

City as Home: Sense of Security and Emotional Places in the Drawings of Schoolchildren from the Nordic Countries and Russia

Tatiana Zhigaltsova

The article gives an overview of the concepts of “feeling of place”, “place attachment” and “sense of security” in phenomenological tradition in the fields of geography, psychology, and culture studies. The author demonstrates the utility of the drawing method in the interpretation of “sense of security” in relation not only to specific places, but to the entire urban environment. The results of the study among the children and teenagers from Tornio (Finland), Haparanda (Sweden), Nikel (Russia) and Kirkenes (Norway) are presented. The study was based on an anonymous questionnaire with open-ended questions and children’s drawings. A total of 56 questionnaires in Nikel, 33 in Haparanda, 35 in Tornio and six in Kirkenes were collected between 2015 and 2020. The schoolchildren were asked if they considered their cities clean, safe, and friendly. The questionnaire also included questions about specific places in the cities that the children and teenagers associated with the feelings of interest, joy, comfort, pride, anxiety, sorrow, disgust, and shame.

The study identified the criteria of a secure urban environment, the most important of which being a “feeling at home”. This was reflected in the drawings of places triggering positive emotions of comfort, joy, interest (emotopias of peace and activity). It was proven that negative emotions such as sorrow in connection with cemeteries, shame and disgust in connection with dirty and polluted places do not diminish the sense of security among schoolchildren, as opposed to anxiety (dark places, abandoned buildings). The obtained results were visualized by means of interactive emotion maps.

Background

Studies concerning different aspects of “place” (“feeling of place”, “place attachment” and other) are remarkably diverse and represent such branches of social studies as environmental psychology, sociology, community psychology, human geography, cultural anthropology, gerontology, demography, urban studies, leisure sciences and tourism, ecology, forestry, architecture and planning, and economics (Lewicka, 2011: 207). Modern processes of computerization, globalization, increased migration and mobility have not weakened the research interest; rather, place research has become of great relevance, and the number of publications on the subject is steadily increasing (Lewicka, 2011).

Tatiana Zhigaltsova is an Associate Professor of the Department of Culture and Religious Studies of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, Russia, Arkhangelsk.

It was geographical studies that took an early interest in the notion of “place”. The growing interest to the concept of “place” in humanistic geography was underpinned by “an insistence on taking seriously the inter-subjectively constituted lifeworlds – the shared meanings and ‘common-sense knowledges’ – associated with groups of people who lead similar lives under similar circumstances in similar places”, which led to the so called “cultural turn” in geographical work (Latham, McCormack, McNamara & McNeill, 2009: 6). Human geography researchers focused on the importance of everyday practices and life routines and researched such mundane human experiences as tending gardens, sitting in airports and cafés and using telephones (Latham, McCormack, McNamara & McNeill, 2009: 7).

The feeling of place in the geographical research, especially in the early periods, under the influence of phenomenological tradition was construed as strong emotional attachment, and even affection, to places – “topophilia” (Tuan, 1974). Since the 1980s, an opposite trend has been observed – the loss of sense of place, which was caused by technological progress, monotony and standardization of design and architectural solutions, creation of environments of few significant places – cities were becoming “placeless”, or “flatscapes” (Relph, 1976: 384). This phenomenon was largely attributed to cities and megacities. At present, the borders between towns and cities, between urban and rural environments are becoming conventional and interpenetrating. Rural lifestyles are undergoing urbanization, with people commuting to workplaces, travelling, teleworking, shopping, and the omnipotent media are present in every sphere of life. “The traditional divide between the city and the countryside has been perforated” (Amin & Thrift, 2002 in Latham, McCormack, McNamara & McNeill, 2009: 1).

Still, some researchers tend to differentiate between the “rural sense of place” and the “urban sense of place” (Convery, Corsane & Davis, 2012). The feeling of home and your own land in small rural settlements has deeper roots (“rootedness within a locality”) due to the fact that several generations might have lived in the same area. Some farm families have a deep feeling for their own land gained over the years from early childhood, so that the land and the surrounding environment are an integral part of their cultural code (Convery, Corsane & Davis, 2012: 12).

In my opinion, not only the feeling of place, but also the sense of security will be stronger in small populated places, in towns balancing between rural and urban environments, due to the absence of unfamiliar, unknown, disturbing spaces, as well as the absence of outsiders, whose actions may be regarded as threatening. The very environment of a small city, where it is easier to reach different destinations and which is better adapted to the daily needs of its residents, is perceived by them as a safer environment (Boverket, 2011: 20).

The crime rate in larger cities is higher due to higher population density, greater migration, more rapid population growth and prevalence of young people in the demographic structure of the population (Ladbrook, 1988).

Naturally, lower crime rates are a foundation for the sense of security. The sense of security is made up of not only low crime rate and the feeling of being protected against physical violence. “Human security” encompasses all kinds of human life aspects: “categories of human security are economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political” (Imanian, 2014). Children and teenagers are vulnerable in this respect, because their “human security” depends on the actions of adults. Children are prone to losing their sense of personal and public security in larger cities due to higher exposure to such risks as kidnapping, child abuse and simply

geographical disorientation, because they are not very well acquainted yet with the local environments (Imanian, 2014).

Identification of detailed criteria of the sense of security in association with specific locations and the living environment in general as perceived by children and teenagers is a promising direction for “sense of security” studies.

Drawing urban environments

Research into the sense of security requires qualitative methods, for instance, by means of drawings. Analysis of drawings allows capturing subconscious representations, i.e. something that cannot be exposed by direct questioning.

The analysis of drawings made by residents of large cities of all ages is a widespread technique for surveying the image of a place and the image of the city in general. Kevin Lynch was one of the pioneers to apply the drawing method (Lynch, 1991). He asked the respondents to draw a map of their city and describe their daily itineraries. Following this, the author reflected on the image of “one’s own territory”, where people feel “at home” and can identify themselves “both socially and spatially”. As an example, he provided a child’s drawing of “one’s own” territory (Lynch, 1991).

The drawing analysis method has been successfully used with children and teenagers as well. In a study by James et al. (1998), the researchers applied methods based on children’s yet limited competencies and skills, such as the Draw and Write technique (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999), along with conversational interviews, assuming that in all other senses children were like adults. “The Draw and Write technique involves drawing a picture and writing about the feelings it provokes or more explanations about its details that could not be expressed through drawing” (Imanian, 2014, as quoted in Sewell, 2011).

