

‘It is somewhere where blokes can be blokes’
Making Places at the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club

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April 2011

Acknowledgement

With this master thesis, I have completed the Research Master Regional Studies; Spaces & Places, Analysis & Interventions at the University of Groningen, Faculty of Spatial Sciences. In the last two and a half years, I have got the freedom and opportunities to explore my own scientific interests in the broad field of cultural geography. With great pleasure, and occasional frustrations, I have combined the geographical concept of place attachment to the fields of sports in this master thesis.

Although, it might look that the result, this master thesis, is an individual achievement, I could not have done it without 'my team', 'and', according to one of my participants, 'obviously individuals make up a team'. Therefore, I want to thank the people who helped and supported me throughout the whole process. First, I would like to thank my two supervisors: Dr. Bettina van Hoven, who has read the chapters and critically commented on them a dozen of times, and Dr. Robin Kearns, who has been a great support in practical issues during my time in New Zealand and provided useful commentary on the research design. Second, I want to thank Robert, Simon, Murray, Steve and Aidan for their time, enthusiasm and co-operation in the data collection. Without their help I would not have been able to write this thesis. Special thanks to Robert for introducing me to other members of the rugby club. Also, thanks to the guys of the AURFC Barbarians, squad 2010. Being part of the team made my time in Auckland so much more fun; keep up the good work guys!

Without cash, it would not have been possible to conduct this research overseas. Therefore, thanks to the funding of Marco Polo, Groningen Universiteits Fonds (GUF) and the faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen. Further, without her knowing, I would like to thank Ellen van Hosstein, whose master thesis has been an inspiration to me.

And at last, but definitely not least, I want to thank my family and friends who made it possible for me to focus on this and supported me when I was on the other side of the world. Especially, I need thank some of my good friends who helped me, supported me, and cheered me up when I thought this thesis would never be completed; Anne-Mieke, Ferry, Quinten, Rolf and Stijn, thanks.

In remembrance of my grandfather, who passed away during the writing process of this thesis.
Rest is peace.

Gijs van Campenhout
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April, 2011

Abstract

While the concept of place attachment has been researched quite broadly, its focus has predominantly been on people's attachment to residential areas. This focus needs to be broadened to places outside the residence, as this could provide diverse perspectives that strengthen our understanding of the people-place relationships. Studies on place attachment also tend to overexpose positive experiences in a place, thereby neglecting ambivalent or even negative place experiences. Further, the influences of time in the process of attachment has been, more or less, taken for granted. Therefore, this thesis brings these influences more explicitly to light.

In this thesis, the concept of place attachment is used to study places of sport, because sport has outgrown its status of a spare time activity in recent decades. The importance of sport and the amount of time people spend in places related to sport has increased. However, how people become emotionally attached to the places of sport and what kind of emotions and feelings colour in-place experiences have remained underexplored.

The study has been conducted in Auckland (New Zealand), focussing on the country's number one sport: rugby. The activities, experiences and emotional attachment of five members of the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club (AURFC) have been observed and studied in a case study approach. This has been done using a mix of qualitative research methods; participant observation, mental mapping, go-along interviews and photography.

The results indicate that emotional attachment to places of sport mainly depends on the intensity of the experiences-in place, making the activities in a place unique and, therefore, memorable. Further, the findings show that the intensity of experiences are time-dependent.

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1. Introduction

Sport has been regarded as a spare-time activity and, therefore, considered as a subordinate 'popular' culture. Sport has been perceived as a form of amusement that acted as a distraction from the more meaningful aspects of life, such as work, economy, family, education, politics and religion (Seward, 1998; Collins, 2007). This vision changed and sport has become a major social and cultural force in society. Nowadays, sport are all-pervasive, and even a 'way of life' for many people; influencing the physical environment (Bale, 1993, 2003), proving to be healthy (Andrews, et. al., 2005; Tonts & Atherley, 2005, 2010), contributing to place pride (Bale, 2003, Tonts & Atherley, 2010), place identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996), and place attachment (Bale, 1996, 2003; Andrews, et. al., 2005; Charleston, 2009).

While the amount of academic works on sport are growing, the field remains, according to John Bale (2003), relatively neglected in geography. In his book 'Sports geography' (2003), Bale suggests what a 'geography of sport' might look like; focussing on variations in geographical treatments of sport over time and the influences of sport on the environment. Although Bale's book provides an insight in the ways in which geographical concepts can be applied to sport, it neglects a full exploration of humanistic geographical concepts in the sporting context, such as 'topophilia', place pride and place attachment. This is surprising, because Bale (1996) himself wrote an article about the usefulness of geographical concepts by Yi-Fu Tuan in exploring some humanistic approaches in the sporting context. According to Bale (1996), Tuan's concept of 'topophilia' or love of place, which refers to an affective bond between people and place, could be used, for example, to encapsulate the intense affection British football fans have to the home-stadium of their football club. However, Bale (1996) neglected to explore these humanistic concepts more in depth in the context of sport.

This thesis focuses on people's emotional attachment to places of sport in New Zealand. Places of sport can be regarded as coded spaces, which include/exclude people and play a role in the identity formation of the self, cultural groups and places. New Zealanders, in general, consider themselves as a sporting nation. Therefore, the national identity of the country is, at least partly, derived from sport (Philips, 1987; Nauright, 1999; Collins, 2007). One single sport in particular has influenced the culture and identity of New Zealanders, especially men: rugby¹ (Philips, 1987; Owen & Weatherston, 2002). This ball handling game was imported to New Zealand by British settlers, and it was adopted as the national game because of its tough characteristics. Pioneer values, such as hard (team) work, and the conquest of pain and fear, were required in rugby to succeed (Philips, 1987; Latimer, 1998). Therefore, the sport was considered to be a 'character-building' activity for men, and was regarded as the purest expression of the 'all male preserve' culture in New Zealand (Philips, 1987), emerging the identity of New Zealand 'blokes' (Philips, 1987; Law, 1997). Even now, rugby is a male dominated game, enabling many New Zealand' men to identify with the game of rugby, its culture and places related to the sport. 'Places of rugby' are, therefore, then 'coded' as sport places as well as masculine places.

