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13

Disruptions in Place Attachment

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A study of disruptions in psychological processes can provide unique insight into their predisruption functioning as well as the disruptions themselves and their consequences. Place attachment processes normally reflect the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional embeddedness individuals experience in their sociophysical environments. An examination of disruptions in place attachments demonstrate how fundamental they are to the experience and meaning of everyday life. After the development of secure place attachments, the loss of normal attachments creates a stressful period of disruption followed by a postdisruption phase of coping with lost attachments and creating new ones. These three phases of the disruption process are examined with respect to disruptions due to burglaries, voluntary relocations, and disasters, with special attention to the Buffalo Creek, West Virginia, flood and the Yungay, Peru, landslide. Underlying the diversity of disruptions, dialectic themes of stability–change and individuality–communality provide a coherent framework for understanding the temporal phases of attachment and its disruption.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A study of disruptions of place attachments starts with an understanding of place attachment itself. By reflecting on a representative range of definitions

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for place attachment or related terms (see Table 1) as well as empirical assessments of disruptions, working assumptions about place attachments are developed and applied to a review of selected disruptions.

1. *Place attachments are integral to self-definitions, including individual and communal aspects of identity; disruptions threaten self-definitions.* Many definitions assert that attachments provide anchors in life, orienting individuals to who they are (see definitions 3, 5, and 9, Table 1) or "incarnating the experience and aspirations of people" (definition 9; see also 1, 7, and 10).

Physical settings and artifacts both reflect and shape people's understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of groups. In the United States, a very individualistic society, homes are often personalized to be and look unique. Personal and familial identities are projected by landscaping, house style, materials and colors, furnishings, and alterations to homes. Nevertheless, many features of home and community environments also reveal more communally based identities. Through both individual efforts and community standards, features such as home style and colors, legislated setbacks, lawn care and landscaping project one's adherence to communal values. Conversely, even in more communitarian cultures where conformity is the norm, there are still ways in which individuality is expressed (see Gauvain, Altman, & Fahim, 1983).

Negotiating one's place in society requires both individual and communal aspects of identity. Indeed, these processes can be described as dialectic processes, wherein oppositions coexist, with neither pole dominating completely, but the combination and connection between the two creating a unified experience that changes over time. Any individual is connected to multiple groups, as a parent, a sibling, neighbor, fellow resident of a town, etc. At times, individuals struggle with tensions between communal and individualistic obligations, trying to maintain all aspects of their identity. Places, especially homes and neighborhoods, are essential actors in this tension, providing places for certain groups to interact, creating barriers between others. Places become part and parcel of these identities, but in a very subtle way. When place attachments are disrupted, individuals struggle to define their losses in order to identify what types of connections will provide them with a meaningful relationship to the world. Some see the bonds of attachment as "limited and replaceable with ties elsewhere" (Fischer *et al.*, 1977, p. 184). We agree with others (Guiliani, 1989) who note that attachments involve unique and nonrepeatable events in the lives of individuals and groups; when rebuilding a network of people and places old attachments are not literally replaced.

2. *Place attachments provide stability and change; disruptions threaten to overwhelm humans with change.*

Place attachments clearly promote and reflect stability, signifying long-term bonds between people and their homes and communities. Many definitions assert that attachment involves processes such as familiarity, stability, and security, that develop over fairly long time spans (see definitions 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). When attachment is described as taken for granted, that implies a certain degree of stability, predictability, and order in knowing what to expect

TABLE 1. DEFINITIONS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT AND DISRUPTIONS

1. *Disruptions*: "Any severe loss may represent a disruption in one's relationship to the past, to the present, and to the future. Losses generally bring about fragmentation of routines, of relatonships, and of expectations, and frequently imply an alteration in the world of physically available objects and spatially oriented action. It is a disruption in the sense of continuity which is ordinarily a taken-for-granted framework for functioning in a universe which has temporal, social, and spatial dimensions. . . . the loss of an important place represents a change in a potentially significant component of the experience of continuity" (Fried, 1963, p. 232).

2. *Topophilia* "can be defined broadly to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment" (Tuan, 1974, p. 93). "Topophilia takes many forms and varies greatly in emotional range and intensity. . . [It includes] the fondness for place because it evokes pride of ownership or of creation" (p. 247).

3. *Attachment*: "individuals' commitment to their neighborhood and their neighbors" (Fischer *et al.*, 1977, p. 139). Commitment includes social involvement and subjective feelings. Attachment develops through a cost–benefit analysis whereby people compare their own neighborhood with a small set of available alternatives. Neighborhood attachment includes institutional ties, involvement, social contacts, and positive feelings.

4. *Place dependence*: one's "perceived strength of association between him or herself and specific places" (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981, p. 457).

5. *Place identity*: "clusters of positively and negatively valenced cognitions of physical settings . . . [that] help to define who and of what value the person is both to himself and in terms of how he thinks of others" (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983, p. 74). . . . [The cognitions] "evolve through . . . selective engagement . . . on both a conscious and unconscious level" (p. 62).

6. Attachment can be viewed as a multilevel person–place bond that evolves from specifiable conditions of place and characteristics of people" (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983, p. 223). It is "a positive affective bond" (p. 233). Attachments involve "cognitions of satisfaction and expectations of stability, feelings of positive affect, greater knowledge of the locale, and behaviors that serve to maintain or enhance the location. . . . When the total balance within this system is positive, the person is attached; when it goes negative [the person is] detached or alienated" (p. 237).

7. "Place . . . means permanence, security, nourishment, a center or organizing principle" (Cochrane, 1987, p. 11). . . . "place is currently understood less as a physical location than a deeply affective characterization crystallized from an individual's emotions, experience and cultural background." [There is a] "reciprocal relationship between individuals and place, an interlocking system in which the people and place define one another" (p. 7).

8. [Attachments involve] "four significant neighborhood domains: *The ways personal needs are met, their location and distribution over space, the role of affiliations to others* in the area, and the *temporal patterns* of each one. All of these contribute to the formation of an ecological niche, a safe haven within a place. How this occurs is important to understanding connection to places" (Rivlin, 1987, pp. 12–14).

9. "Place is seen as a centre of felt value, incarnating the experience and aspirations of people. Thus it is not only an arena for everyday life . . . [it also] provides *meaning* to that life. To be attached to a place is seen as a fundamental human need and, particularly as home, as the foundation of our selves and our identities. Places are thus conceived as profound centres of human existence. As such, they can provide not only a sense of well-being but also one of entrapment and drudgery. To be tied to one place may well enmesh a person in the familiar and routine" (Eyles, 1989, p. 109).

