily to affective, but also cognitive and behavioral, bonds between individuals or groups and one or several places (Altman & Low, 1992). These places are often present or former "home" places, but other places may also give rise to such bonds (Low, 1992). Similarly, when mobility is discussed in relation to place attachment, the focus is often on change in permanent residence. However, it is suggested here that temporary forms of mobility (e.g., travel for leisure or work) should also be considered (see Bell & Ward, 2000).

Today, social theorists are often somewhat skeptical about the importance of place and place attachment, as people seem to be increasingly mobile, and their social relations and other everyday experiences are increasingly dis-embedded from physical locations (Calhoun, 1991; Giddens, 1991). Mobil-ity and cosmopolitanism appear to be the norm, whereas local attachment is rather regarded as a deficiency and deviation from this norm (Bauman, 1998; Gesser & Olofsson, 1997, chap. 1).

The exploratory study presented here used qualitative interviews with respondents living in Western Sweden to examine their views and experi-ences of place attachment and mobility. Some of the interviewees had moved frequently, whereas others had moved infrequently. Because a limited sam-ple size was used, the objective of this article is not to provide all-encompass-ing theories or typologies but to make some preliminary observations and distinctions with regard to place attachment and mobility based on the varia-tion that was found in the data and to suggest an analytical perspective that may be useful for further research.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The focus on place attachment and mobility evokes two different perspec-tives and research traditions. One values place attachment, place-based com-munity, territoriality, identity, and roots. Social and behavioral science has often presumed, and indeed prescribed, a quasi-natural bond—social, cultural, political, psychological, emotional—between the place (whether nation-state, region, or locality) and its residents. This bond has often been considered to be crucial for individual well-being and for social cohesion, whereas mobility has been regarded as a deviation, associated with uprooted

individuals and lacking social integration (Altman & Low, 1992; Hay, 1998; Relph, 1976; Tönnies, 1887/1955; see also Malkki, 1992).

Today, such presumptions are being challenged. Several social theorists have argued that social relationships as well as individual experiences, because of increasing mobility and the development of information and communication technologies, are becoming dissociated from place (Albrow, 1996, pp. 155-159; Calhoun, 1991; Giddens, 1991; Meyrowitz, 1985). Research on globalization and local-global relationships has questioned the focus on national or local communities taken for granted in much earlier social science (Beck, 2000; Fennell, 1997; Taylor, 1996). Instead, a growing body of research investigates migrants, travelers, and tourists: people who move around and who do not necessarily "belong" to the places where, for the moment, they are staying (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996; Pries, 1999; Rojek & Urry, 1997). Sometimes, this literature tends to depict a globalized world where everybody is on the move, where mobility, in one sense or another, appears as a basic human condition, and where place attachment becomes increasingly precarious. Other accounts distinguish between those who are mobile and those who are not, often describing the mobile as rich and powerful, whereas the poor are subjected to increasing spatial control and restrictions on their mobility (Albrow, 1997; Bauman, 1998; Castells, 1996). In these latter accounts, place attachment, expressed as local or national identification, is often interpreted as a defensive reaction of the poor and powerless against contemporary, globalizing forces.

The first perspective values place attachment while often regarding mobility as a threat to a person's affective bonds with place, whereas the second perspective favors mobility and, sometimes, explicitly or implicitly, devalues place attachment. Both perspectives tend to regard place attachment and mobility as opposite, and sometimes even mutually exclusive, phenomena; individuals who are highly mobile are supposed to experience little or no place attachment and vice versa. In addition, each perspective is often based on empirical studies of groups and settings that conform to the ideal held by that perspective. The first perspective favors studies of bounded communities (see Fennell, 1997), whereas the second leans toward studies of very mobile groups and of places characterized by migration or other forms of human mobility.

However, not all researchers accept this opposition between place attachment and mobility. For example, Mesch and Manor (1998), in their study of local attachment among an urban population in Israel, show that the majority of the respondents did indeed express attachment to place. Mesch and Manor therefore argue that place attachment, based on local social relationships as well as on a positive evaluation of the physical or social environment, is

important even "at a time of high geographical mobility" (p. 518). Feldman (1990), in her study of residential mobility and residential attachment in the United States, suggests one explanation for the persistence of place attachment in highly mobile societies. She argues that people who repeatedly change residence try to preserve "the continuity of residential experiences" (p. 186) by moving to places that resemble their former home places, thus maintaining a "settlement-identity." A more general perspective on the relationship between place attachment and mobility is the roots/routes perspective.