In order to study the effects of this national identity, this research zooms in on the local scale. The aim of this research is to illustrate how members of a local rugby club in New Zealand can become emotionally attached to places of their sporting club. Special attention is paid to the

¹ The term rugby can refer to two types of the game: Rugby Union and Rugby League. Rugby League has become the sport of the working class, whereas Rugby Union became the game of the middle and upper classes. Further, Rugby League is played with 13 players and has fast game restarts, while Rugby Union is played with 15 players with slow game restarts. The thesis is focused on a rugby club that plays Rugby Union; therefore, any further use of the term rugby refers to Rugby Union (Collins, 1998; Owen & Weatherston, 2002).

intensity of experiences-in place and the range of emotions that colour these experiences. Further, the role of time in the process of attachment is brought to light.

The central question I aim to answer is:

How do members of a local rugby club become emotionally attached to places of their rugby club?

To provide an answer to this question, the following sub-questions need to be answered:

1. How are places of sport created in terms of physical objects and performances?
2. How do people become emotionally attached to a place of sport?
3. What kinds of emotions are experienced in a place of sport?

The concept of place attachment has been, scientifically, researched quite broad. However, its focus has predominantly been on people's attachment to residential places. This focus needs to be broadened to places outside the residence, as they could provide diversified perspectives which can strengthen our understandings of the people-place relationship. Also, studies on place attachment have tended to overexpose positive experiences in place, neglecting ambivalent or even negative experiences. Further, in the process of attachment the influences of time have been, more or less, taken for granted. Therefore, the ways in which time influences place experiences need to be brought to light more explicitly. From a social perspective, knowledge about people's emotionally attachment to places of sport can be relevant, as it can illustrate how sport influences modern society; shaping everyday places and the identities of people.

In order to explore people's emotional attachment to places of sport, a case study was conducted towards a local rugby club in Auckland: the Auckland University Rugby Football Club. Five members of this rugby club have been subjected to a mix of qualitative research methods; participant observation, mental mapping, go-along interviews and photography. The data gained is transcribed and qualitative analysed with the data software MAXQDA.

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 discusses the concept of place attachment and its use relation to places of sport. Chapter 3 unveils the case of the study and justifies the research methods used in this study. Chapter 4 represents the findings of the data, while in chapter 5 the conclusions drawn from the findings are represented. Chapter 5 ends with a discussion on this study and some recommendations for future research to place attachment outside the residence.

2. Place attachment

The emotional relationship between a person and a specific place, place attachment, has been studied in a variety of disciplines and seems to be ever-growing. However, the spatial ranges of these studies have been primarily focused on residential settings, such as home and local neighbourhoods (e.g. Guiliani, 1991; Shamai, 1991; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). Recent literature indicates a broadening of the spatial range (e.g. Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Manzo, 2003, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). For example, Lynne Manzo (2003) mentions an increase of interest in people's attachment to natural places or wilderness (see Manzo, 2003), and to public spaces, such as plazas, cafes and pubs (Low, 1992; see Manzo, 2003). According to Manzo (2003: 57), 'places outside of the residence are significant, can alter our self-concept and even be a source of spiritual inspiration'. Research on places outside the residence could provide diverse perspectives on the people-place relationship, expanding our understandings of the concept of place attachment, for example research on places of sport (Manzo, 2003, 2005). This is particularly relevant in the light of the growing relevance of (places of) sport in people's lives.

According to Carmen Hidalgo and Bernardo Hernández (2001: 274), place attachment is 'a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place'². This notion requires a critical engagement. Just like most other definitions of place attachment, Hidalgo and Hernández' (2001) definition expects the emotional bond between an individual and a place to be exclusively based on positive emotions, feelings and experiences, leaving ambivalent or even negative emotions, feelings and experiences underexplored (Manzo, 2003, 2005). Home, for example, is generally used as a metaphor for a place where an individual is 'rooted', 'belongs', 'feels safe', or 'feels comfortable' (Manzo, 2003), and research on residential places tend to express people's emotional attachment in positive terms. However, home may not always, and to everybody, be experienced as a positive place. Home can also be a painful place, full of danger, violence and stress. For example, for some women home might not be experienced as a haven, but as a place of violence, as Ahrentzen (1992, in Manzo, 2003) shows. Meaningless or neutral places, like a curb, can also become meaningful to individuals due to negative experiences (Manzo, 2003, 2005). People can, for example, become attached to a specific place on the side of a road when they have experienced an unexpectedly loss of a person due to an accident. Such a place then becomes a place of mourning and expression of grief (Hartig & Dunn, 1998; Clark & Franzmann, 2006). In order to get a better understanding of the complex relationship between people and places, more knowledge is required about the range of emotions, including ambivalent or negative emotions, people can experience in a specific place (Manzo, 2003).

In most works on place attachment, the time-aspects are only implicit, for example as part of a place's history or personal memories. I argue that the role of time in the process of place attachment needs to be brought to light more, because it influences the establishment of an emotional relationship. Tuan (1975) argued that an emotional relationship is built upon time spent in a place, as it takes time to experience a place. To become attached to a place, one should know about the history of a place that can be based on stories or earlier experiences in a place. Further, the passage of time itself does not guarantee a place attachment. People have to be active in a place in order to create an emotional bond between themselves and a specific place (Tuan, 1975).

² Hidalgo & Hernández (2001) considered the concept 'affection' to be too ambiguous, and instead termed it 'a positive affective bond'. Further, they followed Ainsworth & Bell (1970, in Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001) and Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980, in Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001) by adding people's behaviour and 'the desire to maintain closeness to the object of study' (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001:274) to their definition of place attachment.

