

*EXPERIENCING
PLACES*

*ETHNOGRAPHIC
RESEARCH*

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- A former "closed town" Sillamäe (Estonia)
- The town's now older population has migrated from different parts of the former Soviet Union and is still coping with ruptures from 1990-s.
- 95 % of the population still Russian-speaking.
- Documentary photography project in Sillamäe since 2018 („Factory № 7 – Urban Utopia”).
- <http://annelasamuel.com/tehas-nr-7-linn-utoopa/>

STARTING POINT



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DOCTORAL STUDY

- To understand how the profound societal changes of the 1990s following the collapse of the USSR continue to shape the lives of older residents today.
- Using socio-cultural psychology, life-course perspective, and the concept of liminality to understand individuals' perspectives during transitions and highlight the often-overlooked importance of cultural resources in broader social processes, taking into account the environment, history, place and space.
- Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews (also walking- and photo- interviews) with local residents aged 61-91 during September - January 2022



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WONDERHILL

- Regional dialogical case study as part of my larger study in Sillamäe.
- Understand how people make one specific place near town - Wonderhill (Chudomäe) and create its meaning for themselves and for others
- Place-making” as a dialogical process: traces of a dialogue between people’s life stories, community experiences and history and social discourses

WONDERHILL IN THE WINTER



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BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN URBAN FOOD ACTIVISM AND QUIET FOOD SELF-PROVISIONING PRACTICES: LESSONS FROM TRANSDISCIPLINARY PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS IN EASTERN ESTONIA

- various creative interventions and formats which culminated in the community-oriented ‘Gardeners ’Day ’event
- the potential of social sustainability within the Food Self-Provisioning (FSP) practice at the *dachas*
- a vivid socio-culturally important FSP practice have been hitherto overlooked by most urban food activists and policy makers.
- Gardeners ’Day ’event as a method



GARDENERS DAY



ETHICAL QUESTIONS/REFELCTION

- **Refelxivity**

- the researcher's perception of the role and the background and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013).
- The role of the self in the creation of knowledge: to monitor the impact of their own biases, beliefs and personal experiences on their research (Berger, 2015).
- Me as a a documentary photography; me as a femal resrercher from South-Estonia, me as an activst (organising different events in the town) etc.
- “Inside” – “outside” - ” multiple positionalities"

○ **Protect the privacy**



ABOUT ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

- Rather a research strategy and perspective
- Open and flexible
- The focus is clearly on describing and learning about a specific social phenomena.
- Studying a small number of cases, often a detailed study of a single case.
- Ability to work with unstructured data, i.e. data that is not coded at the time of collection.
- Data analysis focuses on human-generated meanings and the understanding of their functions, with quantitative and statistical analysis of the data being of secondary importance.



