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**Modeling Sense of Place: Emergence of Meaningful Places in Encountering Environments**

Abstract of Ph.D. Dissertation

The notion of ‘sense of place’ encompasses the various affects and feelings that characterize the experiences of places; the meanings that people attach to places; and identifications that people have with places (Agnew, 2011). I draw on developmentally oriented cultural psychology (Valsiner, 2007) to examine the emergence of sense of place in ongoing perception of environment (Ingold, 2000). In other words, I explore how people make sense of environments here-and-now, *in situ*, when they experience particular spaces—and how place emerges in the course of these encounters. I focus on how the properties of places and the person’s personal culture (past experiences, cultural competences, embodied skills of ‘dwelling’) interact in micro-scale development (microgenesis) whereby novel senses of places are articulated (Tuan, 1977). Methodologically, I attempt to make these processes observable and traceable in two qualitative studies. In Study 1 the participants stroll through the city while talking aloud their ongoing experience of it. Analysis focuses on how people establish patterns of talk and how particular locations stimulate change in these patterns, thus triggering development of sense of place. In Study 2 the participants verbally respond to fragments of instrumental music. Analysis focuses on how people connect properties of music with experience and cultural symbols, and how place-related ‘atmospheres’ emerge in these associations. These studies demonstrate the ways in which place is not a pre-existing ‘thing’, but emerges as ‘sense’ here-and-now in encountering environments.