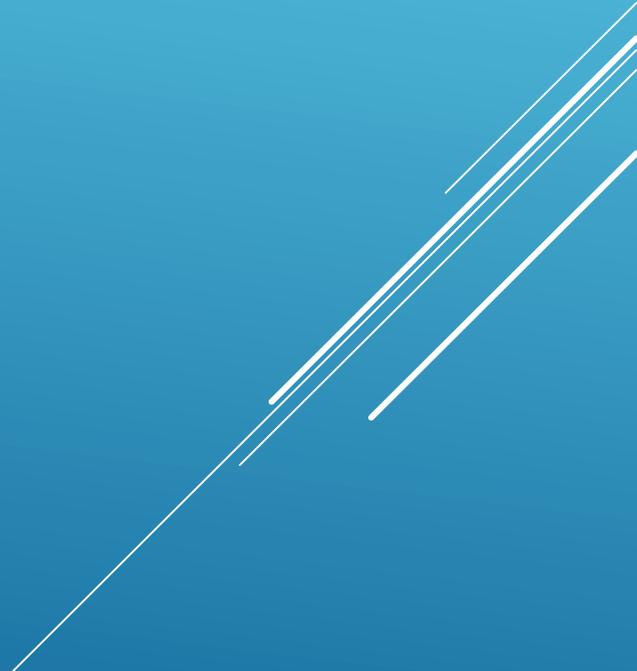


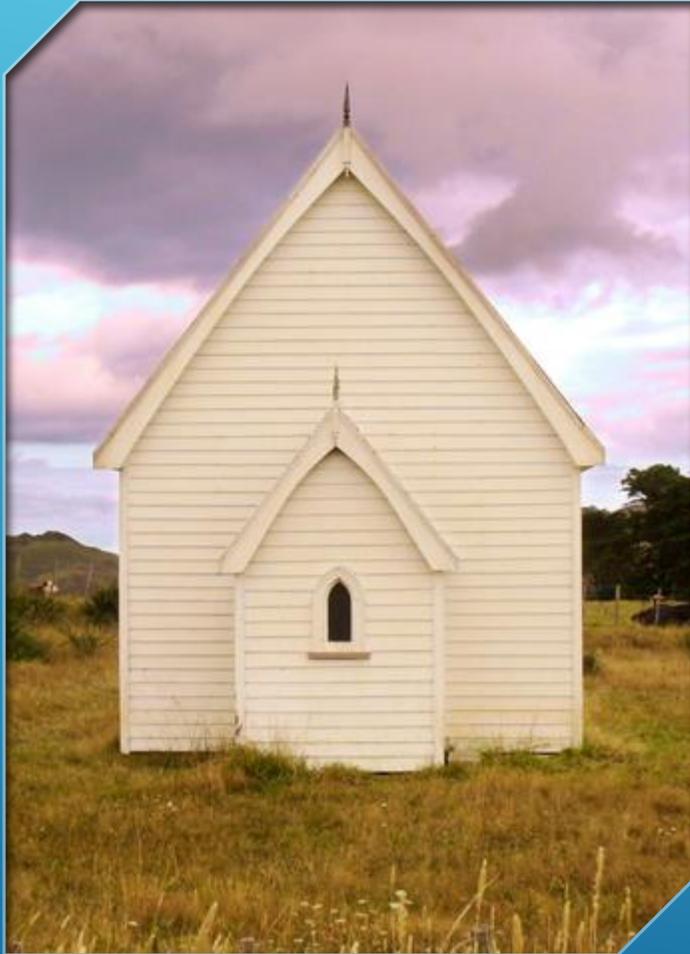
PLACE SPIRITUALITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

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PLACE ATTACHMENT, ATTACHMENT TO
GOD (SPIRITUALITY), AND QUALITY OF LIFE
OUTCOMES

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OBJECTIVE

To investigate whether place attachment is associated with outcomes of quality of life, and the extent to which this association is conditional on attachment to God (spirituality)

1

Adult attachment theory

2

Objects of attachment

- Geographic places (place attachment)
- Divine entities (attachment to God)

3

Empirical study

4

Discussions and Implications

OUTLINE SUMMARY

ATTACHMENT THEORY

- ▶ **Attachment theory explains the evolutionary process that binds infants to their caregivers to ensure infant survival (Bowlby, 1969/1982)**
- ▶ **This early contact experience with a primary caregiver forms what Bowlby calls 'internal working models'**
- ▶ **Internal working models are mental representations of self and others that influence expectations from future relationships**

