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In-Between Identities and Places

Negotiating Belonging with the Malmö Finns

Abstract

As a result of globalization and postmodern confusion, simple place-based identities may be becoming obsolete. Malmö Finns, on the other hand, are part of a thousand-year-old tradition of migration from Finland to Sweden and a long history of in-betweenness. Inspired by phenomenological approaches to geography, this thesis explores the mental landscapes of Malmö Finns and aims to understand how they negotiate their identities in relation place, find their places in the world, and assign places identities. Ideas of bell hooks, Doreen Massey, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Edward Relph form the conceptual foundations of the study. Stories were gathered from a sample consisting mostly of first-generation immigrant women using a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group, and investigated through narrative and thematic analysis. The results show that landscapes, language, routine, memories, and people have an important function in cultivating a sense of belonging in place. Being an ethnic and linguistic minority and the social consequences of this are at the core of determining who one is, yet this is relative to the presence of others who can be interpreted as 'more different.' Changes that have taken place in one's old environment further complicate self-identification. These Malmö Finns' senses of Malmö are practical, international, entrapping, and intimate. The identity of Malmö is also closely intertwined with comparisons to other places. To many, Malmö is an adventure that turned to reality through finding love and starting a family.

keywords: Malmö, Sweden Finns, belonging, home, place identity, sense of place

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Introduction

> Every night I would lie in the stillness of the dark and listen to trains coming and going imagining my own life journey, the places I would go, the people I would meet. The sound of the train comforts me now as it did then, for I know I have come home. I have returned to the world of my childhood, the world in which I first sowed the seeds of my being and becoming … Here in my native place I embrace the circularity of the sacred, that where I begin is also where I will end. I belong here. – bell hooks (2009:223)

Today, speaking of *identity*, *belonging*, *home*, and *place* is anything but straightforward. Enclosed by globalizing processes and major changes in thinking and communication, we greet flows of information and people by questioning who we are and where we stand (Zelinsky 2001). A lurking sense of rootlessness awakens the need to find stable ground among all contradiction (Tuan 1977), which may not least be the case with those that cross state borders themselves. The oppression faced by migrants and minorities gives rise to resistance identities and new formulations in struggles for justice (Castells 2004; Peura 1994), while an inner emergency of loss and threat mobilize nostalgia and nationalistic sentiments (Massey 1994; Macdonald 1993). Simple, fixed, mutually exclusive identity categories are rarely an option (Blommaert et al. 2012), but often something that we long for more than anything.

As migratory movements cut across vast distances, some believe that place-bound identities may be becoming obsolete (Massey 1994; Jones 2001; Savage et al. 2005). Technological advances now allow us to instantaneously connect with our communities on the other side of the globe and to engage in (literally) mobile identification practices where virtual creation and upholding of identities can compensate for our "feeling out of place" (Keating 2015:250). The simultaneous widespread and rapid exchange of ideas, goods, services, and capital ties places worldwide into a system of rigorous geographical competition (Massey 1994). Place becomes fixed space valuable in what can profitably be inserted and extracted considering existing assets and potentials. What is more, lookalike and 'feel-alike' cities have been the source of distress for some time now (Relph 1976). Meanwhile, stories of a unique history and community of a place become prime selling points both in the game of attracting property developers (Harvey 1990) and in excluding others from one's (alleged) territory (Massey 1994).

However, the amount of work needed for holding on to a singular image of a place suggests that maybe place never was a stable entity. Perhaps also our deep distress over belonging and identity is neither new nor universal. Many exploitative structures are left unaffected and still form daily realities (Relph 2001), and for some, there is nothing new about encounters with foreign forces and compromised homes (hooks 1991). Therefore, it must be asked: Whose world is it that suddenly feels out of control (Massey 1994)? While recent decades have undeniably seen great change, place was never experienced homogenously by a uniform global population. To understand place, we must thus attend to the "the entire range of experiences through which we all know and make places" (Relph 1976:6). At the heart of this pursuit is to visit the many meanings given to places; every day and on multiple levels of consciousness (Tuan 1977).

Malmö, the largest city of the Skåne region in southern Sweden, is a traditional industry town gone knowledge cosmopolitan (Holgersen 2014). For many, it is probably quite a different city today than what it was only a few decades ago. But also the people experiencing this city have changed, and among them are the population with a Finnish immigrant background. The current Malmö Finns are the result of

countless generations of migration between Finland and Sweden, and during this history, Finnish migrants in Sweden have undergone a significant demographic transformation (Reinans 1996). Similar but not the same, close yet so far away – despite the unique in-between perspective they could provide on belonging in Sweden, the experiences of Sweden Finns have attracted relatively little interest (UR 2016). Among the great range of personal and collective histories, the population with Finnish family ties may now be perceived as business travelers on a stopover (Reinans 1996) or as a part of the Swedish national body and national story (Parikka Altenstedt 2020). Regardless of such differences, we all experience our places in space, the traces places leave on us, and the traces we see in places. Some say *there is no place like home*; that *a house is not a home*; that *home is where the heart is* – but to those whose hearts have several homes the story may be much more complicated. This thesis is an attempt to map these "geographies of the heart" (hooks 2009).

Aim & research questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore the mental landscapes of Sweden Finns in Malmö (hereafter, Malmö Finns). This is done by investigating how place can form a basis for self-identification, be assigned an identity, or provide an internal home – one's 'place in the world.' The investigation is operationalized through the following research questions:

1. How does place affect the self-identification practices of Malmö Finns?

2. Why is it that Malmö Finns feel at home and that they belong in certain places?

3. What kinds of 'senses of place' do Malmö Finns have in Malmö?

Delimitations

The purpose of this thesis is not to make widely generalizable claims, but to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning-making processes of a sample from this migrant/minority group. The focus is thus on a phenomenological approach, and while the study is placed in a historical context, there is no significant attempt to provide a comprehensive political or economic analysis. For practical reasons, the studied population is referred to as 'Malmö Finns,' which is here employed as a common denominator for both Finnish and Swedish speaking persons living in Malmö who are Sweden Finns, Finnish and/or have Finnish background. The population is limited to those currently living in Malmö municipality, because the Malmö Finn community is under-researched and may have its particularities due to its small size and relatively long distance to Finland. However, the scope of this study is limited both in the size and the representability of the sample, and thus the conclusions cannot be said to speak of the experiences of all Malmö Finns as a population. The sample consists mostly of first-generation immigrant women who moved to Sweden between the 1970s and today. Finally, due to ethical reasons, only persons aged 18 and above were accepted as participants.

Background

> Sweden Finnish culture has long been working class culture, and it hasn't seemed to interest the majority population. Finns gathered for a pint of beer at the bowling alley aren't seen as a great community or an exotic culture that needs to be preserved. Now that Sweden Finns have become middle-class, Sweden Finnishness is no longer embarrassing. On the contrary, we are absolutely everywhere. But at the same time, a question that arises is what Sweden Finnishness actually is. (Maziar Farzin in UR 2016, my translation)

For approximately 700 years, Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden (Allardt 1996). After waves of Swedish settlement and attempts to convert the Finns into Christianity, Catholic Sweden officially established its rule over Finland during the 13th and the 14th centuries (Salo 2012; Borg 2016a). The institutional and linguistic control exercised by Sweden along with the extraction of material resources, taxes, and work force have given some reason to argue that the relationship between the two countries was a colonial one (Liukkonen 2018:30). This past has been suggested to constitute a foundational experience for Finnish identity-building and for the negative stereotypes of Finnishness that persist in Sweden (Borg 2016b:22). Nevertheless, the many institutional, educational, and judicial systems inherited from Sweden, along with common religion, have been culturally important in making possible the widespread migration from Finland to Sweden, as they have guided ideas of right and wrong, as well as of work morale, towards a common direction (Allardt 1996). Migration from Finland to Sweden has been reported at least since the Middle Ages (Borg 2016a). Since then, Finns have commonly found work in agriculture, as servants, forestry workers, and later, factory workers. However, Finns have also come to Sweden seeking shelter throughout the various wars in Finland during the past two centuries (Reinans 1996; Allardt 1996).

Between 1945 and 1994, altogether half a million migrations from Finland to Sweden were registered (Reinans 1996). While Finland and Sweden have traditionally both been relatively poor agrarian societies in the European periphery, Sweden underwent industrialization and modernization much earlier (Allardt 1996). While Sweden survived World War II well due to its 'neutral' position, Finland suffered heavy damages on all possible fronts. There was also unemployment and housing shortage, and so the establishment of the visa-free Nordic labor market during the 1950s allowed for the largest migration waves from Finland to Sweden to date (Reinans 1996; Allardt 1996). During the years 1969–1970 alone, 80 000 Finnish migrants arrived in Sweden, 62 000 of which stayed. These migrants often had low education level and were from the countryside, half of them being from the northern regions of Finland (Allardt 1996). In these days, only a quarter of the immigrations were directed to Stockholm, with most newcomers relocating to large industrial municipalities (Reinans 1996). However, these movements and their demographics have been changing since the 1980s (Allardt 1996). Unlike the previous waves, later Finnish immigrants in Sweden have been increasingly highly educated, with clerks, researchers, and students arriving in thoughts of temporary residence. Especially since Finland and Sweden's entry into the European Union, migration from Finland to Sweden has acquired more of a 'generally European character.' The arriving population is often young, urban, and in search of adventure, and there are significant flows to large cities, especially Stockholm (Johansson 2017; Allardt 1996; Reinans 1996).

Today, the Sweden Finns are one of the 'national minorities' of Sweden, and Finnish is recognized as one the five 'national minority languages' (SFS 2009:724). However, the title of a 'Sweden Finn' still has no

widely agreed-upon definition. According to recent figures from Statistics Sweden, people from the past three Finnish migrant generations alone now comprise more than 725 000 of Sweden's population of 10 million (Sonck 2020), while others estimate that altogether 25% of Sweden's population have some Finnish background (UR 2016). Those who understand Finnish or the related Meänkieli are now 470 000 (Sonck 2020). Currently, there are fewer than 150 000 persons born in Finland living in Sweden (SCB 2020a). Significantly more persons born in Finland migrate from Sweden than to Sweden, and the number of Finland-born migrants arriving in Sweden decreases briskly each year (SCB 2020b, 2020c, 2019). However, at large, the Sweden Finn population is estimated to be growing as those whose parents arrived in the mass waves of Finnish immigration are having their own children, and especially among the younger populations, interest for Finnish culture and language is also growing (Johansson 2017).

While the close ties between the two countries during the past millennium have come to mean that Finnish immigrants and their descendants make an important part of the Swedish society, negotiations over the Sweden Finns' place in Swedish society have not been easy. In the 1970s, long school strikes ensued in notorious Finn-majority suburbs due to plans to pull back Finnish education (Borg 2016a:12). Despite the current national minority status that was designed to grant the Sweden Finns rights above those of 'other (non-national) minorities' and the funding received by various administrative levels to ensure this happens (SFS 2009:600; SFS 2009:1299), the implementation seems to be lacking. According to a government report, the "minorities policy has almost completely failed in terms of guaranteeing the fundamental rights that all five national minorities should enjoy in all municipalities in this country" (SOU 2017:60:11). Despite having voluntarily applied for the administrative area status and funding, the city of Malmö decided to lay down teaching of Finnish in kindergartens (Torstensson 2020). The parents of the children are now fighting for their case in administrative court. In another Finnish administrative area, Västerås, children in a Finnish-speaking class were over the course of several years repeatedly forbidden speaking Finnish during school hours (Smith 2020; Parikka Altenstedt 2020). Following years of criticism from the Council of Europe for minority convention violations, Sweden is now faced with a case of language discrimination in the European Court of Human Rights.

Although many Finnish immigrants arrived in industrial towns in the 1960s, the Sweden Finn population of Malmö has always been relatively small (Reinans 1996). Recent calculations from Statistics Sweden show that Malmö is the home of approximately 1 600 of Sweden's 154 000 first-generation immigrants born in Finland. There were fewer than 9 000 persons who were born in Finland or have parents or grandparents of which at least one was born in Finland, which constituted 2,6% of the population of Malmö (Sisuradio 2017). Malmö's lacking popularity among Finns might be explained by greater distance, and relatively different nature, political history, cultural heritage, and language. Still, the small share of Finnish immigrants in Malmö is somewhat surprising in relation to the popularity of for example the Gothenburg region, which is not much closer to Finland. Both had significant manufacturing activity during the golden days of Finnish immigration, and already at the end of the 19th century, Malmö was of one the most important industrial cities in Sweden (Sernhede & Johansson 2006). However, it is possible that Malmö, too, has become attractive to the new generation of urban immigrant population of a different class composition – probably even more so after its post-industrial evolvement from the mid-1990s onwards (Holgersen 2014). Due to these specificities, and a highly under-researched population, this study is focused on the Malmö Finns.

