Chapter 5. Journeying between place and home

It is still the case that no one lives in the world in general. Everyone, even the exiled, the drifting, the diasporic, or the perpetually moving, lies in some confined and limited stretch of it — "the world around here". The sense of interconnectedness imposed on us by the mass media, by rapid travel, and by long-distance communication obscures this more than a little. So does the featurelessness and inter-changeability of so many of our public spaces, the standardisation of so many products, and the routinisation of so much of our daily existence. The banalities and distractions of the ways we live now lead us, often enough, to lose sight of how much it matters just where we are and what it is like to be there. The ethnography of place is, if anything, more critical for those of us who are apt to imagine that all places are alike than for those who, listening to the forests or experiencing the stones, know better.

(Geertz 1996:262)

5.1 Introduction

I argued in the previous chapter that to understand the ways in which people experience, understand and negotiate their migrations, it is important to look at their narratives. In my discussions with young returned Tasmanians, people spoke about the importance of moving for their health, their education, their careers, their living arrangements, their personal ties, their own identities and their ideas about the future. However, their stories were not only of moving, but of the places they had moved

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between. Descriptions of the significance of different places were an integral part of these young Tasmanians’ narratives. Furthermore, newspaper articles and policy reports also include vivid constructions of places as a means to make their arguments socially relevant. Place, then, is an important concept for understanding the complexities of people’s migration negotiations, experiences and understandings. In the following chapters, I use the concept of place extensively to explain the complexity of these young people’s understandings of migration. In this chapter I provide a broad discussion of the concept of place and contend that a better understanding of people’s emotive attachment to place enables a deeper examination of issues such as identity and belonging. I go on to argue that people’s ideas about place can also influence their actions and therefore their own practical circumstances and by extension the politics and economy of Tasmania. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the importance of a particularly significant kind of place – home.
5.2 Towards a definition of place

The problem of place arises, paradoxically, because the meaning of place too often seems to go without saying.

(Rodman 1992:640)

Before I can go on to discuss the importance of place for understanding the experiences, negotiations, understandings and actions of these young people, it is important to first clearly define what I mean when I write about 'place'. Following Doreen Massey (1995), I argue that 'place' is a social construct. In Massey's view, "we actively make places" (ibid:48) and our ideas of place "are products of the society in which we live" (ibid:50). This is not to say that the creation of places is entirely subjective. The creation of places is influenced by physical, economic and social realities. What it means, rather, is that these realities are understood socially in the creation of place. As Gieryn (2000:465) explains with reference to the work of Soja (1996), "places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined". Massey and Jess (1995:219, emphasis in original) similarly state "the physical environment is an essential part of place, but it is always an interpreted element". Furthermore, as Harvey (1996:211-212) has argued, "to say that something is socially constructed is not to say that it is personally subjective". Davison (2004:84) argues that place should be understood in terms of "the practice of place … rather than just [its] givenness". Harvey (1996:211) similarly argues that "social constructions of space and time operate with the full force of objective facts to which all individuals and institutions necessarily respond". This is also the case for social constructions of place. The difference in the case of place is that while social constructions of space and time are usually agreed upon within large social groups, constructions of places are more commonly disputed.

Notions of places as bound, settled and coherent communities have been threatened in recent times, according to Harvey (1996), because of the increasing pace of
globalization and time-space compression. We live in “an increasingly unstable and uncertain world” (Massey 1995:48), and as a result, more and more people cling strongly to notions of place as secure and stable. Massey (ibid:54) has taken Harvey’s ideas in a new direction, arguing that if the social organization of space is changing and disrupting our existing ideas about place, then we should re-think the concept of place altogether.

Massey (1995:61) suggests that at a time when social relations are obviously “stretched out”, we inevitably interact with people in our local area, our region, our country and even internationally. This means that places can be seen as “the location of particular sets of intersecting social relations [and] intersecting activity spaces” (ibid:61). That is, places are no longer understood as “coherent, bounded and settled” (ibid:54), but as particular nodal points within a complex web of social interactions which stretch around the world. Places are social constructs, but they are created not as bounded wholes, but as open nodal points within a larger set of interacting systems. Places are still seen as unique in this formulation, as “every place is ... a unique mixture of the relations which configure social space” (ibid:61).

I now turn to criticisms of Massey’s understanding of place. Murdoch (1997), a proponent of actor-network theory, recognizes that in Massey’s ‘power-geometry’ approach to place, which understands places to be nodes in networks, she focuses almost exclusively on the importance of social forces. Murdoch criticizes this focus on the social, and follows Latour in arguing that “society is not what holds us together, it is what is held together” (Latour 1986:276 in Murdoch 1997:334). It is held together, according to Murdoch (1997:334), by “active sets of relations in which the human and nonhuman continuously exchange properties”. It is therefore “the

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56 ‘Time-space compression’ is the term Harvey uses to refer to a “sense of overwhelming change in space-time dimensionality” (1996:243). It is based upon the idea that in the face of globalization time and place are being ‘compressed’, largely due to improved transportation and communications technology.

57 The creation of boundaries is always a social act anyway (Massey 1995:61).

58 Actor-network theory approaches social research by focusing on the networks that exist between agents. Agents can be human (varying in scale from individual people to large organizations), but they can also be animal and material (for example tools and texts – Pile & Thrift 1996:36).
distributions, constructions and configurations which should catch our attention” (ibid:334).

Murdoch (ibid:333) proposes that, following an actor-network approach, places should be seen not simply as nodes in networks of social relations, but as nodes in networks of co-dependent social, material and animal forces. This approach sits well with Heidegger’s understanding of dwelling as “the capacity to achieve a spiritual unity between humans and things” (Harvey 1996:300-301). Heidegger (1973) argues that we exist only through our relationships to the world and hence being is ‘Dasein’ or ‘being-in-the-world’. It is the relationship that is primary. Place, understood as a node in networks of intersecting social, material and animal forces, is an important concept for understanding the nature of this relationship.

It should also be noted that, following Relph (1986:29), places occur at many levels: for example, a room, house, street, community, town, region, country and continent. However, “places never conform to tidy hierarchies of classification. They all overlap and interpenetrate each other” (ibid:29). Similarly, Massey (1993:146) points to the “necessary interdependence of any place with others”. A related issue is that in discussions of place, the relationship between ‘place’ and ‘space’ can often become confused with academics using the two terms interchangeably. For example, Sack (2001:232) points to the importance of place, saying that the ‘projects’ that we carry out in our lives “not only require place in the sense that they need place to occur, but the place becomes an active agent in the project and thereby affects it”. He notes “places can not exist without us. But equally important, we cannot exist without places” (ibid:233). Such statements fit well with a definition of places as nodal points in networks of social, material and animal relations. However, Sack’s definition of place as “the countless areas of space that we have bounded or controlled” (ibid:232), and his comment that “places are the primary means by which we are able to use space and turn it into a humanised landscape” (ibid:233) are problematic. This is

59 Murdoch (1997:333) also criticizes Harvey, because although Harvey does look at “the materialistic dimensions of action”, the materials themselves are only considered in terms of the way they embody human values.
because of Sack’s inherent assumption that space is simply a material that exists to be ‘made into’ places. Casey (2001) has criticized Sack on this issue. Casey situates this tension between ‘space’ and ‘place’ as part of the debate between modernism and postmodernism. The modernist insists “on the priority of space (whether in the form of a well-ordered physical space or highly structured institutional space) and the postmodernist conversely maintaining the primacy of place and, in particular, lived place” (ibid:404). Casey (ibid:404, *emphasis in original*) provides an alternative to this dilemma, suggesting that “space and place are two different orders of reality between which no simple or direct comparisons are possible”. He says that space “is the name for that most encompassing reality that allows for things to be located within it; and it serves in this locational capacity whether it is conceived as absolute or relative in its own nature” (ibid:404). While place is situated in physical space, it has no privileged relationship to space because everything, including events and physical things are situated in space (ibid:404-405). Place and space are not interchangeable; they are understood here to be different orders of being. Hence, while some academics use the terms ‘space’ and ‘place’ interchangeably, I use the term ‘place’ to refer to nodes in networks of relations and ‘space’ to refer to “that most encompassing reality that allows for things to be located within it” (ibid:404).