(continued)

TABLE 1. (*Continued*)

10. "These bonds are developed through long-term, focused involvement in a residential setting. Through the purposeful and satisfying concentration of the multiple routines of daily life in a geographic location, the residential environ is . . . imbued with positive affect. The home environ becomes a unique place of familiar, known, and predictable activities, people, and physical elements; a focal point of one's experiential space. Psychological bonds with home places are most often unconscious or taken-for-granted experiences of bodily orientation in the physical environs of one's home as well as an intimate sense of embeddedness, belonging, comfort, at ease, and security in this locale" (Feldman, 1990, pp. 187–188).

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from the environment. In stable circumstances a deep embeddedness can be beneficial by providing a stable sense of self in connection with environment.

Yet, place attachments are not static either; they change in accordance with changes in the people, activities or processes, and places involved in the attachments. They are nurtured through continuing series of events that reaffirm humans' relations with their environments. Housing renovation is an example of an activity that changes the environment, yet can still maintain and enhance one's attachment to place. If people fail to make the changes in their environment that provide support for their desired identities and goals, then attachment can erode. Thus, attachments are responsive to human aspirations and experiences (definition 9). Individuals often anticipate and expect changes in life circumstances in such a way that place attachments adjust automatically or with minimal disruption. Severe disruptions occur when the changes become so great that humans must work hard to define the thread of continuity or stability in life; at times, change may feel overwhelming.

In combination, the dialectic themes show how ties to places are integral to the fundamental human tasks of determining individual and group identity and achieving a mixture of stability and change. A dialectic analysis avoids prescribing an ideal mix of individuality–communality or stability–change, but it is clear that not all mixtures are viable. There may be zones of healthy interdependence between dialectic oppositions. Too much stability prevents development; excessive or uncontrolled change creates chaos. An overreliance on the community may lead to a state of dependency, whereas too much individualism can be isolating.

3. *Place attachments are holistic, multifaceted, and include several levels of environmental scale; disruptions must be examined for their holistic, multifaceted, and multiscale aspects.*

Place attachments are holistic. Some definitions reflect the assumption that human experience is integrally related to place and involves a holistic and ongoing blend of people, processes, and places (elements of a transactional worldview; see Altman & Rogoff, 1987). In such cases of profound attachments to place (variously called "existential insideness," Relph, 1975; or "rootedness," Tuan, 1974), places are experienced as an extension of the self. Such attachments arise naturally in the context of daily experience, often without conscious intent (see definitions 1, 5, and 10). In contrast is the view that human experience is separable from context. As distinct and objective observers of settings, humans engage in rational economic analyses of places, are able to specify the costs and benefits of bonds to places, and are willing to trade off one place for another when the benefits dictate (definitions 3 and 6).

Both views of human nature are valuable, but the first view is more in keeping with accounts of individuals experiencing severe disruptions in place. A common observation of those who survive disasters is that the disaster made them realize how they had taken the provisions of places for granted. In the daily course of life, the holistic experience of people and places creates a tangible reality to undergird many abstract values, self-definitions, and understandings. In such cases, any listing of the costs and benefits of a place prior to its disruption would be misleading, as individuals underestimate the extent to which place is bound up with daily experiences of self and others. Indeed, the more economic analyses of place attachments arise from scholars explaining voluntary mobility within a stable societal context. In these cases, it is likely that a cost–benefit approach will capture the essential differences between places, even if it is insensitive to the similarities between places. In contrast, disasters may reveal that humans never articulated all of the benefits of a place, that taken-for-granted benefits are appreciated only in retrospect.

Because place attachments operate in the background of awareness, it is difficult to assess them. Although the shock of disruption helps to clarify what has been disrupted, investigators often rely on other methodological tools that can reveal unstated assumptions underlying behaviors. Open-ended exploratory interviews or careful analysis of the symbolic functions of environment can help draw out the meaning and experience of attachment (Cochrane, 1987; Oliver-Smith, 1986) and of its disruption (Anthony, 1984; Fried, 1963). In sum, the holistic nature of truly profound attachments means that they are only fully recognized when they have been disrupted. Even then, scientists need to use a method that will enable individuals to process and articulate their losses.

Place attachments are multifaceted. We concur with definitions that describe attachments as multifaceted, involving behavior, cognition, and affect (see definitions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Attachment processes involve celebrations, routines, personalizations, and creations of environments that serve to cultivate individual, family, and community identities.

Many emphasize that attachments especially involve emotional or affective bonds (see 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). The positive nature of attachment may simply reflect that attachments provide a reassuring and known place in the world that facilitates functioning. But the substance of one's attachments may include negative elements, such as entrenchment in a lower-class status (Fried, 1963; Oliver-Smith, 1986) or feelings of drudgery that may accompany routines (see 9 or 4, "place dependence"). More typically, place attachments provide a wider range of positive experiences, such as security, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, etc. We will reserve other terms, like *detached* or *alienated*, to describe instances when positive bonds have not been developed or maintained.

Place attachments occur at both individual and communal levels. In terms of physical scale, some state that attachments are to particular places (definition 4), often homes (9), neighborhoods (3 and 8), or residential settings (6 and 10), while others leave the places unspecified (2, 5, and 7). Similarly, different aggregates of people (e.g., individuals, families, neighbors) may be involved in its creation and, after disruption, its re-creation. We agree that the geographical boundaries of place attachments may be vague but that they involve bonds that are important for individual or group identities.

More generally, issues of environmental (and temporal) scale serve to distinguish place attachment from the related concept of territoriality. Both concepts involve individuals and groups, physical and social qualities of places, and can yield negative effects when disrupted. But attachment may be less spatially delimited than territoriality (Taylor, 1988). For example, attachments to a "hometown" may represent generalized experiences from a variety of specific settings, many of which might not be defended in and of themselves as one would defend a territory. We also do not consider all affective ties to places to constitute attachment, as some arise from symbols experienced only fleetingly or indirectly (e.g., feelings of sentimentality toward the Statue of Liberty). Similarly, attachments involve enduring ties, whereas some territories operate and are defended immediately (Taylor, 1988). Thus, this chapter focuses on important and enduring places, such as homes and neighborhoods, where territoriality and place attachment overlap substantially.

