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PLACES OF MEANING AND BELONGING IN THE URBAN ARCTIC

A study on place attachment, place identity and the impacts of change in Rovaniemi City
center

Tourism Research, TourCIM

Master's thesis

Spring 2022

University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Sciences

Title: Places of meaning and belonging in the urban Arctic: A study on place attachment, place identity and the impacts of change in Rovaniemi City center

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Degree programme / subject: Tourism Research (Tourism, Culture and International Management, TourCIM)

The type of the work: Master's thesis

Number of pages: 78

Year: 2022

Abstract

Urban places are more than just backgrounds for human activity and interaction, as they are both materially and socially constructed. They are both functional structures and sites of human experience that include memories, emotions and how they are negotiated on an everyday basis. The experience of place is affected by its material, historical and social dimensions and can vary depending on many aspects. Place attachment and place identity are some of the most important actors supporting the development of communities. Urban places have been somewhat neglected in both the academic and policy discussions connected to Arctic tourism. As place studies divide into multiple different fields of research, the importance of a more holistic understanding of cities is being stressed.

Rovaniemi is profiled as a tourism city, and the discussions about the places in the city often ask; who are these places made for? This research aims to create understanding on the important elements of place experience from the residents' point of view; place attachment, identity, and the impacts of change are being studied in the context of Rovaniemi city center. The main research question is: **How does residents' place attachment form in Rovaniemi city center?** The methodology used for data collection was semi-structured photo-elicited interviews. There were altogether 5 participants in this research. A qualitative, theory-bound content analysis was used to interpret the data.

The results of this study indicate that in Rovaniemi, the residents' attachment to places forms through different individual and collective aspects. A common theme is that the residents wish for more communal places within the city as they increase attachment. The meaningful places the participants had chosen had a big impact on their comfort and attachment to Rovaniemi. Many residents described their attachment to be constructed by activity and the ability to be close to nature, and especially places of collective and individual memories became highlighted. Some complexities were described in the attachments and place identities as well, as Rovaniemi is seen to be a place of confusing re- and deconstruction that causes detachment and development that only serves some groups.

KEYWORDS: urban place studies, photo-elicitation, place attachment, place identity, Rovaniemi

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout my life, I have found myself in different places within different cities that have become sites of meaning on a personal level. I have found myself in protests that were aiming to protect collectively meaningful places in these cities. I have felt tremendous sadness when being separated from them, however, always capable of adapting in new places and finding my new favorite spots from there. Urban areas are complex playgrounds for multiple stakeholders that are being constantly transformed and negotiated, and the economic activities there are often dominated by real-estate development, tourism, and culture industries. After moving to Rovaniemi few years ago, I started wondering, who is the city made for? What kind of relationships do people have with their own living environments? It is indeed these questions and thoughts that led me to explore this topic.

Urbanization is a megatrend that happens both on a metropolitan level but also on a smaller scale, such as in Lapland and other Arctic regions. The city center of Rovaniemi is a developing urban region that aims, according to its 2025 strategy, to become a comfortable meeting point for locals and tourists (City of Rovaniemi, 2020). According to Carson (2020), urban places have been neglected in both the academic and policy discussions connected to Arctic tourism. Place studies show that places are more than just a background for human actions; they are both materially and socially constructed (Lewicka, 2011). In addition, the experience of place is affected by its material, historical and social dimensions and can vary depending on many aspects, such as time and actions (Tennberg, 2020). Urban studies have been criticized for diverging into multiple different fields of research, while the importance of a more holistic understanding of cities is being stressed (Lento & Olsson, 2013, p. 7).

Many cities are eagerly trying to find out the aspects that make them stand out to increase forces of attraction but also to make people want to stay in these places; this has led to many cities investing in their image and identity projects (Paasi, 1998, p. 174). The image campaigns and collective identity of place can however vary from the actual experience of the residents (Tennberg, 2020). Some cities succeed better in creating environments for attachment within them. There are multiple aspects that affect to the creation of emotional bonds between people and places, yet, when positive, they can motivate towards local activities and environmental protection, and are crucial for psychological balance and good adjustment, together with the attraction and pulling aspects. Place attachment together with place identity is one of the most important elements in fostering the development of community in its

physical, social, political, and economic aspects (Manzo & Perkins 2006). This thesis explores these place bonds people have with places within Rovaniemi city center. Together with these main concepts of identity and attachment, this work attempts to explore some of the fundamental parts of place; the temporal and embodied aspects, and how can we understand place attachment and identity from these points of view as well in order to create a better understanding of how Rovaniemi city center functions for its residents.

1.1 Background

Urban places and spaces are consumed and experienced every day. They are the meeting points, playgrounds and stages for people doing their everyday tasks, moving from one place to another, consuming services, and dwelling. And as Low (2015) states, that while urban landscapes are often thought as built structures that relate to functionality of modern life, they are also sites of human experience that include memories, emotions and how they are negotiated on an everyday basis (Low, 2015, p. 295). Like many of us, I have lived all my life in urban areas. Within these areas, there are some places that feel different, more meaningful, than others. Borer (2010, p. 97) puts out, how places can be seen as more than just a background for individual's actions and interactions, and they can work as identity markers for individuals as well. In addition, smaller places within cities can be seen to be connected to the city's overall image (Borer, 2010). Just recently, I heard of a city planning decision that would wipe out one of my favourite places in my hometown. Afterwards, I realized how strongly this certain place had shaped both the city's and my personal place identity. In addition, it made me realise how strong emotional connections individuals can have towards a place, and that places can be part of one's identity as well.

Urbanization has been a major trend after the industrialization, which is predicted to continue in the future as well. In 2010, half of the world's population lived in cities and the amount is predicted to grow to over 70 percent by 2050 (Birch & Wachter, 2011, p. 3). Urbanization as a megatrend is connected to small towns and cities as well as the big metropolitan cities (Hynynen & Rantanen, 2019, p. 101). The increasing competitiveness between cities has been highlighted in the post-industrialization era, where the global economic and political changes push the cities toward re-invention to meet the societal demands (Andersson, 1997, p. 115). Among the increasing competition, and the other future challenges that cities will

face, such as social instability and sustainability challenges (e.g. Riffat, Powell, & Aydin, 2016), one of the greatest challenges of the future liveable cities is said to be the maximisation of the positive sensory characteristics while reducing the negative ones (Adams, Moore, Cox, Croxford, Refaee & Sharples, 2007, p. 214).

In contemporary cities, the economic activity is often dominated by real-estate development, tourism, and culture industries (e.g. Loughran, Fine & Hunter, 2015). The past years of the pandemic has had a major impact on the way we think and talk about tourism, as well as cities and places. Other than the pandemic, diverse forms of mobility exist which affects how people experience place. There has been an increase in mobility in its different forms, such as airline travel and internet and mobile telecommunications (with digital age mobile work-spaces), tourism and amenity-seeking, refuge seeking from war and disease and attempts to escape poverty and persecution, as an example (Di Masso et al., 2019, p. 125). In the discussions concerning Rovaniemi and tourism development, one strong voice has been the astonishment about how much the city only exists for tourists (e.g. Tennberg, 2020).

1.2 Rovaniemi as a research area

Rovaniemi is a city located in the Arctic circle, Lapland, Finland. It is a home for over 63 000 inhabitants and the largest city in Europe by area with more than 700 000 yearly overnight stays by tourists prior to the year 2020. The number of residents in Rovaniemi has been increasing for 19 years in a row, however, the growth has been somewhat moderate (Statistics Finland, 2022). The first settlements in Rovaniemi have been dated as far as to 5500 B.C.E., and the more constant settlements have been dated between 1000s and 1100s (Heikkola, 1987p. 5-6). From the early days of the first settlements to this day, the location of Rovaniemi in the proximity of rivers Kemijoki and Ounasjoki has been the prerequisite for life within the area. The rivers enhanced the connections for trade, as the rivers were the main means of travel until the 1800s, as well as provided food for the villagers. The villages in Rovaniemi area started to grow in the 1500s, and despite the many uncertainties in life, brought by floods, war and bad crop years, Rovaniemi started to gain self-sufficiency and foundation as a larger and more significant village to live in in the 1800s (Heikkola, 1987, p. 6-9). In the late 1800s, timber rafting and forestry became significant sources of income in the area, which attracted temporary workforce to the area as well, making Rovaniemi a vivid center

of trade and a transit place (Heikkola, 1987, p. 10). Moreover, the significance of Rovaniemi as a center of trade and transit increased even more in the early 1900s, when the railroad was finished. Rovaniemi village used to be situated a few kilometres northwest from where the center nowadays is, and the location of the center was settled to its place in the 1900s, as the village became a township (Heikkola, 1987, p. 14-15).

In the 1400s and 1500s Rovaniemi was situated on the border of east and west, as it was seen as the circuit of Sweden and as the westernmost border of the Grand Principality of Moscow. The villages in the area of Rovaniemi city center were places for multiple pogroms and reprisals within these years and they were burnt and destroyed many times (Maunu, 1987, p. 30). Unfortunately, the destructive history of Rovaniemi did not end here, as during the second world war, Rovaniemi was almost completely destroyed by burning in 1944. The destructions of the war can be noticed to this day as the building stock is relatively new in the city center. The destruction of many significant buildings has had a big impact on the city image (Haavikko, 1987, p. 49-50). The reconstruction era started quite rapidly after that, and the execution of the new town plan was led by Alvar Aalto. The plan was made based on the fact that the city was a crossing point of multiple roads and railroads that came from different directions, therefore, the map of the city got its famous look that reminds of reindeer horns (Haavikko, 1987, p. 51). Rovaniemi became a city officially in 1960, and the center started expanding and dividing more clearly into different areas, such as areas for residence and business (Haavikko, 1987, p. 58). Today, Rovaniemi is a cultural, economic and educational center of Lapland; “the arctic capital”, and highly profiled as a tourism city as well. As the rural municipality and the city of Rovaniemi were joined in 2007, Rovaniemi became the largest city in Europe by area (City of Rovaniemi, 2022).

Due to the large size of Rovaniemi, the focus of this thesis is limited to places that are located in the immediate proximity to the city center, meaning, that the places further than 2 kilometres away from the center will be excluded. In the 2025 city strategy of Rovaniemi, it is mentioned that the city aims to develop itself as a “comfortable meeting point for locals and tourists”, as well as a “lively service center” (City of Rovaniemi, 2020). It is also stressed by Rantala and Salmela (2020), that the city needs to act wisely in order to maintain its attractiveness with developing itself sustainably as a destination as well as a home for local residents at the same time (Rantala & Salmela, 2020). In addition, Carson (2020) states that urban places have been neglected in the academic and policy discussions connected to Arctic tourism. Remote destinations and exotic attractions have remained the main research objects and

targets, and the need for a better understanding of the experiences in urban Arctic destinations is being emphasized (Carson, 2020).

My personal interest toward Rovaniemi comes from the time spent here carrying out my tourism studies and taking part and listening to the conversations concerning the city's development as a tourism destination, as well as experiencing it myself. Generally, the top-down oriented planning process of urban space has been seen as a problem, and the democratic co-creation of cities somewhat unsuccessful (e.g., Lefebvre, 1991), which has become evident in the discussions concerning Rovaniemi as well. In addition, at times the image that marketing material and branding of cities does not reflect the actual place experience, thus, place research turns the focus inside the city (e.g. Tennberg, 2020). In the many discussions concerning tourism, generally and also in the context of Rovaniemi, it is common to notice the opposition of the irritated locals and the many tourists, i.e., "insiders and outsiders" (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002, p. 189), as many cities are battling with over-tourism and unbalanced city development between tourism and the local community (e.g. Bouchon & Rauscher, 2019). In addition, the curiosity towards people-place relationships and place identities and the multidisciplinary nature of these phenomenon lead me towards this topic.

1.3 Previous research

The research on people-place relationships has shown that places are both materially and socially constructed (Lewicka, 2011). The concept of place is the core concept of environmental psychology (Lewicka, 2008), and it is tightly linked to humanistic geography (Seamon & Sowers, 2008; Haarni, Karvinen, Koskela & Tani, 1997, p. 16), from which point of view I carry out my investigation as well. The main themes in humanistic geography are the meanings that individuals attach to different places and therefore its main goal is to understand the individual experience in relation to a phenomenon (Haarni, et al., 1997, p. 16). More broadly, the interest in people-place relationships has grown within the last decades among various branches of social sciences. These include fields such as environmental psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology and urban studies (Lewicka, 2011). Accordingly, to understand individual-place relationships, place attachment has been applied to tourism studies as well. Place attachment has been a so-called instrumental construct to explain tourist and residential behaviour and intentions and has been seen as a tool for managing and marketing

tourism destinations (Dwyer, Jen & Lee, 2019). Place attachment and sense of place have been the focus of research both from the residents' and the tourists'/visitors' point of view as well as investigating them simultaneously (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002).

In humanistic geography, the meanings of place are studied from a phenomenological perspective, in which, the body has been considered as an organ or the medium of perception (e.g. Lester, 1999). Thus, place attachment has been recognized as more than an emotional and cognitive experience, also including the practices that link people to a place (Low, 1992, p. 165). Degnen (2016), in example, argues that place attachment should be considered as a collective, relational and embodied process, experienced through both social memory systems and embodied, sensorial registers. Moreover, in consumer research, the research in phenomenological psychology has pointed the focus more in the direction of embodied agency, and the body as a process (Joy & Sherry, 2003). In order to achieve a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of place attachment, the embodied perspective has been included into this research as well.

Another concept that refers to people's bonds with places is place identity (Lewicka, 2008). Place identity, as place attachment, has been studied by various scholars in the past 50 years. Many scholars, such as Relph (1976) Tuan (1974), Peterson (1988) among others have been studying place identity of a place or people's place identity, however, rarely noticing both sides of the concept (Peng, Strijker & Wu, 2020). Peng et al. (2020) continue, that the concept of place identity was introduced by Proshansky (1978) whose view on the concept has been widely referred to. Other considerable author on the subject is Paasi (1986) who thought that distinguishing two aspects from place identity would be beneficial. Accordingly, Paasi's explanations on place identity have gained a lot of value as well (Peng et al., 2020). The idea that cities have identities has been of interest for many sociologists in the past decades, and the smaller places within them have also been seen to contribute to the city's overall image and identity (Borer, 2010).

As Rovaniemi is highly profiled as a tourism destination, and although the focus on tourism research has been concentrating to the tourists and their attitudes, images and experiences, the research on local people hasn't bypassed the link between the city inhabitants and tourism (Tennberg, 2020). Many inhabitants profit either directly or indirectly from tourism, hence, there are publications concerning the attitudes, participation and affects that tourism has on the local population conducted in the University of Lapland (e.g. Hakkarainen, Jutila & Ilola, 2019; Ilola, Hakkarainen, García-Rosell, 2014). Tennberg (2020) in Arctic

Heterotopia, studies the every-day lived experience and arctic know-how in Rovaniemi with narrative analysis. Tennberg (2020) uses the concept heterotopia, coined by Michel Foucault, that refers to certain state of limbo, places of unclarity and ambiguity, with mixtures of global and local, public and private, artificial and authentic. Tennberg (2020) sees Rovaniemi as a heterotopia and adds, that the voices that are challenging the “tourist city” image are often pushed aside, and the “social order of the city builds up a dystopic theme park, which belongs only to the chosen few”. Cities are often seen to belong to their inhabitants, but in the case of Rovaniemi, according to Tennberg, it is often seen belonging to tourism and tourists (Tennberg, 2020).