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60 For a similar argument, see Grosz (1995).
5.3 Emotive attachments to place

In their discussions about particular places, and especially in discussions about Tasmania, the young Tasmanians I spoke to often described their emotional attachments to place. People's experiences of migration were often understood in terms of emotions surrounding particular places. For example, people spoke about Tasmania as an isolated and insular place, a place with a relaxed lifestyle, and a 'home' place. They spoke about the importance of personal ties in understanding the relevance of particular places, and some even pointed to personal ties as an alternative to location as a primary means of orientation, or sense of place. The theme of flexible identity was also tied around the concept of place in that people explained that to develop themselves they felt they needed to break their bonds to a particular place, to travel and to experience new places. Decisions about the future, particularly regarding the question of where to live, also depended upon the meaning that particular places had for people.

The emotional attachments between people and places have received significant attention in the academic literature, particularly in discussions surrounding both individual and collective identity. For example, Relph (1997:209) notes that:

> It is a perverse testament to the importance of sense of place that one of the most enduring of all military strategies is the destruction of places in order to undermine the will of a people. It is, of course, an even more powerful testament to the importance of place that these places are invariably rebuilt by those whose attachment to them has not been destroyed.

Academic attention in this area has focused on the concept of 'sense of place' and the related idea of 'topophilia'. Tuan coined the term 'topophilia' to describe 'the

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61 When I speak of constructions of Tasmania as a place I am referring to both constructions of places that are understood to be located within the state and constructions of the state of Tasmania itself as a significant place.
affective bond between people and place' (Duncan & Duncan 2001:41). He said that this bond may be stronger for some individuals than for others and can be expressed differently by people from different cultures (ibid:41). Topophilia is an affective response to place, but it is also "a practice that can actively produce places for people" (ibid:41). That is, the bond people have to a place can help change the nature of that place. Bachelard (1969) also discusses topophilia, arguing that "the life of the mind is given form in the places and spaces in which people dwell and those places influence human memories, feelings and thoughts. Inner space is externalized and outer space brought within" (in Malpas 1999:5). Bachelard (1969) argues that this bond between people and place means that an investigation of places is essential "in any phenomenological/ psychoanalytic study of memory, self and mind" (in Malpas 1999:5).

The related idea of 'sense of place' has received more attention than Tuan's topophilia, but the two ideas are closely linked. Rose (1995:88) explains that "senses of place develop from every aspect of individuals' life experience and ... senses of place pervade everyday life and experience". She notes that while one's sense of place can be very personal, it is "shaped in large part by the social, cultural and economic circumstances in which individuals find themselves" (ibid:89). Rose (ibid) provides a working definition of a sense of place, explaining that the idea of a sense of place usually assumes that places have no inherent meanings, only the meanings given to them by humans. Beyond this agreement, Rose identifies three main arguments about the nature of senses of place:

1. A sense of place is seen as natural. Sometimes it is argued that a sense of place is a territorial instinct and some argue that it is a survival instinct. (ibid:98).

2. "A sense of place is seen as a result of the meanings people actively give to their lives ... a sense of place can be seen as part of our cultural interpretation of the world around us" (ibid:99).

62 Bachelard (1969) conflates the concepts of space and place throughout his work.
Some writers have argued that "it is an awareness of cultural difference which may encourage a sense of place to develop" (ibid:99) and that power relations are important in understanding a sense of place.

3. "A sense of place is part of the politics of identity" (ibid:103). This includes the idea of defining oneself in opposition to an 'other' (ibid:104).

Tuan (1980), however, makes a distinction between 'rootedness' and a 'sense of place'. While the first set of arguments above may be relevant for the concept of rootedness, Tuan would argue that only the second and third points actually relate to a 'sense of place'. The distinction Tuan (ibid:6) makes is that "rootedness implies being at home in a unselfconscious way. Sense of place, on the other hand, implies a certain distance between self and place which allows the self to appreciate a place" (Tuan 1980:4). In short, "rootedness is unreflexive". Rootedness is "a knowing that is the result of familiarity through long residence", while a sense of place is "a knowing that is the result of conscious effort" (ibid:8). This distinction is discussed further below.

So, what exactly is the nature of this 'attachment' to place? While the relationship between place and identity construction are examined in more detail in Chapter Six, it is important to explain the mechanisms through which people relate emotionally to place. These mechanisms are explored through the work of Martin Heidegger (1973) and Pierre Bourdieu (1979). While neither theorist focused on the concept of place per se themselves, their work is particularly useful in trying to understand the nature of place attachment. Heidegger proposes a philosophy for understanding people's relationships to the world that resonates strongly with the issues surrounding place attachment63 and Bourdieu's concept of habitus is also useful in providing some clues for understanding the mechanisms through which place and self are connected.

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63 Indeed, his work has already been widely utilized by researchers interested in the concept of place.
5.3.1 Heidegger and place

Harvey (1996) and Casey (2001) have both discussed the usefulness of Heidegger’s (1973) arguments in *Being and Time* for a discussion of place. Heidegger’s contribution was to challenge Cartesian dualism, which differentiated the mind from the body, and to propose the concept of ‘Dasein’. Heidegger recognized that who we are (our mind, our ego) is influenced by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world. As Casey (2001:413, emphasis in original) notes, “the vehicle of being-in-place is the body”. The body “goes out to meet the place-world” and it “bears the traces of the places it has known” (ibid:414).

In Heidegger’s discussion of ‘ready-to-hand’ things, “place and self are intimately interlocked in the world of practical work” (ibid:406). Casey (ibid:407) goes on to say:

Heidegger is telling us that in a comparatively demanding place such as a workshop, the human beings who labor there are so deeply embroiled that their being-in-the-world, their very self, is part of the scene and not something that hovers above it at a transcendental remove. The purpose of the tools we employ is not exhausted in sheer production or an economic fate outside the workplace but is also closely geared into the circuit of selfhood ...

In such a circumstance, then, place and self are thoroughly enmeshed - without, however, being fused into each other in a single monolithic whole.

Heidegger’s work is relevant far beyond the walls of the workshop, however. The workshop is simply an analogy for what Heidegger calls ‘dwelling’, defined by Harvey (1996:300-301) as “the capacity to achieve a spiritual unity between humans and things”. Heidegger’s point is that places “are constructed in our memories and

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64. ‘Place-world’ is “a world that is not only perceived or conceived but actively lived” (Casey 2001:413). The place-world is simultaneously social, spatial and historical (ibid:413).

Casey (2001:407) says that while Heidegger's workshop was a place with "densely enmeshed infrastructures", a dwelling place or a 'thick place', people also come into contact with "thinned-out places". While the existence of 'thinned-out places' can "enfeeble" the self, this circumstance can also allow the self “to become more sensitive to differences between places, for example, by leaving one's attenuated natal place in order to appreciate and savor other places and peoples” (ibid:408). This differentiation between 'thick places' and 'thinned-out places' may be understood in parallel to the differentiation between rootedness and a sense of place. The worker in Heidegger's workshop was rooted, he was 'at home' in an unselfconscious way. However, when we come into contact with thinned-out places, we begin to consciously think about the meaning of place and we develop a sense of place through our deliberate acts of creating and maintaining place. As Harvey (1996) has noted, in this era of increasing globalization, an era of the 'thinning-out' of places, people have responded by creating their own senses of place with renewed vigor.

Heidegger's work has been drawn upon widely in research into place attachment, particularly by researchers of the phenomenological tradition. However, Massey (1993:63) provides strong criticisms of work that draws upon Heidegger's arguments:

Those writers who interpret the current phase of time-space compression as primarily generating insecurity [and who] also frequently go on to argue that, in the middle of all this flux, one desperately needs a bit of peace and quiet; and 'place' is posed as a source of stability and an unproblematical (sic) identity. In that

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65 Places can never be completely 'thinned out', however, if they are to remain places at all (Casey 2001:407). Augé claims that places such as airports, shopping centers and the Metro are in fact 'non-places' (Augé 1995). However, I argue that so long as they hold some sort of meaning for people, they will remain places.
guise, place and the spatially local are rejected by these writers as almost necessarily reactionary. Space/place is characterised, after Heidegger, as Being; and, as such, as a diversion from the progressive dimension of Time as Becoming.

Massey's comments are relevant to this research as the people I interviewed spoke about places in terms of both being and becoming. Some people who spoke about places in terms of being, as a place or origin or belonging:

Gary: I started travelling back to Burnie one time, as I came over the Don hill I could see the water and see the coast and that and I was thinking, I felt like, I actually felt a real peace come over me as far as, this is where I belong, this is my home.

While others spoke about places as a means of 'becoming', of creativity and growth:

Peter: I always thought of myself awakening and sort of getting to know a lot more about the world and a lot more about myself by moving to Melbourne.

However, I challenge Massey's (1993:63-64) contention that:

It is also problematical (sic) that so often this debate, as in the case of Harvey, starts off from Heidegger, for if it had not started off from there, perhaps it would never have found itself in this conceptual triangle in the first place.