4. *Disruptions can be understood by examining their individuality–communality and stability–change functions over predisruption, disruption, and postdisruption phases.*

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following definition of place attachment and disruption is offered:

> Place attachment involves positively experienced bonds, sometimes occurring without awareness, that are developed over time from the behavioral, affective, and cognitive ties between individuals and/or groups and their sociophysical environment. These bonds provide a framework for both individual and communal aspects of identity and have both stabilizing and dynamic features. The environments may include homes or communities, places that are important and directly experienced but which may not have easily specified boundaries. Predominately negative connections to place characterize failed attachments, which may be experienced as alienation. Transformations in place attachment occur whenever the people, places, or psychological processes change over time. Disruptions of place attachment are noticeable transformations in place attachment due to noticeable changes in the people, processes, or places.

This definition frames the concept of disruption broadly, giving equal potential to places, processes, or people as instigators of disruptions. However, the research literature is more complete with respect to disruptions of places, so that emphasis will be reflected in this chapter.

Place attachments develop slowly but can be disrupted quickly and can create a long-term phase of dealing with the loss and repairing or re-creating attachments to people and places. These three phases are interdependent, as qualities of the initial attachment or disruption can ease or exacerbate the stress of loss and the difficulty of re-creating attachments. As will be illustrated below, much of the challenge facing those with disruptions in place attachment is to negotiate a reconciliation between the past that has been lost and a future that is both desirable and meaningful. Certain aspects of predisruption attachment may forecast the extent and severity of the disruption and the availability and effectiveness of coping mechanisms. Instead of making causal claims, we will simply point out discernible patterns across the phases of disruption.

DISRUPTIONS TO ATTACHMENT VIA CHANGES IN PLACE PROCESSES

Burglary as a Disruption to Processes

Although we defined disruption as instigated by salient changes in people or processes, we will focus on residential burglary as the one example of disruption of the customary processes involving home. Normally homes provide a secure and private place where one's identity is protected. Even in objectively dangerous neighborhoods, many residents are biased toward feeling safer in the immediate home area than in more distant parts of the neighborhood (Merry, 1981). Burglars exploit residents' tendencies to take home security for granted by entering through an unlocked door or window in 43% of the U.S. home burglaries (see Brown, 1985, for a review).

The typical safety and security associated with home invites residents to develop strong attachments to home. Homes become the site of strong and reassuring temporal rhythms and markers involving both stability and change. Daily routines of coming and going, when completed safely, reinforce feelings that home is a secure anchor. Seasonal changes are often marked by communal holidays, with festive displays that reflect and sustain identity (Caplow, 1984). These displays link to and may enhance residents' feelings of cohesion with their neighbors (Brown & Werner, 1985). The home, especially the interior, contains personalizations and objects that signify relationships, past events, personal achievements, values, and pleasures that help to define individual and communal aspects of the self (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). In sum, the home often works as an extension of its dwellers—reflecting changes within stability, revealing communal and personal identities.

Victims' emotional reactions to burglary, noted in several Western countries (see Brown & Harris, 1989, for a review), provide psychological evidence of residents' experience of disruption. These reactions include feelings of anger, shock or disbelief, and fear. Some victims report effects that linger months after the burglary, including fear of entering the home, of being alone, or of the burglar's return. These emotions reveal how many victims have been caught off guard, mistakenly assuming that home is a safe extension of self that is both stable and under the resident's control.

The severity of victims' aversive reactions reflected the severity of the disruption. More severe disruptions of security and control were indexed as those involving a large number of rooms entered and the presence of property damage/disarrangement. In these types of burglaries, victims experienced a wider range of aversive emotional reactions and a greater distrust of the police. This suggests that more salient violations of the home's normal provisions elicit a greater sense of disruption.

Bonds to the community and neighborhood were also disrupted. When the burglary was more salient, victims reported a greater distrust of the police. Finally, when the burglary involved a large number of rooms entered and the presence of disarranged property, victims felt less neighborhood security. Even though burglary does not directly involve neighbors, a victim's belief that the neighborhood is familiar and safe is eroded.

Burglary also violates customary forms of identity display, which are important supports of individual and family identity. Families usually extend invitations into the home only to kin and close friends; thus, the personalizations of the home that convey the more private features of family identity are usually shown only by invitation. The burglary changed all of that—now a potential stranger has not only entered the home and stolen from it, the burglar also has intimate and unreciprocated knowledge about the household. This reversal of the ways in which homes normally defend and preserve a family's customary forms of identity display provides the symbolic insult that accompanies the property crime.

Although society provides no symbolic means of reestablishing place attachments in the wake of disruptions created by burglary, police may in fact use evidence processing as a "negative rite," a way of allowing victims to mark and come to terms with their loss. Police elect to dust for fingerprints after a crime (Stenross, 1984) when the homeowner lost special possessions, such as silver or jewelry, that may have had sentimental as well as monetary value. Similarly, dusting for prints was more likely after forced entries, which the author believed involved greater insults to residents' sense of security. These predictors attained significance even when more traditional predictors of police response (i.e., dollar value of loss, the presence of leads pointing to a particular suspect, victim's race and insurance coverage) had already been taken into account. Even though the fingerprinting procedures cannot themselves restore the victim's attachments, at least they provide symbolic gestures that attest to the victim's loss. Additional research is needed to determine whether these procedures facilitate the reestablishment of place attachments.

In sum, burglary disrupts victims' assumptions concerning the meaning of places intrinsic to their identities as individuals, family members, and neighbors. Reactions, by both victims and the police, correspond to the degree to which the disruption threatens a household's ability to identify with their home and neighborhood—to believe them to be stable and supportive features of the world. Burglary, like other disruptions, alerts residents to the fact that they felt greater security in their homes and neighborhoods than was warranted. Because attachments involve people, places, and the processes underlying people–place bonds, burglary represents a direct disruption of the bonding processes. The next section addresses disruptions instigated by a change in the place itself.

DISRUPTIONS TO ATTACHMENT VIA CHANGES IN PLACES

Geographic relocations clearly represent a disruption of place; yet most studies of relocation have given short shrift to the disruption of place attachments. Although there has been a long tradition of seeking links between relocation and outcome variables such as health or academic performance, there has been less attention directed to the psychological experiences of the loss of one place and the cultivation of attachments to a new place. The following relocations, chosen to illustrate the process of disruption in a variety of cultural settings, are representative of a range of circumstances for the move, including voluntary and forced migration.

