

RECONCEPTUALIZING SENSES OF PLACE: SOCIAL RELATIONS, IDEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY¹

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to reconceptualize sense of place through the examination, re-analysis and theorization of two case studies, one of an ex-urban community in England, the other a Himalayan farming and herding community. The paper begins by examining the traditional locus of sense of place research in humanistic geography with extensions to political geography and interpretive anthropology. Identifying three core components—social, ideological and ecological—of senses of place, the paper goes on to reconceptualize these elements using Habermas's theory of communicative action and Ingold's work on environmental psychology. It then applies this reconceptualization to the case studies of Towcester and Shimshal. The paper concludes by emphasizing the ways these cases enrich our understanding of sense of place, by stressing the theoretical contributions of conceiving sense of place as rooted in theories of social organization and society, and as being variably and contingently ecologically emplaced.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature of sense of place. It does this in three ways. First, it locates research on senses of place in the humanistic geographical literature, although it sees this as being extended in the political geography realm by explorations of the intersection of place and politics. This leads to a full explanation of a theory of senses of place and their social, ideological and ecological dimensions through Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action and Ingold's (1992) exploration of direct perception, the latter allowing for an explicit rendering of the ecological as well as the more usually conceptualized social and ideological. Second, it explores senses of place through a process of initial analysis of two case studies (the one building on the other—Shimshal on Towcester), engagement with theoretical debates, reflection and re-analysis. Through this process, the results from different methodological approaches—construction of ideal types and the lived experience of fieldwork—are engaged and used to inform one another. Third, the paper presents, comparative analysis of senses of place in these two dis-

tinct geographical and cultural cases or settings, the first a commuter town in southern England (Towcester), the second a village and pastoral community in the Pakistan high Karakoram (Shimshal). What brings the two cases together is the use of a similar interpretive framework for understanding sense of place—developed in Towcester, reapplied in Shimshal. As with all comparative investigations, such case selection allows a movement beyond description to account for the phenomena of interest (cf. Durkheim, 1938). Such investigations allow generalizations to be made, resulting from the interpretation, side by side, of different groups, collectivities, institutions and environments. As Hecló (1972, p. 95) comments, “to speak to comparative analysis suggests not only that one will be looking at variables which actually vary, but also that one will be doing so in contexts which themselves vary.” It is only through such comparative analysis that one can appreciate which are truly unique and what are the more generic phenomena.

Thus it is our intention to examine the nature of sense of place, empirically derived and refracted through a series of theoretic and reflective lenses from two very different contexts. In this way, it is possible to begin to isolate potentially generalizable features of the phenomenon of interest from the study of the characteristics embedded in the cases themselves. But before the cases are presented, we wish first to isolate the significance of sense of place in the geographical literature, seeing it as emerging as a given in humanistic geography but being necessarily grounded in both theories of communicative action and research on the ecological basis of cultural attachment to place. We shall conclude with a commentary on how our case studies inform a theoretical understanding of senses of place.

Senses of place and humanistic geography

As Cloke *et al.* (1991) graphically express it in their review of approaches in human geography, the hu-

manistic turn “peoples” the discipline. The turn allows for a focus on place and the experience of place by people through phenomenological and existential arguments (Relph, 1970; Seamon, 1979). Place always implies a sense of place even if that experience was not particularly pleasant. Thus, Relph (1985, p. 26) argues that place (and sense of place) are qualitatively different from that of landscape or space. “The latter are part of any immediate encounter with the world, and so long as I can see I cannot help but see them no matter what my purpose. This is not so with places, for they are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations.” Place is where one is known and knows others. Sense of place involves sense of being.

Before any choices there is this “place”, where the foundations of earthly existence and human condition establish themselves. We can change locations, move, but this is still to look for a place; we need a base to set down our Being and to realize our possibilities, a *here* from which to discover the world, a *there* to which we can return”.

(Dardel, 1952, p. 56; translated by Relph, 1985, p. 27)

Such sentiment is also expressed by anthropologists who suggest that consciousness of the world beyond place is the catalyst for the recognition of one’s own community as a distinct entity (Cohen, 1982). Places are thus seen as centres of felt value (Tuan, 1977), centres of experience and aspirations of people (Tuan, 1976). To be attached to a place is an important human need, perhaps the least recognized one (Weil, 1955). Place is a profound centre for human existence (Relph, 1976), important for identity of the individual (with the group) (Duncan, 1973). It is of course not the only basis of identity or attachment but it provides a grounding for other dimensions beyond the household. Even in the electronic era (Meyrowitz, 1985), sense of place-boundedness is strong (Pred, 1983).

Place identity remains strong even if the attachment is not positive (Hummon, 1992), even if it is disrupted (Brown and Perkins, 1992) and at different scales from dwelling to region (Cuba and Hummon, 1993). As Cuba and Hummon (1993) note, place identity, as expressed by a sense of feeling-at-home, is widespread, rich in its attachment to multiple locales and complex in spatial structures and in its determination. Indeed, in a review of ten

definitions of place, Brown and Perkins (1992, p. 284) conclude that place attachments are integral to self-definitions; they provide stability and non-threatening changes; they are holistic and multifaceted and multilevel. Brown and Perkins argued that “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.”

Sense of place underpins sense of (well)being. This is noted by Foucault (1980, p. 70): “A critique could be carried out of this devaluation of space [*sic*] that has prevailed for generations... to trace the forms of implantation, delimitation and demarcation of objects, the modes of tabulation, the organization of domains meant throwing into relief processes—historical ones, needless to say—of power.” The denial of sense of place, criticized by Foucault, is taken up by Harvey (1982) in his description of the homogeneous nature of places that are all subject to the logic of the economy (although Harvey modifies his position somewhat in later works). Thrift (1987) and Entrikin (1991) take issue with this approach, arguing that subjects make-up and are identities localized even if the “material” is not all local in origin (cf. essays in Duncan and Ley, 1993; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Gregory and Walford, 1989; Philo, 1991; Keith and Pile, 1993; Pile and Thrift, 1995). Further, the argument that political alignments have crystallized largely around national social differences to produce national patterns of political mobilization and partisan support has also been challenged. For example, Dunleavy (1979) points to the importance of the social and the local in shaping interest perceptions and value formations to charter the growth of “consumption cleavages” in urban political alignments. Agnew (1987) examines the importance of the local—social, historic and perceptual—in shaping the patterns of support for Scottish nationalism.

From such studies the significance of the local—of places—emerges. But it must be recognized that places have both individuality and interdependence. This is superbly expressed by Entrikin (1991, p. 134), addressing the apparent divide between places as existence and places in nature:

The closest that we can come to addressing both sides of this divide is from a point in between, a point that leads us into the vast realm

of narrative forms. From this position we gain a view from both sides of the divide. We gain a sense both of being “in a place” and “at a location”, of being at the centre and being at a point in a centreless world. To ignore either argument of this dualism is to misunderstand the modern experience of place.

He goes on to make a spirited defence for the significance of place, proclaiming its basis for “community” and significance for democracy (its normative significance), its utility as a “model” in everyday understandings about the world (its epistemological significance), and arguing that it is of continued relevance in a mobile world to “place” people (its empirical—theoretical significance). In some respects, Entrikin’s assertions parallel Agnew’s (1987) three dimensions of place: location (the spatial distribution of activities—the impact of the wider world on place), locale (the setting in which social relations are constituted—akin to “community”) and sense of place (place attachment and the structure of feelings that are used in the everyday).

For us, place is not usurped by other discourses such as those that emphasize the non-place self and the non-place community. Walter (1988, p. 97) argues that the dominance of Freud’s thought helps unground the self:

Freud moved theory of the mind away from grounded experience and helped to build the couch as a vehicle abstracting patient from place. Despite his own existential recognition of the inner need for place, Freud’s psychology never integrated personal identity with the sense of belonging, and the real power of place.

We may add that this power of places was further attenuated as the mass of people in industrial society came to reside in urban places. Despite our interdependence, we are individualized, blasé about interactions, calculating about events and integrated around the self rather than significant others. Simmel’s (1950) description of the mental life of the metropolis and Wirth’s (1964) of urbanism as a way of life encapsulate this world of independent, isolated individuals living in densely settled, heterogeneous settlements where only we know our identity. These arguments also have relevance for the “loss of community” and hence non-place communities.

Agnew (1987) in fact argues that there are two stages to the devaluation of sense of place as a significant cognitive and social structure. First, it stems from the ambiguity in the language of community, in which the term is used to describe both physical setting and a morally valued way of life (Nisbet, 1966; Calhoun, 1980; Agnew 1989). Tönnies’s (1957) ideas of the transition from a place-based community to a place-less or national society link this stage to the second devaluation of place, namely the eclipse of community and with it, by implication, places as “history”. This allows for the evolution of society into associations of interdependent but autonomous workers and consumers. In modern society, individuals become dissociated from place as social networks and interaction make geography less relevant than in the past. Institutions, not places, guide interactions (Stacey, 1969), and it is accessibility rather than propinquity that is the important spatial referent (cf. Webber, 1964). While it is not possible to deny the importance of institutions or accessibility, Tilly (1973, p. 236) expresses our concerns well. He argues that places have persisted in importance but there has been a relative decline in such localized communities as the bases of collective action: “local ties have diminished little or not at all, extra local ties have increased.” Further, local ties and sense of locale in the past may have been political rather than social, as the Lee *et al.* (1984) study of Seattle demonstrates. And while the influence of national, mass phenomena cannot be doubted (cf. Pahl, 1970), they are just as likely to stimulate dissimilar behaviour by individuals in distinct places as similar actions (cf. Claggett *et al.*, 1984). From this literature, we note that place and our sense of place cannot be taken for granted and must be grounded. How might that grounding occur?

Much recent work in the “new” cultural and social geography locates this grounding—and the argument for contextualization is now surely well made—in psychoanalytic and/or poststructuralist (i.e. anti-humanist) notions of “the self”, especially in the connections among space, place, subjectivity and identity (cf. Pile, 1993; Keith and Pile, 1993; Pile and Thrift, 1995). Those who follow a psychoanalytic model of subjectivity see a person’s grounding in place as rooted largely in the unconscious (cf. Thrift, 1993), while poststructuralist approaches understand subject positions and places to be constituted and linked within and through discourses. These approaches provide legitimate grounds from which to critique both the existence

and emancipatory potential of shared place attitudes and attachments, arguing that such place-oriented communities of sentiment repress differences within, and exclude differences from outside (cf. Young, 1990). While we recognize the contributions of this strand of socio-cultural toward reconceptualising place, we nevertheless wish to develop our analysis in a direction that recognizes the continuing salience of community in *our* subjects' lives.

