Out of place? Emotional ties to the neighbourhood in urban renewal in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom
van der Graaf, P.F.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Download date: 11 Jan 2019
2. People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

“Where is the character at home? ... The character is at home when he is at ease in the rhetoric of the people with whom he shares life”. (Auge, 1995: 108)

“Home is the familiar place from which one speaks to one’s neighbours about what they share in common because they occupy common places”. (Boswell, 1997)

2.1 Introduction

Where is home, and what is home exactly? What is home usually goes without saying: we go home after a day’s work, return home from a trip or stay at home when we are sick. However, home can be many different things to many different people: the house we live or lived in, the neighbourhood where we relax, the city we work in, the country we originate from, or everyplace where we put our hat, as Marvin Gaye sang. All these different feelings of home have one thing in common: they are all connected to a certain place, a house, a neighbourhood, a city, a country, even something as small as a bench in a public park. Much less is known why we feel at home in a certain place. Whether we feel at home appears to be an uncertain outcome of many unconscious decisions. Usually, we only become aware of these unconscious feelings when we leave the place they are connected to, or when this place itself is changing.

My research deals with feelings of home in a changing environment: people whose neighbourhoods are being regenerated. This subject is hardly researched in urban renewal. Although much research is devoted to the uprooting of and changes to the social networks of residents in urban renewal, much less is known about the changes in the social-emotional ties of people to the neighbourhood. My research will, therefore, focus on these ties and research how these ties are affected by different urban renewal programmes in the Netherlands. To study the emotional ties of residents, I have first consulted the literature on social cohesion and social
capital as starting point for my search for new research tools on the connection between people and places. The concept of social capital has been central to the debate on the social dimension of urban renewal. Can it be equally useful for studying emotional ties in urban renewal? As I will demonstrate in the next paragraph, the concept of social capital neglects the influence of places, and therefore my search continued by reviewing the role of places in Sociology. I will argue that there is a lack of attention to the study of places in Sociology and therefore I will turn in this chapter to another body of literature in Sociology devoted to the study of emotions, in the hope to find a concept which is more sensitive to places. This will result in the discussion of a particular social-psychological concept, place attachment. This concept provides a bridge between both dimensions by focusing on the relationship between people and places, and therefore the connection between spatial and social structures. However, I will start with a discussion of the concepts of social capital and social cohesion, which are often used by scientists and urban regenerators to link people and places in urban renewal programmes. How useful are these concepts for research on urban renewal and what can they tell us about the emotional ties of residents?

2.2 Social Capital and Social Cohesion in Urban Renewal: Remedy or Symptom?

Urban renewal in the Netherlands is concerned with the social bonds of people. Living in a poor, deteriorated, crime-ridden neighbourhood does not only diminish the labour market and educational opportunities for residents, but is also perceived to reduce their social capital, which is deemed crucial to improve their living conditions. According to policy makers, living too close to people with the same lack of opportunities, reduces their chances for upward mobility and keeps them trapped in their own prison. Alternatively, by knowing the right kind of people, residents should acquire access to much needed information and skills to move up the societal ladder. Therefore, large restructuring programmes are set up in the Netherlands, which aim explicitly at attracting higher income groups to the deprived inner areas of the big cities in order to help poor residents bridge their social capital deficit. Critics of these programmes have warned against the
opposite effect: urban renewal programmes do more harm than good for the social bonds of people in a neighbourhood; residents are forced to move out to make room for the new bourgeoisie (gentrification), uprooting their already distressed social networks and leaving the neighbourhood more segregated due to different time-space patterns between old and new residents. The new occupants are not interested in their poorer neighbours and prefer to spend their resources and time elsewhere and with more likeminded resourceful people. Who is right in this debate? To answer this question, first of all a clearer understanding of the concept of social capital is necessary to assess the potential of social bonds between neighbours for urban renewal programmes. Therefore, in the next paragraph the history and different uses of the concept of social capital will be briefly explored.

2.2.1 What is Social Capital?
Social capital has a longstanding tradition in the social sciences and refers, in addition to human and economical capital, to the value of social relations. Social capital is the product of individuals who are embedded in a network of social ties, which they can use to mobilize aid and support. Portes (1998) provides a useful definition:

_Social capital refers to the capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures (...) social capital does not inhere in the individual, as the possession of money (material capital) or education (human capital) does, but is instead a property of the individual’s set of relationships with others. Social capital is a product of embeddedness_ (Portes, 1998).

This definition distinguishes between three different aspects of social capital, which are often confused in scientific literature; the structure, the content and the effects of social capital. Social relations and networks are the bearers of social capital; individuals do no possess social capital. The content of social capital is established by the norms of trust and reciprocity that are valid within the network and that motivate the individuals within the network to supply other members with aid and supports. The effects of social capital are the material and immaterial
benefits (and disadvantages) for the individuals in the network or the society at large that arise out of the interplay of the structure and content of social capital.

The concept is first mentioned in the 1961 classic of Jane Jacobs: The Death and Life of Great American Cities. She used it to describe how communities use networks of ties to channel diversity and contribute to the life of cities. Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu (1979) and James Coleman (1988) further developed the concept in their research. Bourdieu used the term social capital to explain the advantages and opportunities that accrue to people through their membership in groups, while Coleman used it to refer to the advantages which social ties afford individuals. More recently, the phrase is made popular by the work of Robert Putnam who uses it to explain why in some Italian regions democratic institutions are flourishing, while in other regions totalitarian regimes remain. In his explanation he echoes the heritage of De Tocqueville: regions with a strong civil society, and accordingly dense networks of social ties, are more effective in nurturing democratic institutions. Putnam puts a high interest on civil society as the manufacturers of social capital, the latter which he vaguely defines as ‘a commitment to co-operation, the presence of trust in fellow citizens, the usage of norms of reciprocity and the existence of social networks in a society’. For Putnam, social capital essentially means reciprocity. Reciprocity among citizens is, according to Putnam, essential for a strong civil society and hence a strong democratic government.

His research resulted in an extensive scientific and political debate on the definition of social capital and whether this capital is declining in modern society. Putnam is sure of the latter: in his book ‘Bowling Alone’ he paints a dramatic picture of American society in decline, characterized by ongoing individualization, because people spent too much time in front of their televisions instead of developing social ties and accumulating social capital. However, not all scientists share his pessimistic view. Different authors point to new forms of social capital, which are created outside the traditional institutions (church, family, bowling clubs) of civil society.

A less heard critique on Putnam research deals with the supposed equality of citizens and their social capital. Critics, like Talja Blokland, argue that social capital creates inequality, because citizens do not possess equal amounts of social
capital. Especially the ones that need it most; people at the bottom of society possess the least, while the ones with the best connections are already advanced on the societal ladder. This refers to the dark side of capital, a concept coined by Richard Florida (and discussed earlier in the work of Pierre Bourdieu) stressing the excluding power of social capital.