Voluntary Relocation

Sociologists debate how residential mobility relates to a sense of community. Some contend that mobility involves individualistic gains, such as improved status and economic well-being, at the cost of communal losses, such as uprooting and alienating humans from societal claims on their behavior (Fried, 1963; Packard, 1972). Others argue that mobility provided by technology allows spatially unrestricted and satisfying communities. Personal choice replaces spatial constraint as the basis for determining friends, residences, and activities (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Webber, 1970). Place attachment scholarship could broaden both arguments by focusing on the nature of losses involved in disruptions to place attachments.

Predisruption Phase

Voluntary relocations are often planned (e.g., going to college, company transfers, retirement), and can accompany positive (e.g., job transfer, marriage) or negative (e.g., divorce, widowhood) status changes, and/or normative changes (e.g., leaving home, getting married). Anticipated voluntary moves allow individuals to experience the transition in a gradual fashion and to prepare for accompanying changes in individual and communal identity. Thus, people work at creating stability within the change and prepare both for leaving and for beginning new individual and communal aspects of identity.

Loosening Attachments and Obligations to the Former Home. Research by Wapner and colleagues (Wofsey, Rierdan, & Wapner, 1979) has explored how graduating college seniors loosen their emotional and cognitive connections with a place when they have firm plans for their future. Across three small studies, students with well-articulated plans experiences more of an affective and cognitive "distance" from college, as evidenced by both their verbal descriptions and cognitive maps. These students described the campus in factual terms and drew objective features from aerial views, while students without firm plans drew familiar details, closeup views, and people. Thus, when an impending relocation becomes "real," students show some loosening of connections to the current residence.

Well-adjusted high school seniors have also reported more active ways of tying up loose ends and reducing their obligations to family and friends when anticipating relocation to college (e.g., completing home repairs; Coelho, Hamburg, & Murphy, 1976). Leave-taking celebrations, such as going-away parties, can involve farewells to old friends, promises to keep in touch after the move, and forecasts of a happy resolution of the move. Through both distancing and strengthening connections to past life, such preparations assure some continuity of community and allow place attachments to be loosened in a gradual fashion, imposing some stability on what could otherwise be an abrupt change.

Anticipating and Connecting with a New Life. In the same study of college-bound students (Coelho *et al.*, 1976), some coped by reminding themselves of previous experienced at summer camp or with sharing bedrooms to assure themselves that the move would be manageable, or in our terms, that there is continuity in the face of change. In addition, some practiced their anticipated postrelocation lifestyle before the move, learning independent living skills needed in college. Others wrote to their assigned roommates and gathered information about the college area. Thus, the development of a new identity is started prior to the move itself.

In sum, although research on the preparation for relocation is sparse, it suggests that advance efforts to start relinquishing old ties and anticipating or developing new ties and identities will help reduce the disruption. Furthermore, these efforts involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes that serve to reaffirm some and relinquish other aspects of former attachments.

Disruption

Most scholars agree that relocation involves short-term disruptions that can be stressful. Although a fairly frequent event, with one in five moving yearly (Fischer *et al.*, 1977), U.S. samples have rated relocation as a fairly stressful event (Holmes & Rahe, 1965). Nevertheless, there are ways of experiencing the move that make it more manageable.

Choosing and Liking the Move. Stokols, Shumaker, and Martinez (1983) found that when individuals do not believe they are the type of people who enjoy the change of moving or when they do not perceive the move to be completely voluntary, they are more likely to experience health problems than other relocators. So even among nominally "voluntary" movers, there are differences in the degree to which relocation is experienced as voluntary. Families may pressure adolescents to go to college, widows may move to prevent economic constraints, or parents may not consult the children when deciding to move. The perceived voluntariness of the move may therefore reflect the degree to which individuals desire and are prepared for a change in attachments. Sometimes a relocation may support a new or desired identity. Voluntary moves may also enable those who were detached or alienated to move to settings where more positive attachments can be cultivated. To the extent that voluntary moves can be anticipated and planned, individuals may actively loosen old ties and begin new ones in order to lessen the abruptness of the change.

Postdisruption

Homesickness. Students' memories of their favorite homes reveal intense longings, even for places left years ago (Anthony, 1984). Many described the move as ending a phase of life, recognizing that identity changes with relocation; others remembered their emotional resistance to the move and feeling "heartsick," "betrayed," and "numb."

The feelings that focus on loss of place and people are often called homesickness. Brown (1987a) found that feelings of homesickness among college freshmen are frequently experienced, change in intensity over time, are multifaceted, and include missing family, friends, and places and feeling a sense of disrupted identity. Few students were severely homesick, but many showed some degree of homesickness, a finding confirmed by British researchers using different measures and a variety of age groups (Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1986; Fisher, Murray, & Frazer, 1985). In the U.S. research, students reported most homesickness for family and friends. This type of homesickness, as well as feelings of identity disruption, increased over the first semester but decreased during the second semester. Finally, a feeling of missing the physical environment of the hometown increased across time so that it was most severe 7 months after relocation. These temporal trends indicate that homesickness does not peak immediately after relocation, perhaps because of the distractions and novelty of the move itself. Later, as they attempt some meaningful sense of connection with the new environment, feelings about home may serve as reminders of lost but valued aspects of life.

In addition, this study examined whether homesickness might reflect dissatisfaction with social support in the new environment (Brown, 1987b). In general, homesickness is not simply a reaction to poor relationships in the new social milieu, a finding that has been independently corroborated (Fisher *et al.*, 1985). Ties to new environments are not easy replacements for what was left behind. Certainly family members cannot be replaced and, although new friendships may be developed, they are not literal replacements for old friendships. Students still miss old friends regardless of their satisfaction with new friendships. In sum, even voluntary relocatees feel that part of their identity derived from the people and places left behind.

Maintaining Ties to the Former Home. Sometimes relocators cope by maintaining attachments to the old home, as Yoruba Ibadan migrants did after moving from rural areas to the city for jobs (Chokor, 1988). Although satisfied with the modern functional conveniences of their new city homes, ties to their villages were maintained and extensively cultivated. Many migrants travelled back to the home villages for special events, contributed money for economic development in home areas, and chose spouses from the hometown region. Even after extended stays in their new homes, most believed they would return to their "true homes" some day. However, this strategy of living in one house while attached to a different and distant home may be rare. When California students visited a favorite home they had moved from, many reacted with anger or sadness that *their* home had been changed and ruined (Anthony, 1984). Consequently, the strategy of maintaining old ties may only work if migrants are welcomed back and if the place or the people associated with home remains stable.

Becoming Identified with the New Place. Active efforts to display individual and communal identities in new places may also ease the transition. In a study of college freshman (Vinsel, Brown, Altman, & Foss, 1980), it was found that most personalized their rooms fairly early in the year. Thus, assigning meaning and symbolic significance to a new place is a common response among relocatees.

