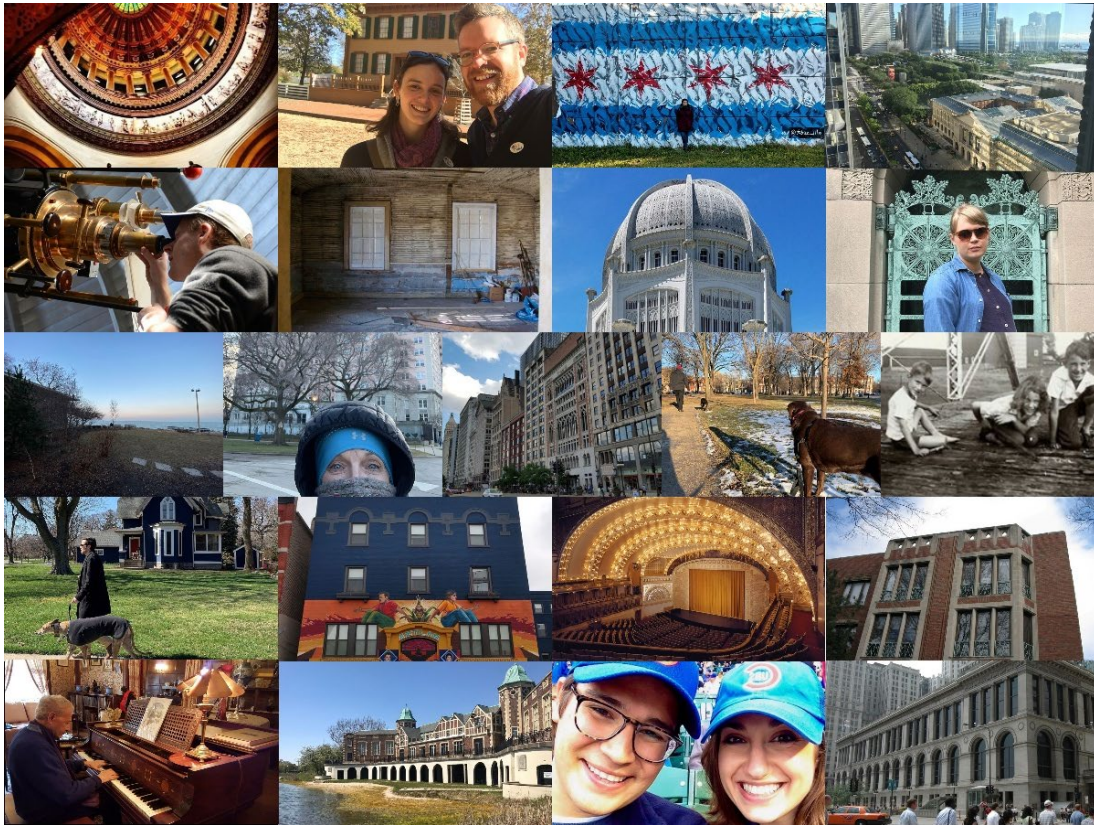


## PRESERVATION AS A MATTER OF HEALTH



At the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in late March of 2020, Landmarks Illinois launched the #mysacredground social media campaign where followers were asked to post photos of special places that brought them comfort. This collage captured the variety of submitted places that provided a healthful mental and physical respite during this challenging time. Older places can have a restorative, healing effect. The campaign was named in honor of Timuel D. Black, Jr., educator, Civil Rights activist, public historian and author of the book, “Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black,” that Landmarks Illinois had just honored on March 5, 2020.

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2022**

**BY BONNIE MCDONALD, PRESIDENT & CEO, LANDMARKS ILLINOIS**

Health and well-being have been at the forefront of our lives with COVID-19’s appearance and repeated surges. For many of us, there were interruptions and alterations to our daily patterns, including where, when and how we gathered. The importance of places became clear when we could no longer access them. Places are where we make a living, receive vital services, learn, practice our faith, recreate and, perhaps most importantly, where we connect with others. Substantially altering access to these vital things has taken its toll, with up to 80% of people in the United States experiencing depression, anxiety, grief and/or isolation.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nealon, Michele. “The Pandemic Accelerant: How COVID-19 Advanced Our Mental Health Priorities.” The United Nations UN Chronicle, October 9, 2021. Accessed on September 2, 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/pandemic-accelerant-how-covid-19-advanced-our-mental-health-priorities>

The Relevancy Project began in 2019 before COVID-19's arrival. Over half of the project's 130 interviews took place after the spring 2020 lockdowns. After March 2020, I noticed that people were more eager to talk about the physiological relationship between place and sense of community. Preservationists are comfortable with economic and aesthetic talking points and we are beginning to use sustainability language with some regularity, but preservation's connection to health is largely unexplored. Interviewees acknowledged that we need data, examples and tested messaging to start communicating the idea that our work preserves and improves health.

**“We need language that isn't so squishy. People need tangible evidence. Can we tie [preservation] to other facts and data, like social determinants of health and resilience?”**

Di Gao

Senior Director of Research & Development

National Trust for Historic Preservation

March 27, 2020

New York City, New York (via Zoom)

Again, the Relevancy Project's purpose is to be additive, not duplicative. I recommend referencing [Tom Mayes'](#) and [Raina Regan's](#) thoughtful work connecting preservation and health as a good start for this topic. Mayes, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) vice president and senior counsel, [published several works](#) exploring the relationship between old places and mental and physical health.<sup>2</sup> In her [Uplifting Preservation](#) blog, Regan, program analyst and National Park Service liaison for grants programs at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, writes extensively about our field's mental health challenges.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT IS HEALTH?

The concept of health has evolved with our greater understanding of human physiology and psychology. The [World Health Organization](#) defines “health” as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>4</sup>

We are part of an ecosystem where we relate to other living things, and to our physical surroundings. The planet's living organisms need a healthy ecosystem to survive. We can measure our ecosystem's health at an individual, community and ecological level. [Blog Post #7](#) explored how preservation can achieve environmental health by fighting climate change. How

---

<sup>2</sup> Mayes, Thompson. “Why Do Old Places Matter?” National Trust for Historic Preservation, January 9, 2017.

Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/why-do-old-places-matter#.YxZ0s3bMJPY>

Mayes, Thompson. “Why Old Places Matter.” Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

Mayes, Tom. “PastForward Reading List: Introduction to Health and Historic Preservation.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 8, 2017. Accessed September 2, 2022. <https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/tom-mayes/2017/08/08/pastforward-reading-list-introduction-to-health-and-historic-preservation>

<sup>3</sup> Uplifting Preservation by Raina Regan: <https://rainaregan.com/uplifting-preservation/> and <https://tinyletter.com/uplifting-preservation/archive>

<sup>4</sup> “Constitution,” World Health Organization, undated. Accessed September 3, 2022.

<https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

can preservation promote community health? By integrating preservation into public health practices.

Public health works to protect and improve the health and well-being of individuals and their communities, from the neighborhood to the global level.<sup>5</sup> California's public health consortium included opportunities to engage with culture as one of its [20 community health indicators](#).<sup>6</sup> [Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index](#), the nation's metric for success, also includes culture. The index includes questions about psychological wellbeing, health, time use, community vitality and cultural diversity and resilience, all of which have a relationship to preservation.<sup>7</sup> Encouraging local public health professionals to adopt culture as a health indicator is a first step, which we can follow by engaging with public health agencies to identify where else preservation integrates with their plans.

The World Health Organization includes "social well-being" in its definition of health.<sup>8</sup> Beyond public health, we can consider how historic places strengthen social connections. In "[Why Old Places Matter](#)," Tom Mayes explores how old places provide a sense of continuity, belonging, memory and identity.<sup>9</sup> These connections are at both the individual and group level. An entire group's health can suffer after losing a special place. Demolition erodes, and even destroys, communities by removing the spaces where people interact with each other. The emphasis in the United States on protection of property rights means that people often have little choice about what stays or goes in their communities. [Dr. Mindy Thomson Fullilove](#) explored the collective loss resulting from Urban Renewal, a program that displaced 1 million people and destroyed 2,500 neighborhoods nationwide between 1949 and 1973.<sup>10</sup> "[Root shock](#) is the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem."<sup>11</sup> Displaced residents suffered physical and mental distress, including "'post-traumatic stress disorder,' 'depression,' 'anxiety,' and 'adjustment disorders.'"<sup>12</sup>

[Solastalgia](#) is another term describing place-based trauma. A recently coined term, solastalgia "refers to the pain or distress caused by the loss of a comforting place; the sense of desolation

---

<sup>5</sup> "What is Public Health?" Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Foundation, undated. Accessed September 3, 2022. <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/what-public-health>

<sup>6</sup> "California Health in All Policies Task Force: 2010 Healthy Communities Framework (HCF)." California Health in All Policies Task Force, undated. Accessed September 3, 2022. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OHE/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Healthy%20Communities%20Framework.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index." Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford, undated. Accessed September 3, 2022. <https://ophi.org.uk/policy/gross-national-happiness-index/>

<sup>8</sup> "Constitution."

<sup>9</sup> Mayes, Thompson.

<sup>10</sup> Fullilove, MD, Mindy Thompson. "Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It." New Village Press, 2004. 9, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Fullilove, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Fullilove, 3.

people feel, consciously or unconsciously, when their home or land is lost.”<sup>13</sup> Preservationists know this feeling when watching the demolition of places that we have worked tirelessly to save. Grief and disruption to a person’s sense of orientation accompany the loss of one’s special place.

## PLACE AS MEDICINE

How can place help heal these deep wounds? Urban researcher Michael Mehaffy and architectural theorist Nikos Salingaros authored a 2019 blog for the National Trust for Historic Preservation studying the link between historic places and resilient human environments, or environments that heal quickly from damage.<sup>14</sup> In the blog, they explored how natural forms emulated in architecture, such as acanthus leaves on a column capital, mimic nature’s healing properties. Exposure to nature has medicinal qualities, including reducing stress and pain levels, and boosting the immune system.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps because of its healing properties, humans have a predilection for natural forms that scientists call “biophilia.”<sup>16</sup> Research shows that people have a similar, positive physiological and psychological response when exposed to architecture that incorporates natural forms.<sup>17</sup> In this way, historic places within natural environments or featuring natural elements could be seen as a form of healing medicine.

