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Suburban Heritage as a Tourist Attraction?

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Introduction

In this chapter we contemplate ambivalent heritage in relation to tourism, and more specifically in relation to an established tourism destination's offering. Our empirical setting, the city of Rovaniemi, is a popular tourism destination in Finnish Lapland. It is well-known because of its main marketed attraction, Santa Claus, and the tourism offering of the city concentrates on different activities around snow and Christmas. Tourists engage in activities such as hunting for the Northern Lights, snowmobile safaris, visiting Santa Claus, and riding reindeer sleighs and dog sleds. In 2022, there were 413,000 foreign tourist overnights in Rovaniemi. In December 2022, Rovaniemi hosted international tourists from forty-five different countries counted by registered overnights. The biggest market areas were the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain (Visitory.io).

The current form of tourism in Rovaniemi has its roots in the ideas of journalist Niilo Tarvajärvi, who envisioned a Land of Christmas to be built in Lapland after visiting Disneyland in the United States in the 1950s. The idea did not take off for a few decades, but it remained in different discussions and, in the 1980s, the time was finally right: various national and international stakeholders decided that Santa Claus would become a character to promote Finnish tourism. The national flight company Finnair forcefully marketed Lapland in Britain, and at the same time the Santa Claus Village started to be built in the Arctic Circle, some 10 kilometres away from the Rovaniemi city centre. This resulted in the launch of charter Concorde flight routes to Rovaniemi from Britain in 1984 (see Hakkarainen and Satokangas, 2022: 21; Ilola et al., 2014: 11–15). Christmas and winter tourism began to grow steadily from there onwards and, increasingly, foreign tourists wanted to visit Santa Claus in the Arctic Circle annually.

As tourism has returned to the path of growth after the Covid-19 pandemic in Finland and internationally, the demand and meaning of authentic tourism offerings has also been on the rise. Although Santa Claus is the unquestioned main attraction in Rovaniemi, authentic tourism offerings – specifically the ‘live like a local’ trend – have gained ground among contemporary tourists (Euromonitor, 2014; Palauskaite et al., 2017). The international trend in tourism is also to experience the ‘rougher’ or more ragged local phenomena and attractions. Tourists want to gain experiences about local, everyday life, not just attractions designed for touristic use. On the other hand, sustainability and responsibility as concepts and practice are ever more familiar to many tourists, and this results in them being aware and caring about the impacts of tourism on the life of locals (e.g. Dredge and Hales, 2012).

Observing the development of this international trend towards seeking local authenticity in tourism, and with all of us living and having acted as resident activists in the suburban neighbourhood towards the end of the 2010s, discussed in this chapter, we began to wonder whether a local suburb could be a space for tourism. What would this mean inside local tourism and what could it bring and to whom? We set up a project that aimed to explore the northern suburb as a home and in a wider context, as heritage and culture in Lapland. We also wanted to analyse these in relation to Lappish cultural heritage and the image of Lapland as seen through tourism. The background idea of the whole project was based on the ambivalence of suburban heritage in Lapland (and in general): suburbs are not commonly recognized as heritage even though they have a history of more than fifty years, and in Finland around 1.5 million of the population of 5.5 million people live in the suburbs (Ympäristöministeriö). This makes them, besides a remarkable contemporary phenomenon, also a large part of Finnish cultural heritage.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, we discuss the relationship of cultural heritage and tourism in Finnish Lapland and, more specifically, in Rovaniemi. Then, we move on to deliberate the history and present-day suburbs in Finland and how they can be considered as cultural heritage. From there, we move on to consider what tourism and the suburb could have in common, and if and how the suburb can be a space for tourism. We do this by taking part in the discussions on social sustainability and inclusive tourism inside urban and tourism studies (e.g. Dredge and Hales, 2012; Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018; Wallin, 2023) in relation to our empirical context: the suburban neighbourhood of Korkalovaara in Rovaniemi, Finland. We conclude the chapter by discussing how different values behind tourism development produce and affect what is

considered 'valuable' in tourism and what ambivalent heritage as a tourist attraction could mean. This discussion on the one hand can destabilize the way suburbs are understood as cultural heritage (or not) but, on the other hand, the suburban cultural heritage has the potential to bring relevant perspectives to the traditional tourism discourse in Lapland. As Chadha (2006: 341) describes, there is discomfort in ambivalent heritage, which occurs in the dichotomy between the past and the present and in the conflict between different meanings.

