

THE POSSIBILITY OF EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE OF PLACE AND THE SOCIAL BOND

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr. Stout for coordinating this symposium. He would also like to express his gratitude to three anonymous reviewers and Dr. Stout for their comments and recommendations, which were enormously valuable in developing this piece.

ABSTRACT

The conventional wisdom, and much of the citizen participation literature in public administration, works from a presumption that the stability of the social bond will come about as a result of more and better participation. However, under the conditions of late modernism including incommensurable language games, participation, even in the form of robust discourse, is insufficient for generating the social bond. In such conditions, some form of the social bond must exist prior to and in order for discursive participation to occur in the first place. Again, in the conditions of late modernism, the mechanical solidarity described by Emile Durkheim, or a social bond based in shared culture, religion and values no longer exists. In such conditions, some other basis to form the social bond must be found. This work suggests that the existence of a shared connection to place—built and natural physical environments—can establish the conditions for effective citizen participation to occur. Following a description of the social bond and its function, this article presents the findings of a case study which suggests that social connection to place can support the generation of the social bond, and that agencies can utilize that bond to facilitate robust, participatory discourse about management activities and outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The role of participation in public administration and policy has been a consistent theme in the literature of the field for many years. This article, following the thinking of King and Stivers (1998), Box (1998) and others, proceeds from the perspective that the governance processes should be driven by citizen input, robust participation and deliberation rather than based in narrow administrative expertise. This approach to participation does not preclude organizational or institutional engagement, but its primary focus is on sociopolitical processes operating at the individual level, rather than representational forms of engagement operating via networks or partnerships of institutions. The central issue explored in following pages is the role of place—geographic location—in contributing to effective participatory processes in late modern sociopolitical conditions.

The social and political conditions beginning in the mid to late 20th century, especially growing social diversity, expanding size and scope of large scale institutions, increasing separation between citizens and their political representatives and growing skepticism about the legitimacy of administrative action grounded in narrow technical expertise, has weakened social cohesion, or the social bond, such that it no longer has sufficient stability and robustness to support the creation of mutually acceptable action by traditional administrative processes (Catlaw, 2008; Hummel, 2008). Attention to the frequency and quality of participatory governance can be understood as a way of responding to these conditions in an effort to find a means for the social bond to be (re)generated, enabling broadly acceptable courses of action to be developed. The conventional wisdom, and much of the citizen participation literature in public administration,

works from a presumption that the social bond will come about as a result of more and better participation.

Many efforts to expand opportunities for participation—to create more participation—appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s (e.g. Newman and Demone, 1969; Roos, 1974; Onibokun and Curry, 1976) and were embodied in legislation from the environmental movement including the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act and National Forest Management Act. As participatory processes became more common, attention to the quality and content of that participation grew as well. For example, King, Feltey and Susel (1998) suggest that through authentic or high quality participation citizens can have “deep and continuous involvement in the administrative processes with the potential for all involved to have an effect on the situation” (p. 320). The underlying notion expressed here is that through high quality participation, conflicting beliefs and perceptions can be resolved such that mutually acceptable courses of action can be developed. Similar claims about participation are found throughout the literature on participation in public administration. Frederickson (1982) argues for recovered forms of civism where flexible and responsive organizations create a space where free and equal citizens can substantively engage with one another to resolve important issues. Similarly, Stivers (1990) extends the exploration of public administration’s relationship to the citizenry in arguing that when active citizens interact with professional administrators in substantive ways, that it is possible to create a polis, “a public space in which members act together in order to achieve limited ends and to lead a virtuous life” (p. 86). Stivers argues that interaction among citizens and administrators, when normatively grounded in an agency-specific understanding of the public interest, has the potential to create and

maintain a public space where members not only survive, but can pursue the political “good life”.

Putnam’s well known work, *Bowling Alone* (2001), describes the consequences of the decline in civic participation and its resulting social capital over the last several decades. In prior research (1993, 1994), Putnam finds that engagement in a variety of civic activities—participation of a quality that supports the development of social capital—has a positive impact on democratic processes and institutions.

In other studies, Wang (2001) and Halvorsen (2003) examine the effects of public participation on the perceptions and beliefs of citizens. These studies reveal that high quality participation, which is characterized by efficient, carefully scheduled, comfortable, accessible opportunities that offer satisfying and robust engagement, has the effect of shifting participant perceptions of the agency which sponsors the initiative, and potentially overcomes existing divisiveness so that consensus can develop. This same central claim about the effect of quality participation appears in a wide range of work focused on any number of specific administrative practices from the policy sciences (de Leon, 1992) to public budgeting (Beckett and King, 2002), and policy areas from environmental policy (Beierle and Cayford, 2002; Landre and Knuth, 1993), to health care (Brown, 1981) and urban planning (Jennings, 2004).