Drawings are generally used to analyse images of specific places and routes from one point to another. Researcher O. Nikitina conducted interviews with 10-12 year-old native and immigrant children in Paris and Berlin. She asked the children to draw their itinerary from their house to school. The drawings were analysed by V. Semenova in the article “Mapping of an urban space: Key approaches for the visual analysis” (Semenova, 2009). By comparing the children’s drawings, V. Semenova arrived at a conclusion that immigrant children did not mark the beginning and end of their itinerary, did not depict themselves in the drawings, and did not capture “mental points”. This suggested that they did not personalize the space, as opposed to native children (Semenova, 2009).

Drawings can be used to analyse not only the image of places, but also personal attitude and emotions of the author, which are bound to be conveyed through the drawing. M.V. Osorina, who studied children’s perceptions of the world, noted that five-year-old children already possessed an individual symbolic system that allowed them to use spatial and colour codes to convey important information about the world through drawings (Osorina, 2019). This information could be obtained from spatial arrangement of objects and people, by comparing their sizes, shapes, colours, etc.

Yet another method of drawing analysis was developed by Sara Imanian, who used prepared drawings of characters with empty speech bubbles and asking schoolchildren to come up with

anxiety-related phrases to fill the bubbles. The children were asked to imagine that the boy or the girl drawn on a piece of paper were the same age as them, and were asked to write down what would worry this child about his or her parents, brothers and sisters, his or her home, their neighbourhood, the nearby park and streets, and the road from home to school (Imanian, 2014). The resulting phrases characterized children's personal attitude to the problem. Besides "Picture-Aided Questionnaires about the worries of girls or boys of participants' own age at home and in the city", Imanian also used "Draw and Write tasks about how insecure homes and cities look like" and "Conversational interviews about concepts of security/insecurity, secure/insecure places, and children's reactions to feeling insecure" (Imanian, 2014).

Edwards (2008) argued that there was a "structural similarity" in the images of emotions drawn by different people. It is feasible to decode the emotional component of the drawing, by analysing the drawing technique: pressure of the pen against the paper, length of dashed lines, and use of colour. For example, "anger" appears to generate jagged, dark, pointed forms, while "joy" accounts for light, curving, circular forms that tend to rise within the format (Edwards, 2008).

Hypothesis and study aim

Is this elusive sense of security possible to capture, study, and understand? The hypothesis of this study posits that identifiable emotionally charged places provide the key to understanding (identifying criteria for) the sense of security of the entire urban space. In the course of my field studies, it became necessary to coin a one-word term to denote emotionally charged places triggering positive, negative and mixed emotions of interest, joy, comfort, pride, sorrow, anxiety, disgust, and shame. I introduced the word "emotopias", composed of the first parts of the Latin word "emovere" – "to excite" and the Greek word *τοπος* – "a place".

The purpose of the present study is to research the sense of security as perceived by children and teenagers from small Arctic cities. The research aims to:

- 1) Identify places associated with the sense of security, and count the number of mentions of such places using open-ended questions in anonymous questionnaires.
- 2) Identify criteria for the sense of security through the descriptions and drawings of emotional places (emotopias) in the cities.
- 3) Draw up emotional maps of the cities.

Methods and participants

The present study compiles data received during my 2015-2020 field visits to small Arctic cities with the population ranging from 7,000 to 20,000 people in Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland. During these visits, I collected and analysed data on emotopias of children and teenagers aged 9 to 16 years old. A total of 56 children were interviewed in Nikel, 33 – in Haparanda, 35 – in Tornio, and 6 – in Kirkenes. The drawings and short anonymous questionnaires with open-ended questions were administered with the consent of the school administrations and verbal consent from the parents. Three types of schools (dancing, art and secondary) were included in the study. No personal data were gathered. Only the child's age, nationality and the duration of residence in the city (for natives) were taken into consideration. The sex of the respondents was not considered for gender neutrality purposes.

My first questionnaires that were used in Nikel and Kirkenes in 2015 concentrated on polar emotions (positive and negative) brought out by specific places. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions and had three parts: 1 – general information; 2 – questions about the sense of place (secure, clean, multicultural, beautiful, unique); 3 – blank space for the respondents to draw their favourite and least favourite places and describing their emotions. The findings of my earlier studies on children and teenagers' perception of urban environments in Nikel and partially Kirkenes were published in "Favorite and Least Favorite Places of the Northern Border Cities" (Zhigaltsova, 2018).

Later on, in the second part of the questionnaire, the question about the multicultural character of their respective cities was substituted with a question about the "friendliness" of the city, because the replies to the open-ended questions in Nikel showed the relevance of this criterion for maintaining their sense of security, while "multiculturalism" did not show such a correlation. The questionnaires were reworked to include a wider range of emotions, such as interest, joy, comfort, pride, sorrow, anxiety, disgust, and shame. Thus, the questionnaire for the study in Haparanda and Tornio consisted of four parts: 1 – general information, 2 – questions about the sense of place (secure, clean, friendly, beautiful, unique); 3 – questions about the places in the cities evoking such emotions as interest, joy, comfort, pride, sorrow, anxiety, disgust, and shame; 4 – blank space for the respondents to draw their emotional places (emotopias) and describe their emotions.

During my earlier field surveys in Nikel and Kirkenes, it became clear that schoolchildren often named and drew places related to their own personal emotional experiences, or "secret" places. It was quite impossible to interpret these locations as places of collective/group emotions, because in the study children and teenagers were considered primarily as an age group. For example, here are captions to some drawings of favourite places in Nikel: "In this place, I met some kids who later became my best friends" (age 13); "Because the roof is like wow (so cool there!!)" (age 13). Hence, such individual places were removed from the study, and we analysed only the places and descriptions that were mentioned by at least three different schoolchildren.

The places that were mentioned by at least three schoolchildren were plotted against physical maps of the cities. We utilized a method of emotional mapping in order to visualize problem areas in the cities and positively and negatively charged places, and designed online emotion maps available at <http://emogeography.com>.

