Rough Draft

Amenity Migration And A Radical Theory Of Place*

Gundars Rudzitis
Department of Geography
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844
USA

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Introduction: The neo-classical model of migration and emergence

of contrary evidence

Traditionally, neo-classical migration models were based on the assumption that people moved for economic reasons such as employment or increased income. In a classical article Sjaasted (1962) set the decision to move within a cost-benefit framework where individuals evaluated the relative tradeoffs as the basis to move or stay. The non-economic facets of people's lives in the decision to move were not part of the cost-benefit calculus.

No attempt was made to understand why people live in places. The role of the physical environment and its major component, land, was dismissed, as was the social and cultural environment. This limited view of migration was, however, soon to be challenged. Perhaps the earliest statement of the importance of amenities in regional growth was a 1954 article by geographer Edward Ullman. Studies in the 1960s and 1970s began to cast doubt on the traditional neoclassical model. [1]

Amenities that are location-specific became a central focus of migration research. Because of their tie to specific places people usually have to migrate to attain the particular combination of amenities they desire (Diamond, 1980; Diamond and Tolley, 1982; Graves and Linneman, 1979; Graves, 1979, 1980, 1983; Harris, Tolley and Harell, 1968; Krumm, 1983; Tolley, 1974, Moss, 2006).

This approach, sometimes called the “quality of life model, argues that people migrate and live where they do for non-economic reasons and that jobs follow people. If given a choice, people and firms live and locate where they do for reasons having to do with the social, cultural, and physical environment. Such non-economic amenities attract and retain people and businesses. Consequently, maintaining a place's unique character can be an important economic development strategy. It puts quality of life and environmental quality at center stage, instead of off stage or in a peripheral and minor supporting role.

The Graves and Linneman (1979) location-specific amenity model provided a theoretical framework that focused on differences between places. Graves and Linneman following Tolley

[1] Much of the work I cite results from the efforts of economist George Tolley when he and a cadre of his students, post-docs and visiting scholars at the University of Chicago began asking questions about the environment and how to value it. I was also a member of this group. I was glad to be working in this group since I was still recovering from a shock when in a graduate class with Professor Milton Friedman, considered by many as one of the most influential economists of all time, he mentioned that we should have no national parks or wilderness areas unless people were willing to pay for them. Only the private market should provide these amenities. I started having doubts about neoclassical economics. For example, one of my early co-authored articles (Hwang and Rudzitis,1981) which resulted from working on George Tolley’s project was estimating the value of the rivers in the Chicago metropolitan area. We estimated this value at about six billion 1970 dollars with a wide confidence span running from two billion to eleven billion dollars. I found doing the research challenging but started to wonder if this was the best way to do it, though I usually put such doubts aside.

(1974) defined amenity as a non-traded or location-specific good that cannot be traded across space or between regions. Variation in consumption is feasible only through relocation.

Areas with lower levels of amenities have to pay more to attract people than areas with higher levels of location-specific amenities. Researchers have shown that families will move as a result of either a rise or fall in income since they are willing to accept lower wages and pay higher rents to live in high amenity areas (Roebeck, 1982; 1988; Blanchflower and Oswald, 1995; Power, 1995, 1996; Power and Barnett, 2001; von Reichert and Rudzitis, 1994).

At about the same time sociologists were conducting survey research suggesting that people's preferences were changing toward a desire to live in rural areas. Previously, people had moved to metropolitan areas for urban amenities, but those leaving metropolitan areas during the 1970s were more likely to list quality-of-life factors than economic ones as part of their migration decision (Williams and Sofranko, 1979). Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975) found that people who show a preference for rural living are looking for particular community attributes not associated with metropolitan life. Attributes such as low crime rate, good air and water quality, a good environment for raising children, and a lower cost of living were desired.

Evidence: Migration in the American West towards public lands, wilderness and the wild

During the 1960s, wilderness counties had population increases three times greater than other non-metropolitan areas, and in the 1970s, wilderness counties grew at twice the rate of other non-metropolitan counties. In the 1980s, their population increased 24 percent --- six times faster than the national average of 4 percent for non-metropolitan counties as a whole and almost twice as fast as counties in the non-metropolitan West (Rudzitis, 1996). These trends have continued as wilderness counties increased by 30 percent and more than twice as fast as metropolitan areas (Dearien, Rudzitis, Hintz, 2005).

Rudzitis and Johansen (1989) found that public lands-- and particularly the presence of federal wilderness-- was an important reason why people moved or lived in these counties (Rudzitis and Johansen, 1991).[2] Duffy-Deno (1998) examined whether local economies may be adversely affected by designation of federally-owned wilderness in the eight states of the intermountain western United States and found no empirical evidence that county-level resource-based employment is adversely affected by the existence of federal wilderness. On average wilderness

[2] Most of the articles cited where I am author or co-author build on a series of grants funded by the National Science Foundation and other funding agencies. These grants used various surveys that were sent to over 15,000 people living in high-amenity counties in the United States in all regions of the country but predominantly in the American West. Essentially, my co-authors and I argued that current economic models did not work, both based on our survey data and also from testing various statistical models rooted in economic logic. Economic theories were not holding up well under scrutiny.

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designation causes little aggregate economic harm to county economies, promoting instead increases in total population and employment (Lorah and Southwick, 2003).

In the American northwest and elsewhere environmental characteristics play a major role in pulling people to the small towns of the region. Social and natural amenities continue to be important in their decision. Counties with amenities grow and migration decisions are increasingly based on natural and social amenities, and quality-of-life factors (Morrill and Downing, 1986; Booth, 1999; Carlson, et. al., 1999; Deller, et. al.; Dearien, Rudzitis and Hintz, 2005; Johnson and Rasker, 1995;Johnson, 1998; Johnson and Beale,1994; Rasker, 1994; Rudzitis, 1996, 1999; Rudzitis and Streatfeild, 1992-1993; Wardwell and Lyle, 1997; McGranahan, 1999; Ohman, 1999; Beyers and Nelson, 2000; Nelson, 2002; Shumway and Davis, 1996; Schumway and Otterstrom, 2001).