**“During COVID, people’s mental health has suffered and the National Trust [UK] has served the communities well. People have enjoyed one [of our sites.] We were in Day 1 of lockdown in U.K. and decided that the National Trust sites can remain open. That decision was especially about people’s mental health.”**

Siân Phillips

Hydro Technical Specialist

National Trust [UK}

November 6, 2020

Shrewsbury, England (via Zoom)

Older places’ healing properties go beyond their design. They can also be forums for discussion, learning and healing around the generational impacts of genocide, displacement and enslavement. The [#LandBack Movement](#) is a First Nations’ and Indigenous people-led

---

<sup>13</sup> “Solastalgia.” Climate Psychology Alliance, 2016-2021. Accessed September 4, 2022.

<https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/handbook/484-what-is-solastalgia>

<sup>14</sup> Mehaffy, Michael W. and Nikos A. Salingaros. “Building Tomorrow’s Heritage: Lessons from Psychology and Health Sciences.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, April 25, 2019. Accessed September 2, 2022.

<https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/special-contributor/2019/04/25/lessons-from-psychology-and-health-sciences>

<sup>15</sup> Franklin, Deborah. “How Hospital Gardens Help Patients Heal.” Scientific American, March 1, 2012. Accessed on September 4, 2022. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/nature-that-nurtures/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CSpending%20time%20interacting%20with%20nature,treatments%20to%20help%20you%20heal.%E2%80%9D>

<sup>16</sup> Mehaffy and Salingaros.

<sup>17</sup> Weir, Kirsten. “Nurtured by Nature.” Monitor on Psychology, American Psychological Association, Vol. 51, No. 3, April 1, 2020. Accessed on September 4, 2022. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>



[movement to reclaim ancestral lands](#) enabling their return as nature's sovereign caretakers.<sup>18</sup> [Chef Sean Sherman](#), an Ogalala Lakota Sioux tribal member, is regenerating ancestral knowledge about Indigenous food culture as medicine. In a [2021 interview](#) with Illinois State University, Chef Sherman remarked on the prevalence of medicine in our landscapes: "I think that the more closely connected you are to the environment... then you start to see nothing but food and medicine basically everywhere you look... There's a deep benefit to understanding how Indigenous peoples connect to their environment. It is more than physical, it is spiritual."<sup>19</sup> Chef Sherman calls out the land as a sacred source of ancestral knowledge, nourishment and healing. Can historic places also provide similar medicine? Historic places can be spaces where we acknowledge traumatic, unjust and challenging histories and share knowledge of our nation's full history. They can also be healing places through a reconciliation and reparations process, such as that begun at Montpelier (see [Blog Post #5](#)). Preliminary indicators that historic places connect to, and improve, a person's and a community's health and healing warrants greater research to talk about this preservation benefit.

**"Heritage communities are healthy communities. Shell donated 72 hectares to create an organic preserve [where] the traditional medicines grow themselves. The Guam Preservation Trust has a grant writing workshop to help people put them together. People who want to put their medicinal recipes in a booklet, the staff writes the grant for them."**

Joe Quinata  
Chief Program Officer  
Guam Preservation Trust  
August 28, 2020  
Hagatna, Guam (via Zoom)

## THE RIGHT TO PLACE

The World Health Organization names health as a fundamental human right.<sup>20</sup> If connecting with place is pivotal to our health, should people have the right to access and protect places that they do not own?

Arguably, the right to one's history is a protected human right. Human rights are those we possess simply because we exist, not because we are a citizen of a political state.<sup>21</sup> The right to health, education and culture are designated human rights protected under the [United Nation's](#)

---

<sup>18</sup> Bearfoot, Cheyenne. "Land Back: The Indigenous Fight to Reclaim Stolen Land." KQED, April 21, 2022. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://www.kqed.org/education/535779/land-back-the-indigenous-fight-to-reclaim-stolen-lands>

and LANDBACK website: <https://landback.org/>

<sup>19</sup> Illinois State faculty and staff. "Chef Sean Sherman shares insights on rebirth of Indigenous foods." Illinois State University, April 6, 2021. <https://news.illinoisstate.edu/2021/04/chef-sean-sherman-shares-insights-on-rebirth-of-indigenous-foods/>. Also see Chef Sherman's TED Talk, "Why aren't there more Native American restaurants?" at [https://www.ted.com/talks/sean\\_sherman\\_why\\_aren\\_t\\_there\\_more\\_native\\_american\\_restaurants?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/sean_sherman_why_aren_t_there_more_native_american_restaurants?language=en).

<sup>20</sup> "Constitution."

<sup>21</sup> "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States." Howard University, 2018. Accessed September 3, 2022. <https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory#:~:text=Civil%20Rights%20versus%20Human%20Rights,of%20a%20certain%20political%20state>.

[International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (ICESCR).<sup>22</sup> Article 12 affords us the human right to enjoy “the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”<sup>23</sup> Article 13 provides the right to access and participate in education to “the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity...education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups...for the maintenance of peace.” Article 15 recognizes the right to participate in cultural life and to take necessary steps to conserve, develop and diffuse culture. Unfortunately, U.S. preservationists are disadvantaged from using human rights law to protect historic places. President Jimmy Carter signed the ICESCR treaty in 1977, but Congress has not ratified the agreement.<sup>24</sup> The U.S. is still obligated as a signatory to refrain from defeating the treaty’s purpose, but U.S. courts are unlikely to enforce it until ratification.<sup>25</sup>

Preservation attorneys have been exploring the idea of enshrining preservation as a civil right, which is a right guaranteed to citizens and, in certain cases, non-citizens, by the Constitution and federal law. The NTHP included Dallas’ Tenth Street Historic District on its 2019 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list.<sup>26</sup> Tenth Street is one of the few surviving Freedman’s Towns, which were self-governing communities established by African Americans during the Jim Crow era. Demolition increased in the district after Dallas’ 2010 ordinance expedited removal of “dilapidated” housing that was under 3,000 square feet – the majority of the district’s homes. [The Tenth Street Residential Association](#) (TSRA) filed suit against the City of Dallas claiming the ordinance violated the residents’ civil rights under the federal Fair Housing Act.<sup>27</sup> In August 2020, the [U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals](#) upheld the lower court’s ruling that the TSRA did not have standing to bring the case. Let us continue exploring this interesting legal argument.

What if historic properties had their own legal standing in court and could sue to save themselves? This may sound strange. How can an object bring a legal case? Attorneys, advocates and scholars have been working on a newer area of law called [environmental personhood](#), where natural features acquire legal rights to protect themselves from harm,

---

<sup>22</sup> “Protect Human Rights.” United Nations, undated. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/protect-human-rights>

<sup>23</sup> “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, undated. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>

<sup>24</sup> Piccard, Ann. “The United States’ Failure to Ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Must the Poor Be Always with Us?” *The Scholar: St. Mary’s Law Review on Minority Issues*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Winter 2010. 231. Accessed September 5, 2022. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1794303](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1794303)

<sup>25</sup> Shiman, David. “Economic and Social Justice: A Human Rights Perspective.” University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center, undated. Accessed September 4, 2022. <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/hreduseries/tb1b/Section1/tb1-3.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Rocchi, Julia. “Dallas’ Tenth Street Historic District Celebrates Temporary Halt on Demolitions.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 16, 2019. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/dallas-tenth-street-historic-district-celebrates-temporary-halt-on-demolitions#.YxZag3bMJPY>

<sup>27</sup> “Tenth Street Residential Ass’n v. City of Dallas, No. 19-10826 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2020). Justia, undated. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca5/19-10826/19-10826-2020-08-03.html>

typically environmental damage or destruction.<sup>28</sup> The nonprofit [Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund](#) (CELDF) has helped dozens of domestic and international governments on Rights of Nature ordinances and ballot measures.<sup>29</sup> They are currently working with Indigenous water keepers in Minnesota to support [“Manoomin” \(wild rice\) v. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#) to stop a pipeline that is located off the White Earth Reservation that [threatens the sacred grass’ “right to live and thrive.”](#)<sup>30</sup> The case was tried in tribal court, which had already passed a Rights of Nature law. The White Earth Band of Ojibwe Court of Appeals [dismissed the case](#) in March 2022 citing a lack of legal precedent.<sup>31</sup> Attorneys working on Manoomin’s behalf filed in April to have the court reverse its decision.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, more cases like this are needed to establish precedent. Rights of Nature lawsuits help us to consider the benefits and implications of granting historic places personhood. It is certainly an interesting opportunity to expand preservation’s legal underpinnings.

**“Remind people of the relevance of preservation...[it is] not just non-extant or extant buildings. We are trying to capture the climate of our society, behaviors, milestones and heritage. There are adaptive evolutions during these moments. Preservation can serve a purpose to remember a way of being, a way of thinking.”**

Cheyenne St. John

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Lower Sioux Indian Community

November 6, 2020

Morton, Minnesota (via Zoom)

## **BURNOUT ENDAGERS PRESERVATIONISTS**

If you are tired, having slogged this far through the Relevancy Project’s blogs, you are probably in good company. You may also be tired because you, like many preservation professionals, are burned out. Burnout amongst preservationists is a real concern. Up to 50% of the nonprofit

---

<sup>28</sup> Khandelwal, Sanket. “Environmental Personhood: Recent Developments and the Road Ahead.” *Jurist*, April 24, 2020. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2020/04/sanket-khandelwal-environment-person/>

<sup>29</sup> “Rights of Nature: Timeline.” Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, undated. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://celdf.org/rights-of-nature/timeline/>

<sup>30</sup> “The Rights of Rice and Future of Nature.” 99% Invisible, Episode 496, June 21, 2022. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-rights-of-rice-and-future-of-nature/>

<sup>31</sup> Fletcher, Matthew L.M. “White Earth Ojibwe Appellate Court Dismissed Manoomin Suite against Minnesota DNR.” *Turtle Talk*, March 21, 2022. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://turtletalk.blog/2022/03/21/white-earth-ojibwe-appellate-court-dismissed-manoomin-suite-against-minnesota-dnr/>

<sup>32</sup> Whalen, Eamon. “The Latest Attempt to Stop Line 3 Hits a Snag in Tribal Court.” *Mother Jones*, April 6, 2022. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://www.motherjones.com/mojo-wire/2022/04/the-latest-attempt-to-stop-line-3-hits-a-snag-in-tribal-court/>

workforce reports being at or near the burnout point.<sup>33</sup> Public sector burnout is even higher at 65%.<sup>34</sup>

Our work centers on serving the public. People count on us. How can we provide good and useful service when our tanks are empty? We have a responsibility to thoughtfully use and care for stories, properties, identities, knowledge and communities that are not our own. Burnout can put this needed thoughtfulness on the back burner, stymie optimism and creativity and prevent the growth of a culture of “yes,” rather than “no.”