The data obtained during field visits in the previous years were updated, which enabled me to provide a wider scale of comparisons in the present study. The choices of places and the emotions that were associated with them were surprisingly similar among the young respondents of different nationalities in my studies. This inspired me to unite some emotopias under larger categories, like "emotopias of peace", "emotopias of activity" for places associated with comfort, joy and interest, and "emotopias of pollution", "emotopias of disease and death" for places associated with shame, disgust and sorrow. A small number of returned questionnaires does not allow for making wide generalizations, however, and the answers to the questionnaires can be used as a basic context for discussing the drawings.

Sense of security in urban environment

The sense of security in urban environment was studied by way of open-ended questions in an anonymous questionnaire. The main question was “Do you consider your city secure?”, and additional questions were “Do you consider your city clean?”, “Do you consider your city friendly?”, “What does your native city mean to you?”. More questions dealt with multiculturalism/friendliness, beauty, uniqueness of the cities. The answers of schoolchildren to most questions were quite short: yes, no, quite, and slightly. The answers to the question about cleanliness were more detailed: “Not too bad, but mostly not very clean, you can see some litter here and there” (Swede, age 14), “Depends on the time of year” (Swede, age 14). Table 1 shows how children and teenagers characterised their cities.

	Nikel (56 respondents)	Kirkenes (6 respondents)	Haparanda (33 respondents)	Tornio (35 respondents)
	No. of mentions			
secure	43	6	20	30
clean	1	0	8	23
friendly	N/A	N/A	17	24
multicultural	12	6	N/A	N/A
beautiful	29	5	16	31
unique	24	5	15	28

Table 1. Responses of the children and teenagers living in Nikel, Kirkenes, Tornio, Haparanda.

The table shows that even if the children did not consider their city clean, it did not reduce their sense of security. At a first glance, it seems obvious that cleanliness and security are interconnected. However, can the same be said about the environmentally challenged cities, where pollution may be viewed by the residents as a threat to the health of their families?

For comparison, let us have a look at the answers of schoolchildren from Nikel and Kirkenes in 2015. Only one respondent from Nikel considered their city clean. Irrespective of the age group, schoolchildren from Nikel considered their city polluted: “No, there are factories and chimneys here that pollute the air” (Russian, age 11), “everybody wants to leave because of the smoke” (Russian, age 13). At the same time, the majority were convinced in the security of the city: “few cars” (Russian, age 11), “Our Nikel is a secure little place” (Russian, age 12), “One cannot get lost here” (Russian, age 13).

The schoolchildren from Nikel made no connection between poor environmental situation and security. The lack of security was often connected to crime, to alcoholics: “No, because all over Nickel, there are drunkards and also a man without legs (and another man was stabbed)” (Russian, age 14). The same could be said about the schoolchildren from the neighbouring Kirkenes. All of them called their city polluted: “Yes, there’s so much pollution because of the nickel factory” (Norwegian, age 9), “Quite polluted. A lot of dust from the mines” (Norwegian, age 13). At that, these schoolchildren also considered their city to be secure: “thanks to the police” (Norwegian, age 9), “this is a small city, no crimes” (Norwegian, age 11), “very safe, few

thefts” (Norwegian, age 13). Therefore, we assumed that littered streets and even environmental pollution do not make the city less secure in the eyes of the schoolchildren.

Friendliness is a more solid indicator of the sense of security: the schoolchildren who considered their city friendly also called it secure more often. The relation between the criteria of friendliness and security requires deeper research, as well as criteria for beauty and uniqueness. About half of the respondents in Nikel and Kirkenes consider their cities beautiful and unique. Among the respondents from Haparanda and Tornio, this indicator is much higher.

When answering the question “What does your native city mean to you?”, lots of my respondents mentioned the sense of security, especially younger schoolchildren, who often associated their city with the feelings of home and security. For example, children going to primary schools in Tornio replied: “Tornio means home and security” (Finn, age 10), “The city means it is safe for me here” (Finn, age 10), “Home” (Finn, age 10). The comparison of Tornio with “home” gave title to this article. This comparison provides a key to understanding of how important it is for children to feel at home in the city.

The children attending primary schools in Haparanda replied: “I think we are doing fine, we have no wars” (Swede, age 10), “Fun, and my city means a lot to me” (Swede, age 10), “I like my home city” (Swede, age 10).

Here are also some replies from Nikel children of the same age: “My family, my home, my friend” (Russian, age 9), “Home, my native city” (Russian, age 10), “The city where my friends live” (Russian, age 11), and from Kirkenes: “I was born here” (Norwegian, age 9), “This city is my whole life: my friends, my school, hobbies” (Norwegian, age 11), “My home” (Norwegian, age 11).

The teenagers in my studies also associated their cities with the feeling of home. Here are some quotes from the questionnaires filled in by teenagers from Tornio, Haparanda and Kirkenes:

Tornio teenagers: “It brings back a lot of childhood memories” (Finn, age 14), “All my friends are here” (Finn, age 14), “This is a safe place to live” (Finn, age 15).

Haparanda teenagers: “The city of my childhood is very important, anyway” (Swede, age 14), “It made me feel very bad, but it also made me into a strong person I am now” (Swede-Finn, age 14), “It feels like home” (Somali, age 14, has been living there for 5 years).

Kirkenes teenagers: “This is a place where my friends live” (Norwegian, age 13), “This is my home” (Norwegian, age 14).

Quite alarming were the responses of Nikel teenagers (over 14 years old), who were thinking of leaving their home city: “A place where I will live until I turn 18, and then we shall see” (Russian, age 14), “A place where I will stay until I am 18, but will always remember” (Russian, age 15), “My little homeland and a bank of memories” (Russian, age 15).

Based on the quotations obtained from the respondents in my field studies, I singled out the following criteria of urban environment security for children and teenagers:

- 1) feeling oneself at home in the city;
- 2) good knowledge of the urban environment and possibility to explore;
- 3) lack of military action;
- 4) low crime rate;
- 5) having friends;
- 6) road safety;
- 7) peacefulness.

Are these security criteria reflected in the drawings and descriptions of emotopias made by the schoolchildren?

Emotopias of peace and emotopias of activity

The place that was named by the respondents in my study most often and associated with the positive emotion of “*comfort*” was “home”: “I chose my home, because I feel safe there, and it is fun” (Swede, age 10, drawing of a house); “Because you can take a breath and have some rest” (Finn, 14, emotion “comfort”). Schoolchildren described their home through such words as “family”, “security”, “shelter”, “order”, “quiet”, “silence”, “help”, “fun”, “brothers and sisters”.