ROOTS AND ROUTES

Roots has long been an important metaphor for place attachment in Western society. As Malkki (1992) points out, it is part of a metaphorical system (including the soil, the land, and so forth) linking people to place, identity to territory. In this context, roots signify emotional bonds with the physical environment but often also contain notions of local community, shared culture, and so forth. More recently, some authors have suggested that the relationship between place, people, and culture may also be thought of in terms of routes (Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1995). Rather than focusing on the local anchorage of peoples and cultures, this concept points toward their mobility, their movements, encounters, exchanges, and mixtures. This mobility may take many different forms: permanent or temporary migration, travel, tourism, transfer or exchange of cultural artifacts, and so forth.

Hall (1995) argues that we are witnessing today a move from roots to routes: "More and more people in general—not only ex-colonized or marginalized people—are beginning to think of themselves, of their identities and their relationship to culture and to place, in these more 'open' ways" (p. 207). Clifford (1997) and Gilroy (1993), on the other hand, emphasize the complementarity of roots and routes. In Clifford's account, roots and routes are not necessarily opposed but rather "intertwined" (p. 4), representing two different, but not mutually exclusive, ways of regarding the relationship between people, culture, and place. Gilroy suggests the investigation of "the relationships between rootedness and displacement, locality and dissemination" (p. 105).

The roots/routes perspective has thus far been mainly used by anthropologists and sociologists for discussing how people and places are related to culture, often with a focus on such issues as race, ethnicity, minority politics, racism, hybridity, diaspora, migration, and identity. However, it is suggested here that the roots/routes perspective, especially with the emphasis on relationships and intertwining suggested by Clifford (1997) and Gilroy (1993),

may be useful for analyzing issues of place, place attachment, and mobility more generally. The concepts of roots and routes will therefore be used in the following descriptions and analyses.

METHOD

The interview study presented here was designed to explore experiences and attributions of meaning to place. A limited sample was used, 14 respondents living in Western Sweden. The sampling was inspired by Trost's (1986, 1993) recommendations for strategic nonrepresentative sampling, aiming at variation in the respondents' experiences of place, place attachment, and mobility rather than at representativeness and statistical generalization (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 27-28; Yin, 1994, pp. 30-32). The sample included 7 women and 7 men, with ages ranging from 18 to 71 years. Six lived in big or medium-sized cities, 6 in small towns, and 2 in small villages. Eight were married or cohabiting at the time of the interviews, the other 6 were either unmarried, divorced, or widowed; 10 respondents had children. Their life paths also differed (whether they had moved a lot, lived for a long time in the same area, worked abroad, and so forth) as did their educational background and employment (the sample included 7 respondents with permanent or temporary employment, 3 who were self-employed, 2 retirees, 1 who was unemployed, and 1 student). Two of the respondents were immigrants. A number of factors—primarily gender, age, place of residence, individual life path, and educational and occupational background—were thus considered in the sampling process to achieve a varied sample. However, the sampling was not directed toward extreme cases (Flick, 1998, p. 69).

Semistructured interviews were made either in the home of the respondent or in another locale that she or he found convenient. The interviews lasted between 1 and 3 hours; they were taped and then transcribed verbatim (although a few stories clearly not relevant were omitted). In the interviews, the respondents were first asked to list places where they had lived or which they, for some other reason, considered important and to describe what these places meant to them. Second, the respondents were asked whether they felt attached to their community or village, their city, their county, Sweden, and Europe, and in what ways these places of different spatial scale mattered to them (or why they did not matter).

The subsequent analysis focused on how the respondents talked about place, how they attributed meaning to place, and in what ways they considered place to be important. Some general findings about the meanings of

place are presented elsewhere (Gustafson, 2001). However, during the initial analytical work, it became clear that issues of place and place attachment were sometimes closely interwoven with issues of mobility, and this finding provided the starting point for the analysis presented here (see Layder, 1998).

RESULTS

To begin with, the interviews clearly showed that place mattered to the respondents but in different ways. In some accounts, place primarily meant place attachment, security, home, continuity, and community. Respondents themselves often talked about roots here, to indicate a strong and often long-lasting emotional attachment to specific places. In other accounts, specific places were less important. Some respondents claimed that they did not really care about where they lived and that places "taken by themselves," as physical environments, did not matter to them. Yet, in these accounts, place gained significance in another sense, which is well captured by the routes metaphor: Places away from home, the discovery of new places, and the mobility (temporary or permanent) between places came to represent opportunities for personal growth, freedom, knowledge, experience, and the possibility or ability of transcending one's "own" (home) place. The following sections describe and analyze in some detail in terms of roots and routes how the interviewees expressed their views and experiences of place attachment and mobility. First, these two themes will be presented separately; next, the relationships between them will be analyzed and illustrated with some empirical examples.

