How can place attachment inform the decision to stay?  
Walking interviews with residents in a struggling Swedish rural municipality
Abstract

This thesis provides in-depth understanding of five residents’ place-relation to a Swedish rural municipality in decline and how this relation can affect their decision of living in the municipality. The participants relation to place is mainly explored and explained through the concept *place attachment* and partly *sense of place*. As a quite experimental method, the study used walking interviews to see if it can contribute to new ways of exploring place attachment. To analyse the material the study is guided by the tripartite model of place attachment (PPP-model), developed by Scannell & Gifford (2010).

The decision to live in the municipality are shown to be based on a diversity of place attachments, where ancestral/family rootedness, everyday rootedness, a pragmatic place attachment, and an ambivalent place attachment can be observed. Furthermore, one can conclude that the participants relation to the place is highly complex and involves a set of emotions. The result also showed that a reflexive sense of place, infused with feelings of melancholy and hopelessness plays a part in shaping the participants relations with place. This confirm the notion from previous research (Manzo 2003) that place attachment also exists in a larger socio-political context and cannot solely be understood as de-politicized personal experience.

Furthermore, the use of walking interviews gave the result that a complex individual set up of many places and spaces of attachments could be observed. The walk also revealed the importance of how pre-cognitive affective sensations plays a part in persons relation to the physical and material place. This suggests that pre-cognitive affect might be fruitful to be considered more fully in further place attachment research.
A thank you,

Thanks to all the people that I met on the way and that was willing to discuss my ideas and encourage me. Special thanks to Eva Gustavsson, my supervisor in human geography, an excellent discussion partner that gave nourish to my mind, thank you for your support. I also want to give a warm thank you to my dear friend Terese who grew up in one of the small villages in the area of study. She helped me get in contact with potential participants by using her social network, and also so kind-heartedly let me use her house whenever I needed a place to stay when performing interviews, or just wanted to escape the city.

I must admit that me myself have developed a place attachment to Ljusnarsberg and some specific places there. Put in a therorethical perspective my own place attachment is based on intensity of experiences there, positive affect, having a lot of knowledge about the place and having developed social relations. So, thank you Ljusnarsberg for offering me a new place relation.

Lastly, this thesis is devoted to all of you who brought me along for a walk, I will always carry with me the stories that you so generously shared with me.

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1. Introduction

“There is no place without self... … and no self without place”, says the geographical philosopher Edward S. Casey (2001 p. 684) and outlines a perspective of human being as being deeply embedded in place. It is a critical remark against modernist ideas that hold `self` separated from body and place. There is a myriad of research about the phenomenon of individuals developing emotional ties to place. Some even say that this emotional tie to place is an essential human condition. Maybe you have experienced that a place can feel like a part of you? That this place feels special to you in some way? Maybe that this place is important for who you are and your identity? It can be experienced as a longing for the place when you are away, a longing for the life you get to live in that specific place, for the people who are there, for the opportunities the nature can give, or for how especially beautiful the light is an early morning in that specific place.

In this thesis the place of study is the rural municipality Ljusnarsberg in the middle of Sweden, a municipality that in many ways have and are experiencing decline. Being an area that used to be dependent on mining industry, the global economic spatial shift around 1970’s meant the loss of a lot of workplaces and many people moved away. Since then, the municipality has had a decrease in its population, from around 10 000 residents during the 1960’s to below 5 000 today (Ljusnarsberg 2017, SCB 2018). Still many people choose to live there. In migration studies staying has to a wide extent been handled as a non-decision but recent studies show that staying is as much an active choice as moving away (Clark 2017, Morse and Mudgett 2018). So, what happens if we instead of looking at why people move, instead ask the question of why people stay or come back?

To understand how the human - place relation looks like in a stagnating municipality is especially interesting in the light of the dualistic contemporary stories about the rural. On the one hand you have the rural idyll where a traditional way of life where humans live close to nature and have strong social networks gets romanticized. On the other hand, you have the story of the rural place that are fighting to survive the dismantling of service and the bad reputation of the rural resident as being low-educated, xenophobic and unemployed.

However, those things are in many ways a fact for Ljusnarsberg. The municipality have very high numbers of unemployment, many residents have low levels of education and low-income (Ljusnarsberg, 2017) and the region is also known for being a headquarter for right-wing...
extremists like NMR (the Nordic resistance movement) which is a neo-nazi movement in Nordic countries. Moreover, one of the municipalities’ electorate scored Sweden’s highest level of citizens voting for Sweden’s far right-wing party; the Swedish democrats (44,5%) in the latest national election 2018 (Valmyndigheten 2018). Contrasting to this, the municipality was also the one that took care of the most refugees per capita during 2015 (SVT, 2015). If we look at the other side of the coin; the municipality is located in the area Bergslagen, an area that share a past industrial history of mainly mining activities and now a days is known as the beautiful and a bit mysterious Bergslagen where you can have spectacular nature experiences. Taking in account both these views of the area, it does paint a somewhat complex picture of the municipality, being both quite depressing but also romantic.

Given this picture; what does the relation to the place look like for those individuals who grew up and today live in the municipality? How can an attachment to place inform their decision of staying?
Purpose statement

As the rural municipality Ljusnarsberg in Sweden, like many other rural municipalities in the country, in many ways are a struggling community that has gained a socio-political and geographical peripheral position¹ and becoming an unpopular place to live in (considering the population drop), it is interesting to know what makes people decide to stay and not move.

The aim of this study is therefore to investigate and gain deeper knowledge about how individuals that grew up and resides in this municipality relate to their place of living and if/how an attachment to place affect their decision to live here. Seeing that a relation to place is formed through everyday life the study is focused on how the relation is shaped, expressed and practiced through ordinary, social, embodied, affective and material experiences and practices of everyday life. To come closer to this everyday experience of place, as both a social and material/physical place, the study is performed through walking interviews with selected participants. This method is a bit experimental and is tried out to see if it can bring another dimension to common research-practices of place attachment.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

How can the participants relation to this place be described through the concept of place attachment?

How can place attachment affect their decision to live here?

Is there anything in the participants relation to this socio-political peripheral place that they have in common?

And can, and if so how, a method of walking interviews contribute with deeper understanding of place attachment?

¹ Ljusnarsberg municipality is regarded as a peripheral located rural municipality by the Swedish agency of economic growth analysis (Tillväxtanalys 2015). The latest classification by Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, categories Ljusnarsberg as a commuting municipality close to smaller town (SKL 2016). Defining what is rural is then a question of how and what you measure, but it is often defined by population size and density (Möller 2016). Having an international perspective on the thesis, defining what is rural gets even more complicated, for example OECD define rural as an area with fewer than 150 inhabitants per square kilometre (Glesbygdsverket 2008). If using this definition Ljusnarsberg then becomes an extremely rural area because the municipality has less than 9 inhabitants per square kilometre (SCB 2018), to define rural than becomes somewhat irrelevant for this study. In this thesis Ljusnarsberg is handled as a rural municipality based on what it is not -it is not a city municipality or a central municipality. Rural is understood in a wide sense to be able to find and contrast the thesis to research done in similar environments. For further discussion of rurality see p. 13.
Chapter 2 starts out with providing a brief introduction to place-research and discuss how place can be understood. Thereafter, we will take a closer look at the concept place attachment. It will be followed by discussions and theoretical considerations of what geographical level place attachment can be understood from, the social and physical place, how mobility and migration affects place attachment and then there is a critical discussion of the concept “rural”. Chapter 3 is devoted to the summarization of a systematically done overview that looks at studies of place attachment and sense of place specifically done in rural settings.

Chapter 4 deals with methodological considerations and explains how the study has been carried out, who participated in the study and how they were selected. Walking interviews as a method is are thereafter presented and discussed. It is followed by ethical considerations taken in to account and a discussion of power dynamics between the participants and the researcher. Chapter 5 provides a description of the main analytical framework used; the PPP-model, and it is followed by a summary of how the main analytical concepts are defined.

Chapter 7 begins with a travel report of my excursion to Ljusnarsberg and is followed by a descriptive and analytical presentation of the empirical material collected from walking interviews, presented in a narrative style. Thereafter follows findings that were in common for all and in the end, we visit the material through the questions from the PPP-model. The last chapters, 7 and 8 are devoted to clarification of the results and a discussion of how this result can be understood theoretically and from a societal perspective, shortcomings and theoretical limitations, how it can contribute to the research of place attachment and how the results relate to previous research.
2. On place-research – a theoretical overview

Before proceeding on to explain the concept of place attachment there is a need to give some perspective on place-research - which the place attachment concept is a part of.

The concept of place is studied in a variety of disciplines like sociology, psychology, geography and human geography, architecture and in subfields or interdisciplinary fields like environmental psychology, planning, natural resource management and more. Most researchers in this broad and diverse field of place-research seem to agree that there are little or no consensus about how to use and understand the concepts of place. Patterson and Williams (2005) say in their well-cited paper about place-research that if one considers theories on how theories usually evolve, theories of place should have had come further and be more developed at this point.

Subsequently, research on place is a bit hard to grasp and understand as a whole because of the varied approaches, theories and methodologies used when studying place. It has been a challenge to wrap my head around this field, but I will give it my best to provide you with a clarifying overview of the field. Patterson and Williams (2005) means that this messiness in place-research is an effect of different scientific paradigms. The biggest conflict is between those who propose for a phenomenological approach and those who advocates for a psychometric one, or in other words a qualitative or a quantitative approach (Trentelmann 2009). Some see this shattered understanding as problematic (e.g Lewicka 2011, Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001) while others note that this messiness might not be a problem, they instead exclaim that we should embrace the diversity of place-research (e.g. Patterson & Williams 2005, Trentelmann 2009).

This diverse understanding and different ways of using place-concepts imply that every writer must be clear and distinct with how they intend to use the concepts. In other words, one study of place attachment can’t be certain to have the same understanding of place-attachment as another study. Which also means the same clarity of how I use the concept are expected of me (and will be explained) in this paper. I believe there is a strength that the field of place research is a highly interdisciplinary field, where sociologist, geographers, psychologists, anthropologists all borrow from each other, so the research visited in this thesis will be from a mix of fields.
What is place and why does place matter?

In the following section, I will explain different ways of understanding place and with the help of more-than representational theory I will explain how place is understood in this thesis. There are two main approaches for how to understand place. There is the classic way, established by humanistic geographers in the 1970’s and mainly represented by Edward Relph and Yi-Fu Tuan (Lewicka 2011) Their understanding of place has a direct phenomenological origin. Tuan explains how places are experienced by humans through their senses, and through conscious thought places are part of constructing the individual’s reality. He takes the position that place is something more than merely a location, a place has been given meaning by people and is distinct from space, which is abstract room that represents the ability of movement and freedom. Space is therefore abstract until experienced and known - that’s when space become meaningful places (Tuan 1977). This view is very subjectivist view, in other words; objects (such as space) only exist if there is a subject to be made conscious about it and to me this represents a highly anthropocentric worldview.