Furthermore, early warning signs of the future dropout were apparent in the type of decorations on freshman walls. The walls of students who dropped out by the end of the second year had more decorations that looked like reminders of the old hometown—pictures from high school, art work by siblings, hometown slogans or insignia. Although most students had some of these symbolic reminders of the former home, the dropouts were likely to have greater numbers of them. Similarly, it looked as if the dropouts were having more difficulty finding meaningful ties in the new university setting. The dropouts were less likely to have decorations showing investment in and commitment to people, places, and activities in the new environment. These personalizations could include club insignia, class announcements, or posters from local recreation spots. Students who chose to leave college had many symbols of attachment to the hometown, few to the new environment, and showed a narrower range of interests and activities in the new setting.

In sum, managing voluntary relocations begins prior to the move itself as individuals prepare for and come to terms with leaving. The disruption itself is likely to involve some stress, but the negative feelings accompanying relocation underscore the value, meaning, and usefulness of previous involvement with places and people. Feelings of homesickness or longing for old places and people reveal the extent to which relocators were interconnected with those settings. They also may allow individuals to reflect on their losses in order to clarify what qualities of places or people are worth seeking in the new setting. This search for new attachments must be done in a flexible manner because both old and new ties represent irreplaceable commitments, stemming from nonrepeatable events in the life course of attachments to people and places.

Involuntary Relocations

Involuntary relocations often follow natural forces, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, drought or flood, or human actions, such as toxic contaminations, or economic development initiatives such as dam or highway building or urban renewal projects. These relocations are often sudden, with change threatening to overwhelm stability. They can involve injury or loss of life and possessions, losses that are integral to self-definitions. In fact, the following discussions of two particular disasters will illustrate how places sustain multiple sources of identity, including kin, friends, and neighbors; institutions and cultural structures; and meaningful behavior settings tied to work, leisure, and celebration.

The Buffalo Creek Flood

In 1972, a dam on Buffalo Creek collapsed causing a flood that killed 125 people and destroyed 1,000 homes, leaving 4,000 people from 16 small Appalachian communities homeless. Accounts of the tragedy are drawn from Stern (1976), the lawyer representing residents against the mining company that had built the dam, and Erikson (1976), the sociologist who documented the social and psychological aftermath for the lawsuit. Although because of the lawsuit some have questioned residents' accounts of losses (Dynes, Billings, & Maggard, 1978), government mental health workers corroborated the severe psychiatric impact of the flood, independently of the lawsuit and for residents not involved in the lawsuit (Stern, 1976). Similarly, as the lawsuit did not focus on place attachment, there was no reason to distort accounts of disruption in place attachments.

Predisaster Attachment. Families along Buffalo Creek were knit tightly together in the face of the chronic problems of poverty and the dangers of mining life. Community life was focused locally on informal neighboring relationships within each narrow village along the creek, with few formal organizations beyond the church. Because the region was fairly isolated from national trends toward socioeconomic progress, the community was an important source of civic and cultural pride, although this reflected common circumstance more than common action.

The Nature of the Disruption. The severity and capriciousness of the flood violated residents' assumptions about the world. Homes, formerly understood as bastions of safety, became weapons, trapping some neighbors in the flood, dismembering others. Death, although an acceptable risk for miners, struck mostly women and children, who were supposed to be exempt from danger. Survivors also had to reconcile their religious belief that justice comes to the righteous with the fact that many flood victims were devoutly religious. Finally, the course of the flood itself seemed random, as it rolled from bank to bank, taking out a cluster of homes here, sparing a cluster there.

Postdisaster Disruptions. Outsiders brought in the machinery, work crews, and bureaucratic sources of relief, leaving residents as passive onlookers to the recovery. Most survivors did not participate in a class action lawsuit brought against the mining company that had built the dam but settled individually for small but immediate financial compensations. Even lawsuit participants did not act as a support group for one another but remained passively "litigized" as lawyers pressed their claims.

Perhaps in part because of their lack of meaningful or efficacious involvement in recovery, victims were severely traumatized. A state-employed psychologist first noted the "Buffalo Creek syndrome," a form of posttraumatic stress disorder, that included "loss of appetite, sleeplessness, extreme fear, and anxiety anytime it rains" (cited in Stern, 1976, p. 238). It led to widespread and persistent family problems and disabling character changes (Titchener & Kapp, 1976). One and a half years later, 93% of the 615 participants in the class action still had an identifiable emotional disorder (Erikson, 1976). Admittedly, our analysis is based on observations prior to the resolution of the lawsuit; any progress in adjustment beyond that time is not reflected in this account.

Disruption and Stability–Change. What happened to Buffalo Creek represents the two extremes of the stability–change dialectic. Prior to the disaster, place attachments arose from a fairly stable context, with long-established neighborhoods and homes inhabited by residents who could trace their local roots back several generations. The flood ripped this stable social and physical fabric of the community, leaving residents helpless and detached from the physical and social reconstruction of their community. Residents had drastic changes imposed on them first by the flood itself, then by the outside experts and authorities directing the relief efforts; residents themselves were not active initiators of or participants in change processes. Conversely, the lengthy legal and bureaucratic delays caught residents in a protracted limbo. Furthermore, residents could not hope to re-create their old community, as a new highway was planned that would split the town and destroy its rural isolation. None of these events provided residents with the stability associated with positive and self-affirming goals; thus, residents were alienated, unable to connect with their present or future.

Disruption and Individuality–Communality. With regard to their individuality, the loss of their homes stripped residents of the "furniture of self," according to Erikson. Many miners had put years of effort and scarce resources into transforming small company houses into homes that reflected their own skills and tastes. That investment was gone, along with all the family memorabilia. Several residents felt that their new permanent housing was of better quality than before, but that did not make it "home."

The emergency rehousing trailers proved a major obstacle to restoring personal, family, and community identity. For families, privacy suffered because "family quarrels could be heard five or six doors away, and such everyday sounds as bedsprings moving or glassware breaking or toilets flushing were broadcast" to neighbors (Erikson, 1976, p. 149). Normal patterns of sociability suffered, as trailers were too small for the kitchen tables and front porches that had been the locus of family activity. The metal roofs of the trailers also amplified the noise of rainstorms, which kept residents vigilant throughout rainy nights, fearful of new flooding.