The ambivalent relationship of tourism and heritage in Lapland

In essence, heritage tourism is about utilizing the past in the present to promote places and regions to tourists (Berkenbosch et al., 2022: 328). We define heritage here according to Ashworth and Graham (2005, in Berkenbosch et al., 2022: 328), who state that it is 'part of the past, which is selected in the present for contemporary purposes'. However, when dealing with ambivalent heritage, this selection is contested. The contemporary representations are continually altered for different reasons and by different groups. The narratives and heritage that are valued and understood as important are culturally embedded (see Berkenbosch et al., 2022: 328). According to these ideas, the role of heritage in Rovaniemi tourism can be seen as ambivalent.

When considering Lapland and Lappish heritage, the first image might not be a city or a town, let alone a suburb. The imagery is, rather, filled with nature and its phenomena. In the city of Rovaniemi, winter and Christmas tourism imageries form a particularly strong norm (Herva et al., 2020; Ilola et al., 2014). Being in nature and in the wilderness, acting – surviving – form a powerful thread in the narrative of the Lappish heritage. Ethnologists, anthropologists, wilderness wanderers, hunters and fishermen have collected and produced both the heritage knowledge of northern Ostrobothnia and of the Saami people (e.g. Järvinen, 1932; Paulaharju, 1963). Again, the existing tourism imagery in Lapland has taken roots and settled during the past decades to lean on images, discourses and structures around Christmas, winter, wilderness and mystics (see Table 2.1). The stories of the people of Lapland focus mainly on the activities in nature and villages.

Finland's EU membership, which was acquired in 1995, has since contributed to the integration of village history and heritage in tourism development in Lapland. After joining the EU, the regional development funds (e.g. ERDF, Leader and ESF) directed to Finland have financed a wide range of development

Table 2.1 The timeline of tourism development, and the representation of local heritage in relation to it, in Rovaniemi

1900s	Ounasvaara Fell a popular place for celebrations. Domestic tourism to see the Midnight Sun.
1920s	Rovaniemi as a gate to Lapland at the crossroads of the main roads and railroads in the region. Arctic Circle signpost becomes a place of stopping and photographing for people travelling the route towards the Arctic Ocean.
1927	First national winter sports competitions in Ounasvaara Fell.
1936	Hotel Pohjanhovi, the first hotel in Rovaniemi, is opened. It becomes a renowned meeting place for tourists and locals.
1944	Rovaniemi is almost completely destroyed in the Second World War by retreating German soldiers. Over 90 per cent of the town's buildings are burned to the ground.
1945	The reconstruction after the war begins. The plan for the town is designed by architect Alvar Aalto and it resembles the shape of a reindeer head.
1950	Eleanor Roosevelt visits Rovaniemi as a United Nation's Ambassador of Goodwill. Roosevelt Cottage is built in the Arctic Circle to honour her visit. After the visit, the cottage acts as a summer café selling souvenirs and offering Arctic Circle special postal stamps and postcards. Place of visit for ordinary tourists as well as notable persons and heads of state.
1951	Local Heritage Association Totto is founded. Its missions are upkeeping the home region spirit and enhancing the awariness of the home region.
The beginning of 1960s	A Lappish family, reindeer and Lapp traditional buildings are established in the Arctic Circle for tourism purposes. The amount of tourists visiting Rovaniemi increases steadily. They are mainly stop-over visitors travelling by car in Lapland or to the Arctic Ocean and Norway during the summer months.
1967	Based on the ideas of the journalist Niilo Tarvajärvi, Land of Christmas Ltd. is established. The purpose of this was to advance and build Christmas-themed attractions following the example of Disneyland.
The beginning of 1980s	First British charter tourists arrive to Rovaniemi due to collaboration between the national flight company Finnair and commercial British radio stations. First reindeer safaris for tourists organized by a local reindeer farmer. In these programmes the participants would aquire 'a reindeer driving licence'. Snowmobile safaris begin in Rovaniemi. Their popularity rose towards the end of the decade and in the 1990s.
1984	First Concorde flight from Britain to Rovaniemi.
1985	Santa Claus Village and Office are opened in the Arctic Circle.