The other view is represented by Doreen Massey, who instead explains space and place through relations. While Tuan (1977, p.179) looks at places as essentially static, Massey focus on spatial patterns of interactions and communication and are looking at places as processes and as relational. She criticizes the idea of places as having unique identities worth protecting because she sees that this idea is based on the illusion that places have boundaries, something she means results in territorial thinking and reactionary ideas. She instead sees places as connected with other places and argues that a sense of place does not solely come from within the place but from relating the place with other places, which she explains as an extroverted sense of place or a global sense of place (Massey 1991). Many more engage in Masseys way of understanding sense of place also as reflexive (e.g Degnén 2016, Farrugia David et.al 2014). From Massey we will especially carry with us her notion of place not only understood from within but also understood in a reflexive manner.

In research of place attachment, most refer to the phenomenological understanding of place and space as represented by Tuan and Relph. Massey belong more to a relational turn in geography mainly represented by Nigel Thrift and Non-representational theory. While still having a philosophical heritage in phenomenology as the research is interested in the everyday life of being, infused by Heideggers notion of human ‘dwelling’ as an unconscious state of being in the world (Heidegger 1971), non-representational research strives to move
beyond meanings, language, discourses and symbols. Hayden Lorimer sums up the approach perfectly:

“The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation.” (Lorimer 2005, p. 84)

She presents a suggestion that instead of doing research under the name of Non-representational theory, instead use the term ‘more-than-representational’. The difference here is that more than representational research still endeavours with the representational but also moves beyond it (Lorimer 2005). This is the way I tend to this approach, as still seeing representations as existing, but that there is more beyond or behind that also is important. Places are thus meaningful not only when individuals ascribe meaning to them (like the place-view represented by Tuan), humans are instead seen as intertwined in relations with place and the material everydayness of life. In this way I avoid an anthropocentric perspective on place.

Why the concept place attachment?

As mentioned earlier, the main concept in this thesis is the concept *place attachment* and as you might have understood at this point – place research is a wide and diverse field blessed with an array of different concepts. The messiness in place research can be seen in how closely related concepts like place attachment, sense of place, place-identity, place belonging, geographies of belonging, community-attachment, community sentiment and place-dependence or topophilia are often used and referred to almost as the same thing. For example, it is quite common to refer to either “the sense of place-literature or the “place-attachment-literature while still talking about the same set of research (e.g. Burholt 2012, Sampson & Goodrich 2009).

One important aspect is that the study should be easily comprehensible even for those not familiar with place-research. As the study has the focus on why people *not* move, place attachment as a concept is a very straight forward word that you don’t need much pre-knowledge to understand what it is all about. This is of course from a very shallow point of view, as we shall see when exploring the concept deeper - more dimensions and complexities will be revealed. Sense of place as more commonly used in human geography have a wider
Trentelmann (2009) argues that sense of place is more inclusive while place attachment comes with a connotation of a positive emotional relationship to place. I cannot agree with this but instead apprehend attachment as something that also can include a complex set of emotions that does not solely need to be positive feelings. (Think for example of how places of tragic events can become very powerful and meaningful places for those who are grieving the victims of the event). Nevertheless, the concepts are related and even sometimes used interchangeably. Hummon explains sense of place like this “Whatever the balance of emotive and cognitive components, sense of place involves a personal orientation toward place, in which one’s understandings of place and one’s feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meanings” (1992 p. 262) He uses sense of place as a concept that captures individuals apprehension of what the place is and combines this with the concept ‘community sentiment’ which is similar to place attachment but more oriented to community than to place. However, his way of using sense of place as individuals understanding of what the place is, is useful. It can fruitfully be applied to understand individuals apprehension of what the place is to compliment the understanding of their emotional relation to place and it is in this way the concept is used in this study.

Definitions of place attachment

To quote David Seamon (2013) place attachment can be defined as “the emotional bonds between people and a particular place or environment” This is a broad and basic definition. Other emphasize more on place attachment as including a strive to keep the object of attachment close. Burholt for example describe place attachment as the “glue” that connects people to places (2012, pp. 2901). Hidalgo and Hernandez argue that the most characteristic of the concept of attachment is the “desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment” (2001 p.274) and therefore likewise emphasize the physical closeness to place. More recent studies have instead looked at mobility and place attachment and suggests an “elastic place attachment” (Barcus. H.R & Brunn, S.D 2010), which might be a more contemporary suitable approach to the concept and which have some similarities with Massey’s concept a ‘reflexive sense of place’. It is also quite common that place is handled as synonymous to community and place attachment are defined as the feeling of belonging to the community, the physical place is then handled only as a container for social events (e.g Burholt 2012).
In her overview of place attachment research, Trentelman (2009) notes that place attachment and sense of place are used as overarching concepts and that ‘place identity’ and place ‘dependency’ is used as dimensions of place attachment or sense of place (e.g Williams & Vaske 2003). This two-dimensional model is often used in environmental psychology whereas place identity refers to how much the individual identify with the place as a part of one’s self. Place dependency refers to a feeling that ‘this is the best place for me’, sometimes focusing mostly on how the physical environment supports the individual in the things that are important for they to practice (Trentelman 2009). In this thesis place identity and place dependency is seen as parts in the individuals overall place attachment and relation to place but they are not understood as solemn dimensions that together determine a level of place attachment like in many psychometric studies.

Robert Gifford and Leila Scannell (2010) have developed what they call a tripartite place attachment framework which structures the place attachment research (mainly from environmental psychology) in three blocks that together answers the questions of: Who is attached, to What and How? A modified model of this framework is the analytical framework that is going to be used in this thesis. A more thorough understanding and description of the PPP-model and the modified version is to be found in chapter 5.

Hummon (1992) developed a useful typology of sense of place and attachment. As described earlier he couples sense of place with community attachment, and what he is describing is very similar to place attachment. What is different and valuable with his typology is that it also involves unattached people, which allows for a more complex understanding of people-place (community emphasized) relation. He identifies that there is Ideological rootedness and everyday rootedness, both encompass a state of being deeply embedded in place (community) the difference between them is the degree of the individual’s consciousness of this rootedness. Everyday rootedness means little consciousness, the place is merely taken for granted and is very similar to the state of dwelling. The ideological rootedness involves an awareness, satisfaction and commitment to this community. Then there are three more or less “unattached” types: Place relativity – where one identifies with place but are somewhat unattached - can commit to many places, Uncommitted placelessness – there is no need at all to develop emotional ties to any place, and lastly: Place alienation- where one is completely unattached and dislikes the place. This typology is used as an inspiration for how to understand the concept rootedness as describing this everyday unconsciousness state of being in place, but rootedness will sometimes also be coupled with a traditional understanding of
roots as having family or ancestors in the place and are then defined as *ancestral rootedness* or *family rootedness* (see for example Hay’s (1998) way of using rootedness). The unattached types serves as an inspiration for how to identify more complex place attachments that are not solemnly positive which makes for a richer description and understanding of individuals place relations.

**Geographical level of attachment**

A crucial question to consider is at what geographical level of place we are studying attachment. This paper is joining the extensive work on place research where place is understood from a phenomenological perspective. This means that for an emotional bond to occur to place, it is seen to be derived from a direct phenomenological experience of place, one could say - a lived and embodied experience by an individual (Lewicka 2011). This in turn limits the area of what can be considered to be the residents *place* in place attachment because the place has to be used and lived. To give an example, a region or a nation is just simply too big to be directly experienced by people. This does not exclude those levels to be of importance, they can still be of symbolic importance (Tuan 1977).

Place attachment has been most commonly researched at the level of neighbourhood, as how individuals are attached to their neighbourhood. When Hidalgo and Hernandez conducted a study that tests attachment to different levels (home, neighbourhood, and city) it shows that most individuals feel more connected to home and city, than to neighbourhood. In another study in Sweden, Westin came to the conclusion that people are more attached to the neighbourhood than to larger geographical levels, namely the municipality or a city-region. The attachment to the different levels were measured by letting the participants estimate how much they felt at home in different places (Westin 2016, 734). Westin are not investigating the level of home, as in home = the house where you live, whereas her result that people are more attached to the level of neighbourhood can be caused by this, contrasting it to Hidalgo and Hernandez result where neighbourhood is the least attached level. The latter also use “I would be sad to leave X” as a measure of place attachment, versus Westins used “I feel at home in X” which also can contribute to the diverse result. This is a perfect example of the messiness in human-place relation literature and points to the importance to clarify how the concepts are used and understood.

Seamon (1979) defines ‘at-homeness’ as ‘the usually unnoticed, taken for-granted situation of being comfortable in, and familiar with, the everyday world in which one lives, and outside of
which one is visiting’ (p. 70) As this, being at home is a state of being in a place which feels familiar. This comes from the early phenomenologist, like Heidegger. Tuan have a very romanticised view of home as a place of rest, comfort and security (1976). Many have questioned the connotation between home and house, they are critical of the taken for granted idea that home is a safe place (Manzo 2003). In this study, I am looking at the place as a residential place, as the place where these individuals live. Home, is more about the state of being at home, and I leave this open for the participant to define where they feel at home.

The social vs the physical – two parts of a whole

Research on place attachment has been more interested in the social dimension of place attachment then in the physical dimension (Lewicka 2011, Trentelmann 2009, Hidalgo & Hernandez 2001). Lewicka (2011) correlates this to the fact that place-attachment has been widely used in community studies (under the name of community-attachment) which are more interested in the social than the physical, seeing the physical place mainly as the room of social interaction. There is a widespread discussion in place-literature regarding which dimension is the more important. Trentelmann (2009) explains that scholars that are taking a harsh social constructionistic perspective on place argues that the social matters the most because our understanding of the physical are socially constructed. This can be traced back to the common understanding of place as a meaningful location, and other places as abstract space (Tuan 1977, Lewicka 2011, Relph 1976, Low and Altman 1992). I would instead argue that if you move away from the view of place becoming place only when ascribed with meaning, then the discussion about what is more important, the social or the physical, will become redundant and place can be understood more holistically.