M.V. Osorina argues, “home” is the first outside environment to become “my own” (Osorina, 2008: 39). It is important for children to “place numerous signs of their presence here [at home – T.Zh.], such as handicrafts, personal belongings” (Osorina, 2008: 39). Russian teenagers over 12 years old put particular emphasis on “their room” as a place where they felt comfortable. In their drawings, they showed such “signs of presence” such as their bed, desk, computer with the name of their favourite computer program, refrigerator magnet, etc. (Zhigaltsova, 2018: 368).

Implied “signs of presence” can also be seen in the drawings of “home”: window curtains, a heart symbol on the door, a smoking chimney, tree houses (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Drawings of “home” (one-family houses) by primary schoolchildren from Haparanda (top), Tornio (middle), and Kirkenes (bottom).

One noticeable fact is that all pictured houses were low-rise wooden structures. The drawings of high-rise buildings were missing the “signs of presence” of not only the schoolchildren, but also of other inhabitants (Fig. 2). Only driveways and walkways to the building were drawn in detail. Were it not for the comments, such drawings could easily be understood as drawings of places associated with negative emotions, particularly due to the short sharp marks made with heavy pressure.



Figure 2. Drawings of “home” (high-rise buildings) by teenagers from Nikel (top) and Tornio (bottom)

Comparison of Figures 1 and 2 suggests a more personal experience, a stronger feeling of place among the schoolchildren living in one-family houses rather than in high-rise buildings. Obviously, this requires further studies and confirmation.

“Hygge” was my first association when I was visiting classrooms in Haparanda and Tornio. These public and official spaces held numerous “signs of presence”, such as pictures, drawings, handicraft items, shelves, and hand-made notices. All these created a friendly atmosphere and made one feel at home in the classroom. This was especially characteristic of Haparanda, where schoolchildren wore no shoes, only socks in class, and the school desks were arranged in a circle in the center of the room, or along the walls.

However, some negative emotions in relation to schools were expressed in the questionnaires. These were mostly found in the replies of schoolchildren over 12 years old, who explain it by “boredom” (Norwegian, age 14), demanding requirements, when “every teacher thinks that his or her subject is the most important one” (Russian, age 13), as well as complicated interpersonal relationships with other schoolchildren: “There are a lot of people, and a lot of pressure from

your peers, and school is the place where you can feel lonely and ostracized” (Finn-Swede, age 14); “a lot of enemies” (Immigrant, age 15, has lived in Tornio for 9 years).

It is possible that the pressure from parental control and school environment makes schoolchildren search for private places. All of the respondents, regardless of their nationality, mentioned the need for some private places in public urban environment where they could spend time with their friends or simply be alone, this need being an indispensable component of emotional well-being of a child and a teenager. Finnish researchers determined that about 33% of schoolchildren would go to their favourite private places after emotionally draining experiences, such as setbacks, disappointments, and depression, seeking emotional regulation (Korpela et al., 2002: 393). Although in the majority of cases the parents were aware of the children’s favourite places, this study has shown that most often children would select private places based on the lack of social demands and outside of parental control (Korpela et al., 2002: 396).

Schoolchildren often pick out their favourite private places based on previous positive communicative experiences in these places, and on the desire to retract from the outer world, while having the ability to control the whole visible territory. More often, these are places in the open area with nature-made shelters where one can hide from the prying eyes, and they are associated not only with comfort, but also with *joy* and *interest*. Spontaneous play zones in parks, snowdrifts, river banks, and forests at the edge of the city: “The beach and the forest. It is interesting to explore them” (Swede, age 9, emotion – interest); “The parks and the river. A wonderful place to listen to the sounds of nature” (Finn, age 10, emotion – comfort); “It is a green spot close to my house, it is beautiful and fun, and I like to walk there. The birds are always chirping there” (Russian, age 12, emotion – joy).

The urban environment of small cities is closely connected with the natural environment. Emotional space of these cities exceeds their physical boundaries and is inseparable from the surrounding natural environment. Schoolchildren often associated surrounding nature with positive emotions, such as joy, interest and comfort. It is where all of the local residents, including schoolchildren, try to spend their free time, skiing, jogging, or doing sports.

Therefore, emotopias of peace can at the same time act as emotopias of activity: “You need to go there to ride a bicycle or ski. An incredible place” (Norwegian, age 12, emotion – interest). A striking example is the water area of the city: “I like to spend time with my family by the river” (Russian, age 12, emotion – joy). Figure 3 shows the children’s drawings of the river and the lake.

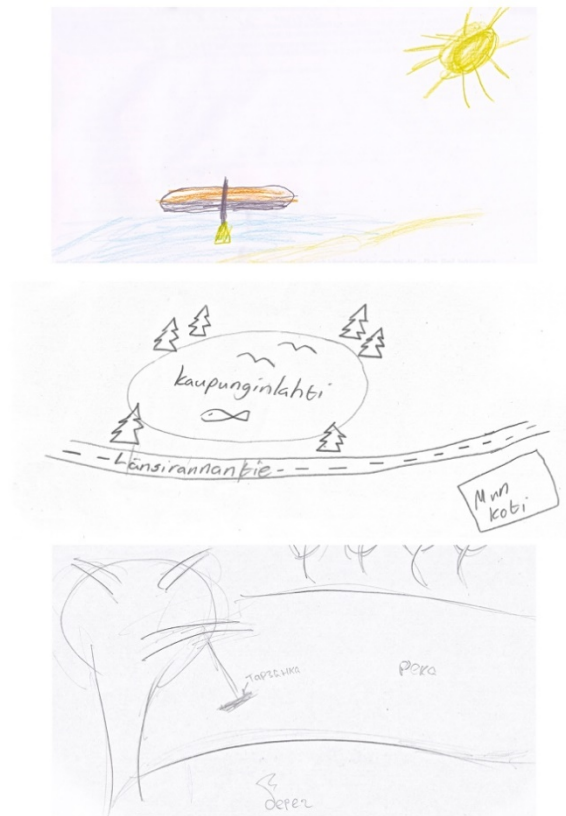


Figure 3. Drawings of places associated with comfort and joy by schoolchildren from Haparanda (top), Tornio (middle), and Nikel (bottom).

