

PLANNING WITH PLACE: SENSE OF PLACE IN BERLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE ¹

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ABSTRACT. This study applies a phenomenological framework to the study of place in Berlin, New Hampshire. The results of Berlin's efforts to identify sense of place are compared with the findings generated by a phenomenological approach to the study of place. It is shown that the attributes and qualities of place that are most important to the people of Berlin are mentioned in the phenomenological interviews but sometimes overlooked or misinterpreted by the city's efforts. Sense of place is not embodied purely in the landscape or heritage, but exists in the minds of the people. Sense of place is a dynamic phenomenon that is the product of people's historical and ongoing perceptions of a certain geographic setting. From a holistic understanding of place gained through a phenomenological approach, planners can develop strategies which help preserve and enhance sense of place.

Rapid growth and the trend towards homogeneity and efficiency in the landscapes of the United States have catalyzed a renewed interest in community planning and the concept of a sense of place. The city of Berlin, New Hampshire, like many other communities in New England, is exploring sense of place in an effort to better understand what makes Berlin a unique and desirable community. From an understanding of sense of place, communities are able to manage growth and plan the future of the area to preserve and enhance the sense of place. The research seeks to advance the understanding of sense of place since all human experience necessarily occurs in settings which are perceived subjectively by individuals. In this way, the understanding of sense of place is fundamental to inquiries in human geography.

It is argued that the phenomenological approach provides a more complete and therefore a more accurate assessment of sense of place since it explores thoroughly the lifeworld of individuals as experienced in a specific setting. A *setting* is a geographic area as small as a favorite rocking chair on a porch or as big as a country (Steele 1981). In this case the setting is the city of Berlin and the surrounding forests and open land. A *sense of place* is understood to be the historical and ongoing perceptions of an individual in respect to a certain geographic setting. The *perception* of the individual is the product of his/her entire lived experience and knowledge of the setting (Saarinen 1976). The lived experience, contemporary experience and perceptions about the future are collectively called the *lifeworld* of the individual (Buttimer 1976). The goal of this research is to understand sense of place by examining the lifeworld of the Berlin residents.

The paper begins by contrasting Berlin's strategy for operationalizing the concept of a sense of place to a phenomenological approach. The research then compares twenty one items identified by Berlin's cornerstone study with the results of the phenomenological study. Each cornerstone is evaluated according to its contribution to sense of place in Berlin, and how its importance is interpreted by the cornerstone report. The paper goes on to examine the attributes of place which were overlooked by the cornerstone project and speculates why they were omitted. The implications of this study are discussed as they pertain to Berlin, to the goals and aims of planning in general, and to the broader advantages of a phenomenological approach for the study of place as a central tenet of community planning policy.

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The phenomenological approach offers more than just a holistic view of sense of place useful for planning and resource management. The interviews gathered in Berlin offer a depth of understanding that is impossible to communicate in such a short summary of this project. In addition to a wealth of information about sense of place, there are countless trends and themes that run through the interviews. From the data collected phenomenologically, one could investigate the role of lived or remembered history compared with historical knowledge acquired orally or through a secondary source (Agnew and Duncan 1989), the need for change in a community and the need for permanence in a community (Tuan 1975; Ley 1977; Seamon 1979), visual attributes of place versus non-visual stimuli (Meinig 1979; Jackson 1984; Appleton 1975), the effects of socioeconomic or cultural background on perception of place (Relph 1976; Cosgrove 1978), variations in details perceived by individuals (Steele 1981), variances with age (Rowles 1980), what causes attachment to place (Tuan 1974), and many other themes and trends. This paper focuses only on the role of sense of place in planning efforts.

The Berlin Cornerstone Project

The state of New Hampshire has embarked on a campaign to identify the state's sense of place with Executive Order Number 89-9. The Governor asked the simple questions: "When we look around us what do we see, what do we experience as part of life in New Hampshire? What is good, what is bad, and what can we do about it? What makes New Hampshire special and unique? What gives our people a sense of place?" The city of Berlin was one of the first cities to respond to this charge.