Mobility and migration

If we go back to the introduction where Casey is quoted, he argues against the idea that places matters less because of modernization where a more global and mobile lifestyle is expected. By some place scholars a high mobility is regarded as a threat to place attachment, especially if you consider place attachment as a fundamental human condition. Won’t human existence become disrupted if we no longer stay in place a longer time for us to develop place attachment? Place attachment and mobility has accordingly been regarded as two incompatible phenomena (Hay 1998, Relph 1976) But, what Casey (2001) argues is that no matter what, places still matters. Gustafson (2001) got engaged in the task to explore the relation between place attachment and mobility and concluded that mobility not necessarily contradict the development and existence of place attachment. Rather, the individuals in the
study considered place attachment and mobility in different ways, some did experience them as contradictory, while others tried to find a balance between them and some found them complimentary. Barcus and Brunn (2010) argues along these lines and notes that someone with a mobile lifestyle might have more place attachments than someone that is less mobile, in other words; the mobile individuals might be attached to more places. They propose for an elastic place attachment which they suggest as a concept to describe how individuals can maintain close engagement with place by the help of communication and transportation technologies. In this way place-relations is seen as elastic and place attachment denoted from the characteristic of involving physical closeness to place.

Clark et. al found in their study of residents in Granada in Spain that when studying decisions of staying it is important to note how mobility is played out at different levels and they conclude that the concept of staying has to be re-thinked. For example, can one say that you are leaving or staying if you move to a neighbouring neighbourhood? What if someone been away for a year during the life-span of 65? Are you then a returnee or a stayer? This makes the concept of staying quite complex and demands specific definitions of how to use it.

From this section it is important to carry along that place attachment and mobility is not necessarily contradictory and that place attachments can be entertained and practiced as elastic with the help of technology. We’ve also problematized the notion of staying and how mobility can be played out at different geographical levels.

Can we really talk about the “rural”?

This thesis has its focus on the rural municipality of Ljusnarsberg and we have already briefly explored the notion of rural and the problems it brings in question of how to define what is rural. In this section rural will be further elaborated and problematized.

Since the modernization and industrialization processes which started the urbanization and what sometimes is referred to as the emptying of the countryside, the rural has been seen as the backwater place, the not modern, the conservative, and the peripheral and marginalized areas of society as a contrast to the urban modern way of life. This dichotomizing of the rural and the urban has been contested, especially since the rural no longer can be solely defined through that the residents are employed in the agricultural sector (Forsberg 2001), and because increased mobility defuses the differences between urban and rural life (Möller 2016). Some scholars suggest that rurality instead must be seen as a concept that is culturally and socially constructed. This turn the focus of the rural towards it’s socio-political
implications on life and recent research has turned it’s interested towards the embodied experience of living in rural areas (Forsberg 2001).

Forsberg compares the development of rural studies with gender studies, and points to the recent poststructuralist focus in both to deconstruct dichotomies and show that the notion of rural versus urban or men versus women is in reality non-existent but a social construct. However, Forsberg notes the difficulties with this approach; rural areas still have problems that are typical for many rural areas, many are struggling to survive, having a peripheral position in society, experiencing depopulation, and clarifies her point by pointing to the similarities that women still have a subordinate position in society. So how does research deal with these inequalities without preserving the dichotomies? Peter Möller (2016) argues along these lines and notes that rural areas still share certain features that is distinct from urban areas, whereas rural, as an empirical category of investigation becomes functional and justified. Ljusnarsberg municipality is one of those struggling rural areas that are experiencing decline. If this comes from being rural, or more likely from its history of being a mining community and effects of globalization and geo-political implications is of less concern in this thesis. What matters is the situation and how this socio-political position effects the resident’s relation to place.
3. Sense of place and place attachment for rural residents - an empirical overview

To explicitly address what is known about the relations to place for residents living in rural areas a systematic research review has been conducted. A systematic review is defined by Jesson et. al as: “...as a review with a clear stated purpose, a question, a defined search approach, stating inclusion and exclusion criteria, producing a qualitative appraisal of articles.” Here I investigated how the concepts of place attachments and sense of place have been used in previous research to explain rural residents’ relation to their residential place. In this section a synthesis of the results of six studies will be presented, exactly how these six articles where selected in a systematic manner is explained in appendix 3.

There are not so much research dealing with this exact point of view of place attachment/sense of place in rural areas. A lot of research focus on the elderly population living in rural areas (Degnén 2016, Burholt 2012), specially how place attachment can be disrupted when forced to move from home when coming to age and in need of elderly care (Burholt 2012)

Several studies emphasize on the social sphere, often the community, as equally or more important for shaping sense of place and place attachment as is the individual experience. Sampson and Goodrich (2009) argues that the community is the social sphere between the individual and place and that this is where meanings about place becomes articulated. Degnén (2016) sees that these meanings ascribed to place are created through talking and remembering place-specific events with others, but, an important distinction is that this study is focused on elderly people, so looking back might be distinct for this group.

Hay (1998) argues in the same line and concludes that sense of place always is individually based, but group-informed. He found that there are cultural differences in sense of place and that family ties and ancestral belonging was important for developing a rooted sense of place. He argues that sense of place always must be coupled with rootedness for society to be able to develop sustainable communities. Morse and Mudgett (2018) like-wise found that family-ties

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2 I excluded research that focused on too small subgroups of rural populations but included studies focused on elderly or young people. I regarded these groups as sufficiently big enough to be part of the overview.
are the main reason for why contented residents who grew up in the rural area of Vermont stay. They also found that appreciation of rural place-based attributes was a main reason why people stay. This is supported by Farrugia et. al (2016) who show that the physical attributes of the rural is important, both the opportunities the physical provides the residents with, for example the sensation of having space which give a sense of freedom.

Burholt (2012) also study place attachment among older rural residents, she develops a four-dimensional framework for place attachment that aims to measure place attachment. The dimensions are the Social, Appropriateness of resources and the environment, and Aesthetic appreciation of the environment. The fourth dimension, the Historical and temporal has yet to be developed.

When conducting a study on young people living in rural Australia, Farrugia et.al (2014) came to the conclusion that participants sense of place is a highly reflexive one, contrasting their place to the city, they explain this as an extroverted sense of place which the researchers means stems from geographical inequalities of living in the countryside. In common for many studies is that the rural is often coupled with some type of disadvantage and being exposed to some form of threat, often in the form of modernization, globalisation and neo-liberalisation (Hay 1998, Sampson & Goodrich 2009, Farrugia, Smyth & Harrison 2014, Degnén 2016, Burholt 2012) In the study of Sampson & Goodrich (2009) the results show that personal identification with place through sense of place/place attachment is a stronger residential location factor than are occupational identity, which means that when residents are faced with a loss of industry they prefer to get a new occupation instead of moving to be able to continue with their former job. Something that is supported by the findings of Morse & Mudgett (2018).
4. Methodology

This chapter deals with methodological concerns, clarifies ontological assumptions and positions this thesis among other place-literature. It will be followed by motivations and explanations of the method of walking interviews and discussions of how it can contribute to the study of place attachment and what the limitations are. Thereafter follows a thorough description and discussion of how the participants were selected, how the walk was carried out and what ethical considerations has been made. Lastly, an explanation of how the analysis is done is provided.

Moving beyond representations and meaning

The concept of place attachment rest on a solid ground that spaces are potential places of meaning and it is to meaningful places that individuals create emotional bonds to. Nevertheless, my intention is to look beyond these meanings, seeing that human existence is not solely defined by subjective and social constructions of meanings. As explained earlier, I therefore bring in a perspective of More-than-representational theory. Muller explains this approach in 5 points which emphasis practice as the basic unit of analysis, that the world is always in the making – not static, the importance of affect as a pre-cognitive, pre-conscious and irrational driver of practice, that the world is more than human – human experience is embedded in material and non-human assemblages, and lastly, he notes that more-than representational research is experimental and trying to find other ways to presencing and present the material (Muller 2014 pp.3-4).

This frame of reference serves as an inspiration and is combined with both the phenomenological understanding of place attachment and the use of a framework of analysis developed by environmental psychologists (see p.23-24.) Alvesson and Sköldberg note in their book Reflexive methodologies (2009, p. 27) that combinations of different theories and frames of references is a way to spark creativity and think in new ways. In other words, this thesis combination of a humanistic geographic and phenomenological understanding of place, extended and developed with the help of more-than representational theory and combined with environmental psychology might open up for new and creative ways of understanding place attachment.

As mentioned, there are two strands of approaches most commonly used when studying place attachment, either a positivist approach that aims to test hypothesises and measure place attachment by operationalizing the concept (e.g Raymond et. Al. 2010, Williams & Vaske
2003, Burholt 2012). The studies are often performed through surveys where the participants are asked to range how well different standpoints like “I feel X (defined place) is part of me” or “No other place can compare to X”. In the qualitative phenomenological approach the aim is instead to find the essence in how individuals experience a phenomenon (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009). In this case the experience of attachment to place is the main phenomenon.

This study takes a middle way and grounds the understanding of place attachment in the traditional phenomenological understanding and the interest in the individual experience of place but do not constrain to a strict phenomenological method of research or analysis (see Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009 p.79 for a description of phenomenological analysis). By using the tripartite model of place attachment developed by Scanell and Gifford this model will serve as my analytical and theoretical framework and be a guidance for what questions to ask to collect the empirical material. When doing a study of place attachment with a qualitative approach the result is not generalizable, as opposed to the goal for quantitative research. Scanell and Gifford notes that the qualitative results instead have the transferability, which means that the results might have relevance to other cases (Scanell and Gifford 2014, 277)

To proceed from an already existing framework, like the PPP-model, of course have limitations. The biggest concern is that surprising results that doesn’t fit the framework might not be seen. Therefore, I’ve decided to remain open and not rule out inductive and creative analysis to be made, which I believe will be a strength and can make the results more valid. This is especially important for the research question about how and what walking interviews can contribute with to place attachment research. There are few studies of place attachment that employs this method of collecting the empirical material.3 For this purpose and to be more context-oriented and not rule out any results because it doesn’t fit the framework, I’ve developed the framework by terms of what the empirical material had to say.

The focal in this study is to gain knowledge about individuals experiences, therefore in-depth interviews are considered to be a suitable method for collecting the empirical material. By doing in-depth interviews this allowed me to derive rich information about individuals

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3 A simple search in the database scopus using the search statement: ("sense of place" OR "place attachment*" OR "attachment* to place*" OR "place bond*") AND ( "walk* interview*" OR "go-along" OR "walk* and talk*" ) only results in 13 articles. Making a wider search (place AND ("walk* interview*" OR "go-along" OR "walk* and talk*")) results in 174 hits.
experiences of living in Ljusnarsberg, how place attachment is shaped and if a relation to place inform their decision of living in the municipality.

Walking interviews

Considering that most research has focused more on the social than the physical dimension of place, I want to give some extra light to the physical than has commonly been done. This will take the form of some sort of limited fieldwork in the form of walking interviews and is influenced by the notion that humans are embedded in place. The idea is that you must be in place to understand place, which means both me and the interviewee must be in the place that are part of their everyday experience and could be places of attachment. This assumption is supported by James Evans and Phil Jones study of walking interviews that show that what’s being said during walking interviews are to a high degree informed by the landscape where they take place (2011).