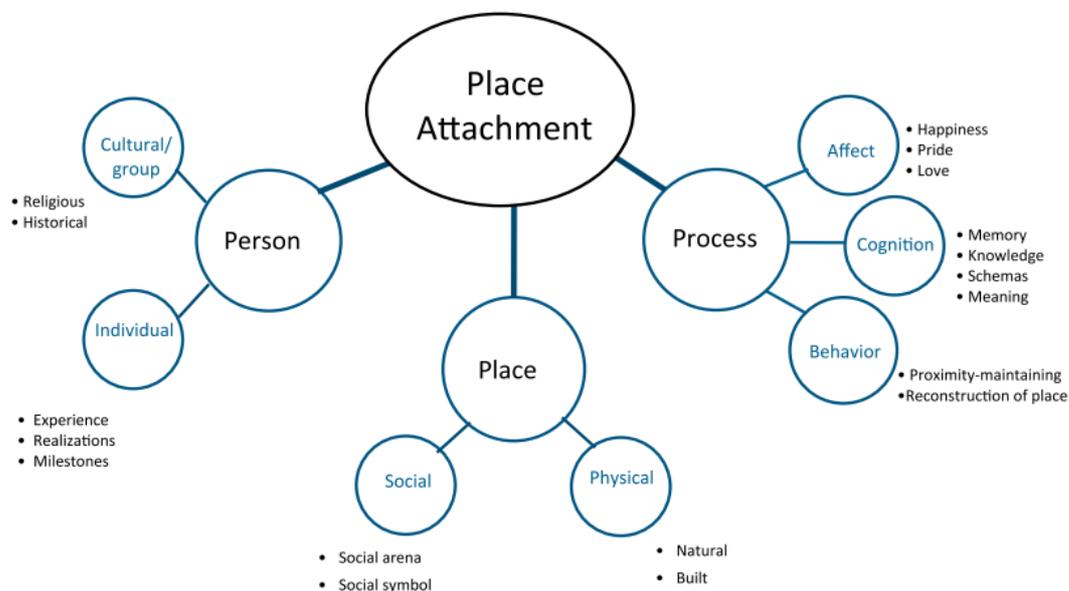
2.1 Attachment to places of sport

A plenitude of place attachment' definitions have accumulated, which make it difficult for researchers to identify whether they deal with the same concept under a different name or with a different concept. This has caused confusion and led authors to use multiple synonyms of the concept without distinguishing them (see Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). This fuzziness triggered psychologists Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford (2010) to review the various concepts and definitions of place attachment, and synthesize them into a triple P-framework (figure 2.1). The Person-Process-Place framework shapes the context for ideas and thoughts about places of sport.

The person dimension of the framework distinguishes individual and collective meanings of attachment to a specific place. The process dimension refers the psychological process that creates an attachment to a place, subdivided into affective, cognitive and behavioural elements. And the place dimension emphasizes the characteristics of a place, including spatial level, social and physical aspects. The elements and dimensions are partly overlapping, because they are intertwined and interaction between the dimension makes people become attached to a place. However, missing in the framework is a time dimension. Although, aspects of time are present in elements of the framework, for example in memory, realizations and history, the influences of time on people's attachment to places are larger. Therefore, I will add a time dimension to the framework.

In the following, I will explore each of the dimensions in greater detail in relation to the implications for places of sport.

Figure 2.1: Triple P-framework of Place Attachment



Source: Scannell & Gifford, 2010

2.2 Place dimension

The place dimension focuses on the location and the physical objects to which people can become attached. Perhaps, this is, according to Scannell and Gifford (2010), the most important dimension of place attachment, because it focuses on the actual objects that make up a place. People's attachment to places have been studied at various geographic scales (e.g. a room in a house, a home, a city, or the world; Low & Altman, 1992; Cuba & Hummon, 1993), and is often subdivided into two levels of attachment: physical and social (e.g. Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). On the physical level, place attachment is based on material settings and items, like streets, buildings, signs or furniture. The physical items of a place determine, to a certain degree, the possible symbolic meanings a place can adopt and, thereby, how people can experience them. For example, mainly a residential place is not a work place or a place to sport; the physical objects code the place otherwise. Cultural geographer Jon Anderson (2010) refers to the physical aspects of a place as 'material traces'. To him, the appearance of a place is determined by the presence of material traces.

The social dimension of place 'involves', according to Scannell & Gifford (2010: 4), 'attachment to the others with whom individuals interact in their place, and part of it involves attachment to the social group that the place represents.' Although, the physical dimension of a place determines the possible meanings a place can adopt, Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) show that mainly the social dimension of place attachment determines the strength of an attachment. Such an attachment to a place is considered to be a 'socially based place bond' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010: 4). In addition, Stedman (2003, in Scannell & Gifford, 2010) indicates that people do not become directly attached to the material objects of a place, but rather to the symbolic meanings that those materials represent. Anderson (2010) refers to the symbolic meanings of a place as non-material traces. Non-material traces are not visible or sensible in a way, such as activities, events, performances, experiences, feelings and emotions.

The physical objects which provide a place with a meaning of sport differ in physical place objects from places with other meanings. It is, for example, hard not to consider the meaning of a sport stadium as a place of sport due to its physical characteristics. The same applies to a swimming pool, a tennis lawn or a gymnasium. Places can be labelled as a place of sport but not yet be meaningful because it is possible that a place is considered to be a place of sport by some people, while others give it a different meaning. For example, a field in a park can be used as a place to lie down. However when certain physical objects are introduced to the place, the meaning can be changed into a soccer pitch, whereby the identity of the place changes. Such small physical changes can influence the meaning of the place, the identity of the place and, thereby, people's experiences of a place. The interactions between individuals and place-based objects also influence people's self. For example, a person can be considered as a rugby player through his interactions with physical objects and people in a certain network.

2.3 Person dimension

In the person dimension, Scannell and Gifford (2010) distinguish individual place attachment from place attachment of groups. Individual place attachment involves personal connections between an individual and a specific place. People are, for example, more attached to places that evoke personal memories (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Clare Twigger-Ross and David Uzzell (1996) state that personal place memories can contribute to a stable sense of self, thereby shaping someone's identity. Likewise, Manzo (2005) brought to light that personally important experiences, like realizations, milestones (significant moments) or experiences of personal growth,

are more important to the meaning of, and attachment to, places than the physical elements of a place. According to her, 'it is not simply the places themselves that are significant, but rather what can be called 'experience-in-place' that creates meaning' (Manzo, 2005:74). The importance of (personal) experiences is also referred to by Tuan (1975). Tuan (1975) claims that place is the centre of meaning and that place attachment is constructed by active and passive experiences of individuals. Through individual experiences we can know places and become attached to them. Cathy van Ingen (2003) also suggested, in her article on the production of sport spaces, that sport places are produced from the body. Thereby, she suggests that active bodies produce sport spaces rather than the other way around. According to her, greater attention should be paid to the ways in which different bodies socially create sports places and to the social relations within such spaces in terms of exclusion and identity formation (Van Ingen, 2003).