The problem of burnout has to be addressed systematically and programmatically as leaders retire or join in the Great Resignation to move into different fields. Future leaders are leaving the field. In addition to Raina Regan’s Uplifting Preservation blog, Vu Le humorously describes the trials of leading a nonprofit, including burnout, in his [Nonprofit AF](#) blog.<sup>35</sup> Preservation commissioners and board members should read his posts to understand why burnout is so prevalent.

The Relevancy Project is an effort to inspire action to make preservation more relevant. By doing so, I believe that we can move from reactive to proactive, save places in less time, raise more money and improve wages and benefits – all factors that lead to preservationists’ feeling burned out. Relevance is one of the key aspects to retaining our talent. Fair wages and competitive (or better) benefits are a start, but we also need to provide:

- Training and accountability in making a welcoming and supportive workplace for all;
- Workload reduction and time to take vacation;
- Professional development, mentoring and sabbaticals;
- Paid-time-off for caregiving;
- Trusted management of one’s own programs and projects;
- Ample resources and tools;
- Promotional and leadership opportunities;
- Engaging everyone in an organization in deciding on the future;
- Listening, engaging and acting with the voices calling for change.

## **A CALL TO HEALTH ACTION**

In the lead-up to a 2017 PastForward Conference health session track, Tom Mayes gave a call to action: “The specific health impacts of older places have not yet been explored deeply.”<sup>36</sup> That

---

<sup>33</sup> Jayasinghe, Tiloma. “Avoiding Burnout and Preserving Movement Leadership.” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, July 8, 2021. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/avoiding-burnout-and-preserving-movement-leadership/>

<sup>34</sup> Edge Hill Consulting. “Burnout Rates Substantially Higher for Government Workforce as Compared to Private Sector According to New Eagle Hill Consulting Research.” *Cision PR Newswire*, April 28, 2022. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/burnout-rates-substantially-higher-for-government-workforce-as-compared-to-private-sector-according-to-new-eagle-hill-consulting-research-301535365.html>

<sup>35</sup> Vu Le’s “Nonprofit AF” blog: <https://nonprofitaf.com/>

<sup>36</sup> Mayes, Tom.



was five years ago. Little data, case studies or communication has become available since then to help us talk about preservation's health benefits. What is available is largely academic and needs to be broken down into language that is more accessible. This is a call to action to collaborate with social scientists, environmental health researchers and policymakers to backup what we know: that connecting with our history enhances our health.

**“How do we make a philosophical shift in the field? Reframe preservation as health. The buildings we live in impact our health.”**

Nicholas Redding  
Executive Director  
Preservation Maryland  
August 20, 2019  
Baltimore, Maryland

**YOUR INPUT IS VITAL**

Your thoughts on this and forthcoming topics are not only welcomed, they're imperative to ensuring this project is inclusive, with well-considered outcomes. So post away on Landmarks Illinois' [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) feeds and my [LinkedIn](#) page (blog comments are not enabled)! I'll collect and consider your comments to inform future blog posts and the project's outcomes published in the forthcoming Relevancy Guidebook to the U.S. Preservation Movement (working title).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Do you believe that older places help people's health and wellbeing?
  - How do older places make you feel? How would you describe this to others?
  - Are there anecdotes from people in your community about how they feel around historic places that you can share publicly?
  - Are you willing to explore unconventional ideas, such as human rights and environmental personhood, as a means to expand preservation protections?
  - Are you connected to university economics, psychology, public health, environmental or social science departments to explore data-driven studies on preservation's health benefits?
  - Are you feeling burned out? If so, are you tapping into resources that are helping you cope and recover?
  - Would you be willing to ask your colleagues if they are experiencing burnout symptoms? Will you share your resources with them?
  - Do you feel overwhelmed when you read these blog posts, or when you think about the scale of needed changes in our field? What are the best ways to make change feel possible for you?
-

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

\*NOTE: Landmarks Illinois' website does not recognize italics, which necessitates using quotation marks for titles. We are aware that this format does not follow proper citation format according to the Modern Language Association (MLA).

- “Boosting Public Health by Preserving the Past: Q&A with Bloomberg Fellow Eli Pousson.” Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, May 19, 2020. Accessed September 5, 2022. <https://americanhealth.jhu.edu/news/boosting-public-health-preserving-past-qa-bloomberg-fellow-eli-pousson>
- Fullilove, MD, Mindy Thompson. “Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It.” New Village Press, 2004.
- “Tool Kit: How to Prevent Nonprofit Employee Burnout,” The Chronicle of Philanthropy, undated. Accessed September 4, 2022. <https://www.philanthropy.com/package/how-to-prevent-nonprofit-employee-burnout>
- Mayes, Thompson. “Why Old Places Matter.” Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.
- Mayes, Tom. “PastForward Reading List: Introduction to Health and Historic Preservation.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 8, 2017. Accessed September 2, 2022. <https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/tom-mayes/2017/08/08/pastforward-reading-list-introduction-to-health-and-historic-preservation>
- Mehaffy, Michael W. and Nikos A. Salingaros. “Building Tomorrow’s Heritage: Lessons from Psychology and Health Sciences.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, April 25, 2019. Accessed September 2, 2022. <https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/special-contributor/2019/04/25/lessons-from-psychology-and-health-sciences>
- Nonprofit AF by Vu Le: <https://nonprofitaf.com/>
- Regan, Raina. “The Burnout Crisis in Historic Preservation.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, September 1, 2021. Accessed September 2, 2022. <https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/raina-regan/2021/09/01/the-burnout-crisis-in-historic-preservation>
- Uplifting Preservation by Raina Regan: <https://rainaregan.com/uplifting-preservation/> and <https://tinyletter.com/uplifting-preservation/archive>

**STAY TUNED FOR BLOG POST #9: JOB CREATION THROUGH PRESERVATION**



# The Mediating Role of Place Attachment Dimensions in the Relationship Between Local Social Identity and Well-Being

Fridanna Maricchiolo<sup>1\*</sup>, Oriana Mosca<sup>2</sup>, Daniele Paolini<sup>††</sup> and Ferdinando Fornara<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education Science, University of Roma Tre, Rome, Italy, <sup>2</sup> Department of Education, Psychology, Philosophy, University of Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy

## OPEN ACCESS

### Edited by:

Tony Peter Craig,  
The James Hutton Institute,  
United Kingdom

### Reviewed by:

Susana Batel,  
University Institute of Lisbon  
(ISCTE), Portugal  
Mirilla Bonnes,  
Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

### \*Correspondence:

Fridanna Maricchiolo  
fridanna.maricchiolo@uniroma3.it

### † Present address:

Daniele Paolini,  
Department of Human Science, Italian  
University Line, Florence, Italy

### Specialty section:

This article was submitted to  
Environmental Psychology,  
a section of the journal  
Frontiers in Psychology

**Received:** 23 December 2020

**Accepted:** 08 June 2021

**Published:** 02 August 2021

### Citation:

Maricchiolo F, Mosca O, Paolini D and  
Fornara F (2021) The Mediating Role  
of Place Attachment Dimensions in  
the Relationship Between Local  
Social Identity and Well-Being.  
*Front. Psychol.* 12:645648.  
doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.645648

Well-functioning communities provide a range of material and psychological resources that enhance well-being. The degree to which individuals see themselves as part of the local social group, or local social identity, i.e., the social identification with the community of the place where people are living, may play an important role in enhancing happiness and well-being, as well as relationships of people with their own living environment, i.e., place attachment. We hypothesized that local social identity influences well-being *via* specific components of place attachment to the residential city/town, i.e., place identity, social relations, and lack of resources (which is the opposite of place dependence). We measured local social identity, individual well-being, interdependent happiness, and place attachment in a sample of  $N = 375$  participants. We tested our hypotheses by conducting a series of mediation analyses with local social identity as an independent variable, individual well-being and interdependent happiness as dependent variables, and place attachment subfactors, i.e., place identity, social relations, and lack of resources, as mediators. Results showed that the relation between local social identity and both individual well-being and interdependent happiness was positively mediated by place identity and social relations, while the lack of resources emerged as a negative mediator only in the relation between local social identity and individual well-being (not for interdependent happiness). Practical implications and future developments are discussed.

**Keywords:** well-being, interdependent happiness, place attachment, social relations, lack of resources, place identity

## INTRODUCTION

Well-functioning social communities provide a range of material and psychological resources that enhance well-being. Recent research in social psychology has shown that a variety of physical and mental health outcomes are derived from meaningful belonging in social groups within a varied range of contexts, and the local community is one of them (Bowe et al., 2020). Belonging to social groups is a basic psychological need of people because it allows them to preserve security, well-being, and high self-esteem (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Therefore, people are strongly motivated to belong to social groups, and when their belongingness is threatened, for example, by exposure to ostracism episodes, strong negative consequences follow (see Paolini, 2019).