Previous research

Many studies on the Sweden Finns have focused on the immigrants from rural Northern Finland, the 1960s–70s generation and their children, and often, the role and status of Finnish language. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies on persons with Finnish background in Malmö, specifically. Therefore, I will provide an account of some studies with a clear connection to the theme of this thesis that have been conducted elsewhere.

Marja Ågren (2006) has researched the role of Finnish identity in the daily lives and positions in society of second-generations immigrants in Gothenburg. The study shows that their senses of belonging are strongly connected to negotiating their relationships to Sweden and Finland, yet they do not have a connection to Finland as a nation-state, rather specific places there where they have spent many summers. Both Sweden and Finland are still homes, and the role of citizenship is primarily practical.

Mirjaliisa Lukkarinen Kvist (2006) has shown how important collective memory-building with other Finns has been for feelings of belonging among elderly first-generation immigrants in central Sweden. By being involved with the heritage association dedicated to the Finnish town the participants come from, they could still long after their emigration identify with that town. This town 'lives on' in the stories far away from that actual place, and its local community is also affected by these stories. Simultaneously, the participants get to determine and send home narratives of their lives in Sweden.

Examining the narratives of second-generation Sweden Finns, Lotta Weckström (2006) presents that the Sweden Finns' stories are impacted by common ideas of what one should think of Sweden-Finnishness. The importance of language in being part of a minority is taken up as one topic that is often self-evident, and this is said to be due to historical language battles of the Sweden Finns throughout times. To first-generationers, emphasizing the differences to Swedes is more important to second-generation Sweden Finns, and there is a trend that the Sweden Finns increasingly identify and are identified by others as an ethnic minority rather than immigrants.

Studying the life stories of second-generation Sweden Finns, Kai Latvalehto (2018) notes that while the negotiation of a Finnish cultural identity has often been a shame-ridden process in the past, especially during adolescence, and led to the suppression of Finnish identities and language, many current second-generation Sweden Finns are mostly just disinterested in their roots. They have grown up in families that were not as 'Finnish' as the families of the previous second-generation Finnish immigrants, few speak Finnish, and there is little sense of Sweden Finnish unity or identification among them. They fit into the majority population, and generally, attitudes towards Sweden Finns have improved, which is hypothesized to be connected to their upward class mobility as a group.

Conceptual framework

In this chapter, a framework for thinking about the central concepts of thesis is introduced. These are *identification with place*, *home*, *belonging*, *place identity*, and *sense of place*. It is in light of the ideas presented here that the Malmö Finns' experiences of identifying with place and identifying place will then be analyzed.

Identity in flux

The stability of identity categories based on spatial formations, such as nationality, region, or community, has been undermined since the 20th century by changes in migration patterns, information technologies, and flows of culture and capital (Jones 2001). Increasing cooperation within the 'European Community' has been accompanied by postulations to national identities, as old political and economic borders are diminishing and giving way to an attempt at prioritizing unity over stereotypes, which were deeply embedded in the history of 20th century Europe (Macdonald 1993; McDonald 1993). Although state borders may weaken (but to whom or what?), feelings of threat in the face of change bring forth aggressive clinging to old allegiances (Macdonald 1993). Booming nationalist discourse divides people into Us and Them, and ever since the establishment of modern nation-states, nationality, language, and 'ethnic' and 'racial' majority/minority positions have persisted as the primary factors for alleged cultural difference (McDonald 1993). However, unlike long-lived stories of 'national character' suggest, identities categories are social constructs and not natural essences.

Identity is "the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning" (Castells 2004:6). Identities are appropriated by people themselves and assigned by others, and they are formed around varied affiliations, within specific social and historical contexts (*ibid.*; Macdonald 1993). Stuart Hall (1997) argues that although this assigning of things into easily comprehensible categories is an inherent part of our sense-making, *stereotyping* juxtaposes people and upholds social orders. Stereotypes are acts of symbolic violence, which recognize "characteristics about a person, *reduce* everything about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them, and *fix* them without change or development to eternity" (Hall 1997:258, original emphasis). In connection to *ethnocentrism* – exerting the normative presuppositions of one's own culture on another culture – stereotypes establish the power of a hegemonic group in shaping knowledge of a subordinate group (*ibid.*). The stereotype is reinforced by finding examples that fit this picture, and it also affects the self-perceptions and behaviors of those being represented (Hall 1997; McDonald 1993). Nevertheless, there is also strength in minority identities, and a "widespread tendency … to seek true identity in the social margins (McDonald 1993:233).

However, the concept of identity is a relatively recent obsession in human history (Zelinsky 2001; Macdonald 1993). According to Wilbur Zelinsky (2001), preceding the rise of agriculture, only lineage, age, gender, physical fitness, and skills were relevant factors when separating between individuals. Thereafter emerged more complex, sedentary societies and increased stratification, but social positions were so profoundly ingrained that identity still received little thought. Through building of nation-states, direct force as a guiding motivation was replaced by an emotional narrative of common history and destiny with 'one's people,' and thus nationality became the obvious principal mode of identification

(*ibid.*). "It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny," notes Benedict Anderson (2016:12), pointing to the context of secularization, in which belief in the nation could replace what religion had offered in sense of continuity and meaning. The members of a nation thus form an 'imagined community' guided by fictive unity, for which they are prepared to sacrifice their lives, although all of them will never meet each other or be equal.

Industrialization meant a shift from life centered on face-to-face community ties (Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*) to one characterized by urban problems and less personal, distant associations (*Gesellschaft*), which made belonging and alienation central sources of intrigue among social scientists (Macdonald 1993). Through developments in literacy and printing, minds were fed with new information and worlds of fantasy (Zelinsky 2001). Innovations in transportation and communications, as well as changing migration patterns and demographics brought questions of identity to the forefront in Europe (*ibid.*; Macdonald 1993). In part, these changes played an important role in destabilizing nationality as an identity category (Zelinsky 2001). As the 'psychological health model' of identity gained ground in the 1960s, strong identity became a positive attribute, while weak or confused identity was pathologized (Macdonald 1993). The lack of an ethnic identity, "the sense of belonging to an ethnic group," was associated with rootlessness and loss of history, and heritage and minoritized groups were lifted on the agenda (*ibid.*:8). The postmodern era then brought a "new mode of perceiving, feeling, thinking, creating, and behaving," which also made many question who they are (Zelinsky 2001:134). However, stories of postmodern identity confusion have been noted to present partial perspectives, and not everything has undergone similar deconstruction (Relph 2001; Massey 1994). As Edward Relph puts it, there are still "what might be called the actual conditions of everyday life, including hamburgers, houses, running shoes, environmental contaminants, malnutrition, and the gap between wealth and poverty" (2001:152). Nevertheless, this confusion was not made solely the property of human identities.

In contrast to abstract space, place has often been considered a secure, static unit with clear boundaries (Massey 1994). However, places worldwide are now arguably threatened by the dominant force of *placelessness*, "the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places" (Relph 1976:6). Landscapes of sameness and syntheticity provide functional backdrops to our lives, where we have no *sense of place*, no appreciation of the uniqueness and meaning of place. Different locations "not only look alike but also feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience" (*ibid.*:90). To escape our resulting sense of rootlessness and return to strong identification with place, Edward Relph suggests we map the "essential features of places" to "preserve" them (1976:6). But, as Doreen Massey (1994) points out, the idea that place once had a single true essence is highly questionable.

Whether applied in urban entrepreneurialism, tourist brochures, nationalistic movements, or anti-gentrification rhetoric, associating place with identity and belonging is often marked by nostalgic notions of a true, original character of place. However, assigning place an identity is an ongoing process of contestation. Competing groups lay "claim to some particular moment/location in time-space when the definition of the area and the social relations dominant within it were to the[ir] advantage," in effect making an attempt at "freezing of that identity" to legitimize their control over the area (Massey 1994:169). Despite the many changes that a globalizing world and a postmodern frame of reference may have brought, the instability of place has "has always been so. The past was no more static than is the present" (*ibid.*). However,

This does not mean that the past is irrelevant to the identity of place. It simply means that there is no internally produced, essential past … Instead of looking back with nostalgia to some identity of place which it is assumed already exists, the past has to be constructed. (Massey 1994:171)

Undeniably, globalization has affected places worldwide, but places are not becoming obsolete, or non-specific space (Massey 1994). They are certainly becoming increasingly connected to each other, but these connections also give birth to specificities. Places exist in social space, and each place is unique in that its exact composition of social interactions is only present there; simultaneously, this mix of interactions impacts social relations across space. According to Doreen Massey, it is from these relationships with other places that place finds its identity, not from a singular history. Just like the identity of a person, the identity of a place is *relative*, as it is defined in relation to others (*ibid.*).

Place as experience

The identity of a place is not only relative to those of other places, but it is also dependent on who is identifying it. This a central notion within humanistic geography, a tradition which interfered with the dominant views of 20ᵗʰ century geography, arguing that the idea of physical, built, and social dimensions of environments as inherently separate spheres was "the outcome of a mechanistic and technocratic process that delineates the world" before analyzing it (Jones 2001:122). Instead, humanistic geographers asserted that the *lifeworld* connecting our bodies, places, and meaning must be the starting point of any inquiry and turned their gaze towards the world of intentionality and experience, that is, *phenomenology* (*ibid.*).

Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:54) recognizes *space* as "a blank sheet on which meaning can be imposed," upon which it becomes defined and "humanized," thus place. Place is then a "phenomenon of experience" (Relph 1976:44). Place is experienced through thoughts, emotions, and senses, and it is formed as humans materialize their mental landscapes into the physical landscape (Tuan 1977). Place occurs when people give meaning to it, and it gives meaning to people. As Edward Relph (1976:43) puts it,

those aspects of the lived-world that we distinguish as places are differentiated because they involve a concentration of our intentions, our attitudes, purposes and experience. Because of this focusing they are set apart from the surrounding space while remaining a part of it. Places are thus basic elements in the ordering of our experiences of the world.

While place is a 'center of meaning' in our world, our definition of place moves with us. This is because we view the world from an *anthropocentric* (or *egocentric*) perspective, where we are always at the center of our world (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). The scale of place is thus also determined by the focus of our attention, ranging on a spectrum where the entire universe may be at one end, and a specific place within one's home at the other (Tuan 1977). This makes it unique to "the symbol-making human species that its members can become passionately attached to places of enormous size, such as a nation-state, of which they can have only limited direct experience" (*ibid.*:18).

Furthermore, we define places in terms of their identities, often without conscious effort. By giving meaning to the different components of our settings, we form a holistic image where meaning, activity, and the physical environment are interwoven, fused into each other (Relph 1976). To us, our image of a place *is* that place, while to someone else, our image seems biased. The image is not static within a

particular individual, either, as the identity of a place changes depending on an individual's current position (role) in that place (*ibid.*). Our definitions of places are guided by cultural frameworks, which direct what things we look for and pay attention to, as well as by language, which limits and enables how we articulate our experiences (Tuan 1977). On a group level, a common identity of a place can supersede the images held by individuals when this image is formed around the specific interests and experiences of the community in question (Relph 1976). The public consensus image is the "lowest common denominator" of diverging views and binds together the common features of group images (*ibid.*:58). A mass image, on the other hand, is a selective identity of a place provided from the above, such as in campaigns of place marketing, and as our experiences of place are affected by our expectations, this image guides our future experiences into a certain direction (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, some argue that there is an inherent spirit of place that exists beyond the identities assigned to place by people. This spirit may be termed *genius loci*, or *sense of place*. According to Edward Relph (1976), it is this spirit that truly makes places unique and equips them with individual personalities. The *genius loci* is more than the simple components of place, as it can "link and embrace" them and "persist in spite of profound changes in the basic components of identity." It is "subtle and nebulous, and not easily analysed in formal and conceptual terms," yet "obvious in our experiences of places" (*ibid.*:48). Instead of this rather ambiguous attribute of place itself, *sense of place* can also be conceptualized as a way of perceiving and making place (Tuan 1977; Relph 1976). Bell hooks speaks of lacking sense of place among many people she meets today, how they "feel bereft of a sense of direction, feel as though they cannot see where our journeys lead, that they cannot know where they are going. Many folks feel no sense of place … [but] a sense of crisis, of impending doom." Sense of place is thus a manner of orienteering, in the world and in life. At the very least, it is "the ability to recognize different places and different identities of a place" (Relph 1976:63).