Social and ideological dimensions of senses of place

The grounding of human beings in place may be explored in the context of studies of "community" in which sense of place often resides. Eyles identifies three salient elements of community: "place or area, people and their institutions, and sense of belonging, which helps enrich our notion of place" (1985, p. 63). He suggests that the concept of community, as constituted in its three attendant elements:

can provide insights into the importance and role of place in social and material life. It is in this respect that the three aspects of community-place, people and mind—are taken and discussed [in terms of] community as ecological structure, social structure and ideological structure respectively.

(Eyles, 1985, pp. 63–64)

In this section we want to explore the relationships between sense of place and each of these aspects, or dimensions, of community. The *social* component provides the basic material for everyday life in a community. Community consists, largely, of groups of individuals and their relationships with one another. This social life does not necessarily involve place. However, place necessarily locates activities and has meaning as an area for social activities or for the expression of sentiments. Thus, places are often constituted by the people who live in them. The conjoining of people and places leads to the latter's constitution as matrices of symbols which comprise the *ideological* component of community and place. Ideological structure constitutes community as an expression of collective sentiment and as a device for the protection and promotion of sectional interests. Matrices of symbols pertaining to places can engender a sense of belonging and identity; individuals identify with a

place, and feel they belong to it, because they share social values and sentiments with others in that place. The place comes to represent a set of shared values. This place-based sense of community exists in the mind, but is not a product of the mind alone. The mental representation is based on the environmental, social and material conditions in which the individual is located. We address the relationship between social and ideological aspects of community through a discussion of Habermas's theory of communicative action, in which (1) collective agency toward intersubjective understanding is understood as occurring "in place", and is founded on shared elements of an "emplaced" life world; and (2) the symbolic constitution of place is itself conceived as materially and socially constructed. We then attempt to root *ecologically* the relationship between sense of place and everyday life, by incorporating a discussion of work in cultural ecology.

Community, whatever its other characteristics, is first and foremost a set of social and cultural relations. It basically consists of a set of social interactions grounded in shared meanings, values and interests. Habermas's (1984) distinction between instrumental and communicative action helps to conceptualize that link between the social and the ideological. In his theory of communicative action, Habermas argues that members of speech communities (a concept that incorporates a more conventional notion of community) are occupied continuously in two types of agency. The first is geared toward specific instrumental or technical outcomes—to get to work, to make money, to meet people, to extract produce from pastures, etc.—which he calls *instrumental action*. Habermas calls the second *communicative action*, and describes it as a continuous struggle to understand one another, to negotiate a set of common meanings, to reach an intersubjective understanding. Communicative action occurs as individuals challenge and eventually accept the legitimacy of each another's arguments, in terms of one or more of three validity claims, which Habermas describes as exhaustive and irreducible: truth, appropriateness, and authenticity. We are not convinced that these validity claims are either exhaustive or irreducible, or can ever result in truly intersubjective understanding (Butz, 1995; Giddens, 1982; Fraser, 1987; Honneth and Joas, 1991). Nevertheless, Habermas's conceptualization of these two action-orientations, and especially the relationship between them, is helpful for conceptualizing senses of place.

Habermas contends that instrumental and communicative action are integrally related, in that instrumental action relies on prior and ongoing communicative action (Giddens, 1982). It is through communicative action that speech communities negotiate both the rules for decision making, and specific decisions themselves. The products of both negotiations shape instrumental action: the first determines what is accepted as appropriate instrumental action; the second, what is considered to be successful action. In this way, Habermas conceives technical activities as the outcome of instrumental action, but determined communicatively. At the same time, the technical success of instrumental action may be used as a claim to validate further communicative action.

What makes communicative action—this continual challenging, arguing and validating—less arduous than it sounds, especially in small face-to-face communities, is the existence of an intersubjectively shared *life world*, which consists for Habermas of a loose and shifting set of non-problematic background convictions that provide the foundations for what we consider to be true, appropriate and truthful; in industrial societies, routinization (Stehr, 1994). Life world is therefore the symbolic context for determining the rules of decision making. The shared assumptions of life world ease communicative action. But the relationship is not one-way, because communicative action constantly validates, alters and reproduces elements of life world by calling the unquestioned into question, and requiring its validation. This occurs as individuals attempt to utilize the convictions of life world to validate their claims. In short, shared life world underlies communicative action even as communicative action rationalizes life world.

The relationships Habermas posits between communicative action, instrumental action and life world help clarify the ways that place, community and senses of place are integrated. First, the communicative efforts of a speech community necessarily occur “some place”. Places provide the specific sites and larger context for communicative action as a form of social interaction, and therefore become associated with, and to some degree constitutive of, that interaction. The reverse is also true. The places where communicative action occurs become associated with and constituted through that form of interaction. This is obviously true of face-to-face interaction among members of a speech community, whether formally in council chambers or informally over the back fence. How-

ever, more obviously mediated—less face-to-face—speech communities are also emplaced in this way, although not always in the sense of contiguous spatial boundedness. An Internet discussion group is an extreme example of a speech community without propinquity, the participants of which nevertheless associate it with, and constitute it through, their specific places of access, and perhaps with and through the larger and less tangible imaginative “cyberplace” of the Net where these individual places of entry meet. We would argue that such a conceptualization diminishes the danger that associating sense of place with territorially bounded community renders sense of place obsolete in an era of time-space distanciation. Certainly, the notion of community without propinquity requires some rethinking of senses of place and the way they are shared, but it does not make senses of place less significant either as an abstract concept, or as constitutive of individuals’ daily lives. Social interaction geared toward intersubjective understanding—whether in contiguous or non-contiguous speech communities—is thus integrally associated with the particular sites of interaction, both lending those sites significance and deriving meaning from them. In other words, the social process of communicative action, to the extent that it is emplaced, engenders senses of place on a very small-scale, which links the place of social interaction with the form of interaction, and lends both place and social interaction significance.

Second, the ideological contexts (life worlds) that members of a speech community bring to communicative action, and which they use as the basis for assessing others’ validity claims, are themselves grounded in the places in which members live their lives. Participants in communicative action associate the norms, attitudes, suppositions, assumptions with which they evaluate others’ validity claims with particular environmental/corporeal settings. We all live our background convictions in place, and they take shape in our minds as guidelines for a material existence, lived in a place. Our practical understanding of the world is rooted in our life places. It is this relationship between place and life world which comprises the core of senses of place. Place, to the extent that it is *shared* by members of a speech community (and the co-presence implied by the notion of communicative action makes it shared), becomes a basis for commonality in the life worlds of participants, which helps make their validity claims recognizable, tangible, indeed real to one another. In many instanc-

es, then, shared senses of place can facilitate efforts to achieve intersubjective understanding among members of a speech community.

Third, the relationship between places and social interaction geared toward intersubjective understanding also works in the opposite direction, in that participants in discourse create and re-create place symbols as they interact and attempt to understand one another. The process of communicative action ensures that life world is as much a social as it is a mental construct: communicative action rationalizes life world, and in so doing also rationalizes sense of place. In that way, shared senses of place may be outcomes of communicative action, as well as constituent elements of it. In short, much of the life world shared by members of territorially based communities is likely to be bound up in a shared experience of and in place. People who have a common history in a place are likely to share certain orientations toward that place which are reproduced through communicative action, and which are represented in things that exist at the intersection of local meaning and local knowledge. This implies that senses of place are dynamic and contingent, not static or originary in any sense.

Fourth, not only is the ideological component of place (or senses of place) socially constituted, but so are its material aspects. Communicative action regulates what can be accepted as legitimate instrumental action, some of which is geared toward the definition, use and reproduction of the sets of material resources that comprise a physical place. Places are constructed symbolically and physically as the products of communicative and instrumental action respectively. Places are produced materially in response to the outcome of communicative action, which is itself regulated by a place-embedded life world. Again, the relationship is two-way, for the symbolic component of place is materially constituted. Place is where life is lived instrumentally (as well as symbolically); it is the corporeal setting for individual life worlds. And for many speech communities it provides a large and tangible (yet limited) component of what is shared among participants. Thus, place can provide a common and material foundation for shared elements of life world, and a basis for social interaction through communicative action.

Several summary points emerge which help move the sense of place concept beyond its humanist roots. First, and most obvious, social interaction, place and sense of place are mutually constitutive. They are all necessarily implicated in one

another, and none of them can be conceived as originary. Second, and following from the first point, senses of place are never purely individual or purely collective. They are never purely individual because life world is always reproduced, negotiated and rationalized through a social process of communicative action. Place meanings may be highly private, but they are nevertheless grounded in a communicatively rationalized life world. Senses of place are never purely collective, in the sense that we can identify the definitive sense of place of a community. All individuals participate to varying degrees in numerous speech communities (several of which may coalesce to approximate what we conventionally conceive as the spatially-bounded "community"), occupy particular subject positions in each, and bring particular place experiences to each, so that the discursive constitution of any individual's senses of place will overlap with, but not duplicate, that of other individuals. Third, following from the previous point, an individual's senses of place are unlikely to be stable or unitary. They are not stable, just as life world is not stable, because the places and social processes through which they are constituted are continuously changing. They are not unitary, because individuals participate in numerous speech communities, and occupy several subject positions, all of which suggest different, often overlapping, often contradictory, attitudes toward place. What all of this suggests for the study of senses of place, is that we abandon all attempts to describe unitary senses of place which are definitive of the relationship between groups of people and their places. It would seem more fruitful to view senses of place, both within and among individuals, as necessarily tentative and contingent, particularistic, dynamic, and at least potentially contradictory. From that point of departure, the task becomes one of recognizing commonalities and overlaps where they exist, and tracing the social, ideological and ecological configurations which account for that overlap. The discussion thus far provides an adequate sense of the relationship between sense of place and the first two of those configurations. It remains to integrate fully an ecological component into our understanding of senses of place.

Ecological dimensions of senses of place

We wish to develop our treatment of an ecologically grounded sense of place around Ingold's (1992) critique of cognitivist theories of environmental

perception, and his arguments in favour of an alternative theory of direct perception. First, we will summarize the main points of Ingold's argument. It will be evident that his approach conflicts in some important ways with the discursive model we have developed so far. Our second task, therefore, is to clarify which parts of Ingold's model we wish to reject, and which we think are useful for extending our understanding of senses of place into an explicitly ecological realm.