Swimming, sailing, fishing, and bungee-jumping are usually the activities shared with close friends or family, that is why they get intertwined with the feeling of seclusion and privacy. It is an amazing phenomenon, when a person can feel private in a public place like a beach or a swimming pool.

The schoolchildren also expressed such a moral emotion as *pride* in relation to their own home, the natural and water environments (the river, the beach, the forest). Among the public buildings in Haparanda and Tornio, the schoolchildren are proud of the sports centre. The Finnish schoolchildren are also proud of the museum, their school: “because it is a wonderful school” (Finn, age 10, emotion – pride); and the Swedish schoolchildren – of the railway station, namely the Ungdomshuset Station.

Thus, returning to the criteria of the urban environment security, the analyzed drawings and descriptions of emotional places have confirmed the need of the schoolchildren to feel at home in the city, to know well and explore the urban environment, to feel comfort and peace, to have a lot of friends and family close by. One can also add the need for private places for playing, and the close connection between the urban and the natural environments.

Emotopias of pollution and emotopias of disease and death

Apart from the positive emotions (such as comfort, joy, interest, and pride), the schoolchildren also experienced negative emotions towards the urban environment. Despite the fact that, as mentioned above, garbage pollution and even complicated ecological situation did not make the

cities less secure, in the opinion of the schoolchildren, polluted places were often associated with such negative emotions as *shame* and *disgust*: “places that are very polluted” (Swede, age 14, emotion – shame). Among the polluted places, the respondents named the beach, littered places, the school canteen, the playroom in the local shopping mall and even “one’s own room”: “My room, because it is very dirty” (Finn, age 10, emotion – shame). It is worth mentioning, that in their responses, the schoolchildren connected disgust not only with specific places, but also with bad smells: the stench of tobacco, fish, toilets: “smelly places and the farms, because they stink” (Finn, age 10). The caption to the drawing (Fig. 4), for instance, described bad smells.

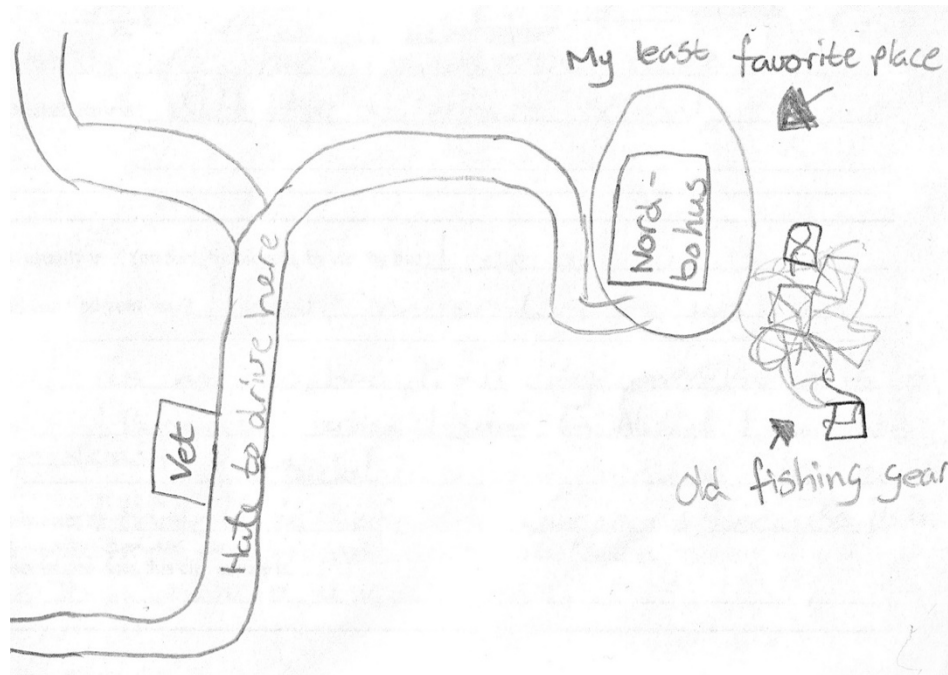


Figure 4. A drawing of a least favorite place by a student from Kirkenes (emotion – disgust). The caption to the drawing ran: “I chose this place because there’s garbage, and it smells of fish”.

In small cities, schoolchildren do not have strong *fear* in relation to the urban environment. They know the city and the suburbs well, as they begin to explore the environment from the age of 6-7, which is a few years earlier than the majority of schoolchildren in larger cities (Zhigaltsova, 2018: 362). In the study by N.K. Radina conducted in a large Russian city Nizhny Novgorod, it was discovered that primary schoolchildren are afraid of darkness, deserted places, basements, parks and forest parks, being home alone, public transport, recreational facilities, roadways, new constructions, and “outsiders” in the city (Radina, 2017: 135-137). These places of “destruction and death” identified by N.V. Radina were typical for Russian schoolchildren responses. In my earlier works, I defined these places as “sacrificial”, meaning that ignoring such places and experiencing neutral emotions in relation to them helps the citizens to “purify”, to safeguard the rest of the environment and maintain their emotional health (Zhigaltsova, 2016).

Of all listed above in the present study, the responses of the Swedish, Finnish and Russian respondents held mentions only of “dark places” (or poorly / insufficiently lit places). Fear of abandoned and tumbledown buildings because of the risk of meeting the “outsiders” (homeless people and drug addicts) was observed in the responses of Nickel schoolchildren. Fear of strangers (migrants, newcomers) was not mentioned by any of the schoolchildren.

Haparanda, Tornio and Kirkenes have very few abandoned and tumbledown buildings, that is why they do not produce such a prominent negative reaction as in Nikel. In the framework of the present study it would be relevant not to focus on sacrificial places or “places of destruction and death”, but rather on places of “disease and death”, which were associated not only with *anxiety*, but also with *sorrow*. These are hospitals, morgues, cemeteries. The schoolchildren were apprehensive of the cemetery as a place of death: “The cemetery, because it reminds me of the dead” (Swede, age 10, emotion – sorrow); “The cemetery, because my grandmother is buried there” (Finn, age 10, emotion - sorrow). The cemetery drawings were very similar (Figure. 5).