Another issue of debate is the question “which form of social capital is declining in modern society?” Are people in general interacting less with others and do they prefer to stay among like-minded individuals or does individualization merely mean weaker ties between many more individuals? Central to this debate are the concepts of bonding and bridging, referring respectively to social capital that unites people who already know each other and social capital that connects strangers. Duyvendak and Hurenkamp (2005) argue for instance, that ‘communities light’, with only weak ties among its members, are the preferred mode of organization in modern society, due the diverse and multilevel networks that people maintain. Others, like Talja Blokland, argue that social capital is not needed at all in the neighbourhood. According to Blokland all that is needed for neighbours to get along is ‘public familiarity’. She uses the concept of public familiarity to emphasise the need for knowledge about neighbours, instead of knowledge acquired in personal contact with neighbourhoods, to develop social trust in neighbourhoods. According to Blokland the neighbourhood is not a basis for shared identification, but merely a framework that can be used for identification. Repeated observations of people in the public space of the neighbourhood are sufficient to anticipate whether we can trust a neighbour or not. This knowledge does not need to be acquired in close personal contacts with neighbours. Her concept is consistent with the warnings of some scholars (Anderiessen & Reijndorp, 1989; Wellman, 1996; Friedrichs, 1997) against putting too much emphasis and fate on the neighbourhood as a basis for identification and integration. They distance themselves from policy makers and landscape architects who paint a romantic picture of the harmonious community of the past, where life was well-organized and everybody knew and helped each other. They dismiss this line of thinking not only as a relic from the past but also as a ‘mythical netherworld’ that never existed.
When someone tells you he or she used to have many contacts in the neighbourhood and now only a few, then this mainly tells us something about the amount of familiarity people used to have: ‘everybody knows everyone’, but ‘knowing’ meant more often ‘knowledge about others, ‘being familiar with another’, not being part of personal networks of sustainable relationships between people who like each other (2005: 30).

According to Talja Blokland, it is not so much a decline of social capital - caused by people not bowling together anymore or spending too much time in front of the television - that makes neighbours mistrust each other but the lack of opportunities to observe each other’s behaviour in the neighbourhood.

The mentioned large societal changes [migration, increased social and geographical mobility, technological changes and the depillarisation] have each reduced and differentiated the practical usage of the neighbourhood, meaning the amount of activities in daily life that take place within the neighbourhood (2005:30).

Therefore she argues for more public meeting places in the neighbourhood, where people don’t have to interact but can acquire public familiarity with another.

2.2.2 Social Cohesion
The shift from small homogenous communities of strong ties to larger more heterogeneous communities of weak ties in modern society was identified more than a century ago by the founding fathers of social sciences, Max Weber, George Simmel and Emile Durkheim, who witnessed a transition from a rural based society to an industrialized society. Ever since their grounding work the weakening of social ties and the growing of larger and more heterogeneous networks of people are a recurring theme in sociological research and on the policy agenda. Nowadays, after a transition to a post-modern society, this theme is linked to large societal trends; globalization, privatization, reforming of the welfare state, and the rise of information technology. To describe these transitions to a (post-) modern society, social scientists have used the concept of social cohesion, referring to the
connectedness of people within a social or political system. The concept has been used in many different ways, focusing on the participation of people in public institutions, describing the social contacts people maintain with each other, or referring to people’s orientation to collective norms and values. The connections between people have been studied at many different levels, ranging from micro (individuals) to meso (neighbourhoods, cities and regions) and macro level (nations and global networks). This makes social cohesion a multilayered and multidimensional concept, which is difficult to capture in a single definition. However, all applications of the concept refer in some way to the consistency of a social or political system and the connections and solidarity of people within these systems. Paul Schnabel tries to capture this commonality and range of use in his definition of social cohesion as:

*The extent toward which people express in their behaviour and experience their involvement with societal groups in their personal life, as citizen in society and as a member of society* (Schnabel 2000: 22).

Comparing both concepts, social capital and social cohesion share many similarities; both deal with the networks and social ties of people, describing their structure and function in different times and places. However, social capital seems primarily concerned with networks between and within communities and focuses on the individuals in these networks. Social cohesion is more concerned with the institutional context in which the social networks are embedded. The concept emphasizes (more than social capital) the role of institutions and focuses on the social system made up by the networks of people. The political sciences are the exception to the rule where special attention is paid to the role of institutions, in particular, to the relationship between citizens and state. The research of Putnam is a good example.

Each concept has been claimed and developed by different theoretical paradigms, which compete with each other for the attention of social scientists. The first one is rational choice theory, with utilitarian motives at its core: people engage in and maintain social ties because it allows individuals to satisfy their personal needs at a minimum cost. This view is opposed by communitarism, which
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

takes norms, values and emotions as the basis for community building. Communitarianism stresses the moral dimension of human behaviour: people need to feel part of a community, with which they can share common values and which can help them to build a (collective) identity. Both paradigms stress different sides of a coin, but in their work both paradigms strongly oppose each other. Rational choice theory stresses the voluntary nature of contact: people choose to engage in relationships because it allows them to maximize their goals with a minimum of effort. Communitarianism argues that people inherently are social beings who are driven by feelings of belonging and solidarity; they stress that people simply cannot live without meaningful contacts.

These different dimensions of contact are often placed in sequential order; contacts based on strong feelings of solidarity represented the rural society and have been replaced in modern time by voluntary types of contact. However, the above-mentioned classical sociologists have used dimension of contact to explain why societies were not falling apart: both individuals maximizing their opportunities and groups looking for solidarity are present and necessary in past and modern society. Likewise, in urban renewal both approaches are visible. In the Netherlands, urban research acquired more recently a strong focus on the social mobility of individual residents, analyzing the opportunities created and used by residents to improve their careers, either on the housing, labour or educational market. Contacts with families, friends, colleagues and neighbours are beneficial to a resident in acquiring access to valuable information and resources for finding a job or a new house, or starting an education.

Another popular line of research approaches the neighbourhood as a mix of different (ethnic) groups who need to learn to coexist by sharing a minimal standard of norms and values. In this view neighbourhood problems are caused by a lack of co-operation. Therefore contacts between different groups need to be stimulated to allow the exchange of values and norms and to help correct stereotypical images of each other. Researchers focusing on social mobility find the concept of social capital particularly useful, while the concept of social cohesion is more appealing for researchers on mixed neighbourhoods/ social mixing, although combinations exist in urban renewal research as well. Research on role modelling takes social capital theory as a starting point, but analyses the use of social capital
by other residents, particular the exchange of values. Less fortunate residents can advance in society by copying the behaviour and using the valuable resources of more able neighbours who act as role models for them.

Therefore, the question is not which concept is better, but which concept is the most appropriate for the research at hand? Depending on the form of contact one likes to study, one chooses social capital over social cohesion and vice versa. Given the focus of social cohesion on collective norms and values and hence shared grounds for identification, social cohesion appears to be a more appropriate concept for this study. However, what is missing in the concept is a reference to the spatial context of the social relations under scrutiny. Research on place attachment and place identity (Altman & Low, 1993) shows that social interactions, which are necessary for social cohesion to develop, are related to the places where these interactions take place. Therefore, any concept of social cohesion used in urban renewal research needs to take the relationship between people and places into account\(^2\). In urban renewal these dynamics are especially pressing: social networks are uprooted and places in the neighbourhood become more contested as new groups enter and claim their territory while the remaining residents try to maintain their sense of community and home within their neighbourhood.

### 2.3 Social versus Emotional Ties

Another reason to given more attention to relationship between social bonds and places is the growing evidence of the limited benefits of social capital for urban renewal programmes. Remember the debate earlier in the previous paragraphs about whether social bonds, particularly with higher income groups, would increase the social mobility of the lower income residents or whether they would do more harm than good by forcing out the original residents (gentrification) and uprooting

---

\(^2\) A new concept seems appropriate for the study of social relations in urban environments. So far the debate in urban renewal has either focused on the social mobility of individuals (with the use of social capital) or on increasing the social cohesion between different groups in a neighbourhood. ‘Place capital’ (the symbolic value of places) can be used as an additional concept for the studying of social relations in urban renewal. By studying the emotional ties of people to places, the spatial context of social bonds can be better understood.
their already distressed social networks, leaving the neighbourhood more segregated due to different time-space patterns between old and new residents. Although research confirmed that the mixing goals of urban renewal were problematic (Blokland, 2001; Kleinhans et al., 2000), evidence on the claim that the results would be counter effective remained inconclusive (Duyvendak, et al., 2005; Kleinhans, 2005).