At the group level, place attachment is primarily based on symbolic meanings of a place, which can be shared with other members of a certain (cultural) group (Low, 1992). Place attachment of groups can, for example, be regarded as a process in which groups become attached to places wherein they are active as a group, thereby preserving their culture. The culture of a group connects members to places, based on historical experiences, values and symbols (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Stories about, for example, historical events that happened at a specific place can circulate in a group, confirming the emotional bond between a place and cultural group. For example, John Bale (2003: 19) claims that 'stories of matches and cup wins are important parts in the construction of geographical memory'. Such stories can contribute to the identity of a place (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996), thereby reproducing the culture of a group in a specific place. In addition, Owain Jones (2005) recognises the importance of place bound memories by claiming that memories are not only personal but spatial as well. He explains this by using Casey's (1987) consideration about the spatial context of memories: 'only consider how often a memory, as a cognition, is either of a place itself (e.g. one's childhood home) or of an event or person in a place; and conversely, how unusual it is to remember a placeless person or an event not stationed in some specific locale' (Casey, 1987:183, in Jones, 2005: 213). Although symbolic place meanings can be shared amongst members of a (cultural) group, the experiences in place are personal and can differ between members. Therefore, the argument that individual experiences-in place form the basis of place attachment, imitating Scannell and Gifford (2010), is convincing.

Attachment to a place of sport at the individual level is likely to be based on personal experiences or the realization of a goal. Individual athletes can become attached to a place where they experienced a significant sporting moment, for example, breaking a personal record, scoring or preventing the opponent to win. Due to such an intense experience, a place can become unique to an individual and provides him/her with a sense of attachment to that place. Sporting experiences-in a place do not have to be positive. Losing an important match or getting injured can cause negative emotions. At the group level, attachment to sport places are more related to achievements of a team or a sport club. Group attachment to a place of sport does not always coincide with personal attachment to a place. For example, a group win may coincide with a person's poor performance during a match or be overshadowed by an injury of a player.

2.4 Process dimension

The process-dimension is focused on how individuals, and groups, become attached to a place and what kind of emotions colour the attachment. Because the process of becoming attached is complex, the process dimension has some overlap with both the place and person dimension, making them difficult to separate. The three psychological processes Scannell and Gifford (2010) distinguish in their framework are affection, cognition and behaviour. In this thesis, the term

emotion is used instead of affection, because affection has a positive connotation while place attachment can also be negative.

2.4.1 Emotions

The importance of emotions as part of the place attachment process is acknowledged in many studies (e.g. Tuan, 1974; Relph, 1976; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Manzo, 2003, 2005). The bonds between people and places have mainly been explored with regard to positive emotions, such as happiness, pride and love. This positive perspective on attachment has been challenged by various researchers, for example Relph (1976) and more recently Manzo (2003, 2005). Edward Relph (1985, in Manzo 2005), for example, coined the term 'topophobia' as a counterpart to Tuan's (1974) 'topophilia', indicating that people might have an aversion to specific places instead of 'loving' them. The importance of everyday emotions in people's attachment to places, such as love, pride, excitement, disappointment, nerves and fear, have recently been acknowledged by emotional geographers. They claim that place meanings and experiences are derived from emotions (Philo & Parr, 2003; Thrift, 2004; Bondi, 2005; Thien, 2005a, 2005b). Emotions are 'woven in the fabric of our everyday lives and yet they also serve to recompose and transcend these mundane aspects of our existences in intense experiences that mark unique moments' (Davidson & Smith, 2009: 440). Emotions are, therefore, a 'fundamental aspect of human experiences' (Thien, 2005b: 451). In addition to positive emotions, negative emotions and feelings, such as hate, disappointment, shame and fear, need to be studied in relation to place attachment, which can lead to a better understanding of the concept of place attachment.

Attachment to places of sport is based on emotional experiences-in place related to sport activities. A wide range of emotions can be experienced in a place of sport. The emotional experiences in places of sport can be more intense than the same emotions experienced in other places, due to differences in codes of conduct, or rules, between the places. In places of sport, emotions are often experienced and expressed 'at full', because it is accepted in a sport and does not directly influence peoples' everyday life (Howe, 2001; Thing, 2001). For example, Thing (2001) showed that women's aggressive behaviour in 'masculine' sports, like hockey, basketball and soccer, is tolerated because it is within the rules of the game. Another example of emotional expressions in a place of sport comes from Howe (2001), who demonstrates how professional rugby players deal with injuries and feelings of pain. His finding indicate that it is only tolerated to express feelings of pain, for example crying or cries of pain, if the pain, or the injury, is visible to other people. It could be that sanctioning otherwise are not tolerated, and emotional outbursts can evoke a sense of freedom.

2.4.2 Cognition

'Place attachment as cognition involves the construction of, and bonding to, place meaning' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010: 3). Elements of cognitive processes, such as memories, meanings and knowledge of a place, can make a specific place unique to a person. People's experiences in a place are organised into sets of cognition that include knowledge and memories about particular objects, events or the self (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Through memories, history, and knowledge a place obtains a meaning which people can be connect to the self and the place. This so-called place identity is described by Proshansky et al. (1983: 57) as 'the physical world socialisation of the self', or 'the self-definitions that are derived from places' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010: 3). Individuals can become attached to a place when memorable events of a place are incorporated into their self-definitions (Manzo, 2003, 2005, Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This process is named

'place-related distinctiveness' by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996). The history or memories of important sporting activities are often displayed in material objects, like photos or awards. Such physical objects can attach individuals, or a group, to a place when they connect the meaning of these objects to their identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). This means that people can know who they are based on the meanings of material objects and activities in a place; place identity.