For neighbors, losses were exacerbated by the trailer courts, which removed the physical supports for the former patterns of community sociability. Erikson describes the predisaster community as one ordered spatially rather than hierarchically along status lines or formally into organizations. But homeless families were assigned to trailer homes on a first come, first served basis instead of by previous location or social network. Lamenting the loss of their former neighbors, residents found it impossible to rekindle a sense of community after the random reshuffling of neighbors into trailer courts. In addition, the crowded trailer court provided no adequate places for former patterns of outdoor neighborhood congregation or play. Exacerbated by the use of alcohol and other socially disapproved coping mechanisms, people came to view their trailer court neighbors as strangers who did not share their values, traditions, or understandings.

Formal organizations beyond the church were unpopular both before and after the flood. Relations with employers were also strained, as the largest employer—the mining company—had built the faulty dam and did not check on families after the flood. Some company officials told residents the flood was "an act of God," which required no compensation. The mostly fundamentalist residents were forced to question either their faith or their long-time economic providers.

In the face of combined losses of support across individual, family, neighborhood, and community levels, residents could not be enlisted in a "conspiracy to make a perilous world seem safe" (Erikson, 1976, p. 240). The disaster had so seriously eroded residents' supports to identity that they could not make any positive statements about who they were or where they were going.

The Yungay Landslide

The next disaster illustrates how drastic changes do not inevitably overwhelm all semblance of stability, individuality, or communality. In 1970 an earthquake killed over 70,000 and left half a million homeless throughout Peru. In the small town of Yungay the quake sent a huge slab of glacial ice through the town, burying it under 5 meters of mud and killing all but 200 residents. Only the tops of four palm trees from the central square marked where the town had been. The primary account of the disaster was written by Oliver-Smith (1986), an anthropologist whose fieldwork in the community began prior to the disaster and who returned to record the survivors' experiences; a secondary source was Bode (1989), an anthropologist who moved to a nearby village over a year after the disaster.

Predisaster Attachment. In Peru, "one's birthplace is part of one's identity" (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 52). Even those who had migrated to Lima still called themselves Yungainos and many joined Yungay-related migrant organizations. The livelihood and way of life for many Yungainos were strongly linked to the land; "a peasant who loses his land . . . may lose the traditional community-based sources of social and personal identity" (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 116). Immediately prior to the earthquake then, Yungainos were strongly attached to their land, proud of their community, and generally enjoyed a good quality of life.

Postdisaster Disruptions. The magnitude of the disaster and the isolation of the area created a period of postdisaster confusion, where normal and meaningful patterns of life were disrupted. Initially, the normal sense of property and individual ownership was lost as people shared whatever resources they had and formed households with other unrelated survivors. Traditional divisions of labor along gender lines were erased temporarily to get things done.

Because official aid efforts were delayed when outsiders did not know the extent of the devastation, self-help efforts were necessary for survival.

Disruption and Stability–Change. Within a few months, once physical survival was assured, residents struggled to come to terms with their losses and to re-create a sense of stability and a positive identity. Oliver-Smith (1986) describes how grieving sets up a conflict between "allegiance to the past and commitment to the present" (p. 185). This conflict is eventually resolved by "incorporating what was valuable in the past with new commitments to the present in a meaningful experience" (p. 185).

The grieving process involved remembering and valuing social and physical attachments lost in the landslide. This was facilitated, in part, by their proximity to the slide "scar," where survivors would gather to mourn and place crosses to honor the dead. They also grieved

> for places and objects that no longer existed and for customs that were no longer viable in the camp's environment. The constant reminiscences about this chapel, that street, the little corner drug store, or a stroll in the plaza were ritual expressions of the value and significance of the lost past. (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 188)

Yungainos also used special ceremonial days to commemorate the past, including the traditionally celebrated day of the dead and new ceremonial day, the anniversary of the disaster. These ceremonies allowed residents to focus and contain their grief in a way that enhanced a sense of community while still allowing them to get on with a new life. The ceremonies also were a public spectacle, prompting government officials to hasten reconstruction efforts (Bode, 1989). One ceremony was specifically oriented to the future, when they planted the first palm tree for the new plaza to be built for the new Yungay. Thus, over time the survivors moved from focusing on the past to focusing on the future and selecting meanings from the past that were worthy of striving for in the future.

Disruption and Individuality–Communality. Ironically, the initial lack of aid may have benefited victims in the long run by forcing them to renew familiar household forms and to provide for their own survival, thus affirming some positive self-definitions. When aid efforts arrived they often threatened the identity and self-esteem of Yungainos. Donated clothing was often tattered and dirty, more appropriate to beggars than self-respecting individuals; donated food was foreign. Neckties or other inappropriate donations left residents feeling misunderstood yet resentfully dependent on outsiders.

The rehousing efforts also served to threaten a positive identity and self-esteem for many of the survivors, echoing problems at Buffalo Creek. Many wanted loans or grants to rebuild their own homes. Instead, authorities provided modular housing and determined house materials, form, and placement. Houses, crowded together and without water or electricity, did not fit survivors' customary ways of life. As one survivor complained, "We are not animals to be put in stables. These houses violate the privacy of the home and the sanctity of the family" (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 141).

A further problem was the distribution of the housing. Authorities dictated egalitarian principles consistent with national political sentiments (Bode, 1989), which were counter to Yungay's existing social hierarchy. Prior to the disaster, lower-status Indians farmed on the surrounding hills, providing inexpensive labor and food for the elite, who lived in town. With the egalitarian distribution pattern, residents lost the supports for their former social hierarchy.

As heated as these problems were, the two groups agreed, for both economic and psychological reasons, that old Yungay should be rebuilt close by. But authorities planned to rebuild elsewhere, providing the external threat that rallied the residents to work together to create institutions, rituals, and symbols with which to advance their cause. Signs were painted, proclaiming the town to be the "new Yungay." The Catholic church created various victims' aid groups. Parents' associations sprang up to rebuild and reequip the local school. Citizens even took pride in the quick reestablishment of the soccer leagues. Although the plaza was destroyed, residents created and used new gathering places—in shops, on soccer fields, in the church, and by the gravesites on the scar itself.

Thus, stable values of the residents sparked their participation in changes designed to regain a tangible place suited to their values. In this way, activities provided a "sense of continuity, of consistency, and a resistance to the further alteration of the environment and society" (p. 213). Residents relied heavily on their broadly communal aspects of identity as Yungainos for the rebuilding; ethnic, family, and individual identities appeared less instrumental in reestablishing attachments.