The claim I develop here argues that the social bond must exist prior to and in order for any effective participation to take place. The existence of the social bond—a basic connection between human actors—is necessary for structuring the sort of discourse¹ required for

¹ Discourse as it is used here not only includes spoken and written language, but the wider set of interactive social practices and behaviors which render the world sensible to social actors.

effective participatory efforts. Under the conditions of late modernism (Catlaw, 2008; Farmer, 1995; Fox and Miller, 1996;) and particularly in situations characterized by incommensurable language games (Fox and Miller, 1996; Lyotard, 1984), participation, even when structured to generate diverse and robust discourse, cannot create the necessary social bond. In such conditions, some form of the social bond must exist prior to and in order for discursive participation to occur at all. Again, in the conditions of late modernism, the mechanical solidarity described by Emile Durkheim, or a social bond generated in a social contract, shared culture, or religion and values no longer exists. This article posits that while robust and inclusive participation is necessary for contemporary governance initiatives to be successful, the issue that has not yet been given sufficient attention is what must occur or be present for the social bond to exist in the first place. I argue that the existence of a shared connection to place—built and natural physical environments—can establish the conditions for effective citizen participation to occur.

THE SOCIAL BOND

The notion of the social bond has been treated in a variety of ways throughout western thought, and many of these treatments relate to how collections of discrete subjects exist together in society. One of the earliest descriptions, although somewhat indirect, is found in Aquinas' discussion of the king's responsibility to maintain the social bond, though little more is said of what it is (Catto, 1976). Social contract theory represents one principal line of thought about the social bond. Rousseau, in *On the Social Contract* (1978), describes the social bond as being formed through commonalities among different interests. Without such commonalities or agreement among different interests, no society could exist at all.

Emile Durkheim's conception is particularly insightful in the context of current social and political conditions. Durkheim (1958, 1984) argues that the desires and self-interests of human beings can only be held in check by forces that originate outside of the individual. Consistent with a Hobbesian notion of human nature, Durkheim notes that, "as there is nothing within an individual which constrains these appetites, they must surely be contained by some force exterior to him" (1950, p. 200). Durkheim, contrary to Hobbes' use of the social contract to authorize and establish the state as the basis of social solidarity, characterizes this external force as a collective conscience or a common social bond that is expressed by the ideas, values, norms, beliefs, and ideologies of a culture. The norms, values, and beliefs of the society are so consistently shared within the population and operate with such overwhelming and consistent force that there is little opportunity in such societies for individuality or deviance from this collective conscience. As such, traditional cultures experience a high level of social cohesion and stability.

In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1984), Durkheim identifies two forms or types of solidarity that function as the basis of the social bond: mechanical and organic. Mechanical solidarity is "solidarity which comes from likeness and is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelops our whole conscience and coincides in all points with it" (p. 84). Mechanical solidarity occurs in early or traditional societies in which most members are relatively homogenous and have similar life experiences. Institutions in these societies share the same set of norms and values and as such help to reinforce and maintain the stability of the social bond, and therefore the society as well. Under conditions of mechanical solidarity there are high levels of social stability and

efforts to generate social or collective action are largely uncontroversial and uncontested.

These conditions have been subject to anomie—the fraying or even outright collapse of social solidarity and the social bond—in modern societies. Durkheim (1984) identifies two major causes of anomie: the division of labor and rapid social change, both of which typify late modernity. According to Durkheim, increasing division of labor and rapid social change both have the effect of weakening the sense of identification with the wider community, thereby loosening constraints on human behavior. This diminished sense of connection and constraint leads to social “dis-integration” that includes high rates of egocentric behavior, violation of social norms, and a corresponding decrease in perceived legitimacy of authority and institutions. These conditions reduce social stability and increase the difficulty of engaging in collective action.

Organic solidarity, or the increasing and necessary reliance that individuals have upon one another in developed societies, emerges as an outcome of specialization and the division of labor, because no individual can accomplish all that is necessary for survival by himself. However, organic solidarity is incapable of reconstituting the social bond with the same coherence and stability as existed under mechanical solidarity. As a result of the expanding division of labor and corresponding complexity of society, social experiences, material interests, values, and beliefs across the society all become increasingly dissimilar. In other words, the growth of individualism increases at the expense of the common values, morality, beliefs, and normative rules of society. As a result, the collective understanding and sense of the world shared under mechanical solidarity collapses. Simultaneously, members of society lose their sense of community and identification with the group. The social

bond weakens and shared social values and beliefs no longer provide us with a coherent or stable sense of what the current situation is or what might be done about it. It should be acknowledged that the collapse of mechanical solidarity is important in terms of overcoming oppression experienced by many minorities. While robust, functional mechanical solidarity can have the effect of oppressing those with alternative beliefs and perspectives, its collapse also poses a substantial challenge to any effort to engage in consensual collective action. Without some social cohesion and stability, coming to agreement on social action becomes difficult if not impossible.

Devetak and Higgott (1999) differ from Durkheim by locating the source of the social bond in political sovereignty. They see political sovereignty functioning very similarly to Durkheim's description of mechanical solidarity. This form of sovereignty serves to create a single source of authority from which all political, social and economic life is maintained. However, they too observe a destabilization of the social bond, though they focus on the more contemporary issues of economic and organizational globalization as the cause, rather than the division of labor and social change. They argue that territorial boundaries have become increasing unbundled in an age of globalization and that the social bond is constantly disrupted and transformed as a result.

