

This is an electronic reprint of the original article. This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

---

## The neighbourhood(s) inside me

Palmgren, Ann-Charlotte

*Published in:*  
Wayfinding and Critical Autoethnography

Published: 06/11/2020

*Document Version*  
Accepted author manuscript

*Document License*  
Publisher rights policy

[Link to publication](#)

*Please cite the original version:*

Palmgren, A-C. (2020). The neighbourhood(s) inside me: Telling stories of (un)belonging, (im)mobility, temporality and places. In F. Iosefo, S. Holman Jones, & A. Harris (Eds.), *Wayfinding and Critical Autoethnography* (pp. 101-116). Routledge. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe202201147821>

### General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

## **The neighbourhoods inside me:**

### **Telling stories of (un)belonging, (im)mobility, temporality and places**

*Ann-Charlotte Palmgren*

ORCID.org/0000-0002-0518-1846

#### Abstract:

In this chapter the author, returns to her childhood neighbourhood in a small city in Finland as a researcher. Wayfinding is exploring the transformation of both the neighbourhood and the researcher. In addition, wayfinding becomes a counter to chrononormative temporality, as the story that the author tells is non-linear. Throughout the chapter, the author explores how spatial, socio-cultural and economic immobility and mobility form subject positions as belonging or not belonging. Focus is on memory, temporality, and place. The empirical material of the chapter is the authors and her brother's memories, family photographs, participant observations, the authors childhood health card, as well as, newspaper articles about the neighbourhood, from the late 1970s until the mid of 2010s. The chapter also include artwork where the researcher has combined photographs from different time periods of the neighbourhood.

Belonging is about emotional attachment,  
about feeling 'at home, about feeling 'safe'  
(Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197).

This is not my neighbourhood anymore, and still:

I never left.

I keep turning back,

now returning as a researcher, it turns out that almost everything has changed, and still:  
everything is the same.

As a researcher, I drive the street of my childhood, a place I moved away from thirty-one years ago. I felt safe here, then. Everything was familiar: this was my home, this was my

house, this was my neighbourhood. And now, as I pass my former house, I do not feel safe because this time, I do not know where to park. There is no obvious parking space for me, for someone not living here.

I pass the apartment buildings, I pass the trees, the lawn, the swings, and the parked cars. I do not know the people living here anymore. I do not know what they think about me doing research about the neighbourhood.

I have lived here, I want to say, I am one of you.

I drive out of the neighbourhood, around the borders of the neighbourhood, to a parking lot of a car mechanic,

I leave my car where there used to be a meadow  
or was it a field?

[Insert Fig 1.1 here]

*Image: Merged photographs taken from the same place in the neighbourhood 1982 and 2018*

I moved away from the neighbourhood when I was six years old, but I have returned many times and in many ways. I visited my aunt who was still living here. I kept including parts of the neighbourhood when I wrote short novels and poems. I kept telling stories about the neighbourhood to friends I got to know as a young adult and adult, and who do not have a relationship to the neighbourhood or even the city. Some of my friends keep asking me for a tour.

After finishing my doctoral thesis on blogs as spaces for girlhood and a research project on teenaged girls' relationship to urban spaces, it was time for me to start something new. The new project turned (in)to something old. In this new/old project, I focus on my childhood neighbourhood, situated in a small and bilingual city[i] in Finland, and the transformation of this neighbourhood and myself since I moved away. I am interested in how spatial, socio-cultural and economic immobility and mobility form subject positions.

In this chapter, I am a wayfinder. Following Ingold (2000, p. 219) is define wayfinding as “moving from one place to another in a region”, but not only that as “wayfinding also asserts

that every place holds within it memories of previous arrivals and departures, as well as expectations of how one may reach it, or reach other places from it” (Ingold, 2000, p. 237). In addition, wayfinding becomes a counter to chrononormative temporality in this chapter as the text and wayfinding is simultaneously non-linear (starts in both the present and past), as well as multiply geospatial (simultaneously here and there). Therefore, I explore memory, temporality, and place. I argue that memories are not stories, but they can be made into stories. Through wayfinding, neighbourhoods become meaningful through memories that accumulate in or haunt places. On my journey and in this chapter, I keep company with scholars, newspaper articles, the neighbourhood and people I have known. Story and theory on (not) belonging and (im)mobility are twined together. Along the wayfinding path of this chapter, sometimes theoretical concepts evoke memories, and sometimes it is the other way around.