2.4.3 Behaviour

The third aspect of the psychological process is behaviour, whereby place attachment is expressed through activities people perform in a place. Scannell and Gifford (2010) claim, just as Hidalgo and Hernández (2001), that proximity-maintaining to a place is an activity which relates place attachment to the 'length of residence and efforts to return' (2010: 4). Although people normally not reside in a place of sport, they often do return to sport places. In this thesis, behaviour refers to people's sporting and social activities, instead of people's returning behaviour to a place of sport. People's behaviour in a sport place simultaneously refers to their experiences-in such a place (Manzo, 2005). The behavioural expression of place attachment can be regarded as the reconstruction of a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), but can also be seen as a reproduction of the identity, and culture, of a place. The activities conducted by individuals depend on the rules and characteristics of the sport, which (re)construct the culture of the sporting club. What is allowed and appropriate in certain places is partly determined by the people who have the power in such places.

2.1.4 Time dimension

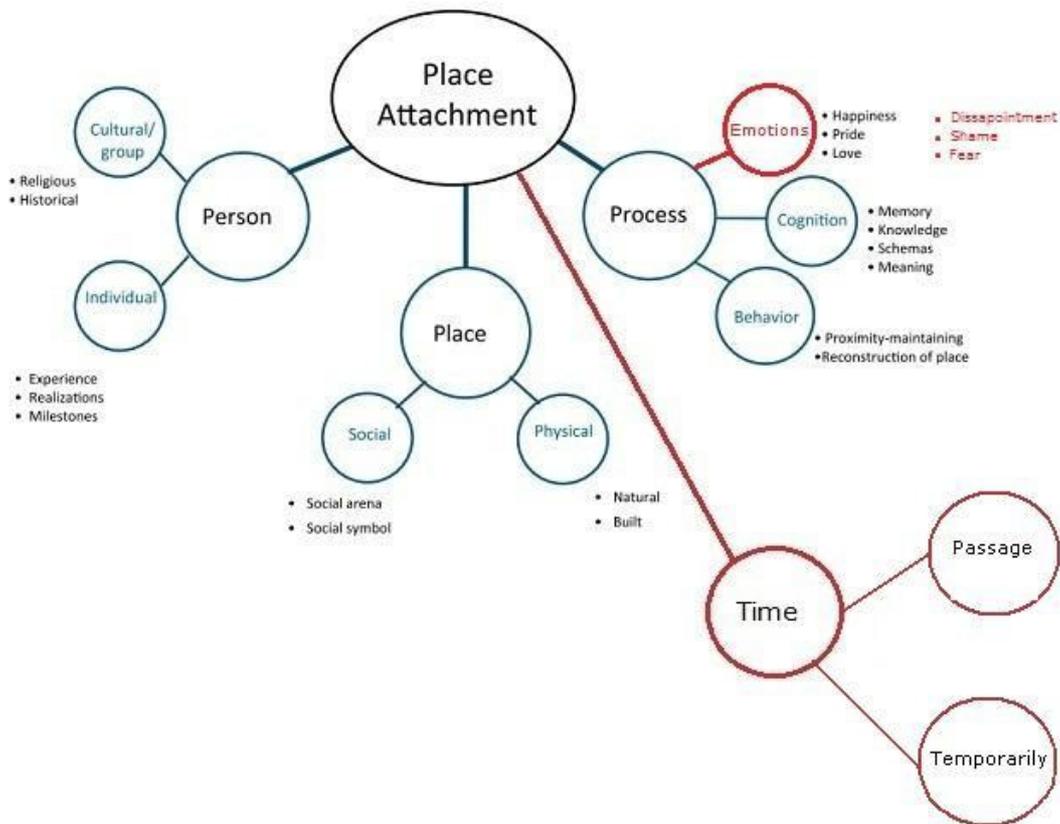
In most literature on place attachment, the role and diversity of time is neglected (see Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In this thesis, I argue that diverse aspects of time influence people's attachment to places, especially in the sporting context. As noted above. Tuan (1975) argued that places are known through human experiences and knowing a place takes time. However, Tuan (1975: 164) also argued, 'if experience takes time, the passage of time itself does not ensure experience'. Place attachment can only be gained when people have active experiences-in-place (Manzo, 2005). The uniqueness, or significance, of an experience-in-place is important to mark the moment. Because the amount of sport activities has increased, the time people can experience such activities in a place have increased as well (Bale, 1996). It is not only the sporting activity itself that takes time, also the preparations for sport activities take time and can be considered significant in the development of attachment to a place of sport as well as time spend on sport-related activities afterwards.

The experiences-in a place can change over time, as 'places may acquire new meanings' (Gustafson, 2001: 13). New meanings of a place can be acquired by physical changes of a place, or because people's past experiences-in place influence the current ones (Gustafson, 2001; Manzo, 2005). The 'temporality of attachment' has been referred to by Low and Altman (1992). The temporal dimension of place attachment can also be reflected in a time-space routine. People's behaviour is often based on routine activities, whereby people tend to visit specific places at set times. For example, people visit a coffee bar each day at twelve, or a gym every Tues- and Thursday of the week. In case of a sporting activity, athletes often visit specific places of sport in a predetermined sequence and at set times. For example, athletes will visit a changing room or a place likewise, before and after, exercising.

In the light of the diversity of emotional responses in attachment and the role of time, the triple P-framework of Scannell and Gifford (2010) needs to be revised for the purpose of this research. In the process dimension, the element of affection is replaced by emotions, and the dimension of time is added to the framework. The time dimension is split in two: the passage of time and temporarily of time; making it a PPPT-framework (figure 2.2).

In this thesis, place attachment is defined as ‘a temporary, emotional bond between individuals and specific places, based on active significant, personal experiences-in place’. With the use of this definition, the study focuses on the emotional attachment of members of the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club to places of the rugby club. This focus broadens the range of places studied in the literature on place attachment, explores the wide range of emotions that colour experiences-in place, and pays attention to the influences of time in the process of attachment.

Figure 2.2: The PPPT-framework of Place Attachment



Source: Scannell & Gifford, 2010 (adapted by Gijs)

3. Research approach

This chapter outlines how the research was conducted. First, it explains why a case study approach was used, before introducing the case. Second, the qualitative research methods are explained and justified. Also, the way in which the data was transcribed and analysed made clear. Third, the participant selection is unveiled and the participants are introduced. Fourth, the ethics of the research are addressed, and, fifth, the researcher's positionality in relation to rugby, the rugby club and club members is discussed.