Summary of Dialectic Themes in Disasters

Although our discussion of both the Yungay and Buffalo Creek relocations has focused on stability and community, interdependence between opposing dialectic forces was also apparent. For example, individual identity must be somewhat viable before residents feel they can contribute to a group. Conversely, a sense of community and participation in community action can enhance individual well-being. Of the many forms of interdependence, the relationships between individual and community identities appear synergistic rather than compensatory—erosions in one linked to erosions in the other, strength linked to strength. Contrary to Packard's (1972) claim, individuals did not resort to neglecting community to regain their individual identities; communal identities even appeared to strengthen individual ones in the Peruvian case.

Prior to a disruption, some stability is necessary for and enhances place attachment. During disruption, the greater and faster and more unpredictable the change, the worse the impact of the disruption. After the disruption, additional changes are needed to retrieve a supportive context. If residents become engaged in work toward a meaningful future, they may regain a sense of meaningful and efficacious involvement in the world. Community organizations may bolster participants' individual and communal identities while providing a future vision of stability—such as a reconstructed Yungay. If action toward future goals is not achieved, residents may be frozen into the dysfunctional limbo witnessed at Buffalo Creek. If change is both sufficient and reflecting positive identity goals for the community, then attachments may be recreated.

The disasters also helped to extend previous dialectic analyses, which were often conducted in relatively stable contexts (see Brown & Werner, 1985), where residents' identities were not severely threatened. The disasters threw into sharper relief the depth and breadth of environmental supports to identity. The loss of a house large enough to accommodate family reunions, the loss of informal neighboring places, the donation of tattered clothing all point to the importance of having identity as a family member, a neighbor or community member, a person worthy of respect by others. The loss of jobs and of abilities to rebuild homes underscored the importance of work- and competence-related identities. These observations go beyond a simple dichotomy between individual and communal identities to suggest that viable identities have strong evaluative components too; the ability to feel pride, competence and worth are crucial accompaniments to viable identities. Hence, drastic disruptions in ties to places reveal how those places had enabled people to sustain a rich set of multiple but connected identities that defined residents as worthy people.

COMMONALITIES ACROSS DISRUPTIONS

Despite the diversity of disruptions included in this review, several similarities are apparent with respect to factors that impinge on the disruption experience. In Table 2 we have presented these factors according to when they occur within the three phases of disruption. Again, we cannot make any firm predictions concerning the pattern of interconnection between these features. We have simply culled them from the literature, placing them in the dialectic framework in order to lend coherence to the myriad possible features of disruption that are important to take into account.

The Strength of Predisruption Attachments

Both Buffalo Creek and Yungay residents were described as deeply attached to their homes and communities prior to the disaster, and in both cases there was the suggestion that the stronger attachments predicted more devastating disruptions. Fried's (1963) classic study of forced relocation of West Enders for slum clearance in Boston also suggested this link. Here long-term grief reactions, involving sadness and depression, afflicted about half the women he interviewed. Those who reported they were more strongly attached to the West End (i.e., they had known and liked the area, considered it to be home, and had many friends there) were most likely to show grief. In fact, voluntary student relocators were shown to loosen some attachments prior to disruption, perhaps to avoid a sudden severance of those ties. The strength of predisruption ties is also important in burglary disruptions; burglaries of homes are described as more devastating than burglaries of commercial areas because of the strength of attachments to the former (Brown, 1985). Although most of these studies are retrospective in nature, they all suggest that the strength of preexisting ties predicts the intensity of disruption.

TABLE 2. FEATURES OF STABILITY–CHANGE AND INDIVIDUAL–COMMUNALITY IN DISRUPTED ATTACHMENTS

Preexisting attachments	Attachment disruption	Reestablishing attachments
Stability–Change	*Stability–Change*	*Stability–Change*
Degree to which attachments reflect long-term involvements, unique events. Desirability of stability Ability to initiate closure and anticipatory detachment Orientation to new places and people	Predictability, speed, salience of onset Identification with and emotional reaction to change Ability to maintain ties to former places. Dissensus regarding nature of change	Ability to create stability in the face of change Ability of grief or rituals to define ends and beginnings Finality and salience of disruption Ability to enact desired changes, combat delays
Individuality–Communality	*Individuality–Communality*	*Individuality–Communality*
Awareness of attachment Strength and replaceability of identity bases Extent to which place reflects identity Cohesiveness of community Strength of individual and communal resources	Pattern and scope of disruption of people, place, & processes Ability to choose new place Transformation of safe to dangerous places and people Degree of identity insult and desirability of new identity Possibility of self-help Responsibility for disruption	Extent of losses in physical and social supports to identity Ability of places to provide desired identity & security Privacy, territory control Loss of valued identities and development of positive ones Degree of community consensus Attachment via external threat

Prerelocation Resources

Some aspects of prerelocation resources appear to predict vulnerability to disruption and the ultimate ease of recovery. In Yungay and Buffalo Creek, one reason residents settled in such harsh surroundings was to escape pressures from mainstream society, a reflection of their precarious standing in the larger social order. Both crime victims and forced relocators often have few resources to begin with, which leaves them more vulnerable to disruption. The poor are often moved for slum clearance or government works (Colson, 1971; Fried, 1963). A lack of resources can compound the problems of coping and reattachment as well as decrease the aid given to victims after a disaster (e.g., low-income neighborhoods received less aid than upper-income ones after the 1989 California earthquake; Gurwitt, 1990).

Failure to Acknowledge the Value of Losses

Relocation authorities often fail to acknowledge the benefits provided by prerelocation homes and communities, often because they fail to appreciate the source and nature of residents' strong attachments to place. What were viewed as slums to relocation authorities in Boston's West End were homes to its residents (Fried, 1963). Gwembe Tonga residents strongly resisted relocation for a dam project because they required the continued residence of at least one lineage member on the old homestead in order to maintain the important magical powers derived from lineage ancestors (Colson, 1971). Thus relocation authorities are insensitive when they show no insight into how place attachments provide anchors of meaning in residents' lives by symbolizing and sustaining self, family, or home.

Degree of Change after Relocation

Disrupted place attachments are difficult to re-create when the new situation shows little familiarity. In the disasters, new housing in particular violated stable organizing features of society and proper boundaries and expressions of individuality and communality. Other relocation efforts have been shown to provide housing that violates customary roles of men and women (Colson, 1971), guests and visitors (Brolin, 1976), family members (Gauvain *et al.*, 1983; Marris, 1986), or family groups (Colson, 1971). Amongst more voluntary relocators Feldman (1990) has noted a particular form of attachment called "settlement identity" that represents attachments to a particular type of place. People show attachments to places like cities or suburbs, which suggest differing identities for respective residents and which may provide continuity for those moving from one suburb to another. Similarly, students going to college often reassured themselves by remembering similar experiences in their lives, thus providing a sense of continuity in the change.