A basic assumption of the neo-classical/neo-liberal model is that people move to get higher paying jobs and more incomes. However, studies in the American West have shown that many migrants move to amenity-rich areas despite a decrease in income (von Reichert and Rudzitis, 1992; Morrill and Downing, 1986; Wardwell and Lyle, 1997). For example, Von Reichert and Rudzitis (1992) found that almost 50 percent of the migrants reported lower incomes, and only 28 percent had increased their income, with the remainder showing no change.

Empirical evidence in the United States continues to show that amenities and quality of life play an important role in regional development (Von Reichert and Rudzitis, 1994; Mueser and Graves, 1995; Dearien, Rudzitis and Hintz, 2005; Schmidt and Courant, 2006; Wu and Gopinath, 2008). Partridge (2010) tested the ability of various models to explain regional growth dynamics in the US over the last 40–60 years. He found that amenity-led growth was the runaway winner of this competition.

Migration and regional development models also normally assume that people follow jobs. Firms migrate into a region and create job opportunities. Then, people move in seeking the newly created jobs. Or do people migrate first, and then jobs follow? This is the old "chicken or egg" analogy (Carlino and Mills, 1987). A few studies have tried to get at this issue for non-metropolitan counties within a simultaneous-equations framework. These studies (Mead, 1982), whether looking at wilderness counties (Rudzitis and Johansen, 1989), the Pacific Northwest (von Reichert, 1992) or the interior Rocky Mountain West (Vias, 1997) find that jobs are following people. Other studies have also found that up to a third of the people migrating into the rural American West move first and plan to find or create jobs after moving to an area (Rudzitis, 1996; von Reichert and Rudzitis, 1994). Some, or perhaps many, of these people are looking to “consume” the amenities in the areas they move to. Indeed, as the next section argues we have created societies based on consumption with all of its vulnerabilities.

Veblen goods and the theory of conspicuous consumption

Economist Thorstein Veblen published *A Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899 and in this and other books he coined phrases such as "the leisure class," "conspicuous consumption" and "Captains of Industry." Veblen wrote sarcastically about how the "Captains of Industry" and other wealthy people who wanted to show the rest of society how wealthy they were, which they did by their high-end consumption patterns, the houses they lived in, the cars they drove, as well as how they adorned their wives, often as "peacocks" in Veblen's terminology. Veblen saw consumer culture by the rich in particular as a form of social pathology. Today, I expect he would argue it has also infected the non-wealthy as well, especially people with mid-range incomes.

There are what can be referred to as normal goods and status goods (today called Veblen goods)[3]. Status goods are, according to Veblen, a waste since they are merely a means of demonstrating the possession of wealth. Veblen argued that for men, in order to be held in esteem by others, it was not enough to simply be wealthy. Wealth had to be displayed to provide evidence of one's wealth. Consumption and the display of wealth gets its value not from the intrinsic worth of what is consumed but because it allows people to set themselves apart from others by their consumption. Indeed, Veblen claimed that people feel worse off if others in their neighborhood earn and display more wealth. Veblen, in effect argued that we have costs as well as benefits from consumption. There can be over-consumption and it decreases societal well-being, especially by the production and consumption of status or Veblen goods.

Only a handful of economists followed-up up on Veblen's work, and until recently it remained on the margins of economic research. Duesenberry (1949) developed the thesis that people not only care about their own consumption, but also their level of consumption relative to others. The relative income hypothesis argues that a person suffers a loss if the consumption levels of others rise since his or her relative consumption consequently falls. People compare themselves to others above them and aspire to "join" them rather than comparing themselves to people just below them. It is in this way that people with very high incomes impose a negative externality on people who make less than they do. Scitosky (1976) in *The Joyless Society* argued that as an economy is increasingly devoted to producing status goods the utility growth is negative and societal social welfare falls. Many amenity-goods are status goods.

The growth of the consumption society was developed by another devotee of Thorstein Veblen, economist, John Kenneth Galbraith and his popular selling book, The Affluent Society (1958). More recently, there has been recognition of the growing importance of social positional goods (Frank, 1985; Brekke et al. 2003; Budescu and Au 2002; Layard, 2005). These are goods for which there is only a limited supply available, and only a limited number of persons can consume them.[4]

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[3] Specifically, a Veblen good is one in which preference for purchase (demand for a good) increases as a direct function of its price due to the good's ability to confer greater status on the owner.

[4] Positional goods represent products, services, and real estate whose value relates to their inherent scarcity and contribute to the consumer's status in relation to everyone else. Certain locations of real estate in amenity regions exhibit "extra" (positional) economic rents because land with specifically high levels of proximate natural (such as lakes, oceans, mountain vistas, and other

Research into the consequences of the general increase in income and upward mobility in the United States has led to some counterintuitive results. The expectation would be that there would be a corresponding increase in life satisfaction or happiness. However, studies indicate that over time the United States and European countries despite having substantial increases in per capita incomes have not had increased levels of life satisfaction or 'happiness." Instead happiness appears to remain flat for these countries (Easterlin, 1974; Clark et. al., 2008). In the United States between the 1970s and 1990s per capita real income increased over 20% with no real increase in life satisfaction measures even when controlling for individual characteristics (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2004).

These findings may not be as surprising as they seem. Any student in introductory economics learns, if she does not intuitively already know it, that people in general are assumed to have insatiable wants; the more they get, the more they want. People are also assumed to aspire higher, never being fully satisfied, and working harder to achieve success. This, despite the fact that the things we value the most are generally not for sale.