The focus and planning of this study was determined in discussions with Dr. Robin Kearns and Jo Coleman, head of communication of the Blues³ and the Auckland Rugby Union. These conversations led to a focus on a local, small scale, rugby club playing 'recreational' rugby. This focus can be seen as a case study approach (Swanborn, 1996), and shows two important features. First, a local rugby club represents the sporting and social activities of the rugby culture in easily accessible locations (Andrews et. al., 2005). The places of the rugby club are freely accessible for club members, for example the clubhouse or the changing rooms. Second, at a small scale, people's emotional experiences-in place can be measured in full as people are easier to approach, and the culture of rugby and the rugby club can be experienced at large. This also provides more opportunities for both formal and informal interactions with club members. Experiences-in these places can influence both the identity of the place and the identity of the self. In this study, the case is the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club (AURFC); a local rugby club in New Zealand that plays 'club rugby'⁴.

3.1 The Auckland University Rugby Football Club

In this thesis, it is important to know some things about the history and culture of the AURFC. Knowledge about the history of a place is required to become attached to a place (Tuan, 1975; Vanclay, 2008). The history of the AURFC provides the places of the club with a (historical) meaning, which can be regarded as a place identity, also influencing the culture of the rugby club. The reputation of the AURFC as successful rugby club is primarily based on historical achievements. Former achievements by the rugby club are represented in various tangible and intangible forms in the places of the AURFC. The Auckland University Rugby and Football Club was founded, by students, in 1888. The rugby club struggled financially until, in 1906, the Council agreed on funding the club and the students adopted the 'heraldic blue and silver' (AURFC, 2010) as the new club colours. Throughout its history, the AURFC has won the Gallagher Shield (the senior championship of the Auckland Rugby Union) seventeen times (AURFC, 2010), making it the second most successful rugby club in the Auckland region. Further, the club has produced twenty All Black players (New Zealand internationals) and two All Black coaches, which has ensured a certain level of expectation of the rugby club by players, fans and members of other rugby clubs.

In the early 1980s, the club moved from the University's City campus to Colin Maiden Park, which is part of the University's Tamaki campus (figure 3.1). This shift led to a significant decline in the numbers of University students, because of the remote location of Colin Maiden Park; a 30 minutes train ride away from the former location. However, the AURFC respects its student roots and various initiatives, such as the University of Auckland Barbarians student team,

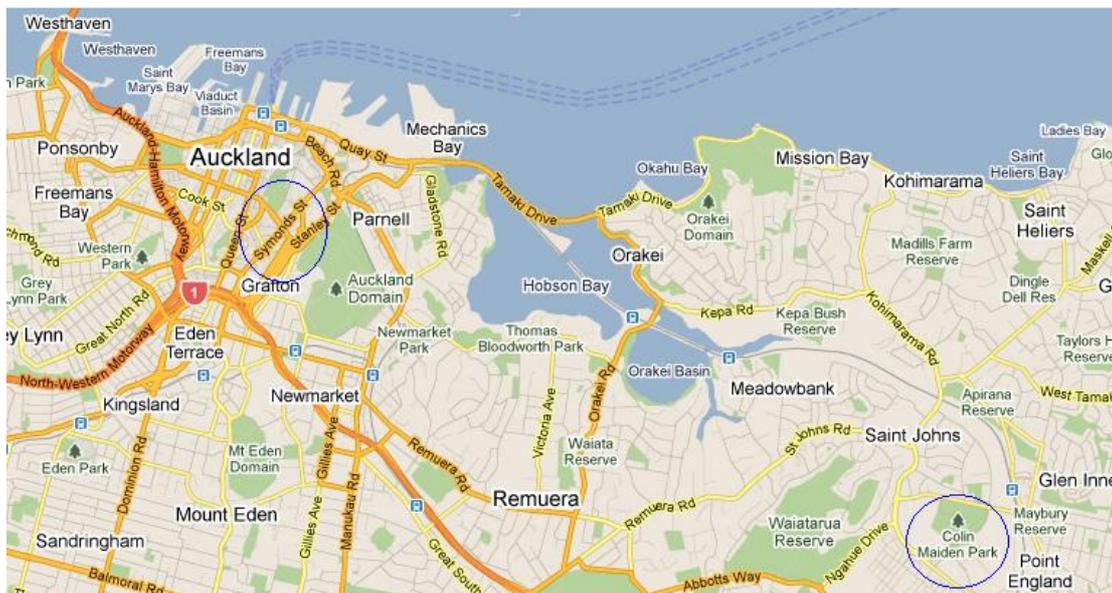
³ The Blues are a professional New Zealand rugby team based in Auckland which competes in the Super Rugby competition.

⁴ Club rugby refers to rugby played at a recreational level.

have been set up to get students back. The involvement and representation of students at the club is important in maintaining the club's students' culture and honouring its history. These initiatives, in combination with a change of the University of Auckland emphasis on their sporting program, are successful and the student numbers have doubled in the last couple of years. Nowadays, a mix of students and non-students make up the club membership. However, the AURFC considers itself to be the student rugby club and tries to provide a fitting student experience, and culture, for any level of player, whether local or international student.

As the home ground of the AURFC, Colin Maiden Park became the main study location. The park is structured around some University buildings and ten playing fields, of which three are rugby fields. The other fields are used for other sports, like soccer and cricket (figure 3.2). Further, the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club clubhouse and a complex of changing rooms complete the park. Clearly, not all physical objects in Colin Maiden Park are related to the rugby club as the presence of some of the University buildings has nothing to do with either rugby or the rugby club. In Colin Maiden Park, three places emerged from the data as the most significant places of the AURFC; the clubhouse of the rugby club, the rugby fields (particular field number 10) and the changing rooms (especially changing room number 5) (figure 3.2). The locations will be at the centre of the discussion of the findings in chapter 4.

