Dacha Sweet Dacha

Place Attachment in the Urban Allotment Gardens of Kaliningrad, Russia

Pavel Grabalov
Lopakhin: Up until now, in the countryside, we only had landlords and peasants, but now we have summer people. All the towns, even the smallest ones are surrounded by summer cottages [dachas] now. And it’s a sure thing that in twenty years’ time summer people will have multiplied to an incredible extent. Today a person is sitting on his balcony drinking tea, but he could start cultivating his land, and then your cherry orchard will become a happy, rich, and gorgeous place...

Anton Chekhov, “The Cherry Orchard” (1903), translated by Marina Brodskaya

Summary

Official planning documents and strategies often look at cities from above neglecting people’s experiences and practices. Meanwhile cities as meaningful places are constructed though citizens’ practices, memories and ties with their surroundings. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to discover people’s bonds with their urban allotment gardens – dachas – in the Russian city of Kaliningrad and to explore the significance of these bonds for city development.

The phenomenon of the dacha has a long history in Russia. Similar to urban allotment gardens in other countries, dachas are an essential part of the city landscape in many post-socialist countries but differ by their large scale. Recent decades have brought diversity into the urban dacha areas of Russia and express a shift away from their primary function of recreational horticulture towards a greater variety in usage, including housing. Due to multiple legal frameworks these areas have become special enclaves with haphazard development, inadequate levels of infrastructure and low quality of self-build houses. Urban dachas can be examined as an example of both post-socialist suburbanization and informal settlement.

In this thesis the concept of place attachment, derived from the works of human geographers and environmental psychologists, is used as both the theoretical and methodological lens to look at people-place relations in urban dacha areas. The empirical evidence for this study was gathered through interviews and observations in Kaliningrad where urban dachas comprise 11% of the city’s territory. To capture the different aspects of place attachment in these areas the data was categorised according to common themes.

The findings of this study show the complexity of the bonds between people and their urban allotment gardens. Despite all the hardships, these places provide their residents an opportunity for independence and self-realization. The respondents demonstrated an energy and aspiration to achieve increased well-being for themselves and their families, however the lack of resources and institutions hinders the development of place attachment in urban dacha areas. The identified features of people’s bonds with their dachas should not only be preconditions for urban planning but also an integral part of the planning and development process. This study also tests the application of the concept of place attachment for urban studies.

Key words: dacha, urban allotment garden, place attachment, urban informality, suburbanisation, Kaliningrad.
Дача, милая дача

Привязанность к месту в городских садоводческих обществах Калининграда (Россия)

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Аннотация (Russian Summary)

Официальные планировочные документы и стратегии зачастую смотрят на город сверху и пренебрегают опытом самих жителей. В то же время город как осмысленное место создается через практики, память и связи горожан с окружающим пространством. Цель данного феноменологического исследования — раскрыть отношение владельцев к своим дачам и понять, что это отношение значит для развития Калининграда.

У феномена дачи в России долгая история. Похожие зоны для городского садоводства существуют и в других странах, но именно в постсоциалистических городах они занимают такое большое пространство. Последние десятилетия сильно изменили эти изначально монофункциональные территории: они перестали использоваться только для рекреационного садоводства и сегодня несут множество других функций. В частности — используются своими владельцами в качестве постоянного места проживания. Из-за своего особого юридического статуса дачные общества стали анклавами городской среды — с беспорядочной застройкой, недостаточным уровнем инфраструктуры и низким качеством домов, построенных самими жителями. Городские садоводства — пример постсоциалистической субурбанизации и неформальных поселений одновременно.

В данной дипломной работе в качестве основной теоретической и методологической модели используется концепция привязанности к месту, разработанная социально-экономическими географами и экологическими психологами. Данные для исследования были собраны с помощью интервью и наблюдений в Калининграде, где дачи занимают 11 % городской территории. Для того чтобы выявить различные аспекты привязанности к месту в городских садоводствах, данные были разделены на категории согласно распространенными темам.

Полученные результаты демонстрируют многогранность отношения жителей к городским дачам. Несмотря на все трудности, садоводческие общества предоставляют горожанам возможности для самореализации и независимости. Истории респондентов демонстрируют их энергию и стремление к благополучию для себя и своих семей. В то же время нехватка ресурсов и необходимых институтов затрудняют формирование привязанности к месту в городских дачных обществах. Выявленные особенности отношений жителей к городским садоводствам должны не только служить предварительными условиями для городского планирования, но также быть неотъемлемой частью развития этих территорий. Данная работа также оценивает концепцию привязанности к месту для применения в городских исследованиях.

Ключевые слова: дача, садоводческие общества, привязанность к месту, городская неформальность, субурбанизация, Калининград.
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Preface

Summer day, sunny morning, a bust stop near the Kalinin park. I am a schoolboy. That day I went with my grandparents to their allotment garden (dacha) on the outskirts of Kaliningrad.

Other gardeners, mostly middle-aged and pensioners, also waited for the bus. Some were neighbours or friends. When the bus 14 finally arrived the gardeners boarded quarrelling with each other who was the first to take a seat. The final stop was the gardening cooperative “Vesna” (Spring in Russian). The gardeners got off from the stuffy bus and drifted away to their plots to gather again for an evening bus. On the way back tired but fulfilled they would have in their bags and buckets cucumbers and tomatoes, apples and berries, potatoes and carrots and flowers of many types which would give a bus a new smell.

My grandparents’ garden was in the remote part of the cooperative. It was very quiet there comparing to the city: only sounds of radio from afar and a cuckoo from the nearest forest. The small house at the plot was another world for me, packed with old furniture, posters and a Soviet version of Scrabble board game without half of letters.

Honestly speaking I did not like going to the dacha. My parents sent me there to help my grandmother but I was useless or maybe lazy. When I was already at the dacha she just once in a while asked for some help and but mostly gave me to taste the first cucumber or tomato. For me the dacha was a boring place full of old things somehow in decay. For my grandmother who moved to Kaliningrad from a Ukrainian village and perhaps did not lose connection to the soil the dacha was the biggest part of her life, full of some other meanings which I could not understand.

Several years ago I came back to the same gardening cooperative to see the place where my grandparents had their dacha once. And I could not recognize the spot. The area changed dramatically: many of old houses were removed, people built new bigger ones and lived there. The allotment gardens started looking like a strange settlement, neither the city nor the village. This thesis is an attempt to understand what meanings the allotment gardens have now.

This paper would not be possible without the interviewees who generously shared their experiences. I am indebted to the friend and photographer Artem Killkin who spent several frosty days at the dachas to get their artistic portrait. I would like to thank Anastasiya Kondratyeva and Aleksey Denisenkov, the editors of Kaliningrad mass media, who helped me to spread the word and to find the respondents. Special thanks goes to my classmates Oscar Damerham and Yegor Vlasenko for sharing many great ideas. Also I am particular grateful to my supervisor Tomas Wikström for his Swedish view on the gardens on the other side of the Baltic.
Glossary and transliteration

**Dacha**
Allotment garden or summer house in Russia. This paper focuses on urban dachas – allotment gardens which are situated inside the city. Throughout the text urban dachas and urban allotment gardens are used as synonyms.

**Dacha cooperative**
Association of gardeners who own dacha plots in one area. In legal terms there are several type of such cooperatives in Russia. The most common of them is SNT (Sadovodcheskoye nekommercheskoye tovarishchestvo), literally meaning a gardening non-commercial comradeship.

**Kaliningrad**
The Russian city in the south-eastern part of the Baltic sea region (459,560 inhabitants).

**Place**
Meaningful location comprising a physical site, a material setting for social relations and people’s subjective and emotional senses¹.

**Place attachment**
“Bond between an individual or group and a place that can vary in terms of spatial level, degree of specificity, and social or physical features of the place, and is manifested through affective, cognitive, and behavioural psychological processes”².

For the transliteration of Russian names and realities from the Cyrillic script into the Latin alphabet I used a simplified form of the BGN/PCGN romanization system for Russian language³ with the help of the website of the IP Translation Service⁴, except for the names which already exist in English-language publications.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In February 2017 the mayor of Moscow Sergei Sobyanin proposed to the Russian president Vladimir Putin a so called “renovation” of Moscow housing stock involving demolition of 7,900 apartment buildings constructed in 1950–1960, relocation of 1.6 million people and changes of laws in urban planning and property relations1. The Putin’s answer was “All right, let’s do it”2. While one can question real beneficiaries of the programme, its official aim is to provide new free housing to the residents of ageing buildings. It looks like people’s dream, doesn’t it? However so far the “renovation” project leads to numerous stormy discussions in media and local councils, organization of neighbours’ active committees and public protests in the centre of Moscow which force the city administration to start changing of the most contradictory aspects of the project. Why are not all Muscovites happy with such an ambitious programme?

In his discussion of the Moscow “renovation” the Russian journalist Maxim Trudolyubov notes that “poor panels with sealed joints hide the hard fought for cherished private lives of people who knew very well what it meant to own nothing of their own”3 (translated by author). Similar idea is shared by another journalist Alexander Baunov who points out that people paid not just for square meters of their apartments but for their places4. Obviously apartments of Moscow citizens mean very different things for their owners and for policymakers. People’s experiences, memories and feelings are the same essential aspects of their flats as physical settings. The concept of place, generally understood as a “meaningful location”5 or humanized piece of space6, aims to capture surroundings with relations to individuals and groups who use them.

In this thesis I intend to apply the concept of place to a very special part of many Russian cities – urban allotment gardens or urban dachas using Russian word for them (see Glossary for definitions). Dacha is not a synonym of an allotment garden and can refer to very different phenomena, from a plain garden with no shelter to a luxury summer house, but this thesis concentrates on urban dachas – traditional allotment gardens located inside the city borders – as more relevant and representative for the field of urban studies. Last decades introduced new institutions such as private property into urban dacha life and caused dramatic changes of functions of these areas, among which housing is the most vivid. Being officially a zone for gardening without proper infrastructure for anything else and facing a

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2 “Vstrecha s merom Moskvy Sergeyem Sobyaninym” [Meeting with the mayor of Moscow Sergei Sobyanin], _Prezident Rossii_ [President of Russia], Feb. 21, 2017, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53915. [In Russian]
3 Maxim Trudolyubov, “Sobstvennost’ i svoboda v sovremennoy Rossii” [Property and freedom in contemporary Russia], _Vedomosti_ [Law], May 12, 2017, https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/columns/2017/05/12/689534-sobstvennost-i-svoboda. [In Russian]
variety a new functions these areas became to some extent lost in legal, planning and social discourses being territories of ambiguous nature. They can be seen as products of both informality and suburbanization in their Russian interpretations. Will urban dachas share a destiny of Moscow apartment blocks and what do we know about people’s attitudes towards them?

This study is empirically driven and brings evidences from my hometown of Kaliningrad, situated in the very West of Russia on the Baltic coast. Figure 2 shows two photographs of the same area of the urban dachas in Kaliningrad. Between them there are 46 years but also efforts and experiences of people who made these changes, regardless of their values, possible. Nowadays 11% or 2.50 ha of the territory of the city is occupied by the urban dachas where approximately 10% of the population of the city lives permanently. The transformation path of the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad looks like a multifaceted phenomenon per se with various dimensions and aspects to examine. However this thesis playing on the well known phrase “Home sweet home” focuses primarily on the aspect which is often neglected by planners and policymakers – on relations between people and their urban dachas. The rest of the introduction chapter describes the thesis’s purpose and research questions, reviews previous studies in the field and gives an itinerary for readers of the paper.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to discover people’s bonds with their urban allotment gardens and explore the significance of these bonds for city development. The thesis discusses urban dachas as places which are constructed by people’s everyday-life experiences, memories and emotions. To capture them it draws on research on place attachment defined as peoples’ multidimensional ties with places (see Glossary). Place attachment acts as both theoretical as well as methodological lens for this study. The material was gathered through interviews and observations in the field trips in Kaliningrad. The design of the study is shaped by two research questions:

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1. **What are the different aspects of place attachment in the urban dachas of Kaliningrad?**

2. **What do these aspects mean for the development of the city?**

The first question is answered in the 4th chapter while the possible answers to the second question are discussed in the 5th chapter.

### 1.2. Previous research

Urban dachas are not a very popular object of study in academia. However implicitly they are part of research on (1) dacha as a national phenomenon and on (2) urban allotment gardens in international context. Firstly, this section reviews dacha studies which modest scope of papers is viewed by some scholars to be inadequate to the large scale of dacha ownership in Russia. This review is not limited to just urban dachas or one specific field but attempts to involve research more relevant to human studies of this phenomenon. The most fundamental and referenced monograph about dachas was written by the British cultural historian Stephen Lovell. Bringing rich material from archives, arts and interviews he explores social and cultural history of the dacha as an essential part of the Russian life for the last three centuries. His analysis shows the transformation of the concept of dacha and people’s sentiments about it and also includes discussion on the modern dacha for which he used a phrase “shanty exurbanization”.

Different aspects of the dacha life attracted anthropologists and sociologists. Using data from her field work the American anthropologist Melissa L. Caldwell discusses Russian’s engagement with nature which generates “a particular philosophy of meaningful living” and shows dacha as a place where this meaningful life can be found. The Russian sociologist Yelizaveta Polukhina studies the issues of works, generations and gender as part of the dacha social order. However both of these studies do not involve evidences from urban dachas but explore areas outside the capital cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Dachas are intensively studied by the Russian human geographers within the research project "Geography of Recurrent Population Mobility within the Rural-Urban Continuum" led by Tatyana Nefedova who does a lot of research in the field of dacha studies as a part of second home studies. The results of the first stage of the project are published in the book “Between home... and home” devoted to the spatial

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8 Kseniya Averkieva, et al., *Mezhdu domom i... domom: Vozvratnaya prostranstvennaya mobil’nost’ naseleniya Rossii* [Between home and... home: The return spatial mobility of population in Russia] (Moscow: Novyy khronograf, 2016), 293. [In Russian]


mobility in Russia regarding distant work and dacha life. The authors propose a typology of dachas, discuss their evolution, demonstrate localization of dachas in several Russian regions and introduce different methods for research. In his review on this book Anatoly Breslavsky who himself researches dachas as part of suburbs in the Siberian city of Ulan-Ude notes that despite very special functions of urban dachas they were not allocated to a separate category by the authors. He also marks the lack of evidences from a broader range of Russian regions. At the same time he points out that “Between home... and home” demonstrates results of the most profound research in current dacha studies.