The impacts of change to place attachment and identity have been studied as well. More recently, by Devine-Wright et al. (2020) studied the effects of the pandemic to place attachments. The impacts of climate change have been considered as well by Devine-Wright (2013) and the overall impacts of perceived urban change have been investigated by Von Wirth et al. (2016). Moreover, in the context of Rovaniemi, place attachment has been studied from the student’s point of view by Lantela, Lantela and Hammine (2017), while Honkasilta (2015) studies the motives of staying and leaving in the city of Rovaniemi and the meanings behind them. Personal place experience of Rovaniemi has been studied by Hattunen (2014) in a master’s thesis from the faculty of arts in University of Lapland. Sääskilahti (2014) studies Rovaniemi landscape from the memory’s point of view that is especially linked to the war, as there are only few historic buildings left. Especially from the architectural point of view in relation to place attachment, Rovaniemi is an interesting area to study.

1.4 Purpose of the research

Most of the authors who investigate place attachment agree that the development of emotional bonds with places is an important factor for psychological balance and good adjustment, and that it gives a sense of stability and is a source of meaning (e.g., Keeler et al., 2019; Degnen, 2016; Lewicka, 2011). Moreover, it naturally helps to facilitate in local activities as well (Lewicka, 2008). Place attachment, place identity, sense of community and social capital are, according to Manzo and Perkins (2006) all important in fostering the development of community in its physical, social, political, and economic aspects. As the concerns are highlighted considering the dimming of the place identities in the post-modern urban landscape

and have been since the end of the last century (e.g., Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974; 1989), it is necessary to gain more understanding on the individual-place relationship and place attachment, but at the same time, not to neglect the social and collective aspects. In the urban context, it is often mentioned that the planning processes do not interact enough with the local population (e.g., Lefebvre, 1991; Staffans, 2004). The identification of place attachment can be used as evaluation indicators for future development of these local urban places, while also sustaining a place identity that will contribute to the touristic advantages of the city as well.

The research on urban areas has been shattered to multiple different research fields, which has increased the need for understanding cities more holistically; as social and physical environments at the same time (Lento & Olsson, 2013, p. 7). The research on place attachment and identity through qualitative means can work as a tool in achieving more holistic understanding, when investigating the phenomena from multiple points of view. My main aim in this research is to create understanding on how individuals are attached to places within Rovaniemi city center, how do meaningful places affect the place identity and image of Rovaniemi and how do the changes within the city affect the relationship. In addition, I aim to identify what kind of characteristics do these places within the urban landscape contain. Urban environments are under constant change which pose challenges to people's place bonds. In example, more recently it has been suggested, that the pandemic might have caused fundamental shifts with our relationship with place as many have been more fixated to place, yet more digitally mobile (Devine-Wright, Pinto de Carvalho, Di Masso, Lewicka, Manzo, & Williams, 2020).

Along with the changes caused by the pandemic, change in urban place occurs due to other aspects as well, such as changes in landscapes and other economic and cultural activities. Indeed, the history of Rovaniemi as a place is miscellaneous and diverse that can be observed through the landscape of the city and its physical qualities as well as with from the more non-tangible aspects. Therefore, it is truly an interesting area to study place attachments and identities. Despite creating more understanding of the possible changes, the overall curiosity towards these meaningful places and the identification of the characteristics that they possess might be useful in the discussions about the future development of Rovaniemi, both as an attractive place to live, and as a destination.

As the main research question, I present the following: **How does residents' place attachment form in Rovaniemi city center?** Supporting the aims of the study and the main research question, sub tasks and questions can be formed as:

(1) What are the elements that make an urban place meaningful?

(2) How are the meaningful places part of the place and individual's identity?

(3) How are the changes in Rovaniemi affecting the residents' relationship to place?

1.5 Methodology

The study at hand is broadly following the philosophical orientation of phenomenology. It is one of the main traditions in qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 11) and the essential concepts can be seen to be experience, meaning and communality (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 32). Therefore, the study investigates Rovaniemi residents' place attachment through a qualitative research design and analysis. For data collection, semi-structured photo-elicited interviews were conducted. Photo-elicited interviews work as a useful method to trigger memories and to see the everyday experiences in a new, more in-depth way (Tonge, Moore, Ryan & Beckley, 2013). Conducting research that focuses on individual's everyday surroundings, the decision on this method for data collection felt natural.

For this research, I chose respondent-led photo-elicitation interviews. Respondent-led approach means that each of the participants were asked to bring their own photo of a place they feel is meaningful to them in the cityscape. Respondent-led photo-elicitation interviews serve both the researcher and the participants, as the collecting or taking photographs can be an enjoyable and familiar task for the participants, and therefore increases the willingness to participate in such research (Tonge et al. 2013). The photographs were only used in the interview setting and were not included in to the report itself for anonymity reasons. The interviews were conducted in May and June of 2021 through Microsoft Teams and in person. The data was then transcribed from audio form to text. After transcribing the data, it was analysed through theory-bound qualitative content analysis, which will be explained more precisely in the latter methodological chapters.

1.6 Structure of the study

After a brief familiarizing to the topic in the introduction chapter, the theoretical framework will give a more throughout introduction to the subject and the important concepts of the research. The theoretical chapters explain the concept of place from extensive sources, which have been discussed widely in the human sciences in the past decades. The concept of place is investigated more closely within the urban landscape. Furthermore, the theoretical chapter investigates the concepts of place attachment and place identity. These chapters give an overview of how place attachment and place identity are created according to various authors, and how is the phenomenon possible. Moreover, the last chapters sharpen the focus and consider some of the different characteristics of place, such as the temporal characteristic. The aim is to help the reader consider place as something more than just a physical location, but also as an active, meaningful, and processual concept.

In the methodology chapter, the main means of research are introduced and the reasons behind the certain methodological decisions are articulated. It explains the data collection process in detail. The methodological part will also discuss ethical aspects of the research and take into consideration the reflexivity of the research. In the analysis and discussion chapter, as the findings of the research will be analyzed with theory-bound content analysis, the discussion will alternate between the data and theory. The concluding chapter will put forth the findings of this research by reviewing the research questions more closely. The final chapter will also include the evaluation of the limitations of the research together with presenting some ideas for future research.

2. BELONGING TO AN URBAN PLACE

2.1 Urban place

‘Place is not just a thing in the world . . .
place is also a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world’
(Cresswell, 2003, p. 11)

Words such as space and place are used in various contexts in everyday discussions. In addition to the more ordinary conversations, they are discussed within multiple fields of research and are extremely complex and mobile concepts. Space and place that are tightly linked to each other and overlapping to some extent, and it is widely agreed that abstract spaces become subjective places through the lived experiences and activities that happen in the lived world (Haarni, Karvinen, Koskela & Tani, 1997, p. 17). The definition of place was challenged in the early 1970s by so-called humanistic geographers, such as Tuan (1974), Buttimer (1976) and Relph (1976). Cartographically, place can be defined as latitudes and magnitudes, but humanistic geographers went beyond these mathematical systems and asked, what are places as lived locations and experiences, and what does it mean to belong to a place (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 229-230). Humanistic geography was formally introduced as a disciplinary subfield by Yi-Fu Tuan (1976) by defining it as a geographic study of human beings’ experiences and understandings of space, place and the natural world (Seamon & Lundberg, 2017, p. 1). The subfield developed side by side with critical social geography as a critique to positivism, and the focus wanted to be shifted towards the ‘lived world’ and individual as an active and experiencing subject (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 16).

The concept of place is accordingly the main objective of humanistic geography. Within the field, it is defined as a space into which an individual creates different meanings in their lived world. The main themes are accordingly the subjective experiences, emotions, memories and imagination (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 16-17). Montgomery (1998, p. 96-97) encapsulates, that places are constructed by physical form, activity and meaning. Thus, place is not seen as an objective fact but rather as a phenomenon that gets its meanings through individual experiences and interpretations, and the attachment to a place happens through living, in the lived world. Environment that is being perceived through senses, can be seen as the foundation for the lived world. Therefore, the interpretation of perception attaches meanings to the world, which turn a space into a place (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 17). Places can be thought of from

distinctive, however interconnected, constitutive elements: materiality, practices, institutions and representation (e.g. Kalandides, 2011).

When thinking about urban spaces and places, it is common to start thinking about the built environments, and the infrastructure and certain landmarks in it. However, Borer (2010) highlights, that urban place is more than a background and matters to individual's social experiences as places can structure interactions. One usual image connected to the words 'urban' and 'urbanization', are the big cities or metropolitan areas. However, according to Hynynen and Rantanen (2019) urbanization happens also on a smaller scale. Within the urban research community, especially in Finnish context, smaller towns and cities are not seen as urban areas, and a broader conceptualization around urbanity is seen as a way to offer more useful tools in order to face challenges on the smaller scale as well (Hynynen & Rantanen, 2019). As the concept of place is multidimensional and complex, so is the urban space as a phenomenon, cities are as well temporally, spatially and socially structured environments of meaning (Lappi, 2013, p. 324).

The difference between urban and rural area has traditionally been seen as differences in density. The density in urban areas can be seen as the density of people, but also as the density of cultural, economic and leisure activities (Lento & Olsson, 2013, p. 12). Urban places are for multiple individuals and groups, and therefore there are multiple different views and aims. City planning has been trying to answer to these contradictions, however, planning and design are forms of power use (Syrjämaa & Tunturi, 2002, p. 28). Tuan (1975 as cited in Lewicka, 2010) saw cities as the centers of meanings, and as the perfect exemplifications of the concept of place as they are areas created exclusively for human use. City planning decisions are undeniably guided by societal conceptions, which cannot be static. The perceptions of space and place are always situated into a societal and cultural, temporal context, where the meanings cannot be universal. Individuals from different ethnical, societal and gender groups interpret space and place differently, depending also on the historical situation (Syrjämaa & Tunturi, 2002, p. 28).

Even though urban places are created exclusively for human use, they consist of many non-human elements as well. Nature, and for example urban forestry, is also an important part of urban area, as it is often described as a meaningful part of them, even only as a landscape that can be seen from one's window (Haarni, et al., 1997, p 174). Especially Rovaniemi, the city is often seen as a place where the nature is close and accessible and part of its arctic identity (Tennberg, 2020). Tennberg (2020) adds, that in the marketing and communications

of cities, the efforts that aim to construct the place's brand does not necessarily meet with the actual reality of that place, its conditions and its experience. Place research therefore turns the focus inside the cities, and it assumes that places in the city are for someone or something. The meaningful places of the city's residents make the sense of place in the city (Tennberg, 2020). In conclusion, the research methods, conceptualizations and conceptions of place vary between different branches of social science and humanities disciplines. However, as mentioned and highlighted, a common argument for scholars across these disciplines is that physical locations have ontological importance, thus, they are more than just a "backdrop to social phenomena" (Gieryn, 2000, as cited in Devine-Wright, 2013, p. 62).

2.2 Belonging to place: place attachment

"Place attachment involves an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place" (Low & Altman, 1992, p. 5).

While it is commonly agreed that spaces become places when they are endowed with identity and meaning (e.g. Tuan, 1977), there is less agreement on how one should describe and measure people's bonds to different places (Lewicka, 2008). The interest in place attachment has grown considerably since the 1970s, as the humanistic geographers took effort in understanding people's connections to place. Devine-Wright (2013, p. 62) describes the research on people-place relationships as burgeoning. In the past decades, there has been a notable increase on the subject across multiple social science and humanities disciplines. While talking about "bond to a place" it can refer to multiple things such as place attachment, sense of place, place identity and place dependency etcetera (Devine-Wright, 2013). Place attachment has however been identified as a main indicator for these bonds (Von Wirth et al., 2016, p. 67). Despite the confusion and possible disagreement in the field of place studies conceptually, it is agreed, that every individual experience a certain level place attachment throughout their lives (e.g. Lewicka, 2008). Riley (1992, p. 13) suggests thinking that humans interact, and therefore are attached, with the landscape in three ways: as a member of a species, as a member of a culture / subculture, and as an individual. To think beyond the early stages of human interaction with the environment, culturally determined landscape attachment and individual experience are, at least in this case, worthy of investigating more closely. Especially

in urban areas, place attachment becomes a more cultural phenomenon as the landscape, and places within it, are affected and made by humans. At the same time, an individual's own life, body and experiences clearly have a major impact to place attachment (Riley, 1992, p. 13-18).

Place attachment has been seen to include many ideas, and its origins are varied and complex (Low & Altman, 1992, p. 3-4). Both Relph and Tuan identify different states of belonging to a place. Tuan (1974) discusses topophilia and topophobia, while Relph (1976) discusses insideness and outsideness (Seamon & Sowers, 2008). Both conceptualizations deal with the possible positive attachment and feelings of safety, ease and belonging and on the other hand, unsafety, alienation and negative emotions and feelings that an individual can possess toward a place (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 17; Seamon & Sowers, 2008). The concepts of sense of place and place attachment have been used simultaneously, place attachment has been seen as a construct of sense of place, and sometimes viewed as a separate construct (Gillespie, Cosgrave, Malatzky, & Carden, 2022; Di Masso et al., 2019). Gillespie et al. (2022) state, that finding a conceptual clarification and agreement across the fields of study that these concepts are being studied, might be unnecessary. Personally, I am not aiming for a clarification either. Rather, I am realizing the interrelatedness of these concepts and not denying either of them. In this work the concept that will be used to describe these people-place bonds is place attachment.

Lewicka (2011), in the informative and thorough article *Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years?* looks into the place attachment research conducted between the end of the last century and early 2000s. Lewicka (2011, p. 219) describes place attachment as something that is "intuitively obvious": "place attachment means emotional bonds which people develop with various places". At the same time, the author makes a realization that there are multiple implementations of the construct which each a slightly different theoretical meaning (Lewicka, 2011, p. 219). Di Masso et al. (2019) summarize, that the research has produced various conceptualizations depending on how bonds, places and the scale of places have been defined. According to Lewicka (2011, p. 211-214) place attachment has been researched from different place scales, such as the neighborhood, home or city and less often researched from a wider scale such as national regions. Place attachment studies have been mostly concentrating on one place scale only at a time, rather than comparing different scales. However, one interesting finding that has come out of the place attachment research on different scales is that they show less attachment to intermediate places (excluding home) such

as neighborhood than to the scale of city. This kind of relationship with place has been described as curvilinear, U-shaped relationship (Lewicka, 2011, p. 212).