Figure 3.1: Old and new location of the AURFC home ground



Source: Google Maps, 2011 (Adapted by Gijs)

Figure 3.2: Places of the AURFC in Colin Maiden Park



Source: Google Maps, 2011 (Adapted by Gijs)

3.2 Methods

The study draws on data collected in a fieldwork-based inquiry that explored the emotional attachment of AURFC' members to places of the rugby club. To investigate such attachments, a mix of creative and (inter)active research methods were used; participant observation, mental mapping, go-along interviews and photography. These qualitative methods can make the geographical context more explicit and facilitate an emphasis on experiences-in place (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Pink, 2007; Carpiano, 2008; Trelle & Van Hoven, 2010). The data was gathered in a period of three months, between April and June 2010; the midst of the rugby season (which runs from March to August).

3.2.1 Participant observation

'Participant observation involves', according to Jon Anderson (2004: 225), 'researchers "deliberately immersing" themselves in the worlds of cultural groups, to participate as well as observe the "everyday rhythms and routines" of these communities'. By 'going into the field', a researcher familiarises himself or herself with and learns about context-specific practices. Such experiences provide knowledge and insights in everyday, social activities of a cultural group in its natural setting (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2008).

However, according to Margarethe Kusenbach (2003: 461), participant observation ‘fail[s] to access the environmental perception and experience of (other) members’. Kusenbach (2003) claims that it is impossible for a researcher to exactly examine how people experience their activities in a place. A person is only capable of knowing, or reflecting on, how he or she experiences the individualised practices in a place, and what they mean. Therefore, ‘becoming and being a privileged insider does not provide automatic clues to other locals’ lived experiences’ (Kusenbach, 2003: 461). In agreement, a researcher can only reflect on his or her experiences in detail. In other words, participant observation is limited by ‘a researcher’s own interpretive framework, accounting primarily for what a researcher sees and hears’ (Carpiano, 2008: 266). Despite its limitations, becoming familiar with the community and the places of the AURFC was valuable for this research. Therefore, I became a member of the AURFC and joined the University of Auckland Barbarians, the students’ team of the rugby club. The membership enabled me to engage in rugby, the AURFC and its culture, thereby familiarising myself with the processes, procedures, rituals, routines, meanings and places of the rugby club (see box 3.1, for an example of my personal experiences).

Field notes were written down in a research diary as soon as I arrived back home after a training, a match or another form of data collection. These notes contain descriptions of and comments on rugby related activities that happened in ‘places of rugby’. I carefully documented training practices, details of rugby matches, place observations, discussions with club members and methodological issues. Also, social and team bonding activities which, mainly, happened at the clubhouse, for example the drinking games and the presence of a (topless) barmaid, are written down in detail. Of particular interest, regarding place attachment and the atmosphere in the clubhouse, are some quotes made by club members about these social activities. During the rugby related activities, I kept reflecting on my own experiences of the activities and the places where I performed, in as much detail as I could, especially paying attention to the emotions and feelings I experienced.

Generally, the notes are building up in a particular way, and I have tended to relate each note back to a previous note creating a sort of rugby story. The notes start with a reference to the date and the location of the activity. In a manner of speaking, each activity was written in a time-space context whereby the place of action was mentioned, for example Domain Park or Colin Maiden Park, and some material traces were described. This can be related to both the time and place dimension of the PPPT-framework (figure 2.2). After sketching the context, the notes continued describing the meaning and content of the activities. Thereby, they paid attention to the people who participated in the activities, their behaviour during the activities and the reaction of others on their behaviour. These descriptions are related to the person and the process dimension of the framework. Throughout the descriptions of other people’s behaviour, I reflected on my own behaviour, and the emotions and feelings that arose from it.

Box 3.1: Description of participant observations at the AURFC

As a participant observer (better described as an observing participant (Waqquant, 2004)), I trained the first three weeks once a week, on Wednesday. This was rescheduled to two training sessions a week, Tuesday and Thursday, from April 29. Full participation in the training enabled me to freely move around the places of rugby observing the game, my teammates and the place of activity in an unobtrusive manner. However, it turned out that the Barbarians did not train at Colin Maiden Park, like the other teams of the AURFC, but at Domain Park.

Therefore, my first visit to Colin Maiden Park was on the 10th of April when the Barbarians competed in the AURFC's pre-season tournament. At the park, I observed the objects in the park like the clubhouse, the changing room and the rugby fields, and the activities of members in these places to ensure that they were suitable for study. From that day on, I visited Colin Maiden Park at least once a week, mainly on Thursday or Saturday. These visits were scheduled to set times, which coincided with the presence of AURFC club members. On Thursday, after my own training, I went to Colin Maiden Park and observed the trainings of the Premiers and the Reserves⁵. Afterwards I would stick around at the clubhouse having informal conversations and discussions about rugby in general, rugby players and the AURFC. These conversations were predominantly held with AURFC trainers and coaches as most of the players left directly after training. At the end of the evening, I was offered a ride back home, generally from Robin or Mark. These car rides took some 20 minutes and provided me with an opportunity to ask some questions to the driver. Such informal interviews provided valuable insights in the role rugby and the AURFC plays in club members' everyday lives. On Saturdays, my presence at Colin Maiden Park was dependent on whether or not the AURFC teams played at home. In those cases, which happened around ten times, I would be there from noon until 9 or 10 pm. However, when the Barbarians had an away game whilst the rest of the AURFC teams played at home, I showed up at the clubhouse after my game to observe the activities of club members in place.

3.2.2 *Mental mapping*

Mental mapping is a creative way to gain personalised information about (the meaning of) places. A mental map is a map-shaped drawing based on people's mental images of a specific theme or place. A mental map can provide insights in the relative importance of places per se, in the relation between the drawn objects, and in the movements of the map's author. Otherwise, they can also serve as a starting-point for other research tools like go-along interviews, particularly in exploring the everyday life and phenomena in a local context (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). An advantage of mental mapping is the freedom participants get to express themselves, in a creative way, without much influence or guidance by the researcher. Within the context of a theme, participants are relatively free to choose the content, detail, design and layout of their mental map, whereby any power imbalance between researcher and participant is largely overcome (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010).

For this thesis, participants were asked to draw a mental map of the places they related to the AURFC in their everyday life. Because the participants had never made a mental map⁶ before I

⁵ The Premiers are the best team of a rugby club, and the Reserves are the second best.