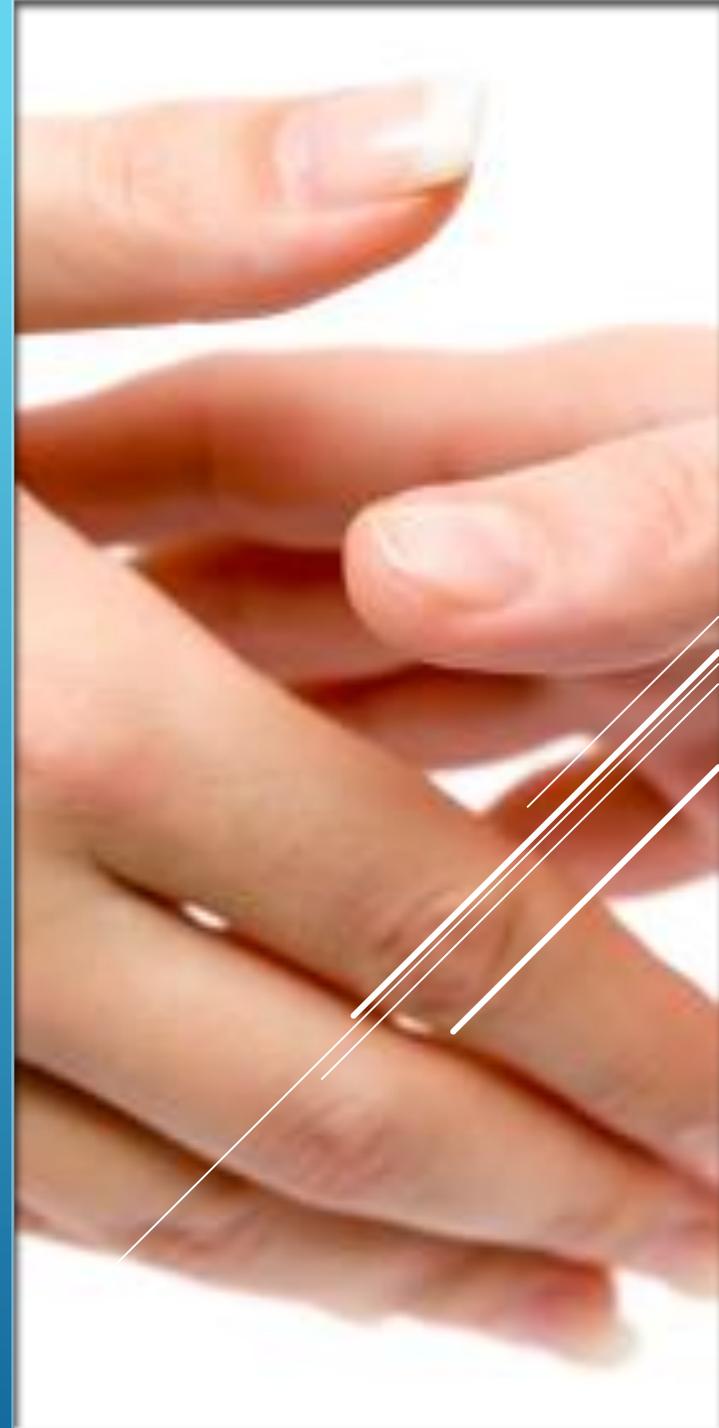


ADULT ATTACHMENT THEORY

- ▶ Existing literature on adult attachment theory is guided by the premise that the same system of internal working model that gives rise to parent-child emotional bond is responsible for the attachment bond formed in adults through emotionally attuned relationships (Ciccharelli, 1991a, 1991b, 2010; Fraley et al. 2011).

- ▶ While infants depend on the physical interactions with their primary caregivers, adults depend upon the knowledge of the whereabouts of their attachment figures for their attachment satisfaction.
- ▶ For example, an adult can maintain attachment with a geographically separated parent by means of symbolic attachment behavior such as writing letters or emails, telephone conversations, etc. with the aim of achieving a sense of security with the attachment figure
- ▶ Some adults also replace their primary caregivers with other objects of attachment that fulfil the attachment figure function (e.g., a romantic partner, geographic place, a divine entity, among others), especially when the primary caregiver has been lost through death or no longer available

**THE GOAL OF ADULT ATTACHMENT IS THE
NEED FOR 'FELT SECURITY'**



- ▶ They are targets for proximity-seeking behaviour
- ▶ They can serve as a safe haven to turn to in times of danger
- ▶ They can function as a secure base from where the individual explores their broader environment and forges identity
- ▶ Loss of attachment with such object may lead to separation anxiety