Located in northeastern New Hampshire, nestled in the Androscoggin River Valley, Berlin is a small city of about 12,000 residents with a long tradition of a forest industry economy. In response to the state initiative, the Development Department of Berlin formed the Cornerstones Committee which sought to identify 21 "cornerstones" which they felt "make Berlin unique and should be preserved into the next century" (Evans 1990). The Cornerstone Committee operationalized these objectives by soliciting ideas and opinions from schools, civic groups, religious organizations, readers of the local newspaper and the general public. Participants were asked to select the things they would like retained in the twenty-first century. They were specifically reminded that the cornerstones need not be buildings, but should include people, activities, events and intangibles (Berlin Cornerstones Committee 1990). A workshop open to the entire community was held to consolidate the data into the 21 cornerstones (Table 1). The city's results are dominated by items which were visual objects or characteristics which symbolized the heritage of the area.

The majority of the characteristics identified by the cornerstones project can be divided into two groups. One group includes all the characteristics which pertain to the lifeworld of the people. These living items include the French-Canadian culture, the churches, an event called Super Sunday, and other attributes. The second category includes items that may have played a role in the day to day experience of residents at one time, but currently play a minimal role in the lifeworld of the contemporary community. Many of these items are important symbols of the history of the area. They include the ski jump, the old Brown Company barns, historical artifacts and other items symbolic of Berlin's heritage. Almost all of the items listed by the cornerstone project have existed for over 50 years and many of them for over 100 years.

Table 1: Cornerstones for the Twenty-first Century

- 1) Androscoggin River
 - 2) Brown Company Barns at the Industrial Park
 - 3) Brown Company Guest House
 - 4) Cates Hill
 - 5) Churches
 - 6) City Parks
 - 7) Dead River Wetlands
 - 8) Forest Land - Open Space
 - 9) French Culture
 - 10) Historical Documents and Artifacts
 - 11) Hockey Tradition and Notre Dame Arena
 - 12) James River Paper Mill
 - 13) Logging Piers in the Androscoggin River
 - 14) Downtown/Main Street - Buildings with Architectural or Historical Significance.
 - 15) Mount Forist and Mount Jaspar
 - 16) Nansen Ski Jump and Nansen Ski Club
 - 17) Old Neighborhood/Catholic School Buildings
 - 18) Scenic Views
 - 19) Super Sunday
 - 20) Theater North
 - 21) Train Depots
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Source: Development Department, Berlin, New Hampshire.

A Phenomonological Alternative

This study collected data exclusively through interviews on the premise that sense of place is the people's living perception of a setting as it relates to their lifeworld. A questionnaire was designed which would solicit comments and feelings about Berlin in as many realms of the lifeworld as possible (Figure 1). Fifty interviews were arranged from a random sample of residents from Berlin and the three contiguous towns of Gorham, Milan and Randolph. In keeping with the phenomenological approach, all the questions were open ended and residents were encouraged to contribute as much or as little as they felt necessary. Several questions concerning important objects, events, and views duplicated the approach taken by the cornerstone project, but the questionnaire went on to solicit feelings about memories, various settings within Berlin, non-visual sensations, moods, emotions, routines, people of Berlin, attachment to Berlin, and things that have changed and things that have not changed. At the end of the interview, the residents were asked to add anything else that they thought was important or relevant which had not been addressed by the questions. The results are dominated by comments, feelings and concerns which revealed common underlying values as well as symbols of these values.

An Evaluation of the Cornerstone's Findings

The 21 cornerstones are grouped according to two criteria: 1) identification-either identified by the cornerstone study alone, or by the cornerstone study and the phenomenological study and 2) interpretation-the degree of correspondence between the stated cornerstone interpretation and the meaning of the item as perceived in the

FIGURE 1

Interview

Number of years in Berlin, NH _____

A]		
Name a few...		...that come to mind
A couple...		...that are significant
Some...		...that are typical
Several...		...that are important
As many...		...that are normal
Are there any...		...that you like about it
	1	objects or groups of objects
	2	people or groups of people
	3	memories of happenings
	4	locations, areas, spaces, regions within the place
	5	views or scenes
	6	non-visual sensations such as sounds and smells
	7	moods, emotions, feelings
	8	routines
	9	activities you do or like doing in Berlin
	10	things that have changed
	11	things that have not changed
	12	things that should never change
B]		Do you feel you know a lot about the history of Berlin?
C]		Would you want to move away from the Berlin area?
D]		How attached to Berlin do you feel on a scale of 1 to 10
E]		Can you characterize Berlin, summarize its attributes?
F]		Is there anything else about Berlin you want to add?

phenomenological study (Table 2). In short, Table 2 summarizes how closely each cornerstone correlates with the lifeworld and the sense of place expressed by the interviewees. Items in the lower right hand corner are central to the lifeworld of the community, while items in the upper left hand corner are peripheral to the sense of place of the people.