There is substantial evidence that people over-estimate the extra happiness they will get from extra possessions. People will work too hard and consume too much. For example, people in the United States work longer hours, have less leisure vacation time, spend less time with their families, and in other activities that are often argued to contribute to the quality of life (Schor, 1991; 1998). Instead, they spend an overly large amount of time trying to obtain status and positional goods, often as amenities. Indeed, Arrow and Dasgupta (2009) show that higher spending on conspicuous consumption is at the expense of future consumption and what they refer to as inconspicuous current consumption. They also show that if consumption is conspicuous while leisure is not, people consume more and work harder in a market economy than they would at a social optimum.

Eaton and Eswaran (2009) argue in essence that the richer people become, the more amenities they consume, the less they enjoy the good life, and that too much affluence can damage a nation's health. Ever more wealth leads to buying status via amenities or "Veblen goods" that have only symbolic value (jewelry, designer clothes, luxury cars, huge houses, second homes or condos in amenity locations) that make the owners appear wealthy, but leave everyone else feeling worse off in a variant of a "zero-sum" game. This gets worse as the demand for status goods increases and crowds out standard/normal and public goods

Causal elements of the spatial concentration of rural wealth

There are various reasons why areas with amenities would be attractive to high-income people. Some reasons might be rooted in a historical advantage. For example, Sun Valley, Idaho was the

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geophysical or biotic resources) and developed (ski areas, golf courses, and related recreational sites) amenities is inherently scarce. Land with proximate amenities, as a positional good, is limited in its ability to be created and is thus inherently scarce. Hal Rothman in his book The Devil's Bargain also argued that we are in a new stage of capitalism, where, if we can, we consume experiences via tourism. This is very similar to the positional goods argument. He also argued that tourism was a form of colonialism, where people change themselves in order to accommodate tourists, and you are paid to belong.

first ski resort in the United States built to attract the wealthy, and, as a prototype it has been quite successful. It has remained a Mecca for the wealthy and is dotted with large mega-homes that are only visited periodically by their owners.

Today, Sun Valley has competition, or rather; wealthy people have a lot more choice, given Aspen, Vail, Jackson Hole and other emerging ski resorts catering to the affluent in the American West. New places have developed with improvements in transportation, and especially increased access with new or expanded airports for the arrival of private jets (Rasker et al. 2009; Booth 1999). In the American mountain west numerous ski areas have been built or expanded, often on or adjacent to federal forestlands. Sun Valley's historical advantage helps explain its current success. Krugman (1992) citing the work of geographer David Meyer (1983) argues that more attention should be paid to historical advantage as a factor in regional growth.

The demand for housing in high-end ski areas does not appear to be waning, and the growth in the United States of new resorts complements older resorts such as Sun Valley. Nor, as the planning director of one high-end ski town pointed out, is skiing the primary reason why people visit as tourists or live in these areas. Skiing often becomes secondary to other consumption activities, such as eating, drinking and shopping during the time many tourists and part-time residents spend there.

On the other end of the climate spectrum, as historian Patricia Limerick (1997) has pointed out, the early movement into the arid Southwest was led by wealthy persons moving there for health related reasons. Later examples include the influx into Florida from affluent people from the Gold Coast of Chicago, the Upper East Side of New York City and other places. Other summer homes were more regional in nature, as for example in the Northeast into the New York Adirondacks, the Pocono's, the Hamptons on Long Island or rural New England, where rural villages were gentrified to better attract affluent people from the cities in the region.

Once enclaves for the wealthy were established they had to be "protected," and one way of doing so was through the use of zoning and land use regulation. Wyckoff (2010) sees these enclaves as representing "landscapes of power" which are part of a historical process where wealthy people create both spatial and social exclusivity and status not available to other members of society with more modest means.

Towns built on mining and other resources such as Butte, Montana and others show the mansions built by mining magnets to demonstrate their wealth. Today, we have the phenomenon of the wealthy isolating themselves in high-amenity places. An obvious factor behind the current growth of exclusive high amenity enclaves is an increase in the number of wealthy people. Other luxury goods, such as Humvee cars have come to be associated with over-consumption and selfish excess. For some people, simply acquiring goods is no longer enough. They also have to consume luxury experiences in amenity-laden places. Increasingly, what you do and where you do it can help define who you are.

The demand has increased for specific types of goods that rural high amenity areas can provide (solitude, outdoor recreation, large estates, etc.) as preferences have changed. The decline in

transportation and technological costs has made high-amenity rural areas more accessible, increasing their attractiveness to wealthier persons for whom time, in an economic sense, costs more. Competition is less of a factor. Wealthy people can pay higher prices and crowd out others. However, there are only a limited number of places that have the high-amenity attributes that attract the wealthy, and especially where they would become the dominant clusters, and here geography plays a significant role.

Geographical considerations are obvious in the American West where climate, geographic features, and most noticeably public lands restrict where development can take place, where attractive public lands limit development. The supply of land abutting public lands as, for example, in the Colorado Front Range, or along the Rocky mountains is limited. Recently, a trend has emerged of wealthy people buying up working ranches, creating a new type of amenity rancher.

In the West there has been an ongoing struggle between ranchers and environmentalists over leaving ranches intact, or getting the cows off the range, and subdividing the land into numerous smaller ranchettes with no cattle (Gosnell and Travis 2005; Riebsame 1996; Riebsame et al. 1996; Theobald et al. 1996). In many places the cattle are gone and the ranchettes have taken their place. Amenity ranches are also a new phenomenon attractive to, and dependent on wealthy people with no experience in ranching.

These amenity ranchers buy an entire working ranch, keep the cattle, and also the ranch manager, or hire a new one to keep running the ranch, while the new owner flies in and out for short visits. The ranch, in effect, becomes a Veblen good. This has created a new sideline for real estate agents who advertise and sell these ranches to out-of-state buyers, and also set up consulting firms to help the new owners find managers to run the ranch since the new owners are not there most of the time (Gosnell and Travis 2005).