Scanell and Gifford (2010) offer a so-called tripartite organizing framework to understand place attachment. The framework includes three different dimensions to help structure the definitions of place attachment offered in the vast literature on the matter. These dimensions are person, psychological process, and place dimensions. Depending on the aims and field of study, these dimensions can be studied separately or with more emphasis on the other, however, keeping in mind that the dimensions usually overlap (Scanell & Gifford, 2010). The “psychological process dimension” of place attachment has been identified by various scholars (e.g., Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant, 2004; Lewicka, 2008; Low & Altman, 1992) which can be defined as affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Kyle, et al., 2004). The affective component refers to the emotional attachments to a place, which individuals can have on very deep levels, while the cognitive component refers to thoughts, concerns, and beliefs towards a place. Finally, the behavioral, or practice aspect, then refers to the activities and behavior which is occurred in spatial context (Kyle et al., 2004).

Di Masso et al. (2019, p. 126) highlight, that place attachment studies have had, at least the earlier ones, a so-called sedentary assumption and concern which indicate that the increasing mobility of the world creates a state of placelessness and therefore weakens place attachment. According to Di Masso et al. (2019, p. 126-127), the early place attachment research was built on, and reinforced, to these sedentary assumptions which recognized mobility and movement as something disruptive, even threatening to place attachment. Thus, the research has naturally pointed out that place attachment implies a wish to stay close to the “object” and highlights the relationship between attachment to place and strength of social (local) bonds, and the length of contact with that place for instance. Gustafson (2014, p. 38) adds, that rootedness and strong emotional bonds with one’s home have been seen as a positive phenomenon, while mobility, as a negative. However, place attachment can also be conceived as something negative and mobility as positive, as it is linked to development and open mindedness (Gustafson, 2014, p. 38) while place attachment can even be viewed sometimes as possessiveness towards a place, and cause conflict (e.g. Hammitt, Backlund & Bixler, 2006).

Despite the assumption that there is an opposition between mobility and place attachment, increased number of research show, that even in highly mobile societies, individuals create strong emotional place bonds (Gustafson, 2014, p. 38). In response, the research on place attachment has later recognized the mobile aspects as well, such as attachment to visited

places (i.e., tourist attractions), multiple places at the same time, and different attachments during one's life course. Studies considering place attachments during life course are said to often point to that people seek some kind of continuity of attachments and identity as they move from one place to another during their life (Di Masso, et al., 2019). Tennberg (2020, p. 91) encapsulates, that in cities, the meaningful places of its residents can be seen to create the "feeling of the city", which means the symbolic meanings, place attachments and positions toward the outer lived world. As an involved individual, the environment becomes a place, but the bystander, or outsider, does not possess a personal relationship to a place; the bystander is a distant observer (Tennberg, 2020, p. 91).

2.3 Belonging with place: place identity

Place can be described as an experiential and emotional phenomenon, along with its physical dimensions and cultural meanings (Karjalainen 1995 as cited in Haarni et al., 1997, p. 175). Therefore, spatial identity or place identity, is also a multi-meaningful concept, which doesn't come into being just by the physical qualities of it, i.e., buildings. Indeed, place identity is culturally differentiated by different individuals, but "under" it all, there are shared features of the human condition that create place attachment and place identity (Tuan, 1977, p. 5). Cities and neighbourhoods having identities has been of interest for many sociologists in the past decades, and the smaller places constructing cities, can often be seen to be connected to the city's overall image, as they have their own characters (Borer, 2010). According to Proshansky (1978 as cited in Peng, et al. 2020, p. 1-2), place identity can be defined as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioral tendencies relevant to a specific environment".

Haarni et al. (1997) put out, that within the concept of identity, there is the place's own identity and the individual's spatial identity. According to Peng et al. (2020, p. 2), the idea of the two sides of place identity was initially introduced by Paasi (1986). Paasi (1986, as cited in Peng et al. 2020, p. 2) explained, that the place's own identity would refer to those features of nature, culture, and people that are used in the discourses and classifications of science, politics, cultural activism, regional marketing, tourism, governance, and political or religious

regionalization, to distinguish one place from others. The latter then refers to the identification of individual with a place. Nature and culture can be part of the individual's place identity as well, but the main difference of these two is that the individual's place identity is always unique, personal and the global, national, and local identity of an individual is always intermingled. In turn, the regional identity of a place is in a way always shared and therefore more consistent (Paasi, 1998, p. 175-176). Paasi (1998, p. 175) explains spatial or place identity to be reflecting the area's historical development, special qualities and the relation to society's development in the way its residents experience it.

According to Haarni et al. (1997) belonging to a place is a subjective experience, whereas the spatial identity is formed by many shared experiences with other individuals. A collective experience of place is produced by the common history and the mental images created by the media for example (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 18-19). The exact relation between place attachment and place identity has not been commonly agreed in the academia, instead, there are multiple views (Lewicka, 2008). Thus, the relation has been identified by many scholars, and the concepts have also been used to mean the same thing, or as components of each other (Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007). Hernández et al. (2007, p. 311) convincingly explain, that the concepts overlap due to the sampling of natives, or people who have stayed long in a certain place and therefore show a high level of both place attachment and identity. The authors give two examples of why these concepts should be treated as individual phenomenon:

- - one person could be attached to a place but not be identified with it (i.e. someone who likes to live in a place and wants to remain there but does not feel that this place is part of their identity; at least not their main place identity) and vice versa; someone could have a high personal identity with a place and not a high place attachment (for example, to feel that one belongs to a place but prefers not to live there). (Hernández et al., 2007, p. 311)

As highlighted, there are many individual traits together with social features that contribute to the experience of place and therefore the construction of place identity as well. For a better, more coherent understanding I do not aim to exclude either side. In this research, I will treat place attachment and place identity as individual, however interrelated concepts, that have subjective and collective elements. According to Jacobson-Widding (1983, as cited in Lewicka, 2008, p. 211), identity means two things: sameness (continuity) and distinctiveness (uniqueness) and the term place identity should encompass both aspects. Despite the tendency to commonly link home and home region to place attachment and identity, place

identity can be linked to variety of places despite of what is called home (Laitinen, 2002, p. 195). Laitinen (2002, p. 195) adds, that different levels of experiences build up place identities: experiences from places we are in, where we have been and even from those we have only heard of, in other words, place identities are formed by the present, past and the imagination as well. Paasi (1996) articulates, that regional identity has appeared for long in research, civil-activities and in the mass media. As a concept, it has become more common together with the emergence of humanistic and behavioural geography in the 1970s (Paasi, 1996, p. 210).

The discussion about “roots” and “traditions” became more common altogether, and regional identity has been an important concept in the territorial planning strategies. In addition, the identities have become considerable in the image campaigns of places, districts, and regions, in order to shape the mental images of the inhabitants and outsiders, both with the investment decisions of companies on different regions. (Paasi, 1998, p. 173-174). Just like places themselves, so are their identities under constant change and cannot be considered as static (Paasi, 1998, p. 180). There has been concern about place identity in the discussions concerning place and globalization, together with climate change and the increasing tension it brings, resulting migration of different forms; while Malpas (Malpas, 1999, p. 4) discusses a sense of loss and dislocation in the contemporary culture, Massey (1994 p. 146-147) states the uncertain place identities, lack of place attachment and sense of place to be a result of the fast globalization. Not necessarily as something to just think of as a negative consequence, Massey (1994) rather encourages to rethink our sense of place, as something progressive and outward looking. In addition, as a result of globalization, the term ‘time-space compression’ has been widely used among geographers. It refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical straining of social relations, and to the experience of it (Massey, 1994, p. 146-147).

The characterization of time-space compression is, however, critiqued to represent the western, colonizer’s view, as the sense of dislocation has been felt for centuries by the colonized people’s view. The moving ability of people, physically and mentally, between places varies, hence, time-space compression is, experienced differentially (if at all) by different individuals (Massey, 1994, p. 147). Human identity has been seen to be linked to a place throughout the history and it is an idea that has a wide currency across cultures. Especially in indigenous cultures, all life, including human, is inextricably bound up with the land (Malpas, 1999, p 2). Massey (1994) adds, that if people can have multiple identities, then the same point can

be made in relation to places. Multiple identities of place can be both a source of richness and conflict, or both. Progressive sense of place would recognize that the understanding of a place's character constructs of linking it to places beyond, without being threatened by it (Massey, 1994, p. 153-156). In a sense, the earlier mentioned 'heterotopia' concept discusses well with the 'multi-identity' of place. As mentioned, Tennberg (2020) talks about heterotopia, a concept coined by Michel Foucault; it means neither a utopia nor dystopia, but rather a realistic lived environment, that includes characteristics and possibilities of both. The local meets the global, and in return the global meets the local in different places of the city (Tennberg, 2020, p. 12-13).

2.4 Memory and imagination in the places of change

Considering place and especially urban place, it is impossible to bypass the role of time and the change it brings. Saarikangas (2013, p. 49) puts out how motion, change, and time are tightly linked to urban areas and places, and there is a strong temporal nature to place. The temporal nature of place includes both the past, present but also the future. As highlighted, urban places are under constant change, and the change that occurs does not only consider the space, but also the time and body: it can change the pace, the routes we use and how we spend our time in certain places. New, all at once built urban areas lack the stratum of meanings that can be attached to built environments. The stratum of meanings is usually linked to old historical parts of the city or unplanned built areas, where each construction reminds of its time (Saarikangas, 2002, p. 49-52). The built environment, i.e., city, can be investigated from memory's perspective in two ways; shared and private (Kervanto Nevanlinna, 2013, p. 275). In other words, the city can be perceived as a collective and individual place of memory and meaning. The city includes buildings or landmarks that represent the attachments of shared memories while every inhabitant of the city also possesses their own special memories to different places in the area (Kervanto Nevanlinna, 2013, p. 274-275).

The attention has indeed drifted to memory in the urban studies context, stating that memories are a process of making sense of experience, constructing, and navigating temporal narratives and structures which ascribe meaning to the past, present and the future (Degen & Rose, 2012). Lento and Olsson (2013) describe that one of the main characteristics of cities is the partial closedness to its user, meaning, that in many ways the city is inaccessible and only

partly opening to its inhabitants and that the missing “pieces” of the city can only be imagined. Therefore, one coherent experience of the city does not exist, and it is produced in countless ways from different perspectives (Lento & Olsson, 2013, p. 13). Tennberg (2020) sees the city as a central place of memory and remembering, and that belonging to a place is based on shared experiences, every-day use of the city and to the memories of it. Memories and remembering are connected both to individual and collective emotions (Tennberg, 2020). Loughran et al. (2015, p. 193) stress the importance of collective memory in urban areas and argue, that cities are “indelibly shaped by memory”. This can be noticed as the users of the city, such as entrepreneurs, real estate developers and neighbourhood residents constantly highlight the importance of local history and character in constructing urban spaces and places (Loughran et al., 2015, p. 193).

In addition, Loughran et al. (2015) emphasize, that cities are shaped by collective identities, shared memories, group cultures and local histories. Indeed, there are conscious decisions and actions of people behind how urban landscapes are being developed and which memories are made visible, or invisible (e.g. Rose-Redwood, Alderman & Azaryahu, 2008). Rose-Redwood et al. (2008, p. 161) continue, that the few last decades have led to reevaluation of collective and individual memory, while the “historical amnesia” seems to be at an all-time high. Moreover, the nature of the recent times, indicating to constantly updating media saturation and information overload push an increasing number of people and groups to search for places that can create a sense of so-called temporal anchoring (Rose-Redwood et al., 2008, p. 161). Accordingly, searching for and establishing places of memory and continuity has become a valuable way for groups and even entire nations in the establishment of their own identities and histories (Forest et al. 2004; Light 2004 as cited in Rose-Redwood et al., 2008, p. 161-162). Thinking of memory as a selective social and geographic construction (Rose-Redwood, et al., 2008) inspires not only to think of the nature of information itself, but also space and place.

Karjalainen (1997, p. 234) refers to Bergson (1963) with an invoking thought that the human consciousness is memory, the storing and accumulation of the past in the present moment. However, in consciousness’ case, we cannot only look to the past, but we must look into the future and to what’s in front of us (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 234). Similarly, Forss (2007, p. 93) argues, that the collective memory of place contains also the utopias, dystopias and not yet executed plans for the places. Borer (2010, p. 97-98) discusses collective imagination in addition to collective memory, and states, that individuals’ anticipation and imagination of

potential future events is important for understanding perceptions of place. Imagination has been shown to play an important role in individuals sensemaking of the past, present and especially the future (Borer, 2010). The future, and our imaginations and dreams within it, very much guide our actions in the present moment (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 234), therefore it is crucial to investigate the role of time, the past and future, in the relationship of place and individual. In Rovaniemi's case, other considerable representation of time in place are the seasons. Tennberg (2020, p. 87) puts out, how Finnish culture and climate do not set the most fruitful baseline for social interactions, which can create place attachment. It needs to be addressed, that the climate in the Arctic is harsh, and therefore the time we spend outdoors in public spaces and places is limited.

Naturally, the senses also play a part in constructing places of memory, which then become memories and construct the perceptions of the places in the now (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 17). While the memory has been stressed to play an important role in the perceptions of place, time and place can also be smelled, heard and tasted (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 232-233). The sensations can open the "locks of the memory", and the corporeal, sensorial, and embodied dimension of remembering can push us towards imagination (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 234-240). Bijoux and Myers (2006, as cited in Scarles, 2012, p. 71) highlight, that in order to have a complete discussion of the experience of the bodies in place, we need to consider the role of feeling, thoughts and emotion. Therefore, it is argued by Ribbens-Klein (2019, p.2) that the experience of place can be physical and direct, but also experienced through thinking about and imaginary place.

The past and the future come together in the present moment, and in that moment, change is constantly occurring. There have been extensive studies on the impacts of urban growth on ecological, socio-economic and health aspects, whereas the effects on social processes and human interaction with the urban environment are said to be less visible (Von Wirth et al., 2016). Thus, the research on the impacts of place changes on place attachment remains scarce. Individuals response to change in different ways, depending on their position. These response categories to urban change are suggested by Von Wirth et al. (2016, p. 69) as following: resistance, acceptance, ignorance, adaptation, promotion of benefits, and personal relocation. While change might be seen as a threat and as a negative aspect to place attachment, Von Wirth et al. (2016, p. 75) point out, that perceived urban change, even when occurring rapidly, can have positive impacts on people's place attachments and therefore

strengthen these place bonds. The positive influence occurs when the change is being perceived as upgrading (Von Wirth et al., 2016, p. 75).