An authentic sense of place, on the other hand, allows us to open-mindedly recognize the complexities of place, and to genuinely experience place and its meanings (Relph 1976). Therefore, place cannot be known by listing facts, but by deeply attending to it, with feeling as a central way of knowing (Tuan 1977). According to Tuan, this

> "feel" of a place … is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones … It is a subconscious kind of knowing. (1977:183–4)

Having a sense of place may then also mean identifying with place more unconsciously. This happens by "being inside and belonging to *your* place both as an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting upon it" (Relph 1976:65–6, original emphasis). Yet there is more at play: one's sense of place is affected by one's sense of time (Tuan 1977). Time is experienced differently in different stages of life, and therefore, even place is. An adult cannot return to the very same place that they knew as a child, for whom time stood practically still and the environment was mostly understood through senses. The unique experiences of place gained in childhood are thus especially meaningful, as they can never fully be replaced with memories from adulthood. Furthermore, sometimes knowing a place is more associated with intensity than with extensity. Long residence does not guarantee there will be much to look back on, and significant events that emotionally bind us to a place forever may be short in duration. Like with people, we might fall in love with a place at first sight (Tuan 1977).

Beyond the differences between these interpretations of sense of place is the idea that there is worth in *sensing* of place. This is also the understanding applied in this thesis: by asking about the senses of place Malmö Finns have in Malmö, I am combining these meanings, and asking what kind of a place Malmö is to them; what kinds of identities they give to it; how they sense it.

Home – the place of belonging?

Home is an intimate place, resulting from practices that create attachment (Tuan 1977). Bonds are tied with specific places where experience has proved it safe to perform behaviors such as eating, sleeping, and excreting (Relph 1976). Home can provide sense of stability, continuity, permanence, and self; "a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things" (*ibid.*:38). Attachment to homeplace thus often becomes especially important in times of adversity (hooks 2009; Relph 1967). Every day, home is generated through the ordinary. Profound attachment "may come simply with familiarity and ease, with the assurance of nurture and security, with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time" (Tuan 1977:159). The memories gathered through senses and emotions during childhood stay with us and form our allegiances for life – and "so the touch and the heart make up their magpie hoard, heedless of the calculating eye and intelligence" (*ibid.*:145). As we are known and know others, we form bonds of familiarity and care, commitment, and consideration towards place (Relph 1976).

To bell hooks (2009:221), hometown is the "landscape of remembered belonging." Today, many who have left that landscape are looking for the experience of coming home elsewhere. Yet, according to hooks, one's foundation of being lies in the landscape of origin and understanding this is necessary for engendering a sense of belonging at any place. The events of childhood leave elemental traces, forming "the stories we tell someone about ourselves when we meet and begin the process of getting to know one another" (*ibid.*:17). How exile was once the ultimate punishment, and longing for home a possible cause of death, is very telling of the importance of homeplace (Tuan 1977; Relph 1976). *Nostalgia*, the possibly lethal medical condition of the 17th century, referred to symptoms such as lack of appetite, sleeplessness, fever, and "persistent thinking of home" (Relph 1976:41). Today, nostalgia is yearning to the past and idealizing it (hooks 2009). Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) claims that in times of a sense of control over one's location, people feel little need to idealize the past, and that nostalgia first appears when there is powerlessness over sudden change. In bell hooks' experience, however, even moving voluntarily "evoked extreme feelings of abandonment and loss. It was like dying" (2009:18) – medical nostalgia.

Traditionally, *belonging* has been understood as "attachment to what is near to you … knowing other people in the area, being socially active in the neighbourhood, being embedded in ties of kin, and understanding local traditions and customs" (Savage et al. 2005:20). However, not all experiences of belonging are the result of long-term rootedness and investment in one place. Mike Savage (2008) argues that place attachment has undergone significant transformation during the past century. In the *functional* 1950s–70s period, to those with little chance for mobility, feelings of belonging were predominantly based on the hometown being a familiar place where the locals and their families lived, where they were 'born and bred.' Places were valuable in "whether they offer people the chance to live a decent life" (Savage 2008:6) – a pragmatic attachment that was shared with the migrating businessmen and their housewives. For them, places might provide good housing, schooling, and weather conditions, work

opportunities and cultural stimulation. If they did not, one could decide to relocate, and the very possibility to do so provided basis for identity formation.

In contrast, today's *enchanted* landscapes offer means for self-identification. While traditional locals express their belonging to the landscape by emphasizing always having lived there, and through nostalgic remarks of how it is not 'how it used to be,' mobile cosmopolitans may belong to a place regardless of only recently having moved there. With the unique 'aura' of a place, one's choice of location becomes telling of one's identity (Savage 2008). Belonging, then, is elective. The individual chooses a place as part of themselves while staying semidetached from it, instead of belonging a community set in one place by tradition. However, oftentimes the perspective found from feeling semidetached in one's new environment leads one to reflect on belonging in the old place. Bell hooks analyzes living elsewhere, and how it strengthened her homeplace identity and taught her more about this homeplace:

> This is what experience of exile can do, change your mind, utterly transform one's perception of the world of home. The differences in geographical location imprinted on my psyche and habits of being home became more evident away from home. --- I placed the portrait of a landscape I knew intimately alongside the stereotypical way of seeing that world as it was represented by outsiders. (2009:13–4)

While deeply embedded cultural values and existing stereotypes may doom one to alienation at a new place, the changes that have taken place within one can also render one's new identity incompatible with the old homeplace. To bell hooks, this was "mental exile, the condition of feeling split was damaging, caused a breaking down of the spirit" (2009:15). Searching for belonging is thus not always a pleasant process.

Perhaps a central part of home is then the people one feels 'at home' with. According to Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), to a small child, a parent is the most important place. In adult age, too, homes can be found in other people, seeing "how one human being can 'nest' in another" (*ibid.*:139). Nevertheless, the personified homes do not necessarily have to be just one person, a parent or a lover, or even one's entire family. Home can very well be an extended community of like-minded living persons and ancestors, such as in bell hooks' local culture of belonging. But just as well, a home can grow too small. In that case, too much familiarity becomes limiting, and have one feeling trapped in everyday life. The boundedness of place becomes boundedness of soul. This is why Edward Relph (1976:42) suggests that "Our experience of place, and especially of home, is a dialectical one – balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape." But neither does *home* have to be a singular, specific place. To those who have left homeplace, who feel uprooted,

> At times home is nowhere. At times one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal, fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become. (hooks 1989:19)

From this perspective, home does not have to symbolize stability, bounded security. Home could be a web of memories of where we came from aligned with insights on where we are on our way to. It is this dynamic process of home-making and home-coming that gives hope of the radical transformation power of having one's heart dispersed across places, of being in-between without being lost.

Method, methodology & material

The foundation

In a phenomenological approach, people are considered active agents, while also being situated within cultural frameworks that affect one's views and intentions. The focus lies on understanding the experiences of people through their eyes as they construct their realities by making meaning of daily life, which makes a qualitative research design is fitting (Denscombe 2018). Three qualitative data collection techniques were thus applied: *open-ended questionnaire* with 21 respondents in November 2020, and two *semi-structured interviews* as well as a *focus group* of three participants in February 2021. This mix allowed not only to direct the more in-depth discussions into a direction proven meaningful in the initial stage, but also to increase the reliability of data by collecting it in somewhat different contexts: orally as well as in writing, and in both individual and group settings. The lag between the stages of data collection also established a level of time-based data triangulation, which can enrich the reliability of material as it is gathered in different times (*ibid.*).

The gathered material was then explored through *narrative analysis*, complemented by *thematic analysis*. However, because the researcher is also inclined to view matters through their own cultural framework, a conscious effort must be made to observe open-mindedly, providing detailed description of the process, and acknowledging one's own position (Denscombe 2018). In the context of this study, this means that while I have attempted to view matters from the participant perspective, as a young, white, relatively recently immigrated Finnish person from a middle-class background, I am both part of the studied population and have specific experiences within it. Although I cannot look at the phenomena with a detached mind, I am neither as affected by an outsider's cultural framework. Simultaneously, I have had the privilege of talking with the participants in their first languages and may be able to immerse in their stories in a way that a complete outsider could not.

Sampling

A variation of *generic purposive sampling* was used, in which the sample is limited on pre-established criteria that are believed to help answer the research questions (Bryman 2016). In this case, the criteria for participants were 1) living in Malmö, 2) aged 18 or above, and 3) self-identifies with the term *Sweden Finn*, *Finnish*, and/or *someone with Finnish background*. As the lack of demographic statistics on the Malmö Finns made it impossible to form a sample around quotas resembling the composition of the population, one mission was to establish some of this knowledge in the study process itself. However, this information does not reveal the demographics of the Malmö Finns as such, but it is useful in analyzing whose experiences are certainly absent from the data. To draw generalizable conclusions, a wider and more varied respondent base would have been necessary, but the sample size can be justified in relation to the principle of depth over breadth, as well as the time and resources available.

Furthermore, as the studied population is relatively small and not easily identified, an inevitable level of *opportunistic sampling* was applied. This means that data is gathered from people that may be able to provide

it, when there is difficulty accessing the population (Bryman 2016). Therefore, anyone who saw the invitation and filled the population criteria was welcome to participate. In an attempt at *snowballing*, the respondents were encouraged to invite others in the population to participate. Although it is unclear whether anyone found the study through this route, this is in general a good way to access hard-to-reach populations based on networks of identity and other group characteristics (Bryman 2016; Denscombe 2018). As is motivated in small-scale qualitative projects like this, the approach was then to proceed with an *explorative* strategy, in which the focus is on accumulation of new ideas and insights rather than results that can be generalized to population level (Denscombe 2018). This is reflected on the studied sample, and therefore, the case only covers some experiences of Malmö Finns, and there is no attempt to compare findings between groups within the sample. Finally, seeing that the material was based on personal and varied life histories, all in all, the elaborate answers of participants in all stages certainly provided plenty of rich data to be analyzed.

Online questionnaire

In November 2020, the first phase of data collection was initiated by distributing an invitation to participate (Appendix 1). The online questionnaire was accessible via a direct link in the invitation, and everything was communicated in both Finnish and Swedish. The invitation was posted in a private Facebook group of approximately 740 local persons with Finnish roots, *Malmön ihanat ihmiset* (n.d.).[1] Two local organizations were also requested to share the invitation with their members, of which *MORO – Malmön Ruotsinsuomalaiset Nuoret* agreed to publish it on their Facebook page with approximately 280 followers (n.d.).[2] Such online platforms can provide easy, free, and fast access to the population by gathering people who are known to have a shared interest or identity, and who may otherwise be difficult to find and identify (Denscombe 2018). Simultaneously, these organizations could 'lend out' their credibility to the study project, which has been suggested to increase responses (*ibid.*).

However, these channels have probably affected the sample so that it only contains those who are comfortable using the internet and who have relatively large interest in (Sweden/Malmö) Finnish matters. Furthermore, as the respondents were recruited on Facebook, an underlying sense of being less anonymous may persist and affect the data. Following Denscombe's (2018) solution to this, confidentiality was highlighted frequently. The later stages of the project were announced already at this point to engage prospective participants and enhance participation (*ibid.*). Interest in these could be expressed at the end of the online survey (Appendix 2), or by email, which was to include persons who did not wish to participate in the online questionnaire or type in identifying information in connection to personal stories.

Of the 21 online questionnaire responses, 18 were in Finnish and three in Swedish. This ratio presents a clearly larger share of Swedish-speakers than among the population of Finland, which has also generally been the case with Finnish immigrants in Sweden (Allardt 1996; Reinans 1996). Following the obligatory questions on consent, place of residence, and age, respondents were presented with three additional closed-ended questions (Appendix 2), which would reveal demographic information on the sample. The results show that there were few participants under the age of 36 (n=3) or 66 and above (n=3).

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[1] Finnish for 'The lovely people of Malmö.'
[2] Finnish for 'Sweden Finnish youth of Malmö.'

Approximately half of the participants were in ages 36–55 (n=11). Both the median and the mode laid within the category 46–55, although none of the three participants who replied in Swedish were in these ages (being both older and younger). The respondents as a group had a significantly higher education level than their parents. The majority (n=14) of the participants had a bachelor's degree, and the rest an even higher education level. The most common highest education level of a participant's parent was secondary education, followed by bachelor's degree. Therefore, while the sample does not seem to represent recently immigrated adventurous youngsters, it is probably neither characterized by the 1960s–70s workforce migrants.

Categories *female*, *male*, and *other* were provided as alternatives for the participant's gender, in line with Statistic Sweden's recommendations on inclusive use of language in questionnaires (SCB 2020d). All participants apart from one (male) turned out to be female, which obviously shows lacking representation (as it seems quite unlikely that only 1 in 21 Malmö Finns are male). A later interview revealed that *Malmön ihanat ihmiset* had originally been a group for women, and although this is not the case anymore, it could still be a predominant feature and have affected the sample. Then again, it is debatable whether males from a Finnish background would generally be less interested in discussing their intimate stories with a stranger about to publish these. Overall, lengthy and intricate questionnaires do run a risk of mental exhaustion and participant withdrawal (Denscombe 2018). This risk was taken to guarantee analyzable material and alleviated by making none of the open-ended questions obligatory and encouraging participation according to one's capacity.