However, this research points to a new direction, where losses are greater and potential gains are higher. Kleinhans (2005) demonstrates in his dissertation that moving residents not so much mourn the loss of social capital, but the loss of attachment to the place they lived in. The movers do not miss the people, but the places that are left behind as an important frame of reference. The emotional ties they developed over time with the places where they lived provided an emotional source of comfort and identity which is cut by moving, causing distress, feelings of displacement and not belonging.

Other evidence for the importance of emotional ties to residents is presented by Henk Flap en Beate Völker (2004) in their research on neighbourhood ties and sense of community. Their statistical analyses demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between the social networks and the sense of community (emotional attachment) in a neighbourhood on one side, and the willingness of residents to look out for each other (i.e. exercise social control) on the other side. Moreover, while social ties are important for making people feel at home in their neighbourhood, sense of community is more important for the amount of social control residents are able to exercise in an area. This means that it is not so much the social networks that influence the behaviour of residents, making them feel safe to address teenagers that make too much noise or to prevent cars from getting burgled, but that their sense of community enables them to be in control of their neighbourhood. Social ties influence the behaviour of residents only indirectly by increasing the sense of community of residents allowing them to act together.

Both research findings suggest that in specifying the effects of urban renewal programmes more attention is needed for the connection between people and places. To understand the effects of different social-physical interventions, not so much the changes in social bonds need to be studied, but the changes in emotional ties of residents in urban renewal areas. This raises a whole new set of
questions. How can residents’ emotional ties to their neighbourhood be defined and studied? How do emotional ties of residents develop and are there different forms of emotional ties possible for different groups of residents? How are different emotional ties affected by urban renewal programmes: do different groups (e.g. higher and lower level income groups) respond differently? Are higher income groups less emotionally connected to their neighbourhood, explaining their lack of enthusiasm to help their less fortunate neighbours? And do lower income groups, due to their social immobility, possess more emotional capital, explaining their strong sense of loss when they are forced (even temporary) out of their neighbourhood by urban renewal programmes? If so, can urban renewal programmes ease their pain and enhance their connectedness to their new or renewed neighbourhood, as politicians in the post-Fortuin era are keen to see? Can the involvement of new (higher income) arrivals in the neighbourhood, and hence their social bonds with the original residents, be increased by changing their emotional ties to the neighbourhood? In sum, by studying the emotional ties of residents and the relationship between social bonds and emotional ties, a new perspective might be gained on the effects of urban renewal programmes. To be able to answer the above raised questions, we need to know more about the emotional ties of people to places, which will be the aim of the next paragraph. In studying the emotional ties of residents I will explore two possible routes in Sociology: the role of emotions in Sociology and the role of place in Sociology. First of all, I will look into the role of emotions in Sociology: what can Sociology teach us on the use of emotions? If feeling at home is an emotion, how can we study it sociologically?

2.4 Sociology of Emotions

The study of emotions in sociology has accelerated over the past three decades. In his review of sociological theories of human emotions, Turner and Stets (2006) conclude that five general theoretical frameworks have emerged in Sociology; dramaturgical theories, symbolic interactionist theories, interaction ritual theories, power and status theories and exchange theories. The first framework is based on
the work of Goffman (1967), according to whom the emotional world is a stage: “individuals make dramatic presentations and engage in strategic actions directed by a cultural script” (Turner and Stets, 2006: 26). Goffman is not so much concerned with what emotions are and how they come into being, but is more interested in the ways emotions are dealt with. Culture, according to Goffman, defines which emotions are to be experienced and expressed in different situations. It constrains the actions of individuals on a stage in front of an audience, while at the same time individuals actively manipulate their emotions or, more precisely, the expression of their emotions, to manipulate audiences about their sincerity and concern, or get access to valued resources and gain power over others.

This framework is extended by Arlie Hochschild (1983, 1990), who internalised the struggle of actors over the control of their emotions. While Goffman is mainly concerned about the influence of culture and social structures on the expression of emotions, Hochschild is more interested in the internal conflict that arises when people’s personal feelings are out of place with the emotions they must express to others in their audience according to the cultural script of their group or society. She uses the concepts of feeling and frame rules to explain this conflict. Feeling rules describe what an individual is supposed to feel in a particular situation. These rules are developed by an individual over time and are based on three framing mechanisms: historical (what have I done before in similar situations?), pragmatic (which repertoires of emotional responses do I have at my disposal/ what do I know?), and moral (what do my norms and values tell me to do?) These three mechanisms validate the appropriate response (feeling rule) of an individual. If this selected response is at odds with what the individual feels at that moment and place, then this discrepancy generates new negative emotions, which motivate the individual to engage in emotional repair work by trying to reduce the tension and adhere to the demanded emotion in the given situation. For instance, by emitting expressive gestures that are more in line with the scripted emotion or by invoking thought and ideas associated with the demanded emotion.

The tension between what we ought to feel and are actually feeling is also central to symbolic interactionist theories. However, they describe this tension not so much as a conflict between emotions, but between identities. People’s
emotional responses are, according to these theories, not enforced by an outside cultural system of feeling and framing rules, but are the result of an internal drive to align their identities with the outside world. People constantly try to confirm their self-identities in interaction with others. “When others respond to us in a manner that is consistent with the way we see ourselves, we experience positive emotions” (Turner and Stets, 2006: 29). However, when people don’t respond to us the way we expect them to, we feel distressed and experience emotions as anxiety, anger, shame and guilt. Therefore, symbolic interactionalist theories also try to describe the ways in which we try to bridge the gap between expectations and actual experiences. According to the interactionalists, individuals will first use the exit option and leave the situation. When they cannot, they will try to change their behaviour or their self-perceptions and identities to conform to cultural expectations. In some interactionalist theories a hierarchy is emphasised: when identities are confirmed they move up in the hierarchy of an individuals’ identities, with identities higher up in the hierarchy more likely to be presented that those lower in the hierarchy.

So far, the individual takes centre stage in dealing with their emotions, while the larger sociological world only appears in reference to wider cultural rules or the emotional responses of others. In the third theoretical framework distinguished by Turner and Stets (2006) emotions are emphasised as collective achievements of a group. Interaction ritual theories start from the assumption that individuals try to maximise their emotional energy in an encounter. However, they acknowledge that the build up of emotional energy depends on specific group dynamics, which create more enduring collective emotions sustained across encounters. These collective group rituals sustain solidarity and result in the development of groups symbols which are powerful enough to reinvoke the collective emotional energy of the interaction rituals. The introduction of collective level in emotional theories brings power and status into play: according to interaction ritual theories, the capacity to increase positive emotional energy is mediated by power and prestige. Those with more power and prestige have first rights and are able to use the symbols to invoke the emotional energy associated with the symbols, while “those with less power must give deference and as a consequence experience less positive and perhaps negative energy, leading to less
commitment” (Turner and Stets, 2006: 33). This can even lead to alternative strategies revolving around minimizing the loss of emotional energy rather than maximising positive emotional energy.