PLACE AS ROOTS, PLACE AS ROUTES

Within the roots theme, place is primarily regarded as a source of place attachment, emotional bonds, and community. The most important place is one's "home place"—residence, neighborhood, and hometown in particular but, to some extent, also the home region and home country. Knowing the place, knowing the people living there, and maintaining good relations with neighbors and other local residents is important. It gives a sense of security, of being part of a local, place-based community. When focusing on place as roots, the respondents often strongly associated places with people living there. Continuity, long-term relations with place and people, also tended to be highly valued in these accounts, together with place-bound traditions and local organizations and associations of various kinds (see Hay, 1998). In

addition, roots may involve identification and a sense of representing one's place in encounters with people from other places. Roots, then, mean that place is something highly specific, something literally irreplaceable. Place is tightly bound on one hand to individuals, biographies, experiences, and emotions, and on the other hand to local social networks and other forms of context-dependent knowledge and resources.

Often, the roots theme implied having roots in one single place where the respondents had been living for a long time, but that was not always the case. Some respondents expressed strong bonds to several different places, and those who had moved a lot might also, at times, feel a need for roots, home, and security, a place to which they could return.

Sometimes, but not always, the roots theme also includes some skepticism toward excessive mobility, whether as leisure travel or as permanent migration. One respondent thought that people got "blunted" by traveling too much, another pointed out that it takes a great deal of time and effort to move around, "always having to worry about your situation." Another aspect of this skepticism was perhaps some respondents' dislike of places where they experienced anonymity and a lack of community, places that did not create a sense of belonging (see Relph, 1976, chap. 6). In some accounts, mobility was also associated with uprootedness and the perceived loss of previously meaningful places (see Fielding, 1992).

The routes theme, on the other hand, focuses on mobility, on traveling, on discovering and exploring new places and different cultures. Here, respondents expressed a desire to "get out and obtain new experiences," to "see your life from another perspective," to try out something new, to find new ways of thinking, and to learn. Places (often new and distant ones) and the mobility to, from, and between them represented personal development and freedom, whereas immobility or recurrent visits to the same place was equated with routine, boredom, and narrow-mindedness.

In these accounts, places should preferably be different from one's home place, and authentic—"interesting place[s] where they don't sell Coca Cola everywhere" as one respondent put it—and people should be flexible, open-minded, knowledgeable, and able to manage differing local conditions (see Hannerz, 1996; Munt, 1994). Traveling to distant places may also be a way of asserting, both to oneself and to others, that the traveler has courage and initiative. One respondent explained that he had made a journey to India because "I needed to do something that made me feel that I could manage on my own." Accounts about routes were also favorable toward changing residences and changing home places (e.g., not living for too long in the same town).

Place in the roots sense seems to matter less here. Place attachment and local community, the firm connection between a place and its inhabitants, becomes either unimportant or devalued. Some respondents claimed that they were "world citizens," that they did not care about places, and that it did not really matter where they lived. On the other hand, at times, place attachment and roots were associated with parochialism, conservatism, repressive social control, and intolerance, and were thus devalued. Still, place matters. Place is an important part of one's biography, although as trajectory, opportunity, and accumulated experience rather than as continuity—as routes rather than roots.

The roots theme favors one or a few specific places, whereas the routes theme favors a multitude of places, in some cases also the specific collection of places reflecting an individual life path (see Andersson Cederholm, 1999; Desforges, 1998). As for mobility, both themes may refer to permanent changes in residence as well as to tourism, traveling, and so forth. These different forms of mobility were sometimes given qualitatively different meanings by the respondents, but, in many cases, there was a continuum, where permanent and temporary forms appeared as interrelated aspects of mobility, and no strong distinction was made between them (see Bell & Ward, 2000). Being mobile, in this broad sense, was highly valued in the routes theme but was regarded with skepticism in the roots theme.

This is one way of describing the respondents' accounts of meanings and ideals relating to place, place attachment, and mobility. Analytically separating expressions of roots and routes in the total body of interview transcripts makes the two themes appear contradictory and mutually exclusive; it gives the impression that the respondents preferred either roots or routes and could be categorized accordingly. That, however, was not the case.

When each interview was analyzed separately, a more complicated picture emerged. Even the most rooted among the respondents also might at times appreciate mobility, and those who had traveled a lot, moved around a lot, or worked abroad still often had specific places that mattered to them, places that they described in terms of roots and continuity. Some of the interviewees did indeed perceive roots and routes as mutually exclusive, but others did not. In several interviews, the respondents tried to combine roots and routes in various ways when they described what places they considered to be important and why. To provide some illustrations, the following sections will describe how 4 of the respondents discussed place attachment and mobility during the interviews (names have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees). These examples will give a richer image of the roots and routes themes and, more important, they will indicate how the relationship between the two themes varied between the interviews.

PLACE ATTACHMENT AND MOBILITY AS CONTRADICTION

Lisbeth, a nurse in her late 40s, had recently moved to a small town with her three children after a divorce. Before that, she had been living in a small village for many years. During the interview, she repeatedly expressed a preference for place as routes. She valued mobility, traveling, discovering new places, which she described as interesting, exciting, and admirable (see Appendix, "Lisbeth on Place Attachment and Mobility," A).