	The city of Rovaniemi begins to use the Christmas destination image in its marketing.
1988	Opening of Santapark, the amusement park of Santa Claus. The designers were British and the end result was criticized for being 'plastic' and Disney-like by tourists and locals. Later, the park was altered towards more local Christmas traditions and activities.
The end of 1980s	Christmas tourism becomes its own tourism season. The tourists mainly consist of the British. Besides Santa Claus the marketing imagery of Rovaniemi is based on snowy landscape scenes of Lapland.
1992	The Arktikum Science Centre was opened to the public. The centre also houses the Regional Museum of Lapland. It is one of Rovaniemi's most popular attractions.
1995	Finland joins the European Union. The era of different development projects funded by the EU begins. Several tourism development projects and measures take place and continue until the present day.
2000s	The development of Christmas and winter tourism continues.
2010	Rovaniemi acquires EU Trademark 'The Official Home Town of Santa Claus'. Christmas as a tourism season strengthens continually. Majority of tourists are international.
The beginning of 2020s	Local Heritage Association Totto becomes active in developing heritage tourism in its Rovaniemi-based museum and the villages surrounding the city.
2023	During the Christmas and winter seasons, there are over thirty direct flight routes and hundreds of charter flights to Rovaniemi from over forty-five countries worldwide. Main tourist attractions are hunting for Northern Lights, snowmobile safaris, visiting Santa Claus and riding reindeer sleighs and dog sleds.

(Sources: Hakkarainen and Satokangas, 2022; Ilola et al., 2014; Komppula et al., 2009; Totto).

projects, including tourism development. Often the tool has been the collection of local stories and histories (e.g. Hakkarainen and Leskinen, 2001). For the locals, these have been meaningful activities that have increased their sense of identity. From the tourism perspective, however, the story collections have been more an act of gathering cultural history than tourism development and there is still a lot of work required to turn these stories into (commercialized) tourism products. From the tourism industry's perspective, the identification, recording and collection of local history and heritage can therefore be seen as the first step

in the development of tourism. In recent years, the role of the heritage of northern Ostrobothnia and the villages surrounding Rovaniemi city has gained more attention in the development of tourism. There are various ongoing village tourism projects and the Local Heritage Museum is actively developing its exhibition and activities.

Even though there have been a few urban-based stories from Lapland in popular culture outlets (for example the novels written by Finnish author Jari Tervo and the movie *Aurora*, which was released in 2019 and is situated in Rovaniemi city), for the most part these narratives of urban locality and city as a place of living have been left in the margins in Lappish stories. On that account, the ambivalence discussed here is located on one hand in the understanding of suburban cultural heritage (or lack thereof), but on the other hand also to tourism inclusion and the representations of tourism. There has been previous research concerning ambivalent heritage, but fairly little in terms of urban development and tourism. For instance, a plethora of research has been made in the field of indigenous cultures and colonialism (e.g. Chadha, 2006; Donaldson, 2018). However, ambivalent heritage can be found in places such as an undesirable neighbourhood, where the trauma might not be as explicit as in the scenes of colonial history or holocaust, for instance.

Donaldson (2018: 69) asks if affirming and supportive place-making can occur in uncomfortable or painful places. According to her, in the context of indigenous cultures, the basic idea is that heritage places are a solid source of self-determination and strength, but many of the places have been the stage for trauma and loss and, thus, the places can never be the same. Even so, they can provide a means for shared connection and culture. Chadha (2006: 348) notes that there are two relative terms in heritage research that have rounded the topic of heritage arising from historical conflict, contradiction or deep contestation. The terms are 'dissonant heritage' and 'negative heritage' (Chadha, 2006: 348). In the study of tourism, such phenomena, which attach to the above-mentioned dimensions of places and culture, are often tied to the concept of dark tourism (e.g. Martini and Buda, 2020).

In Lapland, the discussion on ambivalent cultural heritage is most often and predominantly reinforced by themes related to Saami heritage, the conflicting experiences related to military history and the extensive use of natural resources beginning from the reconstruction era after the Second World War. In Rovaniemi, local history related to the Lapland war can be seen as a reflection of ambivalent heritage and also of dark tourism (Koskinen-Koivisto, 2023). The inappropriate use of the Saami culture in tourism in Lapland remains a topical issue and creates

friction between the Saami people and the tourism industry (e.g. Saari et al., 2020). The devastation caused by the war in Lapland and the loss of entire towns, villages and livelihoods as a result of the construction of hydroelectric power stations resulted in multigenerational trauma among the people living in Lapland. These topics have mostly gone silent and only recently has public discussion and debate on them been possible.