The cornerstone project identified the two railroad depots as one of the 21 most important items in Berlin of place. As the table indicates, however, the depots, like most other items in the same category, were rarely mentioned in the interviews and, when they were, usually in association with another activity, event, memory or feeling current to the lifeworld of the individual. Thus, the presence of the railroad was acknowledged as it related to the lifeworld of the people. "There is one train that drives me crazy early in the morning when I'm trying to sleep." Another said "if you try to get by the railroad tracks at 4 o'clock you're probably going to run into the train." One resident mentioned growing up beside the tracks. Getting woken by the train, waiting for a train to pass, and playing by the tracks as a child are all examples of the day to day contact of the residents with the rail system. It is these aspects of the railroad system that are currently important to the sense of place.

TABLE 2

Grouping of 21 Cornerstones of
Berlin, New Hampshire

		INTERPRETATION		
		POOR	FAIR	GOOD
IDENTIFICATION	CORNER-STONE PROJECT ONLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depots • Documents and Artifacts • Brown Co. Barns • Brown Co. House • Dead River Wetlands • Cates Hill 		
	BOTH CORNER-STONE PROJECT and PHENOM. STUDY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Ski Jump and Club • Old School Buildings • Buildings Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Mill • Boom Piers • Views • Theater North • Androscoggin River • Mt. Jasper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests and Open Space • Parks • Hockey • Super Sunday • French Culture

Source: Adapted from Berlin Cornerstone Committee 1990.

The Brown Company Guest House and the Historical Documents and Artifacts are similar to the depots in this regard. Only one interviewee mentioned the Brown Company Guest house and no one mentioned any of the historical documents and artifacts that the cornerstone project included in its report. The Brown Company Barns were mentioned more than the artifacts, documents and Brown Company Guest House, but they were associated with the local theater group, Theater North, which used them up until July of 1990 as a summer rehearsal and performance hall and storage facility year-round. The fact that none of the interviewees mentioned the Dead River Wetlands would seem to undermine their relevance for sense of place.

Unlike its interpretation of the depots, the Brown Company properties, or the Historical Artifacts, the cornerstone project identified Cates Hill more because of its current use and less because of its history. Cates Hill is a "living" item, but only for the lifeworld of a select segment of the population. Cates Hill is removed physically from the vast majority of houses, and out of reach economically, since it is generally dominated by wealthy residents. Cates Hill was mentioned by only three of the 50 residents interviewed, twice in association with a deceased farmer who had supplied Berlin with local

milk, and once in association with a family member. The cornerstones project notes Cates Hill for its "most treasured neighborhoods" and the view accessible by road for "travelers". While the qualities identified by the cornerstone report are true of Cates Hill, they are outside the lifeworld of the majority, and therefore minimally important to sense of place.

Items in the lower left hand corner of Table 2 were identified by both studies, but poorly interpreted by the cornerstone report. One of the best examples is the churches, identified by the cornerstone report because of their beauty and unusual architecture. Churches, however, can influence the lifeworld of the people beyond aesthetics and architecture. The most obvious is the role of the church in the religious and spiritual life of the residents. Less obvious is the role the church serves as a center of ethnic identity. The French Canadians often mentioned their affiliation with the Catholic Church, while the Russian neighborhood surrounds a Russian Orthodox church. Religion, symbolized by the church, pervades life in countless other ways. There are religious nursing homes, religious schools, community service groups such as the Salvation Army, and social groups such as the Knights of Columbus. In one small neighborhood, "the pastor bought the land and built these houses, a church and a school... He was from Ireland (and) they called it Irish acres." One resident, asked what memories he has of his life in Berlin, responded, "I think they are all church related." While aspects of the lifeworld pervaded almost all the interviews, only a small minority pointed out the beauty and the architecture of the churches as well.