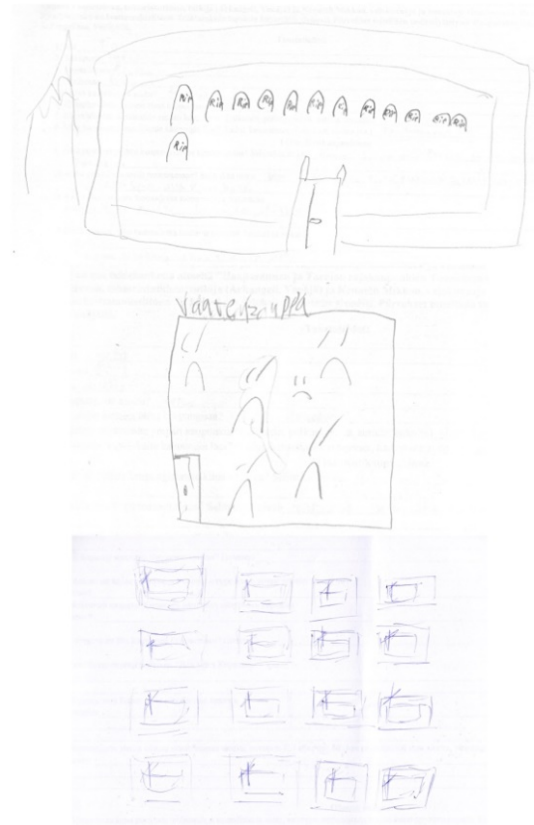


Figure 5. Emotopias of death in the drawings of Tornio (top, middle) and Nikel teenagers (bottom).

In the drawings of the cemetery, one can always see a fence – the border of the place, as well as a gate or a door. The cemetery is perceived as a place of “otherness” or even as an alien place, which can be entered only by crossing the border. In the middle drawing, a teenager from Tornio depicted the grave mounds as negative emoji. The drawing of a teenager from Nikel was more schematic and typified with sixteen identical square graves.

Not all of urban space needs to have a positive colouring. The places of “disease and death”, evoking sorrow, and even places of pollution, evoking shame and disgust, do not make the urban environment less secure. Anxiety, without a doubt, diminishes the sense of security, which is why preventive work in such places is necessary. In this case, this does not require great effort: to make dark or insufficiently lit places well-lit. The problem of abandoned buildings in small Russian Arctic cities, however, demands an urgent solution, since these buildings destabilize the

emotional health of the citizens. The identified phenomenon of ignoring places of acute anxiety and even fear allows the citizens to maintain their sense of security. The loss of such may lead to forced migration.

Mapping emotopias

This research tends to belong to the field of visual art. In order to visualize emotional environments of the small Arctic cities, I developed interactive emotion maps of Haparanda and Tornio together with video artist Sergey Zhigaltsov, photographer Kenneth Mikko and translator Anna Kondakova. The maps are available at <http://emogeography.com/emotional-maps.html>. In the design of these maps, we used some of the drawings collected during my field visits. (Fig. 6).

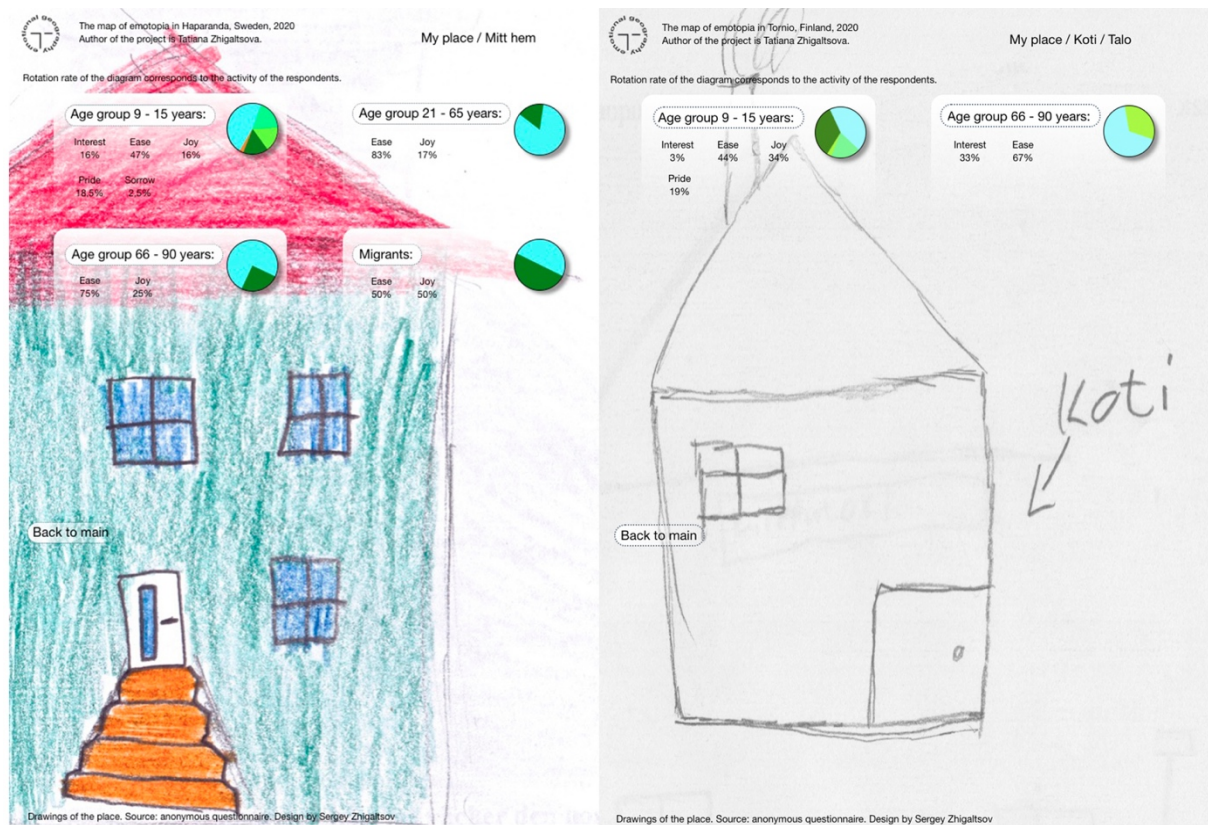


Figure 6. Depiction of “home/my place” on the interactive emotion maps of Haparanda (on the left) and Tornio (on the right) based on schoolchildren questionnaires, 2020.