If senses of place are attitudes toward place, or cultural representations of place, it follows that an effort to conceptualize individuals' senses of ecologically grounded aspects of place can benefit from some attention to one of the central questions of cultural ecology: what is the relationship between culture and ecological setting? (Steward, 1955, p. 33). According to Ingold, cultural ecologists have conventionally answered this question in an internally inconsistent way, at once insisting that (1) all meaning is culturally constructed, and (2) that culture is human beings' means of adapting to the environment. He describes the essence of the contradiction as follows:

Cultures, it is supposed, are systems of symbols. As meaning-making animals, humans impose their symbolically constituted designs upon the external world... . If all meaning is thus culturally constructed, then the environment on which it is imposed must originally be *empty* of significance. But if we hold that culture is man's [*sic*] means of adaptation to the environment, and if the environment—prior to its ordering through cultural categories—is mere flux, devoid of all form and meaning, it follows that culture is an adaptation to nothing at all... . Either we must abandon the notion, central to ecological anthropology, that culture is an adaptive system attuned to given environmental constraints, or we have to abandon the idea that human beings inhabit worlds that are themselves culturally constructed.

(Ingold, 1992, p. 39; emphasis in original)

Ingold views this dilemma as stemming from a cognitivist approach to environmental perception, which “erects an impermeable barrier between the ‘interior world’ of human subjects and their exterior conditions of existence” (Ingold, 1992, p. 40), so that “we must know the world before we can act

in it, and knowing consists in the organisation of sensations impinging upon the passively receptive human subject into progressively higher-order structures or ‘representations’” (Ingold, 1992, p. 45). According to a cognitivist model, raw perceptions of environmental characteristics are meaningless until organized into cultural categories and representations through a process of cognition. Ingold rejects this cognitivist dichotomy between sensation and intellect, and argues that “there is no distinction between seeing and ‘seeing as’” (Reed, 1987, p. 105). His central claim is that “it is possible for persons to acquire *direct* knowledge of their environments in the course of their practical activities” (Ingold, 1992, p. 40; emphasis in original). He supports his claim with a reading of Gibson's (1979) “ecological psychology”, especially his theory of *direct perception*.

The theory of direct perception relies on the notion of environmental *affordances*, which Gibson (1979, p. 127) describes as what an environment “*offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill” (Gibson, 1979, p. 127; emphasizes in original) for the consummation of behaviour. These affordances exist as inherent potentials of environmental objects themselves, independent of whether or how a subject uses them. Thus, environmental objects are not neutral objects waiting for individuals to assign them meaning; their meaning is in what they afford. Human beings perceive the environment as sets of affordances for particular practical purposes, and “perceiving is, *ipso facto*, knowing—to have seen something is to have sought out the information that enables one to know it” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46). Environmental knowledge is thus essentially practical; it is knowledge about what the environment affords. Ingold acknowledges that human beings have the ability to step outside this practical engagement with the environment as a set of affordances, to view it abstractly as ‘nature’, and thus configure it as a system of neutral objects. However, he does not believe this is the way the environment is perceived in everyday life: “no more than other animals can human beings *live* in a permanently suspended condition of contemplative detachment” (Ingold, 1992, p. 44; emphasis in original). Life is lived in engagement, not disengagement, with the environment.

Some central implications of conceiving environmental perception as direct recognition of a set of affordances are as follows. First, perception is not a series of discrete sensory events, but rather a

continuous process, the continuous outcome of which is a new state of the perceiver. Second, to say that individuals share an environment is to say that they live in a world of shared environmental affordances, the perception/recognition of which they also share. Third, “the process of perception is also a process of action: we perceive the world as, and because, we act in it” (Ingold, 1992, p. 45). Fourth, “the structures and meanings that we find in the world are *already there* in the information we extract in the act of perception; their source lies in the objects we perceive, they are not added on by the perceiver” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46; emphasis in original).

Which affordances, of the many offered by an environment, are the ones individuals perceive, depends upon the activities those individuals are engaged in and the *effectivities* they have. The term “effectivity” “denotes the action capabilities of the agent—what he or she is practically equipped to do”—and is the reciprocal of “affordances”, which “are properties of the real environment as directly perceived by an agent in the context of practical action” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46). Thus “the range of affordances of an object will be constrained by the effectivities of the subject, and conversely, the effectivities of the subject will be constrained by the affordances of the objects encountered” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46). What this implies is that effectivities and affordances are constitutive of one another, and that this relationship is the basis for what Ingold calls the mutual constitution of persons and environment.

In conceptualizing effectivities (which are characteristics of the perceiver) as constitutive of affordances, Ingold seems to be leaving room for cultural and social organization to play an important part in the perception of environmental objects. This is not, however, Ingold’s position. He states quite categorically that “we *discover* meaningful objects in the environment by moving about in it and extracting invariants from the continually changing optic array” (Ingold, 1992, p. 47; emphasis in original). We *do not generate* them culturally through language. Nor do we need language for perception to be shared:

The awareness of living in a common world—the communion of experience that lies at the heart of sociality—does not depend on the translation of percepts, initially constructed by subjects from sensory data private to themselves, into the terms of an objective system of

collective representations encoded in language and validated by verbal agreement... . Sociality is rather given from the start, *prior* to the objectification of experience in cultural categories, in the direct perceptual involvement of fellow subjects immersed in joint action in the same environment”.

(Ingold, 1992, p. 47; emphasis in original)

Indeed, Ingold suggests that cultural categories—classification systems—are quite unnecessary for the perception and practical use of environmental affordances. They are only necessary for knowing a “nature” abstracted from everyday practical life. Rather, “it is by their action in the world [and not by their classification of it] that people know it, and come to perceive what it affords” (Ingold, 1992, p. 48). Therefore, language and symbolic thought—culture—are necessary not to know the world, but only to make others aware of that knowledge, to share it: “the cultural construction of the environment is not so much a *prelude* to practical action as an (optional) *epilogue*” (Ingold, 1992, p. 52; emphasis in original).

Ingold’s central proposition that human beings perceive and experience the environment as a set of affordances, the recognition of which—and indeed the constitution of which—is constrained by the effectivities and action contexts of the perceiving individuals, is a strong foundation from which to build a conceptualization of ecologically-grounded senses of place. Clearly, however, his assertion that individuals perceive environmental affordances directly—pre-culturally, so to speak—is incommensurate with the discursive emphasis of our thesis so far. The main failing of Ingold’s conceptualization is that he stresses the direct relationship between human agents and their environment while ignoring a similarly “direct” relationship between human beings and the societies of which they are necessarily a part, and within which they necessarily encounter the environment. Ingold’s persons are environmentally constituted, but apparently not socially or culturally constituted. We wish to accept the notion of “direct” perception of environmental affordances, but with the important qualification that human perceivers are always already socially and culturally constituted (just as in their social interactions they are always already environmentally constituted). Human beings’ perceptions of their ecological environment are in no way originary/pre-cultural acts, because their action contexts and

effectivities are necessarily socially and culturally implicated. There is always a relationship between material perception of the material environment and social communication about that environment, between in another lexicon, signifier and signified, whatever the sign system (cf. Rappoport, 1979; Gottdiener, 1983). Our insistence that perception is socially and culturally grounded is quite different from the cognitivist approach which conceives environmental perceptions as meaningless and “external” until organised through a discrete cognitive process, and, indeed, seems commensurate with what Ingold says initially about the relationship between affordances and effectivities.

In cognitivist models of perception, human beings’ knowledge of their environment is supposedly based initially on abstract thought about that environment. According to a theory of direct perception, environmental knowledge is grounded in immediate practical action in that environment. Individuals come to know their environment as they begin to recognise what it affords for their practical purposes; we never just perceive the environment, we always perceive it *as* something which facilitates or confounds our purposes. Ingold’s mistake, as we see it, is in assuming that this perception/knowledge is unmediated. Social and cultural mediation of environmental knowledge occurs in at least three ways, all of which derive from Ingold’s own use of the term “effectivities”, as “the action capabilities of the agent—what he or she is practically equipped to do” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46). First, individuals’ effectivities, so defined, are constrained by their practical purposes, which are themselves socially constructed. Even something as innocent as a walk in a forest is a socially constructed practical purpose which differs from innumerable other equally socially constructed practical purposes for venturing into the woods. It may not be necessary to identify by name the path we walk along, or to represent it to ourselves as one in a typology of similar objects, including sidewalks, streets, canals, etc. But the recognition that it affords an appropriate route for our walk is influenced by the pre-existing social conventions of going for a walk, including childhood admonishments not to disturb the vegetation, to stay on the path to avoid getting lost, and so on. Second, it seems unlikely that many of us ever encounter an environmental object that has not already been culturally inscribed and socially positioned for us, although something approaching this may occur when known environments are disrupted, and we

see them anew (Lee, 1976; Brown and Perkins, 1992); for example, in the aftermath of war (Hewitt, 1994). Thus our effectivities are constituted in part as what our social context allows us to recognize as the affordances of an environment for our practical purposes. For example, how many of us can survey our world without being aware, at the most fundamental level, of the social context of private property? There are many environmental affordances that human beings do not recognize—indeed, for all practical purposes these affordances do not exist—because we do not have legitimate social access to them. Third, human beings’ practical endeavours are often collective; the tasks we set out to accomplish in the environment must often coordinate with larger group projects, and are frequently set by others. In that case, communication of environmental knowledge precedes direct perception, and the representations and classifications implicit in language shape the effectivities that are brought to the individuals/environment interaction, as well as the direct (but mediated) perceptions that result from that encounter. It seems that in arguing for a pre-cultural/pre-linguistic knowledge of environment Ingold is trying to describe how human beings would interact with the environment if we did not already exist socially and culturally. But we are always already socially and culturally constituted, and that constitution shapes the effectivities we bring to our continuous encounters with environmental objects. This somewhat altered conception of effectivities does not make environmental perception any less direct than Ingold supposes, but merely less isolated from other spheres of everyday life.

Having established the social and cultural constitution of effectivity we can now link it with our earlier discussion of instrumental and communicative action to suggest that environmental effectivities comprise two main types: communicative and instrumental. If effectivities are what agents are “practically equipped to do” (Ingold, 1992, p. 46), then communicative effectivities are those capabilities that allow agents to conceive ecological objects in specific enabling and constraining ways, and instrumental effectivities are those technical capabilities that facilitate specific instrumental uses of the environment (the difference here is between, for example, being able to conceive a piece of mountainside as a socially and symbolically available site for cultivation—to be able to associate it with our own project of cultivation—and having the technical—and social—capacity to terrace,

irrigate, cultivate it, etc.). The two types of effectivities relate to the practical and technical knowledge constitutive interests identified by Habermas. The relationship between these types of effectivity is parallel to the relationship between communicative and instrumental action, and between practical and technical knowledge constitutive interests, in that instrumental effectivities are contextualised by communicative effectivities; what agents can do with the environment technically depends on what they can conceive it to be. Both types of effectivity are contexts for knowing, that which individuals bring to an encounter with their ecological setting, but both are also the products of previous environmental encounters—by the subject and others—so that individuals' effectivities are constituted in and through place.