Semi-structured interviews

In February 2021, all participants who had expressed their interest in interviews or focus groups were contacted (Appendix 3). The three persons who were available at the same time took part in a focus group, and two more were interviewed. Due to health risks associated with the Coronavirus, all discussions were held via online video calls. All respondents were provided clear instructions on using the online meeting programme Zoom, and when preferred by the participant, another application was chosen. This was to ensure there would be minimal technical barrier to participate, as this can be a problem with online methods (Bryman 2016). Everyone participated in Finnish, and at their permission, the discussions were recorded, including their informed consent (see Appendix 4). Recording is helpful for catching and preserving the nuances in people's articulation of their experiences (Bryman 2016), and not having to take notes allowed me to stay present and pay attention to details. Although recording may have an impact on the participants and their answers (Denscombe 2018), the respondents seemed relaxed and genuine. All recordings were stored safely with a password protection.

The first interview took place on February 10th, 2021 and lasted for approximately 30 minutes; the other on February 15th with a duration of 35 minutes. Both interviews went smoothly, had a good atmosphere, and provided lots of material. An interview guide was prepared in advance (Appendix 4), the content of which was adjusted based on results from the questionnaire and the direction of research emerging from this. While the designed questions were taken up with each participant, the interviewees could also bring up their own stories and priorities, which led to individual follow-up questions. This is also the strength of semi-structured interviews: they generate deep data that leaves space for what people themselves find meaningful, while the researcher can still lead back the discussion to a frame that suits their specific needs

and confirm and clarify statements (Denscombe 2018). Semi-structured interviews may even be therapeutic, as the interviewee can talk about their lives and ideas to an interested listener (*ibid.*). There was hopefully some truth to this for the interview and focus group participants who presented elaborate personal stories while being in long-time isolation due to the pandemic. Then again, the presence of the researcher does run the risk of impacting the participants' responses (*ibid.*).

Holding the interviews and the focus group virtually made use of the benefits of online techniques: fewer time and economic impacts, and the participant's ability to freely choose a comfortable location in which it is secure to speak of personal matters (Bryman 2016). In contrast to telephone calls, the visual connection perhaps gave better emotional contact and access to non-verbal cues. Then again, during real-time online contacts the participant may be distracted by events taking place in their surroundings without the researcher knowing it. In my case, it was the researcher who was distracted, as an unexpected renovation project began in my apartment building during one interview. Finally, online methods also make it possible to reach populations that otherwise would not be accessible (*ibid.*), which especially true in the context of this study and the current pandemic.

Focus group

A focus group was conducted, as this is an excellent way to follow processes where people make sense of their experiences together with others (Bryman 2016). This was used for studying how the participating Malmö Finns make meaning both as a group and as individuals whose thoughts are elicited by the comments of others. The focus group took place on February 12th, 2021 and lasted for one hour, due to a participant's last-minute obligation elsewhere. This was long enough to discuss all the talking points (Appendix 5), although the participants seemed like they could have continued for longer. The focus group and the participants' informed consent were recorder. This was especially helpful in a focus group situation, as it can be of relevance to capture who says what and to trace how the insights were developed throughout the discussion (Bryman 2016). Personally, I would have found it impossible to take detailed notes while also moderating and following the discussion, as well as paying attention to dynamics and statements that may become relevant only in the light of a later context.

One male participant took part in the focus group, which increased representation within the data, seeing that the focus group provided a lot of material in comparison to individual questionnaire replies. In the beginning, the participants were informed that the purpose was to have a free, open discussion, after which they were asked to present themselves. The participants confirmed they did not know each other, although may have come across each other on social media. While the focus group participants were not a *natural group* (Bryman 2016), engagement in social media and the small size of the community may have meant a decrease in sense of confidentiality and thus affected the discussion. Nevertheless, all three respondents took part enthusiastically, communicated directly with each other, and developed the discussions into directions they were interested in. There were only minor technical problems, but as a location, the internet made it challenging to 'feel the room' and see others' intentions.

As a moderation tactic, I opted for minimal intervention, and I did not dispense turns in talking. As I wanted to study processes of meaning-making, a natural flow and a relaxed atmosphere was preferable over an excessively self-aware, controlled situation. However, I brought up topics related to the study when the discussion slowed down, and occasionally interfered if there were great problems with people

talking simultaneously, following up if someone had not had the chance to finish talking. From the perspective of the researcher, knowing how much to intervene can be difficult (Bryman 2016), and I certainly experienced that. I hoped to not manipulate the comments or the group dynamic, but also to gather relevant material and avoid participants having negative experiences of being trampled on. Positively, there was both agreement and disagreement, the latter of which was discussed openly and seemed to enhance the conversation rather than make participants upset. The focus group was very giving to me both research-wise and personally, and also the participants seemed happy to share their incredible life stories.

Narrative & thematic analysis

Narrative analysis can be used for exploring how people compose their 'personal worlds' (Denscombe 2018). Therefore, "the focus of attention shifts from 'what actually happened?' to 'how do people make sense of what happened?'" (Bryman 2016:589). Narrative analysis thus looks at people's stories of themselves, their lives, and their experiences, within a context: in relation to other events, and surrounded by other stories. There are at least two primary ways to go about data collection when using narrative analysis: stories can be elicited by explicitly encouraging people to provide detailed accounts of events, or stories can be gathered more 'organically' – by letting people switch into narrative mode as they talk of their experiences (*ibid.*). The latter approach was applied in this study: people were asked questions of their lives, and as they often intuitively started accounting for details, they were not pushed to construct a 'story' just to provide raw material. To me, this seemed like the more reliable and respectful approach. Moreover, rather than focusing on the structure of the narratives as such (e.g., by composing a timeline of the phases of story-building), this study emphasizes the content, that is, how identity, home, belonging, and place are negotiated by the participating Malmö Finns.

Initially, I read the questionnaire responses in December 2020, and adjusted the direction of the study based on this. In February 2021, I went revisited all material from the questionnaire, the focus group, and the interviews with the research questions in mind. Paying attention to repetitive comments, general lines of thought were found from the participants' stories. However, I did not wish to outline just one coherent and simple story of all participants. Therefore, I focused on statements that had detail, emotion, figurative language, and surprising comments. Then, I started gathering passages from narratives that exemplified both the common thoughts and the diverging ones. Thematic analysis was then used as a complement to build the story around central themes in the participants' stories. I could then sketch a picture emerging from the narratives and ideas of the participants and analyze these in relation to the conceptual framework and the background of this thesis.

In the next chapter, the results of this process are presented and discussed. As the idea of this study is to trace sense-making processes through stories, direct quotes are provided to give context and detail of how the insights were discovered. Seeing that narrative analysis has been a critique of categorization that fragments the data (Bryman 2016), the analysis chapter is not divided strictly between the research questions. The narratives were so intertwined that such categorization would have been quite meaningless and repetitive. Therefore, the findings are presented as a holistic story, organized around the core themes: *place-based identities*; *identity transformation across space*; *roots, contradiction & prejudice*; *relative belonging*; *nesting: people, memories & nature*; *homely language*; *the intimate, wild wild Malmö*; *international Malmö*; *relational Malmö*;

and *the Malmö of rationality, adventure & entrapment.* The answers to the research questions will then be clarified in the concluding chapter, where the implications of the study are also reflected upon.

In the presented material, details have been anonymized and omitted to protect the participants' integrity. The participants were assigned codes to increase anonymity and simultaneously provide the context. Interviewees were given the letter I, and focus group participants the letter F, followed by a number to separate between participants. The questionnaire replies are all marked with Q. Finally, all quotes are my translations from either Finnish or Swedish to English. This inevitably means that the quotes are also my interpretation of the original statements. Therefore, ambiguities and concepts with missing English counterparts will be explained in the notes.

Analysis & findings

Place-based identities

Nearly all participants were born in Finland to parents of Finnish nationality and moved to Sweden and Malmö in adult age. Many moved in their 20s, although to some that was half a century ago and to others a few years ago. Only one participant reported being born in Sweden to Finnish parents who had arrived with the large post-war workforce migration waves. This is certainly a great limitation, as it means that almost everyone was a first-generation immigrant. Among the interviewees and the focus group participants, all but one have come to Sweden during the 1970s and the 1980s. However, in the questionnaire, relatively recent immigrants were represented considerably better. When the questionnaire respondents were asked to state the different place-based names they used for themselves, a wide range of terms arose. The most popular of these were *a Finn living in Sweden* (n = 7), *Finnish* (n = 5), *Malmöite* (n = 4), *a Finn living in Malmö* (n = 4), and *Sweden Finn* (n = 3). This also shows that there was no specific place-based name that even half of the questionnaire respondents would agree on. Other place-based identities that came up were *expatriate Finn*, *a Finland Swede living in Malmö*, *a foreigner living in Malmö*, *Skåne Finn*, *North-European* and *European*. Furthermore, two focus group members arrived at the terms *östersjöare* and *itämerensuomalainen* (a demonym for the Baltic Sea, and 'Baltic Finn,' respectively.) This reflected the difficulty of fully identifying with either country, and the sense of discrepancy between the two nation-state-places.

Unsurprisingly, residence in a certain place is a motivation said to lie behind which place-based names are identified with. However, the scale of the place of residence that is the primary source of identity varies between people – from the city to the region, the nation-state, the subcontinent, and the continent. There are numerous logics behind the choice of scale, although this was not always clearly motivated. For some, a large scale can become decisive as it emerges from a tiny scale – that is, the family home. In line with other similar frequently appearing stories, one questionnaire participant explained: "I have lived in Sweden for over 30 years, I partly feel that I am Swedish, my family is Swedish." Although the person does not *feel* fully Swedish, they could domiciliate themselves into the identity of a Swede, because their 'home folk' are that. Or, as for some, will be that in the future – as another Swedish-identifying respondent wrote: "I don't feel that I am Swedish, I don't use Swedish traditions, but I experience that my child will be Swedish."

The wide size range of place-based identities reminds that our definition of the scale of place shifts according to our focus (Relph 1976), which means that we can concentrate on and identify with places too large for us to see, such as the nation-state (Tuan 1977). Home is a personal place loaded with emotional meaning (*ibid.*); and it is thus no wonder that home may have the power to shape one's national identity to the extent it does for the participants. Nevertheless, when talking of home, it is important to remember that people themselves perhaps do not make sense of home in terms of geographical place, but rather in terms of family and memories, for example – although from the theoretical perspective applied here, both are certainly ingredients of place.[3]

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[3] The ways in which the participants do make sense of home are returned to later in this chapter.

Another tendency present in the reasoning of the participant cited above, and of various others, is that identification with place is connected to time. One person deemed themselves to be Nordic, as the share of time currently spent in Malmö did not qualify for identifying with Malmö, writing: "I … only think about this as my place of residence, maybe this also has to do with working in Denmark and that a large part of my daily life revolves around a third country" (Q). To some, a decade's residence in Malmö is not enough to justify the identity of a Malmöite, while to another person, the same duration poses no problems for appropriating this identity. In this case, identification with Malmö is rather the result of a conscious choice to move there, of all places. Here there are many elements of 'elective belonging' (Savage 2008; Savage at al. 2005): Malmö was chosen based on its character, and because Malmö was specifically chosen, the person can identify with it. One's choice of location then tells something about one as a person; the identity of Malmö can be embedded into one's own identity. However, it is not only the duration of dwelling in one's current place that matters – time spent in previous surroundings can make it impossible to identify with one's new settings, which was a problem for participants who identify strongly with the nature in one's home region.

What is more, place-based identities can be centered on how activities are distributed across space and estimated benefit from different identities. During an interview, one participant first mentioned that the place-related term they identify with is Malmöite, but then that they also identify as Swedish in situations where that is more advantageous or accepted by Swedes. This they could justify in the following way: "I think Swedishness is rather dependent on that I live and influence here and raise my children here and pay my taxes here and so on, so in that way I'm just as Swedish as anyone else" (I1). Again, the environment in which one's children grow up is an important part of this identity, but here, being Swedish can even be tactical and reasoned around other involvements in this place called Sweden. In emphasizing one's Swedishness to others, it seems that especially useful are the signifiers that communicate being an established and positive part of the local society, such as tax-paying. However, local involvement as a foundation for identity may also take other forms: one participant declares their Scanian identity is a result of sharing the "Scanian attitude of dislike for Stockholmers" (F1). Like Doreen Massey (1994) writes, place identities are assigned by people depending on how they see a place in relation to other places; what is included in and excluded from that place. Similarly, this participant sees Stockholm as distant to Skåne both physically and mentally, and thus includes themselves as one of those who are closer, and who share this feeling.