**OBJECTS OF ATTACHMENT HAVE
THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY
ATTACHMENT FIGURES**

(Ainsworth et al. 1978; Kirkpatrick, 1999)

Geographic places



Divine entities



EXAMPLES OF OBJECTS OF ATTACHMENT
FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
AND PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION



- ▶ Proximity to place may involve displaying photographs taken in an important place, or purchasing a home in a particular geographic location (Ryan & Ogilvie, 2001).
- ▶ Place attachment can also involve going on vacation on the same location year after year (Kelly & Hosking, 2008),
- ▶ In the worst case scenario, place attachment may also involve refusing to leave a geographic setting even when such a place is threatened (e.g., Billig, 2006; Donovan et al. 2012).
- ▶ These studies suggest that places can be perceived as havens of safety and less dangerous among those drawn to them (Brown et al. 2003).
- ▶ Loss of attachment to such places either through natural disasters, death of loved one or a primary caregiver may lead to separation anxiety (Cox & Perry 2011)

‘PLACE’ AS AN OBJECT OF ATTACHMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Altman & Low, 1992, 2012; Lewicka, 2011; Scannell & Gifford, 2014, 2016, 2017)

- ▶ Most monotheistic religions (e.g., Christianity) demonstrate the idea of a personal relationship with God
- ▶ A religious believer may attain a sense of felt security through the knowledge of the whereabouts of their divine attachment figure through searching sacred texts, prayer, meditation, religious participation, among others
- ▶ God may serve as a safe haven for comfort in times of danger for the religious believer
- ▶ God may also serve as a secure base for exploring the world of danger and forming identity
- ▶ Losing a relationship with God may trigger a separation anxiety

'GOD' AS AN OBJECT OF ATTACHMENT IN PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Further readings: Kirkpatrick 1992, 1999, 2005; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Pargament, 1997; Cicirelli, 2004; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2016.



STUDIES SUGGEST THAT ADULT ATTACHMENT BONDS ARE RELATED TO QUALITY OF LIFE OUTCOMES

- Individuals demonstrating attachment behaviours are likely to secure cognitive-attachment bonds, or mental representations, that convince the self to be worthy of care due to proximity to or availability of the object of attachment.
- Such feeling of felt attachment security allows the individual to negotiate their quality of life and maintain positive emotions that reduce emotional distress (Feeney, 1999; Schore, 2003; Miner et al. 2009; Marganska et al. 2013).
- Insecure attachments on the other hand have been linked to lower scores of life satisfaction and higher psychological distress (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Bethany & Lorne, 2008; Sharon & Wendy, 2009).

Attachment to God & QoL

- ▶ Research evidence suggests that improvements in QoL and life satisfaction can be linked to a religious believer's secure attachment to God (e.g., Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Ellison et al. 2012; Bradshaw et al. 2010; Bradshaw & Kent, 2017)
- ▶ This positive outcome have been linked to the emotional quality of love often expressed in a relationship with God

Place attachment & QOL

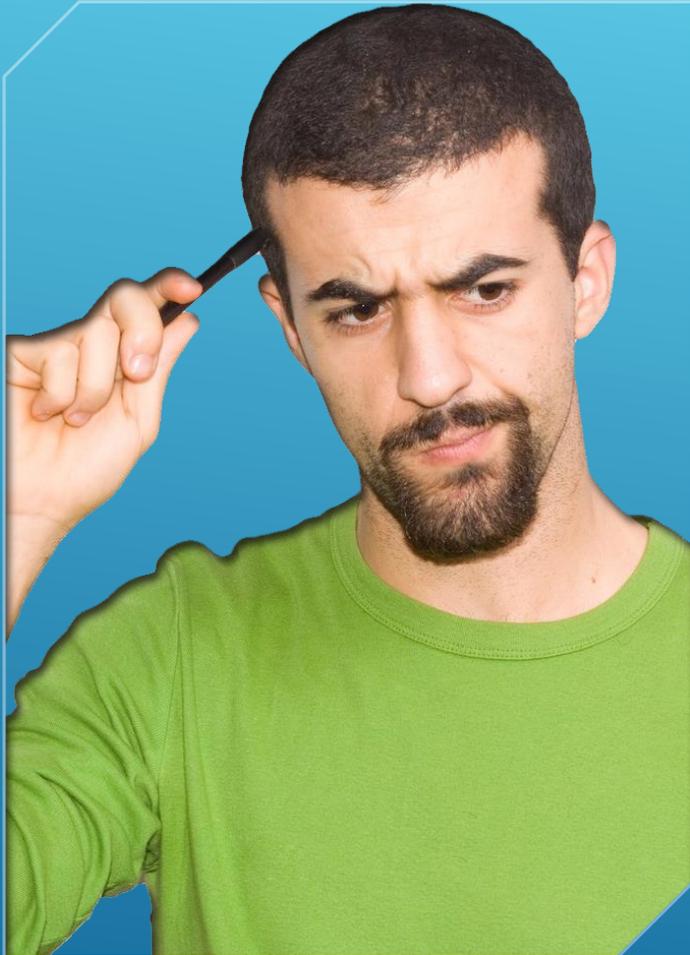
- ▶ Several studies have shown that PA is positively associated with social well-being and quality of life (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010; Tartaglia, 2013; Gattino et al. 2013; Marcheschi et al. 2015)
- ▶ This positive outcome have been linked to several relational factors and the social quality of a place (e.g., friends, family, community, etc.)