Affordances, by definition, are "inherent potentials of [environmental] objects themselves" that "render it apt for the project of a subject" (Ingold, 1992, p. 42). It follows that subjects' projects or "practical purposes" can be either instrumental *and/or* communicative. What the environment affords for persons also falls into two broad categories: those affordances that relate to environmental knowledge geared to technical projects, and those related to knowledge in support of practical projects (associated with constituting a stable life world). The everyday projects or purposes through which we encounter the environment may be instrumental or communicative *from the start*; contrary to Ingold's conceptualization, communicative projects are not an "epilogue" to environmental perception. If environmental affordances are "use values" as Ingold suggests, then the uses of environmental objects must be recognised as both technical and symbolic. In other words, the ecological environment yields both symbolic and instrumental resources (cf. Butz, 1996).

We would like to suggest that ecological dimensions of senses of place emerge from accumulated sets of perceived/known ecological affordances. Ecological senses of place are the knowledges of a place's ecological characteristics that yield meanings which make persons identify with the place. Recognized affordances, whether symbolic or instrumental, are perceptions that yield such meaning because they are generated out of the interplay between the characteristics of a specific place-grounded environment and the effectivities of the perceiver. They are not attributes of ecology alone, but rather products of human encounter with an ecological setting. In that way, ecological senses of

place are best understood as contingent outcomes of the relationship between effectivities and affordances, and as such may be sharply demarcated or blurred depending on social context; or perhaps as disclosures of what exists between the characteristics of human communities and the ecological environment they occupy. Several points emerge from conceptualizing ecological senses of place in this way, which resonate with the sets of comments made earlier about the relationships among community and social and ideological aspects of place.

First, people's effectivities can be understood as life world elements which, like all aspects of life world, are shaped both by subjects' communications with others and their own instrumental interaction with the environment. What we take *to* an environmental encounter is a product both of what we have learned from others and what we have experienced directly in previous encounters with that ecological setting. What we take *from* an environmental encounter is the knowledge of certain environmental affordances, which immediately change the effectivities we will bring to future encounters with that (and other similar) ecological settings. The life world-based "products" of this iterative relationship between effectivities and affordances are senses of place which (to the extent that affordances are attributes of an actual ecological environment) are themselves grounded in a particular ecological setting, and which arise out of a process which is grounded in that ecological setting. If senses of place are emplaced aspects of life world, then ecological senses of place are ecologically emplaced aspects of life world. In other words, it is the relationship between ecological setting and life world which comprise the core of ecological senses of place.

Second, ecological affordances, to the extent that their perception is shared by members of a speech community (and the instrumental requirements of social life makes them shared), become a basis for commonality in the life worlds of participants, which help make some of their validity claims recognizable and tangible to one another. In some instances, then, shared ecological senses of place can benefit efforts to achieve intersubjective understanding among members of a speech community. Third, the relationship between ecological setting and social interaction also works in the opposite direction, in that participants in discourse create and reproduce effectivities (the potential to recognize affordances) as they attempt to understand one another. Ecological aspects of the life

world—ecological senses of place—are as much social and mental constructs as they are products of a physical ecological setting, but they are nevertheless strongly rooted in that physical setting, whether or not such rooting is consciously recognized. Fourth, ecological senses of place are themselves constitutive of physical ecological settings. One product of the interplay of effectivities and affordances is instrumental action geared toward the utilization and manipulation of ecological objects, and the production of new environments. Again, the relationship is two-way, for the symbolic component of ecological settings—ecological senses of place—are materially constituted out of the experiences of real people in real ecological settings.

Fifth, ecological senses of place, like senses of place in general, are never purely individual or purely collective. They are never purely individual because effectivities are developed and affordances recognized within a social context. Ecological place meanings may be highly private, but are nevertheless (contrary to Ingold's conceptualization of environmental knowledge) socially implicated. They are never purely collective, because each individual encounters different ecological settings for rather different practical purposes, and in the context of somewhat different effectivities. Following from that, a person's ecological senses of place are unlikely to be stable; the continuous mutually constitutive interplay between effectivities and affordances in the context of ongoing ecological encounters means that ecological senses of place are always works in progress, always "becoming". Nor are they likely to be unitary, because individuals encounter an ecological setting from multiple subject positions, and in the context of multiple, perhaps conflicting, practical purposes.

Sixth, and finally, following from Ingold's treatment of direct perception, we have conceptualized ecological senses of place as deriving from persons' practically grounded encounters with specific ecological objects. Thus, they are particular types of attitudes toward particular types of places. Not all senses of place have an ecological component, and in no way can we suppose that all senses of place are grounded ecologically, or in material environments. It may be that our strongest senses of place are of places which have no physical environmental grounding (for example, imagined places or 'cyberplace'), and these can hardly be described as ecologically grounded. An obvious corollary is that the strongest and most resilient ecological senses of place are likely to emerge in

groups whose interaction with a place is rooted in numerous and ongoing ecological encounters, contextualized by a variety of everyday practical purposes, in a social setting characterised by sustained communicative action regarding the symbolic and instrumental use value of the ecological characteristics of the place.

Having outlined our conceptualization of senses of place as constituted socially, ideologically and ecologically, we are now in a position to apply this interpretive framework to two very different case studies: Shimshal, in mountainous northern Pakistan, and Towcester, in the English Midlands. Far from a uni-directional application of abstract theory, the outlines of the interpretive framework described above were originally developed as an attempt to understand empirical data collected in Towcester (Eyles, 1985). The subsequent application of that interpretive framework to circumstances in Shimshal inspired its further development and partial reworking, and especially heightened attention to ecological constituents of senses of place (Butz, 1993). Based on his research in Towcester, Eyles (1985, p. 66) suggested that "ecological structure *per se* may only be of limited value in conceptualizing sense of place and its derivations", while Butz (1993, p. 520) insisted that "in Shimshal at least, ecological context (the natural environment *per se*) relates directly with individuals" shared identity and shared membership of a community... the social and ideological components of place and community are also closely integrated with ecology". The conceptualization outlined above is thus already a product of an initial round of reflection on the empirical circumstances in Towcester and Shimshal, which we now wish to reapply to those contexts.

The Shimshal case foregrounds the ecological components of sense of place. It appears that ecological senses of place are central to most Shimshalis' conceptions of, and attachment to, their community, and that they relate in significant ways to other place-oriented elements of Shimshalis' life worlds. The material and social contingencies that accentuate ecological senses of place in Shimshal are largely absent in Towcester. Rather, senses of place are organized around social relationships in which spatial proximity is important, but which are only weakly mediated by a shared set of emplaced ecological effectivities, affordances and practices. In Towcester the social (instrumental and communicative action) and ideological (life world) are less ecologically implicated than in

Shimshal, for reasons that will become apparent in the case studies.

It may be worth summarizing, at this point, the methodologies employed in the two empirical studies, especially as we emphasize below that the value of our conceptualization emerges in part from its grounding in two very dissimilar social and spatial contexts *and* two somewhat divergent methodological approaches. The Towcester survey took five months to complete in the summer of 1982. It was set up as a structured survey, so the results would have some generalizability. Some 168 residents participated in the door-to-door survey, so although structured with scales and closed question responses, the interviews were face-to-face. There were also a series of open-ended questions, which produced a great deal of information and which were useful in constructing the ideal types. While some rapport was established, this was by no means a nuanced encounter. The roles of “interviewer” and “interviewee” were based on a model of professional competence and brief “interference” in people’s lives (Moser and Kalton, 1976; Eyles, 1985). The information on which the Shimshal study is based was collected during seven months of ethnographic research in Shimshal during the summers of 1988 and 1989, as part of an effort to evaluate the influence of agency development initiatives on community-level decision making (Butz, 1993). Triangulation among ethnographic methods (observation, participation, conversation) at different sites (village, trails, pastures), with special attention to the selective perceptions of different groups, gender and the locational context of behaviour, contributed to the development of a nuanced case study. This was facilitated by participation in formalized community-level discussions of the portering issue described in the case study, and by daily and intimate communication with one of the leading participants in those discussions. Unlike the Towcester study, community members did not allow a systematic survey. As we discuss below, these differences in field methods have implications for the senses of place we found, and for the subsequent conceptualization.

Senses of place in Towcester revisited

In this relatively affluent small town in Midland England, one of the most urbanized societies in the world, ecological setting does not seem important. Indeed, in the research carried out in the early to

mid-1980s, the environmental sense of place—the importance of place in its own right, with social, familial and traditional meanings being relatively unimportant—was held by 1% of the sample of people interviewed (Eyles, 1985). “The countryside was not a stage for acting out roles or lifestyle or way of life. Nor was it a commodity to be used, but something to be lived in itself. That living was done with others, but place was more than a backdrop to social or economic activities” (Eyles, 1985, p. 126). Yet on re-analysis, this seems a very narrow definition of ecological setting. If this setting of Towcester provides environmental affordances in terms of properties of the environment directly perceived by an agent in the context of practical action, then these may exist without being used. The fact that they are not used in such an environment points to the indirect relation between individuals and an environment in which technology shapes individual consciousness and human relations to other objects. Our instrumental views of space and place—highlighted in the Towcester survey (17%)—are relevant to the seeming unimportance of ecological setting, seen as dominated by our rational approaches to planning, architecture and urban forms (cf. Relph, 1976). In this respect, the environment offers for some few affordances communicatively, and therefore, technically. If affordances are not “seen” and “transformed” into effectivities, then the ecological will remain relatively insignificant.

Thus effectivities—the action capabilities of agents—are provided primarily in the social and ideological components of community and place. As we have argued above, the social provides the basic material for everyday life in a community, while the ideological pertains to a matrix of symbols that can engender a sense of belonging and identity. For people in Towcester, a sense of place first and foremost predicates and is predicated on a set of social and cultural (symbolic) relations. These essentially consist of sets of social interactions provided in shared meanings, values and interests. The social then is the broad brush way of configuring senses of place in Towcester. The social demonstrates the integral interrelations of instrumental action (geared to technical or instrumental outcomes) and communicative action (geared toward reaching intersubjective understanding through negotiating shared meanings). The first analysis of senses of place in Towcester emphasized their role in the routinization of liveability of everyday life. In other words, it tried to answer the question of how sense of place relates to,

Table 1. Senses of place in Towcester.