The second field of research where this study of Kaliningrad dachas can be included explores urban allotment garden. This phenomenon is widespread in many countries (for example, Schrebergärten in Germany or koloniträdgårdar in Sweden), often with its national features. The studies of urban allotment gardens explore very different aspects, including ecosystem services provided for cities, planning context and associated land policy. European allotment gardens became an object of study of the multidisciplinary and international research project which results were recently published in a book. The scholars who participated in the project explored a great variety of facets of the phenomenon using evidences from many places in Europe and showed some approaches to planning allotment gardens in contemporary cities. Two of the articles included in the book are very relevant to this thesis: (1) a study of gardeners’ motivations and (2) a research on place-making process. The authors of the latter examines gardens as lived places aiming “to address a dearth of sociological literature pertaining to allotment gardens as place”.

The review of previous research demonstrates limited interest of scholars to Russian urban dachas as a phenomenon in its own right and a scarce amount of studies on social aspects of allotment gardens in global context. This thesis seeks to contribute to better understanding in both of these spheres studying the bonds between people and Kaliningrad allotment gardens as meaningful places.

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14 Kseniya Averkieva, et al., Mezhdu domom i... domom.
16 Anatoly Breslavsky, "Popravka na mobil'nost': kak trudovaya i dachnaya migratsiya vliyayet na rasseleniye rossiyan?" [Correction for Mobility: How Do Labor and Dacha's Migrations Influence the Settlement of Russians?], Sotsiologicheskoye obozreniye [Russian Sociological Review] 16, no. 1 (2017): 278-295. [In Russian]
23 Ibid, 291.
1.3. Layout

Over the next pages, the 2nd chapter gives an overview of the theoretical framework which shaped the study and discusses the concepts of place and place attachment as well as different models and methods adopted by scholars. The 3rd chapter is devoted to the methodology of the thesis and explains the research design. Historical and planning aspects of urban dachas are described in the 4th chapter together with a description of one specific area in Kaliningrad. The 5th chapter presents an analysis of the empirical data and findings. In the 6th chapter the meaning of place attachment in the urban dachas is discussed with regards to the development path of these areas. The paper ends with conclusions in the 7th chapter. A reader of the thesis is also encouraged to refer to the Glossary of the main terms and enclosign Appendices demonstrating the researcher’s insights into process of gathering data and photographs from the studied area.
Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This study seeks to reveal the different aspects of the people's relationship with urban dachas in the context of Kaliningrad. The research implies place as the main theoretical lens to look at Kaliningrad allotment gardens and place attachment as the conceptual and methodological framework for discovering complexity of bonds between people and their dachas. This chapter discusses definition of place derived originally from humanistic geography, its strengths and limits for knowledge production and conceptualizes place attachment by focusing on its elements and models proposed by researchers. Among different models I focus on the framework introduced by Canadian environmental psychologists Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford1 which is assessed by some scholars as a common ground in research on place attachment2. This theoretical review includes also a debate on methodological aspects of people-place relation studies. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the concepts which are important for understanding the context of the studied urban dachas, namely urban informality, suburbanization and post-socialist city.

2.1. Place as a process

The research on urban dachas as place in its own right calls for the conceptualisation of place itself. The human geographer Tim Cresswell notes that this concept is comparatively difficult to define as it is used widely in everyday language in its common-sense meaning3. He points out that according to its most often utilized definition place is a meaningful location which comprises geographical, material and subjective settings4. Such understanding of place originates from the political geographer John Agnew who indicates three major interconnected meanings of place: a geographical location, a setting for everyday-life activities and a source of special kind of identity, sense of place5. Such complex idea of place can give powerful insights into research of specific aspects of the urban allotment gardens but at the same time demands in-depth knowledge of elements and mechanisms behind this concept. The theoretical framework of this thesis is shaped by the modern debate on place initiated more than 40 years ago and involves both classic and recent works on it.

The concept of place was actively developed by humanistic geographers who applied the phenomenological approach in their research. They saw place as a backbone of everyday life of individuals. Their definition of place grew from juxtaposition of it with other concepts and abstractions. Yi-Fu Tuan was one of the scholars who put place in the centre of human geography in 1970’s. He pictures place as a pause, or a

3 Cresswell, Place, 1.
4 Ibid, 4 or 7.
stop, along the way of space which he sees as a movement\(^6\). This opposition of space and place is powerful for the conceptualizing of place. Cresswell argues that space can be understood as a realm without meaning and only people’s investment of meanings and feelings into space transform it into place\(^7\). The transformation of space into place is a central process for the phenomenological approach to the concept of place. Phenomenologists see human experience to be crucial for understanding of the world which does not exist outside such experience.

Another human geographer who started this debate on the concept of place was Edward Relph. He compared place and placelessness – “a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike and feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities of experience”\(^8\). Thus in contrast to placelessness place turns to be an identifiable location full of opportunities for meaningful involvement. However in is preface to the 2008 reprint of this book Relph attributes such clear distinction between place and placelessness to be to straightforward as it “is much less obvious now than it was thirty years ago”\(^9\) because of the way how people experience places has changed and diversified fundamentally.

People and their interaction with environment are in the heart of the concept of place. Without people place becomes a portion of empty space. However the converse logic is also true: “the only way humans can be humans is to be ‘in place’”\(^10\) as places defines our people’s experience. In other words “people construct places, places construct people”\(^11\). The anthropologist Setha M. Low and social psychologist Irwin Altman define place as “a medium or milieu which embeds and is a repository of a variety of life experiences, is central to those experiences, and is inseparable from them”\(^12\). Capturing these intangible experiences is the task of phenomenologists. One of the most prominent of them – geographer David Seamon – defines place as “any environmental locus in and through which individual or group actions, experiences, intentions, and meanings are drawn together spatially”\(^13\).

His phenomenological approach to place is especially powerful in methodological sense. For Seamon people’s everyday-life experience defines essence of place. To capture it he introduces two metaphorical concepts: lifeworld which is understood as “the everyday world of taken-for-grantedness normally unnoticed and thus concealed as a phenomenon”\(^14\) and place-ballet – “an interaction of individual bodily routines rooted in a particular environment that may become an important place of interpersonal and communal exchange, meaning, and attachment”\(^15\). Thus

\(^{7}\) Cresswell, Place, 1.
\(^{8}\) Relph, Place and Placelessness, 90.
\(^{9}\) Ibid, [preface 2].
\(^{10}\) Cresswell, Place, 23
\(^{11}\) Lewis Holloway and Phil Hubbard, People and Place: The Extraordinary Geographies of Everyday Life (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2001), 7.
\(^{13}\) David Seamon, ”Place Attachment and Phenomenology: The Synergetic Dynamism of Place,” in Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications, ed. Lynne Catherine Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright (London: Routledge, 2014), 11.
\(^{14}\) Ibid, 12.
\(^{15}\) Ibid, 13.
understanding of people's practices in particular physical surroundings becomes central for studies of places, an example of which are urban allotment gardens.

Place-ballet as a metaphor for catching the essence of place explains why places are never fixed and finished. Indeed if people's activities constantly change then places are always under transformation process. Cresswell sees place as a never finished product of everyday practices. The Swedish sociologist Per Gustafson also argues that places are never static as their meanings are defined through fluid relationships between people and their surroundings. Hence people's practices of investing meanings into environment should be a main focus of every research which aims to capture an essence of a place. According to Cresswell “places need to be studied in terms of the ‘dominant institutional projects’, the individual biographies of people negotiating a place and the way in which a sense of place is developed through the interaction of structure and agency”.

Places are made through actions of different stakeholders. In her research on urban informal settlements in Mexico the British scholar Melanie Lombard defines *placemaking* as “the construction of place by a variety of different actors and means, which may be discursive and political, but also small-scale, spatial, social and cultural”. People are actively involved into the placemaking process by applying their own strategies. Thus places can be seen as personal or collective projects depending on which efforts are taken to give meaning to surroundings. These meanings do not only define places but also contribute to people's self-identity and feelings about themselves.

What are examples of places? Review of current research on place attachment studies gives us a very broad range of locations which can be defined as places: continents, countries, cities, neighbourhoods, homes, rooms, gardens, transport and even virtual places. According to Tim Cresswell “home is the most familiar example of place” and “a metaphor for place in general” as people's sense of home is usually very strong. Although processes of globalisation and time-space compression influence placemaking practices and contemporary sense of place, home is still an important place. As findings of Roberta M. Feldman demonstrate, residential mobility and lack of lifetime stability in terms of housing situation do not result in absence of ties between people and their homes.

At the same time in real life home can be very different from an idyllic picture and in contrast consist of home violence and oppression. As Sherry Boland Ahrentzen puts it “home may not be a refuge but a place of violence”. Apparently places have a

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18 Cresswell, *Place*, 37.
20 Gustafson, “Meanings of Place”.
21 Maria Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 31, no. 3 (2011): 207-230.
diverse range of meanings for different individuals and social groups as individual and social (class, gender, ethnic, etc.) perceptions and practices vary broadly. Or as the geographers Lewis Holloway and Phil Hubbard put it “place are ambiguous in the way in which they can simultaneously be experienced by different people as places of belonging and a frightening experience.”

This leads to another important aspect of placemaking — what power does bring meaning to a location? All issues of gender, class or ethnical inequalities happen not in neutral space but in meaningful places. This process of giving a location a meaning can lead to exclusion and xenophobia as it happens in case of gated communities all over the world. When someone becomes an insider of place and develop intimate bonds with places, someone else is often put outside. For these reasons the humanistic approach to place was criticized by scholars who use feminist and critical theories in their research.

Cresswell notes that humanistic understanding of place makes this concept quite similar to Henri Lefebvre’s socially produced space. In his tripartite model Lefebvre operates with the concepts of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space generalising that any meaningful space is socially produced. Despite conceptual depth of Lefebvre’s theoretical framework this thesis applies phenomenologists’ approach and use their definition of place as the theoretical lens to study urban dachas in Kaliningrad. This framework focuses on people’s experiences giving deep understanding of complexity of bonds between people and the dachas under transformation process and providing methods to research them. At the same time conducted review of social and political context in which urban dachas are constructed as places, discussed in the 4th Chapter, reveals power relations of a variety of institutional forces on these areas.

2.2. Defining place attachment

Aiming to reveal the different aspects of the ties between people and the urban dachas as places, this thesis applies the concept of place attachment which provides a powerful model for understanding of such relationship. Recently this concept was actively developed by environmental psychologists. I take this field of study as a departure point for my discussion trying to find a working definition of place attachment suitable for the object of my study and feasibly for urban studies in general.

The Spanish psychologists M. Carmen Hidalgo and Bernardo Hernández give general and common definition of place attachment as an affective bond or link between people and specific places. They also note that this concept is often used interchangeably or in close connection with community attachment, sense of community, neighbourhood sentiment, place identity, place dependence or sense of

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26 Cresswell, *Place*, 38.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid, 10.
place. This thesis operates consistently with place attachment acknowledging that some scholars can use other terms in the same context. According to the Polish psychologist Maria Lewicka place attachment “implies ‘anchoring’ of emotions in the object of attachment, feeling of belonging, willingness to stay close, and wish to return when away”31. In aforementioned definitions we can see that the focal point of the concept is in affective and emotional aspects. But is place attachment limited by them?

Altman and Low by compiling a book of papers on place attachment research demonstrate how complex and multifaceted this concept is32. It is used by scholars from a great variety of disciplines including social science, environmental psychology, sociology, urban planning, anthropology, human geography, leisure studies and many others. Such broad picture of fields of study contributes to the overall research both by diverse methodological and theoretical frameworks as well as by research purposes and questions. At the same time it leads to somehow loose definition of the concept among scholars. I attempt to conceptualise place attachment by following main paths of the scholarly discussion on people’s bond with places.

According to Low and Altman central to the concept of place attachment is an emotional aspect of bonds between people and places33. Place attachment is not equal to place satisfaction (people can feel special emotions to places which they do not find satisfied and vice versa) and is usually described as a more intimate tie34. As Seamon demonstrates, place attachment can include both positive and negative feelings and be both strong as well as scattered and moribund35. The American psychologist Lynne C. Manzo emphasizes how rich and diverse people’s bonds with places are and points out that they are never limited to just positive images that the word “attachment” prescribes by itself and develop through intertwining of people’s experiences and places36.

What are mechanisms behind the development of place attachment? Apparently it is connected with life experiences and life courses. People are supposed to be affectively attached to places where they had important moments of their life: birth of children, marriage, etc. This observation reveals different levels of importance of place attachment for people in different stages of their life. The social scientist Daniel R. Williams points out the methodological importance of time dimension of development of place attachment: affective bonds between people and places are building up and evolving over time as opposed to aesthetic experience which is immediate37. Meanwhile Lewicka’s review of empirical research on place attachment

34 Feldman, “Settlement-identity”.
35 Seamon, “Place Attachment and Phenomenology”.
shows that time spent in place cannot be a precise predictor and should be analyzed in connection to other factors\textsuperscript{38}.

Identification of different predictors of place attachment is a common research purpose in this field. Among them scholars tested residence time, neighborhood ties, access to nature, housing quality, home ownership, municipal services, household density, size of buildings\textsuperscript{39}. However Seamon argues that attempts to find correlations of place attachment and its predictor factors reduce the wholeness of this phenomenon which should be viewed in its interdependence with other aspects of place\textsuperscript{40}. Such discussion on factors of place attachment demonstrate complexity of this concept which is unlikely to be narrowed down only to the emotional dimension.

Another important aspect of place attachment is a question of scale. A considerable amount of papers are devoted to comparison of levels of place attachment in regards to scale of places. For example, Hidalgo and Hernández measured place attachment within three spatial areas: house, neighborhood and city\textsuperscript{41}. They found that people had strong bonds to city as physical surroundings while house represented higher level of social attachment. My study of literature on place attachment demonstrates a few papers where place attachment is measured using different quantitative methods and a variety of scale. However sometimes such approach seems to be too instrumentalised. Mechanisms which shape development of people’s feelings to places may vary and thus should be revealed in everyday life practices.