The use of heritage in Lapland tourism has largely been fitted to fulfil the commercial purposes of the industry. Uncomfortable stories, such as the war history, have been mainly left out and, for example, the indigenous Saami heritage has in many cases been used as an element of mystification of the area – in the worst cases without any relation to the actual Saami heritage (e.g. Saari et al., 2020). More recently, the inclusion of northern Ostrobothnian culture as part of Lapland's tourism catalogue has already extended the use of heritage in tourism beyond the indigenous (Saami) and wilderness culture of Lapland. On the other hand, collections of local stories and histories produced in recent decades have contributed to the canonization of the experiences of Finnish agrarian society as normative Lappish heritage. The absence of representations of urban and contemporary everyday life is notable both in the representation of tradition and in the images of tourism. Recognizing and making local urban history visible would diversify the image of Lapland and highlight the elements that have been invisible and silent.

When looking at suburban neighbourhoods in light of tourism, a different type of ambivalence-generating dimension emerges from the perspectives of traditionally presented imageries of heritage in Lapland tourism. Suburban heritage challenges both the norm of heritage-used tourism in Lapland and the prevailing imagery of tourism in the Rovaniemi region. But the popularity and attention towards such marginally located and economically small-scale tourism environments and products that differ from the existing norm has been on the rise during recent years (Paiva, 2023; Palauskaite et al., 2017). Peripheral, urban places have gained the interest of tourists globally. However, research made on the phenomenon is still scarce. From the local point of view, understanding one's own everyday life as culture or cultural heritage is not an unambiguous matter and, as stated before, leveraging such phenomena to the field of tourism poses many ambivalences and even paradoxes. There are a manifold of ethical perspectives to be considered in such an enterprise. We will consider these later in this chapter, but first we will discuss the history of the suburban neighbourhoods in Finland and these areas as part of Finnish industrial and postindustrial heritage.

Development of suburban neighbourhoods in Finland

The development of Finnish suburban neighbourhoods began after the Second World War during societal ruptures. Finland turned from being an agricultural society to an industrial one and, consequently, in many regions this led to a lack of housing. This resulted in the building of suburbs: the apartment building dominated construction that began in the 1960s and 1970s and was typically located in rocky forests on the outskirts of cities. This form of urban planning and housing followed the European development currents, but in a Finnish way, with the strong idea of 'a forest suburb' (see Wallin, 2023: 1–3). The design ideology of the Finnish suburban neighbourhoods was initially based on the 'forest city ideal', in which the buildings were placed freely according to the shapes of the terrain. This was also the case in Rovaniemi, when Korkalovaara was built in the middle of the forest, the construction beginning in the late 1950s.

In general, a move to the suburbs meant increased standards of living, since many people had lived in older houses with poorer living conditions beforehand. Nevertheless, moving to urban places meant radical changes in the way of living for many (e.g. Kortteinen, 1982; Wallin and Rosendahl, 2017: 71–6; Aalto and Laaksonen, 2021: 13–20). As Rovaniemi was growing after the war, the town officials decided to start developing the outskirts of the town and build modern suburban constructs in the area, much as had been done in other Finnish towns and cities. The planning was led by a renowned Finnish functionalist architect, Alvar Aalto, who used the 'garden city' of Tapiola in Espoo, Finland, as a model for the area. Aalto developed an area plan consisting of three different residential entirities, but only one of the original three was realized. The Korkalovaara suburb continued to grow by less expensive means with concrete element buildings because of a lack of financing and demand (Lukkarinen, 1998).



Figure 2.1 View over Korkalovaara neighbourhood (Photo: Antti Pakkanen).

Currently, Korkalovaara is home to almost 6,000 Rovaniemi residents, and it is one of the most densely populated areas in the city. Despite its somewhat controversial reputation, Korkalovaara has remained a popular place for living since the housing is affordable and is close to daily services and nature.