Category	No. of individuals	%
Social	31	19
Apathetic-acquiescent	29	18
Instrumental	128	17
Nostalgic	22	14
Commodity	12	7
Platform/stage	11	7
Family	10	6
Way of life	10	6
Roots	7	4
Environmental	2	1
Total	162	99

Source: Eyles, 1985, p. 122

shapes and is shaped by place-in-the-world or individual-in-social-context. It thus established categories of senses of place (Table 1).

A 'social' sense of place is one dominated by the importance attached to social ties and interaction. Place has little meaning without reference to these ties and interactions. This does not mean that the social networks are "placeless". They do not occur as activities divorced from their locational (or ecological) context. Towcester is regarded as the centre of the local networks. It is the location where family, neighbours and friends are to be found. To be sure, other friends are found in different locations and are visited at their homes, but these "distant" friends also come to Towcester. So while social ties predominate, they occur at particular places which are, in their turn, regarded as important because of the social activities which occur at these places. This apparent tautology dissolves. Place has social significance and social ties have place significance.

The "apathetic-acquiescent" category may be regarded as having no sense of place at all. The sense was labelled "apathetic" because the responses of individuals who were so defined demonstrated little interest in or commitment to anything, let alone place. It was argued that responses such as "all right", "not much", and "nothing really" demonstrate more than a lack of interest in being questioned once they are placed in "context". Life seems to possess few affordances, and effectivities are not isolated from the living of life itself. It is also labelled "acquiescent" because apparent apathy may disguise a feeling of powerlessness, of the inability to shape the course of events which form an individual's life.

An "instrumental" sense of place is defined as one which sees place as a means to an end. The place is significant according to what it does or does not provide in terms of goods, services and formal opportunities. The word "formal" is used because the instrumental category reflects the service and employment functions of a place rather than its sociability. In the case of Towcester, this sense of place is overwhelmingly negative (i.e. "The place stinks", "it's boring", or "there's no [*sic*] shops"). It is what the town does *not* provide that emerges from individuals' accounts. The town is seen as a non-provider of most goods and services and as allowing only limited opportunities to obtain such goods and services. Its location, its relative isolation and inaccessibility may also be seen as a barrier to procuring these desirable goods and opportunities.

A "nostalgic" sense of place is one dominated by feelings towards the place at some time other than the present. It therefore involves looking back. Feelings about the place are based on the past and in particular these feelings are shaped by specific events that occurred in Towcester in the past and which colour and shape the individual's current appreciation of place. In this respect, nostalgia is both positive and negative. In the sense of longing for something, or more usually somebody no longer attainable it is negative because it fills many people with remorse, regret and sadness. But it is also positive, in that the act of remembering the shared times of the past often results in contentment and a kind of happiness. Memory is of course a selective device, but it may enable people to come to terms with present lives which they may find, to a degree, unsatisfactory. Bereavement, divorce and loneliness in the present may be overcome in the mind by remembering a happy marriage, enjoyable courtship, or simply good times. But such thoughts and feelings were related not only to people but also to place. At the most conscious level, Towcester was liked for a remembered courtship or disliked because it was where a loved one had died for example, 'It was better when [X] was alive'). Less explicitly, it was the place where the personal past had happened and was significant for that.

The remaining six senses of place have fewer than 20 respondents per category. It may be that they represent sub-categories of the four major ones. They are, however, regarded as sufficiently descriptive to categorize separately. The "commodity" sense of place is dominated by a search for some "ideal" place in which to live. "Ideal" is used

in the sense of having some preconception of what a place should provide in terms of a quiet, safe environment, facilities or types of people. Further, such a sense of place is held by the comparatively mobile, usually in professional, managerial or intermediate non-manual occupations, for whom the actual place of residence is relatively unimportant. A “good place”, however defined, is part of the lifestyle of this group and like any other possession it can be traded. Place becomes a commodity not only in the sense of being buyable and sellable but also usable or “consumable”. What emerges is that a place is used for a time and during that time may or may not be highly regarded (for example, “We won’t be here long”, “I’ve tried to get involved”, “my husband’ll be moving soon”). After a specific time, it may be discarded for another place. This sense of place has, therefore, built-in obsolescence with respect to any specific place. Further, while attachment to a specific place may be low (and the lack of involvement of this group in Towcester life suggests that this is currently the case), importance of place remains high. We can speculate that such a group may value those places with high levels of environmental affordances, with ecological setting (type of landscape, recreational opportunities) being highly prized.

Similar in many respects to the “commodity” sense of place is the “platform” or “stage” category. It refers to those who see where they live as a stage or platform on which to act out their lives. It may refer to some “ideal” picture of place but this sense of place is not as commodified as that of the previous category. They are more likely than those with “commodity” sense of place to search for and find lasting attachment to place and people. They search for people like themselves with whom they create stable, patterned social relationships, for example, commenting, “we’ve tried to mix in with the neighbours”. They come to see themselves as “Towcester people”, although more often than not their definitions of Towcester are limited to their subdivision estate or street. Place may symbolize their attachment to particular people and activities, although it is important to note that it is the interaction in a particular place rather than the place itself that remains dominant.

The “family” sense of place is defined in terms of immediate family connections, often nuclear but sometimes extended. Feelings about place are shaped, therefore, by the nature of family relationships. Family life and how a particular place affects family life are seen as central life concerns. For the

majority in this small category, life revolves around the nuclear family, its dwelling, and its happiness and satisfactions. In Towcester at least, little else is regarded as important. Other elements of life—work, shopping facilities, neighbours and so on—are significant only insofar as they impinge on family life (for example, “There’s little for my kids to do”, “my wife would have nothing if it wasn’t for the neighbours”). Place is a refuge insofar as it is where family is located.

It may be argued that the “way of life” sense of place has in part already been described. The social dimension is important in the constitution of this sense of place. But it is derived from more than social activities. People’s whole way of life was bound up with Towcester. They were “localities” in terms of jobs, friends and associational life. They felt that they belonged. Closely related to this sense of place is one based on “roots”. Again, the place represents something important in its own right and this phenomenon, whether it is social life, lifestyle or sentiment, is strengthened by being based on or rooted in the past. This rootedness usually takes the form of family ties in the town and/or district, so a sense of belonging seen in terms of continuity, or tradition, is added to the familiarity which comes from basing much of one’s life in a specific place. This group belongs to the place without really thinking about it or articulating their belonging. They simply feel, indeed are, “at home” (for example, “I love living here”, “I’ve been here years, it must be something in the water”). The importance of place in its own right may also be seen in the two respondents with an “environmental” sense of place. However the place was not seen as important for its social, familial or traditional meanings but as an aesthetic experience (for example, ‘I feel in tune with the countryside’). The countryside was not a stage for acting out roles or lifestyles or way of life. Nor was it a commodity to be used, but something to be lived in itself. That living was done with others, but place was more than a backdrop to social or economic activities.

These senses of place were categorized as ideal types, “one-sided attenuations of reality... a means of selection of the facts and a mechanism for specifying their significance” (Hirst, 1976, pp. 58–9). Senses of place could be negative or positive. But what was categorized was a dominant sense of place because the purpose of the analysis was to discover the range in variation in senses of place, given the characteristics of the population and place under investigation. In some respects, it was

an attempt to isolate distinct speech sub-communities. But if we argue, with Habermas (1984), that instrumental and communicative action occur coincidentally and that the social and ideological implicate one another, we can now view the senses of place as contingent—dependent on a particular configuration of circumstances, values, activities and actions. Indeed, participation in several speech sub-communities (place-bound or not) makes it likely that senses of place will often be tentative, with this tentativeness being an alternative explanation of what was categorized as apathetic-acquiescent: a feeling of being unsure of or overwhelmed by all that was happening in particular communities in one's place in the world. Further, contingency may also be seen as being dependent upon the negotiation or struggle over meanings (both instrumental and communicative) which in turn shape the meaning(s) of place-in-the-world itself (and the significance or apparent non-significance of ecological setting within it). In other words, what is important in that negotiation at a particular time and in a particular place? Is it what an individual does (instrumental)? Or, as seems to be so important to the Towcester sample, where an individual is located socially (communicative)? Put differently, what symbols or social relations define characteristics of an individual in a place? Is it the significance of the past (nostalgic), an ideal of what a community should be like and should provide (commodity, platform) or a shared life world (social, way of life, roots)? A re-interrogation of the Towcester data with the conceptual framework of this paper would suggest it could be any. It all depends, yet individuals have a sense of why they are where they are of these, communicatively and technically, socially, and ideologically, and in terms of the significance of the ecological; in terms of affordances for their life worlds.

But, further, saying "it depends" does not mean that anything goes and we can have any sense of place we wish or desire. Sense of place depends instrumentally in a Habermasian sense on material circumstances. It also depends on the value attachments of a particular social order. In the relatively affluent world of small-town England, those values emphasize the rural and the land—and anti-urbanism (Nisbett, 1966; Glass, 1968; Williams, 1969; Newby, 1977)—dependent on the once-removed relation of the urban dweller from his or her environment. Affordances in Towcester are technologically mediated within a frame of reference which still largely emphasizes the domination of nature

for the betterment of humankind. Seeing the world in mechanistic terms (Buttimer, 1993) and human history as progress through the control and domestication of nature allows for the setting aside of the ecological. It also points to the centralization of the social and the ideological—the world as a socially constructed place. The senses of place derived from Towcester stem from such a world view, one that may relegate the ecological further as the social is threatened by technological change as we enter the new millennium. Similarly, the world view (and material interests) dominant in Shimshal provides the logic for their derived senses of place.

Senses of place in Shimshal, Pakistan

In his interpretation of senses of place in Towcester, Eyles identifies and describes ten ideal types of (negative or positive) "attitudes towards a place or places that are regarded as the most important phenomena" in distinguishing an individual's sense of place (1985, p. 123). He notes that although "it is not suggested that the relative importance of the senses of place can or will be replicated elsewhere", the "sense of place categories themselves... may be of wider significance" (1985, p. 123). Butz's (1993) subsequent ethnographic fieldwork in Shimshal—a community with social, political, economic and ecological characteristics vastly different from Towcester—shows that Eyles's typology is indeed of wider significance. Some of the same factors connect residents of the two communities to their places, although, as expected, the relative importance of the various types varies between Towcester and Shimshal. However, that overlap does not necessarily signify a deeper similarity either in the ways those senses of place are constituted in Towcester or Shimshal, or in their implications for behaviour in the two communities. Indeed, we wish to demonstrate that the social, ideological and ecological aspects of community are sufficiently dissimilar in the two communities—and integrate sufficiently differently—that the same types of sense of place are constituted quite differently in Shimshal than in Towcester. As we shall see, the Shimshal case allows for an explicit recognition of the significance of contingency in senses of place; of the interconnections among senses of places; and of the pivotal role of ecological context. Our discussion of the constitution of senses of place in Shimshal begins with a brief contextualizing sketch of the community, followed by some attention to an issue that has been preoccu-

pying Shimshalis recently: a perceived need to regulate portering employment in the community.