This issue of power and prestige is further taken up by power and status theories, which document the effects of power and status on the arousal of emotions. In its most simplistic form the theories state that when individuals have or gain power, they experience satisfaction, confidence, and security, whereas they experience anxiety, fear and loss of confidence when they lose power. A crucial element in these theories is the introduction of expectation states: “When individuals expect to gain power, but in fact do not, they lose self-confidence and experience fear and anxiety” (Turner and Stets, 2006: 35). When the opposite happens (the gain of unexpected power), they feel more satisfied and self-confident. In other words, expectation states add more fuel to the power dynamics. This addition brings us back to the earlier dramaturgical and symbolic interactionalist theories, which stressed the damaging tension between expectations (either external or internal) and actual feelings. However, the micro level perspective has now been replaced by a more meso level perspective, stressing the importance of group dynamics in the creating and sustaining of emotions, while micro dynamics add further fuel to these group processes.

The connection with the macro level is less developed in sociological theories on emotion. Turner and Stets conclude that: “Most power and status theories are micro in their focus on the relations among power, prestige and emotions”. They discuss a noteworthy exception by Barbalet (1998) who investigated the distribution of emotions over different segments of a population, which possess varying levels of power and prestige. Barbalet argues that changes in social structures are responsible for the biggest changes in emotions by off-setting the distribution of valued resources as power, honour, and material well-being.

The effect of social structures is analysed by exchange theories. Starting from a rational choice perspective, which states that individuals are motivated to receive rewards or utilities and avoid costs and punishment, emotions come into play, according to exchange theories, when rewards and costs are assessed against normative standards of justice and fair exchange. “When payoffs exceed costs and investments while meeting standard standards of justice, individuals experience
positive emotions” (Turner and Stets, 2006: 41). More importantly, justice standards overrule the utilitarian principle in exchange theories: when profitable payoffs fall below what is considered fair or if payoffs exceed the justice standards of equity too far, the individual will feel less positive and will even experience negative emotions. What is considered fair depends on the payoffs and costs of other people, past payoffs in similar exchanges with others and the relative power of these others.

Thus, this depends essentially on a social comparison, which brings us back to the symbolic interactionalist theories, although culture is reduced to a relative profits and costs comparison. Exchange theories go on to study the nature and intensity of emotion when the conditions of exchange alter: the type of exchange, the types of structures in which exchanges of resources occur, the relative power and dependence of actors on each other for resources, the expectations for resources, the standards of justice that apply to the exchange, and the attributions that actors make for success or failure in receiving profitable payoffs (Turner and Stets, 2006: 41). However, exchange theories fail to make the link between the individual and collective level because they reduce social structures to a pay off game between individual actors whose exchanges do not rise above the meso level. Moreover, they reduce emotions to a by product of these exchanges.

In sum, emotions in Sociology appear primarily as individual responses to external norms (Dramaturgical theories) or an internal drive to confirm identities (Symbolic Interactionalists), whereas power and status decide on the scope and availability of emotional responses (Power and Status theories). Emotions are a commodity, which the powerful possess in more positive amounts, while the dominated are left frustrated with the negative emotions. Emotions become a predefined response to power and status games, the outcome of a calculated pay off in social and economical exchanges between individuals (Exchange theories). In spite of the efforts in Sociology to theorise emotions, emotions are narrowly defined and limited to the meso level.

Even the feeling and framing rules, which were introduced by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild as a clear attempt to incorporate society in the explanation of individual emotions, are in the end a micro level affair, because it is the individual who decides what the right emotion is in a given place and time, based on past
experiences and his or her emotional repertoire and the values they adhere to. Society sets the frame for these decisions and is reduced to a passive backstage for individual emotions. Hochschild does not elaborate on the interaction between individual responses and feeling and framing rules; do individual responses feed back into these rules, allowing them to change over time and place? What are the dynamics of feeling and framing rules and how do they respond to structural and cultural changes?

Not only are emotions in Sociology narrowly defined at the micro and meso level, we are also left none the wiser regarding the relationship between people and places: what role do places play in the emotional exchanges between individuals and how are power and status affected by different places? Can places become an expression of power and status or even an emotional commodity in power and status struggles? In the next paragraph I will therefore investigate the role of place in Sociology. Can this literature tell us more about the emotional ties of residents to places?

2.5 Sociology of Place

Thomas Gieryn (2000) awakes us rudely from this mission before we have even started. He argues that there is a worrying lack of attention to places in Sociology. In his review of the sociological literatures, Gieryn (2000) concludes that, “although there is an enduring tradition of robust sociological studies of place, they often remain invisible because they are rarely framed as such” (464). There appears to be ‘no space for place in sociology’: summing up popular sociological opinion Gieryn states, that in the post-modern network society, the importance of places is greatly reduced. The flow of goods, capital and information moves through nodes in one or another network and is no longer anchored at any place necessarily. Instead, places become more alike in a cosmopolitan society in which cities have to compete with another over creative capital and the latest establishment of retail and food giants. Even iconic places are no longer tied to specific places: if you would like to see the Eiffel Tower, the Egyptian Pyramids
and the Statue of Liberty, you can visit them all in one day by playing the slot machines in Las Vegas. Place just does not seem to matter any more.

However, this conception is misleading, as several authors have pointed out. Globalisation goes hand in hand with processes of localisation: increased mobility and homogenisation of places increase rather than reduce the need for differentiation. Setting yourself apart from other places becomes necessary to gain an advantage in the global competition for goods, capital and information. This effect is known as ‘glocalisation’ (Swyngedouw, 2004). In particular anthropologists have recently become interested in the continued or even increased distinctiveness of places in a globalised society while sociologists, on the other hand, have been quick to accept the homogenisation-hypothesis.

Whoever is right, the fact remains that sociologists have not showed a great interest in places or have been successful in disguising their interest. Gieryn (2000: 464) blames a false modesty by which sociologists stick to their guns and prefer to leave the matter of places to specialists from geography out of fear that environmental determinism would rob special and cultural variables of their explanatory power, or because sociologist worry that the particularities of discrete places might compromise the generalising and abstracting ambitions of the discipline. Instead Gieryn argues for a more place-sensitive sociology:

> Nothing of interest to sociologists is nowhere (cited in Casey, 1993). Everything that we study is emplaced; it happens somewhere and involves material stuff (2000:466).

Comparing behaviour patterns, structural changes and attitudes is, in his view, futile if nothing more is hypothesised about the effects of the geographic locations where these patterns and change take place. Places are for Gieryn more than racial proportions or neighbourhoods and unemployment rates of cities, where place becomes a stand-in for clusters of variables. For sociological studies to become place sensitive, they need to feed in information about relative location of the collected data and, for instance, the significance of architecture, landscape and the perceptions and understandings of place by the people who live there or not.
An example of ‘misplaced’ sociological research is the work of Claude Fischer and his Subcultural Theory of Urbanism (1975, 1995). Fisher argues that cities are the breeding grounds of subcultures\(^3\). According to Fischer, subcultures flourish in cities, not because of the social breakdown in cities where people are freed from their traditional community ties and can engage in norm-less and deviant behaviour (Wirth, 1938), or because cities attract particular kinds of people, like ethnic minorities and artistic avant-garde (Gans, 1962), but because of the sheer size of the place. Due to their size, cities stimulate subcultures to diversify and intensify\(^4\). Although Fischer emphasises the power of place, he reduces place simply to a backstage for subcultural exchanges.