### **A story of the neighbourhood: Starting points and media discourses**

The following story is one possible story of the neighbourhood. It is a story I find when I go through newspaper articles about the neighbourhood, from the late 1970s until the mid of 2010s. It is not only just a story; it is a story with political implications. In ways, my own story contrasts with the public story about the neighbourhood; in ways, my story is related to the public story. Within the story, there is not only the political, but also the theoretical. It would be dangerous to separate the two. Theory is political and integral to critical autoethnography. As Stacy Holman Jones (2016, p. 229) states, “theory asks about and explains the nuances of experience and the happenings of a culture; story is the mechanism for illustrating and embodying these nuances and happenings”. I would argue that media representations are rich sources of geographical knowledge that feed the way we, individually and collectively, imagine the world and our position in it. Furthermore, the media representations or story about the neighbourhood is a mixture of stories by inhabitants, planners, politicians, but also others who have never lived there and have assumptions about the place.

“We are going to expand,” announces a local truck manufacturer.

“There is not enough housing for all the new workers. We need new houses,” answer elected representatives.

So, the planning of my childhood neighbourhood started, four kilometres from the city centre. A neighbourhood planned for 1100 inhabitants (Karis utveckling, 1978). In 2013 my

childhood neighbourhood, after additional expansions of the neighbourhood in 2006 and 2012, had 1336 inhabitants, 327 adult households, 156 child households, and 176 senior citizen households. The same year about fourteen percent of the total workforce of my childhood neighbourhood was unemployed. One-third of all apartments were rentals.

I sit in the local archive reading the local newspaper, trying to find articles about the neighbourhood. Trying to find the start of the story. I was born in 1980 and in the family album there is a photograph of me playing in a sandbox with a building under construction in the background. I browse through the newspaper from that year, trying to not be too attached to old articles about the factory my dad used to work at, trying to not read every interesting article, advertisement or press item. From that year, I find nothing, so I go back in time. I find out that the first house, a three-floor apartment block, was built in 1975, after which several more followed in the next eight years, and two separate apartment block areas in the neighbourhood.

“Let’s build a cosy mini-environment between the areas,” the city planners and elected representatives say in unison.

In 1977, an explicit experimental district was built with detached and terrace houses built very close to each other. It was experimental as a variety of house types was packed into the small area (Äntligen byggstart, 1977).

“Let’s put extraordinarily steep roofs on some of the houses, and high fences,” the city planners and some elected representatives say in unison.

“The fences are too compact and too high considering the narrow paths in the area,” other elected representatives say (Problem med, 1977).

Most articles I find about the early years of the neighbourhood are about the experimental district and the fights over the fences, which today are exceptionally high, but the houses have also exceptionally small gardens. In one article (Bäljars börjar, 1978), the neighbourhood is described as being in the middle of nature and as an animal friendly neighbourhood. All streets and all houses are named after birds. The first house built is called the Black Grouse, the second is the Owl. I lived on Loon Alley.

After this, there is silence. I browse through newspaper after newspaper, finding more or less nothing about the neighbourhood. I find out that the planned expansion of the truck manufacturer never succeeded, and the city did not receive as many new inhabitants as it had

hoped. In the 1970s and 1980s, some of the apartment blocks were built and owned by different local factories. Their factory workers could rent these apartments. Today the neighbourhood consists of both owner-occupied housing and rental housing, but none of them owned by a factory. In the early 1990s, economic depression in Finland hit the city, companies and inhabitants hard. I did not live in the neighbourhood anymore, but had friends and relatives living there still. I remember the last day of school before the holiday, the whole class erasing what we had written in the textbooks during the year. Next year the younger students would receive our old textbooks, as there was no money to buy new ones. The teacher collected used pens and erasers, instead of letting us keep them, and giving out new ones in the next school year.