Mobility, she argued, is a precondition for personal development. Because of economic constraints and her family situation, she could not move from the town where she was living; neither could she afford costly journeys, and she clearly regarded this as a limitation. Physical mobility, in her account, became analogous to open-mindedness. Going to other places meant meeting something different and seeing things from new perspectives (Appendix, "Lisbeth," B).

Lisbeth also wanted to avoid being too firmly attached to the place where she was living. Earlier, she had lived in a small village, and she described how important it had been to her and her former husband not to become "assimilated" or "engulfed" but to maintain a feeling of "just passing by." Although they had tried to take part in the village life, they had done so only "to a certain limit," always keeping in mind that they had personal biographies and social networks stretching outside the village (Appendix, "Lisbeth," C).

In the town where she was living at the time of the interview, Lisbeth had a similar feeling of being on her way, of not wanting to stay for too long. She thought nothing happened there. There was "nothing dynamic," a standstill rather than mobility, and that, she said, could kill anybody (Appendix, "Lisbeth," D). Whereas mobility was equated with personal development, immobility here is associated with stagnation and even death.

On a few occasions during the interview, Lisbeth also discussed place as roots. When she was a child, she used to visit her grandparents, and she could still recall how much she enjoyed these visits (Appendix, "Lisbeth," E). Their home was a place that clearly had been important to her at the time, and she could still "almost" be longing for the coziness, the security, and the feeling of being at home that she had experienced there. Still, however, she could not wholly embrace these feelings. She was just "almost" longing back, she regarded that longing as irrational. Indeed, the security of her grandparents' home even had something terrible about it.

Later in the interview, Lisbeth discussed place in a more general manner and was even more explicit about the relationship between place attachment and mobility (Appendix, "Lisbeth," F). Place attachment, in Lisbeth's view, was for those who knew their place, literally as well as metaphorically. They

were satisfied with what they had but were, on the other hand, very much dependent on having a secure place and might not manage without that local anchorage. Lisbeth, for her part, could not identify with them; they appeared to her as another type of person. In Excerpt F, she puts place attachment and mobility in direct opposition: "Either you feel that here I am . . . ." (place attachment), or you "float around" (mobility); the one excludes the other. Again, too, physical mobility, whether leisure travel or permanent migration, is equated with mental or "spiritual" mobility.

For Lisbeth, place as roots and place as routes were two contradictory and mutually exclusive themes. If she could not be as mobile as she wished to be or, on the other hand, if she was tempted by place attachment (longing to be back at the secure place of her grandparents), she found that problematic. She also suggested that others might experience this contradiction the other way around—having a firm local attachment but regarding mobility as a threat. This perceived relationship between roots and routes was not, however, the only one that appeared in the interviews.

PLACE ATTACHMENT AND MOBILITY AS EQUILIBRIUM

Anders, in the second example, was a farmer in his early 30s, married, with two children, who had spent his whole life (except for short periods during his studies and military service) on the family farm. In the interview, he discussed briefly how he felt about place attachment and mobility (Appendix, "Anders," A, B), referring to "other people" who he regarded as very deeply rooted. They were firmly attached to the place where they lived and wanted to tell everybody they met about its advantages. However, Anders tried to distance himself from these "others" in that he was "not quite like that." He was more open-minded, more mobile, and he could take an interest in places other than his home village. These parts of his account clearly refer to the routes theme.

Still, place in the roots sense also mattered to him. Elsewhere in the interview, he mentioned that his farm had belonged to his family for several generations. Here, he points out that he was born there and had spent his childhood there. In these accounts, place was tightly connected to his biography and gave him a sense of continuity. This was something that he valued a great deal, and he, too, might at times "boast a little" about the place where he was living.

Just as Lisbeth had, Anders expressed an opposition between roots and routes. To him, however, the opposition did not make the two themes mutually exclusive: He did not feel that he had to choose one or the other. In his two quotations, he rather tried to construct an equilibrium, to find the right mix of

roots and routes. The word *but* is italicized in the quotes to point out this balancing act.

PLACE ATTACHMENT AND MOBILITY AS COMPLEMENTARITY

Lars-Erik, a teacher in his early 50s, had lived in several different places as a student and during his early professional life but had since stayed for a long time in the same town together with his wife and their two children. He was somewhat ambivalent about the relationship between roots and routes. Both themes were present in the interview. When Lars-Erik visited foreign places, he wanted to enjoy the difference rather than becoming "even more Swedish" (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," A). Following the routes theme, he wanted distant places to be authentic and different, to provide him with new, exciting experiences. Later in the interview, he also claimed to be, in some sense, a "world citizen."

