

# MEASURING SENSE OF PLACE: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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## ABSTRACT

The main concern of this paper is to classify the different methods of measurement of sense of place (which is a very vague concept). The existence and intensity of sense of place is also related to social and cultural variables, such as ethnic and religious background. This paper reviews the different methods of measuring sense of place and classifies them according to different criteria. The study applies a bipolar (positive and negative level of attachment), unidimensional scale which is composed of one component of scaling, using a 'direct' technique. The results point to similarities and differences between Israeli-born and immigrant groups. Most of the respondents in both groups had similar patterns of positive feelings towards the place where they live. The differences were smaller than the similarities. The sense of place scale applied in this study has the advantage of being a simple tool that is understandable to all types of respondents.

**Key words:** Sense of place, Israel, empirical measurements, immigrants, unidimensional scale

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## SENSE OF PLACE: BACKGROUND LITERATURE

This study is concerned with methodological aspects of a concept that is sometimes dealt with loosely in different types of literature: a sense of place. The aims of the paper are to introduce a new methodological tool for measuring a 'sense of place', and to explore the concept with regard to two different groups: native-born Israelis ('Sabras') and new immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union.

A sense of place is a very vague concept. It has been dealt with using 'non-positivistic' views (mainly phenomenological), and in studies which are based on positivistic (behavioural) approaches (Shamai 1991; Lalli 1992). This study belongs to the latter. Those holding non-positivistic views try to emphasise the difficulties in dealing with the concept of sense of place.

'Obviously, sense of place is one of the most abstract and illusive concepts . . . understanding what creates a true sense of place . . . is a complex task' (Barker 1979, p. 164). Sense of place 'is not just a formal concept awaiting precise definition . . . [C]larification cannot be achieved by imposing precise but arbitrary definitions' (Relph 1976, p. 4). Hence, it is not surprising that some authors declare that 'it is quite useless to try measuring it' (Lewis 1979, p. 40). Discussing the notion of regional identity, Paasi (2003, p. 481) notes that 'instead of assigning automatically an explanatory role to this very popular category, regional identity itself has to be "explained"'. The result of probing regional identity empirically 'is often narrow empirical analysis' (Paasi 2003, p. 480).

Although sense of place resists a simple definition, there are different ways of explaining and probing the concept. 'It is often easier to

see its results in human behaviour than to define it in precise terms' (Lewis 1979, p. 28). According to Relph (1976, p. 4), the concept should be probed 'by examining the links between place and the phenomenological foundations of geography'.

Philosophically-oriented discussions are important to the explanation of the concept of place. They are usually combined with descriptive examples, but they try to probe the concept itself. Relph (1976, p. 20) emphasises the importance of the experience of living in a place in order to reveal the essence of place: 'By taking place as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience and examining the various properties of place, such as location, landscape, and personal involvement, some assessment can be made of the degree to which these are essential to our experience and sense of place'. Location itself is not a sufficient condition to create a sense of place. In order to create a sense and attachment to place, there is a need for long and deep experience of a place, and preferably involvement in the place. Ritual, myths and symbols help in strengthening the attachment to place (Relph 1976), and bind people to a place (Tuan 1977). 'Local symbols reflect and enhance sense of place' (Peterson & Saarinen 1986, p. 164). Sense of place is defined by Dattel & Dingemans (1984, p. 135) as 'the complex bundle of meaning, symbols, and qualities that a person or group associates (consciously and unconsciously) with a particular locality or region.' Kaltenborn (1997) has found that a range of attributes, including the natural and cultural environment, family and social activities, history and traditions are all important in the development of affective bonds with places.