Liotard's work in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) describes similar social trends, and suggests a positive mechanism for considering the social bond in highly differentiated or postmodern social conditions. To this point, the social bond has been articulated as being composed of the collective values, morality, beliefs, and rules of society—a shared normative understanding and sense of the world. Lyotard (1984) shifts and extends the conceptualization of the social bond to be composed of knowledge and meaning and is observable in “language

moves” or discrete elements of language games. The social bond, the basis of a stable society capable of integrated or collective action, is expressed in the language games associated with representations of knowledge in a given society. Lyotard argues that there are two broad representational models of society and corresponding epistemologies. These two are embodied, albeit in a dramatically oversimplified way, in the thinking of Talcott Parsons and Karl Marx. Lyotard views the former’s representation of knowledge as generally being optimistic and unifying, and as productive force within the system. The latter’s conception of knowledge is viewed as critical, reflexive, hermeneutic and resistant (Lyotard, 1984, pp. 9-14). In conditions of late modern market capitalism, these representations no longer fit with most important modes of postmodern knowledge. However:

There is no need to resort to some fiction of social origins to establish that language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist: even before he is born, if only by virtue of the name he is given, the human child is already positioned as the referent in the story recounted by those around him, in relation to which he will inevitably chart his course. Or more simply still, the question of the social bond, insofar as it is a question, is itself a language game, the game of inquiry. It immediately positions the person who asks, as well as the addressee and the referent asked about: it is already the social bond. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 14)

By constituting the positions of those in the language game and thereby establishing the social bond, that bond is necessarily and inherently a feature of human relations and discourse.

The difficulty, because of the fluidity and highly contested nature of language games in postmodern conditions, is finding some means of stabilizing discourse sufficiently for groups to come together, make decisions and the implement them. The growing diversity of political, religious and social perspectives resulting from liberal pluralism has expanded the participation and perspectives shaping political discourse. This sociolinguistic change has also eliminated the preeminence of a single shared normative perspective. As a result, no single institution nor even a finite set of institutions with strong shared moral perspectives retains privileged status. Increasingly, the legitimacy of multiple voices results in a set of distinct and possibly incommensurable language games (Austin, 2004; Farmer, 1995; Lyotard, 1984). Further, neither the political institutions of the public sector nor the market mechanisms of the private sector currently have the capacity to act as the basis from which to overcome this incommensurability. The cynicism and distrust that characterizes contemporary American politics limits the potential of political institutions to create the social bond. Furthermore, the institutions of the market assume that the social bond, which is presumed to serve as a check on excesses of the market, comes into existence naturally (Catlaw, 2006; Chaloupka, 1999; Lane, 1991).

However, the current difficulty is that in the conditions that characterize late modernism, neither institutions of government nor market are able to maintain a stable social bond as it existed in the past. As such, some foundational means of relating must exist prior to the occurrence of functional social discourse and is a prerequisite for it. In this case, the social bond exists and functions in manner something like Heidegger's (1962) notion of *Dasein*'s² skill of primordial coping. According

² *Dasein*, roughly, is Heidegger's alternative to 'individual' or

to Heidegger, it is through lived experience of relating to the world that we develop the ability to move through and interact with the world, including other social actors, in an essentially functional way (see also Hummel, 2004 and Stivers, 2008). The social process of participation, and the discourse which comprises it, does not create the social bond; rather the social bond creates the possibility for stable, functional, participatory discourse. The next step is to identify factors that come into play in building the social bond.

A THEORY OF PLACE

Given the social conditions of late modernism—increased diversity, cultural isolation, incommensurability of language games, and the collapse of shared values that shape collective action—some basis other than the presumption of rational contracts, markets, or shared social values is needed for the development of the social bond. Mark Sagoff (1988) suggests that a landscape, “becomes a place—‘a shape that’s in your head’—when it is cultivated, when it constrains human activity and is constrained by it, when it functions as a center of felt value because human needs, cultural and social as well as biological, are satisfied in it” (p. 254). The breadth of thinking and writing about the lived experience of geographic place is strongly suggestive of its use in supporting various forms of effective social relations that enable political communities to overcome abstracted, interest-based discourse such that inclusive, collective action is possible (Lynch, 1960; Kemmis 1991; Vitek and Jackson 1996; Falk 2004). It is quite likely that the place in which discourse occurs, can foster the social bond, which

‘subject’, terms which he argues have been too thoroughly burdened with Cartesian ontological and epistemological assumptions to be of use in phenomenology.

is in turn necessary for effective discourse. A diverse collection of theoretical and empirical research in this area has been conducted over the last 25 years, which confirms these individual and collective, as well as conscious and unconscious connections to place (Brown and Werner, 1985; Feldman, 1990; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Korpela, 1989). This collection of work from the field of environmental psychology, which describes how individuals and groups connect to, interact with, and are affected by physical environments, strengthens the claim that a shared sense and attachment to place can support the development of the social bond and subsequent social action.