On the other hand, he clearly felt attached to the place where he was living—his neighborhood, the town where he lived, and also, elsewhere in the interview, to his home region and Sweden in general. Having good relations with his neighbors and being part of the local community was important to him, it gave him "a good anchorage in life" (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," B). He also pointed out that he was not a very mobile person, indicating that his own biography was marked by stability and place attachment rather than by mobility (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," C), although he mentioned elsewhere in the interview a quite recent journey to Latin America. He also remarked, with some surprise, that he had been living in the same town for 26 years, thus adding continuity to his local roots (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," D). Indeed, for Lars-Erik, there seemed to be a qualitative difference between different forms of mobility: He enjoyed leisure travel but was much more hesitant about changing home places.

On some occasions, there seemed to be a contradiction between roots and routes in Lars-Erik's account. The continuity described above was not expressed as something unambiguously positive. He might at times think that he had become "too deeply rooted," partly because of remarks and questions from friends and acquaintances about the long time he had been living in the town (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," E). His place attachment then came in opposition to a desire for mobility. Yet, on other occasions (when discussing leisure travel), the roots and routes themes rather seemed to complement each other, as when he claimed that travel requires "some kind of anchorage" (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," C). Here, place attachment and roots became a precondition for mobility and routes. He returned to this argument toward the end of the interview in an attempt to summarize his views of place, place attachment, and

mobility (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," F): Everybody, he believed, needs a home place representing roots, security, community, and identity, but once they have this, once the place-as-roots requirement is fulfilled, they can "go out into the world" and also appreciate place-as-routes. In this synthesis, roots and routes were expressed as a complementarity rather than a contradiction.

For Lars-Erik, the relationship between roots and routes looked different from time to time—sometimes contradiction, sometimes complementarity. It depended on "what mood you are in" (Appendix, "Lars-Erik," E), although, as discussed above, it might to some extent also depend on what kind of mobility he had in mind.

The woman in the final example, Eva, was a physiotherapist in her late 50s who had migrated to Sweden from an Eastern European country some 35 years ago and since then had lived in two different Swedish towns. She had two adult children from a previous marriage and was living together with a new partner. This interview contained strong expressions of roots as well as routes.

Eva enjoyed traveling, being on the move, and visiting faraway places (Appendix, "Eva," A). When the interview was conducted, she had just returned from Germany; a month later she was going to France; earlier that year she had also been to Thailand. Travel seemed to give her a sense of freedom and of being in control. It proved her ability to transcend her home place, to decide for herself where she wanted to go and where she wanted to stay. It is interesting that she gave similar meanings to her previous migrations: first from Eastern Europe to "the West" for political reasons (Appendix, "Eva," B), then to her present home town just after a divorce. Thus, Eva's notion of mobility embraced permanent as well as temporary forms of mobility with much less ambiguity than Lars-Erik's notion, and several times during the interview, she talked about feeling at home anywhere in the world (Appendix, "Eva," C). This, however, requires self-reliance and some courage. To enjoy going to distant parts of the world, she argued, you have to be open-minded, not suspicious of people you meet, not worried about what might happen to you. In addition, being at home anywhere seemed to require her feeling that she was not noticed as being a visitor by the local residents. So far, Eva clearly preferred place as routes and seemed in some respects to devalue roots. This was also reflected in a certain skepticism toward nationalism and patriotism (Appendix, "Eva," D).

Yet, she did feel close to Sweden. In some way it obviously mattered to her what country she was living in. When she described the town and the neighborhood where she was currently living, the importance of place as roots became even more articulate (Appendix, "Eva," E, F). There, she experienced community and security, she was "part of the town." Although she had

only moved to that town a couple of years ago, and thus regarded herself as an "outsider" in comparison to long-time residents, she had come to feel that she belonged there, that she had acquired roots. She also complained about the lack of community in the suburb where she had been living before.

Thus, Eva valued roots as well as routes. On several occasions in the interview, she associated these two themes with anonymity (routes) and recognition (roots). Toward the end of the interview, she was therefore asked a couple of questions about anonymity and recognition (Appendix, "Eva," G), and she reaffirmed that both were important to her. Routes—mobility, travel to distant places—gave her a sense of personal freedom, that she could do anything she wanted. Roots—place attachment and local community in her hometown—were equally important, and she ended up at the same position as Lars-Erik: Once you have roots at home, you can also enjoy routes that lead you far away. Place attachment and mobility were thus perceived to be complementary rather than contradictory: "One does not exclude the other."

DISCUSSION

This article has investigated the relationship between place attachment and mobility. It was argued that prevailing perspectives on this relationship within social and behavioral science are often problematic. First, they often contain underlying assumptions that either place attachment or mobility is in some way better or more important, and second, that place attachment and mobility are sometimes seen as opposite and mutually exclusive phenomena. The study presented here, using a set of qualitative interviews, suggests that this is not necessarily the case.