There are limitations to this method, for example not everyone can perform walking interviews which excludes some from being interviewed. Furthermore, there are practical issues to consider, like how to manage talking, walking and recording all at the same time and the unpredictability of the weather; it might be hard to record if it’s rainy or stormy. The main positive side is that the interviewees words will be directly in touch with the physical environment. Like Evans and Jones say; It opens for the relation between what’s being said and where it is being said to be visible (2011). Scannell and Gifford (2014) notes that there is a lack in doing observations as a method in researching place attachment, so this is also a contribution, even though very limited in scale.

In a smaller experimental study in Finland Ann-Charlotte Palmgren (2018) - a researcher in gender studies, used walking interviews to explore four teenage girls’ relation to a shopping mall. The article captures the conflict between the researcher having a set mind of how the “the walk” will be carried out while still trying to be flexible and sensitive to the participants will. Palmgren is met with the situation that some of the interviewees stopped walking and preferred staying still, maybe wanting to sit down at a café or even meet somewhere else than in the shopping mall. Being written partly as a poem, the article also mediates an emotional account of how the researcher experienced the interviews, which was of good use for me to know what I could be prepared for. She also brings light to the complexities of how to balance the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched. Leila Scannell, one of the creators of the PPP-model, notes in her PHd dissertation (2013) that one methodological
improvement of place attachment research would be to let the participants select the places of attachments instead of rating how attached they are to pre-determined places. By letting the participants decide where to go I do turn the power dynamics between the researched and the researcher a bit, I let go of some control and allow for different places to be noticed for being potential places of attachment, but I also demand more responsibility and engagement from the interviewees. After the gathering of the material takes place, I do have sole power over the interpretation of the material which Dowling (2005) in his discussion of power dynamics in qualitative studies makes it necessary to be critical and reflect over my own interpretations.

The main reason for using walking interviews as a method is the simple reason to be in place and see how the individual relates to that place, to see where they choose to walk, what places they highlight and how this can reflect their everyday life and their embodied practices. Therefore, I don’t think potential stops will be a problem but rather that an openness to stops, planned or improvised, will result in a higher reflexivity and sensitivity. Considering that an interview also is a social encounter between me and another individual which always are inflicted with social norms (Dowling 2005) there are no reason to be too strict with the method. I cannot merely see myself as a tool for gathering the empirical material but have to be aware of the social situation that the gathering takes place in and is constituted of. For example, all the participants discussed where to go with me during the walk, asking if I thought we should take this way or another way. My approach to this was to be as responsive to their suggestions as possible, emphasising that it was their choice. This example shows how the idea of giving more power to the participants in theory is easy, but in practice it is affected by social norms of how you should act in interpersonal communication.

The interviews, the interviewees and some ethical considerations

I mainly found participants through a friend of mine who grew up in the municipality. She works as a hairdresser which gives her a wide social network which was very suitable for this study. I excluded all potential participants that were in my friends close social network, like her parents, relatives or friends, but for example interviewed my friends’ friends’ sister. This method, combined with the access to her occupational network, opened to find participants in a wider social network, and not a limited smaller circle. As another example of how a participant were found; my friend contacted a former customer and resident in Ljusnarsberg, who in turn contacted her neighbour, who turned out to be a suitable participant for the study. Another participant was found through my friends’ parent, who recommended someone in their village they knew about that fit the criteria. Because it is a small municipality (regarding
population) with small villages, most people have knowledge about the other residents, but this doesn’t mean that everyone knows everyone, (something that will be visible in the interviews later) and it was this type of recommendations to potential participants I mostly used. I also asked the participants if they knew anyone that could be relevant for the study, which resulted in that one of the participants were found through this way. To go through someone on the “inside” was also important for my trustworthiness as an outsider - being able to refer to my friend, or go through her or someone else, gave me some credibility and I think this contributed to that people were more willing to participate.

To be selected for an interview you had to be grown up in Ljusnarsberg and be at least 30 years old. This age limit was based on research that people move less after their 30’s whereas the aim was to find both ‘home-comers’ and those who lived most of their life in Ljusnarsberg (Bell & Muhidin 2009 in Möller 2016 p.18) This study’s aim is not to understand those who move from Ljusnarsberg or the ones who move to the municipality. The aim is to understand the place relations for those who grew up in Ljusnarsberg and live there today. This was based on the notion that previous research has been more interested in movement than the lack of movement – as in staying in your home-municipality. In the outset of the study my intention was to only include those who stayed and never lived outside of the municipality, but it turned out to be problematic how to define what “staying” is. In the end I concluded that the most important was that you grew up here and that you live here at the moment of the study.

Five walking interviews where performed, where three of the participants lived in Kopparberg and two in the north part of the municipality. The participants were selected to represent a variety of men and women, ages and geographical residential locations in the municipality. It was important to have a varied group of participants because the focus of the study was “the (staying) resident”. If I wouldn’t have carefully selected a varied group of participants one can imagine that it could have resulted in a homogenous group, maybe only participants in their forties, only women, or only residents in Kopparberg, and this would have changed the focus of the study. In the end the group of participants consisted of two men and three women in the ages between 30 and 80. It was most difficult to find participants that lived outside of Kopparberg, half the municipality’s population lives in the town, which resulted in that three of the participants lived in the town and the other two not.

The participants were told that I wanted to know how it is to live in this area and that they were supposed to tell their stories of who they are and why they live here. I would also ask
questions about their relation to the place while taking a walk together⁴. They got to decide where to walk and if we should make stops or just walk. I kept this task very loosely defined which resulted in very different approaches and choices made by the participants of where to walk. This was intentionally and part of the observational method, to see where they would choose to take me and what they highlighted on the walk. Mutually for all, the walk started out from their place of resident. One interview started out by walking around in the participants garden but thereafter we took a short car-ride because the interviewee wanted to show me the place where he grew up and an interesting natural phenomenon nearby. The walking interviews took between 45 and 90 minutes.

All the interviews where recorded and thereafter transcribed. The participants were informed that the transcript was not going to be published and their names were not going to be revealed in the thesis. Most didn’t thought having their name in the thesis mattered and the information shared by these individuals wasn’t judged as something that could harm them. Nevertheless, according to ethical research principals it is of outmost importance to protect individual’s integrity and their right to protection of their private lives (Swedish research council 2017, p.40). Therefore, the participants names are pseudonyms and personal facts have been minimized, like information about family, exact place of living⁵, numbers of children, occupation and so on. It is a difficult task to balance between protecting the participants integrity and still leave enough information so the thesis will be transparent. I subsequently cannot promise full anonymity, it is possible that people who knows them well will be able to recognize who the participants are, something that the participants have been made aware of before the interviews. In tune with the ethical recommendations they have also been informed that the finished thesis will be openly accessible online.

My intention was to both record, track the walk, take photos and write fieldnotes while doing the interviews, something that turned out to be quite overambitious. Instead I kept it simple, just recording the interview and focus on the walk and talk. Fieldnotes were written down after the interviews to not forget those things that the recording didn’t capture, like observations of the participants, my own thoughts and feelings, what the place was like and what was my first analysis. Some photos were taken at other occasions than during the

⁴ See Appendix 1 for the interview guide.
⁵ The place of those living in Kopparberg had to be announced because living in the central town is often quite different than living in the countryside. Residents living in the town are also blessed with the protection of being many, in the other villages there are only a couple of 100s of residents, whereas it made me more careful in revealing those participants geographical location than of those living in Kopparberg.
interviews and had the purpose of visually mediate the place to the reader. I didn’t take any photos of personal places, only public places.

How to analyse the material

After the interviews were transcribed they were coded in three steps. As I was using both an inductive and a deductive approach the first step meant coding the material with the help of the tripartite PPP-model alongside making own codes that were more specific to my material. In this way I allowed the coding to be more creative and allowed themes to emerge that did not fit in the tripartite model. After this first coding, in the next step an analytical model was developed that was based on the previous coding. The model can be found in the appendix in the end of this paper. The model is structured around the PPP-model but also includes a fourth dimension that concern the observations done from the walk. In the last step I re-read the interviews and re-coded the materials by using my PPP based model. The coding connected the participants accounts to the questions of: who is attached, what is the attachment to and how are they attached?
5. Analytical framework

This part sums up and further explain the analytical framework that the empirical material is understood through. It has been put in context in chapter 1. and in this part the analytical framework and definitions of concepts will be clarified.

A place attachment organizing framework

Leila Scanell and Robert Gifford have developed a tripartite framework of place attachment which structures the main themes in the place attachment literature. They recognize that place attachment is a multidimensional concept and structures the concept in three broad dimensions that they call a “person-process-place organizing framework”. Scanell and Gifford defines place attachment as a person-place bond and sees that this is both a cognitive and an emotional bond that influence human behaviour. They take the standpoint that place attachment develop through length of experiencing a place or through the intensity of experience. The model has been used by many and can be used in many ways, Scanell and Gifford suggest that the framework can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research and other ways (2011). For example, Lewicka is using the framework to organize her review of the place attachment literature (2011).

The first dimension in the model - the person-dimension, aims to answer the question of “Who is attached?” the intention is to see if the attachment rest in individual or group-based meanings ascribed to the place. The process dimension answers the question of “How are they attached” and refers to cognitive, behavioural and affective processes (Scannell & Gifford 2014). The third and last, the place dimension; answers the question of “What is the object of attachment?” This last place-dimension focus on both the social and the physical place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). With these questions as a foundation - Who? What? And How? the participants relation to the place of Ljusnarsberg will be charted and broken down in to parts. One of the positive things with this model is that while still being a helpful way to organize a holistic phenomenon in to parts, the framework is flexible and can be adapted for the context of this study. I also included a section in the model which refers to the walk. The adjusted version of the framework can be found on the next page, and the illustration of the original model – developed by Scannell and Gifford, can be found in the appendix.
Place attachment

PERSON
Who is attached?
Are the place-meanings individual or groupbased?

INDIVIDUAL
Biography
Roots
Experience
Self-realization
Meanings

GROUP
Shared meanings
Cultural
Historical
Religious
Shared experiences

PLACE
What is the attachment to?

SOCIAL
Social cohesion
Social support
Social interest
Open vs Closed
Meeting places
Social Arena
Social relations

PHYSICAL
Natural
Built
Physical restraints
or possibilities
Place dependence

PROCESS
How are they attached?

EMOTIONAL
Joy
Pride
Love
Happiness
Aesthetic
Neg. Affect
Other

COGNITION
Memory
Knowledge
Schemas
-Reflexive
(city)
Beliefs
Place identity

BEHAVIOUR
Proximity - maintaining
migrate
Commitment
Promote place

THE WALK
The route
Why this route?
Talking about what we see
Discussing where to go
Important places
Social encounters
How did they act?
What did they do?