Topics of displacement, mobility, relocation comprise a big part of research on place attachment as changing of habitual environment can easily reveal emotional bonds of people with places and make them salient. Scannell and Gifford name Marc Fried’s study of displaced residents of Boston West End as one of the first (published in 1963) documentation on bonds between people and places\textsuperscript{42}. Scholars who studied the foundations of place attachment note that “we learn much about a place by examining who is uneasy about what kinds of change”\textsuperscript{43}. They review research on place attachment in environment under pressure of risk and changes and argue that bonds between people and places in such situations reinforce social groups and demand them to take group efforts. Potential change in place to which people feel attached can bring to life NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) movements which oppose new developments in surroundings often without taking into account real value of such projects. The environmental social scientist Patrick Devine-Wright analyses such movements as place-protective actions and suggests that policymakers “need to expect, rather than decry, emotional responses from local residents”\textsuperscript{44}.

\textsuperscript{38} Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”, 215.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 216.
\textsuperscript{40} Seamon, "Place Attachment and Phenomenology".
\textsuperscript{41} Hidalgo and Hernández, “Place Attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions”.
Place attachment plays a variety of roles in life of individuals and community. Low and Altman reveals some of them including sense of security and stimulation, control, opportunities to relax and be creative, sense of connection to friends, relatives and identity with bigger communities such as nations\textsuperscript{45}. Scannell and Gifford emphasizes such functions of place attachment as survival and security, goal support and temporal or personal continuity\textsuperscript{46}. It leads to a great variety of applications of this theoretical and methodological framework including the study of natural resource management, alternative energy sources, pro-environmental behavior, social housing policies and community design\textsuperscript{47}.

Such a diverse picture of place attachment research and its conceptualisation questions its restraint to affective aspects. Apparently people themselves and places to which they are affected play not less important role. I believe that Scannell and Gifford found more accurate definition of place attachment which do not leave behind any aspects of this concept. According to their three-dimensional model of place attachment (will be discussed in the next section) place attachment is defined as “a bond between an individual or group and a place that can vary in terms of spatial level, degree of specificity, and social or physical features of the place, and is manifested through affective, cognitive, and behavioural psychological processes”\textsuperscript{48}. Such understanding of place attachment shapes my research and helps to reveal bonds between people and places which are often ignored by planners and policymakers. The next section discusses how the dimensions of place attachment can be incorporated into one model.

\section*{2.3. Models of place attachment}

Since Tuan and Relph put place at the centre of human geography scholars have created a variety of models of both place and processes of development of place attachment. These models help to operate with the concept of place attachment and use it as analytical lens for analysis of manifold places. A brief overview of these models helps to get better understanding of ideas behind them. Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz categorise different conceptualization of place attachment proposed by researchers and use three groups\textsuperscript{49}.

In the first category they include the models which define place attachment as a one-dimensional concept related to other place constructs such as place identity and place dependence. The second category consists of proposals conceptualizing place attachment as a multidimensional framework which operates with several integrated factors. Finally, the third category comprises models viewing “place attachment as a subordinate concept or a dimension of a more general concept”\textsuperscript{50}. According to such models place attachment can be an incorporated part of the concepts of sense of place and place identification.

\textsuperscript{45} Low and Altman, ”Place Attachment: A Conceptual Inquiry”, 10.
\textsuperscript{46} Scannell and Gifford, ”Defining Place Attachment”.
\textsuperscript{47} Low and Altman, ”Place Attachment: A Conceptual Inquiry”.
\textsuperscript{48} Scannell and Gifford, ”Defining Place Attachment,” 5.
\textsuperscript{49} Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz, ”Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Research on Place Attachment”, 125.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 126.
The three-dimensional model of place attachment proposed by Scannell and Gifford draws special attention of scholars. Their model fits the second category of above mentioned typology since it defines place attachment as a multidimensional concept with three aspects – person, psychological process and place. According to Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz this model benefits from an attempt not to exclude different models of place attachment already proposed by scholars but to incorporate them. They view this model as a real advance in place attachment theory which can be a common ground for researchers in a now very heterogeneous field.

Each of three aspects of the place attachment model proposed by Scannel and Gifford refers to specific characteristics and features of this multifaceted concept (see Figure 3). The person dimension of place attachment aims to answer the question who is attached and to define place meaning both on individual and group levels. Individual place attachment is based on personal memories and experiences which create place meaning. On a group level attachment is formed by collective cultural and religious symbolic meanings of places. Scannell and Gifford notes that individual and group levels of place attachment are interconnected and influence each other. The second dimension – psychological process – describes the way how people get attached to places and what mechanisms are behind development of these bonds. It operates with affective, cognitive and behavioral components of attachment. Finally, the place dimension aims to manifest physical settings and social elements of particular space. It covers both spatial as well as social levels of an object of attachment.

51 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment"
52 Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz, "Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Research on Place Attachment", 127.
53 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment".
54 Ibid, 7.
According to the authors, such synthetic coherent framework of place attachment “should stimulate new research by identifying gaps in previous studies, aid in the development of assessment tools, and categorize types of place attachment for planning purposes and related conflict resolution strategies”\textsuperscript{55}. This model looks to be highly relevant to the research object of the thesis and thus shapes research tools, especially methods of analysis of the empirical data gathered during research of urban dachas. It seems also relevant to review some research methods which are usually used in place attachment studies.

\subsection*{2.4. Methods of research on place attachment}

Due to the multidisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the concept of place attachment its application is marked by a variety of methodological frameworks and methods. According to Lewicka, research on place attachment involves both qualitative (developed in geographical analysis of sense of place) and quantitative methods (rooted in community studies)\textsuperscript{56}. She notes that quantitative methods attracted more attention of scholars. This section discusses different methodological frameworks of research on place attachment bringing examples of relevant empirical studies which helped to design my own research according to recent methodological advances in the field and specific features of urban dachas as an object of this study.

Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz give an excellent review of relevant methodological approaches and demonstrate a complex picture of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods which are applied to such kind of research\textsuperscript{57}. According to their review majority of researchers who apply quantitative approach use psychometric methods for analyzing data in regards to different scales of the concept of place attachment and miscellaneous factors. The authors raise the question of validity of results received through quantitative methods when researchers apply so diverse understanding of place attachment as a concept.

Feldman’s research on bonds with home places in Denver, Colorado is an example of application of quantitative methods in place attachment research\textsuperscript{58}. She uses several indicators as evidences of ties between people and their residential surroundings: “a unity of identities of person and home place, constancy of residence in one place, a commitment to maintain future residence in this place, a belief in the distinctiveness of home place and positive affective responses toward this place”\textsuperscript{59}. To identify these indicators she applies quantitative methods such as a survey in a form of a self-administrated questionnaire.

According to Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz qualitative approach in research on place attachment is not so common as quantitative one but in the last decade became more popular among scholars\textsuperscript{60}. They name in-depth interviews as the most prevalent qualitative method in this field and point out several problems of this methodology.

\textsuperscript{55} Scannell and Gifford, “Defining Place Attachment”, 7.
\textsuperscript{56} Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”.
\textsuperscript{57} Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz, “Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Research on Place Attachment”, 127.
\textsuperscript{58} Feldman, “Settlement-identity”, 223.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz, “Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Research on Place Attachment”,
including different interviewing procedures for the same study, not well defined objects of the questions and non-replicability of the analysis. Another widely used qualitative method involves working with images and photographs. Lewicka indicates such qualitative methods of place attachment research as "Q-sort measure of meaning, open questions, evaluative maps, focused interviews, transect walks, collage and photostories".

In their research on attachment to sports-orientated recreational places the British social scientists use qualitative methods, namely focus groups and photo elicitation. These methods help researchers to understand how changes in people’s surroundings stimulate manifestation of place attachment. The authors used their own photographs of the neighbourhood to start discussion in focus groups and “stimulate both the rhetoric of remembrance and the reality of physical change”. Their findings reveal intertwining of both physical and social aspects of place attachment.

Application of mixed methods aims to give better understanding of place attachment. Among others they can include questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, mental mapping, drawing tasks and discussion groups in different combinations in one research. Data gathered in qualitative methods can be then used for a quantitative stage of study. However Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz question objectivity of analysis of data collected through mixed methods in already existing studies.

Recent studies on place attachment cover very broad scope of places, including homes, second homes, recreational places, temporary homes, regions and cities. In his discussion on application of the idea of place in research Cresswell calls for analysis of “the place-making strategies of relatively powerless people at a microlevel”. Urban dachas in Kaliningrad seem to be a good object for place attachment research. Exploring of mundane practices of everyday life in these areas can give deep understanding of place attachment there. Furthermore when seen broader picture place attachment in urban allotment garden of Kaliningrad can tell about their role in contemporary city fabric.

**2.5. Dacha situation: informal, suburban, post-socialist**

Kaliningrad urban allotment gardens as places in their own right are situated in particular social, cultural and political settings. Complex relationships between people and dachas can be understood only by positioning them in the context of current local, national and global trends. Several theoretical frameworks which are common in urban studies seem to be helpful to explain specific features of the object of the study and put it into general knowledge in this field. Although Russian cities are not so often in focus of researchers in urban studies, they do not represent

61 Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?", 211.
63 Ibid, 691.
64 Hernández, Hidalgo and Ruiz, "Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Research on Place Attachment", Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?".
67 Cresswell, Place, 83.
completely isolated artefacts. For a discussion of transformation of urban dachas three particular concepts look to be the most useful: urban informality, suburbanization and post-socialist city. This section briefly reviews all of them.

Observations of current conditions of the urban allotment gardens in Kaliningrad show some similarities with self-built settlements in the global South: lack of services, DIY-architecture, uncertainty of legal rights. These now multifunctional zones were never fully planned to be like this and are still recognized as gardening zones by planning documents. Such status of urban dachas can be understood by bringing the concept of **urban informality** which is defined as “unplannable” – “a state of exception from the formal order of urbanization”\(^68\). This thesis gets valuable inspiration from Lombard’s research of placemaking in urban informal settlements in Mexico. She notes that placemaking practices are not very often studied in informal settings as the concept was introduced and applied mostly in the global North\(^69\).

The phenomenon of urban informality is well examined by scholars who usually attract empirical evidences from Latin America and Asian megacities. Among them is John Turner who already in 1960’s called for autonomy in housing provision and empowerment of local communities\(^70\). For our discussion on Kaliningrad dachas his observation, that people value changes which they made themselves more, seems to be especially insightful. According to Lombard such ideas of self-help provided a basis for governments’ and global institutions policy in Latin America which was criticized for opening a path for the state for withdrawing from provision of housing and services by itself\(^71\). However Turner comments that these institutional schemes of self-help did not confront controversy of property tenure, financing and management\(^72\).

Another point of departure for discussion of the context of urban dachas is **suburbanisation**. New residential function of Kaliningrad allotment gardens is often fed by urban dwellers moving from other parts of the city to less dense area with opportunity to have their own detached house. This process shows similarities of urban dachas with typical single-family house suburbs which are usually prescribed to the North American landscape. According to the urban historian Dolores Hayden the large scale of suburbanization in the post-World War II USA was led by the institutional policy of the federal government and commercial interest of developers\(^73\). Despite the unsustainability of suburbanisation process, Hayden sees them as places in their own rights and notes that they need comprehensive programme of revitalisation which is “more than better design”\(^74\).

The Russian city of Kaliningrad can be described as an example of **post-socialist city**. This concept is referred to cities mostly in Central and Eastern Europe and the former

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\(^69\) Lombard, “Constructing Ordinary Places”, 8.


\(^71\) Lombard, “Constructing Ordinary Places”, 8.


\(^74\) Ibid, 229.
Soviet Union which experienced radical transformation after collapse of the communist ideology\textsuperscript{75}. Sasha Tsenkova describes three main aspects of transition process in post-socialist cities: to markets, democracy and decentralised systems of local governance\textsuperscript{76}. The term is debatable among scholars because of very diverse picture of point of departure and transformation trajectory of post-socialist cities but still provides valuable basis for urban studies in the region. In general this transformation is characterised by a retreat of the state from management of economy, reliance on market institutions even in planning, privatisation of many welfare functions\textsuperscript{77}. At the same time this process dramatically increased individual standards and choices in comparison to earlier decades\textsuperscript{78}. Certainly it influenced the build environment of post-socialist cities. Luděk Sýkora and Kiril Stanilov use the term “the postsocialist suburban revolution” pointing out that suburbanisation in these cities “has become the predominant mode of urban growth”\textsuperscript{79}. This thesis views the urban dachas of Kaliningrad as part of this trend.

The concepts and models reviewed in this chapter aims to form the basis for the research of place attachment in the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad. Place attachment understood as multidimensional bonds between people and places seems to be an insightful theoretical and methodological concept for capturing these ties. Furthermore such bonds exist and develop in particular context which for Kaliningrad dachas can be seen as informal, suburban and post-socialist. The next chapter shows the methodological framework of the thesis which draws on aforementioned theoretical assumptions.


\textsuperscript{76} Sasha Tsenkova, “Planning Trajectories in Post-Socialist Cities: Patterns of Divergence and Change,” Urban Research and Practice 7, no. 3 (2014): 278-301.


Chapter 3: Methodological framework

Methodological framework of the thesis is designed according to both its aim and research questions as well as theoretical lens which is used to capture place attachment in urban dachas as place in specific context. The research draws on a phenomenological approach which according to John W. Creswell seeks to describe “the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon”. Indeed addressing urban dachas as special places demands in-depth understanding of the people’s everyday-life experience – investments of meaning which transfer abstract space into meaningful place – and focusing on them as a phenomenon. This chapter discusses ideas behind such approach, describes applied methods for data gathering and analysis, validity of results and limitations.

3.1. Research design

Holloway and Hubbard emphasize that the phenomenological approach sees “intensive forms of description” as the best way to understand relationships between people and the world around them. According to this approach the world as a set of phenomena exists only through human experience of them. In simple terms Seamon defines phenomenology as “the interpretative study of human experience”. According to him it aims to put particular places into broader conceptual framework while preserving their specificity by descriptions and generalizations. A phenomenological research seeks to reveal the essence of the phenomenon by examining people’s experiences with it. Creswell identifies essence as “the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study”.

Phenomenologists claim that sense of place is a natural condition of human existence. This makes their approach central for research on place attachment which is many cases is a synonym of sense of place. Moreover a phenomenological approach emphasizes unique subjective experience and bonds of people and places. Research on place attachment is naturally phenomenological as focuses on people’s everyday-life experiences and meanings. Every place attachment is a unique process where each of its dimensions plays different role thus shaping “the tapestry” of relations between people and places. The study of place attachment in urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad aims to find this tapestry of the bonds between people and their particular surroundings and to put them in broader conceptual picture by defining common themes and categories.