Specifically, while it is understood that individuals develop an affinity for particular places or types of places, the possibility of collective connections to place offers an opportunity to explore an alternate source of the social bond necessary for functional social discourse. Harold Proshansky's 1978 article entitled "The City and Self-Identity" describes the relationship between physical place and personal identity as being dimensions or attributes of the self that define identity in relation to the physical environment through a complex pattern of "conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment" (p. 155). Proshansky's description of the unconscious connections attends to what he describes as "those environmentally related tendencies, beliefs, dispositions, values and expectations of which the individual is unaware," but nevertheless contribute to the definition and expression of the individual's identity (1978, p. 162). Beyond the connections between place and the unconscious, place-related attributes of identity reflect experiences common to all individuals and groups of individuals in distinct kinds of locations. While personal connectedness to place is established in the context of

specific experiences and socialization unique to each individual, common experiences, those experiences shared by all of those living in particular kinds of settings, are also elements of this connection to place.

What Proshansky (1978) reveals in this early environmental psychology research is that connectedness to place is both individual and collective and that it operates both consciously and unconsciously. More recently, environmental psychologists Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) revealed the existence of the shared or collective effect of place on identity construction. Drawing on mechanisms such as place-referent or place-congruent identity formation suggests that there is the potential to foster both individual and collective connections to place in a way that enables the social bond to emerge and develop. This will be explored in the research findings herein.

Given the variation in setting and approaches of the environmental psychology work, some common means is useful for conceptualizing and linking the various mechanisms described in the environmental psychology literature, through which people perceive the physical environment and how such processes contribute to the construction of the social bond. The psychoanalytic theory of Carl Jung (1921, 1935), and more recently, the interpretation of Jung's work by psychoanalysts June Singer and Mary Loomis (Singer and Loomis, 1981; Loomis, 1982; Loomis, 1991) are particularly useful for two reasons. First, their work provides a framework for understanding how humans perceive and come to understand their connection to place. This frame work is helpful both as a way of operationalizing individual and collective sense of place, and for practitioners thinking about how to structure administrative processes crafted around the use of place.

Second, Singer and Loomis' work with Jung does not fall back on the more commonly used oppositional cross model of Jung's typology. Instead they rely on later works of Jung in which he states, "Do not think I am putting people into this box or that, say, 'he is an intuitive,' or 'he is a thinking type'... It is no use at all putting people into drawers with different labels" (Jung 1935, par. 34). Based on this later work, Singer and Loomis present a more dynamic typology wherein one function may be exhibited quite extensively, but all of the other functions remain operative at the same time. This active, dynamic character allows for greater nuance and variability in interpretation. That is, different people can relate to the experience of place in different ways, and each individual can experience place in different ways at different times. To be clear, the use of Singer and Loomis' interpretation of Jung is not intended as a means of psychoanalyzing members of a group or predicting their behavior, but as a way of framing the various ways individuals perceive and relate to experience, and in this case, experience of place.

Jung's (1921, 1935) theory of psychological types is based on the idea that there are two opposing attitudes—introversion and extraversion. The extravert focuses attention primarily on the outer world including human relations and the physical environment, while the introvert focuses largely on his inner or subjective world. Jung's typology also describes two opposing pairs of functional types—a judging pair, made up of thinking and feeling and a perceiving pair, comprised of sensation and intuition. The first of these four dimensions, associated with the perceiving pair, is sensation. As the common connotation of the word suggests sensation is connected to one's awareness or sense of what is going on in and around him. It is the kinesthetic experiences and bodily awareness of what exists in the present. The second function, intuition, is what Jung called perception via the imagination. It is the

function by which one is able to transcend the present into the past or future. Intuition allows one to conceive of the realm of possibilities through one's imagination.

The judging pair of functions consists of thinking and feeling functions. The thinking function, according to Jung, entails the logical thought processes of cause and effect reasoning. Feeling is not the emotional element the connotation of the term might suggest, but is the process by which value judgments are made. Both are considered rational by Jung, because both result in judgments being made; both are predictable methods by which people make decisions. These functions allow and enable the individual to interact, comprehend and understand the environments (social and physical) in which they live.

Singer and Loomis's use of Jung recognizes many of the more obvious or conscious shared experiences of a physical place, such as those described by the extraverted-sensation mode. Within this mode, place might be experienced through objective qualities such as auditory, visual or tactile sensations. Singer and Loomis also provide a framework for understanding that there are other means of experiencing and reacting to place below the level of consciousness. Experiences would include recognition of symbols that operate at an unconscious (introverted-intuition) level, such as the sense of 'opportunity' or 'space' or 'rugged individualism' that have come to characterize the American West. Perception of place below the level of consciousness would also include modes like introverted-feeling, by which place would call on connections to inner values. This may include values like economic self-reliance or environmental preservation.

Another mode of perception that operates below the level of consciousness is introverted-sensation, by which one might experience particular emotional states related to the physical environment. One well-known

example of introverted-sensation is a sense of anxiety about a room's configuration that is inconsistent with its intended use, such as a classroom style layout for a participatory teaching experience. Associated with physical places such as public lands, this mode might be experienced as a sense of joy while visiting a particularly pristine wilderness. Other important perceptions that Singer and Loomis's schema give structure to are concepts such as conceiving oneself as part of a place, or recognition of the human factor in decisions related to place (extraverted-feeling).