As postulated by the Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel and Turner, 1979), individuals may thus define themselves either in terms of their belongingness, emphasizing what makes them similar and interchangeable with others, or in terms of their individual characteristics, emphasizing what makes them unique (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). A recent approach, the Social Identity Approach to well-being (Jetten et al., 2017; Haslam et al., 2018), stemming from SIT and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987), suggested that the social dimensions of the self (i.e., the multiple effects—cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—of the sense of “we-ness” derived from group membership) are fundamental in shaping our social world and that the pivotal psychological process connecting social relationships with health and well-being is meaningful social identification, i.e., a subjective sense of belonging (Sani et al., 2012). Social cure research (Haslam et al., 2018) has provided a valuable framework for the study of local community processes. The group with which people identify is a social aggregate most people can claim some access to, and it is as valuable in terms of life satisfaction as other important social identifications (e.g., family; Wakefield et al., 2017). Social identity plays a crucial role at least on two levels of well-being: on the one hand, it is related to the individual well-being level (e.g., satisfaction with life; Diener et al., 1985), and on the other hand, it also could impact the interdependent happiness level, i.e., the happiness based on social relationships, that is, on the relational nature of human beings (Hitokoto and Uchida, 2015; Krys et al., 2019).

We want to underline that the concept of local social identity is different from community attachment, a construct proposed by Hummon (1992) that can be conceptualized as subjective interpretation and the affective reaction of a person to the place in which he/she resides. Hummon (1992) described five ways in which people may relate to their places of residence: two types of rootedness (every day and ideological), which are described in positive terms, and three types of sentiments (alienation, relativity, and placelessness), which are described in negative terms, like estrangement, dislike, and indifference (Lewicka, 2011a,b). People–place relations indeed can have either a positive valence or a negative valence, implying not only a “salutogenic” role but also harmful effects on well-being. On the other hand, well-being, as well as happiness, represents a high value and an important goal of society (Lu and Gilmour, 2004), and it is the result of the accommodations that occur over time and through dynamic interactions of personal, social, and environmental structures and processes (White, 2017; Maricchiolo et al., 2021).

Thus, the social relationships that people establish with closer individuals, social structures, physical environments, as well as with the communities in which people are living (Maricchiolo et al., 2020), represent the “social core” that contributes to maintaining an adequate level of their health and well-being (Haslam et al., 2009; Haslam and Loughnan, 2014; Jetten et al., 2014, 2017).

In order to analyze the connection between individuals, groups, communities, and their living environments, we have focused on the key construct of place attachment, which has been developed in the environmental psychology domain. It concerns those affects, emotions, and feelings that arise from our

experience of places (e.g., see Low, 1992; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Korpela, 2012; Lewicka, 2014; Manzo and Devine-Wright, 2020), where the “place” includes both a physical and a social component (Brown and Perkins, 1992; Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Moreover, place attachment also concerns the extent to which the environment satisfies personal needs (Giuliani, 2003), i.e., a functional aspect that has to do with the availability of resources (Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010). This latter aspect is included in the construct of place dependence, which has been defined as a “functional” connection reflecting the degree to which the physical setting provides conditions to support an intended use (Raymond et al., 2010).

In this study, we followed the conceptualization of place attachment consisting of place identity and place dependence (e.g., Williams and Vaske, 2003) and also social bonds (e.g., Kyle et al., 2005). About place identity, it refers to a substructure of the self that encompasses cognitions, emotions, and behavioral tendencies related to socialization of people with their physical environment (Proshansky et al., 1983).

In most literature on the topic, the analyzed place of attachment is the residential place, with a spatial focus ranging from micro- to macro-levels, i.e., home, the neighborhood, the town/city, or even broader levels. Among such levels, the residential neighborhood has been the prominent place of analysis (Lewicka, 2011b), while less attention has been devoted to the town or city level.

There are also some studies addressing the relationship between place attachment and community participation and well-being. Manzo and Perkins (2006) identified place attachment and participation in neighborhood protection as affective and behavioral place-related community dimensions, respectively. Keyes (1998) showed that social contribution (i.e., the feeling of being a vital member of society, with something of value to contribute) is a specific dimension of social well-being. Similarly, Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) found that attachment to the city is a positive predictor of social well-being and of the social contribution dimension. A positive perception of the living place is a powerful predictor of well-being also for specific populations, such as mentally ill persons (Wright and Kloos, 2007) and the elderly (Fornara et al., 2019), as well as college students, who have to face relocation problems (Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010). A mediation role of place attachment in the relationship between local civic engagement and personal neighborhood connectedness was found by Buta et al. (2014) with residents living in the area of a national park and also emerged with adolescents (Lenzi et al., 2013). More recently, Larson et al. (2018) found that a stronger place attachment promotes both higher community involvement and higher engagement in place-protective behaviors among hunters, bird-watchers, and property owners. These studies suggest that individuals more attached to the place in which they live are likely to contribute more to the local well-being, through civic activism and the protection of their environment.

The aforementioned literature yields some mixed insights on the connection between place and well-being and shows a relationship between place attachment and satisfaction with life and social well-being. Since the Interdependent Happiness Scale

was proposed only in recent years (Hitokoto and Uchida, 2015), to our knowledge, there are no existing studies addressing the relationship between place attachment and happiness based on social relationships. It is important to incorporate a relational-oriented approach to happiness and well-being that complements the individualistic approach to well-being (i.e., based on individualistic-centered measures like the Satisfaction with Life Scale) in people–environment studies. Moreover, empirical evidence on the link between local social identity and different forms of well-being is still substantially lacking. Uncovering the impact on different types of well-being of successful community identities, through place attachment components, is therefore essential to progressing the community development agenda (Bowe et al., 2020).

## THE PRESENT STUDY

Based on these premises, this study aimed to understand whether the relation between social identification of people toward their local community and their level of well-being, in terms of life satisfaction and interdependent happiness, is mediated by place identity, place dependence, and social bonds, i.e., those place attachment components, included in many studies addressing this construct (e.g., Kyle et al., 2005; Raymond et al., 2010; Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2018).

Therefore, as a first step, we verified the three-factor structure of place attachment, and then, in an explorative vein, we tested their mediational role on the relation between local social identification of people and their levels of individual and interdependent well-being. Thus, we explored whether and how the components of place attachment mediate the relationship between local social identity and well-being.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sample

#### Participants

We recruited 375 Italian participants (219 females, 156 males; mean age = 34.44; SD = 13.58, age range 18–87), living in cities (more than 5,000 inhabitants, 56%), small towns (<5,000 inhabitants, 26%), or rural areas (18%), by spreading an online survey. Participants took part in the survey on a voluntary basis.

### Procedure

An online questionnaire was implemented by using the Google Forms platform. Participants were recruited from different regions of Italy (mainly Lazio and Sicily) by university students for their Master's or Bachelor's thesis. Data were collected from March to November 2019.

The questionnaire took approximately 30 min to fill in. According to the ethical standards included in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2001), participants were informed about all relevant aspects of the study (e.g., methods and institutional affiliations of the researchers) before they started to fill in the questionnaire. The research protocol was

approved by the local ethics committee of the University of Rome “Sapienza” (October 29, 2018).

## Materials

The questionnaire included the following measures.

- *Satisfaction with Life*. Individual well-being of participants was assessed by using the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The scale is comprised of five items that range from 1 (= It does not describe me at all) to 9 (= It describes me completely), (e.g., “Your life conditions are excellent”;  $\alpha = 0.87$ , SWLS). Higher ratings indicate higher individual satisfaction with life.
- *Interdependent Happiness Scale* (IHS; Hitokoto and Uchida, 2015; Italian version, Mosca et al., 2021). The scale measures a relational aspect of well-being and consists of nine items that range from 1 (= It does not describe me at all) to 9 (= It describes me completely) (e.g., “You feel that you are positively evaluated by the others around you”;  $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Higher ratings indicate higher individual-interdependent happiness.
- *Place Attachment*. We have administered a slightly modified version of the PAHS (*Place Attachment to the Hometown Scale*) (Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010). It included a 16-item self-report scale addressing physical, social, and functional aspects of attachment to the town or city of residence. Participants had to fill in the questionnaire referring to the city/village in which they lived and to indicate their opinion using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (= It does not describe me at all) to 9 (= It describes me completely). As described below, we carried out a factorial analysis to individuate the subdimensions of attachment to the city/village where people live measured on a sample not constituted only of university students, like in the originally published scale (Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010). After having eliminated four items for statistical problems (see below), we extracted three subfactors<sup>1</sup>: (a) place identity (five items), measuring the degree of attachment with physical attributes of the attachment to city/village in which people live (e.g., The landscape of my city/village always makes me feel a strong emotion,  $\alpha = 0.81$ ); (b) social relations (three items), measuring a social aspect of the attachment to the place of residence (e.g., People I am attached to are mostly from my city/village,  $\alpha = 0.68$ ); (c) lack of resources (four items) (i.e., the reverse of place dependence), measuring a (dis)functional aspect of the attachment to the city/village in which people live (e.g., I often get bored there,  $\alpha = 0.54$ , mean inter-item correlation = 0.32<sup>2</sup>). Higher ratings indicate higher levels of

<sup>1</sup>For consistency reasons, we use in the Method and Results sections the factor labels used by the PAHS proposers (i.e., Scopelliti and Tiberio, 2010); nevertheless, we remind where appropriate along such sections that the subfactor “lack of resources” refers to “place dependence” in the theoretical approach we explicitly followed. It is to note that the factor label “lack of resources” has a negative sense; thus, high scores mean low “place dependence,” and low scores mean high “place dependence.”

<sup>2</sup>Due to the fact that Cronbach's alpha values are sensitive to the number of items of the scale, when such a number is low, it is common to find quite low Cronbach's alpha values as in this case. For this reason, we have reported the mean inter-item correlation of the items, and those results are included in the optimal range for the



place identity, quality of social relations in the place, and perception of lack of resources.

- **Local Social Identity Scale.** We administered a social identification *ad hoc* built scale (adapted from Paolini et al., 2020), composed of seven items to measure identification with the local community (e.g., Being part of the community of the people living in the city/village in which I live; is an important component for the image I have of myself; reflects well who I am; has to do with what I think about myself; bothers me; makes me feel good;  $\alpha = 0.83$ ). Participants had to report their answers on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (It doesn't describe me at all) to 9 (It describes me exactly). Higher ratings indicate stronger social identification with the local community.