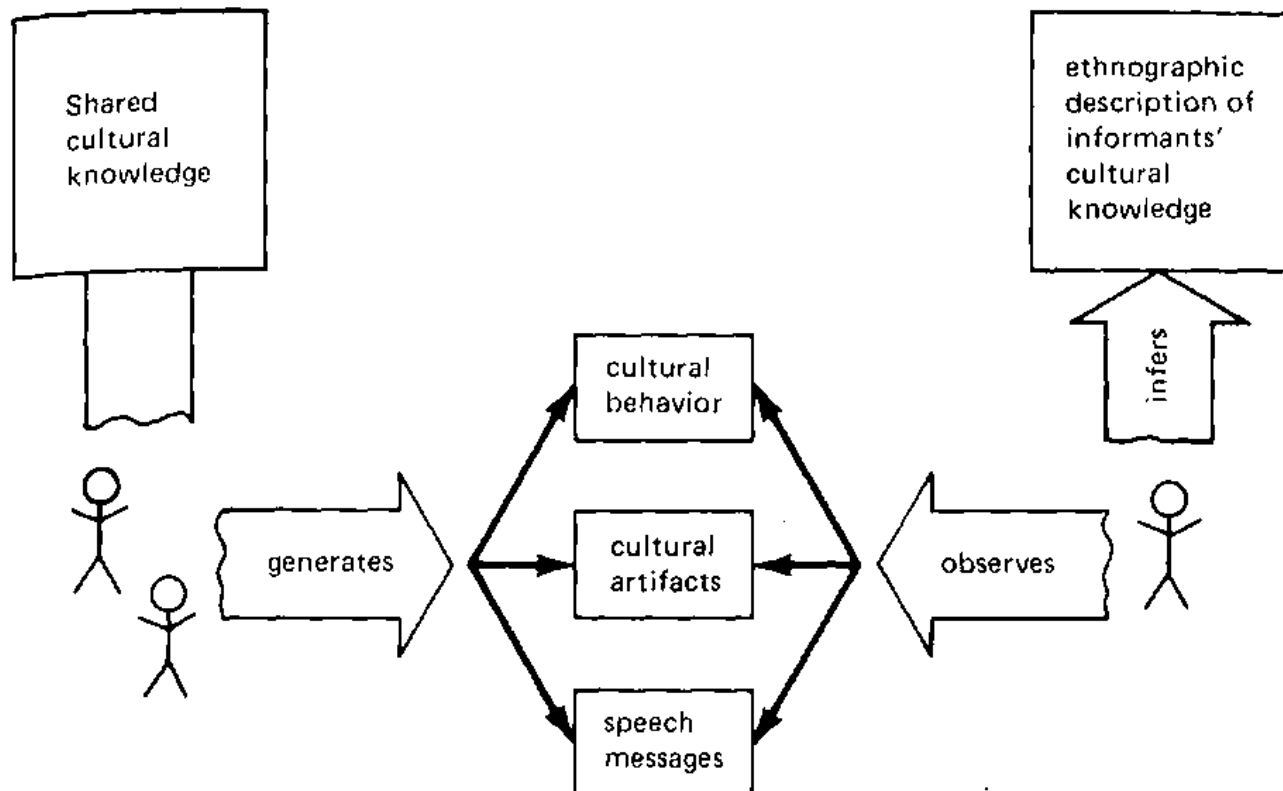


FIGURE 2. Making Cultural Inferences





OBSERVATION

- A method of research in which the researcher directly observes the environment and activities, gathering information through all the senses, but especially through systematic and focused observation and listening to a phenomena of interest (Given, 2008).

WHY TO OBSERVE?

- Beliefs and attitudes vs behaviour
- How something actually happens vs how people think it will happen or how they would like it to happen.
- The interview data need to disentangle reality and people's opinions and desires about that reality
- Observation, on the other hand, focuses on the actual behaviour or social phenomenon taking place.
- Daily and ordinary activities have often become so ordinary that they are no longer 'visible' to the participants themselves and are therefore difficult to talk about.



WHEN, WHERE AND WHOM TO OBSERVE?

- Whom or what to *observe*?
- Where and when to *observe*?
- How to observe, including data collection?



TYPES OF PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION (SPRADLEY)

	TYPE OF PARTICIPATION
High Low	Complete – Researcher is completely integrated in population of study beforehand
	Active – Researcher becomes a member of the group by fully embracing skills and customs for the sake of complete comprehension
	Moderate - Researcher maintains a balance between “insider and “outsider” roles
	Passive - Researcher is only in the bystander role
(No involvement)	Non participation – No contact with the population or field of study



IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT

- First of all, you need to define the focus of interest of the study: what do the results have to provide and who or what do they have to conclude about? Is the phenomenon of interest observable and/or accessible for observation? How much time do you have?
- The observation can be conducted as a single study or combined with interviews, documentary analysis, etc.
- For a more general description of the situation, activities and processes, it is recommended to follow six main dimensions (Spradley, 1980): place/space; time; actors; activities; material objects (things, interior, documents, etc.); processes/events.
- Observation data collection: observation diary; photographs, videos
- The description should be as objective, detailed and systematic as possible.

COLLECTING OF OBSERVATION DATA

➤ **Non-systematic and unstructured**

- Comprehensive descriptions of interviews and contacts in the observation context.
- *A fieldwork journal* containing experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs and problems encountered during the observation process.
- Notes for analysis and interpretation
- Use of photographs, drawings, maps and other visual material

➤ **Systematic and structured:**

- Observation Protocol



STAGES OF PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION

Participatory observation as a process:

- The researcher must become a participant in the research context.
- The observation must become more and more specific and focused on the research questions.
- Participant observation stages:
 - Descriptive observation - understanding the research context
 - Focused observation - focusing on those processes and problems most relevant to the research questions.
 - Selective observation - the final phase of data collection, which focuses on gathering information and examples on the issues identified in the previous phase.