Whereas the respondents in the present study certainly differed with regard to place attachment and mobility, the difference that stood out in the analysis was not that some preferred place attachment whereas others preferred mobility, but that they regarded the relationship between place attachment and mobility differently. Some, indeed, regarded it as a contradiction and felt that they had to make a choice. Some regarded place attachment and mobility as opposites but tried to find an equilibrium. Some considered them as complements and enjoyed both. Other ways of combining or contrasting place attachment and mobility are also conceivable. These findings support the suggestions made by Mesch and Manor (1998) and Feldman (1990) that the geographical mobility of individuals does not necessarily contradict the importance of place attachment.

The approach adopted here—semistructured interviews with open-ended questions, followed by a qualitative analysis—permitted a close examination of the perceived meanings of and relationships between place attachment and mobility. The examination brought out a variation in the views of place attachment and mobility, which is usually not acknowledged in the existing literature. Also, the roots/routes perspective proved useful for the description as well as for the analysis of how the respondents made sense of place, place attachment, and mobility. The concepts of roots and routes indicate two different ways in which place matters, implying neither mutual exclusiveness nor normative judgment on the part of the researcher, and thus avoiding the problems inherent in much of the earlier research.

The differences between the respondents were not, of course, arbitrary. The interviews as well as the theoretical perspectives reviewed indicate that place attachment and mobility have both positive and negative sides. Place attachment may, on the one hand, imply roots, security, and sense of place, but it may also, on the other hand, represent imprisonment and narrow-mindedness. Similarly, mobility may signify freedom, opportunities, and new experiences as well as uprootedness and loss (Fielding, 1992, pp. 205-207; Relph, 1976, p. 42). Thus, place attachment and mobility may mean different things to different people, and this, in turn, is reflected in the way they regard the relationship between them. Social position, economic resources, life path, and other individual properties, together with the characteristics of significant places, will probably influence the ability to enjoy the positive aspects of one's roots and routes and to avoid or overcome the negative ones (see Bauman, 1998).

From this perspective, the arguments that increasing mobility makes place attachment perish or that mobility signifies power, whereas place attachment signifies powerlessness, seem to be simplifications. There was indeed a tendency among the respondents to regard mobility as an ideal and to perceive certain aspects of place attachment as old-fashioned. This study suggests, however, that those who are well-off in today's society bear some resemblance to Eva, the woman in the final example above: They are able to combine the positive aspects of place attachment and mobility in everyday life as well as in their worldviews and in their biographical accounts. This, however, remains a somewhat speculative hypothesis that invites further research.

Because of the relatively limited empirical data available, this article has paid little attention to the fact that place attachment as well as mobility may take many different forms. Place attachment may be directed toward residence, neighborhood, city, region, or country (and indeed toward several places of different spatial scale). It may involve not only the present home place but also, as the case studies above clearly bring out, earlier places

signifying childhood and origin in addition to other meaningful places. Mobility may include international or internal migration, residential mobility within the same region or urban area, long- or short-distance daily or weekly commuting, traveling for pleasure or occupational purposes, and so forth. Today, physical mobility may also be replaced by (or combined with) the use of various forms of information technologies that enable people to act and interact over large distances without physical presence. The importance of, and the relationships between, these different forms of place attachment and mobility in the everyday life of members of different social groups and strata provide a vast and challenging area for future research.

In conclusion, the present study, although limited in scope, indicates that place attachment as well as mobility may contribute to individual well-being and life satisfaction in today's society. Both may mean many different things to different people in different situations. They are not necessarily opposites, neither should one be regarded as, a priori, better or more important than the other. Instead, careful empirical examination of people's roots as well as their routes promises to be a fruitful approach for understanding the role of place, place attachment, and mobility in contemporary society.

APPENDIX

Lisbeth on Place Attachment and Mobility

A. I believe very much in traveling, in moving around. I have always admired those who do that, always been interested in people who have traveled and described traveling, you know, like explorers.

B. I cannot really develop as a person here . . . well, to a certain degree, but to kind of lift myself as an individual, I think I need to get out. . . . I'm very interested in the outside world, I would say that. I think it makes you turn around or change the way you think and the way you see things. That's the only way, to try new things, to meet something different.

C. It has always been important to me to tell people that I'm just passing by . . . , that we've moved here and it's a good place to live, but we'll never become [residents of Village X], because we felt that, and we quite agreed there, we tried our best to integrate to a certain limit, to a certain degree. But I think we never wanted to become really assimilated, or completely engulfed, or what should I say? But we wanted to be those who, we lived there, but that we had another history, that we had our friends elsewhere, that we went away to visit our relatives.

D. Well, here is status quo. Nothing ever happens, really. That's how I feel about it, and therefore I'm not very proud of being a [resident of Town X], because, I'm not ashamed of it either, because there is nothing wrong with it, it's OK, everything is fine, but you see there is nothing dynamic, not a damned thing ever happens and I guess that could kill anybody.