Fig. 1. Place attachment
Concepts – a brief summary and revisit

There are a couple of concepts besides the PPP-model that serve as tools when analysing the material from the interviews. All the concepts have been visited in previous sections with references to how they are being used in the place-literature. For clarification, this section provides a short summary of how the concepts are being used and understood in this thesis.

Place attachment: Is both used to describe person-place relation as an emotional bond, but in this analysis the definition of place attachment will accordingly to the PPP-model be including the strive to keep the place of attachment close.

Sense of place: Is about what the place is, in other words; the understanding and apprehension an individual have about the place.

Place dependence: A concept to capture dependency on the physical or social features of the place and the feeling that no other place will do better for him or her.

Place identity: The feeling that the place is part of who I am. I identify with the place. For example, feeling like a Swede, a Ljusnarsbergare or a Kopparbergare.

Rootedness: I use Hummons notion of “rootedness” to explain how place attachment comes with long time exposure in place can evolve in to a taken for granted state of being, which encompass Heideggers notion of “dwelling”. I also use rootedness as how to describe family and ancestral rootedness in place.

Affect: Affect is understood through more-than representational theory and is understood as pre-cognitive and in this way differ from emotion which is more cognitive.
6. Experiencing Ljusnarsberg

Experiencing Ljusnarsberg

It is in the middle of April when I take the one-hour drive from Örebro up to the municipality of Ljusnarsberg to meet people for interviews. On the way up north, I can see the landscape changing from the flat space that are home to me, to a rolling landscape with fields, lakes and forests. Sometimes you can see an old headframe of a mine peek up amongst the tree-tops. The closer I get to the municipalities regional centre Kopparberg (which can be translated as “Copper mountain”), the closer the forest gets to the road. Driving through Kopparberg takes just a few minutes. At first you are met with townhouses on your right that are soon followed by an area with three-storey apartment houses. Thereafter you find yourself in the picturesque city centre with many old beautiful wooden houses - many of them painted in the traditional Swedish red colour. Here you find Ica Kopparhallen, the municipality’s only supermarket which also functions as a local meeting point. The town is an old mining community and you can experience the traces from one of the last mines that closed 1975 in the north part of the town, the place now functions as a recreation area. These days many residents are commuting to neighbouring municipalities for work, others are employed in public sector or works at the biggest private company – Kopparbergs brewery.

I continue my ride ten minutes north to the next village - Ställdalen, which is an old industrial village, nowadays dominated by a paper mill with about 150 employees. Part of the village is located on a hillside with a view towards the lake Björken. The railway, once upon a time crucial for the mining industry, have the municipalities second and last stop here. A few kilometres north of Ställdalen I pass the village Ställberg - an old mining village with a population of less than 100 people. Every here and there you can see hand painted road signs directing you to flee-markets and cafés. In some you can find material treasures of low prices and others haven’t been active in years.

Last of all, five minutes further north I arrive to the village Hörken with a little bit over 130 people living here. This place will be my point of departure during my fieldwork. I stay in a friend’s croft out in the forest south of Hörken. In the surrounding forest there is an old car scrap and close by there is a peculiar heap of refuse from mining activities that are covering an area the size of a football field. Like many houses in the area this house is mainly used for seasonal living during summertime so during the first cold nights I have to make sure the fire in the stoves are alive to keep warm. Throughout the ten days I’m there I watch the last piles of snow melt away and suddenly a heat wave arrives that brings the temperature up to around
20 degrees and makes spring blossom out for real. A fortunate weather for walking interviews.

The pictures above communicate how human interaction with the physical and material is very visible, and they capture important features of Ljusnarsberg. The tower in the first picture is an old headframe of a mine in Ställberg. In the next picture you can see the entrance to the local supermarket. The picture underneath is of a lake and in the foreground, you can see the railway embankment. The last picture shows a view of the municipality, among the tree tops the head of the wooden church in the Village Hörken peeks up. The deforested area in the foreground also shows how humans use of natural resources is very visible in the landscape.

Going for a walk

After this initial informative presentation of the municipality, which was focused on my own experience of going there, we are going to explore the participants experiences of their municipality. The five participants all hold a variety of different types of place attachments. In the following section I will give you a descriptive first presentation and limited analysis of each individual. It also includes narrative descriptions of the walk. By presenting each walk and participant in a descriptive and narrative way, the intention is to let you, the reader, take part in the empirical material without too much analysis, something that may allow for the reader to make their own interpretations and be able to judge if my interpretations seem to be valid. First out is the participant Mona, then we will meet Kelly, Carl, Kirsten and lastly Eskil.
Mona – Strong and emotional place attachment partly infused by childhood trauma. Strong place dependency and place identity. Ancestral rootedness.

Mona lives on a farm that has been in the family since before the 1900s. The farm is in the forest around three kilometres from the closest village. Mona is in her seventies and lives by herself with part of her closest family as neighbours. When they had cattle on the farm she used to strive to be self-sufficient with food, recounting for the pride she felt in being able to provide for her family “I was so rich, so damn rich when I had that milk and eggs and when one had slaughtered and the freezer was filled with meat and pork”. She tells me how the best place she ever knew was when she got to go out in to the barn and sit and milk the cows by hand. “It was probably the peak of my life” and explains the pride and self-fulfilment she felt in having the practical skills and knowledge of knowing how to take care of the things nature can give.

While taking the walk and talk together Mona shows me where her berry-picking places are – pointing out where she every fall picks buckets of blueberries, lingonberries and raspberries. Even though her children since long have moved out of the house and now most of them are living in other parts of the country, she is firm and convinced in her effort to make sure everyone gets their share of berries and the jars of jams she makes out of them. When asked if she usually takes this walk it is a resolute no and she explains how walking is only something you should do if you have a purpose with the walk, like picking berries “You can’t go out for a walk for pleasure”. Considering this statement and how Mona is using and relating to the natural environment as a resource for her goal of providing food, this points to a strong place dependency, where the physical and material environment are crucial for the way she lives her life.

We are walking slowly on a country road, stopping every now and then, partly because her body is suffering from complications after a treatment of a disease and partly because she is entertaining her dog that accompanies us on the walk, she picks up and throws the dogs toy further on every now and then. When walking along the driveway to the house she automatically starts kicking small rocks from the lawn that escaped the gravel driveway. Both practices showcase a care and maintenance of her living environment and non-human entities.

Very early on in the interview Mona mentions how a family member died in a tragic accident when the participant were around ten years old. “No one talked about it!” she says and explains how the people in the nearest village a few kilometres away, “the village-people” as
she calls them, didn’t know what to say to her and her family after the accident and so they were met with a heavy silence. She keeps coming back to this traumatic experience and memory and it seems like this experience have affected her social and geographical understanding of herself, which she contrasts towards “the village-people”. She positions herself as “different”, partly because of the trauma but also because of having the less common lifestyle of growing up on a farm with cattle. She is being very clear with that she identifies herself with the farm, expressing that this is the place where she was born and this is the place where she is going to die. To move somewhere else is unthinkable, at most she could imagine herself to move to a smaller cottage on the farm. This is something that points to a very limited geographical area as the object of attachment. Mona also expresses a strong sense of responsibility towards family - towards her children as the provider of care and food, and towards her ancestors that used to live on the farm as she is keen that the farm stays in the family.

Kelly – Strong place attachment mainly based on social ties. Everyday rootedness.

The second participant lives in a house in Kopparberg together with her cats. She is soon to be 60 years old and has lived her life almost exclusively in Kopparberg. Growing up in Kopparberg and staying there, it can be said that she has an everyday rootedness. It is her everyday life that is important. Her grandparents on both sides lived in the municipality, but this ancestral heritage doesn’t seem to be important. She says that she doesn’t know a lot about her family but do express that she would like to know more about her ancestors.

I meet her in the garden to her house and we start to walk the route she takes in the morning to go to her job. Thereafter we continue on to follow her regular walking stroll. The walk leads us down to the river that winds its way through the town. Kelly explains that she likes to walk here because she appreciates the calm and peaceful sensations it gives her, it is also good for her health and peace of mind - “it brings oxygen to my head” as she puts it. While walking the conversation is mostly focused on the social life she has in the place. Through her work she meets a lot of residents from the town and nearby villages and she explains how this bring along a position of “everyone knows who I am”. This also goes the other direction, she describes how knowing people is one thing she really appreciates with living in Kopparberg. “You know when you meet someone, and it’s a “Hello! Hello!” and you look after each other,
maybe both positive and negative, but I think it’s always been positive. It’s kind of...what the hell, you don’t make a difference between people like you do in a big city”. This is also an example of a reflexive understanding of her place, contrasting it to “the city” which is something we will return to later.

A couple of years ago she used to be involved in the arrangements of events in a local park (folkparken) which she explains as the funniest she has ever been involved in. They were a group of around twenty people from the community that arranged it together. She describes how they renovated the park and made it a popular summer event but that it all came to a stop when the park was bought by a private investor who closed the park and it is now left to decay. “If I had as many millions as him, then I would also try to buy the park, but operate it the way you should operate a park” Kelly says with a bit of bitterness.

Kelly’s social network seems to be very strong and besides including the “everyone knows everyone” type of network, she also has a strong smaller social network consisting of her closest friends, she explains their relation as “the ones you could call in the middle of the night if I would want to”. She no longer has any close family member living in Kopparberg, her children who are in their twenty’s lives in different cities and her parents are no longer alive. She and her children have a shared interest which brings along that participant 2 travels a lot in the country, going to different events with the children.

Later on, she explains that “There are nothing to do here if you do not seek yourself outwards. But I think...I do like to live here. I think I will always live here, it feels like that.” which kind of sums up her understanding of the place and her place attachment. Her place attachment is strong, mostly based on social ties but she also appreciates the physical environment, especially the closeness to the forest and the recreational and “feel good” experiences it provides. The material environment and social network supports her in living the life she wants, but because of her special interest it also forces her to have a high mobility, (but the traveling can of course be an interest in itself). That the place is lacking in providing opportunities for her to engage in her special interest she doesn’t see as a problem, instead she sees that the towns geographical position is supporting the mobile part of her lifestyle. “I think we live in the middle, it is easy to go to Stockholm, it is easy to go to Örebro”.

Carl - Ambivalent place attachment based on ideological rootedness and knowledge. Ambivalent place identity but a stronger material place dependency.
Carl is in his late 40’s and lives with his wife and teenage children in a house in the central outskirts of Kopparberg. He takes a very practical approach to the task of bringing me along for a walk so we head off to the local supermarket where he is going to pick up a package at the postal arrival centre. He tells me that he usually does not walk but rather drives the car. "The shortest way between point A and B is a straight line. There is no reason to engage in fluttering around." he says when I follow him on a steep natural path behind a building to take a shortcut to the supermarket.