A sociologist who is more sensitive to places is Dolores Hayden. In her classic article (1994) on the power of place, she argues that places can be a powerful source of identity. In the article she describes the struggle of local residents in Bunker Hill with the local Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) over the preservation of rundown buildings in the neighbourhood. While the CRA opts for massive commercial development to provide the downtown area with a new identity, she presents an alternative account of place building by emphasising the importance of women from diverse backgrounds and women’s work, both paid and unpaid, to urban survival. Instead of preserving buildings which represent the identity of a small white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant male elite, she argues for the re-use of more modest urban buildings that represent the social and economical

\(^3\) Fischer defines subcultures as “large sets of people who share a defining trait, associate with one another, are members of institutions associated with their defining trait, adhere to a distinct set of values, share a set of cultural tools, and take part in a common way of life”.

\(^4\) Large places, like cities, attract migrants, who bring along their cultures and create a greater diversity in subcultures through economic, spatial, institutional and cultural specialisation. Size does not only stimulate diversity, but also intensifies the different subcultures that live close to each other, because larger places have larger subcultures which more easily sustain institutions and resist outside influences, while the diversity of subcultures increases the chances of encounters and conflicts with members of different groups, which reinforce group boundaries. Which is not to say that different groups do not influence one other: between-group contact also leads to the diffusion of (similar) traits. However, Fischer argues that the net result is more diversity, because at the same time cultural traits of atypical subcultures are diffused to others in the area. Thus, place (size) matters for the diffusion of and adherence to cultural traits.
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

struggles of the majority of ordinary citizens in an area where half of the residents are women and 60 percent are people of colour.

*The power of place to nurture social memory - to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory - remains untapped for most working people's neighbourhoods in most American cites. The sense of civic identity that shared history can convey is lost or repressed. Even bitter experiences need to be remembered - so as not to diminish their importance* (1994: 467).

By stating that places nurture social memories she directly links place to social interactions. Another important element in her work in the struggle she describes over the identity of place. Her empirical research demonstrates that the meaning of places is contested. This point is further developed by Ed Soja, who suggests that space cannot be dealt with as if it were merely a passive, abstract arena on which things happen. Space is for Soja not an innocent backdrop to social position, but is filled with politics and ideology. Soja argues that space has been misrecognised by contemporary social theory. Either space is reduced to a concrete form, where space is fixed, dead and undialectical, or space is reduced to a mental construct.

However, according to Soja, space is more than the outcome of social relations and more than one of the dimensions through which the social is constructed. It is an active, constitutive, irreducible, necessary component in the social’s composition. Soja, and many other authors in this field are indebted to Lefebvre, who argues there is a dialectic in the lived world between spaces of representation and representation of spaces. In his classical work ‘The production of space’ Levebre makes clear that “*place is not merely a construct of social interaction to be consumed by people, but is actively produced and re-produced in an ongoing struggle of power***”.

This poses a new problem, if space is actively produced and reproduced by many different actors through time, what is then the true meaning of a place at a given moment in time and who decides this? Lefebvre tried to solve this puzzle by developing the notion of different forms of produced space: a typology of spatialities that covers a range from sensory, sensual representational spaces
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

through to the space of the Greek city that is assumed in classical philosophy. According to Lefebvre, there is a succession from natural to absolute to abstract space, progressively erasing nature from our sense of spatiality. In each stage a different form of produced space and the meanings attached to it is dominant, whereby each stage increases human domination over space and its meanings depriving places of their ‘real’ meaning.

This worry is shared by Sharon Zukin who argues that landscapes of power triumph over the vernacular. Hard cash decides in today’s world the meaning of space and what is left for the masses is the consumption of economically produced spaces. To describe these spaces, she introduced the notion of liminal spaces that are ambiguous and ambivalent; they slip between global markets and local place. A key example of liminal spaces and thorn in the eye of Zukin is Disneyland in Los Angeles, USA. She describes Disneyland as a place where:

Stage-sets evoke the social production of visual consumption, with its history of resort and fantasy architecture, its fictive nexus in Disney World, and its dependence on the markets to foster products that in turn create a sense of place. In this landscape, socio-spatial identity is derived purely from what we consume (1992:243).

Zukin paints a bleak picture of a society based on the motto ‘I consume therefore I am’. In her view the post-modern urban landscape imposes multiple perspectives which are not only wedded to economic power but also facilitate ‘the erosion of locality’ - the erosion of the archetypical place-based community by market forces (1992; 240). Her analyses demand the recovery of authentic, good landscapes, which contrast to the Mickey Mouse worlds of capital.

Although not many scholars would agree there is only one true meaning of place and many would find the recovery of authentic landscapes somewhat naïve, Zukin raised, together with Ed Soja, an important debate in the 1990s on the social, cultural and political contexts of place production and consumption. They set out to uncover, as Soja called it, ‘the political economy of space’. Other contributors to this debate were Massey (1992) and Somerville (1998). Particularly in Britain, a fierce debate took place on the politics of place and the politics of
identity. New social movements introduced a politics of resistance, exemplified by black politics, feminism and gay liberation, with a strong focus on culture and identity. They employed a richly spatialised vocabulary, focusing on how identity is forged and the role places play in forging a new identity, turning space into places of resistance. An important question in the debate was whether “concrete geographical and historical circumstances can be understood as expressions of abstract social relations?” (Keith & Pile, 1993:1).

This debate is reflected upon in a book edited by Michael Keith and Steve Pile titled ‘Place and the Politics of Identity’. The authors conclude that “spatialities are political, because they are the (covert) medium and (disguised) expression of asymmetrical relations of power” (220). With regards to the debate on true and false meanings of space, the editors argue that “spatialities draw on a relationship between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic that is not beyond truth and falsity, but is different from it”. In other words space is both real and false, because it is socially and politically produced, but not by one dominant group or stage in time, but by an ongoing struggle for the meaning of places between different social and political groups who change alliances and sides during the conflict.

In this struggle places act, according to Keith and Pile, as neutralisers for conflicts and contradictions: “We would like to argue that spatiality needs to be seen as the modality through which contradictions are normalized, naturalized and neutralized” (224). Places hide power struggles and these need to be identified (politics of place) to understand the different meaning of place that are at stake. (“Politics is necessary territorial but these territories are simultaneously real, imaginary and symbolic” (224)). What a place represents at a given moment in time is, in the view of Keith and Pile, a particular political mobilization round a particular concept of space. The meanings different groups attach to places are related to the identities they present in these places: “Spatialities represent both the spaces between multiple identities and the contradictions within identities” (225).

This viewpoint is closely related to the Symbolic Interactionalist theories on emotions discussed earlier, where individuals constantly try to confirm their self (identities) in interaction with others. The Politics of Identity provide a spatial
dimension for the interactionalist theories by focussing on the places that represent these identities and allow groups and individuals to present different identities. Furthermore, by identifying the Politics of Place the power struggles stressed by Power and Status theories on emotions are uncovered and redefined as a struggle over the appropriate identity in a particular place. This connects sociological theories on emotions and place: whereas emotions are the outcome of power struggles, places tend to hide these struggles. (According to Keith and Pile spatialities of urban renewal are to be understood as an identity politics of space).