2.5 The embodied and sensuous place

Place and therefore place attachment as well, is more than an emotional and cognitive experience. It also includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place (Low, 1992, p. 165). Moving and sensing the places in the near environment can be seen as the foundation of how meaningful places are created (e.g. Ribbens-Klein, 2019; Asikainen & Mäkinen, 2013, p. 129-130). Liimakka (2011) sets out, that according to phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty and social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, the relationship between experience and the body is tight, almost inseparable and the experience appears as an embodied, individual-social stratum (Liimakka, 2011, p. 146-147). The literature on place attachment has largely focused on how individual people experience and make sense of place, and Degnen (2016) among other scholars, argues that it should also be considered as a collective, relational, and embodied process, experienced via social memory practises and embodied, sensorial registers. Degnen (2016, p. 1646) suggests, that place attachment is social and collective and that, as knowledge, social memory is also embodied. Thus, place can be made through combination of materiality, meaning and practice. Degnen (2016, p. 1647) adds, that the way places are sensed and moved through also contributes to fostering place attachment.

Back (2009 as cited in Bennett, 2012, p. 660) states, that places are more than social constructions or imaginaries and more than a context for social relations; they are also material and engage with all the senses and with physical bodies. Geographer Nigel Thrift (2003) describes people's relation to place as embodied, performative and creative. Local knowledge can be seen as sensorial knowledge which is performed and anchored in everyday life (Thrift, 2003). While the spaces are sensed through the moving body as present, they're also sensed through body memory. The last few decades of the last century were seen as the time where across a variety of disciplines, many different approaches were made to understand embodiment. In humanities and social sciences, the so-called affective turn can be seen to have increased the focus on the body and emotions (e.g. Hardt, 2007). Moreover, in social sciences, there has been an increased focus on the senses in the recent years, resulting a "sensory revolution" (e.g. Degen & Rose, 2012). The senses are now commonly remarked to be part of

people's everyday experiencing, making sensory experiences central to the design of urban built environments as well (Degen & Rose, 2012). In addition, Pallasmaa (2005) argues for the embodied experience of the city, with the notion of the hegemony of the visual (Pallasmaa, 2005, as cited in Adams et al. 2007, p. 204).

In geographical embodiment, especially in feminist geography, the research started focusing on how experiences of place and belonging were embodied, highlighting reflexive and subjectively lived experiences of places in a more mobile and changing world (e.g. Ribbens-Klein, 2019). The so-called phenomenology of place sees place not only as a social construct but also a subjective embodied experience (Ribbens-Klein, 2019). It should be considered as holistic, where qualities of nature and physical environment join with qualities of humanness and human community (Coates & Seamon, 1984). Western thinking has been mostly dominated by dualisms, such as culture/nature, good/bad and public/private, and geography has not been immune to this kind of thinking. Especially the mind/body dualism has been discussed within the field, and it has been seen to underpin the geographical discourse (e.g. Longhurst, 1997).

Degnen (2016, p. 1647) suggests, that bodily subjectivity, embodied knowledge and individual and shared memory come together in the intersection of individual and social levels of place attachment. In an anthropological, ethnographic participant-observation conducted by Degnen (2016), it is demonstrated that there are sensual and embodied relationships people can have with place. What connects people to place are also the ways in which they are habitually sensed and navigated and situated within the body. As an example, the author gives the conversations with elderly members of a community who memorize small bodily details that make a great importance to the meaning of that place (Degnen, 2016, p. 1655). Stroud and Jegels (2014, as cited in Ribbens-Klein 2019, p. 3) describe place-making as a practice, embodied and social, that involves movement and interaction with people and objects in space. The authors stress the role of walking in their study, as bodies move through places, locally meaningful places can be created. However, the so-called embodiment of place can also be studied via analysis of the language, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, can produce valuable embodied knowledge. Ribbens-Klein's (2019) investigation of embodiment of place was likewise investigated through narrative discourse; the senses of belonging to a place can be seen as embodied experiences.

3. THEORY-BOUND CONTENT ANALYSIS ON PHOTO-ELICITED INTERVIEWS

3.1 Choice of methods

In the past decades, place attachment has been studied through quantitative methods more often than qualitative (Lewicka, 2011). However, quantitative methods can rarely answer more deep questions, for example to a question of what places mean for individuals (Lewicka, 2011). Investigating place attachment and place identity and the embodied, sensuous aspects of place and remembering, it felt natural and fitting to have a qualitative approach in my research, as one of the main goals of qualitative research is to understand the human experience (e.g. Silverman, 2020). The distinctions of place attachment scales for example derive from quantitative methods. It is stressed by Norberg-Schultz (1979, as cited in Lewicka, 2011, p. 221), that “a place is a qualitative, total phenomenon”, and that the meanings of physical places are obtained by memories, symbols and through the multis-sensory feelings that are experienced while being in the place. In addition, in order to understand attachments to specific places, their meanings need to be identified first (Lewicka, 2011).

Phenomenology, then, working as my larger paradigm, also tries to seek answers to human situations, experiences, and meanings. In humanistic geography, the meanings of place are investigated from a phenomenological perspective. Its purpose is to gather deep information and perceptions through qualitative methods such as interviews and discussions (e.g. Lester, 1999). Both in hermeneutic and phenomenological idea of man suggests the central concepts in making research are experience, meaning and communality (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p.34). In phenomenological perspectives, one important aspect is therefore to understand subjective experiences and are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity (Lester, 1999). Lester (1999) adds that phenomenological approach can be a useful tool in gaining insights into people’s motivations and actions, and in this case, also illuminate the meanings behind certain place bonds. Saldaña (2011) describes that the information produced and analyzed in qualitative research is mainly nonquantitative that can consist of variety of different kind of data, such as recordings, photographs, and interview transcripts. This information documents human experiences about others, or the self in social action and reflexive states (Saldaña, 2011, p. 3-4). Qualitative research is seen as a suitable way of a small-scale research and trial investigations of its different methods (e.g. Saldaña, 2011, p. 66).

Qualitative research opens ways for a deep investigation of meaning and expression, for its trait to keep the research situation open-ended and conversational (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012, p. 13).

At the beginning of my research journey, I saw great potential in choosing walking interviews as my method for data-collection. Walking interviews are seen as a great way of producing rich data from places, because interviewees are then prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment (Evans & Jones, 2011). It also seemed natural and sensorially evoking to talk about places while being in those places. However, walking interviews naturally do have some limitations, as they might exclude some participants and interviewing techniques (Evans & Jones, 2011). Other limitation was due to the rise of Covid-19 cases in the area and the temporary lockdown, which made me reflect and finally to choose remote, online interviews as my data collection method, which I saw to be the safest and most ethical method at this point. Luckily there are multiple other options for facilitating interviews in our well digitally connected society, and the use of different virtual meeting platforms has become familiar to many.

Lewicka (2011) unfolds, that place attachment has been studied through various qualitative methods and measures, which can be divided into two groups: verbal and pictorial measures. The verbal measures have included in-depth interviews and verbal reports, while the pictorial measures have consisted of mostly photographs prepared beforehand or taken on the spot by participants and/or researcher. These two techniques have also been combined, as the participants have taken a photograph of meaningful places and afterwards commented them in an interview setting (Lewicka, 2011). Despite the hegemony of the visual and the privileging of it (i.e. ocularcentrism) in tourism studies, visual research methods can be valuable in order to investigate multisensuous and embodied experiences as well, and can be seen as more than just visual (Pink, 2001 as cited in Scarles, 2012, p. 71). The visual methodologies can be seen as a tool for accessing and activating affectual and embodied expressions of the self (Scarles, 2012, p. 71-72). Visual media and images have been widely used in ethnographic research, not solely as representations of the sensory experience but also as tools for the research itself, as they are seen as routes to multisensorial knowing (Pink, 2009, p. 98-99). Considering these possibilities and acknowledging the limitations, I chose photo-elicited interviews as my main means for data collection.

3.2 Photo-elicitation interview

Since the 1950s, photo-elicitation has been used for conducting research in anthropology, education, sociology, psychology and natural resource management (Tonge et al., 2013). According to its name, photo-elicitation has been used as a method for eliciting responses in interviews, and it implies getting access to concealed perspectives of the participant's life-world. It has been portrayed as a "can-opener" for conversations and has been described as a functional tool to get close to the participants (Andersson Cederholm, 2012, p. 92-98). Multiple visual research methods exist, one being respondent-led photography. Respondent-led photography offers potential for capturing and analyzing people's perceptions as well as generate spaces of comfort and trust as the participants talk around photographs they have picked or taken themselves (Scarles, 2012, p. 73).

In this research, to pursue and follow the objectives of the study, respondent-led photography works as an ideal way of conducting the interviews, as the participants choose the places that are already meaningful to them in the cityscape. It would then feel natural to move to the aspects that make the places significant and meaningful, rather than trying first to figure out where they might be. Photo-elicitation in interview can also work as a useful method to trigger memories and to see the everyday experiences in a new, more in-depth way (Tonge et al., 2013). The memory is especially highlighted in this context, as photographs are always loaded with memories as they are snapshots of the past (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 240). By default, the participants possess some kind of emotional bond already with the place in the picture as the photograph itself makes the place a place of memory. Therefore, it should be natural to also move beyond the present moment and memories into the expectations, hopes and images of the place in the future as well.

Respondent-led photo elicitation can be seen to serve both the researcher and the participants. Collecting or taking photographs can be an enjoyable and familiar task for the participants, which often increases the willingness to participate in such research. Rather than solely focusing on the participant, the interview and discussion happens around the photograph, which can take some pressure off the respondent (Tonge et al., 2013). As I am interviewing the participants about their deeper emotions, attachment and experiences in their lived environment, it is vital, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) put it: to allow space for natural conversation in the interviews and also as a researcher, "humanizing" myself in order for allowing people to talk back (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 26). Drever (1995, p. 1) adds, that in semi-structured

interview, the interviewee is to set up a general structure but to leave the detailed structure left to be worked out during the interview. The participant has a great freedom in what to talk about, how much to say and how to express it. It is also said to be a very flexible technique for small-scale research (Drever, 1995, p. 1). In other words, the structure will handle certain themes, but it is left as open as possible for a more conversational occasion.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

In qualitative research methods, it is common that the data collection and processing intertwine and already in the collection phase, analytical skills are needed. These phases are critical, as the process usually starts sharpening and therefore might orient toward new paths (Hakala, 2010, p. 18-19). As my research is strongly a qualitative one, I was aiming for deep data from few participants rather than aiming for bigger number of participants. To formulate questions that could work as a tool for getting deeper data together with the photos, I decided to perform a few test interviews. The test interviews took place in April 2021. The interviews were meant to help in identifying possible technical issues such as recording and saving the interviews as well as examining how the questions could be formulated in a more participant friendly way. There were multiple challenges I faced, together with the technical issues occurring in Microsoft Teams and the questionnaire. I soon realized that my questions needed to be more open and let the conversation flow naturally.

After the test interviews were executed and the final form of the question body was formed, I started to look for potential residents to participate in the interview. Since the beginning of the research process, I thought of using social media as a tool in the search. There are several local Facebook-groups for Rovaniemi residents, which I saw working as a great platform to inform about my research and invite possible participants. With permission from the group administrators, I sent a general invite to the chosen groups, which included necessary information about the interviews. The general “rule” about the places was, that the place would have to be both in the defined research area and a public place outdoors, meaning, the conversation would not consider indoor places. However, these places of course could have buildings and other structures within them. After sending the general invitations, I then agreed on the more specific details with the participants through email and by phone.

I ended up carrying out 5 semi-structured interviews in total in the time of April and May 2021. The interviews were conducted in Finnish language as well as the questionnaire body was formed in Finnish. Three of these interviews were remote and were held in Microsoft Teams, while two of them took place in person with the participants, as it was their request. The main reason for this request was the unfamiliarity with the virtual meeting platform and the willingness to show paper pictures. In addition, the Covid-19 situation at the time was seen somewhat safe for both parties. With all remote interviews and with the ones that were held in person, the participants sent me a digital picture of a place that was meaningful for them in advance, so I had time to download it and share it on the screen during the interview from a laptop's screen. There were no major technical issues with this, and we succeeded to have in-depth conversations around these pictures.

In the remote interviews, I recorded the sessions with Microsoft Teams after consent from the participants, whereas in the in-person interviews, I used my phone for recording. I anonymized the data by naming the files using different codes and put them to secured location. Subsequently, when the interviews were done and recorded, I transcribed the recorded data to textual form. The transcribing process took place in the summer of 2021, and it resulted of more than 40 strips of transcribed text. The transcribing process was somewhat interesting, despite it often being referred as the most unsuspenseful part of the research process, as the discussion opened more clearly in front of me. In the interview session the researcher is often nervous and can be tensed up, but the transcription process often preliminary familiarizes the researcher with the data (Eskola, 2010, p. 179). I was often really excited of how interesting the conversation sounded like and it was already possible to identify certain themes, and it made me anticipate the next step, which was the analysis. Despite the recommendations on using different dictation programs for the transcription, I simply played the interviews from the beginning to the end and when needed, I used slower speed to capture the words used.

As the research process is always a set of multiple decisions (e.g. Eskola, 2010), and making decisions is not my strongest quality, I was facing another big challenge in my research journey. Eskola (2010, p. 182) writes, that one of the most important questions to be asked while pondering about the possible methods of analysis, is, what is the relationship with the researcher and theory? There are multiple options, which can be grounded theory, i.e., data driven analysis, theory-bound analysis with theory driven analysis (Eskola, 2001, p. 182). Most of the qualitative research analysis methods are based in one way or another to content analysis, which is a basic analysis process that can be used in all of the traditions of qualitative

research. However, it has roots in quantitative research as well (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 91-92). Considering my data, the most suitable way of analysis is theory-bound qualitative content analysis. Theory-bound in this case could be defined as abductive reasoning, where the existing models of theory and the data “take turns” in the reasoning process. It is possible to conduct the analysis so that the process is carried out theory-based, but the observations based on the data are later connected with theory (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 97).

In theory-bound analysis, the units are picked from the data which are crucial for the research question itself, taking into consideration the former knowledge, however not aiming to test a certain theory, but to rather open new ways of thought (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 96-97). I saw great potential in theory-bound analysis as I indeed wanted to open new ways of thought yet keep the focus on the certain elements by letting the theory guide the analysis and work as a “lens”. Thematizing the data is one way of proceeding with qualitative content analysis, and it is about organizing the data in a preliminary form (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 93). It is crucial to investigate the data within the essential research framework, even though it can be seen from different points of view (Alasuutari, 2011, p. 40).

I started analyzing the data already in the autumn of 2021, but because of my new employment situation and heavy workload elsewhere, I had to freeze the process for the rest of the year. The analyzing process started somewhat fresh in February 2022, when I started familiarizing myself with the data again by reading it through. Albeit the pause on my research process caused some difficulties in orienting myself with the data and theory after some time, I was surprised on how quickly I found myself fully invested in the process again. Considering the large amount of transcribed interview data, I found it useful after familiarizing again with the material, and to start highlighting essential and relevant phrases by using differently colored markers. I used different colors in different topics which were mirrored to my research questions, such as physical elements of the place and memory aspects. This way I would already have some structure when starting to analyze the data more deeply.