One feature of new housing that seems especially salient to many undergoing disruption is the ability of housing to make them feel secure. Among the Gwembe, who were suffering increased death rates due to food problems at the new location, the denser settlement forms of the new housing meant that more residents than normal could hear the funeral drums, thus heightening awareness of deaths within the group (Colson, 1971). Similarly, Buffalo Creek victims pointed out how their trailers amplified the noise of rain, exacerbating fears of future flooding. Burglary victims too seem to struggle with the knowledge that home security is often a psychological construction rather than a physical reality.

Community Disability versus Community Action

Documentations of other disasters also suggest that community organizations can help victims with recovery, especially when problems are of such magnitudes that governmental or corporate assistance is required. A particularly useful examination of toxic disasters by Edelstein (1988) showed that communities often become "disabled" in the face of government, corporate, and media hegemony and widespread "dissensus" among victims regarding the nature, origins, and remedies for the disaster. Dissensus impedes community action and may be linked to all three phases of our model. Dissensus is more likely when: predisaster community identity is weak or diffuse (e.g., with heterogeneity, geographic dispersion, absence of formal organizations) or dependent on those responsible for the disaster; the disaster itself has socially and/or spatially isolated impacts; and postdisaster community organizations cannot agree on the nature of the disaster or become worn down by bureaucratic delays.

All of these factors were present to some degree in Buffalo Creek. But we suspect that another important cause of dissensus was the loss or tainting of the physical ingredients of individual and, especially, communal identity during the disaster, making cohesive action difficult to initiate. In Buffalo Creek, not only did these individualistic residents lose their homes, a major symbol of identity, they also lost the spatial bases of organization into long-standing neighborhoods that had undergirded a sense of community. The geographic and design features that had sustained informal neighboring and had been intrinsic to residents' patterns of attachments were no longer available to provide a needed sense of community. In Yungay, residents compensated for the loss of the plaza as the major locus of community activity by using alternative sites such as shops, churches, or the scar itself.

In contrast to disabling effects, residents are enabled (Edelstein, 1988) when they channel their anxieties into shared community identity and action, take the initiative and decision-making process from the hands of outsiders, and identify existing points of common interest and common targets in order to rally residents together. This effect was apparent in Yungay, where victims out of necessity initiated their own recovery efforts and sustained them in the face of opposition when government officials tried to dictate their choices. Particularly striking was the use of physical symbols to give tangible form to their common interests and goals.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND SUMMARY

Patterns across the Phases of Disruption

As we stated earlier, it appears that there are a number of connections between the three phases of disruption, but these have never been investigated systematically. For example, similarity between pre- and postdisruption settings appears to lessen the stress of disruption because individuals continue to experience stability and are comfortable with the opportunities to maintain their sense of identity and self-worth in the new setting. In addition, characteristics of the disruption itself are important in the recovery process because they influence opportunities for coping and defining the disruptive threat as over. We have pointed out some of these connections, but future research needs to address these connections more comprehensively.

Additional Disruptions

Our review has necessarily been selective, focusing on burglaries, voluntary relocations, and extreme disasters that involved the loss of family and community members, and homes and community structures. It would be useful to apply our model to other disruptions that differ in temporal and social scale. For example, slower, less dramatic erosions in attachment are also widespread. These could be due to deteriorations in family relations at home, deterioration in the perceived safety, civility, and appearance of neighborhoods (Taylor & Perkins, 1989), or encroachment by traffic or commercial uses (Appleyard, 1981). Even some environmental problems have a more gradual character, such as a 15-year-old underground anthracite coal fire in Centralia, Pennsylvania, that remained an ambiguous danger for residents. The gradual nature of these changes may invite adaptation rather than participation in large-scale changes.

In terms of social scale variations, it would be useful to contrast individual household-level losses (e.g., following fires or evictions) with disruptions to entire communities. The disruptions of place processes provoked by burglary suggested that bonds to the community are also affected by the household event of burglary. Edelstein (1988) has found that toxic disasters often pit proximal neighbors against one another, with affected households clamoring for attention and unaffected ones resenting the complaints and attendant stigma and property devaluations.

Similarly, it would be useful to understand how citizen participation in community organizations relates to the experience of attachment and to other means for adjusting to disrupted attachments. For example, it may be argued that a group of residents must have at least some attachment to the community to be interested in organizing and working together (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990). Although our review focused on formal community participation strategies, informal or individualistic strategies may also provide some relief. Because formal and informal social networks can offer material help and labor, information, and emotional support, communal strategies may be more efficacious than individualistic strategies alone.

Disruption Due to a Change in People

Although we discussed disruptions of places and processes, disruptions can result from changes in people as well. For example, death, divorce, or leaving home may disrupt home attachments. In addition, increased crime and disorder (Perkins *et al.*, 1990), gentrification, or migration may disrupt community attachments. Similarly, physical disabilities or deterioration of health may disrupt attachments to home, such as when families must care for terminally ill members. As residents transform living rooms to bedrooms, displace sofas with hospital beds, and make beds into dining areas, the home may become more of a tangible reminder of recent losses than a place of positive memories. In sum, social changes in households and communities may have ramifications for place attachment that deserve study.

Summary

We have shown how place disruptions interrupt the processes that bind people to their sociophysical environments. Disruptions are difficult to deal with because the ties that bind people include multifaceted connections, occurring at multiple levels, that provide a taken-for-granted orientation to the world. A disruption means that individuals must define who they are and where they are going without the benefit of the tangible supports that formerly bolstered such intangible understandings. In order to comprehend the disruption fully, one must examine preexisting conditions that influence the experience of attachments as well as postdisruption conditions that influence how individuals can cope with their losses and begin rebuilding ties to places and people.

The difficulty of coping with loss and reconstructing place attachments is exacerbated by the fact that individuals rarely appreciate the depth and extent of these attachments. Although residents quickly develop an understanding of their losses, others are not so sensitive. Relocation authorities assume residents simply need new housing. But residents have also lost the social, cultural, and physical grounding offered by homes and communities. Similarly, others view burglary as a simple property crime, while victims themselves suffer losses of security and identity in addition to property. The analysis offered in this chapter is a first step toward framing disruptions in a more general way, pointing out that they are threats of change overload and insults to both individual and communal bases of identity.

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