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2 Holloway and Hubbard, *People and Place*.
4 Seamon, “Place Attachment and Phenomenology”.
5 Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 79.
6 Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”, 209.
7 Low and Altman, “Place Attachment: A Conceptual Inquiry”, 2.
8 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment", 5.
For Seamon a phenomenological researcher is a “human instrument” who thrives to be as familiar as possible with the object of study\(^9\). Due to the nature of the approach such research is highly personal and interpretative which demands special skills of a researcher who needs to be open to flow of lived experiences and concise to catch the essence of a phenomenon at the same time. Cresswel explains that data in a phenomenological research are obtained from people who have experience with a phenomenon and then analysed by highlighting significant themes and meanings\(^10\). Such analysis leads to a description of an essence of a phenomenon. The concept of place attachment provides both theoretical lens and methodological schemes to study people-place relationships and shapes the design of the research.

This study is based on empirical evidences and includes qualitative methods adapted to the features of the research phenomenon. Maxwell names “ability to elucidate local processes, meanings, and contextual influences” as the main strength of qualitative research\(^11\). Seamon categorizes three specific phenomenological methods, namely first-person phenomenological, existential-phenomenological and hermeneutic-phenomenological\(^12\). My study involves methods from all this three approaches including first-person experiences and observations, existential in-depth interviews and hermeneutic study of an urban dachas area in Kaliningrad. Working with individual participants this research concerns with the ethical considerations including maintaining confidentiality and respecting and not stereotyping the respondents.

### 3.2. Methods of data collection

The empirical data analysed in the thesis is based on three field trips organized in December 2016, March 2017 and April 2017. This section provides a detailed review of each of the applied methods.

**Interviews**

The main method implemented in the study is semi-structured interviews with dacha owners. They helped to reveal people's lived experiences and place attachment in microanalytical perspective. The challenge of gathering empirical data in interviews is based in unconsciousness of everyday life practices. Interviews seem to be quite artificial situations but still provide opportunities to get better understanding of people-place relationship on different levels. The British landscape architect Clare Rishbeth calls for more innovative qualitative methods and richer research environment as the standard interview can lead to a real distance between experience and story which is told about it\(^13\). In my research it was done by open and flexible

\(^9\) Seamon, "A Way of Seeing People and Place", 164.
\(^10\) Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*.
\(^12\) Seamon, "A Way of Seeing People and Place".
character of interview guide, more empathetic approach to experiences of dacha owners, walks in dacha areas with respondents and at their plots.

To test a tentative conversation guide and relevance of topics for the particular settings I implemented a pilot interview in March 2016. The context of this interview was slightly different from ones done after. I contacted a local journalist who lives in one of the urban dacha areas and already reflected her experience in an online article with tips for people considering housing in such parts of Kaliningrad. I interviewed her together with her neighbours with whom they use the house together. The conversation was recorded and then transcribed and translated into English to share main themes with the supervisor of the thesis. This data together with my observations helped me to find focus in the study and modify the design of my research.

The revised interview guide (see Appendix 2) was used during the field trip in April 2017. Respondents were recruited by purposeful selection using local media and my personal network of contacts (see Appendix 1). Including the pilot conversation I gathered the data from seven in-depth interviews (involved nine people in total); each interview took from 30 minutes to 1,5 hour. Appendix 3 contains detailed information about the respondents. The participants represent spectrum of location, time of relations with their dachas and two major functions of urban dachas: housing and gardening. Three of the respondents were from the same gardening cooperative while others have their dachas in different areas. Such spatial distribution of the interviewees helped me to explore common themes across the city.

I aimed to interview people in the form of casual conversation viewed as “the most naturalistic way of interviewing”14. Respondents were mostly in charge for the flow of conversations and topics. Such approach to the interviews emphasizes their own agency. To facilitate the interview I used a map of the city where the respondents were asked to show their everyday life routes. This tool stimulated a discussion on their lived experiences. Five were conducted directly in the dachas while two respondents did not invite me to their dachas. It seems that at their dachas people tend to talk about what really matters to them. Also trips to different urban dacha areas gave me an opportunity for insightful observations.

Observations

Discussing design of qualitative research Maxwell calls for including of informal data-gathering strategies such as casual conversation and incidental observations15. I tried to be open for findings which can be revealed in quite spontaneous way and applied observations with moderate level of participation. With one of the respondents we drove together from her home to the allotment garden; three other gave me long tours at their dachas showing their well-kept gardens. With two owners we walked from the bus station to their house. For respondents these situations were not an artificial but essential part of their everyday life.

14 Joost Beuving and Geert de Vries, Doing Qualitative Research: The Craft of Naturalistic Inquiry (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 110.
15 Maxwell, Qualitative Research Design, 79.
Such observations provided important contextual data for accomplished interviews and supplemented them with different perspectives on the phenomenon. I gathered additional material regarding physical settings, smell, view, sounds, which could not be revealed in interviews themselves. To give an explicit account of an example of urban dachas in Kaliningrad I studied the area on Katina street where due to proximity to the city centre the process of transformation is very vivid. Observations were recorded into a field journal and then analysed in line with the interpretation of the interviews’ data.

**Photographic recording and artistic approach**

During my field trips I took photographs of the urban dacha areas in Kaliningrad which brought powerful insights into their everyday life and complemented on-site observations as gave me an opportunity to go back to them several times using as notes for analysis. Furthermore the photographer Artem Kilkin who focuses on artefacts of Kaliningrad *genius loci* contributed to the research by applying his artistic lens for one area of urban allotment gardens. He provided an outsider’s vision of the phenomenon (see Appendix 5). His photographs were then printed as postcards and sent worldwide (see Appendix 4).

**Interviews with experts**

To understand social, political and planning context of urban allotment gardens in Kaliningrad I interviewed with city officials and experts in the field. For list of respondents see Appendix 3.

**Analysis of secondary data**

Secondary data helped me to contextualise urban dachas in local setting and gave better understanding of time dimension of the process of their transformation. I reviewed Kaliningrad planning and policy documents, including the General (strategic) plan and legally binding Land-use plan. Kaliningrad archive provided me with valuable documents regarding history of allotment gardens in the city. Valuable information on everyday life of dachas and struggles behind it was found on the local websites (klops.ru, newkaliningrad.ru, kgd.ru, kaliningrad.kp.ru).

**Literature review**

Multidisciplinary papers on place, place attachment and related topics, such as sense of place, shaped the conceptual framework of my study. Another category of reviewed literature is devoted to methodological aspects of research. Finally I studied publications about Russian dacha as a phenomenon and debate on allotment gardens in contemporary cities.

**3.3. Method of data analysis**

Only one respondent refused from recording the conversation for which I took notes. All others were recorded on dictophone and then transcribed. Data gathered through the study were evaluated according criteria of trustworthiness for phenomenological
research proposed by John Polkinghorne and discussed by Seamon: vividness, accuracy, richness and elegance\textsuperscript{16}. Empirical evidences were analysed by application of aforementioned model introduced by Scannell and Gifford\textsuperscript{17}. The main themes retrieved from the gathered data were organising into broader aspects of this triple model to describe essence of the bonds between people and their urban dachas.

The results of the study were validated through triangulation of applied methods. The empirical evidences from the interviews were complemented by observations and put into local social context. Maxwell notes that triangulation as “strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops”\textsuperscript{18}. I described my own experience with urban dachas (see Preface) to bracket it from research and be open for people’s knowledge.

### 3.4. Limitations

Lombard notes that phenomenological approach is criticised for failure to capture power relations which also take part in constructing places\textsuperscript{19}. Indeed the focus on people’s lived experiences leaves aside discussion on the institutional powers which seem to be important for placemaking process of urban dachas. However this research bring secondary data while not in the centre of my attention it still provides valuable context of power relations for the studied phenomenon. Another limitation of research is connected to the narrow timeframe of field work and sample of respondents. I did not have an opportunity to interview individuals from less privileged groups: homeless people who found their shelter in urban dachas or labour migrants from Central Asia who use dachas as temporary dormitories. However their presence is revealed in stories of interviewees and observations. The data gathered during in observations is also limited by time of year: apparently summer observations would give more diverse portrait of the areas than late April. Nevertheless urban dachas exist in the city the whole year and cannot be limited just to more active season. Moreover some more summer practices were described by the respondents in the interviews.

This chapter elucidates the approach behind the research design, choice of instruments for data gathering and analysis and stipulates limitations of such approach. The next chapter presents a detailed overview of Kaliningrad urban dachas as an object of study drawing on historical and planning context.

\textsuperscript{17} Scannell and Gifford, “Defining Place Attachment”.
\textsuperscript{18} Maxwell, Qualitative Research Design, 112.
\textsuperscript{19} Lombard, "Constructing Ordinary Places".
Chapter 4: Object of study

The study of the different aspects of people’s attachment to their urban dachas is impossible without a discussion on dacha and urban dacha in historical, legal and planning contexts. The concept of urban dachas being similar to allotment gardens in many European cities still has big part of its legacy from national and local circumstances. This chapter gives a brief description of the development of dachas in Russia with the emphasis on post-World War II period in Kaliningrad, discusses legal framework of urban dachas and their local planning situation. It concludes with a detailed description of the urban dacha area on Katina street in Kaliningrad to provide insights into current state of such territories based on observations. This information aims to be an introduction to the analysis of the data presented in the next chapter.

4.1. Dacha as a Russian phenomenon

Dacha is a part of not so big range of Russian words, which have entered other languages. The Oxford dictionary defines it as “a country house or cottage in Russia, typically used as a second or holiday home”\footnote{“Dacha – definition of dacha in English,” Oxford Dictionaries, accessed Mar. 01, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dacha}, but in fact, it refers to many different concepts: a summer house, a vacation home, a countryside villa, allotment gardens in rural and urban areas. What they all have in common is a distinct connection of a dacha to the urban lifestyle as usually dacha provides a retreat from “unhealthy” way of life in cities for urbanities but do not break their connection to cities. This situation becomes more ambiguous when a dacha is situated inside an urban zone making therefore such retreat quite illusive. For the purpose of this thesis, I use an urban dacha as a synonym to an urban allotment garden to put it in the national context.

The paper does not aim to give detailed overview of history of dachas in Russia, but it seems important to trace some moments from the past which are relevant for their current state. The etymology of the word “dacha” is similar to English “allotment”. It originates from the verb *davat’* (to give in Russian) and in the 18th century was used to describe land (firstly around newly built St. Petersburg) which was given by the Emperors to their loyal attendants for the construction of rich estates\footnote{Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 8–9.}. Due to the granted character of such property dacha owners did not felt secure regarding their rights. Over almost two centuries, dacha lost its belonging to nobility and became a mass phenomenon representing “the Russian way of negotiating the stresses of urbanization and modernization, of creating a welcoming halfway house between metropolis and countryside”\footnote{Ibid, p. 6.}.

After the World War II the Soviet government started the distribution of land spots in collective gardens. This activity had two aims: food self-sufficiency and recreation. Land for gardening was allocated mostly in a periphery of cities in territories, which were often not suitable for industries or agriculture (marshlands, areas under power lines, etc.). The size of a typical plot – 600 m² – became a widespread euphemism of
a dacha and a dacha lifestyle. At the beginning these areas were heavily regulated: people were obliged to grow food and were not able to build a house with a chimney or spend night there. In 1967–69 after the introduction of an official two-days weekend the rules started relaxing\(^4\) and in 1980’s dachas already represented very diverse territories. The cities also grew and some dachas were no more on the periphery but became surrounded by urban built environment.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emerging of the market rapidly changed situation in the country. Dacha spots as well as apartments were privatised by their users who got high level of freedom. There is no consent whether or not dachas had a big impact on food provision during financial crisis in 1990’s but it is important that users of dachas themselves valued them as an essential source of food\(^5\). Relaxation of rules and planning regulations led to rise of new functions in dachas especially in urban areas: people dwell there permanently, spend summer there, use them as storage places, sublet dachas as dorms for migrants, organise small businesses and workshops. At the same time some owners still garden or just come to spend spare time close to nature. This transformation of functions triged physical changes of areas: their development became chaotic and unplanned, especially in areas close to urban centres with high demand for affordable housing. In general the urban dachas of Kaliningrad share the trends from the national history but have their own profile.

### 4.2. History of Kaliningrad dachas

This study brings evidences from the Russian city of Kaliningrad which is perhaps not so well-known. So this section opens with a very brief outline of its portrait to give better understanding of the context of this research. Kaliningrad is the 40\(^{th}\) city in Russia regarding its population size of 459 560 inhabitants\(^6\). It is a capital of the Kaliningrad region (976 400 inhabitants) which is situated in the south-eastern part of the Baltic sea region. Kaliningrad region has very special place in Russia as it is an exclave and is separated from the territory of the country being an “island” of Russia inside the European Union (see Figure 4). Before the World War II the city was a part of Germany and had a name Königsberg but was given to the Soviet Union as a contribution for the losses of the war. In 1946 the Soviet government renamed the city and deported all German inhabitants who have not fled yet.

The city which completely changed the population and lost its original centre in the bombardments and post-war years is now a palimpsest of the German and Soviet past and the Russian present looking for its new identity. It also tries to make sense of its history and questions German legacy for the contemporary Russian city\(^7\). Since the beginning of 1990’s Kaliningrad regions has been attractive for migrants from

other regions of Russia and the former Soviet Union. It seems to be an affordable solution with good location, climate and economic situation for people who move out from the Russian Far North and Siberia and for Russian-speaking diaspora from Central Asia. Today approximately 30–50% of all new apartments in the city are bought by people outside Kaliningrad region. During last four years population of the city grew by 6% (26 000 people). Such high migration influx influences all part of the city including the urban dachas.