Proceeding with the analysis, certain themes started to build up from the data. There were phrases and parts in the data that were referencing to a certain phenomenon, and I collected these phrases into one document, without changing the wording. In this point of the research, it is crucial to ask oneself, whether to seek similarities or differences from the data (Eskola, 1992 as cited in Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 93). Going back to my research questions, and the main objective, to find out how meaningful places contribute to the place attachment and

identity itself, the data produced would be quite nuanced. Therefore, it could be possible to try and show both similarities and what is different in individual's place bonds.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Various entities of research ethics need to be investigated when conducting qualitative research, some of which can be planned and anticipated beforehand. However, many ethical issues emerge as the research begins to unfold (e.g. Wiles, 2013). The ethics of the research should be evaluated in each step of the process, from data collection to analysis and finally producing results. It is necessary to address the researcher's position in this study as well, as the research is based on my own life world and my everyday surroundings. Aaltonen and Högbacka (2015, p. 12) point out, that the concept of reflexivity and moreover the discussion around it has increased especially in the social sciences, as it refers to the realization that the researcher is always part of their social world. In addition, it is the realization that the production of knowledge is always bound to the context and the historical time period along with being linguistically transmitted (Aaltonen & Högbacka, 2015).

In this case, the choice of the research topic has been formed by personal interests and experiences. When investigated, the study of place becomes very personal, as it contains emotions, memories and even expectations for the future. Throughout the whole research process, I have also lived in Rovaniemi. My personal feelings and place attachment together with my personal spatial identity, is also constructing and transforming at the same time, and that has resulted in many new thoughts on this topic during the process. Rovaniemi, nor my routes and routines within it, are not the same that they were when I started my research journey, thus have my feelings and viewpoints altered as well along the way. Considering reliability, it is necessary to address, that the participants might not speak consistently in these kinds of settings, and that the usage of language can be situated. The whole research process all the way until presenting results should be critically evaluated as the nature of the research and the topic have had an impact on how the participants have been answering (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniikka, 2006). Reflexivity, as explained before, can be conceived as a methodological tool to critically review and reflect the research in every step of the way (e.g. Aaltonen & Högbacka, 2015).

It is stressed by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011, p. 125), that the freer methods are being used to collect data, and the more relaxed the interview sessions are, the more emphasis should be put on the ethical considerations. Again, this research deals with very personal topics, such as emotions and memories, and especially in the interview setting, it was crucial to maintain the researcher's position despite the relaxed research setting. To avoid common potholes in the data collection such as over-empathic, manipulating, or leading questions (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 60), it was necessary to follow the structure of the questionnaire while leaving it as open as possible. For the data collection, i.e., the interviews, a letter of consent was written as well with the guidance of this research's supervisor. The research follows the guidelines of the Finnish National Board of Research Integrity, which was also written in the letter and the guidelines were embraced. One crucial thing in collecting the data, and especially right afterwards it, was to save the recordings in a way that would protect the participant's privacy and deleting them from online cloud service. The recordings were anonymized for saving and already instantly in the transcription process, in a way that I was the only one who could identify the participants at that point.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the following chapters, I will open the analysis of the data and discuss the results. As mentioned, there were altogether 5 interviews conducted. Through the interviews, I was introduced to 5 meaningful places for 5 different individuals who lived in Rovaniemi. The interviews first concentrated on the meaningful place the participant had chosen, and the discussion then unfolded to cover Rovaniemi as a place on a wider scale as well. There was a common characteristic to all of these places, as they were public outdoor places within the city center of Rovaniemi. The analysis is constructed by different themes that were recognized from the data, and since I was conducting a theory-bound analysis, data and theory took turns in the analysis process (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2011, p. 97). Therefore, the thematization of the data was not following certain theoretical framework, although keeping it in mind, but also moved forward more freely by allowing the data to speak for itself. This enabled me to identify different aspects that contribute to place attachment and how these meaningful places affect the place identity of Rovaniemi on a broader sense as well as the individual's place identities.

The analysis was guided by the aims of this research supported by the research questions and sub-questions, however, the analysis is not constructed explicitly by them nor placed in that order. Instead, the research question and sub-questions are discussed more closely in the conclusion chapter. The first chapter of the analysis will deal with the notion of place identity. The discussion will open the nature relationship of the interviewees and how that is part of those place's identities as well as shedding light to the material identity markers of the place and city. In the second chapter, I will discuss the temporal nature of place, by disassembling sub-chapters, which individually, yet interconnectedly, discuss past, present and future and how these perceptions of time shape the relationship to place. The chapter that discusses past, will take a closer look as well to the context of memory from the embodied point of view. Finally, the third chapter discusses the social aspects of place attachment; the involvement in planning processes, communally created meaningful places together with the feelings of exclusion in the places within the city.

4.1 The nature shaping the urban arctic identity

Humans are an inalienable part of nature. Although urban areas are often seen as the opposites to nature (i.e., urban – rural) (Benton-Short & Short, 2013, p. 3), nature is an important part of cities as well as it enhances physical and mental health and promotes social and cultural well-being of the inhabitants (Keeler et al., 2019). In addition, it has the potential to mitigate flooding and improve air and water quality (Keeler, et al., 2019), together with maximizing the positive sensorial characteristics of a city while minimizing negative ones, such as noise (Ojala et al., 2019). The traditional nature relationship of people from Lapland has been described both as material and spiritual, as well as exploitative and protective (Kettunen, 2003, p. 38). In the urban setting, the direct value of nature is often considered as recreational and aesthetical (e.g. Bertram, Meyerhoff, Rehdanz & Wüstemann, 2017).

In Rovaniemi's case, the proximity of nature and the valuing of it became evident in this research as well. In the interviews conducted, nature became a subject in all the discussions at some point, and it was highlighted, that the accessibility (especially by foot) to nature is important, when the city center has been built tight. Many participants described their strong bonds and the wellness increasing value of Ounasvaara, therefore wished for that area to be protected and for that area to mainly stay in the use for recreation purposes. Ounasvaara is an area in the proximity of the city center that plays an important role as a place for outdoor recreation for the resident's in Rovaniemi as it can be reached by foot. It faces some pressure of change as there are many preliminary plans to build the area increasingly for different economic and cultural activities. Visiting and seeing natural places is commonly agreed to relieve stress and fatigue, and especially in bigger cities, these kinds of places are often needed in order to temporarily escape the "hustle and bustle" of the city (Korpela, Ylén, Tyrväinen & Silvennoinen, 2008). The aesthetical value and the accessibility to nature from the center of Rovaniemi was described as following:

When you forget about the ugly buildings, it is actually very beautiful, well, when we have the hills around us. There is Ounasvaara, of course they always complain that there's no park and it's a shame, but on the other hand you don't have to go further than to the riverside, there we have some park. - - You can go pick blueberries and mushrooms almost from your own backyard. (A2)

It was mentioned by all of the participants that nature is an important element for their well-being, and that even the gazing at it from afar brings a sense of peace and tranquility. Most of the participants described their place to be distinctively a place with natural characteristics.

Indeed, places with natural characteristics have often been seen as sites for more consistent and strong attachments than built environments (e.g., Korpela, Ylén, Tyrväinen & Silvennoinen, 2009). In addition, it has been indicated by various research, that attachment to place can cultivate and motivate actions towards the protection of the environment (e.g., Lewicka, 2008). According to the participants, the specific meaningful places had become sites of environmental protection; for example, one of the interviewees described that in one of the places which was distinctively of natural characteristics, there were often people who would pick up the trash from the surroundings of that place and that it would cause harm among the community which had developed around that place if someone would trash the place. In these kinds of sites with natural characteristics, there would be a lot of trees for example, many plants during the growing season and possibility to sit and enjoy looking at the nature, and the surroundings were hoped to keep at least somehow maintained. In the urban places, nature was present, not only as something that is far away, or “there”, but the interviewees also described a feeling of being in nature that goes 360 degrees:

So, if you go to the fireplace over there, you get a feeling that you have a small forest behind you because there are some trees there. You get this feeling of privacy and this kind of a nature feeling. (A3)

It feels like, when you're there, if the road wouldn't be there, then the place could be somewhere even more secluded. You could imagine the place to be somewhere in the real nature. - - And it is somehow also isolated from the world. (A4)

The respondents were describing places within the Rovaniemi city center, however, yearning for a secluded feeling and a feeling of being in nature. The feeling was described to be a positive characteristic, and these kinds of places would provide peace and possibilities to stop and admire the surrounding environment. By walking the ordinary routes in the city, the places offering these kinds of possibilities on the way were very important for most of the participants. These places were described to be somewhat rare in the cityscape, however, most of the participant had this kind of place, and they were all different. Thus, Rovaniemi was described to be a place where it is (still) possible to be in the city at the same time as looking at a landscape, that looks, and feels, like it's in the wilderness:

It's only a couple of hundred meters away from the center but this is like in the wilderness. People are astonished when I give them the coordinates of this place and they realize it's so close to the center. It has the color palette of the north that is visible in this landscape. - - now people think that it's in the nature, and everyone is surprised that this landscape is found in the city. This landscape is found in the city... - - and when you look to the north from here, you see nothing (built). (A5)

It's where the river spreads out very freely, you get this pleasantly false feeling that this place has not been built so tight, you can see free shoreline a lot from there. (A3)

It is indeed in these descriptions where the identities meet. Thinking about the regional (and national) arctic identity, it often has elements of nature and landscape strongly included in it (e.g., Paasi, 1998). In these places in the city, the landscape works as a window to the arctic nature, the nature becomes the identity of Rovaniemi and then again becomes a part of the identity of that place. It also becomes personal: some of the participants described themselves being strongly connected to nature and their identities constructing largely from nature-related components and activities (e.g., hobbies), these kinds of places then represent parts of the individuals as well. In one of the places, it was highlighted, that a cultural aspect was also present in that exact place, and the participant shared, that the landscape was part of the cultural landscape of Rovaniemi, and the landscape also lived in paintings of that place. Raivo (1997, p. 201) puts out, how landscapes can be thought of as a process, where the natural environment becomes cultural landscape by human action, and the values and meanings attached to it are "cultural contracts" of what is wanted to be seen. The role of landscapes has an important role in the construction of regional identities and can be thought of as "codes that are essentially part of culture" (Raivo, 1997, p. 202).

As argued by Borer (2010, p. 96), smaller places in the city contribute to the overall image of the city, and the characteristic of this specific place was indeed seen as a visual representation of the Arctic of not only the place and city but also the individual. As Borer (2010, p. 97) describes, meaningful places can work as identity markers and provide sense of place to the residents. The places described here can be considered as such. Another interviewee shared as well, that the landscape of their meaningful place was very important to them, they would see it almost every week as they moved from home to work. The landscape was described as a window not only to the nature, but also to the changes within it. The rhythm of life in the Arctic is very much set by the seasons, and the weather conditions set certain limitations to the life. It was also described by some of the participants, that the ability to follow the changes in the natural world, such as birds as they come and go, was meaningful to them in these places. Some of the participants described the ability to observe the changing seasons as a considerable part of that place's meaning, and identity.

Through that place, it is the window for me, it has been the window to the changing seasons. The meaning of that window is really important to me. Through that window, my well-being and comfort in Rovaniemi have increased. Or it has made the well-being visible. (A5)

- - and maybe it is what's visible here, what I also associate with Rovaniemi, that in this landscape you can see the seasons very clearly. (A4)

Considering the city center's identity from a material point of view, the distinctive landmarks in the landscape were described to create a sense of place within the participants. The small distances between these landmarks and the easy access to them, and to see them, was described as a considerable part of the city image. However, in addition to these landmarks, some of the participants described attachment to different kinds of landmarks as well, especially trees. Some participants described the emotional bonds with decades old trees to be very powerful, as there were not so many buildings to represent and remind of the past. According to the participants, the city planners hadn't been able to see these connections. Therefore, there had been some instances where some of these meaningful trees had been cut down and caused strong emotional reactions.

I went to see when they cut down the trees when I heard from my friend that they started the process. - - There was a person who cried. It was such a merciless situation you'll never believe; I even have some pictures from that day. - - these (trees) were as old as the memorial of the Karelian people and not just only trees, and that it made no sense. (A1)

In addition, another participant shared, that they would often wonder all of the things these trees had seen, as they were including the memories of those trees into the remembering processes. It was described that since there were not many signs of past times, the trees in the cityscape became the sites of memory. In other words, the trees in Rovaniemi had become monuments and memorials to the local people. Trees have a long history in working as "living memorials" and the importance and meaning of urban trees differ among people; they can be seen as improvements to the air quality and aesthetics, but they can also involve deep feelings, sometimes with spiritual qualities as well (Dwyer, Schroeder & Gobster, 1991). It is indeed through monuments and memorials that have linked memory to the built areas, and monuments mean literally the bringing of past into the present moment (Kervanto Nevanlinna, 2013, p. 275-276). Concerns and feelings for nature came up not only through the memories and present moment, but also in imagining the future and its possible threats.

4.2 The stratum of time – past, present, and future

In this chapter I will discuss the temporal nature place, which played an important role in the interviews as well. From the data, it was clear to notice that place attachment and identity are

tightly linked to time: what has been, what is and what will be. Time, place and the self are the elements on human reality; in the sense of self, no one can have the same memories and therefore every individual has their own, unique texture of time and place (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 235). Due to the methodology of this research and the choice to execute photo-elicited interviews worked as a fruitful platform for discussing especially the past memories of these places. Moreover, the participants discussed the temporal nature of place differently, through their memories, the visible stratum of time in the architecture and as wishes and threats about the future. In the next chapters, I will shed light to the significance of memory and imagination to place attachment and identity in the urban context both from individual and collective aspects, as the way individuals understand past, present and the future depends not only on personal positions and conditions, but also social aspects (Borer, 2010).

4.2.1 Past: The significance of memory in place attachment

As mentioned in the earlier theoretical chapters, memory and the experience of place are tightly linked (e.g., Rose-Redwood et al., 2008; Loughran et al., 2015; Lento & Olsson, 2013). Remembering happens not only through narrative expressions but also through visual and audiovisual mediums, corporeally, performatively and in relation to objects and places (e.g. Savolainen, Lukin & Heimo, 2020). As the data collection method of photo-elicitation interview was already a powerful means of evoking memories, the memory aspect was highlighted in most of the interviews. The participants had lived in Rovaniemi within the range of 5 to 70 years. One of the participants had lived in Rovaniemi for a considerably shorter time, and that became evident in the discussion as well. It has been highlighted, that place attachment is, and becomes more significant for people in older age (e.g., Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992). The number of years lived in Rovaniemi became evident especially in the memory's context, which seems quite natural. Nevertheless, all of the participants shared interesting and personal past experiences from the meaningful places they had chosen for the interview setting. All of the participants had lived longer in Rovaniemi than I was, however, only 2 of the participants were born in Rovaniemi. Most of the participants mentioned, that there were only few buildings left in the cityscape that survived the destructions of the second world war and its aftermath. The participants shared, that they generally appreciate older buildings, and the unique architectural features they often entail.