Rural wealth, housing and income inequality in high amenity areas

Starter Castles are large, pretentious, log cabins or massively built houses in the American West, often with elaborate gates and long roads to the house. Other types of starter castles are on private lands located in the mountains or by lakes and rivers and often featured in glossy magazines depicting the “good life”. Starter Castles have lots of “wasted” space, with cathedral ceilings, grand staircases, lots and lots of glass walls, often even in the bathrooms, to bring you closer to outside nature. Many of the people who build or buy Starter Castles often only live in them a few weeks of the year, especially during skiing, fishing, or hunting seasons. Starter Castles represent a modern craze for large, wasted space, as well as gaudy exteriors in a form of Veblin’s conspicuous consumption.

Starter Castles may have a dark side in these economically turbulent times, if the owner’s wealth is recent, and possibly temporary. Owners of such properties, in trying to mimic the extravagant wealth and consumptive styles of “old-money”, may find themselves enslaved and burdened by debts they may not be able to afford. In the current housing market crash, they may also not be

able to sell their homes, or be carrying debts that become intolerable and burdensome (Mahon 2009).

The presence of Starter Castles and other large estates are evidence of a growing inequality on the rural amenity landscape. The literature relevant to understanding recent accumulations of rural wealth needs relates to both income inequality and regional economic change. This literature dates back to the work of Simon Kuznets (1955; and later confirmed and expanded by Berry et al. 1995). From a spatial perspective, Amos (1988) laid out the evidence to suggest that regional distribution of higher levels of income inequality was not uniform across the urban-rural continuum. However, during the mid to latter part of the 20th Century, rural regions of the US tended to exhibit more equal income distributions than they do today.

Rural regions now become the focus of recent transitions in post-industrial economic change and its implications on income distribution. Do rapid rates of economic growth in high amenity places signal a shift in the rate at which rural income inequality is growing? There is a growing body of empirical work that suggests the presence of certain types of natural amenities correlate with higher levels of income inequality (Marcouiller, et al. 2004; Kim et al. 2005

Amenity-driven post-industrial growth also appears to play a role in changing distributions of income inequality. Amenity-based growth can be proxied by rapid increases in land value, which relate to the growth in transmitted land-based wealth. A poster child for amenity and skiing related growth resulting in large inequality in a county is Aspen, Colorado. Places like Aspen or Vail, Colorado, Sun Valley, Idaho and Jackson Hole, Wyoming typify the changing role of the ski industry. Former mining and ranching communities are transfigured into resorts, replete with second homes and a tourism-led real estate growth followed by sprawl.

The locals are priced out of the area, and workers are no longer able to live and service the high-end tourists and residents, part-time or not, that result from such growth. The conversion of Aspen to a place only the rich can afford has introduced the verb "Aspenization". Gonzo journalist Hunter Thompson has described the outcome of this process in his inimitable style as:

> "Aspen is now a slavish service community…where absentee greedheads are taking over the town like a pack of wild dogs … it is a big-time tourist town, and only two kinds of people live here … the Users and the Used - and the gap between them gets wider every day"
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> (Thompson, 2002).

The local governments of places like Aspen, Colorado and Park City, Utah have recently tried to deal with issues such as the lack of affordable housing for workers who otherwise have to commute long distances to work in these affluent communities (Travis, 2007). Counties and their communities which attract very high income homeowners do provide jobs to service the wealthy, and most are low-paying jobs, raising the question of whether an area with an influx of wealthy people makes others better off and here the evidence is slight. Recent research (Hunter, et. al. 2005; Onge, et.al., 2007) has shown that in the American West while wealthier communities have created more jobs for lower income people, after correcting for increased

housing costs in the region they are not better off than they were before; or the benefits were marginal and limited to the lowest income sectors.

Consequences of wealth concentration in amenity areas

High-income households and high incidence of second homes are concentrated in areas with high levels of natural amenities like mountains, open space, lakes, and rivers. Income inequality driven by the attractiveness of high amenity landscapes once confined to urban and suburban areas now appears to be affecting rural America as well.

Increasingly, rural regions with high levels of amenities attract footloose American wealth. But it is also important to note that these are not examples of places where the rural rich are alone. Regions with high levels of rural wealth are places of great contrast; very high-income households exist simultaneously with poor and moderate income households. And, rural income inequality between the rich and the poor is on the rise.

The long-term implications of rural high-income households within regions include the availability of affordable housing and significant employment displacement. Housing costs in close proximate to amenity sites exhibit rapidly escalating real estate values. This escalating real estate value displaces long-term residents of more modest means. In resort communities, the availability of affordable housing and employee displacement (the "Aspenization" effect) creates a spatial mismatch between housing alternatives for service and retail sector employees and the location of their employment opportunities. In high-end resort areas, this can create a situation where the supply of workers is adversely affected given the highly localized inflated housing values in close proximity to the location of employment. Without affordable housing in resort communities, low and middle income households are left with either long, often arduous, commutes or to scrounge for transitional housing (in automobiles, pickup trucks, campers, and more primitive campgrounds).

Furthermore, rural land use planning and public policy as currently practiced acts to support, maintain, and foster exclusivity for upper-middle and high-income landowners. This is particularly true in areas that have large proportions of their housing stock in second homes, vacation condominiums, luxury mansions, and homes for the wealthy landed elite. The rural rich and their housing choices set the wealthy apart in separate enclaves, decreasing interactions, and shrinking the opportunities for diverse people to work together democratically.

I started this section with a discussion of rural high-end luxury housing as a Veblen good that has positional characteristics related to status.The implications of the Veblen goods argument of high income households decreasing the total welfare is another issue that pertains to societal costs. This has lead to calls to eliminate subsidies and to tax these status goods more highly than they are currently. These Veblen goods have also been likened to an addiction, like tobacco or alcohol that should be taxed for the negative externality they present.