The materials from the State archive of Kaliningrad regions do not document what happened to the former German allotment gardens (Schrebergarten) if they managed to survey the war. However already in February 1948 the city council allocated 34 ha for gardens of the workers of the Brewery №1. Allocation of land for urban gardens was organised through trade unions, local councils and enterprises: a shipbuilding yard, a paper mill, an energy company, carriage works, fishing enterprises, etc. Each enterprise formed a gardening cooperative and distributed spots to its members. So

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8 Yuliya Florinskaya, et al., Migratsiya i rynok truda [Migration and the labour market] (Moscow: Izdatel'skiy dom "Delo", 2015). [In Russian]
11 Kaliningradstat, Kaliningradskaya oblast’ v tsifrakh 2016.
12 Resheniye Kaliningradskogo gorispolkoma [Act of Kaliningrad city executive committee] no. 93, Feb. 26, 1948, Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Kaliningradskoy oblasti [State archive of the Kaliningrad region]. [In Russian]
colleagues became dacha neighbourhoods and members of garden cooperatives which were in charge for all common questions and problems.

Figure 5. My grandmother Lidiya Grabalova and great grandmother Elena Grabalova at their dacha. Kaliningrad. May 1971. Source: family archive.

Provision of land for allotment gardens were part of the official agenda and somehow compensated minimal conditions of mass housing. As Vadim Safronov, chairman of the union of gardeners of Kaliningrad region, points out: “We were all locked in Khrushchev’s cages [the most widespread type of Soviet apartments was named unofficially after Nikita Khrushchev]. But in the dacha I could go barefooted and feel the dew”13. The city council had to facilitate development of the urban allotment gardens and control the cooperatives. The archive documents show that it was not an easy task. In 1985 the council issued an act with self-explanatory name “On weaknesses and perversions in the development of collective gardens in the city and measures to eliminate them”14. Among several critical aspects they emphasized plots and houses bigger than standard limit, self-acquisition of land and use of construction material without control. This act bound to strengthen discipline in the gardening cooperatives, allot 150 ha more for collective gardens and expand purchase of fruits and vegetables from members of the cooperatives. It also described the situation with the urban dachas: at that time in Kaliningrad there were 235 gardening cooperatives uniting 21 000 gardeners and comprising 1 278 ha of land.

Today the Kaliningrad allotment gardens occupy big areas, especially in the north-western and northern marginal parts of the city forming a “dacha belt” around the city. According to Zinaida Gushchina, the head of the department of land tenure of

13 Vadim Safronov (chairman of Union of gardeners of Kaliningrad region), interview by author, Jan. 4, 2016.
14 Resheniye Kaliningradskogo gorispolkoma [Act of Kaliningrad city executive committee] no. 367, Oct. 10, 1985, Gosudarstvennyy arkiv Kaliningradskoy oblasti [State archive of the Kaliningrad region]. [In Russian]
Kaliningrad administration, in the city there are 105 dacha societies with 33,000 spots. The Figure 6 shows the urban dachas on the Land-use plan of Kaliningrad. The next section discusses a framework in which these territories exist.

**4.3. Legal and planning context of the dacha areas of Kaliningrad**

Dachas are included into almost all planning and legal regulations but in practice their conditions are not so formal. The dacha cooperatives are guided by the Law on Non-Commercial Gardening and Dacha Unions of Citizens which describes a provision of land for gardening as a responsibility of municipalities. The Urban Planning Code also recognises dacha and gardening territories and gives them more flexible rules regarding construction permits. Most of the dacha plots are privately owned by each user (or family) while land under shared infrastructure (e.g., roads) is owned by a dacha cooperative as one legal entity. The users pay membership fees for management of their cooperative (including maintenance of roads and land development), fees for public services consumed individually (usually only electricity) and taxes for land and real property.

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In 2006 the federal government launched the programme “Dacha Amnesty” which was in line with Hernando de Soto’s ideas of including land into formal economy\textsuperscript{18}. The idea was to simplify formalisation of property rights on land which people got previously and to introduce an opportunity to register already built houses without building permissions or official surveys\textsuperscript{19}. Furthermore dacha owners got a chance to receive an address for their property and an official residential registration there which in theory opens access to all public services including schools and hospitals. Zinaida Gushchina states that in 2015 more than 90% of dacha spots in Kaliningrad were officially registered\textsuperscript{20}. Formalisation of property rights aims to give a base for property and land taxes which are being increasing now and will be an important financial source for municipalities. The Strategy of socio-economic development of Kaliningrad till 2035 ignores dacha areas even in spatial planning chapter but in general calls for greater capitalisation of land resources of the city\textsuperscript{21}. It seems to be in line with dacha property formalisation.

The preservation of urban allotment gardens are named among six new features of the main strategic planning document, the General plan (\textit{General’nyy plan}) which was adopted in 2016\textsuperscript{22}. According to Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy from the Kaliningrad urban planning regulations department this feature was introduced due to the big concern of dacha owners who were afraid, that new land use status of their property will potentially lead to raise of taxes and make land grabbing easier for developers\textsuperscript{23}. He also noted that during participation process on the new General plan they got the biggest interest from dacha owners who did not feel secure with their future.

The legally binding Land-use plan (\textit{Pravila zemlepol’zovaniya i zastroyki}) describes dacha areas as zone Zh-5, part of a functional zone for housing and not of agricultural land\textsuperscript{24}. At the same time, it lists dachas and gardens as part of agricultural objects in the chapter about urban planning regulations. This shows ambiguous nature of the urban dachas even in the legal documents. The plan prescribes that not more than 20% of a dacha plot can be built up and not less than 50% of a spot has to be occupied by greenery. According to the Land-use plan dacha owners can build a house limited to two floors (can be increased with an attic).


\textsuperscript{19} Louiza M. Boukharaeva and Marcel Marloie, Family Urban Agriculture in Russia: Lessons and Prospects (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015).

\textsuperscript{20} Zinaida Gushchina (head of department of land tenure in Kaliningrad city administration), interview by author, Dec. 30, 2015.


\textsuperscript{22} Yuzhnyy gradostroitel’nyy tsentr [Southern Urban Planning Centre], “Proyekt General’nogo plana g. Kaliningrada: Obshchiye polozheniya” [Project of the General Plan of Kaliningrad: General Provisions], Presentation at public hearings, Kaliningrad, June 03, 2016, http://klgd.ru/construction/gr_documents/doklad_publ_slushaniya.pps. [In Russian]

\textsuperscript{23} Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy (deputy head of the urban planning regulations department), interview by author, Dec. 20, 2016.

The Land-use plan already permits different functions in the dacha zone including police stations, pharmacies, children playgrounds, grounds for dogs and shops. At the same time municipal regulations do not provide base for planning social infrastructure for people who live there. However Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy notes that authors of the General plan provided future schools and hospitals for dacha owners as their own idea. The city claims to have no legal right to invest public money into private property, namely dacha plots and gardening cooperatives. Their members have to find ways to deal with all infrastructural problems themselves. The next section presents a dacha area on Katina street in Kaliningrad and illustrates how some planning and legal regulations are manifested there.

4.4. The dacha area on Katina street


The observations gave me the rich material which helps to understand better the current landscape of the urban dachas. The area on Katina street in Kaliningrad can be seen as quite typical one in comparison to other allotment gardens in the city but at the same time due to the proximity to the city centre (3.5 km to the central business district) many processes are accelerated here. The first gardens here date back to late 1960’s. The area is situated in north-western part of the city which is

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25 “Pravila Zemlepol’zovaniya i Zastroyki”.
26 Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy (deputy head of the urban planning regulations department), interview by author, Dec. 20, 2016.
occupied by many gardening cooperatives. Among them I chose a territory of three cooperatives “Raduga”, “Zarya” and “Zarnica” comprising 61 ha as it has clear borders (see Figure 7).

Here there are around 990 land plots there according to the public cadastral map\textsuperscript{27}. The street pattern looks like a maze and blocks an opportunity to go through this area. A dacha plot is about 400–600 m\textsuperscript{2}. Each plot is fenced and fences are the most powerful visual symbols of the area. They are made from a great variety of materials which reflect owners’ financial capacity and tastes. Another striking part of the area landscape is vernacular architecture. The buildings on the dacha plots vary from small wooden houses built in the Soviet times to impressive villas. Many of them are frozen in the middle of construction process and adapted for housing in current stage. There a lot of active construction sites in the area. For more photographs from the area see Appendix 5.

Despite the high proportion of dachas which are used for housing (I estimate it as 70\% of all plots) the area lacks quite basic urban infrastructure, including central sewage system, drinking water supply, central heating and street light. The growing population of the urban dachas triggered rise of small business (shops, a café, a hairdresser) situated at the final bus stop. Several of dachas facing Katina street were also converted into private businesses such as repair shops. Despite proximity to other parts of the city and adequate bus connection physically the area feels very isolated for the rest of Kaliningrad because of buffer zones on edges (see Figure 7).

The background materials discussed in this chapter give a detailed description of cultural, legal and physical situation of the urban dachas in Kaliningrad. Such detour seems to be important for exploring of circumstances in which people bonds with their dachas develop. The next chapter presents analysis of the data from different urban dachas in Kaliningrad to capture common aspects of place attachment in these areas of the city.

\textsuperscript{27} “Publichnaya kadastrovaya karta” [Public cadastral map], Rosreestr, accessed May 21, 2017, https://pkk5.rosreestr.ru/. [In Russian]
Chapter 5: Analysis

The research aims to explore place attachment in the urban allotment gardens in Kaliningrad and to debate on urban development in regards to it. The focus of the study is on the different aspects of the bonds between people and their urban dachas. As discussed earlier in the theoretical chapter place is constructed through investment of individual and group meanings into surroundings. The complexity of the phenomenon is revealed in bringing different aspects. The empirical data gathered in the interviews and observations was categorized according to the triple model of place attachment introduced by Scannell and Gifford1. The common themes were put into one of the three dimensions: person, psychological process or place (see Figure 8). This models seems to be a useful analytical tools for examining the collected material to find common themes. At the same time analysis of the data is not limited to just categorization but aims to save complexity and multifaceted nature of place attachment as a phenomenon by exploring relations between different dimensions and putting them into local context where the urban dachas function. This chapter provides insights into people’s experiences, memories and feelings and illustrates them by using quotations from the interviews. All names of the respondents are changed to pseudonyms reflecting their genders (see Appendix 3).

Figure 8. The different aspects of place attachment revealed during the study on the model of place attachment. Adapted by author. Source: Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment", 2.

5.1. Person: “Step by step”

Who are attached to the urban dachas and how do they construct them as places? As discussed above historically the first holders of the plots in the Kaliningrad allotment

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1 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment".
gardens were colleagues to their neighbours. In this way the gardeners seemed to share many aspects of their lifestyles, although their homogeneity should not be overestimated. The gathered data reveals quite diverse picture of individuals and social groups who use the allotment gardens today. This section discusses several major findings of person dimension of place attachment in the urban dachas of Kaliningrad, namely the topics of migration, construction work, gardening and lifestyle.

**Migration**

According to the statistics Kaliningrad attracts a lot of new residents. The interviews demonstrate that the urban dachas are one of the first point of arrival for many of them. Some of the respondents moved to the city from other regions, other shared stories about their neighbours and observations on the life of the area. Almost all of them named countries and cities in Central Asia as the most common origins of people who move to the Kaliningrad dachas. The migrants represent both ethnical Russian repatriates as well as Central Asians. Such migration trend explains a complex group pattern of users of the urban dachas. The respondents revealed mixed feelings regarding it from a statement that newcomers are generally very friendly to an observation how difficult it is to come on an agreement with each other.

Partly because of the migration the social picture of the urban dachas looks quite fragmented. Their vivid and according to my observations less privileged part is labour migrant from the same Central Asian region. They usually come for several months, work on construction sites and live in dormitories. The urban dachas where many houses are in the process of construction provide for them both place of work and often to dwell. However some of the migrants have to commute to other areas as stated by a respondent:

> Actually here you can see them too, but in mornings and evenings. I guess they have complicated logistics in the municipality: some live here while others come to work here but don’t live in the area. The come for construction work I mean. (Vladimir)

Talking about labour migrants some interviewees pictures them as “illegals” or “gastarbeigers”. At the same time when talking about a migrant who he knows personally one respondent describes him as being friendly and uses his name. Lewicka notes that place attachment research demonstrates evidence of higher level of attachment in homogeneous neighbourhoods. The Kaliningrad urban dachas cannot be portrayed as very ethnically diverse areas as the Russians present majority of the population. However different backgrounds of dacha users make the picture quite intricate. For one of the respondents who moved to Kaliningrad in 2000 being a newcomer still means smaller amount of friends, less intensive social life and necessity to work harder than Kaliningrad-born citizens.

**Construction work and gardening**

3 Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”
High level of personal involvement of dacha users into construction and maintenance of their houses and gardens make these areas very similar to informal settlements in other parts of the globe. Indeed people’s direct participation in changes of their environment is much more intense in urban dachas than in apartment buildings in the city. While some respondents hired constructors, most of them did a lot of work by themselves. According to the interviewees the main reason for it is a lack of finance. There are many consequences of such self-building process, perhaps the most striking one is temporality of construction. It is revealed both in observations and respondents’ stories:

- Not all people move to Kaliningrad with a lot of money. They just had enough money to pour a foundation of the future house. Many people build like this, step by step. When they have money they build a frame, next they build a roof. Step by step. (Natalya)

Designing and construction of people’s own houses do not always lead to better quality or higher level of satisfaction of their needs. Many of the respondents complained about lack of skills and professional experience and demonstrated will to change some aspects if they could. One of the interviewees had to move out from her self-build house because of its low quality. At the same time the interviewees seem to overcome some level of household hardship quite easily which resonates with the Turner’s observation of higher level of acceptance of self-build houses and infrastructure in Latin America. Temporality of both construction process and maintenance cause the permanent need for small upgrading and work. The respondents picture their typical day as to be very busy and almost not to have free time. Such everyday life practices, many of which unconscious, shape the urban dachas as meaningful places being an essential part of Seamon’s place-ballet.

Gardening is another vivid aspect of people’s everyday life in the urban dachas of Kaliningrad. Most of the respondents grow some food and vegetables or had experience of it, however level of their involvement in gardening is different. Also interviewees who live at their dachas invest less time and effort into this activity than people who use a plot just for gardening. During my visits most of the respondents were keen to show their flower and vegetable beds, greenhouses, exotic plants, new techniques and even shared the first spring salad and onions. Only one respondent named self-provision as the main reason for gardening while for other it seems to be an important part of their leisure activities:

- I love growing something! That’s why I started working at the dacha. Before I didn’t like it. When I was a schoolgirl and we had this dacha I made up a lot of things just not to go there. I hated it. Five years ago it changed. After 30 it changes I guess, you feel connected to the soil. Or maybe it is just my case. (Evgeniya)

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4 Turner, Housing by people.
Despite all practical obstacles some of the results of people’s construction and gardening activities seem to make them proud of themselves and places where they live. According to the material gathered both in interviews and participant observations these activities not only shape everyday life but help people’s self-realizations.