Even though Aalto's plan was not fully realized in Rovaniemi, the suburban neighbourhoods nationally are a result of planning ideals from an era where they were seen as both a way of modern urban development and a solution for housing issues. In the beginning, these areas were mainly inhabited by working-class families with children. However, societal developments, such as the heavy recession of the 1990s, especially affected the working classes and thus unemployment and social problems increased heavily in the suburban neighbourhoods nationally (Wallin, 2023: 4). As a result, the discussions concerning them began to turn negative. Forest suburbs, which were once seen as idealistic places for living, were labelled as places with criminal and troubled behaviour. The territorial stigma was – and still is – maintained and reinforced by media and public discussions. It has to be noted, though, that the discussion concerning the suburbs has been polarized throughout history. This means that the residents often see them for the most part as good places to live, but from the outside they are seen as undesirable areas (e.g. Roivainen, 1999; Urban, 2011; Maïche, 2021). As Wallin (2023: 4) notes, such territorial stigmatization is also about symbolic power struggles on hierarchies between neighbourhoods and their residents.

In recent decades, the development paths of the Finnish suburbs have been rather negative. As said, the once modern, desirable and future-focused places have gradually been downgraded as areas where undesirable and poor social reputations and positions are present. This is leading to a slow erosion of the places since, along with their reputations, services have also decreased, which in turn has influenced the decline of the areas. In Korkalovaara too, this development has been tangible. In recent years, development in the area has stalled: services have eroded, and house prices are sluggish and rather low. Both public and private services have decreased. One of the culminating points of the downfall of the neighbourhood has been trouble with the local school, which has been one of the many schools in Finland that have been forced to shut down and move because of poor indoor air quality. At the time of writing this text, the school had been demolished for seven years, but a new one is expected to be opened in 2025 after a long process of activist lobbying, negotiation and planning between residents and city officials. Because of the current lack of services, many families have left the area. All these changes make the development streams concerning

alternatives to the local 'tourism norm' and whether such 'counterproductive' tourism production could provide positive impacts for the place and the people living there.

It is certain that suburban neighbourhoods and their heritage are usually not a part of the tourism offerings of cities. Not even if they reveal inspiring stories and noteworthy heritage. Our empirical context, the suburban neighbourhood of Korkalovaara in Rovaniemi, Finland, could be described as an urban periphery. In its material and socio-economical characteristics it differs from the city centre. But, in the city's policies, it has not been recognized as an area with its own identity. As residents, neighbourhood activists and tourism researchers we began to ponder if and how, through tourism activity, the stigma or the non-recognition of the neighbourhood, which Junnilainen (2020, also Wallin, 2023) discusses, could be tackled. How could the neighbourhood and its heritage be recognized, and could these narratives act towards de-stigmatization (Junnilainen, 2020: 46)? As tourism scholars Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018: 593) point out, one of the elements of inclusive tourism is facilitating self-representations by those who are marginalized or oppressed. This would, according to them, allow their stories to be told, and their culture to be represented in ways that are meaningful to them (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018: 593). However, 'business-as-usual' tourism shapes places in the city: it often accelerates gentrification and makes places similar and 'easy to consume' (see Paiva, 2023). Perhaps such 'non-interesting' places as suburban neighbourhoods allow us to consider tourism in terms of sustainability: could tourism be done somehow differently and what else could tourism be than what is 'the norm' in Rovaniemi today?

To advance these considerations, we applied and received funding for the 'Stories from Korkalovaara' project, which gathered stories and experiences, namely the intangible heritage, of the residents of the Korkalovaara neighbourhood. These were collected from various time periods and groups of people through different methods. The aim of the project was firstly to build an understanding of the meaning of the neighbourhood to current and former residents as well as part of Rovaniemi city in general. We also aimed to strengthen the community of Korkalovaara and possibly even the vitality of the place. The stories collected in the project were edited and placed on a digital platform (www.tarinoitakorkalovaarasta.fi). Based on the stories, we organized a small-scale event at the end of the project. The aim of this was to test how tourism or touristic practices could contribute to making untypical heritage visible and be a way of learning. The project was in action between 2020 and 2023. As it was

suburban neighbourhoods nationally visible in Korkalovaara as well (see Stjernberg, 2019). That is, from being a modern residential area of the future to becoming an almost undesirable place to live. At the national level, various development projects and interventions have been initiated to tackle the undesirable development and segregation of these neighbourhoods (e.g. Ympäristöministeriö, 2020).