OBJECTS OF ATTACHMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE OUTCOMES

- ▶ Watch Video 1:
<https://youtu.be/SBWj3ZvwoHM>
- ▶ Watch video 2:
<https://youtu.be/fN262KwkeOw>

A POSSIBLE INTERACTION BETWEEN PLACE ATTACHMENT AND ATTACHMENT TO GOD?





HYPOTHESES

- *H1*: PA will be positively associated with QoL outcomes.
- *H2a*. Positive/secure AG will be positively associated with improvements in QoL.
- *H2b*. Negative/insecure AG in terms of disappointment and anger with God will be unrelated to QoL, or associated to lower QoL.
- *H3*. The interaction effects between PA and secure AG will be associated with outcomes of QoL than either PA or AG alone.

METHOD & PROCEDURE

- ▶ World Health Organization **Quality of Life** – Bref (WHOQoL Group, 1998) (1 – 5 scale)
 - ▶ environmental health **(.79)** (M=3.98, SD=0.57)
 - ▶ physical health **(.77)** (M=3.77, SD=0.69)
 - ▶ psychological health **(.76)** (M=3.71, SD=0.47)
 - ▶ social relationship state **(.71)** (M=4.03, SD=0.77)
- ▶ 4 **place attachment (.81)** items modified from the sense of place scale (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001) (M=3.61, SD=0.77) (1 – 5 scale)
- ▶ 16-item **attachment to God** measure (Sim & Loh, 2003) was used to assess **secure attachment to God (.89)** (M=5.69, SD=0.46) (1 – 6 scale)
- ▶ Measure of **insecure attachment to God (.71)** was adapted from existing scale of attitudes toward God (Wood et al. 2010) (M=1.54) (1 – 10 scale)
- ▶ Controlling for covariates: age, length of residence, region of origin, gender, relationship status, and education background



- ▶ Snowball sampling
- ▶ Cross-sectional study of African diaspora Christians living in New South Wales, Australia
- ▶ Age mean: $M=36.9$, $SD=11.7$
- ▶ Length of residence: less than 5 years (30); above 5 years (70%)
- ▶ Gender: Male 46%; Female 54%
- ▶ Relationship status: Married 62%; Single 32%; widowed/divorced/separated 6%
- ▶ Education background: 81% had university degrees; 19% had high school or no education
- ▶ Regions of origin in Africa: West Africa, 58.4%; Southern Africa, 38.8%; Eastern Africa, 2.4%; Central Africa, 0.4%.

PARTICIPANTS

RESULTS

- ▶ 3-step hierarchical multiple regression, **social relationship state** scores
 - ▶ Step 1: Place attachment (PA centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.07$, $b=.216$, 95%CI: .10, .34, $p< .001$)
 - ▶ Step 2: add Attachment to God (AG centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.13$, $b=.426$, 95%CI: .23, .62, $p< .001$)
 - ▶ Step 3: enter PA x AG (all centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.14$, $b= -.185$, $p< NS$)

- ▶ 3-step hierarchical multiple regression, **environmental health scores**
 - ▶ Step 1: Place attachment (PA centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.12$, $b=.218$, 95%CI: .13, .31, $p<.001$)
 - ▶ Step 2: add Attachment to God (AG centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.16$, $b=.262$, 95%CI: .12, .41, $p<.001$)
 - ▶ Step 3: enter PA x AG (all centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.16$, $b=.011$, $p<NS$)