It is much later, in a newspaper from 2004 in the archives, I find a partly retroactive text about the neighbourhood (Planeringen lever, 2004):

“Let’s build more apartment blocks in the neighbourhood,” city planners declare.

“Maybe not,” elected representatives say.

“Let’s build more terrace houses,” city planners declare.

“Maybe not,” elected representatives say.

“Let’s build more detached houses,” city planners declare.

“That will increase the well-being of the neighbourhood,” representatives say.

“Oh,” I say, as I drive together with my parents past an area with new bigger detached houses with wooden facades in different pastels in the neighbourhood. It is sometime between 2006 and 2012.

“Oh yes, very different,” my parents say.

In 2016, when the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland collected unofficial names of places in the city, two unofficial names related to the neighbourhood were submitted. One of the apartment block areas was unofficially known as *backdrop-Timbuctoo* (in Finnish *Taka-Bäljars*], while the newest area with detached houses was called *Monaco*, which referred to something more luxurious. Spatial, socio-cultural and economic variations in the neighbourhood are voiced, and controversial proclamations about the neighbourhood are illustrated in newspapers and media. Declarations on the neighbourhood have been made both by dwellers and non-dwellers.

“The Finnish speaking people in the neighbourhood are often home alone or together with others, but they do not go anywhere,” a lifestyle coach not living in the neighbourhood says to a journalist at the local newspaper (Bostadslöshet tabu, 2016).

“What????!!! This is not true,” an inhabitant says.

“One becomes upset over the misery when one walks by the apartment blocks in the neighbourhood,” the coach continues.

“What misery?” another inhabitant says

“The linguistic segregation between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking starts in children’s day care in the city,” the coach says to the local radio channel (Unga finskspråkiga, 2016).

“Fact grounded on what?” a bilingual inhabitant asks on the webpage of the radio channel.

“There is no Finnish-Swedish opinion this misery,” the coach says.

“I’ve always experienced the city as bilingual without problems,” an inhabitant comment.

“I still believe that the Swedish-speaking youth in the city go to the less bilingual and more Swedish neighbouring city, so they don’t need to have anything to do with the Finnish-speaking youth,” says the coach on radio.

“Bullshit. It isn’t the Finnish-speaking people that make people not want to live in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood has had a bad reputation for ages. Inhabitants with different forms of addictions have been placed there by the city. If one can choose to live where authorities don’t visit more or less every day, why not live there instead?” a Swedish-speaking inhabitant comments.

“I have lived there. I am Swedish speaking. I had a happy childhood there,” I want to comment.

“The whole neighbourhood should be burnt down,” someone comments online after an apartment fire in the neighbourhood.

“The bad reputation is uncalled for,” says a resident who lived in the apartment block with the fire when they are interviewed by the local newspaper about the fire (Lägenhetsbranden rökte, 2013).

“It is one of the best places I have lived. It is safe and good, the relations between neighbours is good. This is a place where families with children, senior citizens, and ordinary people live. One is not a second-class citizen because one lives here,” they continue.

Reading newspaper articles in the archive shows me that the public story of the neighbourhood has countering stories, but they cannot always be heard.

## **Moving and standing still: being an insider/outsider, and sunny weather**

After parking my car at the car mechanics, I step out and walk on the pedestrian path to the apartment buildings. It is 2017, and I return to the neighbourhood as a researcher in the process of applying for funding for a project with the aim to analyse how spatial and socio-cultural (im)mobilities form subject positions such as working class, Finland-Swedish and small-town-dweller, when an intersectional perspective is applied. In preparation for my five-minute project pitch to a funding board at my university, I have returned to take photographs of the neighbourhood. I chose a day and time when I was not expecting to see many inhabitants outside. I feel like an outsider, as someone who has left the neighbourhood and is now here to snoop around, an outsider.

Analysing this I would argue that my reaction was connected to newspapers and inhabitants of other parts of the city talking negatively about the neighbourhood. I did not want to be perceived as one of those naysayers. In addition, I did not want to be perceived as an outsider researcher entering the neighbourhood and continuing a stigmatising story of the neighbourhood.