From the outside, by institutions and persons of power, suburban neighbourhoods are often considered an example of failed planning (Wallin, 2023: 5). Such ideas, along with the territorial stigma attached to these places, construct neighbourhood identities that are hard to change (Wallin, 2023: 4–5). This kind of dissonant heritage is, according to Belli (2020: 87), partly a consequence of class dissonance and segregation. Even though the Korkalovaara neighbourhood is very small compared to the suburbs in large European cities, there are similarities in the dissonance and ambivalence in the stories of these areas. Junnilainen (2020: 45) argues that stigmatized low-income neighbourhoods can be seen not only in a negative light but also as historically and culturally diverse milieus. Junnilainen (2020: 46) points out that the residents who live in stigmatized areas feel belonging and attachment towards their neighbourhoods, which goes against general assumptions (see also Wallin, 2023). She argues that stigmatization as an everyday experience can take the form of non-recognition. Furthermore, based on her research findings, she suggests that neighbourhood-based narratives can serve as resources for collectively employed destigmatization strategies (Junnilainen, 2020: 46).

Stories of Korkalovaara: Collecting suburban heritage

As the two previous sections describe, there are many ambivalences in the relationship between tourism and suburban heritage in Rovaniemi and more widely in Lapland. We consider if these could be somewhat resolved and/or overcome through the academic thought and empirical practice of socially sustainable and inclusive tourism (Murphy, 1985; Scheyvens, 2007; Minnaert et al., 2011; Haanpää et al., 2018; Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018). By taking this stance, we align with the idea that local residents should have the power and possibility to define how tourism impacts the local operating environment (Dredge and Hales, 2012; Timothy, 2012; Höckert, 2015; Hakkarainen, 2017; Paiva, 2023). In other words, our aim as residents of the neighbourhood in question has been to explore if the locality and this untypical heritage could offer

established in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, it affected the project schedule and also the methods used.

The collection of stories happened through collaboration with the local school, organizing 'storyworkshops' with the local library and as personal interviews. Once the digital platform was published, there was also an opportunity to leave written stories on the internet. These methods of story collection were organized and informed to the public in different ways. To get the stories of children, we established a collaboration with the local school. One grade level, altogether about sixty children, and their teachers participated in a project-based learning module where we first carried out a walking tour with the group to the neighbourhood and told them historical stories about the place as well as factual information about the development of suburban neighbourhoods in Finland. Afterwards, the children worked with their teachers writing their own stories about the neighbourhood and also making board and digital games about the place.

Besides the school collaboration, we organized 'storyworkshops' together with the local library. The library is a very popular place among the residents, especially the senior citizens. The storyworkshops were organized in the style of group discussions. Besides the library advertising them, they were also advertised in the local newspaper. Some people contacted us and stated that they did not want to participate in a group gathering but would like to tell their stories. In the workshops some participants brought material, mainly photographs but also old newspaper articles, with them. These acted as starting points for memories and stories. The participants also added to each other's stories and discussed their memories; how everyone personally remembered certain events, places or happenings. The participants in the workshops were all middle-aged or older, and both workshops lasted about one hour.

Personal interviews were also carried out with three people. These took place in different locations and one of them was realized as a 'driving interview', where we went to see different places of significance by car with the interviewee. The interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to two hours. Afterwards, the interviews as well as the storyworkshops were transcribed verbatim. The stories produced by the school children were already in a written format. We then edited the stories from the material to create shorter versions to place them on the map in the digital platform. The different data resulted in more than 120 short stories and memories. These were from different decades ranging from the 1960s, when the neighbourhood was built, to the 2010s. Once the platform was published, some tens of stories were received through it and it is open for people to leave new entries.

The aim of the 'Stories from Korkalovaara' project was first to collect and gain recognition for the heritage of the suburban neighbourhood. Secondly, it was to consider if and how this could be done through touristic practices. At the end of the project, we organized a two-day neighbourhood event, which consisted of an event publishing the digital platform, walking tours based on the collected stories, art workshops on storying the place and a future oriented workshop of the neighbourhood. These were advertised mainly to the residents of Rovaniemi in the newspapers and different social media channels, but we also distributed advertisements to a few places popular with tourists in the Rovaniemi city centre, for example a local hostel. The event gathered altogether some sixty people, and the most popular events were the publishing of the platform and the walking tours. From the project's point of view, the meaning of the event was to test the means of touristic practices in representing the ambivalent heritage of the suburb. We next move on to discuss what kind of ambivalences were present during the different stages of the project, as well as how these were present in our own understanding of the purpose of the project.