The cornerstone report devotes several sentences to the Nansen ski jump and ski club, noting that it is the oldest ski club in the United States. Much of the heritage associated with the jump and the club was not acknowledged by the people, who instead spoke of winter carnivals which surrounded the ski jumping activity. "It's an eighty millimeter jump (sic)..., and there used to be a big carnival up here, and a big crowd. People come from all around to compete. Some girl from town would be crowned and she'd be queen and she'd be up there and send the jumpers down and do the ceremony..." While some people did point out proudly that it is the "only wooden ski jump around" and it was "the second biggest in the world" at one time, the people who seemed upset by its present condition remembered it more as a part of an event which included "skiers from all over the country, hotdogs and a lot of people." No one mentioned the Nansen Ski Club, and, the sport itself, while mentioned in the cornerstone report, was secondary to all but one of the residents interviewed, an ex-jumper.

The cornerstone project listed the old neighborhood school buildings as important to place and assets of the city. Memories of bilingual schools, interscholastic competition and seasonal activities at the schools were mentioned most frequently, with the current trend of converting schools to elderly homes mentioned by some. The buildings themselves were unimportant to the residents interviewed. The architecture and historical significance of the buildings downtown was also highlighted as a cornerstone, but "overlooked" by the public in the interviews. When the downtown area was mentioned it was usually in conjunction with shopping and other routines, economic trends, or memories.

The cornerstone project came closer to identifying the significance of the items in the lower middle box of Table 2 such as the paper mill, the boom piers, and the general scenery of the area. More than anything else, Berlin is locally known for its paper mill, which dominates the center of town. The cornerstone project noted the history of the mill, its land holdings, and the number of people it employs. The interviews touched on most of these points, but revealed more about how the mill affects day to day life in Berlin and how it is perceived. The James River Paper Company "is the first thing that catches your nose, eye and ear when you get into this area. Those sounds are natural, they're bread and butter." Berliners live with the infamous smell of the mill constantly

and have the general attitude that "it's the smell of money; no smell, no city." Residents complain about the mill but realize its crucial role in Berlin, "Well it's very noisy... and the smell, we get chlorine every once in a while. But you know it's the lifeblood of the city." One person believed that as many as 90% of the city's workers "still make a living at the mill." The cornerstone project reports a more factual number of 25%, but it is the perceived number which contributes to the sense of place. The mill plays such a dominant role in Berlin that one woman felt it was necessary to point out that "there are some things that are around that aren't mill oriented."

A number of people mentioned the logging piers on the Androscoggin River, but did not value them for their heritage alone, as the cornerstone report suggests. The individuals who noted the piers often complemented this observation with a tale of their lived experience related to the piers; "Of course the river drive, I was driving logs at 16. Sure it was dangerous, you fall in between two logs, they close up and you are finished." Often they would reminisce and describe an experience they had as children, "It was really something to see, you'd walk along the river and watch all that wood come out and it was really something to see. It was a rush... it was like 'Look at that! Where's all this wood coming from?'" Despite the fact that the piers have been defunct for almost 50 years, the attention that they receive from people can be explained by their uniqueness, their visibility, and their intrigue for tourists, visitors, historians, and current residents. There was one resident who knew they were special, thought they were beautiful, but did not know why they were there.

Scenic views do not affect the lifeworld as much as other attributes such as the paper mill or the churches because they are static. The cornerstone report captures most of this, but omits qualities such as the feelings of security conveyed by the physical surroundings. Describing the mountains one resident said, "It's like being cradled, you know. You're protected from floods, winds and disasters." The Androscoggin River is mentioned by the residents for its beauty and recreational potential, as noted by the cornerstone report, but few connected the river with the origins of the jobs at the mill, a connection made in the cornerstone report.

It is difficult to assess the role of Theater North in Berlin since the interviewing period surrounded a time when the local theater troupe was producing and performing a play and looking for a new home for performing and storing equipment. The results of the phenomenological study might have been skewed since Theater North was receiving more media attention than usual. The cornerstone report was accurate in acknowledging the cultural opportunities Theater North provides but overlooked the community ties that the people valued. Speaking about a recent play one woman said, "Father _____ is such a character, I love him."