Isserman, et, al. (2009) demonstrate empirically that growth and place prosperity are not the same. They found, that prosperous counties have lower inequality with more even income

distributions. Also, a recent book by Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* shows that the US and Britain exhibit the widest gaps between rich and poor in the developed world and have, as a result, the most health and social problems. They also found that more equal societies have less status consumption and less stress and anxiety

The emerging economics of happiness literature also suggests the need to examine what kinds of difference may emerge from amenity related migration. Some research (Rudzitis and Johansen , 1991; Rudzitis, 1996) indicates that migrants to high-amenity counties were happier after moving into these destination counties. This raises questions of how different classes of people, rich or poor perceive their lives as communities undergo substantial change as wealthier persons move in and change the social composition of their communities.

It is important as Green et al. (2005) point out that there is a dearth of reliable and rigorous study on amenities with respect to rural development, and even less as Rudzitis, Marcouiller and Lorah (2011) argue that focuses on the residence choices of the rural rich and implications of these for a host of key public policy issues. A critique of related public policies is likewise important. To what extent does blind boosterism as maxim for both economic development and tourism planning relate to wealth concentration, income inequality, entrepreneurial activity, and the availability of employment opportunities.

Neoclassical adoption of amenity development within a framework of limitless growth

The importance of the amenity and quality of life approach was to show why people moved and how, contrary to conventional theory, they often took income losses to live in places with high environmental qualities. There is now an argument that challenges conventional economic theory, arguing that physical, climatic, social and cultural amenities are important. Mainstream economics generally ignored Nature or the environment.

The significance of the amenity/quality-of-life approach was that it broke out of a reductionistic, algorithmic and economic view of life. This model aimed — in my view — at providing an alternative to our increasingly economistic way of viewing life. I believe the emphasis should be put not just on the physical environments and their components. The quality-of-life approach points us towards place, community, and, as importantly, democracy rooted in people living in real places. For many people one of the main reasons why they moved was in the search of the so-called “good life”.

My hope was that the amenities and quality of life approach would dethrone the fanatical emphasis on real income as the measure of social welfare and the value of life and ecosystems. Making income and the quest for profits the measure of regional development is too abstract. It separates the economy from the social relationships and the cultural bonds within which we are all embedded.

I had hoped that the amenities/quality-of-life approach would be the start of a movement that showed the inherent fallacies in much economic modeling — that by deconstructing the income-

maximization approach as applied to migration and regional development, others would continue to show the fallacy of such an approach. I reasoned that once the internal structures of the model were shown to be based on false premises, the house of cards of "growth-and-development" would fall. Well, I was naive! Instead, the amenity approach — I'm going to assert, as I have limited space— has been incorporated by economists into the same growth-is-good approach, with a continuing emphasis on consumption. Mainline economists have taken the amenity argument and adapted it and put it into their utilitarian models. However, there have been some alternative approaches taken and I turn first to a brief discussion of the work geographers have initiated on the role of place.

Geography of place: A very brief introduction

> Place is the first of all beings since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place.
>
> Archytas
> Commentary on Aristotle's categories

There has been a recent refocusing by geographers and others on the importance of place.[5] Much of this draws on the work of humanistic geographers, and particularly the work of Yi-Fu Tuan,(1974; 1977) and Edward Relph (1976), among others. Place is space which is experienced and given meaning. People's experiences also create attachments and connections between people and places, a sense of place. Indeed, Tuan used the term topophilia' to indicate the bond that developed between people and place, a caring bond if you will. Tuan (1991) and others (Buttimer and Seamon, 1980; Seamon, 1976; Entrikin, 1991) focused on home, where people feel attached and rooted.[6]

The place-based work of humanistic geographers was philosophically derived from people such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and more recently extended by contemporary philosophers Casey (1993, 1998) and Malpas (1999) as well as geographer Sack (1992, 1997). These arguments are almost by definition lacking in empirical testing or verification.

There has been some research arguing that attachment to a place keeps people from moving away during times of economic distress (Bolton1992; Rudzitis 1993, 1996; Feldman, 1990; Gustafson, 2001). In the American West, this uniqueness is rooted in a physical environment that interacts with the social lives of the people who live there. The interaction with wilderness and other wildlands creates a "sense of place" and "roots."

Some indirect evidence of the potential importance of sense of place is the willingness of people

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[5] This is a fairly large and diverse literature and I focus here on the main writings relevant for my purposes by geographers and the philosophers and others on whose work they draw, while not discussing other place strands such as the work of Soja or Harvey, among others.

[6] Some, feminists in particular (i.e., Rose, 1993) have argued that this is a romantic notion of home; that it can and has been for many places of neglect and abuse, oppressive, frightening places to live. Clearly, there can be different and widely varying meanings of "home."

to accept lower wages to live in such places. In particular, areas surrounding wilderness and other public lands have lower real wages. Another indirect indicator of a greater attachment and sense of place is the high level of agreement when people in high amenity counties are asked if their lives are now happier, less stressful and more enjoyable (Rudzitis and Johansen, 1991). People who are more satisfied with where they live feel more attached to their communities and are less likely to move (Fernandez and Dillman 1979; Heaton et. al., 1979; Samson 1998; Rudzitis and Johansen 1989; Stinner and others; Carlson and others, 1998).