I contend that to identify place as 'being', but not 'becoming', is to misunderstand the work of Heidegger. For Heidegger, being is 'being-in-the-world'. It is the relationship with the world that is important, and any such relationship must be temporal as well as spatial, and it must therefore be a question of becoming as well as being.
Massey (1993:64) further criticizes approaches which draw upon the work of Heidegger on the grounds that she believes that notions of place derived from Heidegger include the idea that places have “single essential identities”, that the idea of place “is constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history based on delving into the past of internalised origins” and that places “seem to require the drawing of boundaries”. However, one need not necessarily adhere to such bounded notions of place when using the work of Heidegger. Just because Heidegger used the example of a workshop and talks about identity in terms of being, this does not mean that his theories cannot be utilized to examine more open places and flows and to consider identity in terms of becoming. Rather, it is likely that Heidegger chose to use more bounded examples first because of the period in which he was writing, and also to make his point in the clearest possible fashion. Heidegger’s primary interest was not in the concept of ‘place’, but rather in the question of what it means to ‘be’.

5.3.2 Bourdieu and place

Casey (2001:409) writes that Heidegger’s (1973) work in *Being and Time* provides a crucial clue in the search to explain “what ties place and self together”. “The basis of the density of engagement between self and place in this world [of the workshop] is the set of *habitualities* by which its rich fabric is woven” (ibid:409, *emphasis in original*). He ties this concept of habitualities to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. He then goes on to argue that Bourdieu’s habitus is a “figure of the between: above all, between nature and culture, but also between consciousness and the body, self and other, mechanism and teleology, determinism and freedom, and even between memory and imagination” (ibid:409). Casey (ibid:409) proposes that it can also be used as a middle-term between self and place “and in particular between lived place and geographical self”66. He says, “although Bourdieu does not invoke place specifically, it is everywhere present in his discussion of habitus” (ibid:410). This is because:

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66 A use not originally intended by Bourdieu.
a given habitus is always enacted in a particular place and incorporates the regularities inherent in previous such places ... A particular place gives to habitus a familiar arena for its enactment and the lack of explicit awareness of that place as such, its very familiarity, only enhances its efficacy as a scene in which it is activated.

(ibid:410)

In other words, habitus is intrinsically connected to the concept of ‘rootedness’: being at home in a particular place in an unselfconscious way.

Bourdieu (1979:3-4) argues that habitus, as something taken for granted, has little to do with ‘lived experience’. However, Casey (2001:412) disagrees, arguing that we do act on the basis of habitus, “and action is something that is both lived (i.e. consciously experienced) and intentional (i.e. involves an aim even if this is not explicitly formulated)”. “The value or virtue of a particular habitus resides in the actuality of its enactment ... A habitus is something we continually put into action” (ibid:412, emphasis in original). Casey (ibid:412, emphasis in original) argues that “the activation of habitus expresses an intentional and invested commitment to the place-world” because “even if it is the internalisation of social practices by way of origin, in its actual performance a given habitus is reaching out to place. The primary way in which the geographical subject realizes this commitment to place is by means of habitation”. Furthermore, habitus is not only connected to ‘rootedness’, but also to our ‘sense of place’. Because the actions that we make on the basis of our habitus are consciously experienced, we are able to think about our experiences within a given place, and because habitus is not only habitual, but also “improvisational and open to innovation” (ibid:409), we are able to make choices about, and innovations regarding, our interrelations with that place within the constraints imposed upon us by our habitus. That is, we are able to foster a (conscious) sense of place. This process is important because when the places in which our habitus is enacted are changed
rapidly by external forces, such as those increasing in our era of globalization and escalating uncertainty, the possibility of a feeling of rootedness diminishes, and our need to create a sense of place as “secure and stable” is heightened (Harvey 1989 in Massey 1995:48).
5.4 Place construction and practical considerations

While emotional attachments to place are particularly important for understanding the experiences of young returned Tasmanians, the concept of place can also be used to explore issues relevant to the practical considerations of these young people. It is important to recognize that the ways in which places are felt, perceived, understood and portrayed have very real impacts on the practical aspects of people’s lives, as well as on the economies and political organizations of those places. That is, people’s sense of place affects not only their identities and experiences, but also their actions and the actions of others, which in turn influence the politics and economy of a place.

In this research, constructions of Tasmania as a place were very context specific. They differed between the young people I spoke with, the media, and government reports; they differed among the people I spoke with; and given individuals’ understandings differed over time. There were, however, some common strands to the discourses on Tasmania as a place, such as the isolation and insularity of the state and its relaxed lifestyle. People’s experiences of both leaving and returning to the state were influenced by their changing ideas about both places of departure and of destination. As a result of moving, such conceptualization of places often changed. For example, a number of people said that they saw Tasmania as a place differently upon their return. In some cases, this meant people had more appreciation for aspects of Tasmania upon return such as lifestyle improvements. In other cases this meant a greater realization of the insularity of the place upon return.

People act on their beliefs about the opportunities available or constraints posed by a particular place. In this way, people’s ideas about the opportunities or constraints surrounding practical considerations such as housing, health, education and employment are also related to place construction. In other words, people act on the basis of constructions of place. Similarly, discourses of ‘opportunities elsewhere’ or positive constructions of other places also influence migration decisions and experiences. In this way, constructions of place can be understood to have influenced
migration decisions and experiences. Decisions about the future also depend upon constructions of particular places and what they have to offer. These ideas are explored further in Chapter Seven.

Conceptualizations of place can also influence the political economies of those places. First, the image of particular places is important in retaining and attracting both investment and 'desirable' people to those places. Second, conceptualization about the nature of particular places and 'how things are' also influence ideas about 'how things should be done'. That is, place constructions influence the culture of government departments, private industry and educational institutions, as well as the approach of individuals towards their own working and personal lives.
5.5 Home places

Thus far the utility of the concept of place for examining both issues of identity and practical considerations has been outlined. While these discussions have focused on the concept of place in a general sense, it is also important to recognize that some places hold more significance for people. The places that hold the most significance for us, we tend to call 'home'. Home places are particularly important because of the strength of the feelings that surround them.

'Home' is a valuable concept when addressing emotional attachments to place and it is particularly significant in addressing issues of identity, community and belonging. People care deeply about home places and this influences their experiences and their actions. For example, ideas about home can influence migration decisions and experiences and can also influence other actions that may impact upon the economy and politics of a place.

In the academic literature the concept of home has been understood in a multitude of different ways. 'Home' has been seen as a socio-spatial entity (Saunders and Williams 1988), a psychosocial entity (Giuliani 1991; Porteous 1976), an emotive space (Giuliani 1991; Gurney 2000), or as a combination of the three (Somerville 1992, 1997; Sixsmith 1986). What is common to all of these approaches is that while a person's home is usually understood to be situated in space (and time), it is not the physical structure of a house or the natural and built environment of a neighbourhood or region that is understood to make a home. While homes may be located, it is not necessarily the location that is 'home' (see also Robinson 2002). Instead, it is argued that homes are places that hold considerable social, psychological and emotional meaning for individuals and/or for groups.

This connection between the concepts of 'home' and 'place' has already been recognized by a number of academics. For example, Prohansky et al. (1983:60) state that among those theorists who discuss place-identity, "without exception, the home
is considered to be the ‘place’ of greatest personal significance”. McDowell points out that Heidegger argued that the home is “the key location in which a spiritual unity is formed between humans and things” (1999:71) and that for Bachelard, the home is “a key element in the development of people’s sense of themselves as belonging to a place” (ibid:72). Bourdieu, in his discussion of “the regulated improvisation effected by habitus” has also used the house (understood to also be ‘the home’) as an example (Casey 2001:410). Duncan and Duncan (2001:41) note that topophilia “manifests itself most often in attachment to home places, places that vary in scale from the nation to the bedroom.”

However, Heidegger has claimed that:

Home nowadays is a distorted and perverted phenomenon. It is identical to a house; it can be anywhere. It is subordinate to us; easily measurable and expressible in numbers and money-value.

(Vycinas 1961:84-85 in Relph 1986:40)

However, I agree with Relph’s (1986:40) assertion that “this dismissal of the significance of home by Heidegger is too sweeping; there are surely more stages of association with home places than complete attachment and complete detachment”. I also point out that to understand ‘home’ only at the scale of the house is to take a very narrow view of the term. Furthermore, Massey (1995:64) notes that “integral to ideas of places as stable and settled ... is often – explicitly or implicitly – a notion of place as ‘home’”. However, Massey (1995) challenges the idea of the home as a bounded place of security and retreat. She notes that “a large component of the identity of that place called home derived precisely from the fact that it had always in
one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it” (ibid:14).