Shimshal is an indigenous mountain community located high in the Karakoram Himalaya in Pakistan's northern areas. Its 1,300 inhabitants are all Ismaili Muslim, Wakhi-speaking members of landholding, farming and herding households. Except for a few craft workers and teachers, all permanent residents labour on (mainly) subsistence agricultural activities in the household compounds, irrigated terraces and pastures, or for cash, carrying loads for visitors trekking to the permanent settlement—three days' walk from the nearest road—or to wilderness attractions further upslope. Each Shimshali lineage can trace its ancestry via one of three sub-clans through several centuries of continuous occupation of the place called Shimshal, and eventually to Mamu Shah and Khodija, the community's founders. Except for household compounds and irrigated terraces, which are under household control and passed from generation to generation according to agnatic lineage, all other spaces and places in Shimshal are the collective property of the community, although the use of some of these (for example, improved pastures and irrigation channels) is organized along maximal lineages and sub-clan lines. We see immediately that Shimshalis experience a more direct and more instrumentally significant relationship with their ecological setting than do inhabitants of Towcester.

The community's socio-economic homogeneity and emphasis on collective organisation—both of which are remarkable, even for northern Pakistan—would suggest that inhabitants' senses of place are likely to be largely shared. Nevertheless, apart from myriad individual differences, at least four sets of group attributes are important for differentiating the way adult Shimshalis experience the places in their community. First, members of large and wealthy households—those with a surplus of some combination of cash, land, animals or membership—experience Shimshal's social, ecological and ideological qualities as more enabling than members of smaller and poorer households. The range and depth of wealthy households' action capabilities allow their members to recognize and utilize affordances unavailable to poorer villagers. Second, perhaps a quarter of Shimshali men work or study down-country, and reside only seasonally in Shimshal. These young men, with their greater experience of the outside world, high levels of formal education and lack of familiarity with—or direct reliance on—indigenous ecological/agricul-

tural practices, have differently configured senses of place from those Shimshalis who have always lived in the community all year round. These men do not necessarily have shallower, less ecologically oriented, or less tradition-based senses of place than others. However, their practical projects—both communicative and instrumental—and the effectivities they bring to these projects are thus somewhat different from those of other Shimshalis. Specifically, most seasonally resident Shimshalis are involved in portering, many are advocates of Western-style environmental activism, and several have developed an active interest in Shimshal's rich history and mythology. Third, some general differences exist among the generations. In particular, older Shimshalis retain immediate material and symbolic connections to a time when social and economic organization was quite different from that practised today: for example, when the community was controlled by the feudal kingdom of Hunza; when clan and lineage organization, and royally sanctioned prerogative, were more important determinants of everyday life, and community was less so; when Shimshal's highest and most valuable pastures were controlled by China, and were thus inaccessible to Shimshalis for a time; when the community depended almost solely on subsistence agriculture; and when most Shimshalis never left their valley. Symbolic remnants of these circumstances inform the life worlds of their juniors. But, in general, the place experiences of younger Shimshalis are more directly influenced by contemporary circumstances: for example, a growing dependence on waged labour and seasonal labour migration; an increasingly cash-oriented agricultural economy; greater interaction with outside visitors; higher levels of formal education; and government and development agency intervention into most areas of community life. Given the pace of social, economic and political change in Shimshal, it is not surprising that both older and younger Shimshalis bring different effectivities to their understanding of community and place, utilize different affordances in their instrumental and communicative action, and thus reproduce a different place and different senses of place.

Fourth, while the data from Shimshal tell us mainly about men's understandings of place, it is clear that women and men experience different places, and that women experience their community differently from men. Throughout the community women enjoy less autonomy than men. What autonomy they have is greatest in the places

they spend the most time—household compounds and high pastures—while men's control is greatest in the fields, village public spaces, and on the trail. In addition, women have less experience of the outside, participate less in cash endeavours, have lower levels of formal education, and utilize imported technology less. On the other hand, it seems that many women experience a more direct relationship with the community's mythological history and traditional lore, and its many place referents, than do most men. It is apparent that the places which constitute Shimshal offer different environmental affordances to women than to men, and women are socialized to bring different effectivities and practical purposes to their interactions with the places they encounter in their daily lives.

The sets of differences suggested above begin to lend some diversity to Shimshal's apparent homogeneity. It is important to recognize, however, that the distinctions between these categories are not always clearly drawn, and that considerable variation of experience and life world occurs within each category. Despite the existence of the four main sets of dichotomies outlined above, and their multiplicity of combinations, contradictions and negotiations in any individual Shimshali subject, it is apparent that some senses of place are largely shared, at least among Shimshali men.

In the last decade, portering—carrying loads for pay—has become the most important form of cash employment for resident Shimshali men. Apart from its considerable monetary rewards, portering has several other attractions: it is flexible enough to accommodate the seasonal demands of subsistence agriculture and other community obligations; it is at least potentially accessible to every able-bodied male regardless of education, wealth, lineage or social standing; and it is one of the few types of manual wage labour that attracts some prestige apart from the financial gains associated with it. The fact that there is limited demand for Shimshali porters has precipitated considerable debate among villagers regarding the regulation of portering opportunities and activities. This debate, which has been ongoing for at least a decade, reached a climax in 1988 and 1989, when two positions toward portering regulation solidified in opposition to one another. In the summer of 1989 the community made a tentative decision in favour of one position. Since then the debate has considerably subsided, but has not disappeared entirely. Our purpose is not to rehearse the details of this debate over portering regulation, its discursive foundations, or

its tentative resolution (cf. Butz, 1995), but rather to discuss how senses of place are represented in, constituted by, and constitutive of, the communicative process of determining the instrumentalities of portering in Shimshal.

The two positions that emerged in the portering debate paralleled two long-standing ideological formations, and indeed relied on them for their respective legitimacy. Advocates of what Butz (1995) describes as an "authoritative" position toward portering argued for the perpetuation of the prerogative of a few authoritative leaders—those with ties to the former royal administration or current central government—to regulate the economic opportunities of villagers, and especially their interaction with outsiders. These men thus claimed the formal right to select porters, regulate food purchases, act as paid guides, establish porter wages, mediate all personal relationships between Shimshalis and visitors, and authorise routes and itineraries, without the explicit and ongoing intervention of the council of household heads. The "discursive" position (cf. Butz, 1995) represented the most recent incarnation of long-standing efforts to establish what proponents perceived to be a more equitable process for regulating economic activities, and especially for selecting porters, by removing traditional privilege from the realm of portering, and opening porter regulation to a consensual process aided by a set of technical guidelines that would ensure the relatively equal access of all households to portering opportunities, regardless of size, wealth or lineage. Thus, what emerged in Shimshal was a debate over portering which was interwoven with a larger process of communicative action concerning the contemporary practical significance of two deeply rooted ideological formations—privilege and equity—both of which saturate Shimshalis' daily lives and life worlds.

It is clear that the ideological contexts which Shimshalis brought to the portering issue were grounded in their daily experience of, and their specific social and material situation in Shimshal as a place-based community. How individual Shimshalis aligned themselves behind these ideological formations relied largely on their relative abilities to benefit from equity or privilege. This depended, in the first instance, on kinship connections. Other things being equal, those households with the closest kinship connections to "authoritative" leaders had the most to gain from authoritative regulation of portering, and a privilege-based decision-making structure more generally. House-

hold wealth, size and composition were also important. Wealthy extended households with lots of members felt they would benefit, or at least avoid suffering, from the tactics of “authoritative” leaders, mainly because they have diversified incomes, and enough members to exploit portering opportunities when they arise, but without relying on them. At the opposite end of Shimshal’s socio-economic spectrum are several dozen poor elementary households; those with exceptionally small land and animal holdings and few adult members. These are the households which most needed an internal labour market to survive, but which had the fewest resources to actively seek portering—or other—employment. Thus, their members rely most on benevolent “authoritative” leadership, and suffer most from leadership that does not recognize their need. Dependent as they are on the goodwill of village elites, the very poor tended not to advocate a more discursive procedure for regulating portering opportunities, but rather to advocate “privilege with a conscience”, in the form of authoritative leadership that would direct some opportunities their way. Between these two extremes are the majority of Shimshali households, whose resources are sufficient to maintain a comfortable subsistence, and who wish to participate in the market economy, but whose membership is too small to permit labour migration. These households sought equal opportunities to participate in portering when their members have the time, and reasoned that a consensual regulatory process would provide that opportunities. Within households, there was a greater tendency for younger men, and those with high levels of formal education and experience of the world outside Shimshal, to favour the “discursive” position.

To some extent, what we see here are Shimshalis responding to their different sets of ecological effectivities and associated affordances. The environment affords a great deal to big, rich households (i.e. large amounts of land, livestock, trees) and these households can muster instrumental and communicative effectivities to utilize them. Conversely, the environment affords very little to the smallest and poorest households, whose effectivities are limited by their access to the benevolence of others. Heads of the remaining households see portering as affording them a range of ecologically based opportunities that their households’ instrumental effectivities could use, but realize that their communicative effectivities are too limited to compete for those affordances with privileged house-

holds, unless an equitable system of regulation is put in place.

Clearly, different social, economic and ecological circumstances—different action capabilities within the social and spatial characteristics of their surroundings—influenced the life world characteristics, or senses of Shimshal as a place, household members brought to the debate. In the end, however, a consensus was reached, which seems to have emerged from a shared sense of place which transcended, and to some extent united, the ideological positions, and variable action capabilities, discussed so far. Part of the argument of the discursive group was that Shimshal was first and foremost a farming community, whose material and moral sustenance relied on maintaining the subsistence base of each household, and whose future as a community depended on complementing subsistence agriculture, first with market-oriented agriculture, and second with other economic opportunities. They argued further that their regulation scheme would strengthen and complement the other collective endeavours (for example, completing a rough road into the community, building better trails to pastures, selectively breeding animals, collective marketing of produce) necessary to realize those visions. Finally, they connected the competing ideological streams by claiming that the past authoritative leaders whose memories were most respected in Shimshal were those who used their influence to unite the community in collective action for the benefit of all households. And Shimshalis, to a household, eventually agreed that they did indeed live in a farming community, that they related to it as farmers, and that effectivities should be developed that would allow them to utilize and enhance their ecological affordances in ways that would sustain that identity.