Recently, Massey (1997) has called for an expansion of sense of place from being rooted in a specific place to one that in an increasingly globalized world is progressive. She argues that people have multiple identities and attachments to different places, or multiple senses of place, a global sense of place

Ehrenfeld (2009) argues that a love of place is a conservative value and one we increasingly spurn. Staying put can be hard to accept in a society where upward economic and social mobility is so often associated with exotic travel and mobility across the earth. Although, we no longer expect to live our lives in the place where we were born Ehrenfeld says a sense of place, even acquired late in life, can counteract the emptiness of living everywhere and nowhere, which is so common. This hearkens back to Relph's (1976) erosion of place, or placelessness, the lack of belonging to a place increased today by increasing global homogenization, or the creation of non-places (Auge, 1995).[7]

Roots as a foundation stone of a radical theory of place

> "If someone asked us 'but is that *true*?' we might say 'yes' to him; and if he demanded grounds we might say 'I can't give you any grounds, but if you learn more you too will think the same."
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein
> **On Certainty**

Curiously, the literature by geographers and others on roots and sense of place makes almost no mention of philosopher Simone Weil's book, *The Need for Roots* (1952). Weil's book portended many of the issues alluded to or discussed, and in a more radical form since she attacked many of the structures of society that destroyed roots and created an uprootedness in society.

Weil argued that the pursuit of profits destroyed roots. And that by making money the sole, or almost the sole, motive of all actions, the measure of all things, the poison of inequality was introduced everywhere in society

[7] Declaring locales as placeless is fraught with dangers and subjectivity. I recall when reading Relph how I reacted strongly and negatively when he used as examples of placelessness certain areas of Chicago. These were to me vital neighborhoods but which an outsider like himself might be viewed differently, if incorrectly in my estimation.

She saw two opposing paths that could be taken. One consists in transforming society in such a way that the working-class may be given roots in it. The other consists in spreading to the whole of society the disease of uprootedness that has been inflicted on the working-class. Uprootedness for her was the most dangerous malady to which society was exposed, reducing vast numbers of workers to a state of apathetic stupor. She equated total uprootedness with unemployment.

Simone Weil considered the crowding together of workers into factories as industrial prisons, with unhappy workers, functioning as machines doing repetitive tasks, losing identity, a sense of self, similar to charges lodged today against sweatshops around the world. Workplaces that cater to obedience require far too little skill and thought, as well as the exclusion of workers from any "imaginative share in the work of the enterprise."

She called for increasing the happiness during working-hours and an avoidance of the monotony so much feared because of the boredom and disgust it engenders. Weil like Veblen before her saw the machine process as dehumanizing workers. She also felt that the system worked against workers. Veblen felt the system was rigged to benefit the elite, the absentee landlords, the vested interests, who are predators who live off the work of others by right and tradition, and not by their contribution to the productivity of the system. Veblen was, as an economist, rare in saying that businesses should think directly about the interests of consumers, not the shareholders on which economists, then and now, argue they should focus on the implausible ground that if a firm did not maximize profits it would go bankrupt.

Veblen (1919; 1923) saw predator-prey relationships as one of mutual interdependence.[8] Predators rely on prey for their sustenance, but they also require and must motivate their assistance. The success of the predators depends in part on healthy prey. Since the workers (blue or white collar) generally understand this, they also realize that their own position could be worse than it is. For this reason Veblen argued they are not intrinsically revolutionary or inevitably destined (as Marx argued) to become so. Veblen's vision was of an essentially stable order, yet dominated by a predatory, parasitic, and unproductive class. How long it would remain stable he felt was hard to predict though he was skeptical that it could last indefinitely as it was not, in his view, sustainable.[9] He would not, however, speculate on what kind of system would follow. [10]

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[8] Michel Serres, one of the most imaginative philosophers writing today has also written a book in 1980 titled *The Parasite* , different, yet in some ways similar to Veblen's when for example Serres argues that every society built on work is a police state, and that cities no longer have anything but consumers, soldiers and workers, a rational society through and through.

[9] Veblen's skeptism was well founded as he died in 1929 right before the Great Depression. He was harshest in his criticism of the financial and investment sectors which he saw as useless, just set up to maximize their own profits with no concern for communities or society at large. Again, recent trends seem to indicate how accurate his diagnosis has proven to be.

[10] For Veblen, as for Marx, capitalism would always have inner conflicts and imperfections. However, Veblen argued against the idea of finality or consummation in economic development. Variety and cumulative causation mean that history has no 'final term,' unlike Fukiyama's recent book *The End of History*. In Marxism 'the final term' was socialism or the classless society. Veblen rejected the teleological concept of a final goal as pre-Darwinian.

Veblen's Predator State is a coalition of relentless opponents of the regulatory framework on which community and public purposes depends. It is a coalition that seeks to control the state partly to poach, as Galbreaith (2008) argued, extending Veblen's argument in contemporary times, on the lines of activity that past public purpose has established. They are firms, as Weil also argued, that have no intrinsic loyalty to any community or country, nor do they adopt any of society's goals as their own,. The very concept of public purpose, sense of place or community, is alien to, and denied by the leaders and operatives of the Predator state.

By contrast the basis of community and democracy: empathy - citizens caring for each other and, acting on that care- create a different society than what has existed, one in which the role of government is to protect and empower everyone equally. Protection includes safety, health, the environment, pensions and empowerment starts with education and infrastructure. The predatory worldview rejects all of that.[11]

Simone Weil suggested an alternative. Workers should feel themselves to be at "home" at work. To accomplish this large factories would be abolished, replaced by smaller workshops dispersed in places throughout the country and working hours would be greatly reduced. In various aspects Weil anticipated the arguments of E.F. Schumacker's counterculture classic book *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Matter* as well as the writings of Wendell Berry, Roberto Unger, John Gray and others in "creating" forms of social existence that would be neither capitalist or socialist.

Weil also was farsighted in arguing that the purpose of both education and work was to increase the feeling for the beauty of places, nature and the world. She placed love as a central concept, love of what exits, life, persons, places, nature and raising for us questions of how to "build' places and societies such that we love and respect life. The object of the study of places as well as the universe is to find what we can love about it, its beauty.

Weil also recognized that the world and forces within it is defined by limits that should not be crossed. She argued that the notion of the limit should be introduced, and the principle established that everything is finite, limited, subject to being exhausted. Today, we have ecologists, ecological economists led by Herman Daly, poets, philosophers trying to impress upon us the physical limits, which we must honor if we are to survive. They are however considered by most economists, politicians and development "experts" as "crying wolf" since economics ignores limits and growthmania prevails as a dominant ideology in Western culture.