Entrikin (1997) emphasises the tension between viewing the particular features of the place or its universal features as 'place becomes like personality, unique and particular' (p. 265). According to Entrikin (1997) the experience of place 'is filtered through the language of collective narratives and public discourses that continually blend spatial scales and move between relatively centered and relative decentered perspectives' (p. 266). The experience of a place is not neutral. Allen *et al.* (1998) state that a place (a region) is not merely a 'bounded area on a map', but rather, that we should think about a place 'in terms of social relations ...

with internal relations of power and inequality, and punctured by structured exclusions' (p. 65). The feminist view points to the experience of spaces according to differential gender lines, and exposes the mechanism of universal masculinity domination (Rose 1993, 1999). Sense of place is constructed by underlying the structures of power. Sense of place includes people together, and thus, excludes the 'other'. 'Those who belong to a particular place are distinguished from those who do not; and while the latter may be excluded from that place, the former are expected to conform to its conventions' (Rose 1995, p. 100). The power relations are more apparent in the era of globalisation when places are situated between the global and the local. Globalisation is increasing the inequalities between and among spaces and places (Massey 1995).

Sense of place is a holistic concept (Eisenhauer *et al.* 2000) and, according to their study, there are two main components: the first is the interactions at a place among family or friends, family activities and traditions, and the memories associated with the people of the place. The more current literature focuses on the importance of the culture and power relations in shaping the sense of place, and to the mutual but uneven relations between the place and the people who reside there. Culture mediates in a selective way and operates as a screen which shapes the personal and social interaction with the place. The 'culture turn' means acknowledging the power relations in a given place (Rose 1995).

The second is based on sentiments about the natural uniqueness of an area (Rose 1995), the scenery of the place, its climate or geological value and its environmental setting and wildlife (Eisenhauer *et al.* 2000). Thus, sense of place is a combination of both the physical (environmental) and personal/social interaction in the place.

## SOCIAL GROUPS AND SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of place is also a social phenomenon; 'in essence, people confer meaning on the environment in ways that reflect their social and cultural experiences' (Eisenhauer *et al.* 2000). Place is 'understood contextually (and at times metaphorically) in relation to ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, body, self, etc.' (Paasi 2002a, p. 806). The differences of sense of place 'are complex and can be based on class, gender, "race" and

many other aspects of identity' (Rose 1995, p. 116).

Perception is related to the cultural and ethnic background of the subjects, as 'individuals and groups whose environmental interactions differ will form different assessments of the places they experience' (Canter 1977, p. 163).

Social ties are related to a geographical unit. 'In many cases a sociospatial consciousness has developed amongst the local population, a consciousness which includes a social as well as a geographical belonging' (Lidskog 1996, p. 41).

Chang (2000), primarily using Relph's notion of 'insideness' and 'outsideness' and other concepts, identified different groups of people with differing degrees of attachment to Singapore's Little India. Other types of social divisions have been related to racial differences, as Sigelman & Henig (2001), for example, find significant difference between African-Americans and whites in terms of their perceptions of the special advantages of the central city and the suburbs of Washington DC. Sense of place contributes to shaping personal and collective identity (Altman & Low 1992).

The results of a study that was conducted in Banks Peninsula, New Zealand (a rural, farm-based setting) point to the significance of residential status and social belonging regarding the development of a sense of place. Both Maori and those of European descent respondents with long-term residence expressed a more rooted sense of place for Peninsula environs (Hay 1998). In a study in Hong Kong (La Grange & Ming 2001), home-owners manifested a somewhat higher level of positive attitude towards their community and a 'sense of Hong Kongness' than home renters. In an Israeli study (Shamai & Kellerman 1985), differences regarding regional awareness were probed: age and years of residence in the region and in the settlement, and ethnic origin (Israeli born vs immigrants; origin in Europe or North America vs Asia or Africa) were not found to be related to the level of sense of place. However, the rural population had a higher level of sense of place towards their region than urban respondents. Interestingly, according to Paasi (2002b), '[i]t is obvious that the narratives of regional (and other spatial) identities are increasingly being contested in a world characterized by voluntary and forced migration' (p. 146).

## SENSE OF PLACE SCALE

Some discussions have suggested a ranking procedure for sense of place. Feelings towards places are varied. At one extreme, there is 'alienation', 'homelessness', and 'not belonging' (Relph 1976, p. 51). At the other extreme, there is 'belonging to a place and . . . deep and complete identity with a place' (Relph 1976, p. 55). Each different way of sensing the place can be seen as a different level on an ordinal scale; that is, starting with the lowest level of sense of place and 'climbing' six more steps to reach the most intense and deepest way of sensing a place.