As noted above, a second important aspect of Jungian psychoanalytic theory is its active, dynamic character. This dynamism has two important implications. First, the function of place, viewed through Jungian psychoanalytic theory provides a basis from which a response can be crafted to the incommensurable language games of postmodernity noted earlier. Singer and Loomis' Jungian understanding of the relationship between conscious and unconscious and the modes of perception they describe provides a means of making the experience of place sensible. To be clear, place does not "cause" the social bond to come into being. Instead, the social bond coalesces around a robust, shared set of perceptions of place that operate at and below the level of consciousness. Such shared perceptions provide a basis to build and rebuild in an iterative way a shared language that can function as the basis of the social bond—one that moves beyond the ideological abstraction, instability, and incommensurability of much contemporary discourse, as described by Lyotard.

Public administrators wanting to use Jungian theory don't need to know individual personality types, but rather should develop strategies that respond to multiple types in a manner similar to crafting lesson plans that utilize different learning styles. The purpose of using

Singer and Loomis' interpretation of Jungian theory is not to predict behavior or to attempt to determine the personality types of study participants, but rather to provide a theoretical framework by which activities and observations can be organized and analyzed. The psychoanalytic theory reinforces and gives form to Proshansky's claim that individual and group connections to place operate at both conscious and unconscious levels, and do so in a sensible fashion that can be understood and utilized to foster functional social discourse.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

To further understand how a shared sense of place might strengthen the social bond, thereby enabling more robust and effective discourse around its management, a case study of a BLM deliberative process was conducted. In 1992 the BLM created Resource Advisory Councils (RAC) for the purpose of developing new standards and guidelines for cattle grazing. Beginning with one of its predecessor agencies, the Federal Grazing Service, the BLM has a long history of utilizing advisory groups (see Foss, 1960). The current iteration of these, the RACs, are organized and function in such a way as to make them strong candidates for revealing potential connections between agency activities and place-driven development of the social bond.

RACs are composed of 12-15 members representing the breadth of user group interests including extractive industries, environmentalists, recreationists, Native Americans, local communities and others. Membership in these groups is fairly stable, with members serving anywhere from two years to several decades³.

³ One recently retired member of the RAC studied had served on District Advisory Councils, a precursor to RACs .

The groups' work is facilitated by BLM staff, many of whom have training in meeting and group process management. In the case of the RAC observed for this study, the members come together for two day meetings. The first day is typically a field trip to one or more of the areas the RAC is examining for potential management recommendations, and the second day is a business meeting wherein the RAC members discuss management projects and decide upon any recommendations to be made to the agency.

In order to understand how the BLM's administrative processes function to support the development of a shared sense of place and the generation of the social bond, I used the logico-meaningful method of interpretation as developed by Sorokin (1962) and Sjoberg and Nett (1968). This method's usefulness in investigating complex patterns of social interaction is based on how awareness and understanding are gained from a variety of sources, including related literature, personal or professional experience, and the analytic process itself. More than seeing something new or first, this method allows us to recognize what is important in the data and to give it meaning, to make solid connections between something already known and something unknown.

This study focused on a single RAC and chose the group based on factors like size of the geographic area on which the RAC concentrated, diversity of the group's membership, rigor of group's interaction, and current issues under consideration by the RAC. Three related data sets were collected and analyzed. One data set was comprised of documentation related to the agency's historical use of advisory groups as well as records and materials specifically detailing RAC activities since their inception in 1992. A second data set was generated by direct observation of RAC processes before and during a two day meeting of the group. The final data were

collected through in-depth interviews with BLM personnel working with the RACs as well as current and former RAC members.

The value of the logico-meaningful method for this study is its ability to help in the discovery of key elements that permeate the culture of the group being studied, in this case, the RAC. The method allows researchers to make sense of and recognize connections between what appear to be unintegrated fragments. To that end, the data were examined for evidence of routine RAC activities and/or structured experiences of RAC members that would create a shared sense and understanding of the specific places, management areas, under consideration for recommendations to the agency. In other words, did the activities of the RAC put members, in a collective and iterative way, into the places they were considering for management recommendations, such that they had substantive, shared experiences and corresponding understandings? To answer these questions, analysis of the data was informed by the environmental psychology and Jungian psychoanalytic literature described above. The environmental psychology literature provides a means of understanding and recognizing the varied expressions of sense of or attachment to place. These expressions included attributes such as personal and professional histories and affective expressions about specific experiences or places. Overlaid with a Jungian description of the various modes of perception, participants descriptions of personal and group experiences, as well as administrative processes, could be organized such that a sense of integration and significance emerged. The following findings were gleaned from the second and third data sets.

FINDINGS

The findings presented here indicate that there are individual connections to place that precede the work of the RAC. All of the RAC members interviewed indicated some sense of or attachment to place. Beyond this individual relationship to place, the findings described below indicate that the RAC's activities such as field trips to management areas, meeting processes and social processes, contribute to individual and more importantly for this project, a *collective* connection to place. Finally, these connections appear to contribute to the emergence of the social bond in that the relationships established around place enable RAC members to overcome the divisiveness of interest group based languages in order to work deliberatively toward management recommendations.