The cornerstone project was most successful in interpreting the items in the lower right-hand box of Table 2. The cornerstone project noted that the forest land and open space "is an integral part of Berlin's history, economy, culture and image" (Berlin Cornerstone Committee 1990). Accordingly, the forest land and open space was often mentioned in the interviews. It was said that "If you don't get into the outdoors up here, there is nothing for you." The opportunities for recreation in the outdoors were identified by some as the one thing that kept them in Berlin. Stories about camping, fishing, snow-machining, sliding, skiing, hunting, hiking, playing, swimming and just exploring the woods were common to many of the interviews. For one resident, "the woods is everything."

The parks in the city are "treasured" by the residents according to both studies. They provide "a place where everyone can go... to meditate, or whatever you want to call it, relax themselves. People have really taken advantage of it throughout the years and they still do." Another resident remarked, "almost every night you see people in the parks..."

Since the parks and open land contribute to the lifeworld of the majority of the population-stories and comments regarding these resources were common-one can conclude that they contribute to the sense of place.

Super Sunday is unique in the committee's list in being the only cornerstone in Berlin which is less than ten years old. This event kicks off the United Way fund-raising drive and is marked by a full day of parades and festivities. The event includes several weeks of preparation and is a highlight of the fall season. The role of Super Sunday in the lifeworld of Berlin is most explicit during the fall season, but the event seems to symbolize an element of Berlin that runs deeper in the lifeworld of the community. The phenomenological approach revealed the friendliness and comradery that people feel towards one another, highlighted by Super Sunday. "It's not big potatoes to everyone, but here everybody knows everybody the way that you do and it's like a big party." Another resident mentioned that "It seems to be the one time of year when you see a lot of people at one time."

In the winter, many residents of Berlin rally around hockey. The Notre Dame Arena, one of the 21 cornerstones, is the symbol of this tradition. Several people commented to the effect that "when I was younger that was Berlin's biggest attraction, Hockey Town, USA." Ties with the extended family, the religious connection between the schools and congregations and the athletic tendencies of the whole community made this event touch on most people's lives. Even those who did not like to go to the games, "we listened on the radio and cheered them on whenever we were out." Berlin's prowess in hockey has waned, and most people ascribe this to declining enrollment in the schools and the loss of competition between rival schools. Nevertheless the tradition survives today in much the same way, if not in the same intensity, as it did at its peak.

"French culture pervades Berlin" according to the cornerstones report (1990), and again the phenomenological study confirms this. The French-Canadian ethnic group is the largest group in Berlin, some people perceive it to be 90% of the population, and it is manifest through the spoken language heard in the shops and on the street, French names which adorn mailboxes, houses and businesses, the French-Catholic schools, and in other ways. People spoke of a number of other neighborhoods in Berlin which also contribute to the city's ethnic culture. Cascade or Jimtown is the Italian section, there is a Norwegian Village, a Russian quarter, Irish acres, and a Polish section. While the neighborhoods have lost some of their homogeneity and identity, the multinational background of the Berlin community is still embedded in the lifeworld of the residents.

Berlin's cornerstone project is an impressive effort by most standards, but as discussed above, some attributes of sense of place in Berlin were misinterpreted or only partially interpreted. There are other attributes, arguably some of the most important ones, which were missed completely by the cornerstone project. In this respect, Berlin's strategy fell short of its ultimate goal-to understand and identify sense of place in Berlin.

Beyond the Cornerstones: Findings Specific to the Phenomenological Study

The cornerstone project overlooks some of the qualities of place in Berlin that are engrained in the lifeworld of the residents. Attributes such as the friendliness of the people, the sense of community, the family tradition, a sense of responsibility and concern for the youth and elderly, the work ethic, the perceived safety and security of Berlin, and routines, such as walking, exist in the minds of people and are not easily symbolized by a physical object or a formal event. Consequently, they are harder to identify and protect. And yet, in many ways, these characteristics are the most important qualities in the city, since they provide the framework in which all other activities (such as Super

Sunday, hockey, ski jumping, and church) are experienced. These qualities form much of the social fabric which contributes substantially to people's perception of place.