Some positivist studies concerning sense of place have also referred to a ranking procedure. The Kilbrandon Report (quoted in Gold 1980, pp. 131–133), for example, distinguished between two degrees of regional awareness, yes (regional awareness exists) and no (it does not exist), while Piveteau (1969) distinguished between three levels (no, yes-low and yes-high). A four-level scale of sense of place was used by Shamai & Kellerman (1985). The levels used were: (1) not having sense of place, (2) knowledge of the place, (3) belonging to a place, and (4) attachment to a place. Shamai (1991) has developed this scale and distinguishes among seven levels in an ordinal scale: (0) not having any sense of place, (1) knowledge of being located in a place, (2) belonging to a place, (3) attachment to a place, (4) identifying with the goals of the place, (5) involvement in a place, (6) sacrifice for a place.

Most measurements ignore negative feelings toward a place. Although that possibility is rare, it cannot be ruled out; 'sense of place is a positive (phenomenon) usually, but it can include negative feelings' (Arnon 2001). McAndrew (1998) refers to the concept of 'rootedness', which is similar to the concept of sense of place, and constructs it by using a bi-polar structure, including positive and negative components. As previously cited, Rose (1995) argues that the 'dominant' sense of place defines the social boundaries of 'us', and excludes the 'others'. The possible resistance of the 'others' may lead to negative sense of place, too.

Negative feelings may be more important, particularly when dealing with immigrants. In the specific case probed, a substantial number

of Russians who have immigrated to Israel are non-Jews, and others have immigrated against their will because their families wanted to. In interviews (that were not taken in the place examined in this study), some of the immigrants said that their town was 'a dead town', 'a town without a future'. 'We do not have a past, we do not have a present and there is no future [here] . . . [If] we get a bundle of money, we will go to Canada' (Horowitz *et al.* 2003).

The positivistic scales for measuring sense of place can be classified by four attributes: 'polarity', number of dimensions, number of components, and 'directness' (direct or indirect technique applied) of the questions.

**Polarity** – The 'poles' are the highest positive score of sense of place and the 'lowest' negative score. Bi-polar studies (of which the current study is an example) apply negative and positive attitudes towards the sense of place); unipolar studies include only positive attitudes towards the sense of place (as in most studies); and 'semi-polar' studies range from not having sense of place to the positive pole (Piveteau 1969; Shamai & Kellerman 1985; Shamai 1991).

**'Directness'** – A methodological distinction has been made by the 'directness' of the questions. Are the questions phrased by using direct or indirect techniques? (Shamai & Kellerman 1985). A direct technique assumes that the place examined exists in the respondent's mind, while indirect questions, although they do not assume this, are complicated and are open to different interpretations.

**Components** – The empirical scale can be composed of one (direct) question/component or several components (multi-component). A *multi-component* scale is based on several questions which eventually compose one scale. Most studies use a *multi-component* approach. For example, 'an index was designed to measure identification with Canada in terms of commitment to permanent residence, feeling a sense of belonging, of being at home and of becoming, or wanting to become a naturalised Canadian citizen' (Goldlust & Richmond 1977, p. 134). Other studies, as well, use this approach, for example Shamai & Kellerman (1985), Shamai (1991) or the 'Urban Identity Scale', which is

composed of five dimensions of urban-related identity: external evaluation, continuity with personal past, general attachment, perception of familiarity and commitment (Lalli 1992).

The *uni-component* scale avoids the question of selecting the attributes that presumably compose the sense of place. Due to the confusion in the literature, this bypasses the different views, by choosing only one general question, and thus, one component only. Examples can be found in the aforementioned Kilbrandon Report, which distinguished between two degrees of regional awareness, yes and no, while Piveteau (1969) distinguished between three levels: no, yes-low and yes-high.