*Dacha lifestyle and children*

The urban dachas provide more opportunities for lifestyle different from typical urban routines: more convivial and less formal. The respondents shared their stories of parties with friends and relatives:

– I love inviting friends to our house. We have a tradition to celebrate New Year with friends on the 2nd of January. We cook a soup outside on fire. It is cold so we drink alcohol. Soup, barbecue, friends come often. (Olga)

Such events are often connected with some milestones from people’s personal lives, such as birthdays. Celebrating them in the urban dachas brings quite intimate meanings into these places. It also affects their physical dimension in order to accommodate such active use of environment. Many of the respondents built or plan to build a sauna and a barbecue ground. Thus these places through people’s own experiences become special and connected to personal memories.

Many of the respondents shared the view that a house in the urban dachas is a natural choice for families with children. It is confirmed by my observations: children are an important part of the landscape of the Kaliningrad allotment gardens. The
urban dachas provide very diverse educational environment for children to learn something new about nature, gardening or even social life. At the same time a respondent whose son is five years old complained about the absence of children playgrounds in the area where he could meet other children. According to other interviewees for older children the whole gardening cooperative can be a playground. One respondent complained on the lack of interest to the surroundings from her 14-year-old son who spends his free time at home playing video games. Nevertheless presence of children in the urban dachas brings new meanings into place. For some of the respondents even physical features of their dachas reminds about family history and milestones in life of their children and grandchildren:

– We planted this conifer tree when our granddaughter was born. (Irina)

The person dimension of place attachment brings powerful insights into individual and group portrait of people who are attached to the urban dachas and illuminate their experiences. However, this aspect is intertwined with the other ones, such as process and place, shaping the complex and multifaceted picture of the bonds between people and their surroundings.

5.2. Process: “I feel safe on my land”

According to Scannell and Gifford the psychological process dimension of place attachment “concerns the way that individuals and groups relate to a place, and the nature of the psychological interactions that occur in the environments that are important to them”\(^6\). They differ three levels of this dimension: affect, cognition and behaviour. The empirical data from the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad makes it possible to explore several categories of the processes associated with place attachment. In general this dimension defines meanings which people invest into places, their feelings towards surroundings and actions aiming to stay close to a place, protect it or repair. This section discusses such common for the respondents themes as feelings of safety and independency, group effort for infrastructural changes and ways of mapping.

Feeling of safety

Despite my outsiders’ observation of the urban dachas as hostile environment the majority of the respondents do not see them as dangerous parts of the city. The interviews showed that people do not come across with any serious criminal issues and reveal decreased level of burglary. Most of the respondents connect this reflection with increased level of permanent residents of the urban dachas who are now “eyes upon the street” already described by Jane Jacobs\(^7\) and installation of street lamps in some of the cooperatives. A respondent who has more intensive experience in the urban dachas as a resident and insider of the place even pictured her cooperative to be safer comparing to other parts of the city:

– I feel very comfortable here. For example, in the city after the 24:00 I don’t feel very comfortable, I think about what can happen to me. But if come back

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\(^6\) Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment", 3.
here even at 3:00 in the morning, I go out from a taxi on the central street and
walk to my house. It feels OK. I don’t feel scary that someone can harm me. All
people know each other and there are no antisocial people here. (Olga)

Despite of such idyllic picture of the urban dachas, not all respondents do feel safe
and secure being there. This feeling is especially salient when being alone. One of the
interviewees even noted she would never spend a night alone in her house. It can be
explained by her short time of residency there because other respondents
demonstrated that their level of feeling of being vulnerable in the urban dachas
declined with time:

- I don’t have an unpleasant feeling when I am alone. Maybe because this plot is
  from my childhood. I feel safe here, at this dacha, on my land. So I don’t feel
  scary. (Evgeniya)

This is an illustration of how experiences construct meaningful place which does not
seem so hostile anymore. Sense of safety is considered to be among the most
important predictor factor which affect place attachment. Findings from the
Kaliningrad urban dachas demonstrate that some people lack of such feeling which
apparently negatively influences development of their bonds with the dachas.

Another sense essential for development of place attachment relates to independence.

**Feeling of independence**

According to some interviewees their dachas give them higher level of independence
or autonomy than an apartment in the city. The most vivid evidences of it were
presented in the discussions on the motives of moving to the urban allotment
gardens. One of the respondents even indicated it as the main reason to overcome all
everyday difficulties:

- There was no water there, to get warm we used electro heater. But we were
  independent. And we planned that there we were going to build a new big
  house to live in. We spent four winters without water. But we were
  independent and instead of paying rent could invest that money into
  construction. (Olga)

In general the respondents who dwell in these areas believe that the urban dachas
provide an opportunity not to rely so much on other people and have less influence
from them on their lifestyle. Another aspect is food self-sufficiency which was
mentioned by a respondent who told about the dacha role in provision food for her
family in 1990’s. The urban dachas seem to be places where people can feel less
dependent on both economic and political situation as well as other people. At the
same time the dacha owners do not live in completely autonomous situation and have
to decide a lot of everyday life problems together with their neighbours.

**Group efforts**

As already discussed on the example of the dacha area on Katina street (see Section
4.4) the lack of urban infrastructure and services is one of the crucial features

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8 Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”, 217.
distinguishing Kaliningrad allotment gardens from other parts of the city. Most of the resident name quality of roads as the main obstacles of using the dachas. Among other things are the lack or pure condition of drainage system, absence of sewage system and public water supply, absence of gas and street light in some areas, poor access to health facilities. Due to legal and planning status of the gardening societies their members have to deal with these problems together without sufficient help of authorities. The way of answering such challenges is a strong placemaking strategy and influences place attachment in these areas.

Collective actions of the dacha owners, therefore, can be seen as special behaviour for construction place and developing of place attachment, similar to place restoration process discussed by Scannell and Gifford⁹. The diversity of how people use dachas makes it difficult to agree on the ways of dealing with infrastructural problems, nevertheless the areas are dramatically changing. Many respondents name connection to the gas supply as an important step of upgrading the area and adding new quality of life here. Although the process of coming to an agreement and collecting money for investment can be challenging, the cooperatives are in rapid change connecting to gas, installing street lights and trying to repair the roads. These new meaning invested into places transform them dramatically but still do not let loose the dacha atmosphere completely.

Figure 10. Lesnaya (Forest in Russian) street in the dacha area on Katina street. December 2017. Source: Artem Kilkin.

⁹ Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment", 4.
Mapping and place naming

As being a special legal part of the urban fabric, the Kaliningrad urban dachas do not have proper address system recognised by the authorities. Even people who are officially registered there sometimes have just a name of a gardening cooperative as an address. According to the respondents such special position of the urban dachas being places out of the map leads to problems for different services:

– No one will come here and find his way around because we do not exist on the maps. So a driver won’t find us with GPS. We can’t order a pizza. Perhaps it is the most difficult thing for me in life in the dacha area that you can’t order taxi or pizza or sushi. (Maria)

For some of the respondents it creates a feeling of being in nowhere, in a place “lost” by the official map.

According to Relph naming of places is one of the ways of humanising space\(^{10}\). Despite ambiguous position of the urban dachas on the map, both cooperatives and streets inside them have their own names. One of the respondents even took part in naming her gardening cooperative being a child and now it is a part of the family history:

– The name of our gardening cooperative – “Zolotoy petushok” (Golden cockerel in Russian) – was created by me. Land there was distributed for workers of the poultry plant. My parents worked there. And my mother was an accountant of the board of the gardening cooperative. So they had to come up with a name. We were thinking about it at home and we just read the fair-tale “Golden cockerel”. So I suggested to my mother to name it like this. She agreed. It was in 1985. (Evgeniya)

It seems that such personalisation of the name of the place helps to develop stronger bonds between this respondent and surroundings.

The streets inside the dacha cooperatives were also named by boards of the cooperatives which not always had fantasy for them. For example, the streets in the “Raduga” (Rainbow in Russian) cooperative all have the same name but with different numbers: 1\(^{st}\) Sadovaya (Garden in Russian), 2\(^{nd}\) Sadovaya, etc. Most of the respondents did not reveal any attachment to names of their streets. During the interview one of them mixed up the name of the street where she has been living for two years with similar one. Notably according to the interviewees they do not try to find more humane and individual nicknames for surroundings.

The process dimension of place attachment is difficult to capture. However the urban dachas showed some evidences of how these bonds are forming. It is also important towards which places they are developing.

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\(^{10}\) Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 16.
5.3. Place: “You can see stars”

The place dimension defines what is the object of place attachment in each particular case. According to the model of Scannell and Gifford it articulates both physical and social levels of people-place relations. This part of the model was easier revealed in observations during my field trips than person and processes aspects. At the same time the interviews gave me deeper understanding of meaningful for people features of the urban dachas, especially on the social level. Despite a certain degree of unfriendliness of the Kaliningrad allotment gardens from the outsider’s point of view, their users shared not limited to this and complex image of these territories full of significant connotations. Bringing the empirical evidences this section discusses several common themes of the place dimension, specifically property rights, community development, dacha senses and contact with nature.

Property rights

According to Lewicka ownership status is a predicator of higher level of place attachment as the results of studies show that people tend to be attached more to places which they own. While this observation can be debated, for many of the respondents the question of property seems to be very important. New owners of the plots shared detailed reviews of process of acquiring their dachas using both help of kin and institutional instruments such as a bank mortgage. Long-term users of the dachas got it during the Soviet times or inherited from their relatives. Property rights of all interviewees were formalised; some of them used help of the “Dacha Amnesty” programme which was discussed in the Section 4.3. In general the respondents view their dachas as very private assets, way of investment and part of the property which they want to give to their children.

At the same time some interviewees believe that the land use status of the dacha areas which define them as territories for gardening make their land rights less secured even if they are formalised and registered. They are afraid of land grabbing and expropriation. However such insecurity of land rights can decrease in time as reported by one of the respondents:

- At the beginning we were afraid that this big housing development on the other side of the road will come here and they will grab dachas and pay just cadastral value. But even if they pay the real value, I don’t want to start it again. I want to live in the house which I built. Now I am not afraid of it.
  (Andrey)

Perhaps the most noticeable visual feature of Kaliningrad dachas is a great amount of fences most of which are not transparent. Trudolyubov notes that fences as Russia’s constant concludes that they are an “external manifestation of some internal need” (translated by author). Fences are viewed by many respondents as an essential part of their dachas. They named a will to be out of the view of other people and security as the main reasons for installation of fences. However certain level of insecurity in

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11 Scannell and Gifford, “Defining Place Attachment”.
12 Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”, 217.
13 Maxim Trudolyubov, Lyudi za zaborom: Vlast’, sobstvennost’ i chastnoye prostranstvo v Rossii [People behind the fence: Power, property and private space in Russia] (Moscow: Novoye izdatel’stvo, 2015), 36.
property rights can be seen as an “internal need” for fencing the dachas. For one of the respondents a fence between her plot and neighbour’s one helps to minimise any potential conflicts. Therefore fences seem to be directly connected not only to property rights but also to social interactions in the urban dachas.

Figure 11. The street with a lot of fences in the dacha area on Katina street. December 2017. Source: author.

Community development

What is a portrait of community which is now being built at the dachas of Kaliningrad? The material gathered in the interviews shows that time spent in these areas, both for dwelling and gardening, positively influences level of involvement into community life and intensity of social interactions. The respondents with the longest period of time in the dachas proved to know much more people in their surroundings than other interviewees and meet them more often. Sharing of seedlings, seeds and yields as well as exchange of horticultural advice are reported to be the most common reasons for socialising. For one of the respondent sharing is an essential part of her social engagement:

– Across the road a young family bought a house a year ago. It was not finished inside. Of course I shared everything what I found extra in my place, all gave them. Some dishes, old furniture, old gas oven. (Natalya)

The interviewees who came to the urban dacha areas not so long ago showed quite low level of involvement into dacha community. Answering a direct question about amount of people they personally know they named very low numbers. However in flow of the conversation they demonstrated knowledge about much larger amount of their neighbours. It illustrates that some of the respondents do not see the urban dachas as valuable places for their social interactions. According to one interviewee a need to solve numerous infrastructural problems together do not lead to activating of community but make neighbours reluctant to communicate with each other. None of
the respondents complain on absence of public spaces in the urban allotment gardens which could help people to meet. For many of them the urban dachas being a part of private domain do not facilitate social dimension of these places.

**Sensescape**

Different senses, emphasised by Holloway and Hubbord for intimate knowledge of places¹⁴, also influence place attachment in the Kaliningrad urban gardens. During the interviews I tried to understand sensitive knowledge of these places which people obtain through everyday life experiences. The development of this knowledge is not limited to just visual perception but involves other senses as well. For many of the gardening cooperatives one of the most salient features is lack or limited amount of the street light. This aspect distinguishes many urban dachas from the rest of Kaliningrad and makes people’s routines more difficult:

– When you come home alone and it is dark, you use a torch function of your mobile. It doesn’t work without it because roads are so bad. Many people do the same. (Svetlana)

For some of the respondents the dachas are visually attractive as possess visual and sound characteristics different from other parts of the city:

– It is very beautiful at night here. You can see stars. You can’t see such starts in Kaliningrad. Dogs yawl loudly but except it everything is quiet and beautiful. We have windows facing sunset. It is very beautiful when the sun goes down. (Andrey)

The respondents did not share any common perception of the typical smell of urban dachas referring to smells of vegetables and plants, coal and wood used for heating in winter and septic systems in summer. The dacha soundscape in the respondents’ opinions looks more homogeneous. As many urban dachas are situated near the Kaliningrad ring road traffic noise is an integral part of the sounds in the allotment gardens. For some of the interviewees the dachas are considered as a much calmer place comparing with the rest of the city; one of them even turned the radio on louder so as to not be in such a quiet environment. Furthermore many of the respondents associate their dachas with bird songs which place these areas closer to nature than other parts of the city.