### Statistical Analysis

Data analyses were performed with SPSS version 25, including the PROCESS model macro (Hayes and Preacher, 2014). PROCESS is a modeling tool that calculates the direct and indirect effects of mediation models, as well as the calculation of interactions and conditional indirect effects in moderation and moderated mediation models (see <http://www.processmacro.org/index.html> for more details). We conducted an exploratory factor analyses on the Place Attachment Scale because the original scale was validated on a student sample, while our sample was a community sample. Then, we calculated descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between variables. Then, we conducted a series of mediation analyses with local social identity as an independent variable, satisfaction with life and interdependent happiness as dependent variables and place

inter-item correlation (i.e., between 0.20 and 0.40) recommended by Briggs and Cheek (1986).

attachment subfactors, i.e., place identity, social relations, and lack of resources (i.e., reverse of place dependence) as mediators.

### Results

A principal components analysis with Promax rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed on the Place Attachment Scale. Scree plots were also used to confirm the expected number of factors and the factorial loading of each item in the expected component (i.e., subscale).

Four items saturated identically on two factors so they were removed for subsequent analysis (i.e., “I always know where to find what I look for there”; “I know how to feel relaxed there”; “The climate there makes me feel good”; “I feel proud to be part of my city/village”), and a new PCA with Promax rotation was conducted on 13 items. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin sampling adequacy measure attained fairly high values ( $= 0.86$ ), demonstrating that communalities were high and the correlation matrix of the sample was appropriate for the analysis to proceed (Mundfrom et al., 2005). It yielded a three-factor solution explaining 57.1% of the variance (see **Table 1**). The factors were labeled according to the study of Scopelliti and Tiberio (2010), i.e., respectively, place identity, lack of resources, and social relations.

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations are reported in **Table 2**. Local social identity, place identity, and social relations were correlated positively with both satisfaction with life (Pearson's  $r$  ranging from 0.25 to 0.39, indicating a medium effect size) and interdependent happiness (Pearson's  $r$  ranging from 0.27 to 0.36, indicating equally a medium effect size). Lack of resources was correlated negatively with both SWL and IHS ( $r = -0.27, p < 0.01; r = -0.20, p < 0.01$ , respectively).

**TABLE 1 |** Factor analysis for the place attachment scale.

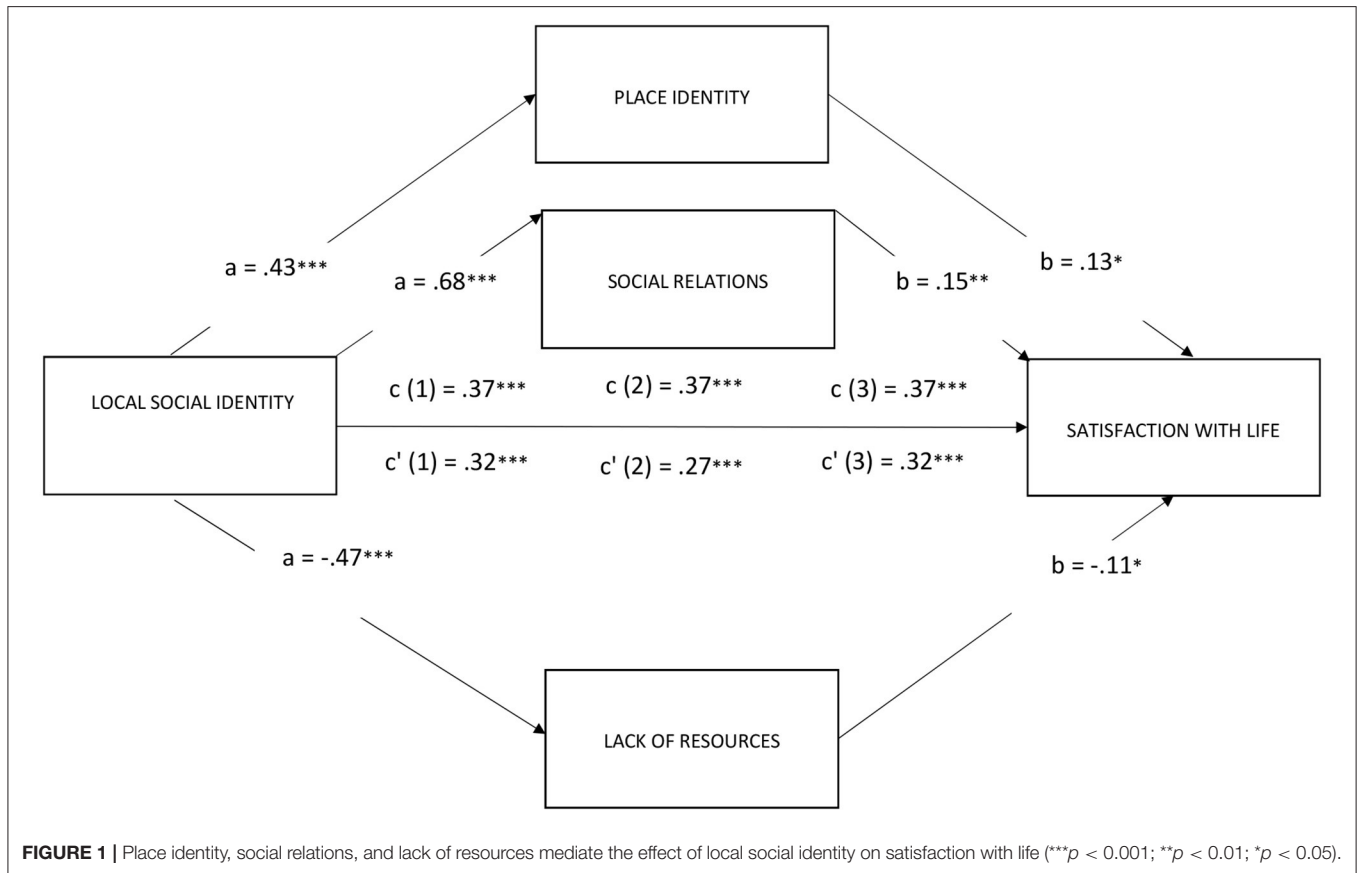
Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
	Place identity	Social relations	Lack of resources
I like to know the history and traditions of my city/village	0.874		
My city/village is surrounded by many beautiful natural places	0.807		
I like to speak about my city/village to people which they don't know	0.731		
The landscape of my city/village always makes me feel a strong emotion	0.681		
Even if I would leave my city/village, it will be always a part of me	0.479		
People I am attached to are mostly from my city/village		0.892	
When I am away, I look forward coming back there to my friends		0.737	
When I am in my city/village I never feel alone		0.596	
I often get bored in my city-village			0.766
I always wanted to leave my city-village			0.759
I hardly found there people sharing my interests			0.641
My city/village offers lots of opportunities (R)			0.459
Eigenvalues	4.07	1.46	1.23
Explained Variance	33.92%	12.21%	10.24%

R, reverse-coded.

**TABLE 2** | Means, SD, skewness, kurtosis, and zero-order correlations (Pearson's *r*) between variables (*N* = 375).

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Sk	C	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SWLS	1.40	9.00	6.31	1.45	-0.72	0.53	1					
2. IHS	2.11	8.78	5.98	1.28	-0.32	-0.26	0.57***	1				
3. Local social identity	1.00	9.00	5.69	1.52	-0.30	0.30	0.39***	0.33***	1			
4. Place identity	1.40	9.00	7.34	1.43	-0.97	0.63	0.28***	0.27***	0.46***	1		
5. Social relations	1.00	9.00	6.14	1.87	-0.51	-0.19	0.32***	0.33***	0.53***	0.58***	1	
6. Lack of resources	1.00	9.00	4.88	1.59	0.09	-0.22	-0.27***	-0.20***	-0.45***	-0.30***	-0.30***	1

*N* = 375; \*\*\**p* < 0.001; SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; IHS, Interdependent Happiness Scale; Sk, skewness; C, kurtosis.



### Mediation Analyses

In order to test our exploratory hypotheses, we tested different mediation models (PROCESS model number 4) with local social identity as the independent variable, satisfaction with life and interdependent happiness as the dependent variables, and place identity, social relations, and lack of resources (i.e., the subcomponents of Place Attachment) as mediators. Models 1, 2, and 3 tested the relationship between local social identity and satisfaction with life through place identity, social relations, and lack of resources, respectively. Models 4, 5, and 6 tested the relationship between local social identity and interdependent happiness through the same mediators of the previous analysis.

Models with satisfaction with life as dependent variable (see **Figure 1**).

Model 1: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.16$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 34.89$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 1**]. The bootstrap analysis with 5,000 resampling showed the indirect effects of the local social identity of participants on their level of satisfaction with life via place identity ( $b = 0.0547$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0073$ ;  $ULCI = 0.1025$ ) were significant. The direct effect considering the mediator was still significant ( $b = 0.3181$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.2106$ ;  $ULCI = 0.4255$ ). In other words, local social identity had a positive impact on satisfaction with life even after controlling for the indirect effects through place identity.

Model 2: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.17$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 40.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 1**]. Indirect effects of the local social identity of participants on their level of satisfaction with life via social relations ( $b = 0.1033$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0293$ ;  $ULCI = 0.1768$ ) were significant. The direct effect considering the mediator was still significant ( $b = 0.3728$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.2775$ ;  $ULCI = 0.4680$ ). In other words, local social identity had a positive impact on satisfaction with life even after controlling for the indirect effects through social relations.

Model 3: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.16$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 33.24$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 1**]. Indirect effects of the local social identity of participants on their level of satisfaction with life via lack of resources ( $b = 0.0503$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = -0.042$ ;  $ULCI = -0.0994$ ) were significant. The direct effect considering the mediator was still significant ( $b = 0.3225$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.2122$ ;  $ULCI = 0.4328$ ). In other words, local social identity had a positive impact on satisfaction with life even after controlling for the indirect effects through lack of resources.