**Dimensions** – When the questions are clustered into a scale, in some cases the main scale has been divided into sub-scales, but often this does not happen. A *unidimensional* scale usually combines several questions to construct a single scale, based on logic (Piveteau 1969; Shamai & Kellerman 1985; Shamai 1991) and/or statistical analyses (mainly using reliability measures, factor analyses and correlations). A *multidimensional* scale is based on sub-scales of different but related attributes of sense of place. For example, McAndrew (1998) tests two empirical sub-scales: positive and negative. Each sub-scale is composed of different questions. Williams *et al.* (1992) used two sub-scales (place identity and place dependence). Jorgensen & Stedman (2001) developed a more sophisticated empirical tool which consisted of three different sub-scales: place identity, place attachment and place dependence.

The idea underlying the multidimensional scale is to break down the sense of place into its parts in order to widen the spectrum of the empirical study of the sense of place concept, and to achieve better understanding. The main problem with this method is the selection of dimensions: Are they the 'right' ones? Do they not limit the conceptual scope of sense?

The difference between multi-component and multidimension is as follows: a multi-component scale is based on several questions, which result in one scale only. A multidimensional scale is also based on several questions, but results in more than one (sub) scale.

In the current study, we decided to use a simple scale that would try to capture the sense of

place in a direct and straightforward way. Thus, a direct technique was selected. Due to the possibility of negative feelings towards a place in general and, in this case in particular, a bipolar approach was applied. We prefer a unidimensional scale which is composed of one component of scaling, rather than more complicated structures which may pre-impose the researchers' conceptions on the subjects. (Thus, a scale was constructed between (-5) to (+5): (-5) = very negative connection/attachment; 0 = no connection/attachment; (+5) = very positive connection/attachment).

## RESEARCH SETTING

The study was conducted in Kiryat Shemona, which is located in the northeast 'corner' of Israel, near the Lebanese border. There are 21,000 inhabitants, including 4,300 immigrants from countries of the former Soviet Union (20% of the town population). The interviews took place during 2001, a year after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The town had suffered from shelling for more than two decades up to 2000. The immigrants who arrived mainly during the early 1990s had suffered from the shelling, as well. In spite of living under warlike conditions the population increased. This was partly due to intensive government support in many ways: by direct help to governmental agencies (such as schools, the municipality), or by developing public sector workplaces, by subsidising private sector workplaces, and by direct benefits to the population (such as, reducing income tax). These benefits encourage the population to stay in Kiryat Shemona.

The questionnaire was tested in a pilot study in two phases in another town in the North of

Israel with similar ethnic composition. The first phase was carried out by face-to-face interviews. It included 116 Sabras and 137 immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The second phase included 200 immigrants interviewed only by phone (Shamai & Ilatov 2002). After these two phases, we were positive that the respondents had interpreted the question correctly.

The data from Kiryat Shemona is presented in this study only after other comparable (pilot) studies have been done (at a different location) among Sabras and previous Soviet Union immigrants, and which resulted in similar results. Thus, the unique status of Kiryat Shemona did not create a different situation.

A sample of 299 adults from Kiryat Shemona were interviewed by phone. The sample was composed of 199 Sabras (93 males and 106 females) and 100 immigrants (50 males and 50 females). Three questions regarding different levels of places were asked:

1. What is your level of attachment towards your settlement?
2. What is your level of attachment towards your region?
3. What is your level of attachment towards your country (Israel)?

(The scale ranges from (-5) to (+5): (-5) = very negative connection/attachment; 0 = no connection/attachment; (+5) = very positive connection/attachment).

## RESULTS

The results (means and standard deviation) to the above three questions regarding sense of place, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Sabras and immigrants attachment to places – means and standard deviations – Kiryat Shemona.*

	Attachment to place					
	Town		Region		State	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Sabras (n = 199)	3.92	1.69	4.14	1.34	3.80	2.48
Immigrants (n = 100)	4.02	1.78	3.98	1.84	3.75	2.16
T-test score Probability	n.s		n.s		n.s	



Both groups manifested similar results, of positive means with small gaps, which were not significant according to the T-test. The standard deviations were also similar.