It seems that a shared sense of place, grounded ecologically, facilitated efforts to achieve some degree of intersubjective understanding among those involved in the portering issue. By reaffirming their shared identity as farmers, Shimshalis united around a particular ecological sense of place, a particular set of conventions surrounding the technically and normatively appropriate way to interact as Shimshalis with the ecological characteristics of their place. The implications of the resulting consensus travelled in two directions: backwards to life world, and forwards to instrumental action. First, and without any immediate need for instrumental changes, the senses of place of Shimshalis were realigned, if only minutely. The debate and its

outcome foregrounded, valorized and further naturalized background convictions and place symbols associated with both collectivity and equity, and farming, and discredited those associated with elite privilege. The whole issue added a chapter to certain strains of Shimshal's place history, but also reconstituted the significance of previous chapters; senses of place are dynamic and contingent. Second, the outcome of communicative action regarding the portering issue has had instrumental implications. Socially and materially, Shimshal immediately became a different place, or at least immediately had the potential to become a different place. Portering regulation itself changed less than many Shimshalis had hoped. Within a year, two authoritative leaders had resumed *ad hoc* day-to-day control of much of the portering, although with significant input and monitoring from the council of household heads, especially to ensure that portering activities complemented other collective activities. More generally, the debate sparked renewed interest in collective activity, resulting in a spate of road- and trail-building activity, pasture and livestock improvement, and schemes to facilitate market-oriented production. A realignment of life world foregrounded a somewhat altered set of practical purposes. A shift in social organization created a somewhat different set of environmental effectivities. The result was a greater commitment to, and capability for, expensive and/or labour intensive infrastructural and agricultural projects. To the extent that these alterations created/revealed new ecological affordances, Shimshal became an instrumentally (materially as well as socially) different place.

The discussion above reveals something of the relationships among social, ideological and ecological components of community, and illuminates how senses of place constitute and are constituted through communicative and instrumental action. Focused as it was on a specific issue, it does not allow us to identify a definitive typology of senses of place in Shimshal, or to examine Eyles's accentuations that may pertain to Shimshal. A different example might have illuminated somewhat different senses of place. At least four of the types identified for Towcester emerged as salient within the example we provided. They constitute categories of feeling or attitude which link Shimshalis through place to their community.

To begin, Shimshalis have an *instrumental* attachment to place, in which place is seen as a means to an end. Place is significant in what it does or does

not provide in terms of goods, services and employment. The debate over portering emerged in part over different ideas about the best way to increase place's instrumental value. This sense of place was highly positive for most Shimshalis, and fundamentally ecological; they conceived their community as affording a large set of ecologically based opportunities, but also worried that many of these could not be realized instrumentally by most households without some collective effort to sustain certain effectivities. Traditionally, environmental affordances had been limited to subsistence activities and hunting. Increasingly, they also included using the landscape to earn money through portering and market-oriented agriculture. The portering debate expressed a formal recognition of these new instrumental opportunities, and the desire to utilize them in ways that also reproduced previous instrumental attachments to place. It also revealed some variations in different Shimshalis' instrumental senses of place. This form of attachment to place is likely to relate closely to the effectivities—the action capabilities—of the subject. The instrumental attachments of members of small and poor households were considerably different from those of wealthy householders. Young men who had spent much of their youth in schools down-country found relatively little instrumental value in agricultural opportunities, but many opportunities in portering. Despite these differences, participants in the portering debate evidently coalesced around a largely shared sense of Shimshal's positive instrumental value.

The way the portering issue unfolded also illustrates Shimshalis' identification of their community with a *way of life*. The two positions towards portering, and the alternative ideologies that informed them, emphasized different notions of how life should be lived in the community. The achievement of the "discursive" position was to reconcile these two sets of guidelines to a comprehensive vision of a Shimshali way of life that resonated with other participants in the discussion: Shimshalis are farmers and herders. This was more than a statement of occupation. It was an affirmation of a particular set of relations among ecological affordances and effectivities, and associated social structures and practices, in which both elite privilege and egalitarian collectivity played a part. In short, it was a statement of a way of life comprised of ecological, social and ideological components. That Shimshalis associate their community with this way of life, and seem mainly to value it, does not mean that all

Shimshalis live it the same way. “We are farmers” means something quite different to a junior member of a small and impoverished household than it does to a wealthy lineage elder whose main income is an army pension, or to a recently returned college student who does not know how to farm, has no autonomous formal voice, and sees no opportunity to use his newly acquired academic training.

Despite extensive variance in the ability of individuals to benefit from what they perceived as a Shimshali way of life, most resident men—with the exception of a few returning college students and army pensioners—did feel they belonged. This stemmed in part from a positive belief that they did not belong anywhere else, but perhaps more from strong, positive *roots* senses of place. For Shimshalis, place indeed “represents something important in its own right and this phenomenon, whether it is social life, lifestyle or sentiment, is strengthened by being based on or rooted in the past” (Eyles, 1985, p. 126). As Eyles says, “a sense of belonging seen in terms of continuity, of tradition, is added to the familiarity which comes from basing much of one’s life in a specific place” (p. 126). The fact that everyone involved in the portering debate had been born in Shimshal, had lived most of their lives in Shimshal, and were descended from lineages whose history in Shimshal bridged several centuries, informed every aspect of the discussion, and provided a solid basis for at least a degree of intersubjectivity. A sense of historical continuity saturated the issue: in the ideologies espoused, in the protocol of discussion, in the place of discussion and the place being discussed, in the ecological affordances and associated effectivities at issue. It would be difficult to overemphasize the extent to which Shimshalis experience their life worlds and senses of place as constituted *in situ*, through centuries of social and ecological activity in this place. The commitment to maintain a focus on agriculture facilitated by collective works was not just an argument for instrumental efficacy, but also an affirmation of a way of life rooted in the past.

The portering issue also reveals a variant on Eyles’ *family* sense of place, manifest in Shimshal in household and lineage. We emphasised how Shimshalis’ interaction with their community members is strongly mediated by the social and genealogical position of their household and lineage within the larger community fabric, and by individuals’ positions within the composition of their own household and lineage. Shimshalis relate to one another and to their environment as members of house-

holds and lineages. Ecological affordances are structured by household (ownership of terraced land, animals and trees) and lineage (access to pastures). The effectivities Shimshalis bring to ecological affordances are organized according to household (agricultural production is household based, as is access to portering opportunities). Indeed, households are described by Shimshalis as units of collective production and consumption. The individuals who participated in the portering-debate did so mainly on behalf of their households—and sometimes lineages—and discussion revolved around how to appropriately structure the opportunities and obligations of households, and relationships between them, given the increasing importance of portering. Shimshal is meaningful to its inhabitants in part because it provides the social and ecological context for their existence as members of households and lineages.

The portering example does not allow us to make a convincing case for the importance to Shimshalis of the other six ideal types, although it does help us to suggest that several of these are *not* likely to be important. Place as *commodity* implies a potential for disengagement that seems unlikely for individuals whose lives have been so completely and so continuously—so ecologically—lived in Shimshal. In a more instrumental sense, space has not been buyable or sellable (technically or normatively), although that may be slowly changing as the economy becomes more cash-oriented. Since *apathy* is a passive attitude it is not easily identified in ethnographic research. However, apathy toward place contradicts Shimshalis’ stated self-perception: a Shimshali who is apathetic about his or her ‘place’ is considered a ‘poor Shimshali’, a label which is more derogatory than the equivalent in Towcester would be. It is hard to imagine how a Shimshali could be apathetic toward place without being apathetic about life in general. It may be, however, that the poorest households merely *acquiesce* to the interests of their patrons in the hope of gaining from “privilege with a conscience.”

In addition, several of the ideal types who emerged as important in their own right in Towcester seem to collapse into others in Shimshal. Aspects of the portering debate indicate that Shimshalis do feel *nostalgic* toward their setting, but that nostalgia is for a long-term shared history that may be better expressed within the *roots* sense of place. Similarly, *platform/stage* sense of place, as manifested in Shimshal, is bound up within *way of life*. Not even the most manipulative/theatrical Shim-

shalis separated themselves from their stage sufficiently for this ideal type to be relevant to Shimshal. The *environmental* sense of place did not emerge as important in this discussion, but neither did evidence emerge to suggest that it would not be important in others. Indeed, in other contexts (cf. Butz, 1996) Shimshalis do claim to experience their environment in aesthetic terms, and apart from its instrumental value.

Some of the ideal types developed to explain the range of variation in senses of place in Towcester are clearly applicable to the small chapter of Shimshali community life described above. Some that do not seem important to the portering issue are likely to emerge as significant in Shimshal given a different set of issues (for example, environmental), while others seem unlikely to be descriptive of Shimshalis' senses of place under any circumstances (for example, apathetic). What the Shimshal case provides is a strong sense of the contingency, tentativeness and instability of senses of place. Earlier in the paper we described senses of place as place-based life world elements, and argued that life world both informs and is constituted through communicative and instrumental action. Shimshalis' senses of place were reconstituted through their use of them when arguing about portering. The nuances of sense of place that emerged, and the way sense of place informed the arguments, were contingent on the specific issue under discussion, and the longer-term unfolding of senses of place through previous instrumental and communicative action. A different issue, or a different discursive approach to the same issue, would have foregrounded different senses of place, and left different enduring traces in Shimshalis' place-based life worlds. Contingency implies that any individual's senses of place are likely to be tentative — subject to challenge. We can infer from the Shimshal case that tentativeness also emerges from individuals' multiple subject positions (i.e. their participation in disparate speech communities). The portering issue allowed certain of these subject positions and their concomitant senses of place to dominate others for a time, and thus reproduce place-based life world in a specific way. But community members commit themselves to a specific set of dominant subject positions only tentatively. All this implies that senses of place are only relatively stable, not solidly-positioned life world elements which anchor individuals' connection to their habitat (as is often imagined), but rather shifting ideologies of place that unfold contingently and

tentatively; never autonomous from previous senses of place, or the senses of place of other community members, but neither are they determined by them.