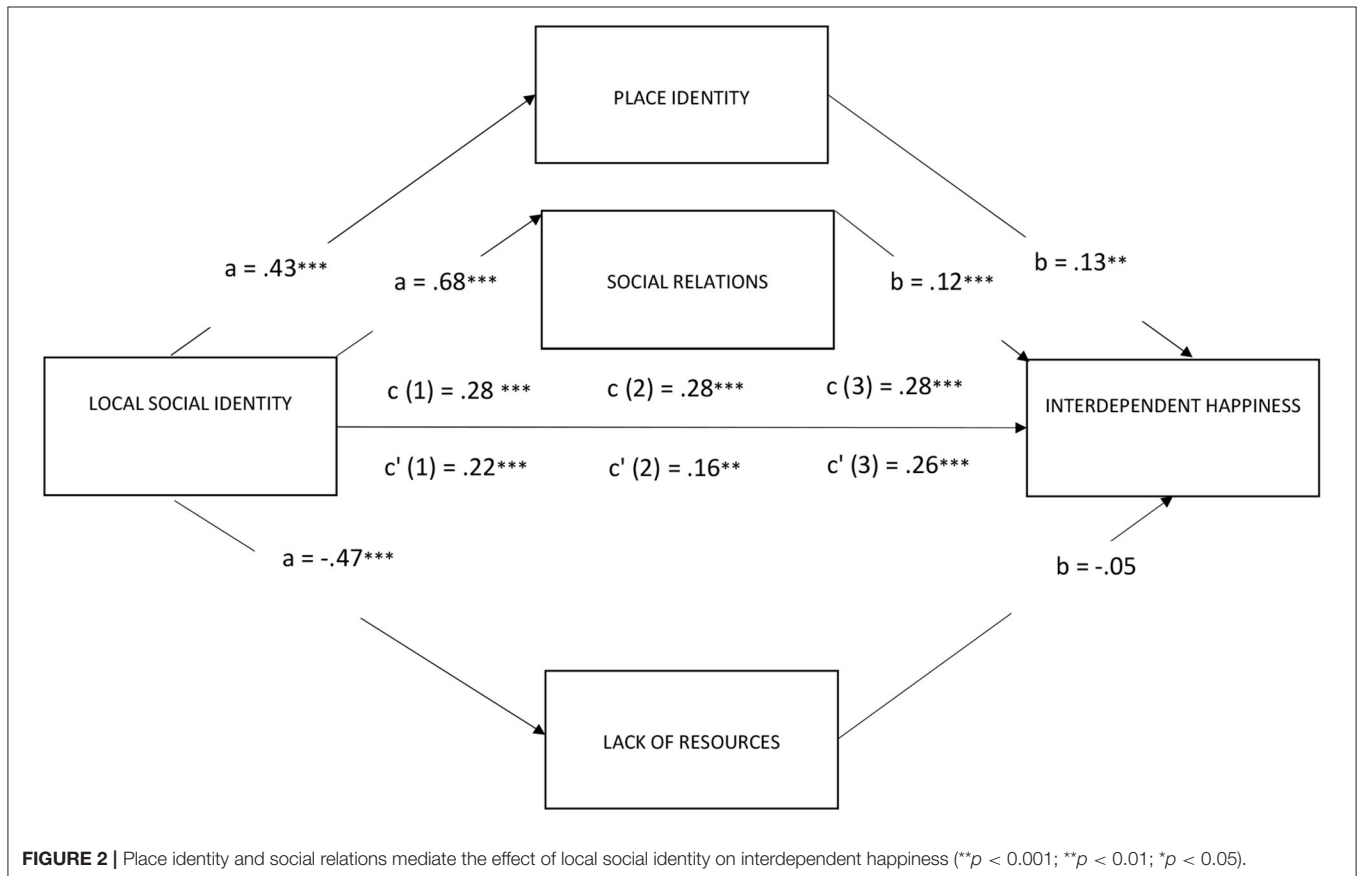
Model 4: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.13$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 27.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 2**]. The indirect effects of the local social identity of participants on their level of interdependent happiness via place identity ( $b = 0.0565$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0204$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0167$ ) were significant. The direct effect considering the mediator was still significant ( $b = 0.2251$ ; 95%

CI:  $LLCI = 0.1279$ ;  $ULCI = 0.3223$ ). In other words, local social identity had a positive impact on interdependent happiness even after controlling for the indirect effects through place identity.

Model 5: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.15$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 32.99$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 2**]. The indirect effects of the local social identity of participants on their level of interdependent happiness via social relations ( $b = 0.1211$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0611$ ;  $ULCI = 0.1809$ ) were significant. The direct effect considering the mediator was still significant ( $b = 0.1604$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0561$ ;  $ULCI = 0.2646$ ); in other words, social identification with the local community had a positive impact on interdependent happiness even after controlling for the indirect effects through social relations. Model 6: The overall equation was significant [ $R^2 = 0.11$ ;  $F_{(2, 372)} = 21.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; see **Figure 2**]. The indirect effects of social identification of participants with the local community on their level of interdependent happiness via lack of resources ( $b = 0.0242$ ; 95% CI:  $LLCI = 0.0194$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0675$ ) were not significant.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide further evidence to the tripartite model of place attachment, consistent with other studies (Williams and Vaske, 2003; Scopelliti and Tiberio,



2010), and also to the consideration of place identity, place dependence, and social bonds as the key components of place attachment (e.g., Raymond et al., 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2018). The study also corroborates the positive relationship between place attachment, local social identity, and relational and individual well-being. It is also shown how the dimensional distinction better explains the mediating role of place attachment factors in the relationship between local social identity and well-being.

Previous studies showed the links between social identification and well-being (e.g., Paolini et al., 2020), place attachment and well-being (e.g., Ratcliffe and Korpela, 2016, 2018), and community connectedness and activism (e.g., Rollero and De Piccoli, 2010). Moreover, previous studies demonstrated the mediating role of place attachment in the relationships between these variables (Buta et al., 2014). In this study, it is confirmed from the high relation between group identification and well-being (satisfaction with life and interdependent happiness), and from the importance of place attachment in connecting the strong identity bond of individuals with the local community which they belong to with their own well-being. This emerged taking into account not only the independent individual well-being, given by satisfaction with life (Diener et al., 1985), but also considering well-being as interdependent happiness, which is achieved with social relationships and harmony with others, in particular with the reference group of an individual (Hitokoto and Uchida, 2015).

Specifically, this study found that the relationship of local social identity with individual well-being (in terms of satisfaction with life and interdependent happiness) passes through the positive relationship with two dimensions of place attachment, i.e., place identity and social relations, while the perception of lack of resources (i.e., the reverse of place dependence) in the place where a person lives negatively mediates the relationship only between local social identity and satisfaction with life. This means that people with high local social identity develop a high identification with the place in terms of both the physical aspects of the place where they live (i.e., place identity) and the social relationships that they establish there; both these subdimensions of place attachment are positively related to individual well-being and interdependent happiness. Similarly, people with high local social identity have highly negative perceptions of the absence of resources in their place of living (in terms of functional attachment to the place), and this is negatively related to life satisfaction (but not to interdependent happiness). In other words, a high local social identity promotes a high place dependence, and this, in turn, is positively associated with life satisfaction but not with interdependent happiness.

### Limitations, Implications, and Future Research

This study has some limitations. In particular, it is a cross-sectional study (like most studies on place attachment and

well-being), so it is not easy to clarify whether there is a causal direction of the relation between local social identity and place attachment. As pointed out in the literature review, these two psychosocial aspects are certainly highly interrelated. Future studies could manipulate the local identity degree of individuals to better understand the impact of place attachment on well-being. It is possible to think that these have a positive impact on the individual and relational well-being of people. That is, if one lives in a place with which she/he does not identify with or feels she/he does not belongs to, or to which she/he does not feel emotionally attached, then she/he does not experience satisfaction, well-being, or happiness either. On the other hand, social identification, place attachment, and well-being are psychological factors that mature over time, are bound to places, and are related to the social community. The merit of the present study lies in highlighting the role of place attachment in the relationship between local social identity and well-being, above all by investigating the different dimensions and facets of place attachment and their different impact on happiness and life satisfaction of people. Finally, most of our participants were female, not allowing us to test for the moderating role of the gender of participants. Future research would warrant a more in-depth investigation in this direction.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors upon request.

### ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethical Committee of the Department of Social and Development Psychology of Sapienza, University of Rome (October 29, 2018). Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

FM and OM contributed to data collection. OM and DP contributed to data analysis. FM and FF contributed to the interpretation and discussion of results. All the authors equally contributed to develop the project of the present research and to writing the paper.

### FUNDING

This work was supported by the Department of Educational Studies, University of Roma Tre under biannual Grant DSF 2017-2018.