Perhaps the most salient characteristic that residents mentioned in connection with Berlin was the friendliness of the city. One woman noted that, "The hospitality is remarkable. People from all over the place say how friendly the people are. When I go out of town I notice it. I have to watch myself because I am so used to being friendly. Sometimes I have to watch it because I get myself in trouble." The degree to which people both identified with this quality and were determined to perpetuate it was remarkable. One resident pointed out it was "amazing how people care for one another ... people really work... to be friendly toward each other." Some mentioned that the friendliness of the community had changed over time, but the majority of the people held the friendliness of Berlin as one of the most outstanding qualities of the place.

The friendliness has contributed to a strong sense of community within the neighborhoods. "We are here for each other when the time comes," explained one elderly woman. Recalling memories of Berlin, one resident said, "the real big ones are like problems, disasters when everyone comes out and helps and bonds. When there's a funeral everyone cooks and comes out. In a tragedy people pool together and get together..." People describe the city as "closeknit", "a certain closeness", "the city with a warm heart", "a friendly group" and "like a family". When speaking about the neighbors, one native Berliner said, "that's what brought me back.

The role of the family in day to day living is central to the Berlin experience. The family is so important to the lifeworld that one resident said if "you're gonna come up here without a wife, husband or family, you're gonna have a tough time... But to raise a family it's great. It's terrific." Several people tied the family tradition to the French background, "the city is predominantly French with strong family ties and a strong family tradition." Others maintain that the area is just conducive to family life. "It is a good place to raise kids, a safe town" and the "activities are centered around the youth." One woman said, "it's a wonderful place. I mean I brought my boys back, and you don't just bring your children anywhere." An overwhelming number of people, both parents and grandparents, "find that it's an ideal place to live with children."

There is an underlying concern for the welfare of the elderly and the young people who finish high school. When asked what should be done to improve the city many answered to the effect of "more stuff for the kids." Several people lamented the loss of the YMCA, a pool downtown and the community center. People with a concern for the youth and family ties "wish there were jobs just so people who wanted to stay in Berlin could stay." With a few exceptions, the community is very supportive of their young people; "we've got a good bunch of youth, they should do something about keeping them in the area." There is a similar feeling concerning the elderly. There is a growing population of old people who are respected as the people who "made Berlin what it is today." While some services are lacking, many of the residents, both working and retired, mentioned the advantages of Berlin which make it a "good place to retire." Concern for this population was communicated through comments about the need for adequate transportation, support groups and other services.

Another quality which contributes to an overall sense of place is the pride in the work ethic. "Friendly" and "hardworking" are sometimes used together to describe the Berlin residents. One elderly man crippled by a stroke spoke proudly of the days when he built his home and the two houses on either side of his lot "without missing a single day of work" on his regular job. "I always like to work, if there is no work, I create work." One mill worker summed it up well, "You see some people who live off the city, but most people want to live by themselves, you don't have a lot of people on welfare. It's an employment town, people want to work." The most commonly mentioned routine in the

lifeworld of a typical Berliner is get up, go to work, work, and come home. Working is a part of any community's lifeworld, but the phenomenological study showed the emphasis and pride that the Berlin residents have for this aspect of the lifeworld.

Most of the routines which were identified were dominated by work and church on Sunday, but there was one interesting anomaly to an otherwise ordinary routine; people love to go walking. "I don't care if it's 3, 4, 5 o'clock in the morning, you see people walk. I leave for work at 5:30 in the morning and there's always about 15 or 20 walking around Cleveland Bridge, up by the river. It's really something." It's a routine that has been adopted by all ages; "on a nice night like tonight you go downtown and you see everyone walking." Other routines involved athletic activities such as softball, bowling and golf, family responsibilities such as car pooling children, and seasonal routines of recreation.

One of the qualities that makes the routine of walking possible is the widespread perception that Berlin is safe and secure. According to one resident, "if I had to describe Berlin in one word, I would say it is secure." Berlin is not perfect, and many people are aware of dangerous and vulnerable aspects of the city, but the general perception that the city is a safe place affects the lifeworld. "You never mistrusted anybody," said one woman, "I was able to go out anytime day or night and not be afraid or molested." Like other components that contribute to sense of place in Berlin, the feeling of security is deeply intertwined with other attributes that affect the lifeworld of the residents. The underlying feelings of safety and security are not easily identified by non-phenomenological approaches to the study of place, but fundamentally shape the way people perceive and live in their environment.