The frequencies of the answers were divided according to three levels of attitudes: negative (scores from -2 to -5), neutral (-1, 0 and +1 scores), and positive (+2 to +5). The scores of the two groups are presented in Table 2.

In most cases, the breakdown of frequencies shows similar views between the two groups. Two minor exceptions can be observed: more neutral feelings towards the town by Sabras than by the immigrants, who manifested somewhat more positive views, and more neutral feelings towards the state by immigrants than by the Sabras, who manifested somewhat more positive views.

The intensity levels of sense of place were probed regarding two variables: years of residence in Kiryat Shemona and age. The correlation coefficients (*r*) and significant levels ( $\alpha$ ) for the two groups are presented in Table 3.

These figures manifest two different patterns: The longer the Sabras have resided in a place, the higher their level of attachment to the town and region, while there is no such connection found among the immigrants. Both groups manifest no connection between the years of residence and the level of intensity of sense of place towards Israel. The results regarding the age variable are somewhat different: both groups manifested similar patterns, but with different levels of intensity. The level of correlation coefficients among both groups decreased as the unit of place increased expanded: it is highest with respect to the town, less so (but still positive) towards the region, and the lowest toward the state.

Table 2. *Sabras and immigrants in Kiryat Shemona – attachment to places – frequencies.*

Attachment to Kiryat Shemona (settlement)				
	Sabras		Immigrants	
	n	%	n	%
Negative (-5 to -2)	3	1.5	2	2.0
Neutral (-1 to +1)	20	10.0	6	6.0
Positive (+2 to +5)	176	88.5	92	92.0
Total	199	100.0	100	100.0

Attachment to region (Galilee)

	Sabras		Immigrants	
	n	%	n	%
Negative (-5 to -2)	2	1.0	2	2.0
Neutral (-1 to +1)	13	6.5	8	8.0
Positive (+2 to +5)	185	92.5	90	90.0
Total	199	100.0	100	100.0

Attachment to state (Israel)

	Sabras		Immigrants	
	n	%	n	%
Negative (-5 to -2)	16	8.0	7	7.0
Neutral (-1 to +1)	5	2.5	7	7.0
Positive (+2 to +5)	178	89.5	86	86.0
Total	199	100.0	100	100.0

The results indicate that the length of residence in the place is an important factor for the veteran (Sabra) population, mainly towards the close surrounding area. Age has a similar effect

Table 3. *Sabras and immigrants in Kiryat Shemona – Spearman correlations between attachment to places and dependent variables.*

	Attachment to Kiryat Shemona		Attachment to the Galilee		Attachment to Israel	
	r	$\alpha$	r	$\alpha$	r	$\alpha$
Years of residence – Sabras (n = 137)	0.501	0.000	0.268	0.002	0.068	0.427
Years of residence – immigrants (n = 49)	-0.036	0.807	-0.007	0.960	-0.015	0.921
Age – Sabras (n = 137)	0.439	0.000	0.323	0.000	0.105	0.220
Age – Immigrants (n = 49)	0.308	0.031	0.261	0.070	0.047	0.747

for both groups. Number of years of education was another variable that was probed. In all six cases probed (with the level of attachment to the town, region and state, for the two groups separately), the absolute value for each of the correlations was less than 0.2.

A regression was computed in order to study the multivariate relations of the independent variables: age, years of residence in Kiryat Shemona, years of education, and for the immigrants only, years in Israel, toward each of the three levels of attachment. This was done separately for each group, thus six computations were performed. The  $R^2$  values of five out of six values were less than 0.2 (less than 20% of the variability of the dependent variables was explained by the independent variables). The only exception was the regression computed for the attachment level to Kiryat Shemona. ( $R^2 = 0.288$ ,  $\alpha = 0.000$ ). The independent variables that were included (whose explanatory power was significant statistically) were years of residence in Kiryat Shemona and age.