One’s home, then, can be understood as a particularly significant kind of place with which, and within which, we experience strong social, psychological and emotional attachments. The home is therefore an open place, maintained and developed through the relations that stretch beyond it.

5.5.1 Significant places

The nature of our attachment to home places is similar to that of our attachment to places more generally. However, homes are particularly significant places. Bourdieu and Wacquant add that we feel most ‘at home’ in the fields where our habitus has developed (1992:128 in Friedman 2002:300). Similarly, I argue that we feel at home in the places in which our habitus has developed. This appears to be what Susanne was saying when she explained, while talking about the nature of home during an interview:

Susanne: It’s something like not head but heart ... maybe just knowing that you know how to get along in that place, you know how things are done around here, you know what’s expected to live in that way. You know what you’ll come up against, you know how you’ll get through it, which is not to say that you won’t eventually learn those things somewhere else, but maybe it’s just that it comes instinctively rather than having to learn it.

A number of other people also spoke about this in terms of the familiarity of a place, the knowledge they had about that place and how this added to their feeling of being at home.

\(^{67}\) And I add (following Murdoch 1997) material and animal relations.
Kate: Here I know everything and when my friends from overseas come and travel round I say ‘OK, come on I’ll show you, this is Blackman’s Bay, we used to have sailors here, it used to be a little port area, but now it’s really, really rich’ [laughter]. ‘And you see this area in Salamanca, that wasn’t there when I was a kid. They’ve just built it now and it looks really ugly, Salamanca used to be heaps prettier than it is now’ ... and I feel like I have historical knowledge of the areas and you know, different areas have different meanings. Like I would never go to Syrup\(^{68}\) now, but when I walk past there I go, oh yeah, year 12 [laughter]. And the people as well, like you, it’s really quite ... interesting seeing what happens to everybody and you can go for so long without seeing anyone and someone will go ‘oh, remember that girl’ and I was like ‘yeah’ and they’re like ‘she’s doing this now’ and I was like ‘oh, really?’ and you don’t get that sort of historical connection between people and places anywhere else, yeah I definitely feel it here.

Some of the young Tasmanians I spoke to had multiple homes:

Peter: It was weird, I’d say that I was going home, in the Christmas break, I’d go home for two weeks and then I’d go back home to Melbourne ... They both became my home and I always considered I was going home whichever direction I was going.

However, people also mentioned that the sense of home they had in new locations were different to the sense of home they had in the places they grew up because their new homes were more of a ‘creation’. This can perhaps be understood as a distinction between the feeling of rootedness and the creation of a sense of place. In both cases, it remains a question of home places being places where the habitus has developed,

\(^{68}\) A nightclub.
but while the habitus may already be developed from an early age in the place of origin, moving to a new place requires the development of a new habitus for dealing with new environments and situations. For example, Susanne raised these issues when she was talking about feeling at home in London:

_Susanne_: Yeah, it was different, it was a creation ‘though. It wasn’t like I got there and ... I felt like I could come and live in Hobart, live in Launceston, go to the East Coast and even if I didn’t have the networks there, I didn’t have to create the ability to belong, I had that already because this is where I’m from and ... when I went to London you had to create that and it actually felt really temporary because it felt dependent on the people around you, whereas maybe Tasmania feels more dependent on the environment.

A number of people also spoke about these issues in terms of familiarity and feeling at home in familiar places. For example, Ben talked about the possibility of creating a new home:

_Ben_: I don’t know there’s just a certain time I guess after you’ve been somewhere for long enough ... that ... you have more going on socially than you would if you moved back to where you lived previously, um, you start to know the geography of the place I guess, to feel um, well that probably comes earlier, you start to feel really comfortable and you know all the places ‘round about, um, it feels familiar, um, and I think it’s very important that you’re happy there, um, but yeah, I think there would come a point and that would be it [you would feel at home].

Elizabeth also talked about the importance of familiarity for feeling at home:
Elizabeth: So to me Hobart is home, not Launceston which is where I went to school and is where my family, where my parents live. Hobart because I know it so well, I know the people, I know how to get around, I know where to find things.

Home, then, is a particularly significant kind of place. Home is significant because it is a place where the habitus has developed and this in turn means that one can feel unselfconsciously comfortable in the sense that we feel like we belong. People can come to have new and/or multiple, homes, but this requires the creation of a depth of relations (or of the development of habitus) in a new place, and this often takes time.

It is also important to recognize here that significant places, including home places, need not necessarily be places where people only have positive experiences. As Relph (1986:41) explains:

The places to which we are most committed may be the very centers of our lives, but they may also be oppressive and imprisoning.

Similarly, Olwig (1998:269) claims that:

The upholding of an idealized, harmonious home, associated with specific values and social relations, may create a perfect place of identification for some, a prison for others.

5.5.2 Located homes?

While the above quotations refer to homes in particular locations, it is also important to remember that while most places are located, location is not necessary the most prominent or important characteristic of any place, including home places. Indeed, for
some of the young people I spoke to, location was a less important factor than social ties in understanding the nature of home\(^69\):

**Katherine:** I guess that at the moment I’m really enjoying the sense of um, the community that we’re a part of and in some ways it’s an international community ... it’s more about a whole bunch of people who want to do life together and want to encourage, want to support and be there and ... for me there’s a feeling of home in that too because some of the relationships have developed to a point where there is a lot of honesty ... I’ve discovered new senses of the word ‘home’ ... I don’t know what to call it, of friendship or relationship.

**Trish:** For me, location’s not so much about physical location, like I said before, it’s about meaning ... if things are being shared and people are being looked after, that’s what I look for more than physical location.

In talking about where she thought of as home, Emily pointed to the importance of social ties in her understandings of home:

**Emily:** I always thought this [Tasmania] would be kind of, you know, a ... base, but as the love balance has kind of sorted itself out over Bass Strait that sort of changed, so, I mean my parents are here but my sister and cousin are in Melbourne, which kind of weighs it out.

\(^{69}\) While none of my informants talked specifically about their relationships to animals as an important part of their understandings of home, it would also be possible to understand home in these terms. In a famous essay, Heller discussed meeting a woman on an aeroplane who said that her home was “where my cat lives” (Heller 1995:1). This understanding of home also fits with a conceptualization of home places as nodes in networks of animal relations.
However, for others, location was very important. David spoke about home in terms of a node in networks of relations (a ‘centered place’) and the importance of the physical location of that place, in his case, Tasmania as a whole:

_Hazel_: You said before you came back to Tassie because it was home … what exactly do you mean?

_David_: I think I actually meant that’s where my parents were, that’s where the majority of my possessions still were, or a lot of them, and whatever centered place you have in your head or your heart that’s where it was physically located and I think that generally was Tasmania, in a broad sense, not just my parents’ house in Launceston … So, it’s something in your head and if you move, and er, you sort of align it, sort of want to be close to it, or if you go away that’s where you go back to … Some of it is where your mental map is.

The physical landscape was also raised as an important aspect of home. In particular, Mt Wellington, the mountain overlooking the city of Hobart (see plate 5.1), received a number of mentions both in the interviews and one of the focus groups:

_Peter_: It does feel like home when I’m going across the bridge for some reason, because that does stick out as you’re going across the bridge and you see the mountain.
Some informants also raised the importance of having a house in order to feel at home. For example, Heather explained that she did not feel like she had a home until she bought her first house:

*Heather:* Because my parents sold their house to go traveling around Australia, so home for me, I didn’t have a home as in a brick and mortar home and because I didn’t have that, Tassie didn’t feel like home and Launceston, my parents were already away, they were off Woop Woop somewhere, so again I didn’t have any tangible house to say right, this is my base and all the
time I was in London traveling I've never, I never had one. My first home was when I bought my house back here.70

James also pointed to the importance of having a house in order to feel at home:

James: I haven't been living anywhere that I would actually think of as my own place for a long time now because I was living at Mum and Dad's house ...and it's something that I really miss, something that I really hanker for now is my own place um and I feel a little bit like I'm a cork bobbing around, and I have been for a while, and I've been aware of it, and it's, yeah, it's not good, but I do feel a little bit homeless.

Hence, while home need not necessarily be located, often homes are understood to be located, and the absence of a particular stable location in which to centre oneself can even lead to feelings of homelessness.

Jackson (1995:110-112) suggests that 'home' can best be understood in terms of a relationship, arguing that 'being at home in the world':

is to experience a complete consonance between one's own body and the body of the earth. Between self and other. It little matters whether the other is a landscape, a loved one, a house, or an action. Things flow. There seems to be no resistance between oneself and the world. The relationship is all.