As I write this chapter, I still have not started my planned ethnographic fieldwork beginning with interviews with residents. And yet, I have been doing the ethnographic fieldwork my whole life, always relating to the neighbourhood in different ways. I imagine myself conducting the interviews in the future, starting with saying that I have grown up there, that I have fond memories of the neighbourhood, and that I always remember the sun shining. Still, I feel like a wayfinder, not entirely clear where I am going or where I have been.

The status of insider/outsider researchers does not simply have to do with moving away from a place or staying, but also about movement or standing still while being in a place. For Tim Cresswell (2010, p. 20) “human mobility is practiced mobility that is enacted and experienced through the body”. Walking in the neighbourhood as an insider I would likely have felt bodily comfort and ease, or not felt anything or thought about it.

It is an early Sunday morning in May, and the sun is shining. I walk, and realize that I have lost my spatial rights to the neighbourhood. “Once inside, the right to remain there” (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

So, I walk,



stand still when no one is watching,  
pass benches I do not feel I have the right to sit down on,  
pass swings that I want to try but feel I cannot.

I move further from my car,  
closer to the houses, which I moved away from.

I am moved by the neighbourhood.

I am moved when I read that there are three aspects of mobility:

“getting from one place to another; the representations of movement [...]; and [...] the experiences and embodied practice of movement. In practice, these elements of mobility are unlikely to be easy to untangle. They are bound up with one another” (Cresswell, 2010, p. 19).

I am bound up with my mother, father, younger brother, my class background, my mother tongue, my gender, my white skin, my childhood neighbourhood, my age, my work situation, my doctoral degree.

I am 38 years old, and the sun is shining.

I am 2 years, and the sun is shining.

I am soon going to be a big sister.

I am a wayfinder,

“following a path of life, negotiate[ing] or improvis[ing] a passage as [I go] along.

In [my] movement as in life, seeking a way through,

always somewhere further

[I] can go” (Ingold, 2010, p. 126).

I am a postdoctoral research fellow.

I am described as a healthy girl at my one-year-check-up at the child health clinic.

I have never in my life had a work contract longer than one year.

I have never lived anywhere else.

The sun is shining.

I am part of the academic precariat.

I am working class.

I am the first in my family to receive a matriculation degree,  
first to enter university, first to receive a doctoral degree.

I am described as a happy and satisfied girl,  
good at drawing people, at my four-year-check-up.

Last year I applied for one permanent position within academia, two temporary positions outside academia and ten research grants for three different research projects. I was called to one interview, and I received eleven negative decisions and two positive ones for research grants.

As a wayfinder, and in accordance to Yuval-Davis (2006) positionalities are different in different contexts and temporalities, simultaneously fluid and contested. I would also add spatial contexts to the mix. Returning to the neighbourhood as a researcher, I am bringing myself as a child growing up in the neighbourhood. The fragments of myself, which I present above, can be perceived as identities but also as narratives. This follows Denis-Constant Martin (1995), who see identities as narratives, since they are stories people tell themselves and others about who they are and who they are not.

Later, after pitching, I receive research funding for the project on the neighbourhood. I once again return to the neighbourhood. This time the purpose is to explore more in depth my own feelings, memories and relationship to the neighbourhood.

And the sun is shining.

This time I drive around the neighbourhood until I, for the third time, see the same approximately four-year-old girl, bicycling around alone, and I park my car next to a parking lot with empty spaces, on the side of my childhood street, between a crashed car and a car without a tire. As I drive, I think about common descent or common culture. How Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 209) express is as “loyalty and solidarity, based on common values and projected myth of common destiny. And I still belong, as you, my childhood working-class-neighbourhood on the outskirts of the small city, you embrace me with your architecture. You embrace me with my tattooed right arm, a tattoo with your coordinates under a three-floor apartment building with colourful curtains symbolising my happy childhood. Just recently I realized that it was only a two-floor apartment building. You embrace me with the memories of your path through the woods, along the railway, to the city centre, you embrace me with the bumpy ride on my mum’s bicycle carrier. The sun is shining.