**Contact with nature**

The interviews showed that the majority of the respondents consider their dachas as healthier places and more nature-like habitat:

– When living in the dacha area you start feeling how bad air in other parts of the city is. I heart that there should be 300 metre between housing and a motorway. So sometimes I think how do people live in the city? (Olga)

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¹⁴ Holloway and Hubbard, *People and Place*, 74.
In fact one can argue on real value of living in the urban dachas for people’s health but the respondents’ attitudes seem to be any way important for shaping of their attachment to these places.

Another part of this dimension is easier contact with wildlife. The respondents named hedgehogs, squirrels and different kinds of birds being an essential element of their sense of the dachas. They do not only notice animals but have their personal stories of interactions with them. Thus the urban dachas get new meanings for them and develop into more complex places.

During my field trips to the Kaliningrad allotment gardens stray dogs were an obstacle for the observations. Being an outsider I felt a potential threat from them and was scary because of a big amount of stray dogs in many gardening cooperatives. However most of the respondents do not see them as a problem and a source of aggression. According to the interviewees the situation with stray dogs became better in the last years and claimed irresponsible behaviour of people in the area to be a source for the stray dogs.

The place dimension of place attachment model which is used in this analysis pictures some aspects of social and physical complexity of the urban dachas. The next section of the analysis explores person, process and place aspects as being intertwined parts of the phenomenon.

5.4. Person-Process-Place: synthesis

All three dimensions of place attachment discussed above do not function without each other. Hooloway and Hubbard emphasize that “we cannot study people and places independently of each other”15. Categorization of the common themes revealed in the interviews and observations according the model of Scannell and Gifford16 is just one way to operate with the gathered data and understand place attachment through its lens. The complexity of real bonds between people and places are much richer than any model can accommodate. Some of the themes are much bigger than only one dimension, others are so well connected with each other that can be better understood as a cluster of themes (for example, migration pattern and community). However this categorization helps to capture such subtle complexity and understand inputs of the different aspects into place attachment. This section aims to look at the interconnections of the aspects revealed during the analysis.

How do these aspects of place attachment correspond to the existing research of the field? Some of the discussed above aspects, such as ownership and proximity to nature, are among the predictor factors of place attachment named by Lewicka17. Other predictors mentioned by this scholar were also revealed in the data but are included into several aspects. Thus the empirical findings confirm positive influence of time spent in the dachas with developing of place attachment. Indeed more experienced dacha owners tend to feel more secure in the areas, keep more social contacts within community and have more meaningful memories and milestones.

15 Holloway and Hubbard, *People and Place*.
16 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment".
17 Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?", 217.
connected to these places. Lived experiences in construction work and gardening help for individual realization of dacha users and to feel more independent.

Figure 12. Internal road in a gardening cooperative on Katina street. December 2017. Source: author.

Discussing her motives of moving to the Kaliningrad allotment gardens one of the respondents placed an urban dacha in-between a house in the countryside where she did not want to go and a house in the city which she could not afford. Some of the aspects of place attachment in the urban dachas demonstrate similar position of these areas being in-between rural and urban arenas. In such a way typical dacha lifestyle with a lot of time spent outdoors, family gatherings and quite informal social interactions is closer to the typical countryside style than to the urban life. However Kaliningrad urban dachas are a part of very private domain where people according to the interviews are more attached to their houses than to a cooperative or community. This observation is in line with Hayden’s remark about suburbanization in the interwar USA: “as suburban house lots became more remote from city centers, owners felt more connected to their houses than to their neighbourhoods”\(^{18}\).

Discussing simple and superficial landscape Relph compare it to advertisements and coffee table books about scenery as it has “no conflict or hardship or ugliness or distastefulness\(^{19}\). My observations demonstrate that in this way Kaliningrad urban dachas are unlikely to be a part of the simple landscape. At the same time people’s


\(^{19}\) Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 136.
experiences, meanings and emotions construct them as places in their own rights and develop people’s ties to them. This thesis does not aim to measure level of place attachment or limit place attachment just to positive emotions which people have towards places. The accomplished analysis demonstrates complexity of person-place relations in the Kaliningrad urban dachas and distinguish the different aspects of place attachment there (see Figure 8). The next chapter discusses meanings which they have for the future of the city.
Chapter 6: Discussion

Relph emphasises two main reasons to explore the phenomenon of place: “first, it is interesting in its own right as a fundamental expression of man’s involvement in the world; and second, improved knowledge of the nature of place can contribute to the maintenance and manipulation of existing places and the creation of new places”. I believe that the same is true for the logic behind place attachment studies. The analysis of the empirical data from Kaliningrad urban dachas and findings presented in the previous chapter explored the different aspects of place attachment in this areas and thus answered the first research question of the thesis.

The second research question – what do these aspects mean for the city development – needs both broader local context of the urban dachas as well as an opportunity to match them with some global trends. This chapter aims to put these dimensions together. The discussion also helps more critically than in previous chapters to look at the concept of place attachment and the object of this study – the urban dachas in Kaliningrad. Listening to people’s stories it is a difficult task not to romanticize their experiences and the urban dachas as place.

Bringing new angles for the discussion on place attachment in the Kaliningrad allotment gardens this chapter is devoted to four topics: (1) value of the concept of place attachment for the field of urban studies; (2) strategies for future of Kaliningrad dachas; (3) meanings of explored aspects of place attachment for development of these areas; (4) positioning of the urban dachas in the international debate on urban allotment gardens.

6.1. Place attachment for urban studies

Being derived from the humanistic geographers’ works on place the concept of place attachment developed recently in papers of environmental psychologists. Many of them instrumentalise this concept by using different scales and quantitative methods for measuring. The model of Scannell and Gifford (person-process-place) which shapes the analysis of the data gathered in this thesis can also be seen as an instrument for fitting rich empirical evidences into artificial and limited framework. At the same time as the previous chapter demonstrates this model adapted to the object and purpose of the study is a powerful way to explore such subtle phenomenon as people’s ties with places.

According to Lombard emotional and psychosocial dimension of the urban environment are often overlooked in urban studies generally. The multidimensional lens of place attachment is considered to avoid this problem as aims to capture people’s bonds with places including emotional ones. Applying aforementioned model of place attachment created by the environmental psychologists I faced some challenges the biggest of which was exploring of the psychological process dimension. Urban dachas are not a classical example of place attachment research as they are not

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1 Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 44.
2 Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?".
3 Scannell and Gifford, "Defining Place Attachment".
4 Lombard, "Constructing Ordinary Places".
under threat of demolition or people are not displaced. So it was difficult to find psychological processes relevant to place attachment without experience in environmental psychology. Meantime I believe that this model helped me not to ignore this dimension and explore it together with more conventional for urban studies aspects of people and place.

The conceptual framework of place attachment seems to be beneficial for dacha studies as well. Human geographers see dachas “as a possible agent of suburbanization”\(^5\). This approach is very powerful in discussion on people’s mobility in Russia which is their object of study. At the same time it can omit local and personal levels of the transformation process. More humanistic approach helps to get better understanding of these microanalytical levels. In this way this research of exploring people’s everyday life experiences through the lens of place attachment emphasises agency of people who use dachas.

An obstacle of using the concept of place attachment can be seen in validity of results when the gathered data is considered to be just a variety of anecdotes. I believe that criteria of data in a phenomenological research discussed in the section 3.3 helps to achieved verified results. In general the concept of place attachment seems to be an advantageous tool for urban studies research as focuses on capturing usually elusive aspects of relations between people and their surroundings. Another advantage of the concept of place attachment in application to the urban dachas as its attention to temporary aspect of forming of bonds between people and places. Kaliningrad urban dachas are an excellent example of places in progress which essence is difficult to catch without exploring of complexity of people’s lived experiences.

### 6.2. Urban dachas as place in progress

People construct Kaliningrad urban dacha as meaningful places not in empty space but in space full of power relations of different stakeholders. The authorities with their legal and planning capacity are among them. While the background of this dimensioned was just described in the section 4.3, this section analyses the most important trends.

Some historical parallels despite their limitations reveal impressive similarities with contemporary urban dachas of Kaliningrad. Discussing suburbanisation in the interwar USA Hayden brings to notice “garage suburbs”: neighbourhoods where people did not have enough money to finish their houses at once and lived there while construction process did not finish\(^6\). She points out that such suburbs were not acclaimed by planners as they demanded infrastructure from the city. Furthermore they did not prompt development of neighbourhood ties. Lowell’s description of life of dacha settlements around Moscow in the very beginning of the 20th century share very much alike observations: enormous amount of practical difficulties, lack of attention from the state, absence of institutions where neighbourhood ties could be developed\(^7\).

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\(^7\) Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 82.
According to Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy in the Soviet tradition of urban planning, dachas were seen as a temporary solution before other types of development. The previous version of a General plan proves this idea: there the zone of urban dachas was marked for perspective development of the Garden City. However it was never implemented. This objective has an interesting historical analogy. In the early 20th century, an Ebenezer Howard’s idea of a Garden City became popular in Russia and some of the thinkers saw dachas as a national and localised way of it. After the Revolution, the new government did not encourage individual housing due to ideological reasons and limited capacity of the construction industry. Therefore, the process of moving to the city periphery observed in Kaliningrad in this study can be seen as postponed suburbanisation, supporting thereby findings of human geographers.

The programme “Dacha Amnesty” has direct effect on the dacha fabric. With much easier regulations, the urban dachas became very attractive territories for individual housing. The programme therefore accelerated transformation of dachas from gardening to residential areas. Obviously, speed and extent of this process was not similar in different locations.

Although some of the respondents are afraid of potential land grabbing and expropriation of their plots, so far, Kaliningrad urban dachas are not in focus of the developers and authorities. It can be explained by availability of other sources of land for development. According to the General plan, Kaliningrad is a compact city and is planned to grow inwards by developing brownfields and former military bases inside the city limits. However, what will happen when these sources are finished? What will be the role of the urban dachas? The General plan proposes the transformation of the urban allotment gardens into “proper” city blocks of low-rise houses in “far

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9 Lovell, Summerfolk, 79.
10 Nefedova and Pallot, “The multiplicity of second home development in the Russian Federation”.
11 Yuzhnyy gradostroiteln'nyy tsentr, “Proyekt General'nogo plana g. Kaliningrada”.
future”\textsuperscript{12} and supposes that this process will be implemented though collective actions of the owners of the urban dachas or private developers who will buy the plots\textsuperscript{13}. But what is a “proper” city block and what will be functions and physical settings of these areas?

Aforementioned observations demonstrate that the city authorities do not have any working and coherent strategies for development of Kaliningrad urban dachas. They attempt to catch already happening informal transformations and to give them a kind of “order”. In her research on placemaking processes in Mexico Lombard proposes to refuse from the traditional dialectic between formality and informality: her findings demonstrate high level of intertwining of these notions\textsuperscript{14}. She critiques an idea popular in urban studies to picture these areas on contrast with “normal” urban environment. We do not need to look for a “solution” to informality but should implement other tactics and strategies. It seems that people’s bond with their environment can be in a core of these strategies.

\textbf{6.3. Place attachment for development of the urban dachas}

For the Rotterdam architectural biennale 2014 Lithuanian architectural company PUPA made a project “Collective Gardens Revival” where introduced “new approach and development vision for allotment garden communities”\textsuperscript{15} in Vilnius, an area similar to Kaliningrad urban dachas. They researched unplanned and chaotic transformation process and proposed gardens’ conversion into “living neighbourhoods where urban dense environment blends with gardening qualities.”\textsuperscript{16} The vision of Lithuanian architects is very powerful with strong ideas and images but somehow ignores people’s experiences and ideas which already transformed these areas. I believe that the different aspects of place attachment discussed in the previous chapter should be taken into consideration planning any future for the urban dachas.

The urban dachas of Kaliningrad can be seen as problematic areas characterised by haphazard development, inadequate level of infrastructure and low quality of self-build houses. However the findings gathered in the previous chapter demonstrate not only hardship of life in the urban dachas, but also people’s energy and aspirations for better living and well-being of their families. They care about future of the place where they live or garden and hope for improving of infrastructure and services:

\begin{itemize}
  \item I have a dream: if I am rich enough one of the first thing which I will do is buying gravel and repairing roads to stop all this mud and dirt. (Svetlana)
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{13} Gorodskoy sovet deputatov Kaliningrada, \textit{General’nyy plan}, tom II, kniga 1, 35.
\textsuperscript{14} Lombard, “Constructing Ordinary Places”.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
Constant changes through people’s everyday practices such as construction and gardening aim to make better places around them. As Lombard points out “home as place may mean something continually improving, with the ongoing possibility of change”\(^{17}\). But what is the limit for such improvements?

As findings from the Kaliningrad urban dachas demonstrate people see them as “healthier” places comparing to the city and appreciate an opportunity of direct contact with nature. But how does this nature look like? And how does transformation process influence it? The General plan of Kaliningrad see “dacha landscape” as an ecological buffer zone between highly urbanised territories\(^{18}\) but at the same time proposes transformation of them into residential areas without any mechanism to compensate their ecosystem services\(^{19}\). The healthy image of the urban dachas is questioned by reality of septic as sewage system and coal heating. This contradiction is essential for understanding meanings of the urban dachas as places.

Many current problems and hardships associated now with the urban dachas appeared because of new functions of the area, especially housing. But what about gardening? As the interviews showed this activity is still important for many respondents. However gardening as activity has a lot of ecological and social benefits for the city. So how can transformation of these areas which looks to be impossible to stop save place for gardening?

Despite people’s attitude to improvement of the areas many of these problems are bigger than their individual and group efforts can solve, especially in case when the dacha owners represent such a motley group of people. So far future vision of these areas raises more questions than gives answers. This dissertation does not aim to propose a programme for improving of the Kaliningrad urban dachas but traces general directions of thinking which incorporates the aspects of place attachment in these areas. I believe that people’s direct participation in more general decision making process can help to find better solutions for these areas. The different aspects of place attachment should be not only preconditions for these solutions but also an integral part of all changes.

Advocating people’s autonomy in building environments Turner calls for direct participation of citizens into provision of housing according to their real needs and priorities\(^{20}\). In this picture the central agencies should establish the limits of such participation instead of providing the lines for design. His ideas were developed through observations of complexity of informal settlements in Latin America but are they relevant to Kaliningrad urban dachas as well?