While he does not use the term 'place', Jackson's comments describe well the relationship between self and place through the body, where 'place' is understood in terms of landscapes, social relationships and actions. Hence, homes need not

70 See Saunders (1990) for a discussion on the impact of home ownership on feelings of ontological security.
necessarily be understood primarily in relation to a particular physical environment, but they certainly can be, just as they can be understood in relation to social (and animal) relationships and actions.

5.5.3 Timeless homes?

Home is certainly not simply a spatial entity; it is also a temporal entity. We develop a sense of place (and a sense of home) gradually over time. Our habitus needs time to develop in a new situation, a new place. As a result, people’s ideas about home change over time:

Mark: I suppose I started thinking of Tassie as home when I realized that I was having a lot of fun here, therefore why chuck in a perfectly good job type of thing. It just gradually became more home to me again.

Gary: I think of Hobart as my home now. Burnie was my home, but not any more ... although it’s funny like Burnie, I know that’s a place where I feel safe, a place where I belong.

Some theorists have even gone as far as to argue that the home experience was spatial in the past and is now temporal. For example, Heller (1995:7) argues that rather than feeling at home in the culture of a particular place, people increasingly feel at home in the culture of a particular time – the present. Heller’s arguments mirror the concerns of social theorists such as Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1997, 2001) with regards to the issue of identity in that she is concerned with explaining the evident changes that have occurred over the last century in the ways in which people interact with each other and with the material and animal world. Much has been made of such changes in discussions about globalization and the increased independence of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental aspects of human life. However,

71 Discussed further in the next chapter.
Heller's argument that the experience of 'home' for individuals was spatial and is now temporal seems to miss the point that home places (like all places) do not have (and never have had) a privileged relationship with space. Furthermore, the temporal aspect must always have been important in the creation of home places as places where the habitus has developed over time. It may be the case that home places were more likely to have been discussed in terms of location in the past than they are now, but this is a question of more 'bounded' as opposed to more 'networked' conceptualizations of places. The social, material and animal networks of the past may not have been as far reaching as they are today, but this need not be understood as a move away from the spatial and towards the temporal but rather as a move away from more bounded notions of place and towards increasingly networked notions of place.

5.5.4 Home and practical considerations

Just as people's understandings of a place can influence their actions and therefore their practical considerations and the political economy of that place, so too can people's understandings of a home place influence their actions and practical considerations and the politics and economy of that home place. In fact, given that people's attachments to home places are particularly strong, it follows that the impact of understandings of home places would be even greater than that of other places upon their actions. For example, David explained the reasons behind his return:

_Hazel:_ How come you left Canberra and went back to Launceston?

_David:_ It was home ... that's where you go back to, that's where your parents were, that was home.

And Ben said that given the choice, in the future:

_Ben:_ I would choose to live in Tasmania, um, because it's home.
5.6 Conclusion

The concept of ‘place’ is of central importance to this research. Taking note of discourses of place is an important part of understanding migration experiences. This is firstly because experience is emplaced and secondly because places are experienced. That is, place is not simply given, it is created through action. Place is practiced and, in this process, also experienced. The young Tasmanians I spoke to were moving physically and emotionally between places, understood as socially constructed nodes (or central significant points) in networks of social, material and animal relations. Furthermore, Heidegger’s arguments imply that not only is place a “distinctive feature of ... experience” (Casey 1996:29), it is also necessary for ‘being’ itself. That is, “place is something like a formal universal in that it functions like ... a condition of possibility for all human (and ... animal and plant) experience” (ibid:29). The concept of place has much to offer in providing understanding of people’s ideas about self, identity and belonging, and in understanding the actions that they take as a result of such understandings, as well as the impacts of those actions on the economies and political situations of different places.

Home places are particularly significant types of places that hold a great deal of meaning for people. People may have multiple homes, and ideas about home can change over time, but the creation of the feeling of home takes time, as homes are places ‘thick’ with meaning. The emotional attachments that people have with home places are particularly strong and this strength of feeling can have a substantial impact upon the actions they take, and hence on the politics and economies of the places they inhabit.

The next two chapters draw upon this understanding of place in examining the understandings of these young returned Tasmanians with regards to flexible identity (Chapter Six) and place construction (Chapter Seven).
Chapter 6. Flexible identity, mobility and place

The way we theorise place and space has important implications for the way we understand social processes. Migration studies can offer an important perspective on these questions because the migrant’s identity is characterized by movement between places.

(Baldassar 2001:7)

6.1 Introduction

The stories people tell about themselves and their experiences are a means through which identities are constructed and developed. During my discussions my informants about their experiences of migration, people often spoke about, and thereby constructed, their own identities. Indeed, for many of the people I spoke to, their moves were not only moves between places, but also journeys of self-discovery.

In analyzing the interview transcripts of my informants, I realized that one of the most important issues to come out of these discussions was the idea of moving as a means towards flexible self-development and identity formation. With this in mind, I started looking for theorists who address these issues and thought that Giddens’ (1991) and Bauman’s (1997, 2001) discussions on the rise of ‘reflexive individualism’ might be useful. In this chapter, I discuss the problems that I faced in trying to apply Giddens’ and Bauman’s approaches to my own research transcripts and outline an alternative approach that recognizes the importance of both mobility and place to the process of identity construction.

I begin by describing the socio-historical approaches to identity proposed by both Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1997, 2001). I then examine the relatively recent work in sociology that concentrates on identity as mobile, dynamic, hybrid and relational,
followed by a look at the approach of a group of geographers who have been concentrating on the relationship between identity and place and the affective bonds that people have with places. Finally, I examine the relationships between these three approaches in the context of the potential impacts of mobility and place on identity construction, address the related issue of the impact of stability and change on people’s identities and discuss the difficulties of directly equating the place-mobility relationship with this stability-change relationship.
6.2 A historical approach to identity

The first approach I want to examine considers the changing nature of identity construction throughout the last century. Pioneered by Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1997, 2001), this approach argues that the nature of identity has changed since the late nineteenth century due to a series of significant social and economic changes. According to these theorists, during the pre-modern period, which lasted until early in the twentieth century, individuals' identities were prescribed by place of birth and the social position of one's parents. In fact, the identities of individuals were understood to be a matter of human nature, predestination and fate (Bauman 2001).

In the modern period, significant changes in western societies and economies led to changes in the nature of identity. During the modern period, the individual was emancipated from "the ascribed, inherited and inborn determination of his or her social character" (Bauman 2001:144). However, social life was still organized to a degree around the concept of social classes, which were understood to be achieved social positions, but which were, in reality, relatively stable (ibid:145). The aim during this period was to maintain one's class position, "keeping up with the Joneses" (ibid:145).

In the post-modern period, over the last twenty years or so, more significant social and economic changes, often referred to as globalization processes (including increasing rates of, especially international, migration) have led to yet another major change in the nature of identity. This period, which Bauman (2001) has called 'liquid modernity', is characterized by endless flows of people, money, ideas and a requirement for flexibility. Construction of identity is understood as an individual

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72 It is important to recognize that while Giddens and Bauman seem to imply that their theories of the development of identity apply to the whole world, a closer reading of their work indicates that their arguments are directed mainly at developments in 'advanced societies'.

73 A number of famous sociologists wrote about the structural changes occurring during this period (e.g. Marx [1876] who discussed the need for flexible labour and a 'reserve army' of labour) and the resulting changes in the nature of identity (e.g. Durkheim [1897], who wrote about the increasing stress on individualism and resulting 'anomic').


project and individuals carry responsibility for making their lives work (White and Wyn 2004:184). This means that people are faced with the ‘freedom and burden’ of designing their own identity (Williams and McIntyre 2001), and since everything is changing so rapidly, the previous generation cannot provide a useful template for the best way to proceed (White and Wyn 2004). This period has also seen a rise in the concern with lifestyle and ‘quality of life’ issues as survival is now presumed to be assured for many (Bauman 1997; Giddens 1991).

In the post-modern period, individuals find themselves with no stable position to aim for in the process of identity construction. People must continuously redefine their aims because if they aim for a particular goal, the likelihood is that not only will the goal have moved by the time they get there, but the path they needed to follow to get there will have moved as well (Bauman 2001). Giddens (1991:5) explains that individuals have to work at sustaining “coherent, yet continuously revised”, identities, because identity is understood as a task that can never be completed. Hence, identities are fluid in postmodern society.