The American West's history is based on a frontier mentality. We in the USA are still not far removed from that mentality, and have a lot of roots in exploitation, based on the idea, historically, of unlimited resources, high mobility, of moving on to the next place as resources run out. We have created a variety of myths around these issues. Myths need not be bad, but ours have not served us well. The American West served as the region that created the mythology

[11] This is not an academic argument as efforts to continue to empower a predatory state are occurring all over the world, especially in my own USA.

and illusion of limitlessness. Conventional economic theory ignores the role of Nature -- Nature and environment is limitless. However, the idea of no-limits is an illusion, a fantasy with which we continue to live.

Now, there is good growth and bad growth. Growth beyond some point becomes the growth of the cancer cell, a poison within our society that grows at our risk. The argument against growth, as represented in conventional economic models, is that it doesn't reflect the world of ecosystems we all live in, nor does it reflect time and space relationships and limits.

Amenity migration by itself can be limitless, but quality of life diminishes with too many amenity migrants. Amenity development should mean recognizing limits in a society that does not recognize limits. Looking around the American West, there are many examples of how amenity/quality-of-life migration is taking place without limits, consuming land, building landscapes of conspicuous consumption, ignoring the limits of geography, promoting exurbia as an extension of suburbia, depleting water, and ignoring the consequences for the future.

I would argue that what we need is a radical place-based approach that recognizes geography of limits — geography of limits specific to places and regions. For example, in the American West water is the most obvious example, particularly in the Southwest. Travel or live in the Southwest, and it is hard to convince yourself, or others, that these places or the region are on a sustainable water path. They are not. Yet development continues, the over-allocation of water rights continues to be a major issue.

We need to move away from the economic assumption that our objective is to maximize lifetime utility and towards one that sustains community. We need a different set of priorities, where undermining community is unacceptable. Veblen and Weil show us that a society based on individualism denies the primacy of relationships, and substitutes instead goods and services, or stuff, a poor substitute for meaningful relationships with family, friends and community.

We live in societies that promote competition between firms, which is fine. However, between individuals what we want is a lot of cooperation. Why, because, that way, life is more enjoyable. A competitive world where other persons appear to us as a threat will probably not "produce" much happiness, even if it increases productivity, output and consumption.

We need to pay attention to, and nurture community. It is the sense of community that give meaning or lack thereof to our lives. Simone Weil stated it plainly, that the search for profits is counter to the search for a sense of place, because it destroys human roots by turning the desire for gain into the primary motive of life. Or more recently, as Sontag (2007) reminds us traditionally all cultures are local. Culture implies barriers, distance, nontranslatability. Whereas what is "modern" means, above all, the abolition of barriers, of distance; instant access; the leveling of culture---and, by its own inexorable logic the abolition, or revocation of culture. This is, she argues a spurious cultural geography that is being installed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Following Sontag's insightful comments, consider mobility policy, especially amenity driven migration. More mobility may, though not necessarily, increase income. However, mobility can also affect the quality of relationships in the community and in families as Wendall Berry and others have shown. We should not advocate more mobility, amenity or otherwise without considering these effects.[12] This is important if our objective as academics, social scientists or citizens is to try and promote increased quality of life, decreased suffering in places, wherever they may be.

I would argue, as a geographer, we might start by asking: 1) What are the forces that destroy places and are part of a predatory system? 2) What are the forces that are place-maintaining? and 3) What are the forces that transform places sustainably? We need a new paradigm. In a broader sense, we have to experiment with new institutions.

We can also listen to current voices such as social theorist Roberto Mangeibera Unger who argues for constant experimentation and pragmatism in incrementally changing the structures of society. Unger argues that society itself is a human artifact and not the expression of any underlying natural order. Society as an artificial context is conditional and can be changed, even if such changes seem rare and exceptional. The more we become aware of that conditionality, the greater opportunities to reimagine and make a meaningful change to that context. Or as Roberto Unger (1987a, pp. 202) puts it:

> "We act according to two different and seemingly incommensurable logics. On the one hand, we behave as if we were passive objects of the formative institutional and imaginative contexts of our societies and the victims or beneficiaries of the tendencies and constraints that shape these frameworks of social life. On the other hand, however, we sometimes think and act as if our pious devotion to the practical and argumentative routines imposed by these structures had been just a ploy, to be continued until the propitious occasion for more open defiance"

Roberto Unger also reminds us (1987b, pp. 34) that:

> "Every formative context of habitual social life arises from the containment of conflict. It results from a particular, unique history or practical and imaginative struggles. The stabilized social world that results from a containment or interruption of conflict depends on its continuance upon certain practical or conceptual activities that constitute the most important of the routines shaped by a formative context. Yet each of these context-reproducing activities can escalate into context-disturbing conflicts because nothing can entirely reduce us to the condition of puppets of a formative context."

[12] For example, anecdotal evidence and research, some of which may be presented at this workshop, indicates that workers and people in communities that depend on tourism are not happy with this outcome. It creates what has been called a "devils bargain."

We need to create limits and to do so by experimenting: live within environmentally sound and sustainable limits, decide what these limits are, where they are, what we have to do, and to do it democratically. We need education and an ongoing dialog. We also need to pay attention to the growing spatial inequalities currently taking place at all geographical scales. If so, how do we create alternative places and associated institutions? Where do you learn about such things? Perhaps one way to start is by looking for evidence from other societies that have tried to organize their societies in different ways, and where the predominant focus is not on the economic dimension of our lives.[13]

Learning From the Indians and moving forward to alternative places

We need to get off the growth-and-development treadmill. We need theories, yes, but they must be linked to action. Growth-and-development today, at times assisted by tourism, is destroying communities. Change and a move towards providing more collective goods and less privatization can be and has been a successful strategy. The American West would not be the unique region it is if we didn't have the ultimate collective goods of the public lands — the parks, the wilderness, the other classified lands. They are among the most lasting symbols we have of people and society providing lasting alternatives to what the private market has not, and will not provide us.