Despite the dynamism that the terms contingency, tentativeness and relative instability suggest, the Shimshal case study also indicates the durability of at least one limited regularity, founded in Shimshalis' largely shared recognition of a set of positively valued ecological affordances, constituting and constituted from a commitment to a specific array of action capabilities or ecological effectivities. As we have demonstrated, the two positions on portering regulation, drawing from quite different interpretations of Shimshal's social, ideological and material context, shared a conception of Shimshal's ecological environment as the source of life, and the foundation for normatively valued (albeit quite differently conceived) set of social and material practices — "we are farmers and herders". Broad-brush regularity and durability are entirely consistent with contingency, tentativeness and instability; the latter agents of dynamism are limited by their social, ideological and material context, even as they shape that context, and thus tend not to be radically transformative.

Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to reconceptualize sense of place using Habermas's theory of communicative action and Ingold's reworking of Gibson's environmental psychology, and to present comparative analyses of sense of place in two radically different cultural and geographical settings. The theoretical framework we describe and the cases we present are simultaneous outcomes of a process of initial analysis of case studies, engagement with theoretical debates, reflection and re-interpretation; a process informed by the juxtaposition of disparate empirical contexts, methodologies and theoretical perspectives. In the space that remains we wish to comment on the contributions of this process and the juxtapositions it entailed. In this, we recognize that we represent the voices of others, but feel that because we shared, to some extent, the life worlds of those voices — Eyles for eight years in Towcester, Butz for seven months in Shimshal — we are in a unique position to provide insider/outsider accounts (Powdermaker, 1966; Simmel, 1950).

The material from Towcester identifies ten ideal types of attitudes toward place that emerge as im-

portant characteristics of individuals' senses of place. Indeed, the primary purpose of that research was to establish ideal types, to categorize and classify, to remove from context in order to reinsert into life worlds. There is some evidence that most of these types are also applicable to Shimshal; broadly similar sentiments connect residents of the two communities to their places. It is evident, however, that these ideal types describe something quite different in Shimshal than in Towcester, in terms of their constitution, distribution and implications for behaviour. This is no surprise, given the major differences in social, ideological and ecological contexts between the two communities. We wish to concentrate here on three main differences. First, despite the fact that an "environmental" sense of place, as defined for Towcester, was not important to the portering issue, all the senses of place that did emerge as important were constituted to a significant extent in ecological terms. In Shimshal, for example, an "instrumental" sense of place derives largely from Shimshalis' recognition of a varied set of ecological affordances, while "way of life" describes a fairly literal relationship between ecological affordances and place-based effectivities. This was not the case in Towcester, where attachments to place were defined mainly around social relationships. This is not to say that the social is overwhelmed or determined by the ecological in Shimshal, but rather to recognize that almost all social life has ecological implications there. It makes a difference for the constitution of senses of place that (among other things) in Shimshal most people make their living from the land, work where they live, and have roots in their environment that bridge many generations; and it makes a difference that Towcester is a satellite ex-urban community of mainly recent migrants, whose worlds are technologically shaped by forces and institutions over which they exert little direct influence.

Second, while individual Towcester residents' important senses of place overlap somewhat with those of other individuals, the data do not indicate that senses of place are shared in any deeper sense. Its residents live largely separate and household-based lives, implying a segregation from most other residents for most purposes. In Shimshal, some senses of place do seem to be largely collective, for example, sufficiently shared to inform the outcome of communicative action relating to the portering issue. Shimshal, as a social entity, is structured around the primary, face-to-face interaction of in-

dividuals whose lives intersect continuously in a spatially bounded territory. Despite variations in experiences and subject positionings, all Shimshalis belong to households which share common ancestors, a common set of ways to make a living, a common history in Shimshal, and a more or less common positioning in terms of the rest of the world. These commonalities contribute to the potential for intersubjectively shared senses of place. Inhabitants of Towcester share much less in terms of history in place, occupation, ancestry, and social world. They forge place attachments as members of secondary social groups, or as members of sub- or extra-community primary groups. The community itself is a relatively unimportant source of intersubjectivity. A result is less cohesive (and perhaps less politically effective) senses of place. But the individuality of senses of place in Towcester also hints that place attachment there may operate in an atmosphere that is somewhat freer from moral sanction than in Shimshal. Inhabitants of Shimshal, unlike those of Towcester, are clearly expected to express certain types of place attachments. In this regard, it is worth noting that Shimshal is far from an "ideal speech community", where "each subject who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate [fully and equally] in discourse" (White, 1988, p. 56). Therefore, intersubjective understandings of place are (as the case study indicates) inevitably and systematically distorted by power; that senses of place seem more intersubjectively shared in Shimshal than in Towcester implies nothing about their relative authenticity.

Third, the Towcester case depicts individuals as exhibiting one or more discrete sets of positionings toward significant places. Residents "possess", for example, "instrumental" or "roots" or "family" senses of place, or perhaps several of them, which are stable external expressions of subjects' positioning of themselves *vis-à-vis* their surroundings. But there is little comprehension that these senses of place constitute one another, or help constitute the subjects who exhibit them. In Shimshal, on the other hand, these positionings emerge as more integrated with in one another, and in the constitution of subjects, less discrete and less stable. For Shimshalis, what we have called a "roots" sense of place is not clearly separable from an "instrumental", or "family" or "way of life" sense of place. They are all integrated with one another in a way of life that is saturated with the contingencies of a particular place at a particular time. As these contingencies change, the already blurry boundaries among dif-

ferent sources of place attachment realign, with consequences for the reproduction of subjectivity.

While we are confident that each of these differences actually describes dissimilarities in the constitution of sense of place in the two communities, we are also aware that actual differences are at least exaggerated by the methodologies used in the two case studies. The original survey and interview research in Towcester was designed to solicit each participant's dominant sense of place in order to discover the range in variation in senses of place, and ultimately to construct ideal types descriptive of broad categories of variation. This methodology involves a twofold process of dissection—the separation of individuals' attitudes from those of other individuals, and the isolation of discrete predominant senses of place within individuals—and then their re-aggregation as ideal types. Small wonder, then, that the place attachments of different Towcester inhabitants seem to overlap without being shared, and that the data do not reveal a contingent and continuous negotiation of sense of place internal to individuals. The Shimshal case study, developed through ethnographic fieldwork and geared to a particular community-level issue, suffered different limitations. Rather than attempting to identify the range of variation in Shimshali senses of place, it sought evidence in a single social event for the types developed in Towcester. The result of this focus on senses of place as they are utilized in communicative action is an emphasis on a few dominant and shared discourses of place attachment relevant to the issue in question (to the exclusion of alternative or oppositional senses of place), on an understanding of the way different senses of place combine and recombine in response to contingent circumstances (without much attention to their potential autonomy), and on how senses of place are continuously reconstituted through communicative and instrumental action. Two points can be made which reduce the suspicion that apparent differences in senses of place are mainly a methodological artefact. First, both authors develop their interpretations out of their experience of living in the communities, and thus, despite methodological differences, both bring the insider and outsider perspectives of participant observation to their interpretations. Second, that our comparative analysis indicates considerable overlap in the senses of place between the two communities, despite methodological dissimilarities, suggests that differences in our interpretations of senses of place are unlikely to be mainly methodologically determined.

There remain two theoretical contributions to which we would like to refer. First, by reconceptualizing senses of place as place-based constituents of life world we are able to theorize how sense of place is constituted through social and material circumstances, and how—as an ideological effect—it influences the reproduction and transformation of those circumstances. In particular, the relationships Habermas posits among communicative action, instrumental action and life world help clarify the ways that place, community and senses of place are integrated, and suggest several points which help move the sense of place concept beyond its roots in humanistic geography to recentre it within well-developed theories of social organization and society. First, the communicative efforts of a speech community necessarily occur somewhere. The social process of communicative action, to the extent that it is emplaced, engenders senses of place on a very small-scale, which links the place of interaction with the form of interaction and lends them both significance. Second, place, to the extent that it is shared by members of a speech community, becomes a basis for commonality in the life worlds of participants, so that shared senses of place facilitate efforts to achieve intersubjective understanding among members of a speech community. Third, the process of communicative action ensures that life world is as much a social construct as it is a mental one; shared senses of place are outcomes of communicative action as well as constituent elements of it. Fourth, not only is the ideological component of place socially constituted, but so are its material aspects. Places are constructed symbolically and materially as products of communicative and instrumental action respectively. The symbolic component of place, in its turn, is materially constituted in a social context; place is the corporeal setting for individual life worlds. It follows from these conceptualizations that (1) social interaction, place and sense of place are mutually constitutive, and none of them can be conceived as originary; (2) senses of place are never purely individual or purely collective, but rather the product of social interaction mediated through individual subjectivities, and (3) an individual's sense of place is unlikely to be stable or unitary, but rather subject to the vagaries of both social and material circumstances and subjectivity formation. All this would suggest that conventional notions of senses of place as definitive of the relationship between groups of people and their places should give way to a conceptualization of senses of place as

necessarily tentative and contingent, particularistic and at least potentially contradictory.

The second main theoretical contribution of this paper is to integrate ecological considerations into a reconstituted theory of sense of place. Eyles (1985) identified an ecological dimension to sense of place, but did not theorize it fully, nor find it to be important to senses of place in Towcester. Human/ecological relationships clearly were significant for Shimshali senses of place; not overwhelming social relationships, but rather in a relationship of mutual constitution with them. By drawing from Ingold's (1992) reworking of Gibson's (1979) theory of ecological perception, we were able to suggest that ecological dimensions of senses of place emerge from accumulated sets of perceived/known ecological affordances. They are the knowledges of a place's ecological characteristics that yield meanings because they are generated out of the interplay between the characteristics of a specific place-grounded environment and the socially constructed effectivities of the perceiver. These effectivities can be understood as life world elements which, like all aspects of life world, are shaped both by subjects' communications with others and their own instrumental interaction with the environment. If senses of place are emplaced aspects of life world, then ecological senses of place are ecologically emplaced aspects of life world. It is thus the relationships between ecological setting and life world that comprise the core of ecological senses of place. Not all senses of place have an ecological component, and in no way can we suppose that all senses of place are grounded ecologically. It seems, for example, that senses of place in Towcester, as perhaps in most of the post-industrial West, are largely independent of an explicitly ecological component. On the other hand, the strongest and most resilient ecological senses of place are likely to emerge among individuals whose interaction with a place is rooted in numerous and ongoing ecological encounters, contextualized by a variety of everyday practical purposes, in a social setting characterised by sustained communicative action regarding the symbolic and instrumental use value of the ecological characteristics of the place. Shimshal is exemplary of those characteristics.

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Notes

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