Memories and especially early memories from childhood, were emphasized in the interviews with the participants who had grown up in Rovaniemi, and the places that were described meaningful had been the stages of everyday life and growing up, and were, at least for now, still existing in the city. Especially the affective component in the psychological process of place attachment was emphasized in the articulated memories, as the participants described deep emotional connections with the specific places. The places had naturally gone through some changes during the years, but they still portrayed as places of vivid memories for the participants. The vividness of the memories was present in the very detailed stories these participants shared with me, whether it was a specific tree they would climb with the neighbor's kid or a hot summer day driving a borrowed car to pick up your mom from work.

This place used to be the center of life in this city, where people would come and go. There was a lot of people all the time. - - nowadays there's only a small space left with a couple of chairs and a table, it's almost if a hair would drop to the floor there and you could hear it. (A2)

When this building came here many years ago, people didn't like it and they wondered how such an ugly building can be in the middle of Rovaniemi. It was a shock. However, in my opinion, it has always been more beautiful than the Aalto buildings, such as the library. (A2)

In the latter quote, it is interesting how most people thought about this new building as ugly, but as time passed, at least with this specific participant, the building is more beautiful than the more collectively appreciated landmark buildings, such as the library. It was clear that the participant had spent time in the specific place continuously as a child and the place had been a very important stage of their everyday life. Even nowadays, it was mentioned that the participant would go to that place and memorize these different events and talk about them to the younger generation. Attachment to the "places of past" is also one way for keeping the past alive, creates a sense of continuity and fosters identity (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992, p. 140). Moreover, it can also be seen as a way of protecting the self against mischievous change (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992, p. 140), that was described as scary and uncertain. Cross (2015, p. 506) talks about historical attachment to place, as a process of "accumulating experience in a place and creating meaning about those experiences that tie both ordinary and significant life events to a particular place as well as to the history of a place." Two components are included in this kind of attachment, experience of life in a place and the stories that create meaning about the experiences in that place (Cross, 2015).

In most of the interviews, the participants described the many-phased history of Rovaniemi to be seen in the architecture of the city. As mentioned, after the destructions of the war in 1944, only a few buildings were left in the city, however, many post-war buildings from the so-called “reconstruction era” have also been destroyed. The city center was described to be very confusing, even ugly resulting from the mixed de- and re-construction of the area. The changes in the city were described to have happened somewhat unplanned, resulting to this confusing city landscape and image. The places that have been sustained almost as they were after the post-war reconstruction years are described to be few. It is indeed so, according to the participants, that the built Rovaniemi city center lacks these stratum of time, layered memories that create collectively meaningful places of memory. It was described that some of the sustained areas, however, have been left to “stand alone in silence”, remain stagnant and unkept as the future of these areas remain uncertain and under quarrel resulting contradictory views from different actors in the city. Kervanto Nevanlinna (2013, p. 275) points out, that the precedence of collective and individual memories becomes important when the built environment faces pressure of change. In the discussion about conservation of historical, “endangered”, places and buildings, the meanings to the local community and the meanings to the city planners becomes important. These different groups may produce varying perceptions about places that are worth sustaining. (Kervanto Nevanlinna, 2013, p. 275).

The embodied nature of remembering place

As highlighted in the earlier chapter, the memory aspect was very much highlighted in the data. One reason for that is the interview setting itself was encouraging to remembering processes, as it was photo-elicited. Not only as a separate mental construct, but memory can also be perceived as embodied (e.g. Wilson, 2002) and remembering occurs both corporeally and performatively among other things (e.g. Savolainen et al., 2020). Asikainen and Mäkinen (2013, p. 132) separate a variety of embodied memories; sensory memories (hearing, smell, touch; seasons) and memories of movement (walking, stopping, running and climbing). Together with these, Asikainen and Mäkinen (2013, p. 132) talk about the embodied memories of living, dwelling, and acting/operating. From the data, many kinds of embodied memories could be identified and observed.

Most of the meaningful places described were places that the participants would visit and reach by foot, and the ability to stop in these places. In these places, there was either a bench or another comfortable spot to take a pause. Walking was mentioned to be one of the main

means of navigating in the city, as most of the participants lived near the center as well. It was mentioned, that one of the best qualities in Rovaniemi city center is indeed the short distances that can be reached by foot within the city center. However, some of the familiar walking routes had been destroyed, by city planning or seasons (such as floods) and therefore the participants had to seek for other routes.

It (memories) has a lot to do with my movement and strong experiences when I have jogged here, and when there has been a flurry of snow that has closed the path there and made me wade there. So, these are very sporty, my memories from this place.
(A5)

Walking in Rovaniemi did bring up some other kinds of experiences as well. The research on city walking has emphasized the notion that the streets are societal spaces, and places that are divided by different societal relations. From some of the interviews, it was possible to interpret that Rovaniemi was felt to be a city for people who own and drive cars, and that the pedestrians were neglected in the planning processes. This notion also becomes evident in Tennberg's (2020, p. 65) arguments, where she describes Rovaniemi as "the city of cars". One of the participants described that the fact that people are passing the city fast with cars, could have something to do with the not-so attractive appearance of the center. Slower, wondering type of moving through the city space was said to be somewhat absent, certainly because of the climate limitations, but also because of the feeling that the city was not, according to some of the participants, planned for pedestrians.

As mentioned, the seasons affected naturally a lot of the sensory memories as well, for example, in one of the places it was possible to observe migratory birds and the landscape was "*nothing but (bird) yelling*" at that time of the year. Other sensory memories were described one place to always have "*quite some hullabaloo*" inside and outside in the past, compared to the present, when the participant (A2) described the place to be almost the quietest place in the city, where it could almost be possible to "*hear the sound of a hair dropping*". In one of the places, the rhythm and identity of that place was described to be changing with the seasons as it was a place of doing, where the forms of doing were regulated by seasons. The daily activities, or "rituals" in public places is contributing to feelings of attachment (Low & Altman, 1992, p. 5). The participant said that they would walk past the place every week, and the activities in that place would vary depending on the time of the year. Together with the possible activities in the place that created attachment, it was highlighted in the discussion that the participant also imagined the activities that could be done, thus, the place portrayed as a site of possible activity as well.

4.2.2 Present: The mixed messages of impermanency

When it comes to the present moment, the miscellaneous, eclectic history of Rovaniemi is present on this day. If it was formerly the vagabonds and lumberjacks who passed the city, or the war that changed the landscape completely, nowadays it is the tourism and the frenzied deconstruction and reconstruction that keeps the place in the so-called fixed impermanent state as one of the participants described, and as heterotopia, as Tennberg (2020) describes, and what makes forming emotional bonds with the city harder. This feeling became truly evident in many of the interviews, especially in the following:

- - all the time I feel like all of this will be vanished. That I will lose all of this. And that so-called permanently impermanent state, that marks this place, is what makes it so much harder to feel at home here. - - I am afraid that if I start loving this place too much, it will hurt even more to lose this. (A3)

The impermanency shows as something that has been apparent here for long. Some stay, but most people come and go. Rovaniemi is almost like a camping site that hasn't been cleaned. People come and use it, but no one cares what they leave it like. And those who stay are not proud enough of what we have here. (A3)

What is evident here, is that the feeling of constant change in the cityscape resulted in fear of attaching to a place. The participant described to have received many “messages of impermanency” from the city developers as the pedestrian street had been narrowed by the river for a driveway and some new buildings had only stayed up for some years until they had been torn down again. The development of Rovaniemi was described by other participants as well to be unplanned and uncontrolled, resulting as a confusing and unpleasant architecture of the city center. Another participant shared, that despite they feel like they have a strong emotional bond to the place, it is shameful how the center has been built in the more recent years. Change can be seen as disruption to place attachment and/or a threat to place identity, and within the urban context, and also Rovaniemi, changes are constant, and these naturally can result in emotional responses, such as anxiety or a sense of displacement (Devine-Wright, 2009). These kinds of responses were indeed described in the interviews.

As mentioned, tourism has the power to alter the place experience in Rovaniemi as well. From some of the interviews, tourism was seen as an unstable, yet important industry for Rovaniemi. The places built for tourism, however, were not seen as consistent as they were mostly used in specific times of the year, causing the feeling of impermanency together with

the unplanned de- and reconstruction that has been occurring. One participant, who described their relationship to Rovaniemi to be mostly formed by sports and activities, told, that despite just a few places and the one we discussed in the interview, they do not have any bond to the city center. The participant told, that there were no major material changes happening in that place. The biggest change in the place was, that it had become more known and popular, which was also their achievement. The changes were perceived as positive in that particular place, which in this case, similarly as Von Wirth et al. (2016) argue, strengthens the attachment. The meaningful place was also described to be visited while they were on their familiar run or walk around the city, and it worked as a pitstop. What they described meaningful in the bigger context were the surrounding hills, where they would go every week for runs and hikes. The city center was described as somewhat ugly, but then again, it was mentioned that too beautiful things would not even suit to Rovaniemi. From this point of view, the perceived ugliness and confusion is part of Rovaniemi's identity, which creates attachment.

Another participant described their place as a pitstop as well, between home and work. From this interview, a somewhat contradictory view on the present state of the appearance of the city center was articulated compared to the others. It was mentioned that the within the five years that participant had stayed in Rovaniemi, the city development had gone to a better direction and the destruction of older buildings has been desirable. The new buildings were described as beautiful and that they had made center more clean and distinct area. According to Kervanto Nevanlinna (2013, p. 280), what usually dominates the city planning processes, are the most profitable plans of the land usage, however, modernizing and condensing city spaces can also indicate the city's willingness to create futuristic meanings that can be attached to the city image. The future orientation of the participant was somewhat recognizable, as they described old (especially when not conserved properly) to be unattractive to them. As Von Wirth et al. (2016) point out, the response to change differs depending on multiple aspects. When change is perceived and something progressing and upgrading, the response to it is naturally positive (Von Wirth et.al, 2016), which was the case with the specific participant.

4.2.3 Future: The lively city for everyone – year round

Borer (2010, p. 109) describes the interview setting to be a “dramatic present moment where interpretation and imagination coalesce into ideas about (future) planning”. Future

imagination and interpretation of residents are therefore important elements of planning processes and should affect the visions of the city planners and developers (Borer, 2010). When it came to imagination of the future of these meaningful places and Rovaniemi, what was common in every interview was the sense of communality. The participants had different kinds of views and ideas for the future, but all of them wished for a more comfortable city not only for themselves, but for other people as well, which included more permanent residents as well as tourists and other visitors. Each participant wished for a livelier city, where people from different backgrounds could meet, and this was described to enhance comfort and attachment to the places. What was pointed out many times in the discussions, was the wish that the city could develop the riverside more efficiently; include some cafes and restaurants there and keep it for pedestrians, as there are no parks in the center. What was also mentioned, was that the city could develop more communal spaces, indoors and outdoors. These places should take into consideration all kinds of residents from all ages. The cross generational aspect was mentioned to create a stronger feeling of community in most of the interviews.

There are a lot of aspects that make this place meaningful but one important one is the social aspect. It's supposed to be accessible for everyone. - - It's not only my place, even though I have taken part in its 'productization', but everyone's place. - - I love it when even people from abroad marvel at it on social media. (A5)

In the discussion about tourism places and their development in the city, it was mentioned that they were mostly fake, e.g., the husky safaris or Santa Claus villages, as they did not represent the authentic identity of Lapland. The notion of 'authentic identity', of any place, but especially of Lapland, is a wide and complex construct that should consider indigenous identities as well. Authenticity as a concept, and the discussion around it can be seen as one of the most essential ones within tourism research, therefore it is wide and diverse (e.g., Cohen, 1988; De Bernardi, 2020; Lüthje, 2017). The participants mentioned that the tourism places could stay, but what would be needed in addition was to strengthen the northern Ostrobothnian and Lappish identity as well in the narratives. From these following quotes, some light can be shed to the attitudes on the future development of the city as a destination:

And this will not become a metropolis, doesn't have to, this is a small northern city, we could rather think about the perks that it has, instead of making this something that it's not. In tourism as well, why does there have to be igloos and husky dogs, it doesn't have anything to do with this place. (A3)

I wish this (Rovaniemi) would become a more high-level destination, instead of the tourists having to drag their suitcases in the dark. - - I wish for this place to be more utilized, for instance, it could have a small guesthouse for the tourists, so it could have some liveliness in it. (A2)

I want us to have our own identity, at the same time we can have Santa Claus Villages, but these are fake. (A1)

As place attachment is increased by awareness of place's history, and vice versa (Lewicka, 2008), the sustaining of historical places and buildings was highlighted by many participants in the future visions. To facilitate these kinds of visions, ideas, and narratives into realities, it was mentioned that the city planners and decision makers should have better understanding of the place's history, and the involvement of the local population was stressed. The future desires, together with past representations can be said to be determined by present conditions, and the anticipated future actions and visions affect the individual's and community's actions in the present, and therefore support motivations to save or sustain the identity or image of the community (Borer, 2010).

In addition, the development of Rovaniemi as a year-around lively city, within the arctic limitations, was said to be an important thing. Climate change was mentioned to be one of the biggest future threats to Rovaniemi and the arctic places in general, as the environment is very fragile to these changes. It poses a threat to the seasons, especially the winter, which was mentioned to be one of the most important reasons for attachment to Rovaniemi as well as to the specific places. The emphasis on winter as one of the most important seasons for tourism was also described to be somewhat problematic, as the participants were concerned about the warming winters and their impact on the industry.

4.3 Insiders and outsiders – participation in place making

Place attachment and sense of place has been investigated quantitatively through different scales by different authors. For example, as mentioned earlier in the theoretical chapters, Relph (1976 as cited in Shamai 1991), talks about insideness and outsideness in sense of place. Relph (1976) then makes a distinction of seven different degrees of insideness and outsideness, which range from alienation to belonging to a place with deep and complete identity with a place (Shamai, 1991). In addition, Shamai (1991) suggests that one's sense of place develops from no sense of place to sacrifice for a place on a six-level ladder. While it

was not purposeful for this qualitative research to try and identify these linear and determinedly progressive ladders or ranges based on the data, the outsideness and insiderness, and the important role of participation, or at least the feeling of having influence on the planning processes, could be identified.

What I found interesting, is that despite one participant's feeling of not belonging to Rovaniemi, they still felt deeply involved in the place and were willing to give a lot of time to protect the meaningful places in the city. The involvement showed as an active participation to activities, such as carrying out collective workshops together with other residents to create and suggest new, more resident oriented designs for the area. This kind of agency points to urban activism, usually referring to local events and activities initiated by city residents (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021), which has become increasingly salient across the world (Vanhoose & Savini, 2017). I shall discuss urban activism and participation as a collective place making process more deeply in the latter chapters.

Going back to protecting that certain place, the place was described as an important recreation area for the residents in the city center, and if that place would be lost, there would be no place to go after that. The bonds between people and places can develop to the extents that places become individual's "own places" and sometimes the "only places" for their activities, such as recreation purposes (Hammitt et al., 2006, p. 17). It was in this specific place, that the historical, natural and social qualities were so significant, that it had become the last place for the participant. Moreover, there was a feeling that the city was developing plans behind the scenes, secretly from the residents and that they had no say in the development plans. This can be considered as outsideness.