You embrace me with the memory of my friend living in the same apartment building with her mum, big brother and dog, and how I hid from the dog under the writing desk and the sun shining outside. You embrace me with your small slide and big swing, your sandbox. The memory of the sun shining. I feel that I belong, which has been describes by Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 199) as a dynamic process, and as an interplay between “social locations, individuals’ identifications and emotional attachments”.

You embrace me with your lampposts, which I stuck my tongue to and could not move away from until my parents came with hot water in a mug, and I was later standing in our bathroom with a bloody tongue and a mum calling the public health care centre. Cresswell (2010, p. 19) has pointed out that “mobility has been figured as adventure, as tedium, as education, as freedom, as modern, as threatening”. In this chapter it is exemplified by being stuck on a lamppost, but also, later in the chapter through moving from working class to middle class or moving houses.

[Insert Fig 1.2 here]

**Image: photograph of the neighbourhood taken during the summer of 2018 merged with a photograph of the chapter author in the neighbourhood during the winter of 1983.**

And I remember the sun shining,  
as I jumped with one leg on our hall carpet with colourful stripes.  
It is 1986, and we are going to move, and the next renter is there to see the apartment.  
“Memory is inherently anachronistic, present simultaneously in multiple temporalities. Memory is not only connected to the time remembered and the time of remembering, but it also contains layers of reflections on previous times” (Taavetti, 2018, p. 42). The repetitive sun, shining in all layers of temporality.  
My repetitive sun, shining in all layers of temporality of me being both an insider and outsider.

### **We in I of stories: families, fellow passengers and identities**

I remember the food smell in my aunt's staircase in the neighbourhood. Me holding my breath until I reached her apartment, as it was from food I did not like. Smells, just as the paths in a neighbourhood, are created by people. A neighbourhood is not only materiality—house, walls, playgrounds and benches—it is also constituted by its inhabitants. This entails for example sounds and smells created depending on inhabitants' activities, which in extension construct specific ambience for a neighbourhood Ingold (2000). In stories about a neighbourhood there is seldom only one person present.

I say in unison with my brother: "I am 38 years old. I am a gender scholar. I am a postdoctoral research fellow," even if we do not share these things. We are standing in front of a camera in a media production room of my university. He is helping me make a short autoethnographic film. We have been talking about my research project and inevitably, about memories we have of the neighbourhood and our childhood. In front of the camera, my brother then continues alone, "No. I am your brother. I am 35 years old. I am living in the capital city. I am exercising a lot. I was born in [the neighbourhood]. I moved away from [the neighbourhood] when I was three." He stands quiet, and I say, "We moved away from the neighbourhood when I was six."

We are very much the same, and we are different. I do not exercise a lot; I do not live in the capital of Finland. We share our parents, who have always wanted the best for us. At the same time, they have been worried and sad about not being able to provide us with everything they thought we needed. What we remember together, my brother and I, is us having everything we needed and wanted. We are the children of a factory worker and someone providing day care for other people's children in our home.

"I am sorry about your childhood", our mother says.

"No need to be", we say.

"I am sorry about your childhood", our father says.

"We had a great childhood", we say in unison.

"I am sorry about your childhood", our mother says.

"We had and still have loving parents", we say in unison,  
year after year.

The narratives we tell “can be individual, or they can be collective, the latter often a recourse for the former” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). We are Swedish-speaking Finns, and we went to a Swedish-speaking school, as Finnish and Swedish are the two official languages of Finland. We grew up in a small bilingual city, with more Swedish-speakers than Finnish-speakers. We belonged to a majority. We now live in two different bilingual big cities, where with more Finnish-speakers than Swedish-speakers, we have become part of a minority. The social locations we have are “never constructed along one power axis of difference, although official statistics – as well as identity politics – often tend to construct them in this way” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 200).