E. A place that has meant a lot to me, here it comes, mostly when I was young . . . that is [Town Y, where my father's parents used to live]. . . . because I think, I often keep thinking, you know, you can have such irrational [thoughts], you are almost longing back to something and wish it would be that way, and then I often recall the time we spent with them in [Town Y], because it was so cozy, so secure, so terribly secure and nice to be there.

F. You may think of, quite weird I guess, but you imagine there are people who are so happy and so secure and, ordinary people, you know, who stay in their place, do their duty, live their lives, who are so good and seem to be so satisfied. . . . Again, I don't know if I would be able to be one of them, but sometimes I think, there, I think you can find people who really identify with their community or their locality, and if you would tear that away from them, everything might fall apart. Perhaps that's the way it is. Either you feel that here I am, this is where I should be, I have always been here, and this is where I'm going to stay. Or you are one of those who float around, searching and searching, I mean that may be spiritually and materially as well as geographically, physically. But perhaps that's really a question of what type of person you are.

Anders on Place Attachment and Mobility

A. I have met other people, for whom their place is, I mean most of the time they keep talking about the place where they live, *but* I'm not that deeply rooted. I can talk about Australia as well, or some other region, or some other place that I have been to. . . . *But* of course, this is where I was born, so naturally that is reflected, sure. *But* still, I am not so narrow-minded that I have to place it above everything else. Because there are people who emphasize their native district so much that nothing else really compares with it, *but* I'm not quite like that.

B. Answer: No, it's just that, of course my childhood and all that, I value that a lot, *but* still, I am mobile, and I don't talk that much about the place where I live, really. I mean, there are those who don't do anything else when they are away. . . .

Question: So you are not a local patriot in that sense?

Answer: No. Of course, if they ask, I may boast a little about it, *but* it's not like "Sure, you've got a shop here selling clothes, but we've got one back home that is much better." I'm not like that.

Lars-Erik on Place Attachment and Mobility

A. No, I'm not one of those who say, like some do, when they come to another country, that they become even more Swedish, coming to some seaside resort, wanting to have Swedish food. No, I would say, on the contrary, it's exciting to have something to eat which is not Swedish.

B. It's important to have some nearness to those living in your neighborhood. Without that, it may be difficult to have a good anchorage in life.

C. I must feel that I have some kind of anchorage, I think, then I can go away. But I have never been one of those who set off, who travel around very much, I don't think so.

D. Since then [when I arrived here] I haven't moved [laughs]. It's true, really. Except for shorter journeys, of course.

E. Sometimes you think, that depends on what mood you are in, sometimes you think differently about that: that you are too deeply rooted. Some people ask me, "Have you been living here that long? Why on earth have you stayed here?" But it doesn't matter where you live, as long as you're happy where you live.

F. You need to have some kind of identity, to feel close to something, and then I would say, if you think about it, it's very important that people feel at home and rooted. They must have a sense of security and nearness in their immediate surroundings, because otherwise I don't think they have the courage to go out into the world either.

Eva on Place Attachment and Mobility

A. Yes, I enjoy traveling and, flying, I love flying too. Just sitting in the plane, going up in the air, knowing that in only a few hours I will be in a completely different place, that feeling.

B. Question: So you had known for several years that you would escape to the West?

Answer: Yes, I had. I just didn't know how, but that I would, absolutely. . . . It was so confined. That's the worst thing there is, being shut in, not being able to leave a place.

C. Answer: And I really enjoy being able to feel at home, preferably all over the world.

Question: You can?

Answer: Yes, I think, yes, you can. If you are open-minded. . . . I can enjoy just sitting there, in Hamburg or anywhere, Berlin somewhere, and feel that, well, nobody knows I am Swedish or anything, just, I am there. Or in New York, or London.

D. I really feel close to Sweden. It is my country, where I live. But being SWEDISH, in some chauvinist kind of way, no, I'm not.

E. This is where I have a sense of community. I am a part of the town, people know me here and I know them. . . . at that time, in [the city where I lived a couple of years ago], it was never, it was a small, sleepy suburb, you know, a dormitory town, no sense of community, nothing. But here, here it is, here you're part of a community.

F. We know each other here. And I think that gives a strong sense of security too, that I, I'm a real outsider here, I had no roots, not any longer, but here I have found roots again.

G. Question: You said that you think this anonymity is a good thing, that nobody recognizes you. Why is that?

Answer: . . . I guess I'm a bit of a lone wolf, really, I am, and I'm not afraid of being alone. And I want to be able to feel at home anywhere, and to be anonymous and do anything I want and—yes I would. I don't need a lot of people around me, if I am going somewhere. I can be all by myself, and I can even enjoy it. . . .