The most striking with this participant is that he has a very ambivalent place attachment. He expresses a willingness to move away, saying that he feels the urge to move maybe every second month. As he has a very social work and likes to talk to people he has also the position of being known by others and recognizing many in the town. Nevertheless, he feels that he lacks a close social network, which is why he wants to move. Instead he has his eyes fixed on a different geographical area in a neighbouring region, a place where he believes people are nicer and share the same hobbies as him, something he hasn’t found in Kopparberg. “I think it would have to be more people here to exist more people that are suitable to hang out with…or how should I say it? …I don’t know what understanding you’ve gained of me yet, but I’m not really conformal with other people”. Just like Mona he positions himself and feels like he is different and not really like the majority in the society.

After we pick up the package, he decides to show me the local museum where he works as a volunteer in the summers. He is convinced and committed in the task of promoting the municipality as a good place to live in and is engaged in the task of remembering and communicating its history. “It feels a bit like I might not be so interested in the museum, but if I don’t take my responsibility and put my interest in it then it will not survive, I think”. This shows the other side of his ambivalent place attachment. As described earlier he is not fully content with the social dimension of the place but are to a high degree engaged and involved in promoting it and remembering it’s history, which show an ideological rootedness that is also based on having a lot of this historical knowledge about the place.

Carl has never travelled outside of Sweden but because of his work he used to drive a lot, so he moves a great deal, but on a very limited area. “In my office I have a world map…and I can basically put my thumb to cover the area where I have been”. He has a very geographical way to talk, where he always wants to explain where things are, describing how to get to the places he mentions. During a couple of years, he lived with his family in a town a bit south in another municipality but moved back to Kopparberg when they found a suitable house here.
“...with outhouses and some distance to neighbours but at the same time central.” Having a hobby that demands some degree of space and storage place, the physical and material features of the home are important for him to be able to practice his interest which points to a degree of place dependency.

**Kirsten** – Pragmatic place attachment based on childhood memories. Weak place identity and mainly social place dependency.

The fourth participant lives with her family in a house in the middle of Kopparberg. She is a student and the youngest participant, she is in her early 30’s and moved back to Kopparberg a couple of years ago after ten years of living in bigger cities. “I’m gonna take you to where it all started” she says, and we walk a few hundred meters to the house where she grew up and where her parents still live. The rest of the walk continue as a walk of memories - she shows me where she used to play as a child, where she used to go jogging, where she went to school, where her best friends lived, and the house of her grandparents. She tells me how she as a teenager just wanted to leave Kopparberg, striving for “the big-city life” just like everyone else she grew up with. Now she remembers her childhood with love and nostalgia, saying it was the perfect place to grow up. She decided to raise her child here, wanting to give the child a garden to play in and the security and support of having grandparents nearby, and living in a small community “If X (the child) would run away, then most people know who’s child it is” she explains, and remember how this was something she didn’t like when she grew up, but now she appreciates the social control that comes with living in a small community - as a place where you don’t know everyone, but you know who everyone is.

Being close, both socially and physically, is something she returns to often when she talks about the place. The closeness to her family, the closeness to relatives and closeness to certain places, like the forest or community services. She says that she feels at home in Kopparberg, saying that; “... you know every path that goes here. So of course, it gets very at home”. It’s a description of how everyday embodied being in place is part in shaping a place in to something that feels like home. Two other places are mentioned where she feels at home, her parents’ house and the city where she used to live a couple of years ago. The house she moved to a year ago, she describes as a home that she and her family has created. She talks about how she does not yet identify herself as a “real Kopparbergare” because she hasn’t had the time to get involved in the community since they moved here. She would like to contribute to
the community though, feeling that this would make her more like a part of the community. She imagines herself engage in in some volunteer work, maybe govern some sport activities for children.

When talking about the decision to live in Kopparberg she has a very practical approach. She says that living in Kopparberg suits her family-oriented lifestyle she has right now but that she is open to find new places to call home in the future. The last sentence of the conversation below captures this pragmatic place attachment perfectly.

- Where could you imagine moving?
- I don’t know. Oh god, I could even move abroad. That is…or have a summerhouse somewhere. I don’t know… I think the place where you live suits differently in different stages of the life.

**Eskil** – Strong place attachment based on family/ancestral rootedness and everyday rootedness. Strong place identity (community)

The last participant is in his mid 70’s and lives with his wife in one of the smaller villages in Ljusnarsberg. He wants to show me an interesting natural phenomenon that emerged from a mine that is over a hundred years old. The place is also located close to the farm where he grew up, his “home-place” as he calls it. We take a short car-trip of five minutes from the house where he has lived the last 50 years. The farm is no longer in the family but is taken over by new comers and is no longer a farm. Eskil says that he of course has mixed feelings about it, but that he is happy that the place is filled with life. We walk through the forest to the old mine and he tells me how he used to play there as a child, explaining where there is a hidden patch of land so you can cross the waterfilled mine hole. He shows me where the best viewpoint of the landscape is and where it used to be one but that now are overgrown with bushwood. This is expressive for his way of relating to the place, as simultaneously reflecting and showing what is now, and as well what used to be.

The trip and walk we take together continues as very community-oriented and about the past, not so much about the people but rather about the societal and physical service functions that used to be. Eskil shows me where they bought their meat, the veggies, where the iron-store were, where you could buy clothes and furniture’s and where the two gas stations were. All this is gone, and the population has decreased by more than half since he grew up. I ask if
many people move away and he answers a bit hesitating that “well... they don’t move, someone maybe, but most passes away, they die, goes away through that way.” He tells me that half the population are members in the local senior citizen national association (PRO), including himself, the high number of members are eloquent for the aging population. He is also an active member of a game club, meeting people two times a week to play games together. I ask what he would tell an outsider about his place of residence and he answers that “Well, then I must tell them how great it is, I almost said. But with the lake and this. And the club activities, that is at least... We have continual meetings with the clubs.

He lived a couple of years in Örebro and some in Grängesberg but concludes that it never suited him. He like it better when he can live in a house where you don’t get disturbed by neighbours - “I’m not really a city-person” he says. Eskil identifies strongly with the village he lives in and expresses an everyday rootedness that is not very conscious but more of a dwelling state of being in place. He appreciates the physical attributes of the place and the natural experiences that nature gives, like wandering the forest and swim in the lake - “I like the peace and quiet”. He would not like to move but are a bit realistic and says that he might have to move to Kopparberg or Grängesberg if he no longer can drive the car, seeing that driving to one of those towns nowadays is the only way to get to a grocery store.

Themes

After these narratives I hope that you’ve got a picture of the empirical material and the participants relation to place. We’ve seen deep and emotional connections to place, everyday rootedness and pragmatic and ambivalent types of attachments, in other words: a wide array of place attachments. In the following section the material will be further analysed. At first, there is a presentation of the common themes that were exposed through the walking interviews, these are elaborated under the themes: Social support; A melancholic and reflexive sense of place and lastly; Peace and quiet. Thereafter follows an analysis according to the PPP-model.

Social support - sharing and caring

All participants except one, talk about the personal social support that plays out in their social network in the community. One participant retells how one neighbour helps her by taking the dog out for walks, something she cannot manage on her own. “...I feel some guilt because of it. But then I tend to bribe her with a home baked cake or something.” An eloquent example of how the social support plays out as exchanges of material goods and services. Another
participant tells me about and displays the different materials that friends have given her to use when renovating the house and arrange the garden. One participant who are an educated craftsman provides services for the ones in need in the community. The participant explains that this is the way you do it in the community; ”Is there someone who needs help with anything there are always someone who lends a hand”. The social dimension of place also became very present when taking the walk together when several social encounters took place, especially in Kopparberg. All the participants mentioned their experience of being recognized by others, and recognizing people. But they imply that it stops at the level of greeting each other and that it doesn’t mean that “everyone knows everyone”, even though it is a common expression from several of the participants.

A melancholic and reflexive sense of place

“I am right. You shouldn’t live so many at the same place. Why should they fuse everything, every job, together at one place?”

Every participant mentions the municipalities socio-political peripheral position, they explain the municipality by contrasting it with the outside, which often is “the city”6. This can be thought of as a reflexive understanding of their place. As seen to the right, they both describe their place with negative emphasis, like the first one, “there is nothing to do here” But they also describe their place as better than the outside, like the one above. At the same time a lot of the quotes are permeated by a melancholy. They share a melancholic understanding of the place, the sorrow of everything that used to be but now is gone. This can be seen as explicitly showed among the two older participants, the ones in their seventies, who both emphasized on how the community used to look like, how many stores they used to have, in which house you could go to buy fruit, where you bought candy or where the train station used to be or how

6 I did ask a question about what they think about this negative picture of the municipality, which can appear as leading, but I made sure to do it in the end of the interviews. Nevertheless, the participants always brought it up earlier in the interview, often when asked what they tell about the place where they live when they are away from home.
many people that used to live there but are now gone. But, it is also showed among the younger ones even though they do not talk as much about what used to be.

In this sorrow, there is a hopelessness of everything being too late, many of them puts their hope in that maybe the brewery can be developed, or a factory could be located to the municipality, one even hopes for the mining to be brought in to daylight again. While having a bit of a hopeless attitude, like one of the participants express; “As being an out-and-out Ljusnarsbergare, since 40 years, I don’t think there are any point in trying... ...You can’t stop development or liquidation”, the same participants in their doings and their practices are not willing to give up but are striving to make the place a better place or at least live a full life in the place. To what extent this reflexive sense of place impacts their place attachment is hard to say, but nevertheless it showcase how their apprehension of the place and how they relate to the place is complex and involves a wide set of emotions and meanings. This reflect and confirms Manzo’s notion that peoples relation to place always exist within a larger socio-political context and cannot be understood as merely based on individual experience and as non-political.

One potential outcome of how this reflexive sense of place might have an effect, is that they might feel that their choice of living place is contested. This can be seen in how Kirsten retells me what she tells people about where she lives “Well, I tell them I grew up here, I think that is quite eloquent” which imply that it wasn’t a choice of her own, but a genealogical heritage that was her allotment in life, and in this way she avoid to have to defend herself. Nevertheless, she took an active and determined choice of moving back and during the interview she emphasis all the good features of the place. It does have to be taken in to account that when I, as an outsider, come and ask them questions about why they live here, the participants might have felt the need to overcompensate the good reasons to live in the municipality to defend their position and life choices.

**Peace and quiet**

It turns out that talking about an emotional relation to the physical and material place, which is a theme that comes up often, is quite hard when asked to describe how being in place makes them feel. Many appreciate their place in the countryside for the sensation and experience they have there, especially in nature. They mention calmness, the quiet, the peaceful, the mysterious and the sensation of freedom. But many times, when asked why they appreciate it
and how it feels when they for instance are in the forest, the interviewees show a lack of descripting words.

Here is an example of this difficulty in having conversations about feelings, the participant is talking about why he prefers to live more by himself in the countryside.