In summary, these theorists describe the changing values over the last century in terms of the ways in which people think about themselves and their place in the world. They describe a shift from a situation in which people had “unambiguous priorities linked to local communities and shared goals” (White & Wyn 2004:187), to the current focus on individualism, “self-enlightenment and self-liberation” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002:38 in White & Wyn 2004:187). Or as Bauman (2001:152) puts it, the shift has been from inherited or acquired identities to a focus on ‘identification’. This shift in the nature of identity can also be understood as a shift from relatively stable identities rooted in place to hybrid identities characterized by mobility and flux. The problems with understanding this shift in terms of a movement towards identities entirely divorced from place are addressed below (in sections 6.4 and 6.5).
6.3 Mobility and identity

Recent sociological accounts of identity seem to provide some support for the arguments of Giddens and Bauman. These accounts of identity have criticized characterizations of identity as being fixed and stable. Gabriel (2004:110) explains that there has been a recent shift in the ways in which sociologists view the self, with increasing focus being placed on the strategic, positional and context-reliant nature of identity, the “multi-vocal, fragmented and hybrid” nature of identity, and the construction of identity within “particular discursive formulations” and relations of power. In other words, these theorists argue that identity is dynamic (Rutherford 1990), positional (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), hybrid (Ang 1998) and constructed within relations of power (Mason 2004).

According to these accounts of identity, identities are not fixed. Rather, identities are seen as dynamic. As situations change over time, so do identities. Rutherford (1990:24) explains:

> Identity then is never a static location, it contains traces of its past and what it is to become. It is a provisional full-stop in the place of differences and the narrative of our own lives.

The dynamic nature of identity has led Wallman (1998:195) to argue that identity “is better understood as a search than as a quality of places or persons”. Wallman (ibid:195) goes on to argue that migration, understood as both physical mobility of people and cognitive migration evident in “an increasing awareness of the possibility of movement”, is “the essence of the age”. Sweetman’s (2003) idea of the ‘reflexive habitus’ (discussed in Chapter Three), where reflexivity and flexibility are integral to one’s habitus, provides a further argument for the intrinsically dynamic nature of identity.
Not only are identities dynamic, they are also positional according to these theorists. Katz (1992:504) argues that we should recognize the “situatedness, and thus partiality of all knowledges [in order to] develop a politics that is empowering because it is not just about identity – a descriptive term – but about position”. However, for many recent identity theorists, identity itself is understood to be positional. These arguments draw on the work of Said (1979), who argues that people define their own identities in part through the identification of ‘the other’. In other words, people’s identities are in part constituted by their definitions of what they are not, and by the creation of (physical and mental) borders or boundaries around their identities. Penrose and Jackson (1993:207) explain that this situation “gives rise to a politics of identity, as groups of individuals become aware of their differences”. However, such identities, and the boundaries created around them, are also understood to be dynamic and constantly changing. This leads Gupta and Ferguson (1997:13) to claim that “identity neither ‘grows out’ of rooted communities, nor is it a thing that can be possessed or owned by individual or collective social actors. It is a mobile, often unstable relation of difference”.

The term hybridity has been taken up by some of these theorists to stress the dynamic and positional nature of identity. The word ‘hybrid’ was originally used to describe people of ‘mixed-race’, but has been adopted by these theorists to talk about “the notion of ‘in-betweenness’ as a position, being between positions” (Ang 1998:160). According to Ang (ibid:161), hybridity is a useful term because it starts from the presumption that boundaries are blurred. Hence, identities, once they are understood to be hybrid, are no longer fixed, bounded or discrete entities, but necessarily dynamic and positional.

Finally, some theorists (e.g. Gabriel 2004 and Mason 2004) have brought attention to the significance of discourse for identity construction, arguing that people construct their own identities through the stories that they tell to themselves and to others to make sense of their lives. Mason (2004:165) discusses this issue with regards to the narratives of migrants explaining, “narratives are interpretive devices through which
people represent themselves to themselves and to others and a means by which people connect past and present, self and other”.

However, the types of stories one is able to tell and the ability to have those stories heard and taken seriously is intricately tied up with relations of power. The works of Foucault (1986) and Goffman (1968, 1971) have been used by some academics (e.g. Gabriel 2004) to bring attention to the significance of discourse for identity construction and to provide support for the argument that identities are constructed within relations of power. Similarly, Friedman (1992) discusses the importance of power for identity construction in the context of flows of capital between economic cores and peripheries, arguing that unstable economic relations between more and less powerful groups can lead to identity crises.

All of these elements of identity were apparent in the interviews conducted with young Tasmanians. Some people spoke about their identity as a dynamic, open-ended and incomplete project:

*Gary:* I felt like it was a new chapter, I actually felt like I could re-invent myself really, I felt pretty good.

*Tim:* My father was fairly well respected in Hobart ... you were ... always going to be in his shadow if you were here and I wanted to go away and just do it on my own ... and it’s worked well because now I’ve come back it’s different to if I’d stayed here I reckon, because I’ve done all these things by myself now and I’m a different, I’m my own person.

*Katherine* [talking about when she moved to Melbourne]: Coming out of a very close knit community where things are black and white and things are right and wrong and things are the way they
are and coming into contact with lots of different, church communities and different non-church communities and seeing different ways of life, you know, I mean I just see that whole time of life as incredibly um, enriching in terms of me understanding the world and incredibly frustrating in terms of me trying to understand who I was and my place in it.

People also talked about their identities in positional terms. Both in terms of differences between themselves and other people:

*James:* I found a lot of my old friends really annoying, um, and sort of narrow minded, that sort of struck, and you know, Canberra doesn’t exactly broaden your horizons in the same way that going to Peru would or something but, um. Yeah, I had a very different perspective I think.

And also in terms of differences in their own identities in different situations:

*Susanne:* I mean there are some times when I think I’m a completely different person to what I was when I was travelling and um which one, you know, sometimes you’d prefer to be the more exciting one that’s living the life ... but in reality I know now what I’m really comfortable with and I know who I am.

*Heather:* I swear, I had so many hang-ups and issues and problems that yeah, I just look back now and I think it’s a different person.

Some people also spoke about the power that others could hold over their identities and the freedom that migration could bring in this respect in terms of re-defining oneself:
Susanne: After a while the anonymity becomes really sort of fun and you realize that you don't have to fit any stereotype that you've had before, you can be whatever you want to be, and if you're a quite, retiring sort of person no one knows it and you can be really outrageous and no one's going to think any different of you.

In summary, a number of contemporary academics understand identities to be mobile, relational, hybrid and power-laden. Research into the experiences of migrants (e.g. Ang 1998 and Mason 2004) has proved a fruitful field for examination of these issues, given that migrants are often faced with new situations and new experiences, requiring a re-thinking and negotiation of their understandings about the world and appropriate ways to deal with issues that arise in their everyday lives. My own discussions with young returned Tasmanians provided much support for such mobile, relational, hybrid and power-laden constructions of identity.
6.4 Place and identity

While the accounts revealed so far seem to support Giddens’ and Bauman’s approaches to the concept of identity, I decided to also look at the interview transcripts and focus group discussions to see if some people had spoken about their identities in relation to place, which both Giddens and Bauman contend is less important in these post-modern times. To provide a theoretical basis for such an examination, I looked to the work of a group of geographers who concentrate on the relationship between identity and place. Studying the relationship between identity and place became popular amongst geographers who focused on the affective bonds people had to different places, due to a growing concern about “the alienation produced by ‘placeless’ modern environments” (Duncan & Duncan 2001:41).

These academics perceive identity to be created through the body’s interactions with the outside world (Easthope 2004:130). Personal identity is no longer seen as “a matter of sheer self-consciousness” (Casey 2001:406), or as defined and expressed only through one’s relationship to other people (Proshansky et al. 1983), but rather involves “intrinsically an awareness of one’s place”, an awareness that “there is no place without self; and no self without place” (Casey 2001:406).

According to Dovey (1985), identity is tied to place in two important respects. Firstly, one’s spatial identity is related to ideas of attachment to places and particularly ideas surrounding a special kind of place – the home. Secondly, temporal identity is also affected by place as the emotion of human beings “finds expression and anchorage in things and places” (Tuan 1974:241 in Dovey 1985:42), and the physical environment enables us to “concretise memory through association” (Dovey 1985:42; see also Godkin 1980).