For the maps, both children and teenagers were included into one age group. Each emotion was coded with a colour: blue-green colours were used to code positive emotions, while red and brown were used for negative ones (Fig. 7).

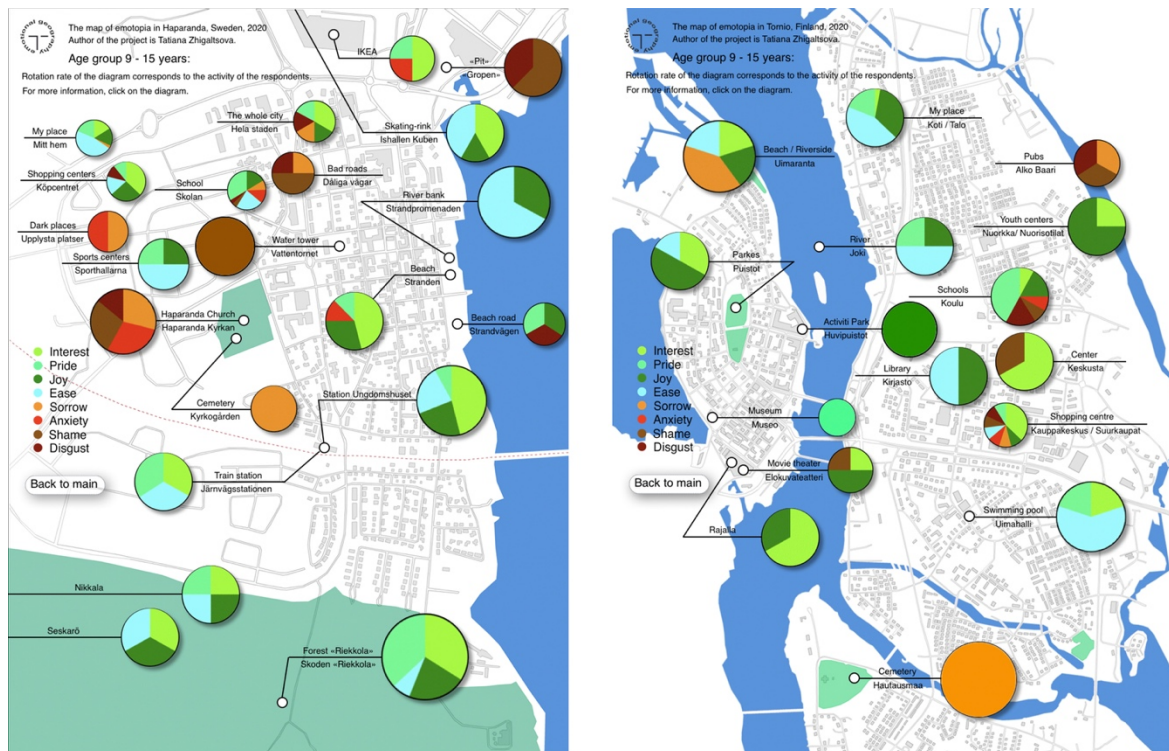


Figure 7. Interactive emotion maps of Haparanda (on the left) and Tornio (on the right) based on schoolchildren questionnaires, 2020.

The maps allow us to get a new perspective on emotopias and identify problem areas in the emotional spaces of the cities. Comparing the two maps, one can observe that negative emotions like disgust and shame are more prominent in the emotional space of the Swedish schoolchildren. It is necessary to take into account the fact that some teenagers come to Haparanda schools from the neighbouring villages (Nikkala, Seskarö and other), and they have very strong emotional connection with these. Haparanda emotional space is therefore perceived in a more neutral way. One respondent expressed an idea that Haparanda was not a child-friendly city, as it was more focused on the elderly people: “I dislike the whole city, there is nothing for young children, all people are old there” (Swede, emotion – disgust). The Church was associated with negative emotions among the Swedish schoolchildren mainly because of its “ugly” outer appearance.

Both emotion maps reveal positive emotions in relation to the respondents' "home", the surrounding natural environment, the youth and sports centres, mixed emotions in relation to the school and the shopping malls, and sorrow in relation to the cemetery.

In addition to visualization, the emotion maps also demonstrate emotional activity of the respondents in relation to certain places in the city by means of diagram rotation. The rotation speed depends on the number of times a certain place was mentioned in the responses of the schoolchildren: the more mentions the place received, the higher the rotation speed of the diagram is. The smallest number of mentions was three, the largest (“my home”) – 37 in Haparanda and 32 in Tornio.

The maps also demonstrate the lack of segregation between the center and the periphery in the emotional space of the Finnish and Swedish schoolchildren, in spite of Haparanda having a pronounced architectural and planning centre – the central square with its beautiful historic buildings. The emotional space of the Swedish and Finnish schoolchildren was decentralized,

unlike the emotional space of Nikel schoolchildren, where there were central landmarks – the Lenin Square and the Community Centre (the Palace of Culture) “Voskhod,” and a periphery landmark – the Kolosjoki river and the bridges across it, situated in several kilometers from the center (Zhigaltsova, 2018: 364).

The results of this research were included in a photo exhibition “People and Places” in “Jala Studio” in Haparanda (February 2021) and in the Rajala shopping centre in Tornio (February–March 2021). The exhibition showed Kenneth Mikko’s photographs, some of the drawings of schoolchildren and interactive emotion maps of Haparanda and Tornio. The photo exhibition was funded by the Municipalities of Haparanda and Tornio.

Conclusion

The idea inspired by the answers of younger schoolchildren about the similarity of a small city to their home implies an expansion of the sense of security to the limits of the city with the suburbs, when the threshold of the house ceases to be the boundary between security and danger. Summing up the entire study, it is important to mention that in order to maintain and enhance the sense of security among schoolchildren living in small Arctic cities, measures should be taken to plan urban space in the same manner as we plan our home space, where each place and each object structuring the environment is assigned to a certain age group, as if for family members. According to my personal observations, in Russian cities, regardless of their size, places for teenagers rarely exist. There are playgrounds for children under 12 years old in every yard, and at best, a skatepark and a football field for active, athletic teenagers. All other teenagers, especially girls, often remain invisible users of the urban environment, who often prefer to stay indoors or go for a walk to the mall. The increasing attachment to their room among Nikel teenagers cannot not but cause alarm – 16% of high school students indicate that their own room (their computer desk, their bed) as their favourite place in the city (Zhigaltsova, 2018: 365, 368).