The level of intensity was probed with respect to religious affiliation, as well. The two largest groups were examined: secular and traditional Jews. The results are presented in Table 4.

In most cases (5 out of 6), the traditional Jews manifested a higher level of attachment. Although the differences were not statistically significant in most cases (except among the secular with respect to attachment to the town), the tendency is clear. The differences may be due to two reasons: ideological-religious or socio-economic.

The socio-economic differences were tested by two variables: number of children of the respondents, and education level. The mean

number of children (up to 18 years old) of the secular Sabras was 3.15 compared to 3.81 among the traditional Sabras. The differences, according to T-test, were statistically significant ( $p = 0.043$ ). Regarding years of study, the mean of the secular group ( $n = 57$ ) was nine years, in comparison to six years among the traditional group ( $n = 108$ ), and the difference according to T-test was statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, among the veteran group, the socio-economic factor was an important intervening variable.

Among the immigrants the differences were in the other direction: the secular ( $n = 46$ ) mean number of children was somewhat higher (1.72) than the traditional ( $n = 19$ ) respondents (1.58 children). The mean number of years of education in the secular group ( $n = 56$ ) was 12, compared to 13 in the traditional group ( $n = 31$ ). Both variables were not statistically significant according to the T-test. Thus, regarding the traditional immigrants, the reason is not socio-economic. It may, however, be related to the fact that they became traditional only after their immigration to Israel, and accepting a traditional way of life means some affiliation with a synagogue on the local level, and an additional social network. The change from a secular life in the former Soviet Union to a more religious affiliation is a substantial shift that indicates an ideological change. Becoming more religious develops the Jewish nationalistic aspect of Jewish-Israeli identity which could explain their higher level of intensity of attachment to the state.

**Language acquisition** – Immigrants were asked about their efforts to learn Hebrew. The answers

Table 4. *Secular and traditional Sabras and immigrants in Kiryat Shemona – attachment to places.*

	Attachment to place					
	Town		Region		State	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Sabras: Secular ( $n = 47$ )	3.15*	2.00	3.83	1.71	3.87	2.23
Sabras: Traditional ( $n = 87$ )	4.24*	1.44	4.15	1.49	3.37	2.91
Immigrants: Secular ( $n = 32$ )	3.78	2.07	3.72	2.02	3.56	2.35
Immigrants: Traditional ( $n = 18$ )	4.33	1.19	4.33	1.19	4.06	1.73

\* The differences between the groups were statistically significant according to T-test ( $\alpha = 0.002$ ).

Table 5. *Immigrants in Kiryat Shemona – Hebrew acquisition and attachment to places.*

	Attachment to place					
	Town		Region		State	
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Acquiring actively ('yes') (n = 26)	3.50	2.37	3.35	2.36	4.42	1.17
Do not acquire ('no') (n = 31)	4.48	0.72	4.39	0.88	3.32	2.52
T-test score Probability	0.032		0.027		0.046	

were 'yes' or 'no', combined with a great deal of effort. The results are presented in Table 5.

The results indicate an interesting pattern: immigrants who actively acquire the language are less attached to their immediate places (town and region), and are more attached to the state. Immigrants who actively acquire the language have more heterogeneous answers than the other group, regarding their attachment to the town and region. Immigrants who do not acquire the language actively have more heterogeneous answers than the other group regarding their attachment to Israel. The differences were found to be significant statistically according to the T-test.

The reason for this pattern of attachment may be related to the age differences between the groups. The 'yes' group mean age is 47 years old compared to 56 for the 'no' group. (The difference was statistically significant according to the T-test,  $\alpha = 0.011$ .) Of the 'no' group, 36 per cent are 65 years old and over, compared to only 10 per cent among the 'yes' group. Thus, more of the 'yes' sample is engaged in the workforce and has a broader sense of place, while the 'no' group has a narrower sense of place, focusing on the local community.