## REFERENCES

- Baumeister, R. F., and Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychol. Bull.* 117, 497–529. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497
- Bowe, M., Gray, D., Stevenson, C., McNamara, N., Wakefield, J. R., Kellezi, B., et al. (2020). A Social Cure in the Community: a mixed-method exploration of the role of social identity in the experiences and well-being of community volunteers. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* 50, 1523–1539. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2706
- Briggs, S. R., and Cheek, J. M. (1986). The role of factor analysis in the development and evaluation of personality scales. *J. Pers.* 54, 106–148. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1986.tb00391.x
- Brown, B. B., and Perkins, D. D. (1992). “Disruptions in place attachment”, in *Place Attachment*, eds I. Altman, and S. M. Low (New York, NY: Plenum Press), 279–304. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4684-8753-4\_13
- Buta, N., Holland, S. M., and Kaplanidou, K. (2014). Local communities and protected areas: the mediating role of place attachment for pro-environmental civic engagement. *J. Outdoor Recreat. Tour.* 5–6, 1–10. doi: 10.1016/j.jort.2014.01.001
- Chen, N., Dwyer, L., and Firth, T. (2018). Residents’ place attachment and word-of-mouth behaviours: a tale of two cities. *J. Hosp. Tour. Manag.* 36, 1–11. doi: 10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.05.001
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., and Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *J. Pers. Assess.* 49:7175. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\_13
- Fornara, F., Lai, A. E., Bonaiuto, M., and Pazzaglia, F. (2019). Residential place attachment as an adaptive strategy for coping with the reduction of spatial abilities in old age. *Front. Psychol.* 10:856. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00856
- Giuliani, M. V. (2003). “Theory of attachment and place attachment,” in *Psychological Theories for Environmental Issues*, eds M. Bonnes, T. Lee and M. Bonaiuto (Aldershot: Ashgate) 131–170.
- Haslam, C., Jetten, J., Cruwys, T., Dingle, G., and Haslam, A. (2018). *The New Psychology of Health: Unlocking the Social Cure*. London: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781315648569
- Haslam, N., and Loughnan, S. (2014). Dehumanization and inhumanization. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 65, 399–423. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115045
- Haslam, S. A., Jetten, J., Postmes, T., and Haslam, C. (2009). Social identity, health and well-being: an emerging agenda for applied psychology. *Appl. Psychol.* 58, 1–23. doi: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.2008.00379.x
- Hayes, A. F., and Preacher, K. J. (2014). Statistical mediation analysis with a multicategorical independent variable. *Br. J. Math. Stat. Psychol.* 67, 451–470. doi: 10.1111/bmsp.12028
- Hidalgo, M. C., and Hernandez, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 21, 273–281. doi: 10.1006/jenvp.2001.0221
- Hitokoto, H., and Uchida, Y. (2015). Interdependent happiness: theoretical importance and measurement validity. *J. Happiness Stud.* 16, 211–239. doi: 10.1007/s10902-014-9505-8
- Hummon, D. (1992). “Community attachment. Local sentiment and sense of place,” in *Place Attachment*, eds I. Altman and S. M. Low (New York, London: Plenum), 253–277. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4684-8753-4\_12
- Jetten, J., Haslam, C., Haslam, S. A., Dingle, G., and Jones, J. M. (2014). How groups affect our health and well-being: the path from theory to policy. *Soc. Issues Policy Rev.* 8, 103–130. doi: 10.1111/sipr.12003
- Jetten, J., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, C., and Steffens, N. K. (2017). Advancing the social identity approach to health and well-being: progressing the social cure research agenda. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* 47, 789–802. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2333
- Keyes, C. L. M. (1998). Social well-being. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* 61, 121–140. doi: 10.2307/2787065
- Korpela, K. M. (2012). “Place attachment,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental and Conservation Psychology*, ed. S. Clayton (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 148–163.
- Krys, K., Zelenski, J. M., Capaldi, C. A., Park, J., van Tilburg, W., van Osch, Y., et al. (2019). Putting the “We” into well-being: Using collectivism-themed measures of well-being attenuates well-being’s association with individualism. *Asian J. Soc. Psychol.* 22, 256–267. doi: 10.1111/ajsp.12364
- Kyle, G. T., Graefe, A., and Manning, R. E. (2005). Testing the dimensionality of place attachment in recreational settings. *Env. Behav.* 37, 153–177. doi: 10.1177/0013916504269654
- Larson, L. R., Cooper, C. B., Stedman, R. C., Decker, D. J., and Gagnon, R. J. (2018). Place-based pathways to proenvironmental behavior: empirical evidence for a conservation–recreation model. *Soc. Nat. Resour.* 31, 871–891. doi: 10.1080/08941920.2018.1447714
- Lenzi, M., Vieno, A., Pastore, M., and Santinello, M. (2013). Neighborhood social connectedness and adolescent civic engagement: an integrative model. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 34, 45–54. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2012.12.003
- Lewicka, M. (2011a). On the varieties of people’s relationships with places: Hummon’s typology revisited. *Env. Behav.* 43, 676–709. doi: 10.1177/0013916510364917
- Lewicka, M. (2011b). Place attachment: how far have we come in the last 40 years? *J. Environ. Psychol.* 31, 207–230. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001
- Lewicka, M. (2014). “In search of roots: Memory as enabler of place attachment,” in *Place Attachment. Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*, eds L. C. Manzo, and P. Devine-Wright (Abingdon: Routledge), 49–60.
- Low, S. M. (1992). “Symbolic ties that bind. Place attachment in the plaza,” in *Place Attachment*, eds I. Altman, and S. M. Low (New York, NY: Plenum Press), 165–185. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4684-8753-4\_8
- Lu, L., and Gilmour, R. (2004). Culture and conceptions of happiness: Individual oriented and social oriented SWB. *J. Happiness Stud.* 5, 269–291. doi: 10.1007/s10902-004-8789-5
- Manzo, L. C., and Devine-Wright, P. (eds.) (2020). *Place Attachment. Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications, 2nd edition*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780429274442
- Manzo, L. C., and Perkins, D. D. (2006). Finding common ground: the importance of place attachment to community participation and planning. *J. Plan. Lit.* 20, 335–350. doi: 10.1177/0885412205286160
- Maricchiolo, F., Mosca, O., Lauriola, M., and Krys, K. (2020). The role of urbanization of place of living in the relation between individual features and happiness (El papel del desarrollo urbanístico del lugar de residencia en la relación entre las características individuales y la felicidad). *Psy. Ecol.* 11, 232–259. doi: 10.1080/21711976.2020.1734399
- Maricchiolo, F., Mosca, O., Lauriola, M., and Krys, K. (2021). From ME to WE: a literature review on happiness and well-being focused on relational factors and social interconnectedness. *Psicol. Soc.* 16, 3–25.
- Mosca, O., Maricchiolo, F., Krys, K., and Lauriola, M. (2021). Two countries, one happiness? The interdependent happiness scale in Italy and Poland. *TPM Test Psychom Methodol. Appl. Psychol.*
- Mundfrom, D. J., Shaw, D. G., and Ke, T. L. (2005). Minimum sample size recommendations for conducting factor analyses. *Int. J. Test.* 5, 159–168. doi: 10.1207/s15327574ijt0502\_4
- Paolini, D. (2019). L’ostracismo e le sue conseguenze: una rassegna della letteratura. *Psicol. Soc.* 3, 317–342. doi: 10.1482/94938
- Paolini, D., Maricchiolo, F., Pacilli, M. G., and Pagliaro, S. (2020). COVID-19 lockdown in Italy: the role of social identification and social and political trust on well-being and distress. *Curr. Psychol.* 1–8. doi: 10.1007/s12144-020-01141-0
- Proshansky, H. M., Fabian, A. K., and Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place-identity: Physical world socialization of the self. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 3, 57–83. doi: 10.1016/S0272-4944(83)80021-8
- Ramkissoon, H., Smith, L. D. G., and Weiler, B. (2013). Testing the dimensionality of place attachment and its relationships with place satisfaction and pro-environmental behaviours: a structural equation modelling approach. *Tour. Manag.* 36, 552–566. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2012.09.003
- Ratcliffe, E., and Korpela, K. M. (2016). Memory and place attachment as predictors of imagined restorative perceptions of favourite places. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 48, 120–130. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2016.09.005
- Ratcliffe, E., and Korpela, K. M. (2018). Time- and self-related memories predict restorative perceptions of favorite places via place identity. *Environ. Behav.* 50, 690–720. doi: 10.1177/0013916517712002
- Raymond, C. M., Brown, G., and Weber, D. (2010). The measurement of place attachment: PERSONAL, community, and environmental connections. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 30, 422–434. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.08.002



- Rollero, C., and De Piccoli, N. (2010). 'Does place attachment affect social well-being?' *Eur. Rev. Appl. Psychol.* 60, 233–238. doi: 10.1016/j.erap.2010.05.001
- Sani, F., Herrera, M., Wakefield, J. R., Borocho, O., and Gulyas, C. (2012). Comparing social contact and group identification as predictors of mental health. *Br. J. Soc. Psychol.* 51, 781–790. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.2012.02101.x
- Scannell, L., and Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: a tripartite organizing framework. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 30, 1–10. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006
- Scopelliti, M., and Tiberio, L. (2010). Homesickness in university students: the role of multiple place attachment. *Environ. Behav.* 42, 335–350. doi: 10.1177/0013916510361872
- Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. (1979). "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict," in *Organizational Identity A reader*, eds W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (New York: Oxford Press), 33–47.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., and Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*. Basil Blackwell.
- Wakefield, J. R. H., Sani, F., Madhok, V., et al. (2017). The relationship between group identification and satisfaction with life in a cross-cultural community sample. *J. Happiness Stud.* 18, 785–807. doi: 10.1007/s10902-016-9735-z
- White, S. C. (2017). Relational wellbeing: Re-centering the politics of happiness, policy and the self. *Policy Polit.* 45, 121–136. doi: 10.1332/030557317X14866576265970
- Williams, D. R., and Vaske, J. J. (2003). The measurement of place attachment: validity and generalizability of a psychometric approach. *For. Sci.* 49, 830–840.
- World Medical Association (2001). World medical association declaration of helsinki: ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. *Bull. World Health Organiz.* 79, 373–374.
- Wright, P. A., and Kloos, B. (2007). Housing environment and mental health outcomes: a levels of analysis perspective. *J. Environ. Psychol.* 27, 79–89. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2006.12.001

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

Copyright © 2021 Maricchiolo, Mosca, Paolini and Fornara. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.