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74 It is important to recognize that these academics operate with a particular definition of the concept of ‘place’ (outlined in Chapter Five, see also Easthope 2004).
Place attachment can of course be personal, but place attachment is also important for collective identities. As Basso (1996:56-57) notes, “relationships to places are lived most often in the company of other people, and ... people are forever presenting each other with culturally mediated images of where and how they dwell”. The most common examples of group identities connected to particular places are national and ethnic identities, in which connection to a ‘homeland’ provides a common reference point for groups of people (e.g. Holton 1998 and Martin 1997). Kakar (1996) explains that identification with a group based on a concept of a common ‘home’ place can provide feelings of love and belonging for individuals and groups, and can be formed as a result of feelings of ‘exhilaration’. It is this feeling of exhilaration that is played upon in nationalistic discourse, a feeling of national pride. Furthermore, ideas of home-place have been “important bases for resistance and liberation” (ibid:233).

However, bonds to place need not be positive. People also identify against places, establishing their own sense of place by contrasting themselves with different places and the people in them. This is the thesis of Said’s famous book Orientalism (1979) and there has been much academic interest in the connection between places (particularly home-places) and hostilities, especially at the national scale. A number of researchers have discussed the “dark side of topophilia as manifested in the naturalisation of the nation-state” (Duncan & Duncan 2001:41) and Massey and Jess (1995:233) note that “the metaphors of home and homeland” have often “provoked damage and aggression”.

Much of this work on place attachment draws on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Heidegger (1973). Both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger challenged Cartesian dualist thought. Merleau-Ponty criticized the idea of a disembodied ego and instead argued that “our primary relation to our world is not, in the first instance, a matter of reflective thought, ... but rather of practical involvement and mastery” (Crossley 2001:100). In his own words, Merleau-Ponty (1999:154) argues, “consciousness is in the first place not a matter of ‘I think that’ but of ‘I can’.”
As noted in the previous chapter, Heidegger's contribution was to propose a philosophy of 'being-in-the-world', an explanation of the mechanisms through which attachment to place is realized. Heidegger recognized that who we are is influenced by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world. As Casey (2001:413, emphasis in original) notes, "the vehicle of being-in-place is the body". The body "goes out to meet the place-world75 [and it] bears the traces of the places it has known" (ibid:414). In other words, these theorists recognize that to fully understand the concept of identity, we need to recognize the ways that people interact with the physical world through their bodies. It is not enough to just conceive of identity as a process that takes place in the minds of individuals. Hence, the relationship that people have with their physical environment and the ways in which they understand that relationship through different conceptualisations of place are important aspects of identity construction (on both an individual and a group level).

Martin (1997:91) points to the utility of Bourdieu's arguments for the embodied nature of place at both the individual and the group level. Bourdieu (1979) argues that the actions of bodies "constitute places, constructing them as gendered and sexualised in particular ways" (Martin 1997:92). In the process, "these same bodies are also gendered and sexualised" (ibid:92). Hence, place is inscribed and experienced through bodies. Place and bodies are co-constituting. Furthermore, the embodied notion of place is relevant at the group level not simply in the sense of many bodies interacting with the same place, but also in their interactions with other bodies. Hage (2002:162) argues that communities are not simply imagined, "they are also so many bodies relating to each other". According to Hage (ibid:162, emphasis in original), "that's what feeling part of a community, as opposed to just imagining, can convey".

These theories are not in opposition to the sociological accounts of identity described above. These theorists of place and identity seldom claim that identities based on place are anything other than incomplete, dynamic, hybrid and relational. For

75 'Place-world', a term coined by Edward Soja, is "a world that is not only perceived or conceived but actively lived" (Casey 2001:413, emphasis in original). The place-world is simultaneously social, spatial and historical (ibid:413).
example, Keith and Pile (1993:31, *emphasis added*) explicitly point to the “significance of spatiality in the *incomplete process* of identity formation”. However, they do add an extra dimension to the study of identity by recognizing that we necessarily have an attachment to the physical environment through our bodies and that this attachment can be given social significance through attachment to place.

During the interviews many people spoke about attachment to place and to home places and the influence of this attachment on identity and belonging:

*Gary:* I started travelling back to Burnie one time ... I actually felt a real peace coming over me as far as, this is where I belong, this is my home.

*Katherine:* I look out and look at what the mountain’s doing and I talk about the mountain as though it has a personality and that’s part of a sense of feeling that I belong to a place.

*Susanne:* I actually made a choice to come to Tasmania because I really, there’s something about, it sounds really corny, but there was something about it that never left me when I was away.

This feeling of belonging was also tied to memory and longevity in a place:

*James:* It must be that feeling [pause] you just know the place, how do you explain the feeling that comes from growing up somewhere. Because that’s so, you know, you know every street, you know that if you look at the clouds coming from the hill it’s about to rain or whatever, and that’s, I find that hard to explain but you feel completely comfortable, you know something almost as well as you know yourself even.
One woman even talked about this in terms of place being engrained in the body:

*Heather:* It's nice going somewhere and just having it seem so familiar that it's engrained in you.

These connections were not only personal, but also collective. Some people spoke about collective identification with Tasmania:

*Tim:* A lot of the Tassies that I met away were very, they were always Tasmanians, in fact they were always bagged out as Tasmanians ... Him and I organized a Tassie party once in Perth ... We picked a pub ... and we rang up all the Tassie people we could think of and asked them to ring up all the Tassie people they could think of and just spread the word and this pub was packed ... Just packed full of Tassie people, all different ages and different walks of life and they all strongly, obviously strongly identified with Tassie. Because they used to call us the Tasmanians at work, so it's something you wear.

In summary, many of the young Tasmanians I spoke to talked about their identities in relation to place attachment, including attachment to home places, and both personal and collective forms of place attachment. Significantly, the people referred to above did this at the same time as they spoke about their identities as mobile, hybrid and relational, indicating that the two modes of identification do not necessarily exclude each other.
6.5 Discussion

I have outlined the major arguments of three schools of thought that address the issue of identity. The first argues that we are moving away from identities based on place and towards hybrid and flexible forms of identity in this late-modern period. To put this more simply, the argument is that we are moving away from ‘rooted’ and towards ‘routed’ identities (Ang 1998), that is, away from identities grounded in place and towards identities of mobility. The second provides some support for this position, and argues that our identities are incomplete, hybrid and relational. The third argues that understanding identity only in terms of mobility is insufficient and that our identities are also influenced by our attachment to places.

All of these theorists recognize that identities may be influenced by both stability and change. However, Giddens and Bauman’s implication that in post-modern times place no longer holds any relevance for identity is problematic. I argue that this assertion is only possible because these theorists, in concentrating on the social aspects of identity, simply equate place with stability and do not pay enough attention the role of the body in identity construction, and particularly the body’s interactions with the physical world.

To be fair to these theorists, Giddens (1991) does talk about the body and Bauman (2001) does address the issue of place. Giddens (1991:7) mentions the body when he explains that the reflexivity of self affects the body in that “the body becomes reflexively mobilised” in the construction of identity. However, Giddens is only talking about the role of the body in terms of image creation, not in terms of the relationship of the individual with the physical world in the form of place attachment. However, Bauman (2001:146, emphasis in original) does specifically address the issue of place attachment, claiming that:

In our times of ‘liquid’ modernity ... not just the individual placements in society, but the places to which the individuals may
gain access and in which they may wish to settle are melting fast and can hardly serve as targets for life projects.

However, this claim that places are ‘melting’ is, I believe, misguided. Places do not exist independently of our attachments to them (remembering that ‘place’ is not the same as ‘space’) and so long as we exist as physical bodies in the physical world, we will always have some form of attachment to that world and hence we will always create meaningful places. This is not to say that the relative importance of rooted identities based upon significant ties to places has not diminished. Neither is it to claim that all identities must necessarily be rooted in a single place. While many of the examples of place attachment described above give examples of very strong attachments to (often singular) ‘home’ places, attachments to place need not be singular, or as strong. For example, Fortier (2000:129) claims that diasporas can be empowering because they are “liberated ... from the necessary rootedness of origins in ... a single place”. However, attachment to place(s) cannot be absolutely demolished. Perhaps for some, attachment to place manifests as weaker attachments to a collection of dispersed places. However, attachment to place must exist in some form, and must impact upon our identities so long as we exist as beings with bodies.

Similarly, sociologists who consider identities to be hybrid and positional also need to recognize the relationships of people to places, as well as to other people. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Understanding that identity is influenced by place attachment does not mean that identities cannot be seen as hybrid, relational and positional. This is because place does not necessarily equate with stability. Places are constantly being re-imagined and re-created (discussed further in the next chapter). Furthermore, the identity ‘project’ relies on both place attachment and mobility simultaneously, just as it relies on both stability and change. None of these aspects of identity should be seen as exclusive, as they make sense only in relation to each other. Hence, approaches to understanding identity construction that focus on place attachment can be complementary to approaches that focus on mobility.
Indeed, the interview and focus group excerpts included in this chapter indicate that it is possible to understand one’s identity in terms of both place and mobility simultaneously. Gary, Heather, James, Katherine, Tim and Susanne all drew upon notions of fluid, mobile identities and identities informed by place attachment simultaneously. People can, and do, talk in terms of both post-modern individualism and place attachment simultaneously, indicating that the two modes of understanding identity construction are not exclusive. We cannot say that we are moving away from the importance of place attachment totally and migrants cannot be categorized into ‘modern’ and ‘post-modern’ ideal identity types.