Notions of inner similarity became apparent also in discussions of national identity based on heritage. Comments like "I am always Finnish in my customs and my soul" (Q) and "Finnish is my ethnic identity" (Q) show that central to identities are ideas of traditions, character, and physical traits shared by people descending from a certain place. However, while nation-states are considered large places in this thesis, national identity is not a mere attribute of proximity in physical space, seeing that its dominance as a mode of identification is deeply rooted in political, economic, and cultural projects over time (Andersen 2016; Zelinsky 2001; Macdonald 1993). When speaking of national identity, people may instead of place refer to cultural and (what are seen as) biological factors. Nevertheless, these ideas are still connected to place, descendance from which is seen as unifying between people and decisive in parts of one's being. As identities may be held on to exceedingly in the face of threat (Massey 1994; Macdonald 1993), it is only logical that one's Finnishness or Sweden Finnishness is emphasized in Sweden. Indeed, several participants mention that their identity is based on them being part of a cultural and/or linguistic minority (whether Sweden Finn or Finland Swede). Therefore, one's minority position in a given place and experiences of obliviousness or oppression from the majority enhance one's nation-based identity.

Although national identity was to some so self-evident and intuitive that it raised few questions, and on the other hand, to others such a questionable concept that it was difficult to discuss, there is still a common factor – namely, growing awareness of this identity after emigration to Sweden.

Identity transformation across space

Following the move to Sweden, the national identities of many participants underwent a reconfiguration. In several stories, this was into the Swedish direction, as "belonging to the crowd" was important (Q), and sometimes, the immigrants were also actively forced into that direction through assimilationist policies. These experiences are more common in the responses of participants who arrived in Sweden for several decades ago, and many of them report reclaiming a more Finnish identity later. However, to others, there has been an opposite tendency from the beginning, and the move to Sweden has only strengthened one's Finnish national identity. One questionnaire respondent mentions that the importance of Finnish language and culture became greater, especially after having children, with whom the participant hoped to share these. Another one tells: "I have noticed that Swedes are not as tolerant and open-minded as they imply. I probably wouldn't be as strict about my national identity if I lived in Finland." Even if the Finnish identity of both persons has been enhanced by relocation to Sweden, examples like these suggest that there is great variance in how positive experience this has been.

However, the changes in one's identity as one changes places do not happen only once in a lifetime. Although some assured this is not the case, the identities of many respondents are affected continuously as they travel between places. There were those who reported that they immediately appropriate the identity of a Finn upon arrival to Finland, despite otherwise identifying as a Swede or a Malmöite, for instance. To several others, the Finnish identity they have in Sweden persists only partly when visiting Finland. Due to the changes that have taken place within them during the years lived in Sweden, they cannot feel completely Finnish there. One participant clarified: "In Sweden I am always Finnish, in Finland an expatriate Finn, and elsewhere abroad I am both Finnish and Swedish" (Q).

While these identity transformations revolve around contrast to local identities, interestingly, the said participant is Swedish only outside both Sweden and Finland. Somehow, Swedish national identity is part of them, yet a part that does not manifest in Finland; there they are only a Finn living ambiguously 'abroad' – never fully identifying with the majority population of any place. Similar notions are brought to the fore by bell hooks' (2009): one's community of origin separates one from the locals of one's new place, yet one has become too shaped by the new experiences to feel at ease in one's hometown. Furthermore, this does also resonate with the idea that today's mobile lives make it difficult to identify with any place (Tuan 1977). This is in stark contrast with 'elective belonging' (Savage 2008; Savage et al. 2005): relocating between places, one is not choosing places as parts of one's identity but loses grasp of the ability to identify with one's current location.

Moreover, identification can vary not only when moving across geographical space, but also between more specific social situations. One participant reports that in "situations where ethnicity matters" they are Finnish (Q). For Interviewee 2, it was impossible to identify as a Sweden Finn in the days that they only spent time with Swedish people, and today, this term is fitting as the interviewee has found a community of people with Finnish background in Malmö. Some feel more Finnish in the presence of other Finns, like this questionnaire respondent notes: "I feel more Finnish when I am around other Finns.

The language connection is strong." Finnish company also influences in the opposite direction, like for this participant, who speaks of being around other Finns:

> I1: I feel more Swedish … I have lived here all my adulthood, so the Finnish identity is not important in the same way anymore. You kind of let some things go … The Finns that are here now have not been here as long, and then the bonds with the home country are somehow more important. But I don't feel estranged [from them], no.[4]

Although nations may be 'imagined communities' in the words of Benedict Anderson (2016), there are anyhow very real consequences to the people who are associated with that community by others or excluded from another community, regardless of how they self-identify. A questionnaire respondent illustrates this: "I don't necessarily experience myself differently I different situations, but my surroundings define me differently in different situations. As an immigrant/emigrant you are always somewhat different in the eyes of your surroundings." From this it follows that it is not only our inner convictions that dictate whether we can connect with our environment – our identities are also assigned by others, like Castells (2004) and Macdonald (1993) suggest.

Roots, contradiction & prejudice

An important part of identity formation among the participants was configuring where they belong and where one's home is. This confirms that home can indeed be the birthplace of identity and the foundation on which negotiations over one's identity are built (Relph 1976; hooks 2009). This process was often articulated in terms of 'roots,' which could mean that one's personal history allowed one to belong both in Malmö and in Finland. One participant explained:

> F3: For a very long after moving from Helsinki I still had the feeling that when I am back there … I never even left … although every now and then there are some new houses somewhere … on some level it still feels that everything is the same, and because I have lived a considerable part of my adulthood in Finland, I am kind of rooted there

Therefore, one's "territory has extended" to cover both Malmö and places in Finland, and both feel like homes (F1). However, rootedness in one place does not always make for a pleasant experience in another place – ambiguous belonging had some participants feeling contradicted. Despite a strong Finnish identity, many have lost their home-feeling of Finland, and while Malmö is the everyday home, it is difficult to feel that one belongs there, either, because of one's background. Stories of estrangement during visits to Finland were told frequently. A questionnaire respondent mentioned that they belong in both places, but there are more significant emotional bonds with Finland, yet they feel like "a visitor, a holidaymaker" there. Interviewee 1 said that in Finland, they have an inexorable sense of belonging with their family, but otherwise they feel like a stranger, as they do not understand anymore how practical daily matters, such as the public transport, function.[5] Making sense of one's belonging was thus not always

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[4] The Finnish word *vieras* lacks an English counterpart that would convey the same meanings and feelings. *Vieras* can be used for unfamiliar, unknown, estranged, strange, a stranger, or a guest. I believe it is something like a combination of the first five meanings the participant hopes to convey here.

[5] See previous note on the translation 'stranger.'

a straightforward task. This is especially the case when there is the burden of balancing between realism and nostalgia:

> Q: Finland feels like the *lintukoto* of my dreams although I know that when I'm there the reality might be something else.[6] I dream of Finland often even though I like it in Malmö … I definitely feel that I belong more in Finland, because I find more similarities in myself to Finnishness and Finland. Then again, my own identity has been shaped by living in Malmö, and I have a difficult time trying to see myself in the Finnish society.

Furthermore, negotiations over belonging have surfaced increasingly as the Coronavirus pandemic has confined many into their homes and reinforced national borders. A questionnaire respondent who feels that there is little cultural difference between Finland and Sweden declared: "Corona drew back the border, otherwise you don't really notice it." The tightened border controls have also brought up questions on nationality 'of the wrong place.' Interviewee 1, whose Finnish passport had been about to expire, maintained that citizenship was not important until times of Corona. Without Danish citizenship, travel restrictions hindered the interviewee from renewing the passport at the nearest embassy in Copenhagen; if it expired, they may not be able to cross borders at all; and renewing it in Helsinki caused worry that they might not be allowed to return to Sweden. Although discussed in very practical terms, the underlying implication is that the reinforcement of these political borders, which have long been almost non-existent to Nordic citizens, does agitate thoughts on national identity when it can no longer be taken for granted. This means that while globalizing processes and postmodern times have certainly shaken the foundations of simple, straightforward national identities (Zelinsky 2001), it is also true that senses of emergency do bring with them the need to resolve who one is and where one belongs (hooks 2009; Relph 1976).

The current situation was also closely intertwined in the identities and belongings of the focus group participants. To a participant who has now been in quarantine for over a year, and has thus not been able to travel to Finland for the first time in 50 years, these themes were triggered by mourning:

> F2: It hurts so much … these trips to Finland have been absolutely necessary to me mentally during all these years … many times I say I am an *östersjöare*.[7] Because things have changed so much in Finland that … if I would spend everyday life there, then I'd definitely feel that I am Swedish, seeing that I have never lived in Finland as an adult … It's not negative, it's positive, kind of having your feet, and spirit, and mentality in two different countries, positively … During these 50 years there have definitely been periods when I have felt that I don't belong anywhere, because I anyway have a Finnish mentality that doesn't always suit Swedish working life. And then I feel that I know this society much better than how I know the Finnish society. So positively put, I am *östersjöare*

While another long-timer joins in to suggest the term *itämerensuomalainen* ('Baltic Finn'), the original name *östersjöare, with* its reference to the sea and the areas framing it, shows how it has been necessary for 'coming home' psychologically to give up reference to nationality. It represents positive in-betweenness, identification with the shared similarities and differences of the places within this area. After a battle of feeling split and placeless, deciding whether one belongs to one country or the other, both, or none of them; this *östersjöare* has found a home of another scale and logic. At the time, the term perhaps also

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[6] *Lintukoto*, literally 'bird home' derives from Finnish mythology and is today often used as a reference to a paradise-like homely place of safety, peace, and happiness. In critical use of this word, like in this context, I believe *lintukoto* contains the idea that such an enclosed haven of security and perfection is really obliviousness and illusion.
[7] Demonym for the Baltic Sea.

reflects the transitions over this sea, the life that takes place on both sides, but that is still divided by the sea. Another participant described such a hybrid belonging as having one's "head in Småland and feet on Åland" (Q). On the other hand, some participants denied having any conflicting feelings of belonging, yet instantaneously brought up experiences of not belonging. In practice, this mean that many who presented that they belong in both countries then spoke of the conflicts they have both in Sweden and in Finland with locals who criticize the participant's 'other place.' Interestingly, this was not always narrated as a negative experience, but rather as a sign that the participant had over time cultivated a greater perspective on both places. However, in contrast to the stories suggesting such clashes are the result of refined 'objectivity,' these conflicts have a negative impact on many participants' ability to belong.

Stereotypes and unpleasant ideas of Finnishness seem to be a common problem among the participating Malmö Finns, as they came up frequently in narratives on belonging in Sweden. Especially to those who moved to Malmö several decades ago, the oppressive attitudes are presented as a key factor in forming one's cultural identity and expression. According to the participants, the Finns' bad reputation, derogatory jokes, and being seen as intellectually inferior and 'backwards' are among factors that have resulted in attempts at erasing and disguising one's features that are seen as 'Finnish' by the majority population. Furthermore, these factors are believed to spring from historical relations, especially the ideas established during the Swedish racial biology projects, which have been unconsciously inherited by later generations of Swedes. Belonging in Sweden has initially been a central goal for many participating Malmö Finns who arrived before the 1990s, to the extent that it had to be bought with self-erasure. For example, by not speaking of their Finnishness and switching into a Swedish surname, one "started being treated in a completely different way" (F2).

The negative attitudes have not only affected the identities and senses of belonging of the first-generation Finnish immigrants, but also those of their children. To them, Finnish heritage became a great source of shamefulness during their youth:

> FI: I think our [children] at one point had this phase that … [they] were kind of ashamed, at that age when you are adolescent and in general parents are so embarrassing, so this Finland [thing] was connected to that shamefulness

The negative ideas have thus been inherited also among the Malmö Finns themselves – internalized. However, these attitudes are not just history, and many Malmö Finns still today seem to be faced with the decision whether to distance oneself from ideas of Finnishness to fully belong. One participant wrote:

> Q: Finns are still commented to be factory workers who are drawn to alcohol and swing with their knives. I have come across prejudices regarding Finns, although in the next sentence I will hear – but you aren't part of that crowd really

This shows that the attitudes persist, and like is typical for stereotypes, they are upheld by excluding the observations that cannot reinforce the image (Hall 1997). Here, too, the person facing these stereotypes has the chance to try to disconnect from the group which is seen negatively by emphasizing contrasting behaviors and avoiding the reinforcing ones; or to interfere with the negative image and risk never belonging. However, it should be noted that not all participants have encountered negative comments or been that affected by them – to some, stereotypes of Finns are in fact "folklore that is dying out" (F3). And what is more, the few positive comments that were encountered even led to a "greater patriotic pride than before" (Q).