To emphasize once again, the home environment needs to be friendly for every family member. Given the ageing of the population and the migration of young people away from smaller cities, special attention should be paid to “children-friendly” places in the urban environment of the city-home. The simple principle of creating a safe, cozy home environment in a small city lies in giving each family member their own space, which includes a variety of emotopias of peace and emotopias of activity, as well as the signs of presence in the city. For example, youth street art is not only a manifestation of the creativity of teenage nature, but also a kind of “sign of presence” of teenagers and young people in the city, as well as an indicator of their sense of security.

Strong feeling of home has a beneficial effect not only on the schoolchildren’s perception, but also on their confidence of being able to change the urban environment on their own accord. Children who have a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood do not think it is impossible to make the place secure. They try to convince adults and local authorities to consider children in making the space secure. On the contrary, children who do not have any sense of belonging to their space of residence, cannot believe that they could play an effective role in creating security (Imanian, 2014: 7).

The complete list of security criteria for schoolchildren will therefore include:

1. feeling at home in the city;
2. good knowledge of the urban environment and possibility to explore;

3. lack of military action;
4. low crime rate;
5. having friends;
6. safe roads;
7. feelings of comfort and peace;
8. private areas for playing;
9. close connection between the urban and natural environments;
10. lack of places of anxiety and fear.

To conclude, the present study has proven that it is possible to identify criteria for the sense of security in the city by means of identifying emotional places (emotopias). The identified security criteria for the schoolchildren give direction for preventive work with the entire urban environment. Out of the list above, “lack of military action” and “low crime rate” obviously do not belong to the city planning sphere, but rather to the security policy of the city, and it is in the power of adults to ensure that schoolchildren do not have to worry about these issues. Analyzing the remaining criteria, we can put forward the following general recommendations for planning the urban environment in order to maintain a sense of security among schoolchildren:

Enhancement of emotopias of peace through:

- giving priority to low-rise buildings when planning urban environments;
- creating home-like coziness and comfort in public and official institutions;
- setting up some private places in the public urban environment where schoolchildren and teenagers could spend time with their friends or simply be alone, for example, in park areas;

Enhancement of emotopias of activity:

- preventive measures and ecological work with the suburbs: maintaining the cleanliness of nature trails, forests, water areas, and so on;
- minimization of traffic flows inside the city and re-routing traffic flows;
- organization of all-city events where the schoolchildren and teenagers could realize their potential for creativity and physical activity, socializing and making new friends.

Despite the fact that it has been shown that the presence of emotopias of pollution and emotopias of disease and death (garbage places, cemetery, hospital) in general does not affect the feeling of security in schoolchildren, it is necessary to improve the situation with places of anxiety, like dark places and abandoned buildings.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the schools for their participation and assistance in the implementation of this research, and all the schoolchildren of Nikel, Kirkenes, Haparanda and Tornio, who participated in the anonymous questionnaires. The author is very grateful to Anna Kondakova for her support, to Kenneth Mikko and Roman Khoroshilov for their invaluable assistance in the organization of field work. Also, the author expresses gratitude to the

Municipalities of Haparanda and Tornio for their funding a photo exhibition “People and Places”, which demonstrated the study results for these cities. Special thanks goes to the reviewers for their comments and suggestions for improvement.

References

- Amin, A., Thrift, N. (2002). *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, Cambridge: Polity. Quoted from Latham, A., McCormack, D., McNamara, R., McNeill D (2009). *Key concepts in urban geography*. London: SAGE Publications, California, pp. 232.
- Boverket (2011). *Places to feel secure in Inspiration for urban development*. Karlskrona: Boverket, pp. 91.
- Convery, I., Corsane G., Davis P. (Eds). *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (2012). Series: Heritage Matters. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 334 p.
- Edwards, B. (2008). *Drawing on the artist within*. New York, Simon & Schuster. <https://books.google.ru/books?id=ROh9ZGJPfv8C&lpq=PP1&hl=ru&pg=PR11#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Imanian, S. (2014). Children's Sense of Security in Social Spaces: A Case Study of Middle-Class Children in Iran. *SAGE Open*, 4 (4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014561212>
- Korpela, K., Kytta, M., Hartig, T. (2002). Restorative experience, self-regulation, and children's place preferences. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 387–398. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jevp.2002.0277>
- Ladbrook, D.A. (1988). Why are crime rates higher in urban than in rural areas? — Evidence from Japan. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 21(2), 81-103. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/000486588802100203>
- Latham, A., McCormack, D., McNamara, R., McNeill D. (2009). *Key concepts in urban geography*. London: SAGE Publications, California. p. 232. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2010.00984.5.x>
- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 31(3), 207-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001>
- Lynch, K. (1990). *The Image of the City*. USA: The M.I.T. Press
- Osorina, M.V. (2019). *Children's secret world in adults' world*. Piter Publishing House, 446 p.
- Radina, N.K. (2017) The city as a factory of fear and risk: children's judgments about the urban space. *Social Psychology and Society*, 8 (2), 131–145. DOI:10.17759/sps.2017080209.
- Relph, E. (1976). Excerpts from Place and Placelessness. In *Introducing Architectural Theory: Debating a Discipline*. Edited by Korydon Smith, Johnson Philip, and Mark Wigley. London: Routledge, 2012. pp. 373-386.
- Semenova, V. (2009). Mapping of an urban space: Key approaches for the visual analysis. In *Visual anthropology: Urban Memory Maps*. Edited by P. Romanov. Moscow, Variant, TSPGI, pp. 67-81.
- Tuan, Y.-F. (1974). *Topophilia: A study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Zhigaltsova, T. (2018). Favorite and Least Favorite Places of the Northern Border Cities. In

Human and societal security in the circumpolar Arctic: local and indigenous communities. Edited by K. Hossain, M. Roncero, A. Petretil. Leiden; Boston: Brill Nijhoff. DOI: 0.63/9789004363045_00.

Zhigal'sova, T. (2016). Sacrificial heterotopias of a provincial city. *Urbanistica*, 4, 73-80. DOI: 10.7256/2310-8673.2016.4.21603