RESULTS

- ▶ 3-step hierarchical multiple regression, **psychological functioning scores**
 - ▶ Step 1: Place attachment (PA centered)
 - ▶ (R^2 .08, b =.174, 95%CI: .10, .25, $p < .001$)
 - ▶ Step 2: add Attachment to God (AG centered)
 - ▶ (R^2 .11, b =.192, 95%CI: .07, .31; $p < .002$)
 - ▶ Step 3: enter PA x AG (all centered)
 - ▶ (R^2 .11, b = .015, $p < NS$)

RESULTS

- ▶ 3-step hierarchical multiple regression, **physical health** scores
 - ▶ Step 1: Place attachment (PA centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.20$, $b.362$, 95%CI: .22, .43, $p < .001$)
 - ▶ Step 2: add Attachment to God (AG centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.21$, $b=.149$, $p < NS$)
 - ▶ Step 3: enter PA x AG (all centered)
 - ▶ ($R^2.21$, $b= .181$, $p < NS$)

RESULTS

- ▶ PA was positively associated with perceptions of God as a
 - ▶ safe haven ($b=.063$, 95%CI: .01, .11; $p=0.025$)
 - ▶ secure base ($b=.157$, 95%CI: .02, .29; $p=0.025$)
 - ▶ and developing proximity to God ($b=.167$, 95%CI: .03, .31; $p=0.019$).

FINDINGS FROM ANOTHER STUDY USING THE SAME MEASURES

Demography: African residents in northern and western regions of Netherlands

Females (52%)

Married (51%), Single (43%), separated/widowed/divorced (6.3%)

Tertiary educated (56%), High school or less (44%)

Christians (94%), Muslims (4%), African traditional religion and others (2%)

Interaction between PA and AG in another study



DISCUSSIONS

PA is positively associated with outcomes of QoL in this sample group

AG is positively related to QoL outcomes, except for the physical health context. This suggests that even though AG may provide psychological comfort, it may not change the physical health status of the individual.

The effects of PA are not contingent upon AG for this particular sample group.

The strength of PA is reduced once AG is introduced into the models, suggesting the presence of a partial mediation.

Another possibility could be that the lack of interaction might be context-driven, given that another study with similar demographic group in a Dutch context showed striking interaction between PA and AG

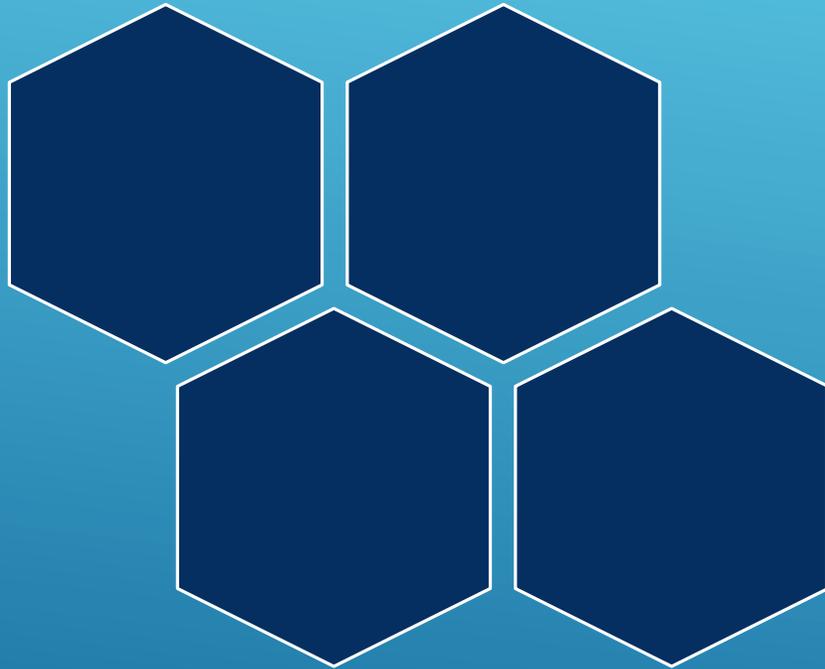
Overall, the findings suggest that the participants showed strong place attachment, as well as secure attachment to God.

However, even though they have secure attachment to God, it has not affected their ability to connect well with place. Alternatively, even though they are drawn to place, this has not affected their attachment to God.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ The interactions effects between PA and AG may be context-driven
- ▶ The emotional quality with these objects of attachment may have accounted for the positive outcomes of quality of life
- ▶ These findings may contribute to a possible theoretical framework that study people's relationship with both the sacred and physical space and its health implications
- ▶ The study makes a case for the impact of place on religion





THANK YOU

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