Observation Protocol for (Title of Study)	
Date:	
Time:	
Place	
Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
(Portrait of informant, physical setting, event description)	(Personal reflections, insight, ideas, confusion, hunches, initial interpretation)



PÕHJA-TALLINN



SOME USEFUL LINKS

- https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Põhja-Tallinna_linnaosa#/map/1
- <https://www.tallinn.ee/en/ehitus/scenic-areas-tallinn>
- <https://gis.tallinn.ee/pohjataallinnyp/>
- <https://www.tallinn.ee/et/pohja>
- <https://ajakirimaja.ee/en/a-vision-for-hundipea/>
- <https://rohe.geenius.ee/rubriik/uudis/tallinnasse-tuleb-13-kilomeetri-pikkune-park/>
- <https://www.eestikaart.com/pohja-tallinn-linnaosa-kaart/>





SOME FACTS ABOUT PÕHJA- TALLINN

- A unique blend of cultural heritage and modern development.
- The population of the district has steadily increased, with approximately 60,000 people at the moment.
- Historically the district has been characterised by industrial activity, maritime trade, and diverse communities, which has shaped its distinct character and socio-demographic profile.
- The neighborhood of **Kalamaja**, one of the oldest in the district, was originally a fishing village. It became the residence of fishermen and sailors, contributing to the district's maritime identity:
https://www.tallinn.ee/en/ehitus/senic-areas-tallinn#Põhja_tallinn
-

HISTORY

- The industrial boom during the 19th and early 20th centuries turned Põhja-Tallinn into one of Tallinn's key manufacturing zones. The establishment of railways and factories, particularly in the **Kopli** area, attracted a working-class population. Kopli became home to shipyards, machine factories, and later, a large tram depot.
- During the Soviet era, Põhja-Tallinn's industrial capacity was expanded, with factories producing goods for the Soviet Union. Many Soviet workers were relocated to the area, and a large number of **Khrushchyovka** (Soviet-era apartment buildings) were constructed to house them. **Kopli**, in particular, became a symbol of Soviet industrial power.
- Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Põhja-Tallinn experienced a period of sharp decline. Many factories closed, and the area became synonymous with social issues, including high unemployment, crime, and deteriorating infrastructure. Parts of **Kopli** and **Paljassaare** were marked by abandoned buildings and economic stagnation.
- In the 21st century, Põhja-Tallinn has seen significant revitalization. **Kalamaja**, in particular, has transformed into a trendy, bohemian neighborhood, attracting young professionals, artists, and entrepreneurs.





REVITALIZATION

- the **Telliskivi Creative City**, once a railway factory, is now a vibrant cultural and commercial hub, housing start-ups, artists, and cultural organizations
- The area's **seaside location** has also been a focal point of recent development. The **Kopli** and **Paljassaare** peninsulas are undergoing renewal, with plans to modernize housing and create green spaces, while retaining the historical and cultural legacy of the district.
- Kalamaja, the district most affected by gentrification.
- Põhja-Tallinn showcases a diverse community, including a significant number of Russian-speaking residents.
- Beaches and Green Spaces: The district features some of Tallinn's most beautiful beaches, like Stroomi and Pikakari, and green spaces, providing residents and visitors with lovely areas for recreation and relaxation by the sea.



FEEDBACK FROM OUR STUDENTS

- “The language barrier was also challenging, as many residents of Põhja-Tallinn speak only russian.”
- Security: Regional and social segregation is noticeable. The greatest strength of the area is its proximity to nature. Preserving it supports the creation of a safe environment; In order to harmonize the sense of security in different areas, more leisure opportunities should be created in less developed areas as well.
- Environment: The sea is an important value for the residents of North-Tallinn of all ages (76.4% of respondents).
- The cleanliness and maintenance of the green living environment is concerning especially the cleanliness of the seashore and seawater.
- The needs of different age groups are taken into account in urban spaces (age-friendly city). However, environmental planning should focus more on the friendliness of different age groups.



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TÄNAN!

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