2.6 Emotions and Places: Feeling at Home

Although I have collected clues on the relationship between people and place for both disciplines, the study of emotions and the study of places remain thus far largely separate and marginalised disciplines within sociology. Both subjects, however, have also been studied at large and more interdisciplinary in other social sciences. The study of the relationship between humans and their environment is a fundamental subject of social scientific research and theory generated by geography, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and environmental psychology. It is impossible to do justice to this volume of knowledge in the scope of this chapter. Therefore, I started with one particular emotion: feeling at home. This emotion is directly connected to a place; home, where ever and whatever home may be, but that is a subject I will deal later with. For now it is sufficient to stress that home is always in some way tied up to a place or has least a strong spatial connotation. (Even Marvin Gay, who felt at home where ever he laid his hat, marked his home spatially by symbolically putting his hat down in a specific place. Where he felt at home was spatially defined, however small and temporarily). By researching how people feel at home I was able to analyse a particular emotional relationship between people and places. Until recently, sociological discussions have tended to ignore the experiential significance of home.

Many of the early quotations of home refer to the country or land. Domestication of the word began in the 17th and 18th centuries in England. The house became an essential aspect of the identity and self-definition of the middle
class. Rybczynski (1987) traces the origins of our current, cosy idea of home to 17th century Amsterdam, where merchants started separating their warehouses from their living quarters and so began the familiar work/home division. For the working class, home centeredness became a permanent feature of cultural life since the industrial revolution. The study of (feeling at) home has a central focus within the disciplines of phenomenology and philosophy (Heidegger, 1971, Bachelard, 1964). Their work has highlighted the human qualities of places and the bonds that develop. Early psychological exploration examined the affective bonds between people and places (Fried, 1963). This link has been more extensively studied by philosophers and psychologists.

Jeanne Moore, who researched the literature on home for her PhD dissertation (2000), argues that previous discussions of the concept of home within psychology have tended to focus more on the experiential and personal aspects of home than the social and cultural aspects. Most researchers focussed on the different meaning of home and this resulted in a wide range of largely unrelated listings. However, from the meanings of home studies a new theory framed in a transactionalist perspective emerged, called place attachment, which is the main theory used in relation to home. Rather than identifying types of bonds with home places, the attachment approach emphasises the process by which people and home places develop relationships. Adopting the transactional approach provided by the concept of place attachment enabled me to explore the different elements or facets of home as part of a single complex process. The transactionalist perspective highlight important aspects of the study of emotions and place in sociology: people attach meanings to places and form affective bonds with these places when they present their identities in these spaces. Positive place bonding results in feelings of home. The concept of place attachment provides a bridge between emotion and place, by focusing on the affective relationship between people and places.

I do not wish to imply that no other useful concepts exist, nor that the concept of place attachment is by far the best. On the contrary, I am aware that my specific focus on this concept disregards other potential useful concepts for bridging the gap between the spatial and social dimension of urban renewal. However, the task I set myself in this research is not to compare the value of
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

different theoretical concepts and to assess the relative value of the concept of place attachment within the rich scientific tradition of urban research, but to explore the specific theoretical and empirical value of this concept for studying and influencing the relationship between people and places. Does the concept of place attachment allow me to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the social and spatial dimension of urban renewal and does this knowledge help me to formulate useful suggestions for architects, urban planners and social workers in urban renewal that enable them to combine social and spatial interventions more successfully? In short, I would like to test one specific theoretical concept on its empirical usefulness within a specific context: urban renewal programmes in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

2.7 Place Attachment

When studying the scientific literature on place attachment, one is confronted with many different concepts and notions. There are many similar terms such as community attachment, sense of community, place identity, place dependence, sense of place, place attachment, etc. These different notions are seemingly interconnected and are often used interchangeably without much attempt to distinguish them from each other. This makes the concept of place attachment a slippery term and difficult to define.

The concept of place attachment dates back to the sixties when it was primarily of interest to earlier phenomenological scholars such as Bachelard (1964) and Eliade (1959). They emphasized the emotional experiences and bonds of people with places, particularly homes and sacred places. Unfortunately their work resonated poorly among many environmental and behavioural researchers, whose work was dominated by positivist philosophies, leaving little room for emphasis on subjective experiences. More recently, the subject gained renewed interest among scientists, particularly in geography and anthropology. Geographers’ focus on regional studies has sparked their interest in human action and an acknowledgement of the cultural significance of everyday life. Anthropologists on the other hand were criticized for
their unproblematic treatment of place: places were merely settings, albeit exotic ones, were things happened.

*Insufficient attention has been paid to conceptualizing place in anthropology as something other than a physical setting or a passive target for primordial sentiments of attachment that flow from life’s ‘assumed givens’* (Geertz, 1973:259).

To readdress these critics, anthropologists started paying attention to the material and spatial aspects of culture and acknowledged space as an essential component of social-cultural theory. Both disciplines, therefore, try to study the ways in which social behaviour shapes the environment and vice versa: the effects that the environment has on social behaviour. The concept of place attachment provided a useful theoretical framework by conceptualising the bond between people and places. This bond is captured in the meaning of the words attachment and place. According to Setha Low and Irwin Altman (1993), ‘attachment’ emphasizes affect, while the word ‘place’ focuses on the environmental setting to which people are emotionally and culturally attached. In their much-quoted work on place attachment Low and Altman (1993) offer the following, somewhat confusing, description:

*Place attachment is a complex phenomenon that incorporated several aspects of people-place bonding. This means that place attachment has many inseparable, integral, and mutually defining features, qualities, or properties; it is not composed of separate or independent parts, components, dimensions or factors”* (1993: 4).

The basic assumption behind these notions, however, is a simple one: “*In general, place attachment is defined as an affective bond or link between people and specific places.*” (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001: 274). People become emotionally and culturally attached to the environmental settings where they interact with other people. “*Place is a space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes*” (Low & Altman, 1992: 5). Central to the concept of
place attachment is the idea that people form meaningful relationships with the locales they occupy and in doing so, attach meaning to space and transform ‘space’ into ‘place’. Low and Altman talk of ‘inscribes space’ implying that humans ‘write’ in an enduring way their presence on their surroundings (p. 13). The transformation of space into place emphasizes the importance of social action and interaction in place attachment. Although place attachment implies that the primary target of affective bonding of people is to environmental settings themselves, a number of scholars indicate that attachment to place is more based on other people - family, friends, community, and even culture.

The social relations that a place signifies maybe equally or more important to the attachment process than the place qua place (Low, 2003: 7). Or as Riley remarks: It may not be attachment to a particular place that is central; rather, it may be affective attachments to ideas, people, psychological states, past experiences, and culture that is crucial (cited in Low, 2003: 10).

It is through the vehicle of particular environmental settings that these individual, group, and cultural processes are manifested. Place acts more as a medium for cultural processes. (In these processes meanings are established and exchanged). Other scholars take this a step further and not only view places as a medium for cultural process, but as social constructions themselves. Margaret Rodman (2003): “Places are socially constructed by the people who live in them and know them; they are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions”. Many scholars are indebted to the work of Henri Lefebvre on the production of space. Lefebvre (1991): “Space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations”.

2.7.1 Place Identity
Much attention, therefore, has been given to the way places are involved in the construction of personal and social identities, which is captured in the concept of Place Identity. In general terms, place identity can be defined as an interpretation of self that uses environmental meaning to symbolize or situate identity. Like other
forms of identity, place identity answers the question ‘Who am I?’ by countering ‘Where am I?’ or ‘Where do I belong?’. Cuba and Hummon (1993: 112) call this the display-function of place attachment.

To understand how place identities are formed, I turn to the work of Anthony Cohen (2003), a leading anthropologist, who has extensively researched the functioning of personal and group identities in different cultures and places. In his research he developed and coined the concept of identity dynamics, emphasizing the continuous change of identities in our daily interactions. Particularly, his ideas on the context of identity dynamics are useful in explaining the formation of place identities.