I am against the development plans. Now, I think the city planners are in that phase of the process where they are most likely preparing the new plan behind the scenes.
(A3)

This kind of feeling, as being an outsider from the city development plans, also comes from another discussion with a different participant. The outsideness in this context referred to the people in charge of the city development, who did not have, according to the participant, any relationship with the city. The place they described as one of the most meaningful places in Rovaniemi was not only the place of their childhood, but also, according to the participant, one of the only places in the city center that has been sustained almost as the same from the post-war reconstruction era. The future plans for that place were described to be *crazy*, as they contained dense construction of apartment buildings.

There were two notions that came from these discussions: 1) the city development was seen as something that was dominated by investors building for profit, and 2) the city development is not considering even the near history of Rovaniemi in the plans. The tourism in the city was described to have both a positive and a negative consequence in every interview. Tourism-related concerns dealt with the city image, and it was mentioned, that it should be based on a long-term plan, rather than for being “a sleeping place for tourists” (A1). These kinds of oppositions and collisions in the city development are common, and despite the many positive outcomes place attachment is known to create, it can also be seen as the root for these disagreements (e.g., Manzo & Perkins, 2006). The local oppositions towards unwanted planning processes have been labelled as NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) responses (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). However, especially Devine-Wright (2003) among other sociologists, critique this way of labelling as it sees the local population as egoistic and that it is “politically deployed to undermine the legitimacy of opponents’ views by opposing symbolic/affective concerns with rational/instrumental ones” (Devine-Wright, 2003 as cited in Manzo & Perkins, 2006, p. 341).

Manzo and Perkins (2006) highlight, that what is important, is creating consensus and sense of community by allowing and accepting controversial meanings and uses of places. The foundations of common ground can be found in the realization of place being as socially determined and that the different views are not hierarchical. Thus, cooperation becomes easier, and conflicts can be depersonalized (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Indeed, processes of collective agency work better when the inhabitant’s emotional bonds to places are identified and cultivated (Manzo & Perkins, 2006), and this could and should be considered in the development plans of Rovaniemi as well.

There was a great sense of “insideness” in one of the interviews. The participant shared, as mentioned in earlier chapters, that they were largely taking part in making their meaningful place known by others by sharing pictures of the place through social media and taking people to see the place. In addition, they felt like they were partly responsible of the changes in the place, which were described as that place becoming more known. The participant shared, that they were proud to be from Rovaniemi and therefore this kind of participation became naturally. The participant was greatly involved in the development and protection of that particular place. Thus, as the early humanistic geographers such as Relph (1976 as cited in Seamon & Sowers, 2008) argues, these kinds of feelings strengthen and increase place attachment on the individual scale considerably.

The small, compact size of Rovaniemi center was seen as a positive thing among all the interviews. Rovaniemi was described to be a safe place to live, and one participant told, that they would often wonder how anyone could even feel unsafe or scared in the city. Another participant shared that they had been living in bigger cities for a long time, and now that they had returned to Rovaniemi, it was amazing how people recognized them on the streets. The participant described that in bigger cities it is possible to be very anonymous, and that one reason they had returned to Rovaniemi was the homely feeling the city had, even though they did not have much family left here. Being recognized by others in place creates safety and creates a sense of belonging as an embodied experience as well (Ribbens-Klein, 2017). The urge to move to bigger cities is common with younger people, as this participant described, but the feeling of belonging had become more important with older age. Another participant would also describe their feelings of safety, and the astonishment they would feel if someone would describe not feeling safe in Rovaniemi. The feelings of safety and belonging are some of the characteristics of insiderness, which create and foster place attachment (Haarni et al., 1997, p. 17). As mentioned, the 2025 vision of Rovaniemi describes as one of the main goals to be a vital arctic capital, in which the aspect of safety is also highlighted (Rantala & Salmela, 2020). In becoming the place of these kinds of visions, Rantala and Salmela (2020) similarly as Tennberg (2020) encourage to ask the question of how are local people engaged with the visions of the city – and how much room is there for local practices?

Proactive and collective place making

The willingness to develop the city and protect its meaningful places has strong links to place attachments. On the other hand, people who are highly attached to a place are more likely to become involved in their communities, e.g., by protecting the cultural characteristics and environment of their neighborhoods. Bonds to places can indeed inspire action as people are motivated to seek, stay in, protect, and improve places that are meaningful to them (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Anton & Lawrence, 2014). This is quite logical conclusion; however, I argue that there might be some logic in thinking of this process the other way around as well. As mentioned, even though one of the participants described a feeling of alienation and not belonging in Rovaniemi, and despite having spent a long time in the area already, they were still strongly willing to try and sustain significant places in the city by actively participating in forms of urban activism. Naturally, the individual already has formed some kind of place attachment to this place as they had some important personal memories from that place, with

visions for the future. The theme of communality was present in most of the interviews when it came to the current state of the city center and worries about the future development. It was mentioned in many of the interviews that the city center lacks communal places, and that they have been destroyed actively.

When briefly discussing the effects of the pandemic to the use of the city center, most of the participants mentioned that they missed these communal spaces that were left, especially the library. The meaning of libraries as communal spaces was described to be very significant for the participants in general as well, and overall, communal, accessible places were described to increase comfort and attachment to the city. The concerns of losing communal of places and therefore hoping to have more of them in the future was highlighted in most of the interviews. It has been brought up in the discussions about tourism in Rovaniemi that the locals might avoid the city center during the high tourism season (e.g., Rantala & Salmela, 2020). However, nothing that the participants shared in the interviews indicated that the outdoor places in the center would have been utilized more frequently now that the tourist activities had dwindled. The absence of tourism was however mentioned to be noticed. It was highlighted, that they would visit the public places more rarely, as efforts of social distancing, as many could also work from home and continue to do so. Many of the participants also shared, that they had second homes and/or summer houses that they had been staying at during the times and therefore spent less time in the city, and in their homes.

The social and community aspects were highlighted in a discussion with another participant as well. The place had become meaningful of its physical qualities and location and the fact that it portrayed as a window to the northern nature and landscape. Later, the meaning of the place had expanded, and a small community had developed around it. It had even crossed the borders of Finland as the essence of that place as a window was produced through photos in social media. As described, the meaning of that particular place was constructed from its physical qualities of working as a window to the life of the arctic nature, that now spread online as well as the story of the window. Among other linkages, Low (1992, p. 165-166) describes the narrative linkage to create place attachment. Thus, the place gained interest among foreigners as the seasons of the north were documented continuously from that exact spot.

I think it is wonderful that people from outside Rovaniemi and Finland can follow the life of this place. I have unconsciously been a part of this 'Rovaniemi project', where I want people to create positive images of the city. - - This place has a lot to do with

working towards common good and positive images. I want it to be accessible not just for me but for everyone. I am proud to be from here, so this comes naturally. (A5)

In this distinctive place, and the descriptions of it as not only as an encapsulation of Lappish nature, but also a small community and a special narrative, what was different from the other places in this research was that it was eminently made. By that I mean, it was quite recently that this exact place became so meaningful not only to an individual, but to a whole group of people, at least in this scale. By actively photographing and showing that place through social media platforms and by taking visitors there, the participant had, together with other people of course, created a collectively meaningful place, that had no wider significance in the collective history of Rovaniemi. In this way, creating a narrative and a small community around a certain place, the future of the place felt, according to the participant, sustained and certain in a way; “now that it (the place) has its own reputation I don’t think anyone will destroy it” (A5).

Meaningful places are created and made through “bodily presence, movement, and interaction with people and objects in a semiotic landscape” (Ribbens-Klein, 2019, p. 3). Moreover, placemaking also happens in other spaces, such as social media platforms and in the narratives produced by media for example. Placemaking is an orientation of urban development that means place based planning and design of the public urban spaces compared to a more comprehensive system of traditional urban planning (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021). Place based city development also indicates to the social aspects of place: it’s about the local community’s resources, needs, motives and potential’s realization through the development of place which aims to increase the well-being of the community. The approach highlights the creative development and constant transformation of the place’s identity. Residents’ active participation to the activities and development in the city, i.e., urban activism, has many positive outcomes (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021).

4.4 Making place beyond place – role of online communities

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the significance and meaning of some of the places within the urban landscape had increased through social media platforms. With one of the places, the conspicuousness and knowledge of that place had “spread across the world” through pictures and stories online created by the community this place was meaningful to. According to another participant, social media groups had become important sites of

collective remembering to them. The participant shared, that in the past, the small size of Rovaniemi became evident when people would be tightly in touch with each other and if something or someone went missing, these situations were quickly resolved. Today, this same kind of feeling was present in Facebook groups, and the participant mentioned that their specific meaningful place is actively memorized and therefore in a way, continues to exist online:

This place only exists online more broadly nowadays. It has been such an important place in the past that people have many memories from there, everybody was memorizing the past events of that place in the Facebook group. (A2)

Facebook groups especially have been seen as fruitful platforms for remembering, as it is easy to include other material (such as pictures) with the stories (Savolainen, et al., 2020). According to Mäenpää and Faehnle (2021) as well, one of the most fruitful platforms for urban activism has been identified to be Facebook. Tennberg (2020, p. 39) points out as well, that due to the fast development, especially in the context of Rovaniemi city center, residents' memory is working increasingly online. She continues, that the narrative of the city past is constructed differently in these shattered, personal stories shared in Facebook groups. The pictures and stories not only represent the past but also bring it to the present moment, and place, that is happening at the moment. The members of these groups can be seen to build and construct their own identity in relation to specific landmarks and places in the city (Tennberg, 2020, p. 34).

The reason why I am treating this subject in this chapter and not in the earlier one concentrated on memory, was that people on the social media platforms actively participate to the production and fostering of place identity and attachment through the stories they share with others. In other words, these groups can highlight the shared bonds people have with places, especially emotional bonds that deal with identity, through pictures and other material that evoke feelings and memories. This way, social media groups can also be linked with the communal place making processes. As Ozkul (2013) mentions, sharing photos and other information in relation to specific locations through mobile communication technologies, contributes to the so-called spatial practice, can be seen to improve social attachment to places. Another participant mentioned that the meaning of their chosen place had increased by "spreading" to social media. One of the most important aspects to this place was described to be the social aspect and the fact that the pictures from that exact place had gained popularity and admiration outside from the local community as well:

There is the social aspect, because there is the Facebook community and the virtual community, together with the users of this place. All the dimensions exist here to make this a very meaningful place. (A5)

There had also been some changes in the place which were unwanted, and when the city maintenance company had been told about it and they had fixed them, they had received many messages through social media from people who were thanking them. The feeling of communality was described to increase through these online interactions considering the place. Thus, not only does the fast development of the city center encourage these memory processes to go online, but social media also provides new ways of influencing place identity and its production. As the importance of place identity can be seen to have increased in a way, resulting people to take “symbolic meaning of place into their own hands” (Breek, Hermes, Eshuis & Mommaas, 2018, p. 907). Social media can be seen as a public stage for individuals to present their views, as well as shared stories that may increase involvement and place attachment. Moreover, through social media platforms, such as Facebook groups, it is possible to make local impact together with influencing associations people have with the places in the city (Breek, et al., 2018).

Based on these interviews together with the literature, online communities have the power to organically shape the place image, motivate action and protection towards meaningful place, as well as increase the knowledge of certain places in the city. Online communications about places and their development also help to increase the transparency of city planning processes and provide platforms for open discussions between multiple stakeholders in the city. Accordingly, Breek et al. (2018) stress the importance of social media platforms in making place associations as they are openly accessible and can work without interference of local governments of printed media in example and therefore trigger and motivate bottom-up place making and community formation. Mäenpää and Faehnle (2021) point out, that the main reason for urban activism to exist as it is now, is social media. Digitalization in its deepest meaning does not mean the technicalities of apparatus, but people’s capability and willingness to be in interaction with each other and the environment through these devices. Social media provides possibilities for many kinds of information and knowledge sharing, co-operation between different individuals and groups in order to find goal-oriented solutions together (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021). It is indeed because of these platforms exist, such as Facebook, that I was able to conduct this research as the participants were reached from these groups. Moreover, Borer (2010) also highlights, that by providing residents with platforms to discuss the past, present and the future of their neighborhoods and meaningful places can assemble

some positive effects of place attachment. It seems that there is a lot of willingness, curiosity and motivation in these social media groups to discuss, remember and therefore keep alive the past, but also develop the city to a more comfortable direction.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the vast literature and the data of this research as well, it was distinguishable that many types of place attachment exist, and there are multiple different aspects that contribute to the phenomenon. In addition, it was clear that place attachment affects residents' wellbeing and can motivate them towards different kinds of activity in order to sustain, protect and develop the places in the city center. The place identity and image of Rovaniemi city was also seen as somewhat different from the actual everyday living experience according to the participants. The concluding chapter in this research will first outline the results, review the main research question and supporting questions by answering to them individually. Secondly, the limitations of the research will be articulated. Finally, the ideas and possibilities for future research will be proposed briefly and hopefully motivate and inspire to conduct research on similar topics in the coming years as well.

5.1 Summarizing the results

According to the participants, the meaningful places they had chosen had a big impact on their comfort and attachment to Rovaniemi. One participant described that their meaningful place always *"thrills the soul"* when they visit the place. To some of the participants, the places distinctively worked as places of memory, where they would go and remember the old times. Other participant described that the place worked as a transition landscape between home and work, and if it hadn't been there, their experience in Rovaniemi could have been different, and in their words, not as comfortable. Some participants described their place to be an important window to the Lappish landscape, where they can follow the seasons and the life of the natural world in peace. The material elements of the so-called cultural landscape of Rovaniemi were important elements for attachment to the participants. The meanings of these particular places that were chosen for the interviews and discussed constructed somewhat differently for each individual, however, there were some common characteristics to them and to how these places enhance place attachment.

To answer my main research question: *How does residents' place attachment form in Rovaniemi city center?* it became clear from the data that indeed all of the participants had formed some kinds of emotional bonds with the city center, yet the ways of attachment were constructed and formed differently but with some shared features. From the data, it was

possible to identify the strong contribution of memory to place attachment. For the participants, historical sites created a sense of continuity, embodied traditions and therefore also facilitated place attachment. Most of the meaningful places that were discussed in the research were some kind of historical places, both individually and collectively. As mentioned, the participants described attachment towards the natural and built cultural landscape of Rovaniemi. It was also possible to identify the three components of place attachment introduced by Kyle et.al (2004); affective, cognitive and behavioral. Some of these components were more important in creating place attachment than others depending on the individual.