Relative belonging

Perhaps the negative attitudes from the majority population have made it especially important to the Malmö Finns to find others 'like them.' Many have entered the local Finn networks through the Finnish Facebook group, Finnish interest groups, and through their children. According to the participants, this has helped in creating a home and birthing a sense of belonging in Malmö. They have found new company in Malmö, and a community of their own. However, some participants who have lived in Malmö for decades reminded that not every Malmö Finn is part of the *same* community. Interviewee 1 noted how in "the beginning of the 80s, there were still these who came as labor force migrants in their days" and nowadays, it seems "there are more of those … academics and others." However, the experiences of Finns in Malmö have not only been differentiated by class, but also by gender and age. Focus group participant 1 reasons that in the 1980s, it was perhaps easier being a young Finnish woman in Sweden than a Finnish working-age man: "A woman is somehow more harmless and less dangerous … nobody thought that we would be competing for someone else's job."

That social position is embedded in one's sense of belonging becomes apparent also in experiences of being determined by others and through 'Others.' Many acknowledged that how much of an outsider they are treated as is based on who they are compared with, and those who have non-European or non-Nordic family members, friends, or colleagues feel less "lost in Swedish society" (F3) or less excluded. This becomes especially clear in the story of this participant:

> I1: [My] husband was … like clearly an outsider … he was clearly seen as a foreigner, and he was maybe even considered a little bit suspicious in one way … as I was Finnish and based on my appearance could have just as well been Swedish, it somehow balanced it so that I wasn't as foreign then. That you know, Finns, 'they are almost like Swedes'

Belonging, too, is then relational and relative, and not least in its preconditions. That is to say: whether one will manage to cultivate a feeling of belonging in a place is closely tied to the level of acceptance received from other people in that place, and how much one is accepted depends on one's position on a range of people organized based on 'positive' ideas, such as perceived sameness, malleability, and value to the majority society. In a discussion between the focus group participants, this is illustrated by a stereotypical story of Finns in Sweden which has later been assigned new protagonists. A participant states that being the first foreigner at their university in the 1970s, they had to defend to Swedes everything foreigners did, which ultimately led to the participant bringing home a classmate to prove that Finns do not rip apart parquet floors to grow potatoes in the living room. Roughly twenty years later, the participant's mother, who had recently moved to Sweden, called to ask if this participant had heard that Yugoslavians in Sweden do the very same thing. This story triggered a process of figuring out why it is easier to belong in Sweden as a person of Finnish background today:

> F2: [The story] proves how these prejudices are directed towards those you don't know, they travel forward, are inherited in different ways. We Finns got rid of these potato stories but then they look up another group that they don't know … It isn't that far away [in time], the battle over our own identity here

> F3: I think that Finns have sort of normalized in Sweden, because that is no longer the biggest group that comes from the outside

F1: Yes and then again we are already so many, and Finnish names are already nowadays completely … normal

F3: Yeah and then again … I read somewhere that the demographics of Malmö are approximately the same as in Los Angeles, that was it now 40% have been born outside Sweden …

F1: In Malmö I by the way have a little bit of this habit that … I so willingly speak Finnish with my children. So that everyone notices that I'm not Swedish after all … that I'm one of you

The changes of the previous half a century have thus worked in favor of the Malmö Finns' chances to belong. Immigrants who are perceived as 'more different' have arrived; immigration in Sweden is no longer dominated by Finns; yet Finns are everywhere and in the roots of so many Swedes; and especially Malmö is so 'multicultural' that descending from somewhere else is the norm – to the extent that, arguably, acceptance now has to be won from others from an immigrant background. In this sense, the Malmö Finns seem to occupy a very specific position in the game of belonging. They may affiliate to Swedes of a Swede background or portray themselves as 'one of the immigrants' based whichever works in their favor in a given situation. Whether this is true from the perspective of these potential affiliates, however, is a different question.

Nesting: people, memories & nature

The presence of other people does not only form how one is being determined from the outside. One can also find belonging in other people, 'nest' in them (Tuan 1977). To one respondent, Finland is a dearly missed home country, yet Malmö, in their words, "is where I live, my home and my future home, because it is the home of my child" (Q). People have thus the power to make a place into a home even if one's loyalties lie elsewhere. This was made clear by most of the participants, and many asserted that place does not matter as such as a source of belonging, yearning, attachment, or home-feeling, but people do. Having one's children and grandchildren in Malmö is what makes it the home of many participants. Nevertheless, place does play a part in this, as it gathers people together, and its worth was emphasized in stories of common meeting places. To Interviewee 2, Finland is home, but not as much as when the extended family had one specific home they could gather in during the holidays and on other occasions. After the death of the family member whose home this was, Finland, too, has become distant, and having to travel from one municipality to another, meeting people separately, has eroded the home-feeling. A questionnaire participant who allegedly feels no attachment towards places spoke of a specific small town and the previous house of the family there, which have kept their homely association although the family would not want to move back, hinting that the home-feeling was founded on all their children having been born in that specific house.

Especially powerful in the birthing of a home are positive memories, childhood senses, and routines, as confirmed by the earlier quote from bell hooks (2009:221) maintaining that hometown is the "landscape of remembered belonging." Proof of the truth to this was provided in a brief yet accurate comment from a questionnaire respondent: "I have two homes, one in Malmö, and a home-home (childhood home)." How intuitively *home-home* is grasped as one's place of origin illustrates the weight placed on childhood belonging. However, home is also ingrained knowledge of how things are done in a certain place. To Interviewee 1, this is the foundation of home-feeling: "I know which street I can cross totally freely … if you are in an unfamiliar city you don't always even cross the street with the same confidence." Others

spoke of sensations of childhood as home: the liberty of walking around one's quarters without a care in the world, the sight of the wooden houses in one's neighborhood, the joy of playing in the yards and the park nearby. The days were repetitive and predictable, and one knew exactly one's place in the world. However, as these places have changed, extended, and been demolished, the ability to orient oneself and thus one's sense of home there have disappeared. Homes are thus made of people and rooted history, but also of very practical matters, such as local, tacit everyday knowledge.

Furthermore, a sense of home is not provided only by built environment, but also by the 'natural' one. The participating Malmö Finns may cultivate a sense of home in Sweden when associations to one's landscape of origin are brought by familiar features: spaciousness, clean nature, cliffs, spruce forests, a certain kind of light, or proximity to the sea. One can be comfortable in and enjoy many kinds of nature, perhaps even identify with them after a while, but to those who have lived long in Finland, the emotional connection with the landscape of one's home region is difficult to replace. This "basic landscape" provides an "external frame" for one's life, even to a Malmö Finn who has "never been a nature person but … the kind of person who smokes cigarettes and sits at a pub" (F1). One questionnaire respondent admitted that despite the years lived in Malmö, ties with the old environment in Finland are not easily released: "I don't feel any strong bond towards the city [Malmö] or the region [Skåne]. Rather I feel a strong bond with my home landscape."[8] Then again, another participant has attained a Scanian identity by developing over the years a similar "home landscape feeling" in Skåne (Q). Very much like bell hooks describes in *Belonging: a Culture of Place* (2009), these intimate connections show how belonging is associated with memories, familiarity, and importantly, nature, which may shape one's sensibilities and prospects of relating to other places for a lifetime.

Homely language

Even more often than the matters analyzed above, the participating Malmö Finns' stories of home turn to language. The Finnish language was presented as a significant part of home – both as the language one feels at home in, and more practically, as the language of the private sphere. It is "the language of emotions" through which words receive a deeper dimension, and in which "one can just be and relax" (Q). All the participants apart from very few exceptions are actively bilingual, at the very least. Most work and run their errands in Swedish, and speak Finnish with their children, friends, and relatives. However, many communicate in Swedish with their spouses, and it is not at all to everyone that the Finnish language has an active role in the everyday home. Furthermore, although the Finnish language may be the language of one's (emotional) home, it may not be one's strongest or primary language. Many participants note that despite being originally unilingual native Finnish speakers, Swedish is the easiest to use and the language that they have the widest vocabulary in. Nevertheless, the Finnish language is an important part of the participants' identities, especially to those who identify with the Sweden Finn minority group. Speaking Finnish carries a "different kind of homely feeling" (F1). One respondent explained:

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[8] The Finnish word *kotiseutu* lacks a fitting English translation. In German, this would be *Heimat*, and in Swedish *hembygd*. Riukulehto (2014:48) suggests as an English conceptualization of this the term "the homely landscape," a term that encompasses the many dimensions of landscape and ways of relating to it.

F3: You feel at home in a completely different way when you can speak your own language, the longer you live abroad the more you kind of… I remember while living in Finland if I met some Finn abroad I wouldn't even think of talking to them. Now if I hear someone speaking Finnish I immediately go and talk to them

This shows that living away from one's language has probably not only made these Malmö Finns aware of the significance of their mother tongue, but in fact increased its importance in creating a feeling of home. This applies also during visits to Finland, as whether one's children have learned Finnish is decisive in their ability to connect with their Finnish-speaking relatives. Nevertheless, the issue is not restricted to simply speaking the language or not – what kind of Finnish one can speak also makes a great difference for a sense of belonging in Finland. The disappointment of losing one's dialect or not passing it on caused sorrow to the focus group participants:

F2: I have grown up with the Helsinki slang … and nobody gets that slang anymore, I instead have to talk more like standard language. And when you run your errands in Helsinki for example, or other things, like when I was young and went dancing on the ship and some unknown man would come and ask me to dance..[9] Then I began talking, everyone always said 'oh how fine Finnish you speak' … I don't have a dialect, I can't speak any dialect … I'm not trying to speak finely … I just don't have any other alternative

Also the two other focus group participants have grown up with the Helsinki dialect, and notice how their children have little understanding of spoken Finnish during visits to Finland. They acknowledge that when hearing Finnish only at home in Sweden, the language use is less varied, and many colloquial expressions are lost. Focus group participant 1 has even had to translate to their adult-aged child discussions that take place on the street with a stranger.

To Finland Swedes living in Sweden, the issue of belonging is further complicated by having belonged to a language minority already in Finland. This was brought to the fore by a questionnaire respondent whose experiences in Sweden have been characterized not only by the classic Finnish stereotypes, but also oblivious comments like "such good Swedish you speak." They explained:

Q: In the beginning I didn't think I wasn't as "exotic" as many believed, really. One is surely affected by stuff like this, but even growing up in Helsinki there was prejudice against Finland Swedes. That has probably also "colored" me. The prejudices are reversed when one as a Finland Swede moves to Sweden, in Finland you are odd and in Sweden you are odd.

To native Finnish-speaking Malmö Finns, however, completely losing their language remains a common concern. This is closely connected to assimilatory and non-supportive practices by authorities in Sweden, in which language has played a central role. To varying extents, these have undermined the home language of many Malmö Finns. One participant admitted that they still have not recovered from such events, although they took place decades ago. Like many other expecting parents in those times, they were told by the doctor at the maternity clinic: "If you speak Finnish to [your child], you will ruin their whole life" (F2). This advice was apparently appreciated by the family of the participant's Swedish spouse, and despite the participant's lacking proficiency in Swedish, they were horrified enough to never speak Finnish with their child. This has caused great sorrow in light of later events:

F2: My [child] who is now [middle-aged] said to me a couple of years ago: I am so sad at you mom for not teaching me Finnish. And I really understand, because that would a been a gift of a language to them, but I knew nothing about this stuff then..

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[9] By 'ship,' the participant refers to the cruise ship between Stockholm and Helsinki or Turku.

However, even today, when the national minority language protection policies are in place, some developments seem to be moving in the wrong direction. Interviewee 1 mentioned that all the services for Finns have been narrowed down remarkably, and still some decades ago, there was a Finnish school in Malmö. The participants noted that "at that time, it was somehow a lot more taken for granted, that these things existed," which means that out of necessity, many parents of young Finns in Malmö are now very active in fighting the municipality for their children's language rights. Nevertheless, although the problem is recognized by many, this organizing around a shared issue has also been a source of a sense of community – even to the older Malmö Finns, who take pride in the energy the new generations put into this battle. While questions of language were not at all present in the conceptualizations of home of the scholars featured in the conceptual framework of this thesis, to the Malmö Finns, this certainly seems to be among the central foundations of feeling at home.