According to Cohen, place is, in accordance with the central preposition of place attachment, a social construction; more specifically a construction of identity. He defines identity as a dimension of human interaction. When we communicate with others we are not only expressing what we are thinking (contents dimension) and what our relation is to the others with whom we are communicating (relational dimension), but we also express who we are, what our identity is. Human interaction materialized into a ‘sediment’ of identity: a sense of a feeling of who we are, to whom we do and do not belong and how we do the things we do. These feelings are more abstractly labelled as identity and culture. Because identities are formed and expressed in human interaction they are, according to Cohen, constructions. In the course of our lives we build this construction and use it to tell other people ‘who we are’.

Cohen argues that these constructions are not static, but change continuously in our daily interactions with others. Although they remain in some ways consistent because new interactions are evaluated in the light of previous interactions and the meaning we inferred from them. New interactions build on the existing meaning systems that we constructed. This makes identity in the eyes of Cohen a plural concept. Personal identity is not based on one type of lifestyle or network, but on a whole pattern of relations that we maintain with others. People are not only part a family, but of different friendship groups, colleagues’ networks, sport societies and many other networks people join in the course of their lives. Interestingly, the neighbourhood can be one of these networks. With each group an individual shares experiences and, based on these experiences, norms and values.
Depending on the people we meet or the contexts in which we move, we accentuate different aspects of our identities.

Cohen emphasizes that the construction of identity has to be understood from multiple viewpoints. Change of context not only causes identities to collide and differ, but also to change. In interaction with different groups and contexts, meanings are adjusted or new meanings arise. The giving of meaning to actions never ceases, but is a process that redefines and reconstitutes itself continuously. Identity is, in other words, a dynamic process. Scientists such as Cohen, therefore, rather speak of identity dynamics or identity processes instead of the more static notion of identity. The dynamics of which Cohen speaks are present at different levels in society that mutually influence each other, ranging from the street and neighbourhood level to the scale of entire cities and regions and also play at the international stage. The relevance of plural groups bonds is increased in a globalizing society where we and our networks become more mobile. Different social scientists (i.e. Castells, 1997) have pointed to the relation between identity and globalization causing people to change increasingly faster from position (in their networks) and therefore of the identity to assume/express to other people.

Different contexts play an important role in the construction of identities, by providing different meeting places for social interactions and also, as Cohen argues, by becoming part of these interactions. According to Cohen the exchange of meanings is not limited to people. Objects and rituals can also acquire meaning based on their place in the human interactions; they can be ‘charged’ with meaning. The same can also happen with an entire neighbourhood. Individuals, and the groups to which they belong, use these spatial meanings to express who they are and where they belong. Cohen defines them as ‘symbolic and ideological map references’ that people use as markers for the communities they belong to. In the same way neighbourhoods can have a symbolic function/meaning. This means that identity is not simply a passive sediment, a mere by-product of human interaction⁵. From Cohen’s concept of identity dynamics it becomes clear that identity is a productive power that can strengthen or destroy a place. As part of identity

⁵ This argument was made earlier by Geertz, who criticised anthropologists for conceptualizing place as nothing more than ‘a physical setting or a passive target for primordial sentiments of attachment’. Cohen rephrases this debate in terms of identity construction.
constructions, places acquire possibilities that other places do not offer. By charging a place with meaning, certain groups can identify with it, stimulating certain activities and interactions in that place.

Low refers to this mechanism when she speaks of ‘imbuing places with meaning’. With identity dynamics we are able to explain how places are imbued with meaning: they become symbolic and ideological map references for the communities that people belong to. Places are more than social constructions; they are material markers for the personal and group identities that people construct in their daily interactions. They are not merely a setting but play an active role in the construction of identity. As symbols, they can have different meanings for different people. Rodman (2002) uses the notion of multi-locality to describe the diverse meanings of place symbols.

*Place can have a unique reality for each inhabitant, and while the meanings may be shared with others, the views of place are often likely to be competing, and contested in practice.* (p. 208).

According to Rodman, places have multiple meanings that are constructed spatially and therefore to understand the construction of places they need to be analyzed from multiple viewpoints. Moreover and in line with the comments of Cuba and Hummon, she states that identities need to be analyzed from different places:

*Some activities arise from the actions of multiple agents in different places and can only be understood by identifying both intended and unintended consequences in the network of complex connections within a system of places.*

Rodman stresses the constructive and hence temporary nature of place attachment: “*The social contested, dynamic construction of places represents the*
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

*temporary grounding of ideas*. People attach meaning to places in the process of producing and reproducing their identities. Low points to this connection:

*The social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process than the place qua place [...] It is through the vehicle of particular environmental settings that individual, group and cultural processes are manifested. [...] Extending to this idea, place attachment may contribute to the formation, maintenance and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture*” (Low & Altman, 1992:7).

2.7.2 Sense of Home

Although social interaction is an important identifier for place attachment, other scholars warn of losing sight of the spatial component of place attachment. Cuba and Hummon (1993) criticize the strong emphasis in research on the social construction of space in their conceptual study on place attachment. They stress the need to take into account the physical component of place, which is often neglected in studies on place attachment. While places defined as social constructs may help to describe the relationship between people and places, the concept of place attachment tend to overemphasize the people in this relationship, neglecting the role of places and particularly the question “how places become social constructs?”

Therefore, Cuba and Hummon contrast the earlier mentioned display function of place attachment to a second function, named affiliation. While display is concerned with the communication of qualities of the self to self or other, affiliation focuses on the use of places to forge a sense of attachment or home. In using a place, people acquire a sense of attachment or home. Such identification with place often involves emotional ties to place. The second function of place attachment, therefore, focuses on the (individual) emotional ties of people with particular places, instead of the social interactions between people in places to

---

6 Elsewhere she states that: “From a cultural perspective, place attachment is the relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular place or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual’s and group’s understanding of and relation to the environment” (Low, 1992: 165).
form identities. By distinguishing between display (place identity) and affiliation (sense of home) Cuba and Hummon put the concept of place back in place attachment as a separate spatial factor with its own importance. Place attachment defined as purely social constructs and researched by social bonds, neglects the constitutive relationship between people and places where people not only construct places, but where places also affect the behaviour of people.

Both functions of place attachment, place identity and sense of home are of course linked. Research on emotional ties to place shows that the environmental quality of the local neighbourhood as objectively measured has little impact, though residents’ perceptions of the physical quality of the neighbourhood are associated with attachment. Among objective features of the environment, only housing quality and ownership consistently seem to increase attachment to some degree. Community attachment seems to be most strongly associated with social integration into the local area. Local social involvements, particularly those with friends and those involving kin, organizational memberships and local shopping, prove to be most consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to local places (Gerson et al., 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983). Therefore, both dimensions of place attachment, social (display) and spatial (affiliation) bonding, need to be studied at the same time to fully understand the concept of place attachment.