To review the first supporting research question: *What are the elements that make an urban place meaningful?*, the answer is also quite many-sided. The components mentioned in the previous chapter can be viewed as elements that make place meaningful, for example, as it's possibility to work as a place for dear hobbies or a place of social interactions that create and foster the feeling of belonging, and the so-called "insideness". Especially in one of the interviews the participant emphasized the role of small community around their meaningful place to have had big influence on the attachment to the place and its identity. The most important physical elements of Rovaniemi and the meaningful places chosen by the participants were the natural qualities and the proximity of nature, the possibility to stop and sense the surroundings and the life around. In addition, important physical elements were the architectural, mostly historical, features of the places which had buildings within them. Thus, the temporal elements of the place are to be mentioned then as well; the places worked as sites of individual and collective memory and, in addition, they possessed possibilities for future development to work as more lively and communal spaces.

The second supporting question was formed as *how are the meaningful places part of the place and individual's identity?* The discussion around the chosen meaningful places worked as a great platform to discuss the place identity of the city, the city image and the individuals' identities on a larger scale as well. In the discussion about the meaningful places and place identities, it was important for the participants to find places *for them* in the cityscape. Tourism in the city of Rovaniemi can work as a force that temporarily and sometimes permanently too, inhabits and changes the experiences and attachments to places in the city, not to mention the place image and identity itself. It is wise to consider, does Rovaniemi want to be a city where its diverse residents feel like there are not that many things for them in the city, instead have many places for the visitors? As mentioned, Borer (2010) suggests, that meaningful places can work as important identity markers for residents. The meaningful places chosen

by the participants of this research also portrayed as such. Some of the participants described their meaningful places to be sites of personally important activities, such as sports, culture and other communal activities, and they wished for the creation and sustaining of these kinds of places in the future. Moreover, the places worked as sites for fostering and creating place identity as well.

Places which make individuals experience feelings of belonging, safety and ease, were, according to the participants, found in the city. In other words, the meaningful places created feelings of “insiderness” which then contributes considerably to place attachments. Not only emerging from the physical qualities or the behavioral aspects, it is also important to create these kinds of places on the cognitive and affective levels. In most of the interviews, the place’s history and the meaning of memory was emphasized. As Lewicka (2008) states, awareness of the place’s history can be seen to intensify place attachment. This can be viewed other way as well, meaning that strong emotional bonds to a place create awareness to the history, which was observable in the interviews as well. Moreover, providing residents with a platform to discuss their neighborhood’s past, present, and future can summon the implicit positive effects of collective self-reflection and place attachment. In this way, it can be possible to take part in public sociology as Borer (2010, p. 111) puts it, that does as much listening as it does speaking. The role of social media groups was emphasized as they were seen as platforms for collective remembering and creating resident-based narrative of the city. In addition, social media platforms worked as tools in order to make these important places more known.

The identification of meaningful places can work as a great tool in the city development plans, and similarly as Tennberg (2020, p. 91) writes, the data also indicated, that residents’ meaningful places can shape the image and the “spirit” of the city. In order to sustain and create more comfortable city center, it is important to oppose, but also to find solutions and common ground, to create collectively meaningful places. However, when talking about big historic buildings, it is impossible to just create another place like that somewhere else. It would be wise for Rovaniemi to really get to know its history and to start protecting, sustaining, and utilizing its historical areas better. The elements that increase place attachment in the city, such as natural characteristics, historical features and the proper maintenance of these places should be considered in the city planning processes. In addition, it would be wise to recognize the different needs of different groups of inhabitants, by providing places and spaces for multiple different cultural and other physical activities.

When thinking about the third supporting research question: *how are the changes in Rovaniemi affecting the residents' relationship to place?*, the participants expressed sadness and worry towards the historical and present development in the city, that has resulted in the confusing de- and reconstruction of the city center and its buildings. There were naturally many different reactions towards these changes which were not only negative. Places of collective remembering were described to be somewhat few in the cityscape; thus, it was described to be somewhat difficult to attach to the city. When thinking about the seasons, they truly shape the place called Rovaniemi. Winter has the power to make some places (more) accessible and inaccessible, by creating paths of ice to the other side of the shore that would otherwise be out of reach. The magnificent ski tracks in the forest lead us to complete new places. Summer, on the other hand, brings the liveliness to the city in ways it's hard to believe we're in the same place as in November. As mentioned, changes of the city and its places were described to affect the place attachment. The changes caused uncertainty and difficulties in attachment, but also hopes and anticipation towards the future and therefore willingness to be involved in place making as well.

5.2 Limitations of the research

Various limitations exist in this research. As mentioned, in person walking interviews was the originally preferred means for data collection. However, due to the limitations set by the pandemic, this was not seen as a safe option at that point. By choosing walking interviews around the city there could have been emphasis more on the memory and senses. It can also help the participants to think more imaginatively, critically and freely (Barber, 2014, p. 106). As former experiences and knowing can be seen to be present in the moment through the body (e.g. Wilson, 2002), senses can trigger memories and thoughts that lie beyond the realms of our intelligence (Karjalainen, 1997, p. 234), therefore these kinds of studies may produce richer data about the everyday urban environment.

Because of the small number of only 5 participants, the amount of data is very limited. Therefore, no wider generalizations can be done to consider Rovaniemi residents' place attachments or the place identity of Rovaniemi. On the other hand, wider generalizations are not even necessarily possible or needed when conducting small-scale qualitative research, but the everyday urban experiences of the residents' in Rovaniemi should be studied more

extensively, as the data of this research indicates that there are some contradictions in the city image and the experience itself. Identity being such an extensive and multidimensional concept, the place identity aspect of the research was also very limited due to the one-sided, small number of residents' point of view.

The participants were invited to participate to this research online, through local Facebook groups. For this research, I used various different groups, one of them being the group for people who had spent their childhood in Rovaniemi. Naturally, the participants that came through this group, had more emphasis on the memory aspect. Therefore, by focusing on different kinds of forums for invitation, the results might vary and produce more focused data about certain groups of people. One limitation was also the exclusion of non-Finnish speakers from this research, as the invitations for participation were written only in Finnish. Some of the limitations can also be considered to stem from the translation process that needed to be done for the analysis of the data and reporting. That meaning, some of the expressions the participants used were local and did not translate that well into English, therefore, it might fade out or take some weight over of those expressions.

5.3 Possibilities for future research

Rovaniemi as a developing urban environment and destination offers many possibilities for future research, as well as other developing urban areas especially in the Arctic. Certainly, one very interesting point of view would be to study the so-called multilocality of today, which has even increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and it's affects and relationships to place attachment. In addition, conducting research on place attachment in Rovaniemi that focuses on different minority groups could offer new ways for design and development of the city, and create possibilities for the city to be seen as more than something that "belongs to the chosen few". The necessity for making a more diverse society visible has been one of the main concerns in urban studies for a long time (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021). Massey (1994, p. 147-148) argues, that it is not only the capital that determines our experience of place, but also race and gender. Therefore, it is important to also investigate the elements that create safety and therefore place attachment for people from varied groups, and create accessible, safe places within the city of Rovaniemi as well. Other focus points could also be highlighted in other research by choosing collectively important places in the city and exploring

place attachments and identities from this point of view. In addition, place attachment could be studied from the city developers' point of view as well.

Future research could also take advantage of the "walking and talking" methods, which can provide access to more sensory knowing about more alternatively significant places in the city as well, giving the research a more experiential emphasis (Barber, 2014, p. 106). Considering the difficult past of Rovaniemi, and my personal interest towards audio storytelling, I find it interesting to explore the relationship with place and stories. For example, Cross (2015) argues, that storytelling is one of the first ways through which individuals learn about place and therefore develop attachments, that may be shared in ways that bind or separate people from the sense of belonging. There have been many projects using locative technologies that aim to giving a new kind of perspective to places through stories, and it is indeed this way that it could be possible to access and keep alive the somewhat forgotten city past.

Finally, changes in the climate were described by many participants. The relationships between place attachment, place identity and climate change has gained interest increasingly in the past years (Devine-Wright, 2013; Devine-Wright, Price & Leviston, 2015; Devine-Wright & Batel, 2017). It has been accepted that climate change will alter both the physical character of places and the meanings, identities and emotional bonds people have with places. The impacts of the changes will indeed be place specific; and for example, in Arctic regions, it already challenges the more traditional ways of living (Devine-Wright, 2013) as well as the tourism industry, which is highly climate dependent and seasonal especially in the Arctic (e.g., Rantala, de la Barre, Granås, Jóhannesson, Müller, Saarinen, Tervo-Kankare, Maher & Niskala, 2019). Climate change will have its impacts on places, their identities and therefore place attachments, which became evident in this research as well. However, it would be necessary to study this point of view more extensively as well, as it may produce essential information about local communities' relationships towards the changing environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For starters, I want to express my gratitude for the fact that my home and other places of personal importance have not been faced by direct threats created by war or natural disasters. I feel privileged to live in such safe, though imperfect, environment, where I can study and take bigger and smaller steps to reach for my goals as I feel like I have a future. Thank you Rovaniemi, for existing and being such an inspiration for this research in all of your disorientation. I will miss you.

I am extremely grateful for my supervisor Minni Haanpää for supporting me in this journey and providing me with insight, tips, and comments that inspired me to shape this research. Studying in University of Lapland has been an amazing opportunity to gain expertise and study freely and broadly many of the subjects I have been interested in. Thanks to my fellow scholars as well and thank you M.K. for taking the time to read my work and providing comments.

This research would not be without the open-minded participants who gave me their precious time in the interviews. Thank you for sharing your experiences and letting me hear your compelling and fascinating stories on and off-topic as well.

There have been times when thought I would never even find myself in a university, yet to finish a master's thesis, but here we are, on the verge of graduation. For this, I want to thank the people around me for always believing in me and supporting me in whatever I chose to do on my adventures of becoming. Thank you, *mutsi*, for encouraging me to hold on to my child-eyes and never stop learning. Thanks, *faija*, for reminding me of the importance of setting goals and reaching them, even the smaller ones. Thanks, S, for putting up with my crazy stress vibes, and providing me with such care always. Thanks, A & A for always listening to me without any judgement, that is truly precious. I am very proud of and grateful for my beautifully diverse group of friends as well, everywhere, who remind me that so many different realities exist and that it does not set any obstacles for friendship. From you I want to learn every day!

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APPENDIX 1. Invitation for participation in the research

INVITATION SENT TO THE LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS (IN FINNISH)

Hei rovaniemeläinen!

Sijaitseeko Rovaniemen keskustan alueella jokin sinulle merkityksellinen paikka?

Toteutan Lapin yliopiston matkailututkimuksen maisteriohjelman lopputyönäni tutkimuksen paikkakokemuksesta urbaaneissa ympäristöissä. Etsin tutkimukseen halukkaita osallistujia, jotka ovat käytettävissä n. puolentoista tunnin mittaiseen haastatteluun touko-kesäkuun aikana. Haastatteluun pyydän osallistujaa tuomaan mukanaan valokuvan itselleen merkityksellisestä paikasta, joka toimii haastattelun lähtökohtana. Toivon osallistujien olevan kaupungin asukkaita, jotka vierailevat usein keskustan alueella.

Haastattelut toteutetaan Microsoft Teamsin välityksellä, jotta tutkimustilanne olisi mahdollisimman turvallinen. Valokuvat toimitetaan minulle etukäteen digitaalisessa muodossa.

Mikäli kiinnostuit, otathan minuun yhteyttä joko sähköpostilla tai puhelimitse, niin annan lisätietoa sekä voimme sopia haastattelun ajankohdasta:

xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx / xxxxxxxxxxxx

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Amanda Landström

APPENDIX 2. Letter of consent

LETTER OF CONSENT (IN FINNISH)

SUOSTUMUSKIRJE

Hyvä osallistuja,

Nimeni on Amanda Landström. Olen maisteriopiskelija Lapin yliopistosta, Rovaniemeltä. Lopputyöni ohjaajana toimii Yliopistonlehtori Minni Haanpää (e-mail). Sinut on kutsuttu osallistumaan pro-gradu tutkimukseeni, joka käsittelee paikkakokemusta kaupunkiympäristössä. Tutkimuksen tulokset julkaistaan tutkielmani yhteydessä. Pro-gradu tutkielma tehdään osana kansainvälistä matkailututkimuksen maisteriohjelmaa Tourism, Culture and International Management (TourCIM).

Allekirjoittamalla tämän kirjeen, annat suostumuksesi haastattelumateriaalin luottamukselliseen käyttöön. Materiaalia käytetään ainoastaan tutkimustarkoitukseen. Tutkimus noudattaa Tutkimuseettisen Neuvottelukunnan ohjeita ja aineisto käsitellään anonyymisti. Osallistuminen tutkimukseen on vapaaehtoista, ja siitä on mahdollista vetäytyä milloin tahansa, myös tämän dokumentin allekirjoittamisen jälkeen, ilmoittamalla siitä alla olevalle yhteyshenkilölle.

Otathan yhteyttä minuun tai ohjaajaani, mikäli tarvitset lisätietoa tutkimukseen tai aineiston käsittelyyn liittyen.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Amanda Landström

TourCIM Maisteriopiskelija

Puhelin: XXXX Sähköposti: XXXX

Annan suostumukseni haastattelulle yllä mainittua tarkoitusta varten.

Allekirjoitus

Päivämäärä

Nimenselvennys

APPENDIX 3. Structure for photo-elicitation interview

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE (IN FINNISH)

1. Lämmittely

- Esittele lyhyesti itsesi
- Oletko Rovaniemeltä kotoisin? Kuinka pitkään olet asunut täällä?

2. Paikan kuvaus

- Missä se on?
- Milloin kuva on otettu, kuka sen on ottanut, miksi tämä paikka?
- Mitä paikassa on? Mikä on sen tarkoitus?
- Mitä siellä voi tehdä? Onko paikassa usein muita ihmisiä? Liikennettä? Mitä itse teet tässä paikassa?
- Käytkö usein tässä paikassa?
- Käytätkö paikkaa yksin vai yhdessä?
- Miltä paikassa kuulostaa? Miltä se tuntuu? Miltä se tuoksuu?

3. Paikan merkitys

- Muutokset paikassa?
- Muistot tästä paikasta?
- Onko sinulla jotakin lempimuistoa tästä paikasta?
- Oletko käynyt enemmän tai vähemmän tässä paikassa koronapandemian aikana, onko se erilainen nyt kun aiemmin?
- Millaisissa paikoissa liikut yleensä?
- Millaisissa paikoissa viihdyt, millaisiin paikkoihin hakeudut?

4. Paikkaan kiintyminen ja identiteetti

- Onko tällaisia paikkoja mielestäsi paljon kaupungissa? Miten paikka eroaa muista paikoista?
- Toivoisitko löytäväsi lisää tämänkaltaisia paikkoja kaupungista? Miksi?
- Miten muistelet paikkaa tai haaveilet siitä, silloin kun et ole siellä?
- Onko paikka ”rovaniemeläinen”? Mitä rovaniemeläisyys sinulle merkitsee?
- Miten paikka vaikuttaa sinun viihtyvyyteesi Rovaniemellä? Kertooko paikka mielestä paljon Rovaniemestä paikkana?
- Onko jotain odotuksia, oletuksia paikan tulevaisuuden kannalta? Toiveita? Uhkakuvia?