[Insert Fig 1.3 here]

**Image: Two photograph of the chapter author together with her brother taken 2018 merged with a photograph taken of the neighbour the same year.**

I ask my brother about his memories of the neighbourhood. It’s not a new question, as I have asked it many times before and he has answered. He tells me, once again: “I have two memories from [the neighbourhood]. In one I am sitting in a sandbox with a girl, telling her in Swedish that I know Finnish, kukka [flower in Finnish].” He continues, “I remember dad throwing out the winter tires from the balcony, the tires landing on the ground below.” The latter memory is a shared memory, or it could be shared, we are not sure. The tires thrown from the balcony could be only my memory. After all these years of talking about the neighbourhood, the memory may have become my brother's memory as well. Or the other way around. There is one difference: I remember it happening in the summer and he remembers it happening in winter. I remember the sun shining and green grass. He remembers snow. However, according to the law in Finland the tires must be changed during spring and autumn, so maybe neither of the memories is accurate. While making my autoethnographic film, we asked our parents about our memory of the tires, but neither of them remembered. The memory has become a narrative, or as Barbara Hardy (1968) expresses it:

we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order

really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future (p. 5).

With friends, asking for a tour of my childhood city, we drive to you and through you and I say: there is my house, it doesn't look the same anymore, there is where we once built a snowman with my friend Monica, there is where my aunt lived, there is the sandbox. There is where I once went to a home disco; there is where I once went to a party as a teen; there is the playground – it does not look the same anymore. There is where Ken lived, there is where Tony lived, there is where Helen lived, there is where Sabrina lived, there is where Jonas lived, there is where Maria lived, there is where Charlotta lived, and there is where Johnny lived. The construction of belonging as performative as illustrated above, can read through Vikki Bell (1999), who states that specific repetitive practices, relating to specific social and cultural spaces, which link individual and collective behaviour, are crucial for the construction and reproduction of identity narratives and constructions of attachments.

From the neighbourhood, my family moved to a shared rental house two kilometres away. To another neighbourhood, to a house just next to the Finnish school in town. My brother and I kept sharing a room, and during our mother's workdays, it was also the room of the children she took care of. Both she and my father worked two jobs, as they were also janitors for the house and yard. In the yard, we had apple trees and pear trees, which we shared with five or six other families living in the house. I do not remember thinking that much about our old neighbourhood; we returned to it when we visited our aunt and family friends still living there.

From here, we moved 3.8 kilometres away from the neighbourhood where my brother and I started. It was a single-family, type-planned house, built in the 50s after the Second World War. We had two floors and a cellar, and a yard. In the beginning, my brother and I shared a room, with the day care children having their own. I remember thinking that I had moved on in life, now being someone living in a one-family-house. It is still the home of my parents, the house I visit when visiting them, and the house where our stories continue.

Through moving, I made new friends with children living in each new neighbourhood. To belong to a neighbourhood is to connect with the people sharing the neighbourhood. But connections and existences are not only made with humans, but also non-humans can be

perceived as fellow passengers, continually creating the conditions for each other's existence through their activities (Ingold, 2005). You, my childhood neighbourhood, embrace me with your cracked pavement,  
with the green fence around the green house,  
with the brick wall of the Finnish school.  
I take a new route, through my spatial roots,  
still stopping at my childhood swing.

### **(Non)chrononormativity: kilometres and lines**

People move. They move to another city to study. They move together with a significant other. They have children and need a bigger home. They move for a job. Their grown-up children move away from home. They move to something smaller. The movement is not only interlinked with space but also time, as (middle class) people are expected to live chrononormative lives during which they go to college, get a permanent position, get married, buy a house, have children, see their children get married, have grandchildren and retire. One is socially and culturally expected to do specific things at a certain point in time or according to an expected chronology. According to Elizabeth Freeman (2010, p. 22), “chrononormativity signifies the interlocking temporal schemes necessary for genealogies of descent and the mundane workings of domestic life”. One could talk about a (hidden) rhythm for the privileged. My family moved to a ‘better’ and bigger home, after which my family moved to an even ‘better’ and even bigger home, and as they did, they also slowly moved from working class to lower middle class, and still, this story, as my life, are not chrononormative.

I moved to a student housing complex, lived on 17.9 m<sup>2</sup>,  
124 kilometers away from where I started.  
I shared kitchen with nine strangers.

I moved to an apartment building rental, lived on 50 m<sup>2</sup>,  
122 kilometers away from where I started.  
I shared the bed with my boyfriend.