The intimate, wild wild Malmö

As the participants negotiated their identities and belonging in relation to places, in this process, places, too, were assigned identities. To some of them, a sense of Malmö is built around a few selected tiny places within the city. As an interviewee introduced their personal Malmö, it became clear that most of their sense of the city was built of homes. Speaking of their experiences of moving from Helsinki to Malmö, the participant noted how having low income in a place with higher prices had meant that meetings with people had to be moved from bars and restaurants to homes. Furthermore, they acknowledge:

> I2: I have never been someone who wanders around Malmö, I have just had my small circles, the specific places I have been in … So, everything has been pretty close by … I still don't know where all the suburbs are, and then if somebody lived a little bit further away I would always take the bus and not have any idea what's there in between

To this person, Malmö is indeed an intimate place, where home is the focus of intention, in line with the ideas of Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977). To many others, too, Malmö is a deeply lovable home-place – however, sometimes combined with presentations of it as a 'crime city.' The Malmö of one questionnaire respondent is likeable in its landscape and people, yet "rowdy and unpleasant due to criminality but also fantastic and open at the same time." Another one refers to comments of Malmö as a "horrible place and that there are only criminals here and people are shooting at any time" by dismissing them, and then declares their love to the city. Others remember the Malmö of the past as "shabby" and one's current home Möllevången as somewhere "only addicts were living," but are today lovers both places. In these senses of Malmö, the city is certainly a mixed bag of emotions.

International Malmö

An especially common theme among the senses participants had of Malmö is its internationality and multiculturality. However, this has not always been so, according to the participants. Change was frequently emphasized, and this has taken place both in the physical cityscape and the atmosphere. One respondent explained the changes that they have seen in Malmö since the 1980s:

I1: Malmö has internationalized so much, although even then it was [international]. I am not necessarily talking about migrants, foreigners, refugees, but about that there is that kind of atmosphere in general. The atmosphere is much more international, in many ways somehow more continental

Tracing the changes of the same period, the other interviewee recognizes the differences in Malmö's internationality in terms of which people are seen in public space, for instance, in the park and outside the school they live close to. They also spoke of memories of Rosengård as the place "where all the Finnish people lived," where the Finnish organization had its meeting place, and where the Finnish mobile store (i.e., a convenience store in a bus) came. Talking of walking there in the evenings, they say: "I was never afraid of anything. And I haven't been to Rosengård nowadays but of course, all of this has changed enormously" (I2). Although it seems that this person has not actually witnessed it, there is a definite sense that the demographics have changed; and even if they assure they are only interested rather than afraid of those changes, the implication seems to be that Rosengård would not be a safe place to stroll around anymore.

While in the senses of the participants, the public space of Malmö has become more 'international,' it has simultaneously become less Finnish. In early 1980s, many people could be heard speaking Finnish in the city center, most of whom were working-aged work force migrants from the 1960s, and today, they cannot be found in the cityscape. With all the thoughts of suddenly internationalizing population and atmosphere, it seems that the participants would agree that globalizing processes may have a great impact on local places. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether the participating Malmö Finns feel that globalization has brought with it damage to the spirit of the place, or what Relph (1976) calls 'placelessness.' In fact, although there are nostalgic remarks of *how it used to be*, many seem to think that the city has actually become *more* interesting and vibrant.

Relational Malmö

A central part of the process of making sense of the identity of Malmö is comparing Malmö with other places. These were commonly places that the participants had previously lived in. The senses respondents have of Lund in contrast to Malmö were often the very reason for moving to Malmö – sometimes without further explanation, at other times with more elaborate critique. To some participants, Lund is a "middle-class bubble" where everyone sends mannered greetings to others' parents, who also happen to be clinical directors and have doctorates (F1). Therefore, it is "children's traffic playground, not real at all," which starts to annoy one after a while and leads to the need to search for another kind of community in Malmö, where even the children look real. In contrast, Malmö feels like "a real city," where there are many things happening, unlike in Lund (F3). While Malmö turned from boring to continental along with the opening of the Öresund bridge, Lund was left behind. The eventfulness of Malmö has encouraged Finns to emigrate also from other Swedish cities.

The identity of Malmö, as in the participants' sense of Malmö, is born of such comparisons to other places. The focus group members had in common a history of living in the Helsinki region during childhood and now spending time in Småland, the spruce-filled region neighboring Skåne. This meant that the identity of Malmö and Skåne were debated intensively in relation to both Helsinki and Småland. Parallels were drawn between gentrifying neighborhoods in Helsinki and Malmö, and the two cities were examined to decide which one of them was more urban, innovative, and has more beautiful architecture.

No consensus was reached, as Helsinki still has the vibe of a "drowsy provincial capital" (F3) and a "sweet small town" (F1), while Malmö is more of an "old industry town" (F3), but then again, Helsinki has a nice new library and saltwater pools by a marketplace. Småland, on the other hand, shares the taiga landscape of Southern Finland unlike most of Skåne, which has also been a cultural divider and perhaps made the Smålandian mentality more similar to a Southern Finnish one. Such comments present empirical proof that place is certainly relational, as has been suggested by theorists such as Massey (1994), albeit here in a very direct sense.

The Malmö of rationality, adventure & entrapment

Despite all these features that were observable to some, in many answers, there is the sense that Malmö as such has no internal character that would make it the preferred place to live. Rather, participants have ended up in Malmö and stayed for practical reasons, such as work, housing, weather, good transport options, or concrete family-related matters. As Finland was hit by the 1990s economic crisis, finding employment and an apartment had been easier in Malmö; the summers are longer; and 'everything' is close, including the Kastrup airport. Moreover, there had been hopes of children receiving Finnish language education in preschool; life in the Finnish countryside had been poor; and simply, one would not even know where to move or "where it would be better than here" (Q).

However, a good share of the participating Malmö Finns have landed in Malmö as a result of adventure – "By happenstance, the wanderlust of youth" (Q). Such stories are present both in the replies of those who have arrived recently and of those whose youthful adventures ended here for decades ago. Many believed that they would only stay for a short while but then found love. A participant who has lived here for decades states:

> I1: Everything went so fast. And well, I don't even know if I had any plan, my original plan was to live [in Sweden] for a year … But then all kinds of things happened and when you are twenty all your plans disappear, and suddenly you are surrounded by everything else that is interesting … well it was just some kind of adventure … then later when we got married and these children started arriving, that's when it became some sort of reality in one way. I could have just as well been somewhere else, like London or really anywhere.

Adventure has turned into reality, and the participants have stayed with no previous intentions of doing so. For some, Malmö could have been *anywhere else* and on the other hand, it is also the rational move to stay here, based on whether or not other places would have more to offer. Such notions pay shocking resemblance to Savage's (2008) ideas on the pragmatic place attachment of earlier days, but in practice, the matter is of course much more complicated. Although experiences are articulated in this rather straightforward, practical manner, the lengthy stories of family bonds from these same individuals remind us that this is probably not a case of cold-hearted opportunism. It is possible that there are also cultural and generational factors at play, which can lead participants to make sense of one's intimate experiences in less emotional and dramatic language than others maybe would.

However, family ties can also make the sense of Malmö a restrictive one. Some participants are more or less 'trapped' in Malmö and would rather be elsewhere. When asked if the participants can imagine themselves moving from Malmö, many reported that they are bound by family. They are tied to Malmö because of their circumstances, feel that they belong elsewhere and would love to move, and plan on

emigrating when the children move out. Some spoke of this very directly, like this questionnaire respondent: "I can imagine myself moving anywhere. However, my children and grandchildren anchor me." Malmö becomes a landscape of entrapment, and the case of restless Malmö Finns bound in place by family is very much the paradoxical act Relph (1976:42) calls "balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape."

However, it is of course not all bad. In the hearts of some, Malmö is a dear part of a process of self-actualization, alike the one in Savage et al.'s (2005) notions of location choice that represents one's identity. As elaborated by one questionnaire respondent: "Swedishness is the work self of my adulthood, my current persona. It reminds me of my own, self-made life and home here, Malmö and Skåne." Ultimately, the senses some participants have of Malmö are further away from what can be described with emotional or rational narratives, along the lines 'I like it here,' 'of course it's home,' and 'where would I even move from here.' Perhaps these expressions present that rootedness in place which Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) speak of, the kind in which there is no conscious reflection, and in which feeling is at the core of knowing. Among the participants, there is tacit, emotional knowledge of Malmö as a place – a place which is such an inherent part of one's life that there is little need or possibility for articulation.

Conclusion

The research questions will now be answered by highlighting the key findings. Thereafter, this thesis will be rounded off by discussing the study and its implications in a wider context and in relation to future research.

1. How does place affect the self-identification practices of Malmö Finns?

The identities of the participating Malmö Finns are affected by place in relation to duration of stay there, feelings of involvedness in that place, contact with the majority population, identities of loved ones in one's surroundings, attraction to landscape and nature, concentration of activities between places, estimated benefit and acceptance from people within the current context, and whether one feels that they can call a place home. Moreover, identities are negotiated in terms of whether attitudes toward people from other places are shared with locals, and whether one has consciously chosen the place one lives in. Furthermore, identities are formed around heritage that is believed to spring from a certain place. This consist of ideas of ethnic heritage, as well as heritage of traditions, customs, personality, language, and beliefs.

According to this sample of Malmö Finns, following relocation, identities are affected by the experience of being part of an ethnic or linguistic minority within a certain place. This mode of identity formation exhibits a pattern where one's identity is strengthened based on the majority attitudes of that place, such as interest, ignorance, or oppression. There is also an opposite trend: minority identities are suppressed, and majority identities acquired and adapted to, although this seems to be becoming less predominant. Restrictions on mobility and the reinforcement of national borders has led to some minor changes in the awareness of formal citizenship in identity-building, and stories of national identity are still rather told in terms of cultural unity. Moving between places affects identities also when one's place of origin reveals to have become more unfamiliar. This happens in relation to ways of functioning in everyday situations and the society, culture, language, and changes in the physical environment. Across social space, the presence of others with a similar identity may impact in both directions, i.e., either strengthen or weaken one's association with the shared identity.

As the role of language was often emphasized in identity formation, a chain of events emerges through which place-based, linguistically motivated identity negotiation can be traced within the new generation of Malmö Finns. Initially, as one relocates to a country with a different majority language, one's own language and thus also identity, is under threat. At this stage, the local institutional structures affect these identity-negotiation processes by hindering or enabling one's use of own language. Subsequently, people from the same language community join each other in fighting the municipality, and thus find sense of community. This organizing around a sense of community then also strengthens one's own cultural identity. In a greater perspective, it is possible that this is further enhanced by people's appealing to the minority laws to justify the claims for rights, which again brings people closer to a story of common heritage (where, furthermore, ethnicity and language are equated in a way).

2. *Why is it that Malmö Finns feel at home and that they belong in certain places?*

The narratives of the participants confirm that home can certainly be found in people, which was oftentimes prioritized over ideas of belonging in place. While belonging was found in the Malmö Finn community, that community is not homogeneous, and individuals' social positions in relation to class, gender, age, 'race,' and language are an important factor in deciding who gets to belong. From this it follows that belonging is relative to which people one is being compared to. A greater sense of belonging in the majority population may be experienced when there are others who are 'more foreign.' This applies on many scales of place: the nation, region, and the city when new migrants arrive from further away than Finland; within one's workplace, where colleagues may be less acquainted with the Swedish society; and within homes, if family members are perceived as more of outsiders than oneself.

This aspect is closely intertwined with stereotypes, prejudice, and other negative attitudes. To put it shortly, these have been a pivotal factor in the participating Malmö Finns' sense of home and belonging in Malmö for decades, and partly also today. The current activation of Finnish interest group does not only feed into the senses of belonging of the organizing Malmö Finns, but also to those of previous generations. Furthermore, it reflects the value of language in one's sense of home. Finally, familiarity, routines, memories, one's built and natural surroundings, and childhood landscapes are especially potent ingredients of home-making among the participating Malmö Finns.

3. *What kinds of 'senses of place' do Malmö Finns have in Malmö?*

The Malmö of the participants consists commonly of work opportunities, studies, and love. To many, Malmö was an adventure that became reality, and then a home. This is often based on the passing of time and the building of family and networks of friends and relatives, which shows that Tuan's (1977) notion that time affects sense of place does hold. Moreover, Malmö is commonly sensed as 'international': both in its demographics and atmosphere, by which it is meant both everyday street culture and high-brow influences from Europe. There are various of narratives of how enormously Malmö has changed, and it is no longer sensed as boring or shabby, but exciting and eventful, although to some, even scary and criminal. At the same time as it has become more 'international,' Malmö is now perceived as less Finnish than previously in its public space and services, yet more active in Finnish community activism. As highlighted earlier, Malmö is a site of hope and struggle for the minority rights of Sweden Finns in Malmö.

Furthermore, the Malmö of some is tiny and intimate. It is strictly centered around few specific locations where everyday activities take place, and where little change has occurred. This is not always positive, and in several narratives, Malmö is a place to which people are tied through family relations, whether they want it or not. Nevertheless, Malmö is also greatly loved among the participating Malmö Finns, and when Malmö is one's chosen place, it is a center of self-actualization. However, Malmö can be sensed as a rather generic place that provides things that other places could not, such as better weather, housing, work opportunities, education, or transport.