A number of academics have addressed the dual nature of identity. Perhaps the most influential is Tuan (2001), who argues that the cosmos and the hearth correspond to our dual nature. The hearth is local, cozy, familiar and nurturing, and implies a small bounded place, which is accessible to us through direct experience through the senses (ibid:319). The cosmos, on the other hand is large, abstract and impersonal, and is accessible only through mediated experience (ibid:319). Cosmos and hearth are two polar extremes and “the worlds and experiences that these terms conjure often overlap” (ibid:319). Tuan (ibid:319) writes that these two terms correspond to the fact that we are both body (which desires the hearth) and mind (which reaches out to the cosmos). He goes on to argue that both the hearth and the cosmos contribute to a sense of self, but in different ways – the hearth offers security while the cosmos offers adventure. One’s identity in the hearth, according to Tuan (ibid:322), “is not an effect of personal struggle and definition”. He (ibid:322) says, “identity is bestowed by one’s kin and neighbor and by material objects that one’s ancestors … have made”. One’s identity in the cosmos, in contrast, “requires effort, individual or group; and it is effort with no guarantee of success” (ibid:322). The similarities to Giddens and Bauman’s work are apparent here, but Tuan recognizes that both the cosmos and the hearth are necessary parts of our nature, and that while one may be more dominant, it cannot entirely eliminate the other.
Following from Tuan, Casey (2001) argues that it is not the case that the stronger the self becomes, the less important place should be (and vice versa). The self is strengthened not only by the cosmos, but also by the hearth. It can be argued that a self that becomes stronger through its 'explorations' in the cosmos still requires a different kind of strength that can only be achieved through the hearth. In other words, the more we rely on the cosmos for our development, the more we desire the hearth.

A number of other academics have also addressed these issues. Seamon (1985:227, emphasis in original) talks about the "rest-movement relationship and its associated polarities of home and reach, centre and horizon, dwelling and journey". Based on a phenomenological examination of Swedish immigrants to America in the 1800s as portrayed in Vilhelm Moberg’s “Emigrant” novels, Seamon (ibid:227-228) claims that “the relationship between dwelling and journey is dialectical and identifies the need for both stability and change in people’s dealings with places and environments”.

Similarly, while Rapport and Dawson (1998:33) argue that movement has become fundamental to modern identity and that people conceive of their lives in terms of moving between relations, people, things, groups, societies, cultures and environments, they do this in “a dialectic between movement and fixity”. Both movement and stability are necessary for understanding one’s life. Dawson (1998:219) also talks about these issues, arguing that there is an ambivalence at the heart of most people’s experiences between “fixity and a connection to the here and now” and movement. His arguments are interesting in that he explicitly explains that this movement includes not only spatial movement, but also social and temporal movement (ibid:219-220). Hence, he recognizes that even when “people face conditions of fixity … they engage cognitively in movement” (ibid:220). That is, even when a person is in one place, their imagination can be in movement. This is important because imaginations of other places (and other times) “[inform] images of community constructed in the here and now” (ibid:220). In other words, imaginations
of movement can inform the lived reality of 'fixity'. By extension, it could also be argued that even when one is in movement, one's imagination can be focused on a singular place and that these imaginations of fixity can influence the experiences of mobility. Much of the literature of migrants' attachments to 'home' seems to do just that.

These issues are also discussed within the context of borders and group identities. Sarup (1996 in McHugh 2000:85) recognizes that identities are defined and limited by borders and boundaries and that "in crossing boundaries, taken-for-granted identities are thrust into consciousness". However, other commentators have argued that most people need to have those boundaries in place, but they also need to be able to cross those boundaries in order to maintain their identities. For example, Buttiner (1980) writes about insiders' and outsiders' views of space, saying that people's personal and cultural identity is bound up with place identity, and that most people need both a home and horizons of reach (of imagination, social relations or physical relations) outward from that home. King (1995:29) discusses these issues with reference to migrants' experiences, saying that "the migrant's sense of place and of personal identity often involve a duality - 'here' and 'there', which is an important aspect of their lives."
6.6 Place as stability and mobility as change?

While this chapter has focused upon place and mobility, the issues of stability and change have also been implicit in these discussions. The arguments outlined above have pointed to the importance of both place and mobility in understanding identity. However, at the same time, the importance of both stability and change for people's identities has also been recognized by many academics. This is particularly evident in the work of Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1997, 2001), but also in the writings of Casey (2001), Rapport and Dawson (1998), Seamon (1985) and Tuan (2001).

Stability of the external (social, physical, cultural) environment has been seen as important for maintaining coherent identities, while change in the external environment has been seen as important for identity development. However, despite the importance of both place and mobility and both stability and change for the identity 'project', place should not be simply equated with stability and mobility should not be simply equated with change or instability.

Places, understood as nodes in networks of relations, are not stable in the sense of being static. Rather, they are constantly re-negotiated and understood in new ways by different people, or by the same people at different times. For example, Matthew's comments regarding his return to Tasmania provide an indication of how a person's sense of place can change over time:

Matthew: I realized just how pretty it is here, how naturally pretty, even, I just started to notice things that I hadn’t noticed before just driving around up North between Mum and Dad’s and Devonport, oh wow, you can see Mount Roland and the Great Western Tiers over there and I just, it really bothered me, just taken for granted before I guess, and now it’s something I really notice.

Similarly, mobility need not necessarily imply change. For some people, mobility itself has become normalized and they can feel "at home in movement" (Rapport &
Dawson 1998:27) Mobility is normalized and expected for cosmopolitan elites (Bauman 1998) and for nomadic cultures. To a lesser extent, this was also true for those young Tasmanians who saw leaving Tasmania (mobility) as a normal state of affairs:

**Hazel:** Why did you leave?

**Emily:** Partly it was just I think some sort of natural, I don’t know, fly, like migratory instincts. You know, turtles pop out of the sand, run to the water, go for it, you know, head out to deep sea. And it felt very much partly that, I just had to go, had to get out of town

Hence, the stability-change dialectic is related to the mobility-change dialectic, but the two should not be equated. It is important to move away from such dialectics and recognize that reality is even more complex than these dialectics imply.

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76 A related argument is made by Cuba and Hummon (1993:551), who argue that feeling at home in a place may in fact require place mobility across the life-cycle for some people.

77 Bauman’s work can be interpreted to imply that such ‘cosmopolitan elites’ are in fact ‘placeless’, while ‘locals’ are place-bound. However, I argue that place still matters to both cosmopolitan elites and locals because they both have bodies and therefore interact with their external environments. It may perhaps be more useful to draw on the work of Skrbis and Woodward (2005), who consider cosmopolitanism to be something one *does* rather than the cosmopolitan as something one essentially *is.*
Figure 6.1 below outlines the relationships between place, mobility, stability and change as they relate to identity following the arguments of Giddens and Bauman, and then using my own approach.

Figure 6.1: Approaches to understanding the relationship of place, mobility and identity

The approach implied by Giddens and Bauman

The approach taken in this thesis
6.7 Conclusion

In discussing the nature of identity in these late-modern times, it is not sufficient to address only those aspects of identity influenced by society, or to address only those aspects of identity influenced by place. I contend that these approaches are not exclusionary and that theories that concentrate on identity and society are in fact complementary to theories that focus on identity and place. However, if we are to fully understand 'the late-modern individual', our approach must recognize the importance of both place and mobility.

In this chapter, I have made two parallel arguments. First, I argued that to properly understand migration, we need to take into account the impact not only of mobility and change (as many recent sociologists have done), but also of place and stability (as a collection of geographers have done). Second, I extended this argument by claiming that places are not necessarily stable and mobility need not necessarily imply change in the sense of instability. It is not enough to claim that we are moving from a society of people with stable identities based solely on constructions of place to one of people with identities in flux solely because of change achieved through mobility. There may be a trend towards a prioritization of one over the other, but neither can ever become redundant. Stability, change, place and mobility are fundamental aspects of the human condition and the concept of identity cannot be fully understood without reference to these stability-change and place-mobility dialectics.

The next chapter moves away from discussions of identity and emotive attachments to place and instead focuses on the political and economic consequences of place construction.