-... I don’t want it to be sound and people everywhere. I like it when it’s quiet. Yes. It doesn’t go along with my music interest, but you get what I mean?
- Yes I see…It is more about this…?
- Music is one thing, sound is another thing.
- So you simply wants to surround yourself with a quiet environment?
- Yes, calm.
-How does it make you feel? When it is quiet and calm?
-...(Quiet)...I didn’t understand the question.
- Hmm...But how does it feel then..?
-Eueueuefooorical…! No maybe that’s too much. No but it is good.

Eskil simply starts out with saying “It feels good” and tells me how he sometimes goes out in the forest only to be and do nothing. Instead of using a lot of descriptive words the interviewees show and express positive emotions towards the place through what they do and how they say things, for example Kelly says “And nature! You know the nature!” with positive exclamations when asked what she appreciate about the place. Eskil continue and tells me how he strongly appreciates the sensation of calm and freedom of living in the countryside. He recounts how he in the summers can easily grab his bike and go and swim in the lake and says “Ahhh….It is...delightful (Swedish translation: ljuvligt)” pronouncing the last word very thoughtfully, which was one of the most expressive answers he gave throughout the interview.

Mona gives one of the most powerful accounts, she is actually giving a description of how it feels when an affective reaction takes place in her body:

-How are the people that lives here?
-Like me I guess…
-They are like you?
-Yes, they want to be surrounded by this peace and quiet.
-How does the peace and quiet make you feel?
-Well yes… then, then it is nice (lowering her voice and talking slower) …Sometimes it comes from my feet below and then it creeps upwards… and then the tears just start to flow…. a satisfaction...

This make me draw the conclusion that place attachment to the physical, especially to nature, might be very much about affect. It points to the importance of the feeling you get from being in place, before processing it intellectually in to emotions. This reflects Mullers note about
more than-representational-theory that; "The world is affective. The lived immediacy of experience becomes present through our bodies. Affect underscores the importance of registers that exceed the cognitive and the conscious." (Muller 2014 pp.3-4). The difficulty to talk about these affective experiences is then not so strange, after all, they are pre-cognitive.

Who were attached, to what and how?

If we now take a step back and return to our framework of analysis, the modified PPP-model and answer the question – “Who is attached?”, we can see that there that their relation to place are based on a mix of individual and group-based meanings. If we connect the information shared from the participants and connect it with what they choose to show on the walk my belief is that it shows a lot of what place-meanings they ascribe to the place. For Mona it is highly individual, the farm where she grew up is the most (one could almost dare to say solely important) place in her life. Based on individually ascribed place-meanings is also Kirsten and Kellys. Kirsten showing the important childhood places and Kirsten taking me along for her everyday routine, walking to her work and where she likes to go wandering. For Eskil and Carl the place attachment is mainly based on group-based meanings ascribed to the place. Eskil showing me the natural phenomenon which is a feature of the cultural and historical heritage that is distinct for the village. And carl, being an advocate for the place’s history and culture, choosing to show me the museum and promoting the place as a good place to live in, while still being quite ambivalent in his own attachment. One could discuss if this

If we consider the next question in the model - “What is the attachment to, social or physical dimensions of place?” we also get a variety of answers. By letting the interviewees decide where to walk and what places they wanted to highlight I kept an openness for several places to be the place of attachment. The walk showcased how place cannot be understood as bounded and singular, but that when talking about “their place” it has to be understood as a myriad of places and that the places in between, maybe you can call it the “spaces” also plays their part in the overall apprehension of place. There was a pattern among the individual walks of what kind of places seemed to be most important for them, for Mona it is the family-farm located in the forest. For Kelly it is the community with its natural features and the social network of both being known by many and having close friends. For Kirsten the attachment is to the places of childhood memories and are highly family-oriented. For Carls’ ambivalent attachment it is the historical and cultural heritage, what the place is and what his
house provides in the form of space for his things. For Eskil the attachment is to the community where he grew up and resides.

Something all the participants share is that they are attached to the house where they live. All share a sense of being at home where they reside. Since the days of Tuan and Relph the idea of place attachment has carried along something Manzo calls “the mythology of home” and the last decades there has been a critique against the notion of home as a place of security and rest, especially from feministic scholars. The results from this study nevertheless supports this connotation of Residential place = home and security. But, here we must imbue a big attention. All the residents lived in houses, which they owned (except Mona who had sold the house to her family and now rented it, but ownership in the capitalistic sense might not be the most important). Research has shown that owning the place where you live means stronger place attachment than if you are renting, because owning allows more agency and security, lesser threat of losing the place which connotes a secure base for developing attachment (Brown et. Al 2003). With this in mind, having only participants that lived in houses and owned it, the notion of house as equal with home have to be considered carefully. Maybe the result would have been different if the study included participants in other arrangements of residence or that felt unsafe at home. But, one could imagine that those with insecure residential settings and maybe unsafe homes would be less willing to participate in this kind of study. Another thing in common is that they all value the environmental setting of being close to the forest and nature and given the sense of peace and quiet.

How are they attached? Is the next question, what we can see is that the attachment involves a complex set of emotions, from those suggested by the PPP-model- joy, happiness and pride, to negative feelings, like Monas childhood trauma that played its part in enforcing her strong and geographically limited place identity, to Carls ambivalent attachment to the place - wobbling between feeling a responsibility and promoting the place whilst simultaneously dreaming about something else. They all show examples of happiness and joy, but when it comes to pride this is where the participants attachment can be seen as affected by their reflexive understanding of the place. They share a sort of “people don’t understand this place so there is no point in trying to explain” attitude. When being somewhere else, they don’t expect to be met with positive reactions when telling about where they live.
Considering behavioral aspects, they are all engaged in proximity-maintaining behavior, all though some (Kirsten and Carl) are deliberating the possibility to migrate. All are place-committed to a higher or lesser degree, engaged or want to engage in community life, or, like Mona, committed to taking care of what nature provides. They engage in promoting place, some more than others, but this is also in conflict with their reflexive sense of place and limited feeling of pride to their place. It is also apparent that growing up in the municipality is important for all of the participants place attachment, for some it is the memories of their childhood or what used to be, and others show a more taken for granted rootedness in place or a combination of both.
7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the place-relations some residents of Ljusnarsberg has to their place and how this relation, conceptualized as place attachment, can affect their decision of staying in this struggling municipality. Guided by the following research-questions: How can the participants relation to this place be described through the concept of place attachment? How can place attachment affect their decision to live here? Is there anything in the participants relation to this socio-political peripheral place that they have in common? And can, and if so how, a method of walking interviews contribute with deeper understanding of place attachment? After previous analysis of the material this section serves to, in a clear and distinct manner, answer the research-questions one by one. We will start with the first one.

**How can the participants relation to this place be described through the concept of place attachment?**

The participants showcase a diversity of different types of place attachments, where ancestral/family rootedness, everyday rootedness, a pragmatic place attachment, and an ambivalent place attachment can be seen. They share having a strong attachment and feelings of being at home in the house where they live. The geographical level of attachment thence varies, but as all the participants grew up in the municipality they have developed place attachment through long time stay. For some the attachment mainly stems from group-based place-meanings, while others are more individually based. Their relation to place is complex, two of the participants stands out by deliberating the possibility to migrate. The others are more committed to engage in proximity-maintaining behaviour, which then points to strong place-attachment, if defining place attachment as a will to keep the place of attachment close.

**How can place attachment inform their decision of living in the municipality?**

Place attachment cannot solely explain their decision of living in Ljusnarsberg, for some it is also practical reasons. As all grew up in the municipality many emphasize that having family-ties or social ties in the place is important for their decision of staying. This can be both having family/ancestral roots, or/and having family close and having social support from community. Important is also the sense of being surrounded by peace and quiet that comes with living in the countryside/small town and being able to be in nature. It is also visible that place attachment cannot solely be understood as a positive bond, the participants stories
reveal a high complexity in their relation to place both individually, but in particular because of their reflexive understanding of their place, which brings us to the next question:

**As all participants share the experience of growing up in Ljusnarsberg and living there today, is there anything in their relation to this socio-political peripheral place that they have in common?**

They all share having a reflexive and melancholic sense of place, where they look at their own place from an outsider-perspective as a “bad” place. Here they both show examples of the feeling that they are misunderstood - that people don’t understood what the place is all about and contrast themselves and this place as both better and worse than other places. There is also a melancholy shown among all the participants, a hopeless feeling of everything being too late. What they have control over seem to be thought of as quite limited, pointing to a feeling of de-empowerment which is seen in how they express that “there is nothing to do about it”. This way of relating to the place confirms Manzos (2003) notion that place attachment cannot solely be understood as a de-politized and individual phenomenon, but the larger socio-political context needs to be considered. This suggest that it might be this socio-political position that makes their relation to place more complex.

**And can, and if so how, a method of walking interviews contribute with deeper understanding of place attachment?**

Walking with the participants showcase how place cannot be understood as a bounded singular place, but what is seen as “their place” is a setup of a complex series of places and spaces. By letting the participants freely choose where we should walk, it resulted in very different approaches to the task and they highlighted very different places that was eloquent for their type of attachment to the place. Going for the walk, the place takes shape and the place in place attachment moves from abstract geographical levels of attachments like “neighbourhood” and place becomes substantial and the multitude of places and spaces seen. This do resonate with Masseys (1991) notion of seeing places as relational and space as important as place. The walk makes both the physical place and even the social visible through social encounters, this was very distinct when walking in the town of Kopparberg. Furthermore, the walk pointed to the importance of how pre-cognitive affective sensations plays a part in individuals’ relation to the physical and material place.
8. Discussion

Lastly, this thesis is coming to an end and now the question remains of what the study can tell us, what we can learn from it, what were the limitations, how does it relate to previous research and finally; how to proceed from here.

The results support the findings of Morse & Mudgett (2018) that family ties and appreciation of rural place-based attributes (peace and quiet) are important for why people stay in rural areas. It also supports Degnéns (2016) findings that memories of the place are important for place attachment among elderly and it can be discussed if this is valid for other then elderly, but this study cannot support that remembering place-specific events together are going on, which is because this study is focused on the individual experience. Farrugia et al. (2014) findings that young residents extroverted (reflexive) sense of place stems from geographical inequalities can also be discussed if they are valid as well for the case of Ljusnarsberg, but not only for young people.

Hay (1998) argues that sustainable societies have to be founded on rootedness, as in valuing ancestral heritage in place. This study contrast to this and show that even when strong ancestral rootedness and family ties exist, it doesn´t necessarily means that there is a solid foundation for developing a sustainable community. Instead the place socio-political position, as relational to other places needs to be seen and acknowledged. As much literature of place attachment do not take in to personal socio-political positions, this study is also limited in this way (the individuals subjective experience has a tendency to take up a lot of space). Categories like gender, class and race are not considered in this study which is a limitation. The selection of participants is also a bit homogenous, all participants have Swedish background and have quite similar socioeconomical position (as much as I can know). An extension of the study could be to include other groups of residents. For example, one could explore newcomers relation to the municipality as their new place. What about all the refugees that decided to stay and become a resident? Do they experience the same melancholic sense of place or is it something else? There would also be a point in exploring the place relations for those who left, or those who are on their way to leave.