Expressions of Individual Sense of Place

The prevailing description of place attachment that emerges from the environmental psychology research described above includes some level of affective or emotional connection to place. One clear finding from the interviews was a demonstrated connectedness to place among all of the RAC members and the following examples provide a sense of how RAC members expressed that connectedness. Conversations with RAC participants yielded a variety of comments in which the language and emphasis reveals an expression of concern for or appreciation of places, which confirms the existence of this type of connection to place. In one case a member related a story about a contentious management decision the BLM had proposed for particular management area. In describing various reactions to a proposed management option, she noted the anger and anxiety that she and others had felt, calling it a "great cry" opposing the proposed decision and its potential impact. This participant went on

to describe her personal connection to place in that she was a native of the state and spent a great deal of her time camping on and around the BLM lands and more specifically, how appalled she felt at the loss of the area's unique natural resources with which she was so intimately familiar.

Other RAC members also expressed similar personal attachments to place in two general ways: through recreational activities and through professional activities. A number of RAC members indicated that they were sportsmen and had spent significant amounts of time on the land pursuing those activities. Two of the RAC members who are longtime residents of the region noted that they had done a great deal of fishing in the area. One of these RAC members also related that he had also hunted on the public lands in the area for many years. While visiting the home of another area native, the RAC member noted that he too had hunted extensively on the public lands in region and proudly showed off a buck that he had killed.

Several other RAC members indicated avid trail use as a source of their attachment to place. One person stated that he had hiked "every significant land holding of the BLM" in the area. Another described how both he and his family had a long history of equestrian and more recently, ultra-running activities on the local public lands.

There is evidence to suggest that these connections to place extend to the level of identity construction. Continuity, as an element of place identity described by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), can be understood as continuity over time between past and present self-concepts. The concept of continuity is further divided into two types of individual-environment relationships: place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity. Place-referent continuity suggests that the identification of a specific place and the objects therein, as well as

experiences and connectedness with that place, create coherence and continuity in self-conception (Korpela, 1989). By contrast, place-congruent continuity maintains a stable self-conception through general characteristics of places that can be found in more than one specific place.

A number of RAC members' comments indicate the kind of longevity and strong, intentional association with specific places that is associated with place-referent continuity. One long time area resident conveyed that he originally moved to the state's timber producing area as a young boy, moved away for a time as a young adult and then chose to move back in the early 1970s, making his living on the lands as a timberman since returning. Moreover, this individual said that his stepfather worked in the timber industry in and around this area. Despite being warned by his stepfather not to go into the timber industry because it "had no future" and despite having a sufficient educational opportunity to go into some other profession, this individual *chose* to enter the timber industry in *this* particular place. This type of comment suggests how previous experience in that place is important to identity and self-concept.

Although there was less evidence of place-congruent continuity, RAC members' comments that suggest identification with environmental characteristics helped them maintain continuity in self-concept. For example, one member revealed that he had lived his entire life in and around areas similar to those where he lived at the time of the study. Starting as a child, when his father had been a timber worker, this member's description of his life story indicated that he saw both his personal and professional identity in relation to the places he lived and work he did on the land. While giving a walking tour of his property and his personal timber management work, he reflected, "after all these years, I still have a love for the land."

Individual and collective connectedness to place stems both from what the individual can do to affect the environment and from the physical and social environment's affect his ability to function. One RAC member noted that his father had worked in the timber industry until the local mill closed, putting his father out of work. This individual stated that rather than placing responsibility on environmentalists for the mill closure, his father had blamed the industry for over-harvesting. As an adult, this individual was influenced by this experience to make his career with a regional environmental organization that works to establish and protect wilderness areas. When interviewed, this individual remarked that, "I have to do it (be involved place and efforts to affect its future), even if I'd rather be someplace else." Despite the economic and even psychological hardship associated with a family member's loss of employment, this member remained strongly connected and committed to place.

Upon examining the RAC members' comments and experiences, there is strong evidence that most if not all express some place connection, be it through a sense of identity or valued activity. While it is not surprising that individuals who live near public lands and are involved in management and use issues have a connection to that place, the more important question is to what degree are these connections shared? Furthermore, to what extent can or does the Bureau build a shared connection to place? Can such a shared connection to place contribute to the sort of social bond that is required for successful participatory initiatives to occur?

Social or Shared Sense of Place

As noted earlier, the theoretical framework for this study utilizes the model of Jungian dynamics developed by Singer and Loomis. While the data were collected and analyzed in the context of that framework, the findings as

they are described here are organized around agency activities, rather than the modes of perception described by Singer and Loomis.

The agency activity that emerges most clearly from the study's data is the field trip which takes place at each RAC meeting. These field trips clearly illustrate the BLM's contribution to development of the social bond through a shared connection to place. One RAC member who had been a member of various advisory groups for 40 years shared a story of one field trip in particular. In this case, the Bureau transported the entire advisory group by helicopter to the management area in question, taking along tents and food for a multi-day trip, in order that all members of the advisory group could gain an understanding of the issues faced by the Bureau in its management of that particular area. While this example was more elaborate than most field trips, it does demonstrate the agency's long established commitment of time and resources to building a mutual understanding of specific places through a shared experience.

Current RAC field trips are typically day trips, though overnight trips do occasionally take place as well and stand out in the comments of both the RAC participants and Bureau staff. Field trips tend to be organized around the BLM's Field Office that is hosting the business meeting the following day. In most cases, field trip sites can be reached within a reasonable drive from the Field Office. In cases where it is important to conduct a field trip to a site too remote from a Field Office for a day trip, the Bureau will typically make arrangements to host the business meeting in the nearest town with adequate facilities for the meeting.