## DISCUSSION

The central aspect of the study demonstrates that sense of place can be measured empirically. The simplicity of the scale makes it an understandable and clear concept. However, what contributes to it is not completely clear. The question remains: what creates the sense of place, the perception of physical environment or the perception of the personal and social contact and interaction in the place. The specific case study points to similarities and

differences between the two groups, Sabras and immigrants. The similarities between the groups may point to the influences of the physical environment which override the differences between the groups. Most of the respondents in both groups had similar patterns of positive feelings towards the place where they live. More than 90 per cent mentioned positive attachment towards the town, region and state they live in. In both groups, the older the respondents are, the more attached they are to their town and region. Regarding religious affiliation, in both groups, the traditional group is more attached to their town and region than the secular group. Thus, places are experienced differently by different social groups.

There are also other differences between the groups. The differences may point to the fact that the influence of the personal and social perception and interaction overrides the physical dimension of sense of place. The differences were fewer than the similarities. The main differences related to the years of residence in the place: the Sabras' level of sense of place intensity, mainly towards the town and also towards the region, is positively correlated with the years of residence, while this tendency does not occur among the immigrants. Another difference is the differing reasons explaining the lower affiliation to place of the secular group: socio-economic differences among the Sabras and age differences among the immigrants. Place is not merely a bounded area on a map; however, the physical attributes of the map are important too.

Places can be sensed differently by different groups. However, as Rose (1995) has pointed out, the immigrant sense of place did not challenge the dominant sense of place. They



accepted/adopted the dominant (Zionist) sense of place, perhaps because of the uniqueness of the Kiryat Shemona experience, or because of their positive process of integration, or because of both of these factors. It seems that the involvement in the place can be achieved relatively fast, within a few years, and does not necessarily take a long (or life-long) period. This is particularly true in an assimilatory state like Israel, where a large number of national symbols are prevalent in the assimilation process. It would seem that the 'Israeli experience' overrides any other way of sensing a place. In Israel, perhaps the symbolic and ideological milieu, rather than the natural landscape, is the dominant factor which shapes the sense of place. The 'cultural turn' regarding sense of place is more effective on all segments of the Jewish population in Israel, and does not divide them, but rather unites them, shaping the sense of 'togetherness' as Jews (and perhaps excludes the non-Jews. But that is a matter for another study).

This study uses a bipolar, unidimensional scale which is composed of one component of scaling, using a 'direct' technique. This scale has the advantage of being a simple tool that is understandable to all types of respondents. It does not pre-suppose a variety of components that compose the sense of place, but rather tries to explain its relation to a variety of variables. It does not attempt to try to explain the multidimensional nature of sense of place, but rather is a more modest attempt to propose a straightforward technique which can be useful when addressing any audience, from elementary school-aged children to adults. The pilot for this scale was developed among students from Grades 5 to 12, including immigrants, when the possibility of negative feelings towards the state was a real concern among educators. Thus, the need to use the negative side of the spectrum was very important.

The question of which scaling technique is the appropriate method to examine sense of place is an open one, due to the complicated nature of the phenomenon. We support the view that the many methods reflect the various aspects of this concept. There is room for the different methods, considering that the literature is not clear. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. The more the scale is 'multi-oriented', the more the researchers

presume their own views, and there is a danger that they will impose specific views (even if they are multidimensional, they are still limited compared to the comprehensive concept of sense of place) and, therefore, may decrease the breadth of the concept of sense of place. Using a specific interpretation as the 'right' solution, based on the theoretical literature narrows the scope of the concept.

The idea that the more complicated the scale is, the more sophisticated it is and thus, the better it is, is questionable. For example, 'empirical investigations of sense of place utilising quantitative methods have been relatively few in number and have generally lagged behind theory ... [W]e suggest that these attempts have not reflected theoretical imperatives well, specifically, the multidimensionality of the sense of place concept' (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001, p. 235). Regarding one interpretation, even if it is 'multidimensional', as the only correct way, is wrong. Moreover, this specific study has examined a rural recreational region, while the studies criticised (Shamai 1991; Lalli 1992) dealt with urban contexts. The measure should be tailored to each case, and the variety of methodological tools are only an advantage which widens the scope of sense of place.

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