In regard to societal developments there is a point for struggling municipalities to engage in the citizens place attachment. Many struggling municipalities are engaged in place-branding and the challenge to attract new residents to the municipality. But, what if they instead tried to figure out what the “stayers” appreciate about the place, what their relation to place is based
on and thereafter investigate how to give space and possibilities for this relation to take place. In Ljunsarsberg, the participants express hopelessness, but still they haven’t given up. One question to operate in public planning would be how to extend the reach of the residents’ agency. If we as an example think about Kelly, who lived up when engaged in the summer event, how do the municipality make room for that kind of engagements? What structures can be changed to enable and extend the residents sense and actual reach of their agency in the place?

Looking in the rearview, one can understand the limitations of the PPP-model, where the questions are framed as searching for positive relations to one place, even though Gifford and Scannell (2010) acknowledge place attachments are complex and not always positive. This study shows that there are complex emotions involved in place attachment and that the socio-political peripheral situation of the municipality lays another dimension on the residents’ relation to their place of living. By using walking interviews, it revealed the complex set up of places that show that the place in place attachment hardly can be understood as bounded and singular. What the participants chooses to show on the walk seem to be quite eloquent for their type of attachment and this is something that probably would have been harder to understand if conducting the interviews in a traditional way. For example, how could Carl have communicated his quite practical approach to places if not taking me along for a walk to the supermarket? How could Eskil so vividly have communicated the memories of what was without taking me for a tour? My guess is that those things, if communicated in a normal interview-situation would have remained abstract for me as a researcher.

I can also see that the affect - as in “feel good” or other experiences from being in place, should be investigated further. How can pre-cognitive triggers be part of individuals relation to place? To what extent is these affective experiences precognitive? Taking a social constructivist view, one would say that these affective reactions comes from the meaning’s humans have ascribed to the phenomenon. If instead understanding affect from a more-than representational perspective this can suggest that to understand and describe humans’ relation to place, individuals’ affective experiences might be more important than cognitive and conscious creations and ascriptions of meaning to those experiences. The search to understand what meanings are ascribed to places therefore moves a bit out to the periphery which suggests that pre-cognitive affect might be fruitful to be considered more fully in further place attachment research.
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Appendix.1 Interview guide

**Intro**
Tell me about yourself, age, occupation, family, living
Roots, family
How was it to grow up here? Childhood, friends still here? Doings.
Where have you lived? Biography
Everyday life. Doings.

**Social**
Social life -who? How? Where?
Know many people here? Network, close or distant
What role do you have?
Social cohesion? Support? Helping out?
Newcomers. How’s it like for newcomers?
Meetingplaces. Where do you meet people?

**The walk**
Why this place?
Do you normally go here? What do you do here? (comfort, meetings, activity, memories etc.)
Alone or with somebody? When are you here?
What is it like to be here? Feelings.
Meanings

**About Ljusnarsberg (their place of choice) /place dependence/Migrate**
What is this place like? How is it like to live here?
What is it here that you need? What do you appreciate? Important for you? Why?
What is not here? What do you feel is lacking?/ Something that's hard with living here?
Favourite place?
What do you tell others about where you live?
Any situation where you would feel you must move?

**Mobility**
Which places do you go to normally (here), why? (home, work, town, friends, activities, nature)
Traveling, outside municipality? Abroad? How often? Why?

**Place identity**
How are the people that lives here?
(if) Which place do you identify yourself with? Which places are important for you? (feeling like a Ljusnarsbergare, Kopparbergare etc…?)
Where do you feel at home?

**Future – individual/municipality**
Here? Somewhere else?
What about this negative picture about Ljusnarsberg?
What will happen with the municipality?
Appendix 2. PPP- Place attachment framework

Figure 1. The original tripartite organizing framework. (Scannell & Gifford 2010)
Appendix 3. Research overview – Place attachment and Sense of place for rural residents

A systematic research overview was done as a preparatory work before starting the study. By using the search statement below, the search resulted in 64 articles in the databases Sociological abstract and 89 articles in IBSS (overlaps included). From these 6 articles met the inclusion criteria and was chosen to be the material for the research review.

(("sense of place" OR "place attachment") AND ((rural OR countryside OR peripher* agrarian OR provincial OR depopulat*) NOT (urban* OR suburban*)))

Inclusion:
- Peer reviewed
- Academic articles available online in English or Swedish
- Studies focusing on long term residents in rural areas
- Studies having either Sense of place or Place attachment as a main concept
- Studies that focus on individuals experiences of place.

Exclusion:
- Studies focusing on very small subgroups of residents in rural areas

The word “depopulat* (depopulation) is of course not a synonym for rural but was a mean to include this area of interest, something that resulted in 5 additional articles. By using the bolean operator NOT, studies that for example focused on suburbanization’s effects on rural areas or studies done in urban settings where excluded, this limited the result with nearly half.

A tabulation and short summary of the articles is included as an appendix. What the articles could say about rural residents’ sense of place and place attachment can be found on page 14-15.

This systematically done research review was important to gain knowledge about individuals’ relation to place in the rural context. To compliment the systematically retrieved articles focusing on the rural I also wanted to find the most seminal works on place attachment to gather a broad base to proceed from. Here I used more of a snowball method where I looked in the retrieved articles for what articles they commonly referred to or in other ways seemed to be of interest. I also looked for the most cited articles to see which articles seemed to be key-literature in the field. Both methods above led me for example to the research review of place-attachment by Lewicka (2011), Trentelman (2009) and Patterson and Williams (2005),
which turned out to be very helpful giving a broad and at the same time detailed overview and summary of the field.

There are discussions if it is wise to synthesise research done using different methods (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey 2011, p124), but because the study of place and place attachment are widespread in a diversity of fields I decided to be open for different methodological approaches. This can especially be seen as tricky when it comes to the place attachment studies that are highly quantitative, like many are in the field of environmental psychology. Nevertheless, they are interesting because there are learning outcomes from seeing how they operationalize the concept, which vary to a high degree. Nevertheless, most environmental psychological studies of place attachment also have their basic understanding in the humanistic geographers understanding of place which makes them have a common ground.

In the next appendix you can find a tabulation and brief overview of the six articles from the overview.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Context/study population</th>
<th>Design/Methodology/perspective</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Main field</th>
<th>Key concepts</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay, Robert A rooted sense of place in cross-cultural perspective 1998</td>
<td>New Zealand - Banks Peninsula, a rural area / interviews w. 270 residents and 80 out-migrants (modern/indigenous)</td>
<td>Case study (1) Individual interviews and group interviews using questionnaires social surveys, Statistical analysis /phenomenology, ethnography,</td>
<td>How sense of place develops and how it varies in different cultural settings and places/context</td>
<td>Geograph y</td>
<td>Sense of place /Rooted sense of place</td>
<td>People with strong ancestral heritage in a place develop a stronger sense of place than those with loser connections. For sustainable communities to be developed, people need to reconnect with place and value ancestral heritage. Critical against current postmodernistic culture where residential mobility is high and expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson, Kaylene A and Goodrich, Colin G Making Place: Identity Construction and Community Formation through “Sense of Place” in Westland, New Zealand 2009</td>
<td>New Zealand - two rural communities in the West Coast region that are going through economic decline/ 56 Interviews</td>
<td>Case studies (2) Fieldwork, Interviews and informal discussions/Grounded theory and comparative analysis /social constructionism and environmental determinism</td>
<td>“How do “community” and attributes of landscape and setting shape personal identity and the way in which individuals develop an attachment to place?”</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Sense of place/Place attachment/Community</td>
<td>Personal identity is socially and culturally (re)produced but cannot be disconnected from place (as socially constructed). The social construct of place that are possible are in turn determined by the place/landscapes physical attributes and setting (natural and man-made). Community play a crucial part as interconnecting the individual and the place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burholt, Vanessa The dimensionality of place attachment for older people in rural areas of South West England and Wales 2012</td>
<td>South West England and Wales, (different rural settings)/previous work with data on 920 older people (60+)</td>
<td>Exploratory factor analysis/Psychometric (Using qualitative data from previous work done with a phenomenological approach.)</td>
<td>“To develop a measure that encompasses the dimensionalit y of place attachment for older people in rural areas.”</td>
<td>Sociology/Social gerontolog y</td>
<td>Place attachment</td>
<td>The development of a model for measuring place attachment amongst older people in rural areas. Multidimensional measure of place attachment includes 1. Social attachment to place 2. Appropriateness of resources and the environment 3. Aesthetic attachment to place. A fourth dimension needs to be developed, concerning the historical and temporal matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrugia, David, Smyth, John and Harrison, Tim Emplacing young people in an Australian rural community: an extraverted sense of place in times of change 2014</td>
<td>Australia, “Little town” (4000 residents) /23 young people between 12-17</td>
<td>Case study, Fieldwork, Interviews/ Narrative analysis/Critical</td>
<td>“To emplace understanding s of rural youth identity in relation to theoretical debates about the consequences of social change.”</td>
<td>Sociology/youth studies</td>
<td>Sense of place/Extraverted sense of place</td>
<td>Sense of place is developed in a reflexive way where place is understood by contrasting it with the ‘outside’ (the city). Young rural people’s sense of place is made extraverted because of geographical inequalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathrine Degnen</td>
<td>North England, semi-rural village Dodworth (5000 residents)/63 interviews</td>
<td>Fieldwork, 2 periods, total of 26 months, participant observation, interviews.</td>
<td>“To begin thinking through the ways in which place attachment is bound up in social memory, embodied knowledge and the significance of the passing of time”</td>
<td>Sociology/Social anthropology/Gerontologic al geography</td>
<td>Place attachment/belonging/social memory</td>
<td>Place attachments social dimension needs to be considered further in research. Place attachment cannot be reduced to one individual’s experience but is made and remade in social places. Emphasis on social memory and the embodied and sensual experience of place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morse, Cheryl E and Mudgett, Jill</td>
<td>Canada, the state of Vermont (625 000) / 3360 responses (age 25-91)</td>
<td>Online Survey/Statistical analysis combined with biographical sketches (quantitative and Qualitative)</td>
<td>“…to learn what they (contented stayers) value about their home place, why they decide to remain, and what they wish for in future.”</td>
<td>Geograph y</td>
<td>Place attachment/Mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fondness for rural place-based attributes and family-ties are the key factors why contented stayers decide to stay in rural places.