Moreover, defining Malmö revolves extensively around how it is in relation to other places. Some general ideas are that Malmö is less pretentious or boring than for example Lund; that Malmö is either more or less urban and innovative than Helsinki, based on who you ask; and that the next region up north is much more like Southern Finland in mentality and the physical environment. In the minds of the participants,

Malmö is far away from their places in Finland – in relation to geographical distance, nature, culture, and emotionally. Finally, some senses of Malmö do not have to be that complicated – one can just like living here and love the city without specifying why. This is the kind of sense of place that does not require a conscious effort to relate, but a profound feeling of rootedness in place.

Reflections, implications & prospects

As I set out to study mental landscapes among the Malmö Finns, I was aware that this would not be an easy population to make definitive statements of. The community contains multitudes, and many groups who make up this diversity are not easily reached. In this diversity I saw even more reason to explore whether some of it can be mapped. In relation to the relatively scarce literature on Sweden Finns in general, I hoped to investigate what had happened since the previous publications, in light of the changes that have since taken place within both the group and the world as we know it. Nevertheless, the stories of the participants confirmed that the themes were generally the same as the ones that had been at the heart of Sweden Finnish existence already in the previous decades. Language, nature, stereotypes, mentality, identity conflict, and family surfaced once again as central concerns, whatever the question was.

However, firstly, it is also a finding to find out that perhaps some things do not change, and secondly, as research on the Malmö population has in fact been nonexistent (to the best of my knowledge), it is also a result to notice that the same matters apply in Malmö, at least among the 21 Malmö Finns I studied. Against the foundation that even elementary knowledge on this group has been lacking, this project, however limited, has made its contribution to starting the process of unraveling the experiences of Malmö Finns. While the participants' stories were most likely affected by the Coronavirus-related travel restrictions and the isolation, these mean that the study has been conducted in a unique situation in which it has become apparent how very important it is for the participants to visit Finland and meet their Finnish communities face-to-face. Furthermore, the Malmö Finns today exist in a historically strange turning point also as they are forced to fight for their basic rights despite the establishment of the Swedish national minority laws. Within this context, analysis of how elemental to their identities is the opportunity to practice and pass on the Finnish language is by no means irrelevant.

As to the implications of this study in a wider context, the findings on the importance of language and on the traumas of losing it establish that it is high time the rights of the Malmö Finns are taken seriously by the municipality of Malmö. Moreover, also the findings on the weight of minority activism in a sense of belonging within this minority group, and on the specific positions Finland Swedes living in Sweden have in in-betweenness, should be salient areas of investigation in future research. Furthermore, the notions that Finns have disappeared from the public space of Malmö raise the question: where have they gone? This is a theme that should be studied and that is closely intertwined with the limitations of this study: the lack of male participants, especially those who represent the 1960s–70s migration workforce migration waves. A broader study on the topic has been conducted by Jari Kuosmanen (2001), however, two decades ago, and not specifically in the Malmö context.

Moreover, several other limitations of my study also provide excellent starting points for future inquiries. Naturally, this would mean studies with larger and more representative samples. The latter point is,

however, difficult to execute accurately, as the demographics of the Malmö Finn population are not known, due to which also a comprehensive investigation of this would be relevant. And, importantly – as the participants of this study were recruited through channels that can be expected to be only used by persons who do have a current interest in/identification with their Finnish background, it would be reasonable to study how those who have this heritage but are not reachable by such means make sense of their identities, homes, and homeplaces today. This is an especially valid point in relation to persons who are not first-generation immigrants, as only one such person was represented.

From this it follows that in the future, research could be conducted with the children of those Finns who are now fighting for their rights in Malmö. Only time will tell whether they will experience their belonging like the previous generations did, how growing up in a family that was active with these questions affected them, what kinds of Malmö Finns they will grow up to be, and what kind of a city Malmö will be to them. Another area of interest that will only be revealed by the passing of time is how the Malmö Finns' relations to national borders may have changed after the Corona pandemic is over, and whether the growing familiarity of distance communication methods will have affected their senses of belonging and of the distance between their places across borders.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Invitation to participate

[English translation]

Welcome to participate on a project on
identities, belongings, and relations to stereotypes of people living in Malmö with Finnish background

The aim of this project is to gain better knowledge of who the Sweden Finns of Malmö are today and their experiences of Sweden Finnishness. I am now looking for participants to an **online questionnaire** and also to **focus groups** or **individual interviews** taking place during the next following weeks (Nov-Dec). The focus groups and the individual interviews will be executed via video call, on the phone, or via email, according to your wishes. The answers will be used in a bachelor's thesis in Human Geography at Lund University.

In my thesis, I am using the terms 'Sweden Finn' and 'person with Finnish background' interchangeably as general names for persons with family bonds to Finland. You might use other words to describe yourself, but I nevertheless want to encourage you to participate, and thus bring forth the diversity of our group. **All persons aged 18 or above who are living in Malmö and who have Finnish background are welcome to participate, regardless of language or nationality**. I am hoping that you will find participation meaningful in that you will be able to reflect on and make visible your experiences as well as gain a sense of cross-generational Sweden Finnish community and its differences.

Your participation is voluntary and does not bind you to anything. Participants will not be paid, and you are welcome to participate just as much as you can. All answers are confidential and none of your replies will be connected to you in the thesis. You may withdraw your participation at any time during the research process without having to tell why. Collected material will be processed safely so that it will not be accessible to persons not working with this project. The final work will be made visible to the public.

To participate in the online survey, click on the link below. There you can also express your interest in participating in a focus group or an individual interview. You can also sign up by emailing me, also if you have any comments or question. You are also very welcome to spread the invitation to other persons living in Malmö who have Finnish background.

Take part of the survey in [language]: [link]

Many thanks for your interest in this project!
Best regards,

Haikku Arosuo
Bachelor's student in Human Geography
Department of Human Geography
Lund University

Supervisor Katherine Burlingame
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Geography
Department of Human Geography
Lund University

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire content

[English translation]

Questionnaire to Malmö Finns

Welcome to map the experiences of the Malmö Finns/people in Malmö with Finnish background!

In this questionnaire, replies are collected for a bachelor's thesis in human geography.

Your participation is voluntary, and you will not be paid for it. You can participate as much as suits you. All replies are confidential and will not be connected to you in the thesis. You can discontinue your participation whenever during the study process without having to give a reason why. The material will be processed safely so that outsiders do not have access to it. The finished written work will be publicly accessible.

I also want to warmly welcome you to an online or telephone based individual interviews or group discussion, where we will have the chance to discuss our experiences together. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked to type in your email address if you want to participate in these. If you choose to type your contact information in the questionnaire, I will be able to see your replies in connection to your mail address. However, your answers are still confidential and no details that can be used to identify you as a person will be published. To participate in a group discussion or an individual interview, it is not required to have submitted this questionnaire. Feel free to contact me if you are interested!

Many thanks for your time and your participation!

Best regards,

Haikku Arosuo

Bachelor's student in Human Geography

Department of Human Geography, Lund University

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Choose one of the alternatives below. By choosing "I consent," you confirm that: 1. You have read the information above. 2. You voluntary consent to participate. 3. You are aged 18 or above.

- I consent.
- I do not consent.

Background information

Do you live in Malmö? * *[mark one. this, the following and the consent question are the only compulsory questions]*
- Yes
- No

How old are you? * *[choose from list]*
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76 or older

What is your gender? *[choose from list]*
- Female
- Male
- Other

By "Other" I mean other gender identities than female or male, for example non-binary or no gender. These are combined into one category only to make sure that individuals do not stick out when there are relatively few participants.

What is your highest (completed) education level? *[choose from list]*
- Elementary school or lower
- Secondary education (high school/vocational school or other)
- First cycle higher education (bachelor's degree/university of applied sciences or other)
- Second cycle higher education (master's degree or other)
- Doctoral degree

What is the education level of your parents? (If your parents have different education level, choose the level that is higher.) *[choose from list]*
- Elementary school or lower
- Secondary education (high school/vocational school or other)
- First cycle higher education (bachelor's degree/university of applied sciences or other)
- Second cycle higher education (master's degree or other)
- Doctoral degree

[the rest of the questions in this questionnaire are all open-ended questions]

Your Finnish background

Could you briefly describe your Finnish background?

Do you nowadays speak Finnish and Swedish? In what situations do you use these languages in your daily life? Do they mean something special to you?

Where did you live during your childhood and adolescence? What kind of a relationship did you have to Sweden/Finland (the country you did not live in)? Did you have a special bond with any specific place in Finland/Sweden?

Why did you move specificly to Malmö and to Sweden? If you did not live in Finland previously: why did your relative who is from Finland move to Sweden?

Identity, Finnishness, and Swedishness

Which words that are related to place do you primarily describe yourself with? (E.g. Swedish, Malmöite, a Finn that lives in Sweden…)

Why do you use these specific terms?

Do you experience yourself as Finnish or Swedish differently based on the situation? (E.g. in different places or social situations.)

What does Finnishness mean to you? What do you associate it with and what does it mean to you personally?

What does Swedishness mean to you? What do you associate it with and what does it mean to you personally?

Belonging and prejudices

How is you relationship with Sweden and Finland today? How about Malmö and the place in Finland that you have connections to? Do you feel like you belong in one of these places? Why?

Have you come across stereotypes regarding Finnishness or Swedishness (within yourself or from others)? Has this affected you – how?

Has your relationship with Finland and Sweden, as well as Finnishness and Swedishness, changed over time? How and why?

Can you see yourself moving from Malmö or Sweden some time in the future? When, where and why?

Many thanks for your participation!

Please do not forget to click "send" when you are ready.

Do you have anything to add in relation to this topic?

Are you interested in participating in a group discussion or an individual interview about this topic during the coming weeks? Please write your email address here and I will contact you. Your email address will be then saved in connection to your answers, but the answers are still confidential and will not be connected to you personally in the thesis.

Appendix 3 – Email invitation to interviews and the focus group

[English translation]

Thesis study on identities and senses of belonging of people in Malmö with Finnish background

Hello!

You participated in a questionnaire on your experiences of identity and belonging as a person in Malmö with Finnish background. In connection to this, you also expressed your interest to participate in an individual interview or group discussion that will be executed via distance methods.

Unfortunately, the project got delayed, but I now want to warmly welcome you to participate. The individual interviews and the group discussions will take place during **weeks 6, 7, and 8 (between Wed 10/2 and Tues 23/2)** and will take an hour at maximum.

If you still live in Malmö and want to participate, please click on the link below and choose the times that would work for you. I will then email you to confirm the specific time and the channel you wish to participate through.

[link]

You may sign up on Sunday, February 14th at latest.

Thank you for your interest! I look forward to talking to you.

Best regards,

Haikku Arosuo
Bachelor's student in Human Geography
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Ps. Some of those who answered the original questionnaire and who were interested in participating in the interview/group discussion forgot to type in their contact information. If you know someone who did not receive this invitation, you are most welcome to share this message with them!

Appendix 4 – Interview guide

[English translation]

Some of the questions are similar to those in the questionnaire, but I will ask again, so that we may talk about them in depth.
Detailed information will be anonymized or left out.
for example, if you speak about a specific small municipality, such detailed information will not be published.
Is it okay that I start recording?

Consent:
the information that you give will be used for research purposes, and the final study will be published.
your participation is voluntary and not paid, and you may discontinue at any time without giving the reason why.
your information will be processed securely so that no outsiders can access them.
your answers will not be connected to you personally.
could you confirm, that you consent to participation and to the use of the information that you give for research purposes?

could you tell me a little bit about your Finnish background?
when did you/your relative move to Sweden? if otherwise not clear
how would you describe yourself with words related to nationality or place? (Finnish, Malmöite etc…)
can you tell why you use these specific words? do they have anything to do with which country's passport you have?
do you use different words in different situations? (with Finnish people, abroad, etc.)

if you visit Finland, how does it feel? do you feel at home/that you belong there?
when you return to Malmö, do you look at the city differently? does it feel strange/foreign?
what kind of a place is Malmö to you? what kind of a relationship do you have with the city?
is it home to you, do you belong here?

in general, what does home mean to you?
what makes you feel that you belong somewhere/that you feel at home somewhere?
do you ever have contradictory feelings of where your "place" is?

has your relationship with Malmö changed over the years?
what about with your place in Finland?
what is important to you there? how about in Malmö?
have you considered moving from Malmö? do you know where you will live in the future?

anything to add?
thank you for participating!

[English translation]

You can speak freely and talk with each other, answer to each other

I will every now and then suggest new topics

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- Finnish background and move to Sweden (own/relative's)
- nationality/place identity – why – in different situations, connected to passport?
- belonging, feeling at home: when you are in Finland, when you return to Malmö
- what kind of place is Malmö to one – home?
- home – what is it?
- own place – contradictions?
- relationship to Malmö, to place in Finland – changes, what is important there?
- future, moving out
- anything to add?

thank you for participating!