Discussion: Tourism in the suburb?

The ambivalent relationship between suburban heritage and local tourism was very much present throughout the course of the project. We were continually asked by different people and media to explain what these two had in common. 'What is there to see?', was a common question. It was also suggested that we conduct tours based on well-known cultural figures who had lived in the neighbourhood. The stories of ordinary places and people were not thought of as interesting enough by some people. The collection of the stories also counted for a significant proportion of the project time, since these stories had not been seen as valuable before and they did not 'exist' publicly. Besides making an unseen place visible, our aim was namely to bring different histories and places into tourism discussion in Rovaniemi (see Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018: 590–2). When doing this, it became very clear to us that using such heritage as tourism content in Rovaniemi somehow questioned and contested the normative way of doing tourism, which is much based on a Western consumer society perspective (see e.g. Paiva, 2023). The value system of tourism development and what is considered worthy was very present. Tourism activity in Rovaniemi is not thought of as a phenomenon that can force change or counter the status

quo (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018: 590–2) but rather as an activity reinforcing them.

Nevertheless, while trying to conduct inclusive tourism practices among the research group, we were continually aware of and frequently discussed the possible ambivalence of our endeavours. The underlining thought of the project was, according to Junnilainen's (2020: 46) argument, to investigate whether neighbourhood-based narratives could serve as resources for de-stigmatization strategies. But, such inclusive practices in tourism development can be ambivalent, because they can in fact enhance the dynamics that they are trying to deconstruct. In other words, the practices intended to be inclusive can add to the sense of exclusiveness. Inclusionary practices, no matter how well-intended they might be, have ambivalence and paradoxes that need to be considered (see Adamson et al., 2021; Kangas-Müller et al., 2023: 5). In the context of inclusive tourism and suburban heritage, this can be seen in Scheyvens' and Biddulph's (2018: 599–600) description of the uncertainty concerning tourism programmes in 'undesirable or unwanted' neighbourhoods, which need to be conducted carefully in order not to commercialize poverty or exploit the marginalized areas in ways that do not benefit them. We did not experience such developments during the course of the project, probably because we were only testing the touristic practices on a small scale. However, if these were to be commercial products sold for wider audiences, these dynamics would have to be considered more carefully.

By organizing the walking tours, besides the alternative narratives, we aimed to test if 'the map of tourism could be reshaped' by organizing touristic activities in an urban periphery (see Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018: 590). As Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018: 590–2) argue, such tourism activity can act on the one hand as a force of change by addressing inequalities and segregation of different places and groups of people, and on the other hand by challenging stereotypes and conventional interpretations of history. Indeed, the walking tours were a powerful method in the project (we also organized a few of them outside the project actions) to raise awareness and share information on the unconventional heritage of the suburban neighbourhood (see Haanpää et al., 2022). In the touristic practice of walking, people's senses become heightened, and they observe their surroundings more carefully (Österlund-Pötzsch, 2010). As Carú and Cova (2003) argue, engaging with the flows of everyday life by walking provides premises for experiences. However, the form of an organized walking tour is also a way of representing the place where it is held.

A touristic walking tour can be understood as a form of storytelling that is a poetic and political practice (Lund, 2008; see also Aoki and Yoshimitzu, 2015:



Figure 2.2 Walking tour participants in front of the neighbourhood mall (Photo: Antti Pakkanen).

276). The narration of the tour gives meaning and value to places encountered and shapes the participants' understanding of them. As such, we had to carefully consider our ways of telling the stories of the neighbourhood. However, the tours often created a certain atmosphere between us guides and the participants, where different stories were mutually shared. It was not just the 'official' story told by us guides, but also the participants engaged in storytelling. Often, local, random by-passers participated in the storytelling too. They were first interested in what was going on as a group of people on a touristic walk is not a typical sight in the neighbourhood. Once they were told what we were doing, many were suspicious of our purposes but still wanted to share their own stories. It has to be noted though that, even if the by-passers were curious about our doings, their attitude might change if such an activity happened every day in the neighbourhood.