The provision of environmental public goods, or the lack thereof, is not just limited to rural areas in the American West or elsewhere. Graves (2003a, 2003b; Flores and Graves, 2008) argues that it is the lack of an adequate supply of public goods in cities (local parks, other shared spaces) that has partly driven the suburbanization process in the USA. If American cities had more public goods, which by definition would increase quality of life in cities than the process of suburbanization, a poor substitute he argues, would be much less. Indeed, Graves argues that the rapid growth of amenity areas in the American West is partly a result of the poor provision and lowering of quality of life in large metropolitan areas. Consequently, the provision of public amenities is as, if not more important, in metropolitan areas where most of the population lives.

We need to develop alternatives to current trends. There may not be many alternatives out there right now, but there are some, and people we can learn from. Without alternatives, the future looks bleak: sustainability is not going to happen. We need experiments and changes in the institutional structures that exist. Institutional structures — as Veblen argued in 1917 — are really nothing but a social construction.

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[13] Indeed, this I would argue is a common feature of even two diverse theorists such as Karl Marx and John Maynard Keynes, Keynes perspective differs little from Marx's economism, the idea that the economy shapes the society. Marx aand Keynes share the view that capitalism dictates the culture of contemporary society. This is a view of development, a Eurocentric ideology that unites Conservatives and Marxists, where history is seen as leading all cultures to the modern West, with non-European peoples waiting to be lead.

We have evidence of alternative societies in the American West. I believe we can learn much from the very indigenous, native societies and cultures that we have destroyed and transformed in such a way that they are the poorest in the United States. The poorest on almost any dimension — social, income— is American Indian civilizations, tribal societies. We have destroyed much within these groups, but fortunately there is a collective memory inherent in them.

We, by contrast, are in danger of losing whatever non-Indian collective memory we have. There is a view of Nature in the indigenous memory; a lack of focus on economics as the base of life; and, importantly there is a revival taking place in the American West, which most westerners, ignore — we don't see it or, we oppose the Indians and their efforts to reawaken and regain their traditions, rights, and status as sovereign nations. Fortunately, some environmentalists and other non-Indians are listening and starting to respect each other and work together — we need to do more of that, we need to work together, sharing ideas and worldviews but more importantly, we non-Indians need to listen with respect.

I have been privileged to get to know, to get insights, and to work with the Nez Perce tribe of Idaho, Oregon and Washington, and what is amazing about them, and other tribes that I've had contact with, is that — despite the high unemployment rate, despite the high alcoholism, despite the highest suicide rates in the USA — they are promoting real sustainable policies. They are not just talking about it, they are moving forward, often despite opposition and at times racist attitudes from non-Indians on and off their reservations.

The Nez Perce tribe wants to remove dams to save the salmon. They're reconstructing lands. They're working towards harvesting timber and other resources in more sustainable ways. They're promoting organic farming and moving towards more renewable energy sources. They brought back the wolf, which we non-Indians in Idaho, through our governmental representatives, are again intent on killing off. They are doing a better job managing wildlife and water resources than the state or federal government. They use high technology such as geographical information systems, yet, at the same time, they remain grounded in indigenous thinking and cultural traditions.

An indigenous worldview — what is it? Let me very briefly and imperfectly summarize it; Native Americans see everything as related, and everybody as related to everybody else — humans and non-humans, we're all animals. Indians believe in taking, giving, sharing; they have a different view towards economics and consumption. They're respectful, they're not greedy, and they are actually trying to plan for sustainability. So, again, we can learn and gather hopes from what some tribes such as the Nez Perce are trying to do.

Indigenous peoples live in and by forests that they have no wish to individually own-the idea of owning the forest would appear to them as ludicrous as the idea of owning the air that we breathe. Patton (2000) argues that indigenous populations (like North America and Australia) should not be considered through, nor included within, the norms of property owning white majorities. Their claims to land and identity are not demands to recognize some pre-existing essence or group. It is in the political act of claiming and expressing new relations to the earth

that such groups both disrupt the majority standard and open up to new futures. New political concepts could be created through the encounters with previously excluded cultures.[14]

The Nez Perce are just one example. There are others as Halfacree (2007) shows us in the non-Indian community. However, indigenous societies also show us as we have been slow to realize what we are in different ways beginning to acknowledge, that we need to have a creative relationship with our non-human relations as we make places. Places *are not* just human constructs! Indians and other indigenous peoples show us that we are wrong to treat the biophysical environment as nothing more than an inert mass that we humans can dominate and manipulate, as we like.[15] If we do not then our ability to create livable places will suffer greatly.

If we establish communities anchored with a sense of place than we can have some hope of living frugally, peacefully, and restoratively, as we need to in our current period of widespread cultural, social and environmental damage. The hope will come from citizens willing to demand their rights, to foster and maintain democracy by caring about one another, about working not just for individual profit but to help create societies with shared prosperity, ones we are all proud to live in.

[14] Patton makes this argument in reference to philosopher Giles Delueze who places the emphasis on becoming, rather than being, there is nothing other than the flow of becoming. Deleuze argues that true becoming does not have an end outside itself. We value action and becoming itself, freed from any human norm or end. I would add that like Unger with Delueze we end up with the notion that our relationship and so called development is not given once and for all but it is an ongoing creation. This also goes back to Veblen's argument that there is no end state of development, it is ongoing, and with no end, or final state, again unlike Marx.

[15] For example, the deep ecology literature appears to have developed (see philosopher Arne Naess) similar arguments as many indigenous tribal groups such as the Nez Perce. However, in Naess' seminal work there is no acknowledgement or recognition of this. And, he is not alone in this.

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