The field trip experiences effectively put RAC members, who already have a strong connection to place, into that place together. A BLM staff member noted that the field trips were one of the instances where RAC

members could interact most directly. Each vehicle transported a diversity of the members, with commodity users, environmentalists, and local government officials sitting next to one another engaged in conversation about a wide range of topics both personal and professional, but especially about the specific places they had experienced as a part of the field trips and management discussions. RAC members noted similar experiences during field trips, in one case saying that “it’s real and it breaks down barriers, both who we are as different and who we are as similar.” Another member reflected back on a camping trip to a BLM managed area, also saying that the experience “brought us all together” both literally and figuratively. These experiences certainly contributed to developing social relationships, but because the experiences occur at and are focused on particular places, a shared sense of place develops.

When discussing the field trips, all RAC members and BLM staff noted the value and diversity of the experiences. Field trips appeared to result in development of a shared experience or sense of place. One RAC member noted that the field trips were their means of getting out and seeing the areas and becoming aware of what was going on the ground. Another stated that the field trips offered a collective opportunity to “see, smell, and taste” the areas they discussed. The BLM Field Managers also noted the importance of the field trip experience as well. Another acknowledged the importance of the field trips saying RAC members “have to see how the thing looks” in order to understand the issues and contribute to a recommendation. Stated another way, this same Field Manager suggested that the field trips were a means of the group gaining what he described as “ground truth,” or the detailed level of understanding necessary to engage in a discourse about which many management alternatives were appropriate. Another Field Manager

described gaining a local flavor or “sense of place,” which was needed for the same reason.

Beyond the shared sense of place that developed from the field trip experience, informants describe the development of a shared language that moves away from interest based or ideological abstraction. One RAC member noted that the field trips had the effect of getting them away from abstract arguments and enabled them to be more practical and efficient. Another RAC member, who was involved in the group’s initial work developing the Standards and Guidelines document for grazing management, commented on how the field trips moved them away from emotional positions of whether or not there should be cattle on BLM lands. This individual noted how the conversation was different from what had taken place in early grazing debates. Rather than the old rhetoric of “no moo in ’92” or “cattle free in ’93”, the discourse move to a place-focused, contextualized discussion about the best management practices in terms of prescribed burns, herbicide use, fencing, stubble height and so forth. Still another RAC member reflected on his experiences exploring a site from the ground and seeing it from the air, and stated that while he thought he had an understanding of the area from his prior experience, the field trip allowed him, and the entire group, to see new perspectives and better understand and evaluate the management implications. Here again, the field trip and experience of place connected with the extraverted thinking mode allowed individual RAC members as well as the entire RAC to draw on that mode.

One further effect of the field trip can best be understood in terms of the Jungian notion of extraverted-intuition. Extraverted-intuition is the mode that allows us to “see the possibilities in a situation” (Loomis, 1991 p. 83). It is the mode that allows awareness of a room’s ambiance as opposed to the details of the décor or the

tenor of a conversation over the specific words and phrases. One example of how the field trips lead to a shared sense of possibility was expressed in the comments of a woman who was, at the time, one of the newest members of the RAC. After her first field trip, she commented that she and the rest of the members in her vehicle spent a lot of time talking about the landscape. She reflected that rather than talking about current management issues, they talked about the history of the area and various historic issues. She felt that this set the context for her later participation in management-related discourse focused on specific places. The BLM staff members recognize this experience within the group as well. In another instances, when the RAC was discussing the acquisition of a new management area, the group toured the site and developed a shared sense of the concerns that would be involved in its management. A BLM staffer noted that this shared experience allowed them to “articulate what *they* saw as the bottom line—the problems we [the BLM] would face if we were to manage the area.”

An additional, albeit less dramatic positive impact was achieved during the RAC business meetings, which appear to support and reinforce a place-oriented social bond. This occurred primarily through a close connection between field trips and business meetings’ agendas and discussions. RAC business meeting processes helped strengthen the members’ connection to place in at least two different ways that contribute to the development of the social bond. The first was the development of agendas that focused heavily on field trip sites, sites for which the RAC members had shared direct experiences. The second was the inclusion of agenda items that, while not dealing with field trips sites, were focused on specific places or types of places with which the RAC or individual members had intimate, firsthand experience. To support

these discussion items, the BLM provided extensive sets of maps that were positioned to be viewed by the entire group. During the meeting observed for this study, the discussions about these items—that weren't part of the prior day's field trip—remained very concrete and specific. Members referred to both previous, shared experiences of those places as well as to the maps or other specific information available to the group as a whole. A review of the meeting minutes from the prior nine RAC meetings⁴ and interviews with the BLM staff strongly suggest that this was not a unique occurrence for this RAC.

It is also worth noting that although their charter establishes a process of majority voting for formalizing and advancing recommendations to the BLM, the RAC informally operated under an agreed-upon consensus model wherein votes were not taken until consensus emerged across the membership the group. This decision to operate on a consensus basis for making management recommendations is consistent with the possibility that the group intuitively understood that despite their structural or role diversity, they did have group processes in place for the social bond to develop sufficiently for them to have a functional discourse about, and to come to agreement on management options.