In sum, place attachment defines places not just as a stage for social action, battle scenes for power and status, but it is linked to people by an affective bond, in which space is transformed into place by the meaning people attach to this space. Places are involved in the construction of personal and social identities, which is displayed as place identity and can be noticed in their behaviour through their sense of home. In short, places are socially constructed. With the concept of identity dynamics I have tried to explain how places are ‘imbued with meaning’: they become symbolic and ideological map references for the communities that people belong to. However, this does not imply that places are purely mental constructs that only exist in people’s minds. Places have a physical component, which cannot be ignored. Both dimensions are important for my research on emotional ties of residents in urban renewal areas. Therefore, different dimensions of place attachment will be explored in the next paragraph.
2.8 Dimensions of Place Attachment

The distinction between the social and physical dimension of place attachment was originally introduced by Riger and Lavrakas in 1981. In their research article they discussed rootedness or physical attachment opposed to bonding or social attachment. Using data collected from telephone interviews on citizen's reactions (both behavioural and attitudinal) to crime in their neighbourhoods, Riger and Lavrakas performed factor analysis on a series of items that reflected social, economic and behavioural ties to one's neighbourhood, to investigate the interrelationships underlying these items. They concluded that two distinct factors underlie the selected items. The first appeared to represent the extent to which a person is settled or rooted in her/his neighbourhood while another factor represented the extent to which a person has formed social bonds with the neighbourhood. The factors correlated with each other (.58), indicating that the more a person is settled in the neighbourhood, the more likely he/she is to have formed strong social bonds.

Furthermore, Riger and Lavrakas criticize the unambiguous use of place. "Not much attention is paid in research to the different spatial levels of places towards which attachment is developed. Most studies focus on the neighbourhood or community level". The few studies that analyze different spatial levels indicate that neighbourhood is not the most important level of attachment (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974). Cuba and Hummon (1993) pick up this thread. They distinguish in their research on place identity, three different loci of place identity; dwelling, community and region. Their survey research in three towns in Barnstable County in the region of Cape Cod shows that most respondents locate a sense of self in more than one place: each of the three loci of place identity- dwelling, community, and region- are identified with roughly the same frequency (respectively 70.7, 67.1 and 65.5 percent), although a slightly higher percentage reported a dwelling-based place identity (Respondents were allowed multiple responses to the question of where they feel at home).
In an attempt to establish if some configurations of place loci are more likely to arise than others, Cuba and Hummon disaggregate the results for the three groups and compare these to a hierarchical model of place attachment.

*It is possible to conceive of the various combinations of place association as ranging from singular and sparse (linking one’s identity to a single place) to multifaceted and dense (linking one’s identity to a number of places. If place identity referents were ordered from least to most spatially expansive, one would expect the greatest number of those who report a single place identity locus to identify with their dwelling. Concomitantly, the most common dual loci identified should be dwelling and community* (Cuba and Hummon, 1993:121).

In their data respondents were most likely to place themselves at either end of this continuum of place association, with relatively few falling in between. About two-fifths of the sample (39.3 percent) reported ties to only one place, with region being the most probable locus of a singular place identity and community being the least probable locus. A group of comparable size (42.6 percent) exhibited the opposite pattern, claiming a sense of place at all three loci. The remaining group, those who report attachments to some combination of two place loci, is the smallest of the three. Less than 20 percent of the respondents comprise this middle group; most of these represent a pairing of dwelling and community-based place identities, the other two possible combinations of place loci being quite rare. They conclude therefore that:

*It is prudent to argue simply that although there is a good deal of variation in where people feel at home, most respondents locate a sense of self in more than one place and that some configurations of place loci are more likely to arise than others”* (Cuba and Hummon, 1993: 121-122).

To identify why people feel at home at different places Cuba and Hummon distinguished six levels of place affiliation by categorizing the answers respondents gave to the question “Why do you feel at home here?”:
1. Self-based (e.g., general psychological feeling of adjustment, “feeling comfortable”);
2. Family-based (e.g., reared family here, nearness to family);
3. Friend-based (e.g., meeting people, getting to know neighbours);
4. Community-based (e.g., attractive lifestyle, sense of community);
5. Organization-based (e.g., participation in work, formal organizations); and
6. Dwelling-based (e.g., home ownership, variety of personal possessions).

They hypothesized that different levels of place affiliation should relate to different loci of place identity. For example, those who report dwelling-related place affiliations should be most likely to locate their place identities within their houses or apartments. Place affiliations based on friends, community, or organizational attachments, on the other hand, may lead to community-level place identities. These expectations are confirmed in their research. Reasons for feeling at home linked to friends or organizational involvement, such as work, were positively related to a sense of community as home, while self-related place affiliations were negatively related to a community-based place identity. Not surprisingly, dwelling-related place affiliations are strongly and directly associated with a dwelling-based place identity.

However, the same does not hold true for the relation between community-based affiliations and identifications at the community level. Although community-related place ties related negatively to both dwelling and regional senses of place, they do not influence the adoption of a community-level place identity. In short, if you know other people in your neighbourhood through friendship or work you generally feel more at home in your community. Neighbourhood ties are more important than the way you feel about your neighbourhood: you might like the people in your neighbourhood and think you are getting along well, but that does not necessarily mean you identify with the community and feel at home there. Your regional sense of identity is least affected by your place affiliations.

These results are in line with earlier research identifying local social ties as the best predictor of community sense. Cuba and Hummon elaborate on this relationship by taking into account the different levels people develop a sense attachment with and prove that residents attach themselves to different levels of
People and Places: A Theoretical Exploration

places simultaneously, but that each level is related to different connections to these places. Home is not a single place, but the way we feel at home at every place very much depends on the people we meet there. How and why we feel at home can be described with the different dimensions of place attachment, which are summed up in the table below.

Table 2.1 Dimensions of Place Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Place Attachment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel at home here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(How do you feel at home?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rootedness or Physical Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding or Social Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Why do you feel at home?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Place Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Where do you feel at home?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region-based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the different dimensions of place attachment the emotional ties of residents particularly in urban renewal areas can be studied. The concept of place attachment enables me to distinguish between different emotional ties. Although, one critical issue remains: place attachment as defined in table 1 overwhelmingly emphasises positive attachments to well defined places; the neighbourhood (or region) as a place where residents feel at home. However, I started this chapter by questioning the positive effects of urban renewal programmes on emotional ties. Feelings of home surface, and become challenged by the regeneration process. Will I feel at home in the new house or neighbourhood? Will I still feel at home in the same neighbourhood when all the people I know have left?

Therefore, urban renewal can also evoke negative feelings of attachment: residents can become detached and can feel alienated from the place where they live due to changes in the population and their living environment, which are caused by urban renewal. They might not feel any attachment for their new
neighbours or the new design of housing and public spaces in their neighbourhood. To talk of place attachment in urban renewal, one needs to take into account negative feelings of home or positive feelings of home that disappear or change in magnitude and type of attachment. Therefore, when I talk of place attachment I refer to a wider array of at home feelings that can include negative feelings. This issue will be explored in more detail in chapter four.

I use the term of feeling at home, however, as a positive connotation of place attachment, with strong spatial connotations. Whereas place attachment can be negative and not place specific, feeling at home refers to positive emotions tied to a specific place. As such this concept is particularly useful for studying emotional ties in urban renewal. Can urban renewal affect the place attachment of residents positively, in that they increase the feelings of home in the neighbourhood for residents? This raises an interesting question: When does urban renewal fail and turn positive feeling into negative or indifferent feeling? To incorporate both negative and positive feelings of home, I have use the distinguished dimensions in table 2.1 to analyse different patterns of place attachment among Dutch (chapter 4) and English (chapter 5) residents. The patterns do not only describe different dimensions of place attachment, but also the connotation of these dimensions. This allowed me to study the change of positive feelings into negative ones and vice versa.

---

7 This point has also been recognised by other researchers who study place attachments by increasing the focus on the negative and darker side of home experiences. Home can be a prison and a place of terror as well as a haven or place of love. For the unemployed life can be home-centred in a negative retreatist way (Binns & Mars, 1984), while elderly people may be homebound (Deem, 1986).