I moved to an apartment building rental, lived on 23 m<sup>2</sup>,  
123 kilometers away from where I started.

I did not share anything with anyone.

I moved to an apartment building rental, lived on 38 m<sup>2</sup>,  
126 kilometers away from where I started.

I shared memories of the apartment with friends coming to my parties.

I moved to an expensive rental house owned by the university foundation, right in the heart of the campus, on the opposite side of the street of my department. Colleagues waved when they passed, colleagues glanced through my kitchen window, through my bedroom window. I lived on 46.9 m<sup>2</sup>,

127 kilometers away from where I started.

I shared the apartment with my two cats and the glances of my colleagues.

I moved from student to Ph.D. candidate, from single to significant other to single to cat owner, to doctor in gender studies, to member of the academic precariat working more short work contracts and scholarship periods than I can remember. This follows how Cresswell (2010) discusses mobility, as having a physical reality, at the same time as, it is encoded culturally and socially, and experienced through practice. This means that mobility produces and is produced by social power structures.

In 2013, just before my time-limited work contract as a lecturer was ending, I was granted a housing loan<sup>[ii]</sup> and bought my own home in an apartment building, 119 kilometres away from the neighbourhood. If I would have been able to get a bigger loan I would probably have moved to another neighbourhood. In a way, I was back in the childhood neighbourhood. The apartment block of the same style, in the yard children play, shouting to their parents through the open windows, and as the neighbourhood is located in the outskirts of the city it is only a stone's throw to the forest. When I look out of my kitchen window, I see a big field with high grass and a few trees, people walking their dogs. I feel safe; I feel like I am returning.

I am a postdoctoral research fellow,

I am an academic precariat member.



Yuval-Davis (2006) has shown how there are difference of how important or unimportant belongings are between people but also within a person, and writes that “emotions, like perceptions, shift in different times and situations and are more or less reflective. The emotional components of people’s constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel (p. 202).

I have paid off almost 25 percent of my housing loan,

I am 38 years.

I have trouble identifying as someone with a university degree.

I have a mother who still identifies as working class.

I have a mum who tells me how proud she is of me.

I have a mum who cannot sleep because she is worried about my work situation, my chances of retirement because I am a scholarship researcher, my housing loan. Mum who tells me she is at least happy that I will have paid off the housing loan when I turn 53 if everything goes as planned. As Skeggs, (1997/2005) writes:

we inherit the meanings associated with social positions and positions in discourse and knowledge. Each kind of capital can only exist in the interrelationships of social positions; they bring with them access to or limitations on which capitals are available to certain positions. They become classed, raced, sexed, and gendered through being lived: they are simultaneously processed (p. 132).

Wayfinding through remembering becomes knowledge production of how spatiality and temporality form life in non-linear ways. Just like my movement from one apartment to the next, from one neighbourhood to the next, life is fragments, dots, and u-turns. In this chapter, I have illustrated my wayfinding, my non-chrononormative journey, as I do not fully move away from a neighbourhood; instead, I carry all neighbourhoods with me. I move away from my childhood neighbourhood but am stuck with it. I relate later homes with my first home, later neighbourhoods with the first neighbourhood. I do this not only in geospatial ways like kilometres, but also in relation to sociocultural markers of a neighbourhood and similarities of the environment and architecture.

I travel along lifelines, city lines, story lines, family lines, education lines, house lines, roof lines, text lines, straight lines, curved lines, horizontal lines, vertical lines, most often not linear. My wayfinding is not linear, even if it consists of lines. Even if I, both in writing this

chapter and as returning as a researcher and former inhabitant “the line of writing is [...] a way of remembering” and “the line of walking is [...] a way of knowing” Ingold (2007, p. 91). Here the places and neighbourhoods where I have lived, become, following Ingold “knots, and the threads from which are tied are lines of wayfaring” (2011, p. 149). These neighbourhoods are knots as they are caught up with threads like movement paths, family relations, sociocultural and socioeconomic circumstances.

My childhood neighbourhood is not my neighbourhood anymore, and still:

I have never left.