There are many indicators that RAC members do have a strong connection to place, that RAC activities support and enhance both an individual and a shared connection to place and most importantly that these connections contribute to the emergence of the social

⁴ BLM policy requires that minutes be retained by the Field Offices for no less than three years. As a result, meetings dating back more than three years were not available for review. However, conversations with RAC members and BLM staff suggest that earlier meetings were essentially the same in the parallels between agenda items and field trips.

bond. Furthermore, the specific processes used by the RAC support a shared sense of place which fosters the social bond.

DISCUSSION, TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

A review of the findings presented here reveals several issues worth highlighting. First, it is clear that most individual RAC members bring to the group a strong connection to place. In and of itself, this finding is not important to the questions posed by this research, but it suggests that such connections are available for the agency to build on in an effort to develop the requisite social bond necessary for effective civic discourse to occur. More significantly, it is apparent that the agency uses processes with the RAC that are likely to build shared connections to place in ways that foster the social bond. The field trips in particular appear to support the development of place-oriented social relationships in a way that enable the group to work together effectively. The connection between the field trips and business meeting agendas ensures that not only is the social bond developed around place but more importantly, that the agency is creating experiences that develop a collective connection to place and provide a venue and process for discourse to be productive—directed towards concrete management recommendations. Moreover, the agency is doing so in a way that allows individuals to utilize the wide range of perceptual strengths present in the group. From the perspective of Singer and Loomis' understanding of Jungian psychoanalytical theory, the BLM's organization of RAC activities and experiences are structured in such a way that a wide range of perceptual modes will be potentially engaged. There is evidence that a variety of modes are expressed in this setting, and this offers the agency a new means of

developing strategies that will support the expression of an effective civic discourse.

The findings presented here imply more than just a means of assessing the activities of single public agency. It suggests that a public administrator, knowing something of this framework or simply attuned to the importance of place in individual and social dynamics, could craft strategies that draw on or develop connections to place and in so doing, support the construction of the sort of robust social bond that enables effective and action-oriented discourse to emerge and flourish.

Public administrators working to craft effective participatory practices under a place-based mode of action need only understand that individuals can be, and are likely already connected to place. To start, a public administrator might explore the histories, issues, and concerns of group members as a way to gain some sense of those members' existing connection to place. Connections may emerge in varying forms including individual or group, personal or professional, and historical connections, as well as voiced or implied issues and concerns. Administrators might look for a wide variety of relationships with place. Connections may be demonstrated in terms of distinctions drawn between members' and other cities, regions, or other sorts of lived environments. Further, personal and professional histories may be a sign of stable or contiguous experience of a place or type of place. Finally, expressions of the members' sense of safety, comfort, or pleasure are associated with place. Likewise, connections to place may be expressed in terms of a desire to retain a relationship to particular places, and an affinity for that place or a resistance to leaving or changing it. Critical to all of these possibilities is the development of some means of ensuring that the sense of place or connection to place becomes shared within the group. While existing or created individual

connections present a basis from which to work, it is the social bond that emerges from a shared sense of place that must be generated in order for any sort of concrete, functional discourse and ultimate action to develop.

Following an examination of the existing and potential place connections, an administrator would then have the opportunity to develop approaches that build on individual connections to place and that can ideally engender a collective connection to place. Here, too, agency staff need not have a grasp of sophisticated theoretical models in order to effectively create and utilize connections to place. It is possible that many expressions of connection to place observed by environmental psychologists would not only be expressed and shared by individuals and within groups engaged in such an initiative, but could also be the basis of framing agency approaches and activities associated with participatory initiatives. Approaches utilizing one or more of these elements might include sharing prior experiences and histories with one another in order to identify and share commonalities. They may also include the development of new opportunities to experience places as a group, and in doing so, to build new connections and create a shared social bond. Such experiences could include group field trips, walking tours, show-and-tell sessions, or other experiences that put all group members into the same context at the same point in time, thus building a shared sense of place. Over time, experiences of place such as eating, meeting and traveling to and in place could also evolve into pseudo-rituals, which would reinforce the symbolic as well as pragmatic shared sense of place. These sort of experiences are valuable not only because they allow participants in participatory governance activities to create shared experience, but also because those experiences will operate both consciously and below the level of consciousness in such a way as to strengthen the

shared or collective connection to place. Moreover, administrators need not have an exhaustive list of specific steps to employ in every setting, but rather the flexibility to experimentally develop approaches that are unique to particular contexts.

It is apparent from these data that connections to place do exist in a form that supports participatory practices. Further, there appear to be ample opportunities for the agency's staff to recognize and foster a collective attachment to place. This research indicates that public agencies are able to take steps to capitalize on this connection to place in a way that deepens and strengthens participants' relationship to place and to one another. An additional benefit is that this approach does not require radical changes in agency processes or administrators' theoretical perspectives, but rather entails sensitivity to the possibilities of place and a willingness to experimentally develop connections to place. The results of this study indicate that place, as it contributes to the formation of the social bond, has the possibility to contribute to effective participatory governance in a way that merits further exploration.

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