

Relocation Trajectories and the Making and Remaking of Place

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In the United States each person relocates, on average, more than 10 times during their life. Some individuals never or rarely relocate while others relocate many more than 10 times. Each move entails not only a physical displacement but also the abandonment of a place, which one has come to know with a greater or lesser degree of familiarity, and the recreation of a new sense of place in a destination environment. Each relocation entails change in patterns of action (use of the spatial environment), cognitive reorientation to a new physical space, and complex emotional adjustments involving perpetual refinement of place affinities. With each relocation, aspects of the self, as manifest in place, are abandoned and others are taken up. Over the life course, individuals may develop a level of relocation competence in making and remaking place. As one moves through middle age and into old age—assuming a level of physical, economic and social independence—processes of making and remaking place become increasingly more consciously related to the maintenance and development of identity. Focusing on the level of the individual, this chapter presents a dynamic model of knowledge and action during the process of relocation. Dimensions of *abandonment*, *transference*, and *creation* are viewed in social context and in relation to evolving knowledge over the life course. It is suggested that a trajectory of progressively increasing individual *proactivity* in the creation and recreation of place that extends through the Third Age gives way, during the final phases of life, to a pattern of *reactivity* as the making and remaking of place gradually slips from individual control. The chapter concludes with consideration of implications of the model for interventions that might maximize the retention of autonomy in making and remaking of place.