We also had to consider the question of representation (e.g. Alvarado-Sizzo, 2023). This manifested in both collecting the stories and publishing them in digital form but also (re-)telling them on the walking tours. The project resources affected our possibilities to collect stories and this influenced the people who participated in the study. Also, the ways the data was collected somewhat reinforced the fact that more people with middle-class backgrounds shared their stories (see e.g. Luhtakallio and Mustranta, 2017). This naturally shaped the way the heritage of the neighbourhood is presented: it is certain stories that are told, and others go

unheard. The publication of the stories on the digital platform added ‘another layer’ to the question of representation, since the original transcriptions were edited by us, the researchers. This was a research ethical question of anonymity, but the chosen way of presenting the stories collected on a map forced us to leave out some stories if the place on the map connected with the story would be too recognizable. We were also forced to edit and shorten some stories quite radically for them to fit the chosen form. Through the platform we also received stories that were ambivalent in their content: they described drug use and other social problems in detail. As we did not want to reinforce territorial stigma, we were forced to contemplate how to edit and publish these stories. We tried to navigate these difficulties by discussing the decisions together with the research group (the authors of this chapter) and being self-reflexive towards our choices.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed viewpoints on ambivalent heritage and tourism in the Korkalovaara neighbourhood in the city of Rovaniemi, a popular tourist destination in Finnish Lapland. Korkalovaara is not typically mentioned as part of the tourism map of Rovaniemi. On the contrary, it has been seen as an unwanted neighbourhood, much like other similar suburban neighbourhoods in Finland and other parts of Europe.

First, we have argued that the heritage in places such as the Korkalovaara suburban neighbourhood is a valuable resource, but also has an ambivalent component. This ambivalence is rooted in the experiences of the locals and in the past developments in the neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods are seen on one hand as a good place to live and places of living heritage by the residents, but, on the other hand, they are seen – mostly from the outside – as undesired or unwanted places, with persistent stigma attached to them and the residents. In a forest suburb, the closeness of nature and possibilities to enjoy outdoor activities are present, which can be seen as valuable resources. However, this kind of geographical position also means that the suburban neighbourhoods are usually located on the city outskirts, which creates a space for social segregation. Thus, the suburban neighbourhoods can be seen as places of contradictions and dichotomies.

The ambivalence of the place and its heritage is also rooted in the means and meanings of tourism development, which might be exclusive in nature or enhance the sense of exclusion for those they are trying to include. Tourism in Rovaniemi is mainly developed on the basis of winter tourism and Santa Claus.

Although tourism development has been successful in Rovaniemi and the economic impacts are significant, the role of locals and local heritage, especially that of the suburban neighbourhoods, has been in the margins. Consequently, the contrast between wanted and unwanted places grows when the undesirable neighbourhoods are discussed in the tourism context. In the project, we tested tourism practices that are based on the unseen, and as such ambivalent, heritage of the suburb. These were rather moderate compared to the amplitude of tourism activity in Rovaniemi. However, several walking tours were created and executed during the years. These proved to be of interest, at least for certain audiences. Additionally, from the comments of the participants we could interpret that the tours were important for them, either because of learning about the neighbourhood and its history and/or because of sharing their own experiences.

Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018: 601) argue that, along with the economic benefits, the social benefits of tourism are important, even though they do not receive as much attention as the economic ones. According to them, inclusive tourism has the potential to result in enhanced unity in rural and urban locations and a more pleasant place to live (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018: 601). However, it is important to consider how tourism is developed in these places: for whom and on whose terms. Not all will want to be part of tourism or see the neighbourhood as a touristic place, which makes the issue complicated. Accordingly, it can be argued that this kind of tourism is not for the masses, since the value aimed for is rather more social than economic. It may be more relevant for individual travellers or small groups. The experience is then based on the local life as it is, storytelling and nostalgia. Small-scale touristic activities, such as walking tours, have gained attention, and participants in Korkalovaara have shown interest in telling or sharing stories from their past. It seems though, that while the residents or former residents are willing to participate and tell stories, it has to happen on their own terms. Tourism has the potential to create social value in suburban neighbourhoods, but there are many aspects to consider in its development that can only be resolved through careful listening and local solutions.

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