This study on place attachment in the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad captures human agency. The analysis of the data see an urban dacha as a people’s project and a result of their strategies. In comparison with the city for them the dacha means independence, private property and much richer possibilities for achievements and realizations. To my mind the future of these areas have to incorporate these aspects and give more agency to people who use the urban dachas not only in

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\(^{17}\) Lombard, "Constructing Ordinary Places".

\(^{18}\) Gorodskoy sovet deputatov Kaliningrada, General’nyy plan, tom I, kniga 1, 158

\(^{19}\) Gorodskoy sovet deputatov Kaliningrada, General’nyy plan, tom II, kniga 1, 35.

\(^{20}\) Turner, Housing by people.
construction of their houses but in more general terms. At the same time it has to set
more concrete limits which shape possible space for positive transformations and
provide both infrastructural and institutional resources to relax burden of everyday
life in these areas.

Regulations which now are seen mostly as obstacles can be pro-active instruments for
change. One of these instruments is a new more adaptive land policy reflecting reality
of the urban dachas. Benjamin Davy calls for polirationality in land policy and notes
that “land uses are what land users do”\textsuperscript{21}. Another direction of thinking can be
borrowed from the work “A Pattern Language” which is often included in discussion
on place attachment\textsuperscript{22}. According to the authors of the book “people should design for
themselves their own houses, streets, and communities. Most of the wonderful places
of the world were not made by architects but by the people”\textsuperscript{23}. As the photographs of
vernacular architecture in the urban dachas demonstrate it is difficult to see many of
these buildings as “wonderful” ones. At the same time they mean a lot for their
owners and with professional help can find new future.

Some aspects revealed in this study of place attachment are dangerous for optimistic
futures of the urban dachas. As many people value very personal character of their
dachas one can expect that the future the urban dachas develop into gated
communities. In turn it can contribute to more segregated city than it is now.
Furthermore many of the respondents showed the lack of interest in community life.
While time spent in the urban dachas can help to develop neighbourhood ties and
social dimension of attachment to place, it requires for more evidences to conclude
that time is enough for it. Perhaps lack of appropriate institutions and public space
make it difficult even in course of time. For many respondents their dachas became a
home due to financial reasons. What will happen if the infrastructural situation
improve? Will prices dramatically increase? Perhaps these challenges should be
addressed in a more comprehensive strategy that this thesis can propose.

6.4. Urban dachas in the global context

The research on post-socialist cities often involves application of theories and
concepts already developed in Western Europe and North America\textsuperscript{24}. In this case
extamples from Eastern Europe fit or do not fit these theories missing at the same
many contextual and local notions. This thesis does not aim to create such a new
theory but demonstrates that rich lived experiences of people cannot be limited to the
stand-alone concepts of urban informality or suburbanisation.

Although through this thesis I contextualised Kaliningrad allotment gardens through
the local historical and legal context, not it is time to broaden the horizon and to see
them as a part of the bigger picture. The transformation of the role of allotment
gardens in urban fabric is far from being Kaliningrad or Russian special case. Jana
Spilková and Jiří Váagner demonstrate the evidences from Prague where local

\textsuperscript{21} Benjamin Davy, \textit{Land Policy: Planning and the Spatial Consequences of Property} (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012),

\textsuperscript{22} For an example see Lewicka, “Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?”.

\textsuperscript{23} Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, \textit{A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings,

\textsuperscript{24} Hirt, Ferenčuhová and Tuvikene, “Conceptual Forum: The ‘Post-Socialist’ City”, 508.
Allotment gardens can be seen as places “somewhere in between”: connected to many aspects of urban life and not to one in particular. For planners this ambiguity poses an obstacle. At the same time it gives an opportunity for change: if something is not completely shaped it gives a space for better adjustment to current environmental, migration and economic challenges. The Kaliningrad allotment gardens demonstrate very high level of such adjustment. This idea is close to Richard Sennett’s notion of a city as an open system, never completed. He argues that such openness can be planned. This thesis demonstrates that openness of Kaliningrad urban dachas calls for the planning strategy which understands the different aspects of people’s ties with these places.

At the Venice architectural biennale 2014 the dacha was one of Russian architectural ideas which were ironically exhibited with a slogan “Russia’s past, our present.” Perhaps right now Kaliningrad urban dachas cannot be a showcase of the best practices. Nevertheless I believe that people’s immediate experiences, meanings and emotions construct dachas as places with great potential for bright future.

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25 Spilková and Vágner, “The Loss of Land Devoted to Allotment Gardening”.
28 Spilková and Vágner, “The Loss of Land Devoted to Allotment Gardening”, 234.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

Taking the concept of place as a point of departure this thesis explores people’s bonds with the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad. The transformation path of these areas informally moving from gardens to suburban houses contests their current role in the urban fabric. It also affects everyday life and attitudes of people who use the urban dachas. Applying the phenomenological approach this thesis attempts to explore the different aspects of place attachment in the urban allotment gardens of Kaliningrad and to discuss their meanings for the development of the city.

Rishbeth points out that people’s stories are at the heart of any attachment: “each story is an intersection of site, time and human experience” ¹. During this research I gathered such stories to get deeper understanding of people’s bond with places. The empirical data from several urban dacha areas in Kaliningrad helped to capture both common and contradictory aspects of place attachment. In general the respondents appreciate independence and private life which their dachas give them. For many of the interviewees the dacha is an important part of a family project important for actualisation of family life and personal realization.

At the same time the diversity of the ways how and how long people use their allotment gardens shapes quite varied picture of place attachment in these areas. Thus people who spent more time at their dachas are more likely to engage in local community life, know more neighbours and feel more secure. Their stories demonstrate that place attachment develops through personal lived experiences and memories which have a relation to these places.

People’s bonds with places provide fundamental knowledge for future management and development. We tend to overestimate effort and effects of official planning activities but do not always think about practices of people themselves which cannot be revealed in analysis of official documents and institutions. I believe that the different aspects of place attachment revealed in this study should be incorporated into new vision of the area not only as prerequisites but as an integral part of all stages of planning and development process. These aspects elucidate fantastic human agency which is already shapes Kaliningrad urban dachas but calls for elaborated limits and resources.

The urban dachas are not very typical object of study in place attachment research which often studies people’s ties to nicer places, such as summer houses, or after change and displacement when bonds between people and places are more salient. At the same time the findings demonstrated in this thesis show that place attachment as the theoretical and methodological lens can provide powerful insights into bonds between people and such elusive places as urban dachas. In general they indicate that this concept actively used by environmental psychologists is a useful tool for urban studies as well.

¹ Rishbeth, “Articulating Transnational Attachments through On-Site Narratives”, 100.
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44. Kaliningradstat. *Kaliningradskaia oblast' v tsifrakh 2016* [The Kaliningrad region in figures 2016]. Kaliningrad, 2016. http://kaliningrad.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/kaliningrad/resources/5abf46004895d0309aadaf7ea5adf2/2016(%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%BD% D1%82%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9).pdf. [In Russian]


Appendix 1: Call for respondents

I used four means of findings participants for interviewees:

1. my personal network of contacts,
2. a post on a social media page of the local news website klops.ru (Figure 14),
3. a publication in the regional newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda” (Figure 15),
4. posters in the urban dacha areas (Figure 16).

Only two first approaches were effective. The local news website klops.ru has the most popular page among the Kaliningrad segment of the social network Vk.com and has 200 000 subscribers. The editorial office kindly posted my call for respondents in their feed. After this post I got private messengers from people who wanted to share their stories. Also I contacted directly people who started commenting under the post: in total they left 58 comments. This appendix includes English translation of the post on a social media page (the original post available on https://vk.com/wall-23419392_2170316). Similar information was used for other means of communication.

#klops_help

There are more than 30 000 dacha plots in Kaliningrad. During the last 20 years life in gardening cooperatives changed considerably: some plots are abandoned, others are used for housing and some people still grow vegetables and fruits on weekends. “Dacha Amnesty” provided new opportunities to dacha owners. But what do we know about life in the Kaliningrad gardening cooperatives? Does it look like an idyllic picture with own house close to nature and a beautiful garden? The new life of urban dachas is studied by Pavel Grabalov, master’s student in Urban Studies at Malmö University in Sweden. For his research he is looking for people who want to share their experience. Do you live in a gardening cooperative? Grow there flowers and green vegetables? Just come for a barbecue party? Each story is important. Tell about your experience in comments or contact Pavel (pavel.grabalov@gmail.com, +7 931 604 5145). It is especially interesting to hear from owners of dachas at the end of Katina street (the gardening cooperatives “Vesna”, “Zarnica” and “Raduga”).

For purposeful selection I aimed to recruit respondents regarding several major criteria: users of the dachas within the city limits; both gardeners and residents of these areas; representatives of different age, gender and social groups. In general the selection group consisted of seven households meets these criteria except gender balance: only two of the respondents were men. For the information about the respondents see Appendix 3.
Figure 15. Call for respondents (bottom left corner of the page) in the local newspaper "Komsomol’skaya Pravda v Kaliningrade". May 02, 2017.

Figure 16. Information board (left) with the poster with the call for respondents (right).
Appendix 2: Interview guide

This set of questions aims just to navigate the flow of a conversation and does not demand answers to all of them. The idea was to give more agency to the respondents in choice of topics but at same time to have this set as a backup.

The first question: When did you move to a dacha area or start gardening there?

Motifs for moving to a dacha area

– What was the best/worst place where you lived?
– Where did you live of have a garden before? Where were you grown up?
– Why did you decide to move / to start gardening?
– How did you get the dacha: bought, inherited, etc.?
– Who was the previous owner?
– Did you know anyone who live in urban dachas before?

Gardening

– Did you parents have garden? Did you garden as a child?
– Do you like gardening?
– Do you grow food and vegetable on your spot? What kind of? What is your favourite part?
– Do you cook a lot?

Construction

– Was there house before?
– How long did it take for you to build your house?
– Did you hire someone for construction? Can you estimate the cost/compare with an apartment?
– What kind of infrastructure was there before? What is now? How does it work?
– What challenges did you have?

House and plot

– What are sizes of your plot and house?
– How many rooms do you have? What are their functions?
– Are you happy with both aesthetical and physical characteristics of the house?
– Do you or other member of your family do a lot of manual work for house? Do you like it?
– What kind of fence and security measures do you have?

Legal issues and administration

– Are your rights for both house and land formalised?
– Was it difficult?
– Do you have an official registration here?
– Are you involved into administration of a cooperative? How does it work?
Neighbourhood

– How many of your neighbours do you know? What kind of relationship do you have?
– What are events when you can meet your neighbours?
– Can you estimate what other people do in the dacha area: dwell, live during summer, rent, garden, etc.?
– What kind of conflict are there? Do you solve problems together?

Connection to the city and services

– Where are your places of work, study, shopping, leisure, etc.? Can you mark them on the map?
– How do you usually commute to places of work, study, shopping, leisure, etc.?
– How can you describe to your friends a way to find your dacha when they visit you? How do they usually travel?

Safety and security

– How do you feel there?
– Do you have street lamps?
– Are there any stray dogs?
– Do children play on streets alone?
– Do you know or have experience of burglary?

Lifestyle and contact to nature

– Do you like inviting friends to your dacha? What do you usually do?
– Do you think your friends like to be here?
– Do you feel nature at your dacha? Have you met some animals?

Senses and feelings

– What smells and sounds do you associate with your dacha?
– Do you miss you dacha when you are away?
– Is your plot or street better or worse than others?

Future

– Are you happy with you housing situation / location of your garden?
– Do you want to move somewhere? If yes, then where?
– Are you considering of improvement of your house or plot? In what way?
– Will you advice you friends to buy a plot in your cooperative?

Background (age, family, household, education, job) if not being revealed in the main part of the interview or observations

– How old are you?
– Do you have children?
– Where have been born?
– What do you do now? What is job of other members of your household?
Appendix 3: Information about the respondents

The data in research in based on seven interviews conducted in Kaliningrad in April 2017. The first – pilot – interview included three persons who use their dacha together. This interview was also included into the gathered materials and then analysed as initial approach was not dramatically changed after this interview. The location of the dacha plots of the respondents are shown in the Figure 17.

Native language of all respondents is Russian. Among them four moved to the city from other regions and five were born in Kaliningrad or spent most of their lives there. The basic information about the respondents is included into Table 1. Real names of the interviewees were changed into pseudonyms reflecting their gender.
Table 1. Information about the interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Use of a dacha</th>
<th>Duration of use of a dacha (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrey</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>housing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evgeniya</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>gardening</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irina</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>gardening</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>housing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalya</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>gardening/housing</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olga</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>housing</td>
<td>7(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svetlana</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>housing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatyana</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>gardening</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>housing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this study I also used the material from three specialist interviews, two of which were conducted for the paper on urban dachas in Kaliningrad for the course “The Urban Question” in 2015:

- Zinaida Gushchina (head of the department of land tenure in the Kaliningrad city administration), Dec. 30, 2015;
- Vadim Safronov (chairman of Union of gardeners of Kaliningrad region), Jan. 4, 2016;
- Aleksey Preobrazhenskiy (deputy head of the urban planning regulations department), Dec. 20, 2016.

\(^1\) This number indicates amount of years which Olga has been living in her current house. However she has an experience of living in different urban dachas areas since 2005.
Appendix 4: The dacha as a postcard

This study on the Kaliningrad urban dachas has also an artistic detour. Photographer Artem Kilkin contributed to the research and took photographs of the gardening cooperatives on Katina street. In his works he captures everyday life of place in the Kaliningrad region, especially in relations to history and people’s lived experiences. For my research his artistic approach added a new angle to the urban dachas and illuminated such aspects as vernacular architecture and temporality of construction work. The area where these photographs were taken in December 2017 is described in the section 4.4. See Appendix 5 for some works from this series.

This series was published on the website urbandachas.wixsite.com/katina and in the form of postcards. Then I sent around 50 different postcards to friends around the globe, therefore spreading the word of the Kaliningrad urban dachas and my research project. The postcards also attempt to catch places which are usually considered to be out of beauty and art. Some of the delivered postcards are showed on this page.

Figure 18. Example of the dacha postcards.
Appendix 5. Photographs of the urban dachas on Katina street (Artem Kilkin)

These photographs of the urban dachas on Katina street in Kaliningrad were taken by the local photographer Artem Kilkin in December 2017. For details about the photo series see Appendix 4.