Question: Also, you said that when you moved to [the town where you live], you recognized people in the street, people that you knew. . . . So that is also something?

Answer: Also. Yes. But I think, it does not have to exclude, one does not exclude the other. Well, maybe, it is very important to have a safe retreat, some place from which you can start out, where you feel secure.

REFERENCES

Albrow, M. (1996). *The global age: State and society beyond modernity*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity.

Albrow, M. (1997). Travelling beyond local cultures: Socioscapes in a global city. In J. Eade (Ed.), *Living the global city: Globalization as a local process* (pp. 37-55). London: Routledge.

Altman, I., & Low, S. M. (Eds.). (1992). *Place attachment*. New York: Plenum.

Andersson Cederholm, E. (1999). *Det extraordinäras lockelse: Luffarturistens bilder och upplevelser* [The attraction of the extraordinary: Images and experiences among backpacker tourists]. Lund, Sweden: Arkiv.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The human consequences*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity.

Beck, U. (2000). *What is globalization?* Cambridge, U.K.: Polity.

Bell, M., & Ward, G. (2000). Comparing temporary mobility with permanent migration. *Tourism Geographies*, *2*, 87-107.

Calhoun, C. (1991). Indirect relationships and imagined communities: Large-scale social integration and the transformation of everyday life. In P. Bourdieu & J. S. Coleman (Eds.), *Social theory for a changing society* (pp. 95-121). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Canter, D. (1997). The facets of place. In G. T. Moore & R. W. Marans (Eds.), *Advances in environment, behavior, and design: Vol. 4. Toward the integration of theory, methods, research, and utilization* (pp. 109-147). New York: Plenum.

Castells, M. (1996). *The information age: Economy, society and culture: Vol. 1. The rise of the network society*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Desforges, L. (1998). "Checking out the planet": Global representations/local identities and youth travel. In T. Skelton & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Cool places: Geographies of youth cultures* (pp. 175-192). London: Routledge.

Feldman, R. M. (1990). Settlement-identity: Psychological bonds with home places in a mobile society. *Environment & Behavior*, *22*, 183-229.

Fennell, G. (1997). Local lives—distant ties: Researching community under globalized conditions. In J. Eade (Ed.), *Living the global city: Globalization as a local process* (pp. 90-109). London: Routledge.

Fielding, T. (1992). Migration and culture. In T. Champion & T. Fielding (Eds.), *Migration processes and patterns: Vol. 1. Research progress and prospects* (pp. 201-212). London: Belhaven.

Flick, U. (1998). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Gesser, B., & Olofsson, P.-O. (1997). *Samhällsmoral och politik: Exemplet Helsingborg* [Societal morals and politics: The example of Helsingborg]. Göteborg, Sweden: Daidalos.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. London: Verso.

Groat, L. (Ed.). (1995). *Giving places meaning*. London: Academic Press.

Gustafson, P. (2001). Meanings of place: Everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *21*, 5-16.

Hall, S. (1995). New cultures for old. In D. Massey & P. Jess (Eds.), *A place in the world? Places, cultures and globalization* (pp. 175-211). Oxford, UK: Open University/Oxford University Press.

Hannerz, U. (1996). *Transnational connections: Culture, people, places*. London: Routledge

Hay, R. (1998). Sense of place in developmental context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *18*, 5-29.

Layder, D. (1998). *Sociological practice: Linking theory and social research*. London: Sage.

Low, S. M. (1992). Symbolic ties that bind: Place attachment in the plaza. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 165-185). New York: Plenum.

Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). Place attachment: A conceptual inquiry. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 1-12). New York: Plenum.

Malkki, L. (1992). National geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees. *Cultural Anthropology*, *7*, 24-44.

Mesch, G. S., & Manor, O. (1998). Social ties, environmental perception, and local attachment. *Environment & Behavior*, *30*, 504-519.

Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Munt, I. (1994). The "other" postmodern tourism: Culture, travel and the new middle classes. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *11*(3), 101-123.

Pries, L. (Ed.). (1999). *Migration and transnational social spaces*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion.

Rojek, C., & Urry, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Touring cultures: Transformations of travel and theory*. London: Routledge.

Rubinstein, R. L., & Parmelee, P. A. (1992). Attachment to place and the representation of the life course by the elderly. In I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 139-163). New York: Plenum.

Taylor, P. J. (1996). Embedded statism and the social sciences: Opening up to new spaces. *Environment and Planning A*, *28*, 1917-1928.

Tönnies, F. (1955). *Community and association*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1887)

Trost, J. (1986). Statistically nonrepresentative stratified sampling: A sampling technique for qualitative studies. *Qualitative Sociology*, *9*, 54-57.

Trost, J. (1993). *Kvalitativa intervjuer* [Qualitative interviews]. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.