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SENSE OF PLACE IN DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

Sense of place differs from place attachment by considering the social and geographical context of place bonds and the sensing of places, such as aesthetics and a feeling of dwelling. Insider status and local ancestry are important toward the development of a more rooted sense of place. Three contexts are used to examine the development of sense of place: residential status in the place (superficial, partial, personal, ancestral, and cultural senses of place); age stage, as in development across the life cycle, using a psychodynamic model (after Erikson and Vaillant); and development of the adult pair bond, most often in marriage. Being raised in the place affected feelings of rootedness, particularly for Maori peoples who have ties to tribal territory. Interactions were found among place and pair bonds, and multigenerational patterns were noted for ancestral and cultural senses of place, with sense of place styles passed from parent to child. Modern society, due especially to high levels of residential mobility, tends to develop more of a partial or personal sense of place among its members. Sequential stages in the development of a sense of place were most evident among those who were raised in

the place and spent most of their lives there: embryonic (childhood to adolescent); commitment (early to mid adulthood); and culmination (mid adulthood to old age). These became apparent in phenomenological and statistical analyses of responses from 270 adult residents of Banks Peninsula, New Zealand, of both Maori and European descent. Additional interviews were conducted with 80 adult out-migrants from the Peninsula; brief surveys were also done of tourists, long-term campers, holiday home owners, and resident school children on Banks Peninsula. Models of place attachment need to be reconsidered, as does the value of developing a sense of place based more on ancestral and cultural connections. Such a sense of place is considered to be of benefit to individuals and to modern society. @ 1998 Academic Press



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