January 9, 2017

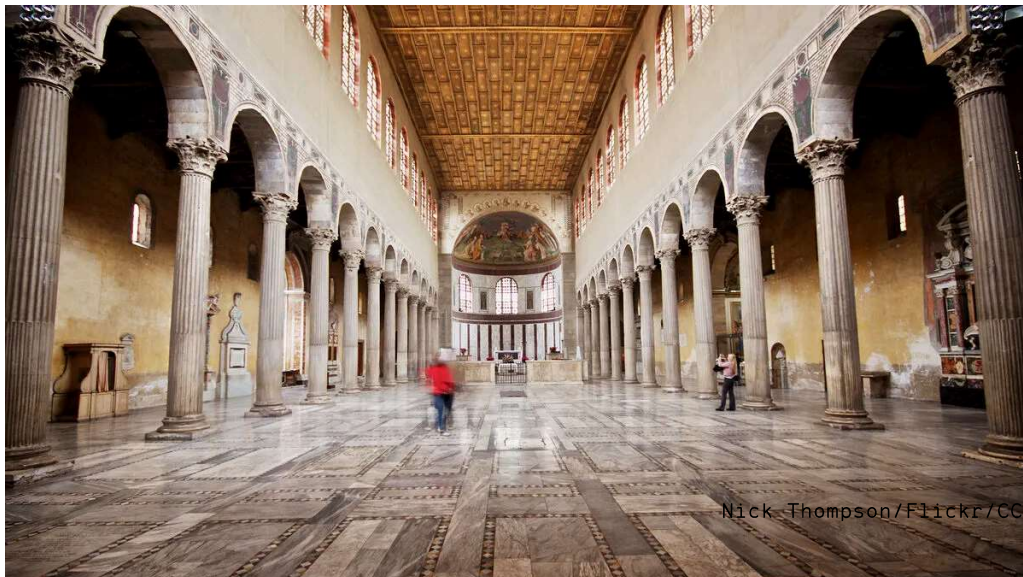
# Why Do Old Places Matter?

More:

[Preservation Leadership Forum](#)

By:

Thompson Mayes



Nick Thompson/Flickr/CC BY NC SA 2.0

Santa Sabina in Rome, Italy.

In 2013 Tom Mayes, deputy general counsel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, was selected as a winner of the [Rome Prize](https://www.aarome.org/news/features/2013-14-rome-prize-winners-announced) [Link: <https://www.aarome.org/news/features/2013-14-rome-prize-winners-announced>], which is awarded to about 30 emerging artists and scholars who represent the highest standard of excellence.

A lifelong preservationist, Mayes is the principal lawyer for legal matters

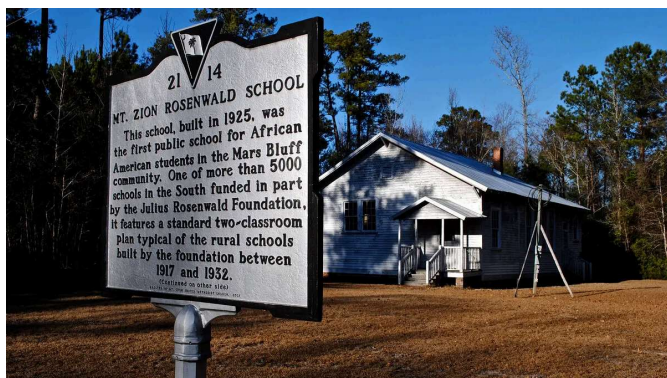
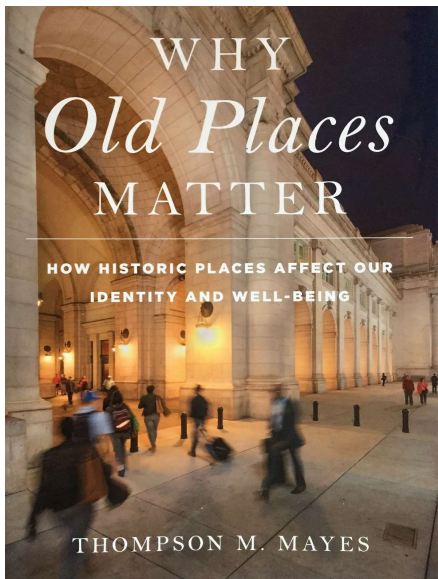
relating to the National Trust's 27 historic sites and for historic property real estate transactions, and has expertise in architectural and technical preservation issues, collections management, preservation easements, the Americans with Disabilities Act and historic shipwrecks.

When he isn't working on legal complexities, Mayes considers the role historic places play in everyday life. This prestigious award sent Mayes to Rome on a six-month tour of discovery where he sought to answer the question: *Why Do Old Places Matter?* This photo essay presents Mayes' answers along with links to that longer posts that explore the answers in more depth.

**Find Out More [Link:  
<https://amzn.to/2Arwf6V>]**

Tom Mayes' popular Why Old Places Matter series is now available as *Why Old Places Matter* [Link: <https://amzn.to/2Arwf6V>], the only book that explores the reasons that old places matter to people. Although people often feel very deeply about the old places of their lives, they don't have the words to

express why. This book brings these ideas together in evocative language and with illustrative images for a broad audience. [Order your copy today.](https://amzn.to/2Arwf6V) [Link: <https://amzn.to/2Arwf6V>]



Mt. Zion Rosenwald School (1925) was the first public school for African-American students in the Mars Bluff community.

## **Continuity** [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-continuity]

“In a world that is constantly changing, old places provide people with a sense of being part of a continuum that is necessary for them to be psychologically and emotionally healthy.”



Cemetery gate at Ramah  
Presbyterian Church in  
Huntersville, North Carolina.

## **Memory** [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-memory]

“Old places help us remember. Old places... trigger memories people already have, give specificity to



memories, and arouse curiosity about memories people don't yet know."



The cedar trees on this pasture at Mayes' family farm creates a sense of individual identity.

**Individual Identity [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-individual-identity]**

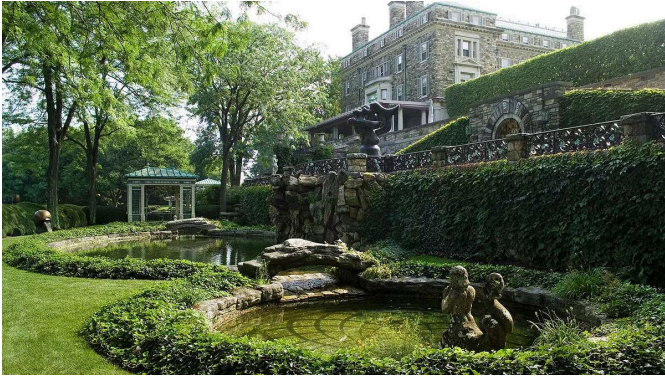
"...[O]ld places...serve as reference points for measuring, refreshing, and recalibrating our identity over time. They are literally the landmarks of our identity."



Exterior of the U.S. Capitol Building.

**Civic, State, National, and Universal Identity [Link: </why-do-old-places-matter-civic-state-national-and-universal-identity>]**

“Americans argue vociferously about what our country is, who it is for, and what it means. These debates help reshape and re-form and—hopefully—deepen our understanding of history and identity. The old places that embody our identity are the perfect venues for those discussions and debates.”



Kykuit, a Historic Site of the National Trust in Tarrytown, New York.

**Beauty [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-beauty]**

“The history of preservation demonstrates a remarkable march of the ugly transforming into the beautiful.”



The State of Virginia monument at Gettysburg depicts General Robert E. Lee astride his favorite horse, Traveller.

## **History [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-history]**

“What is it about old places that give them this unique capacity to ‘convey, embody, or stimulate a relation or reaction’ to history? ... [P]eople feel the excitement of experiencing the place where something actually happened, from the shimmering watery fortress of Fort Sumter where the Civil War started, to the quiet rooms of Emily Dickinson’s home in Amherst, Massachusetts.”



Farnsworth House in Chicago.

## **Architecture [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-architecture]**

“These special places, these works of architecture, are works of art. Like painting, music or literature, these buildings help us understand our capacities as humans.”





Acoma Sky City, which includes San Esteban del Rey Mission Church, is a Historic Site of the National Trust.

## **Sacred [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-sacred]**

“...old places that are considered sacred are treasured by the religious and the non-religious. Why? Because these old places provide people with ‘restorative benefits that foster meditation and reflection and ... a sense of peace or serenity,’ and with all the other benefits that old places provide—continuity, memory, identity, and beauty—that are psychologically and sociologically beneficial.”



The interior of Studio A on Music Row, a National Treasure in Nashville, Tennessee.

## **Creativity [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-creativity]**

“Just as people once traveled on pilgrimages to visit the relics of saints, they now go to visit the places where creative people worked, dreamt and struggled. From Mark Twain’s house in Hartford, Donald Judd’s loft building in Manhattan, Jackson Pollock’s house on Long Island, to William Faulkner’s Rowan Oak, these places attract people who want to connect with the creative power of art and artists.”



Kwan Tai Temple in Mendocino,  
California.

## **Learning [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-learning]**

“Without exactly paying attention to it, we also absorb information about people and how they lived—what they ate, how they worked, how they made money, how they lost money, how they coupled, raised their families, and lived and died. And in learning about others from the past, we learn about ourselves.”



The Wing Luke Museum was awarded the 2014 Trustees Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites.

## **Sustainability [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-sustainability]**

"In trying to envision a world that is more environmentally sustainable, I hope for a world where we are more appreciative of the communities, buildings and things that already exist, and that we continue to use them, so that we're not constantly tearing buildings down and throwing things away."



Visitors engage with an educator during a tour of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, a National Trust Historic Site at 97 Orchard Street.

## **Ancestors [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-ancestors]**

“Old places connect us to our ancestors and our ancestors connect us to old places, giving us a sense of belonging and identity.”





Old places, such as this historic neighborhood in Athens, Georgia, foster community.

## **Community [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-community]**

“Old places foster community by giving people a sense of shared identity through landmarks, history, memory, and stories, by having the attributes that foster community, such as distinctive character and walkability, and by serving as shared places where people meet and gather.”



The interior of the Tennessee Theatre in Knoxville, a historic tax credit project.

## **Economics [Link: /why-do-old-places-matter-economics]**

“Old places support a sound, sustainable and vibrant economy that also fulfills deeper human needs of continuity, identity, belonging, and beauty.”



Tom Mayes, chief legal officer and general counsel, has worked on the full range of National Trust legal issues since he joined the National Trust in 1986. He received the National Endowment for the Arts Rome Prize in Historic Preservation in 2013 and is the author of the book *Why Old Places Matter*.