I keep turning back,

returning as a researcher, it turns out that almost everything has changed, and still:

everything is the same.

“Moving is knowing.

The wayfarer knows as [they] go along” (Ingold, 2010, p. 134).

## References

”Äntligen byggstart för Bäljars-småhus” [Finally time to start building small houses in Bäljars]. (1977, May 31). *Västra Nyland*.

“Bäljars börjar bli en stadsdel” [Bäljars is starting to become a neighbourhood]. (1978, June 3). *Västra Nyland*.

Bell, V. (1999). “Performativity and Belonging: An Introduction”. *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol 16(2), pp. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632769922050511>

“Bostadslöshet tabu i Västnyland” [Homelessness is taboo in Västnyland]. (2016, May 4). *Västra Nyland*.

Cresswell, T. (2010). “Towards a Politics of Mobility”. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol 28(1), pp. 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d11407>

Freeman, E. (2010). *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Duke University Press.

Hardy, B. (1968). "Towards a Poetics of Fiction 3) An Approach through Narrative", *Novel: a Forum on Fiction*, vol 2(1), pp. 5–14

Holman Jones, S. (2016). "Living Bodies of Thought: The "Critical" in Critical Autoethnography". *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol 22(4), pp. 228–237.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800415622509>

Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment. Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2005). "Epilogue: Towards a Politics of Dwelling". *Conservation and Society*, vol. 3(2), pp. 501–508.

Ingold, T. (2007). *Lines. A Brief History*. Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2010). "Footprints through the Weather-World: Walking, Breathing, Knowing". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 16(1), pp. 121–139.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2010.01613.x>

Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Routledge.

"Karis utveckling beror på SAT" [The city's development is dependent on SAT] (1978, June 3). *Västra Nyland*.

"Lägenhetsbranden rökte ut grannarna" [An apartment fire smoked out the neighbours]. (2013, December 18). *Västra Nyland*.

Martin, D.-C. (1995). "The Choices of Identity". *Social Identities*, vol 1(1), pp. 5–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.1995.9959423>

“Planeringen lever hela tiden i Karis” [The planning continues in the city] (2004, March 18). *Västra Nyland*.

“Problem med plank på småhusområdet” [Problems with fences in the small-house-area] (1977, April, 7). *Västra Nyland*.

Skeggs, B. (1997/2005). “Classifying Practices: Representations, Capitals and Recognitions”. In P. Mahony & C. Zmroczek (Eds.), *Class Matter: ‘Working-Class’ Women’s Perspectives on Social Class* (pp. 123–139). Taylor & Francis. Original work published 1997)

Taavetti, R. (2018). *Queer Politics of Memory: Undisciplined Sexualities as Glimpses and Fragments in Finnish and Estonian Pasts*. University of Helsinki.

”Unga finskspråkiga blir isolerade i Raseborg” [Finnish-speaking youth becomes isolated in Raseborg] (2016, May 5). *Yle Västnyland*. Retrieved from <http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2016/05/04/unga-finsksprakiga-bilir-isolerade-i-raseborg>

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). “Belonging and the Politics of Belonging”. *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol 40(3), pp. 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>

[i] As a city, my childhood city has transformed from an old parish to a borough (1930), to a city (1977), to a part of the municipality, together with two neighbouring cities (2009). At the end of 1976, the city had 8156 inhabitants and a population increasing by 1.03 % per year. At the end of 2008, the population of the city was 9155. Inhabitants working in a truck manufactory, a scissors factory, metal factories, textile factories and a meat factory in the city or the neighbouring cities, characterizes the city. 58,7 % of the population was in 2008 registered as Swedish speaking and 38,6 % was registered as Finnish speaking, these numbers also include inhabitants who moved to the city in the 90s and later as war refugees, as most of them have chosen to register themselves as Swedish or Finnish speaking.

[ii] As my work contract was ending soon, I felt that it was now or never that I would be able to receive a housing loan. It was also feminist care, as one of my colleagues at the Gender

Studies department encouraged me to see if I could be able to get a loan instead of indirectly paying someone else's loan by renting.