The interviews also revealed characteristics of place that are integral to the lifeworld of Berlin residents, but may not be qualities that a community would want to perpetuate or enhance. Almost all of Berlin's residents mentioned the smell of the paper mill, and residents of towns surrounding Berlin, in fact all over the state, identified this smell as one of the over-riding characteristics of Berlin. As much as the smell characterizes Berlin, most people would rather see the smell eliminated, if this could be done without hurting the economy. Other unsavory realities include Berlin's reputation as having one of the highest per capita beer consumption rates in the nation, Berlin's growing trend of economic decline which seems to dominate the perceptions of both Berlin residents and their neighbors in the contiguous towns, a few sporadic and minor ethnic conflicts, and other problems. These characteristics are not included in the cornerstone report for understandable reasons. The phenomenological study revealed these negative qualities, demonstrating the thoroughness of its inquiry for understanding sense of place.

Conclusions

This research has argued that the Berlin cornerstone project partially misidentified and mis-interpreted key elements of that community's sense of place because it assumed an approach which failed to account for the importance of the lifeworld. A phenomenological alternative was proposed, and found to present a more complete analysis of sense of place.

From this understanding of sense of place it is possible to propose programs which would maintain and enhance the sense of place. In Berlin's case, possible programs include organizing more community events and activities (especially those designed for families), providing more public recognition of the work ethic, creating more promenades or walking routes with appropriate services such as overpasses and crosswalks, providing increased access to outdoor activities, conducting public tours through the paper mill, establishing neighborhood crime prevention coalitions, and fostering more interaction between the youth and the elderly. Most of these programs could be

implemented by volunteer organizations or by the city government at relatively low cost. On the other hand, dedicating time and money to the preservation of historical artifacts, the Brown Company Barns and other relics of years gone by would not contribute significantly to the sense of place. There are reasons why buildings and artifacts should be preserved, but if one's goal is to preserve sense of place, one must address the needs, values and concerns of the lifeworld of the residents.

The study reveals some principles which can be extended to planning and managing a sense of place in general. Traditional approaches to preserving the sense of place have been (and continue to be) directed primarily at physical objects, and occasionally at activities. Sense of place cannot be preserved and guaranteed by giving a few landmarks a fresh coat of paint and a commemorative plaque. The research illustrates that it is not buildings that are the most important components for a sense of place. It has been empirically shown that routines, feelings, and human values are as important to sense of place as the symbols of the heritage of past communities. In fact, routines, feelings and other human values may be even more important to sense of place. A symbol of a particular attribute such as a church, boom piers in a river, or an old ski jump cannot be considered important to the community if it is not linked to the lifeworld of the people through a certain set of beliefs, values and behavior. It is the sentiments and values of the people that give meaning to the landscape. Therefore it is to the people that one must look to understand sense of place. It is important not to attribute sense of place to static symbols such as buildings and artifacts because sense of place must also accommodate change. Sense of place is a dynamic process constantly evolving to meet the needs and desires of the residents in a particular setting. One cannot pick a certain year in which the sense of place has attained a desirable quality and stifle all subsequent change so that it is buried carefully out of sight from the lifeworld of the people. Change is not inherently bad, it is in fact inevitable. Change should not be stifled so much that a setting is rigidly controlled and does not authentically represent the lifeworld for the community. Rather change should be carefully shaped to fall within the existing attributes of place in a way that complements them. Preserving sense of place must address the reality of changing societies.

Phenomenology allows planners to achieve an accurate and useful understanding of the dynamics of sense of place. Using an approach which looks holistically at the lifeworld of residents, and which is not tainted by a lens that seeks the positive and 'important' parts of the community, one can access the essence of life in a particular setting, and begin to understand what that setting means to the people. The study introduces one questionnaire that is an appropriate mechanism by which such a phenomenological approach may be conducted. The potential for further study is remarkable. This brief study of sense of place indicates the potential of the many contributions that phenomenology can offer to the study of human geography.

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