⁶ During the process of a mental mapping I was surprised by the uncertainty of the participants in 'doing it right'. They kept asking me for confirmation, for example if their map was clear to me, or excused themselves for their bad drawings even though I had emphasised that they could not do it wrong. To ease their minds, I allowed them to clarify the objects on their mental maps with key words.

provided them with an example of a mental map of places I related to my volleyball club in Groningen. These mental maps served two purposes. First, they provided an overview of places which club members related to the AURFC and their importance to the participants. Second, the maps served as a starting-point for the go-along interviews. The participants were free to choose a place on their mental map where they would like to do the go-along interview. I let the participants determine the interview location, to ensure they would feel comfortable and at ease at the place.

3.2.3 Go-along interviews

'Go-along' (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2008), 'talking whilst walking' (Anderson, 2004), and 'the walk' (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010), refer to a relatively novel qualitative research tool in social sciences. Go-along interviews are formal interviews conducted outside while interviewer and interviewee are on the move, for example walking or riding in a car, and therefore appropriate for studying interactions and relationships between people and places. The method combines in-depth interview techniques with unstructured observations and direct experiences of the environment under discussion. Several authors (e.g. Pink, 2007; Trell & Van Hoven, 2010) have argued that participants can become inspired by direct contact with places under discussion.

Being on the move and in direct contact with the context under discussion are considered to be strengths of the go-along method as they make it possible to conduct an interview in the midst of an activity. In a go-along interview a participant is often accompanied by a researcher who asks questions, listens and observes his or her subject in his or her 'natural' environment, creating an opportunity for researchers to explore the practices and interactions between a participant and a place as *they occur*. When an interview is discussed *in situ*, knowledge of the relationship between an individual and a place can be richer because it is grounded in direct experiences-in a place (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2008; Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). Further, several authors have argued that during go-along interviews the existing power imbalances between interviewer and interviewee are more equal, because participants are a bit more in control of the interview as they determine the location and route of the walk (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2008).

In this thesis, as mentioned above, the go-along interviews were guided by the mental maps of the participants. Four of the five participants chose Colin Maiden Park as interview location. One participant preferred to be interviewed at another, to him meaningful, place; his home. The interviews themselves were semi-structured, whereby the questions were based on the literature and observations. The questions were subdivided into five sections; personal details, places of the AURFC, beyond visual traces of a place, the AURFC and participants' experiences with the research. The interviews were audio taped and ranged from 30 up to 75 minutes, depending on the talkativeness of the participants.

The audio recordings of the go-along interviews were transcribed and coded in MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis program. At first, the coding was inspired by Anderson's (2010) writing on material and non-material traces, or 'objects' and 'subjective aspects' of a place. According to Anderson (2010: 5), traces are 'marks, residues, or remnants left in places by cultural life', which he subdivides into material and non-material traces. Material traces include 'objects' such as buildings, signs or landmarks, while non-material traces refer to 'subjective aspects' such as experiences, activities, memories, meanings, feelings or emotions in a place (Anderson, 2010). However, this analysis remained too descriptive and failed to capture depth and nuances. In addition, the tentative outcomes aligned with much writing on place attachment. Therefore, the

places of the AURFC to which participants seemed to become attached were turned into codes. This way of coding, letting the interview transcripts determine the codes, is referred to as 'emic' coding (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). After that, sub-codes were created to analyse subjective aspects of a place that were important in the process of emotional attachment, such the club's history, memories of a place, and feelings and emotions of participants in a place. The sub-codes were created based by 'etic' coding, which means they are theoretically based (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). Analysing the data this way created an overview of how the participants have become attached to the different places of the AURFC. The mental maps and photos taken by participants (see paragraph 3.2.4) were also analysed using MAXQDA.

3.2.4 Photography

Because much of our worldly knowledge is based on the visual, the use of photos as research data has increased in social sciences. Photos are often used to illustrate a certain context or a case, and can strengthen arguments visually (Pink, 2007). As a research tool, photography has been used to 'capture a moment' or 'make a snapshot' to represent an event, activity, object or expression that happened at a place. It is a method that can easily be used outdoors, enabling participants 'to be inspired by direct contact with their environment' (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010: 10).

Photography can be incorporated in a research process in several ways, for example researcher-led or participant-led photography. The researcher-led technique means that photos of people, objects or activities are taken by the researcher, while the participant-led technique refers to participants taking such photos. Participant-led photography can be beneficial as it can provide access to knowledge and meanings of photographed items from a participant perspective (Pink, 2007). An even better understanding of place meanings and experiences-in place can be derived from photography when participants are accompanied by a researcher during the production of the images. Being *in-situ* when a photo is taken can add value to the meaning of an image, and providing knowledge on how people represent and construct places (Pink, 2007; Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). However, even when participants have commented on and explained the meaning of an image, the researcher still needs to interpret them and decide whether to include or exclude the photos in a report.

In this research, I tried to use photography as a participant-led technique, handing my digital camera over to the participant. During the go-along interviews the participants were free to take photos of objects, people or activities in a place that were important to them and their relation to the place. Afterwards, the participants explained the meaning of the photographed to me. Another advantage of the participant-led photos was that the images made it easier for me to recall the routes of the go-along interviews when transcribing the interviews. However, the use of photography sometimes got lost in the go-along interview. Some of the participants just forgot to take photos, which forced me to remind them to take some pictures. This blurred some benefits of participant-led technique. I took several photos of places and objects in places myself, which I found meaningful in relation to this project; researcher-led photography. The photos used in this project illustrate and support some of the findings from the other methods. Further, photos provide the reader with a glance of the physical objects of Colin Maiden Park, mainly as seen from the perspective of the participants.

3.3 Participant selection

Before I could conduct the research, approval from the University of Auckland Human Participation Ethics Committee was required. The committee did not give full ethical approval instantly. The committee objected to the recruitment of teammates as participants for the research. They argued that, because I had joined a rugby team without first informing my teammates about the research project, it would give me 'more than casual access to these observations' (University of Auckland Human Participation of Ethics Committee, 29th of March 2010). The refusal made the selection of participants harder as it forced me to search for participants outside my team while I barely knew any member of the club.

Robin, the trainer and coach of the Barbarians, was also the AURFC director of rugby, which means that he was involved with all members of the rugby club. Due to his function at the rugby club, Robin was a suitable key informant for this research project. On request Robin informed me about the organisation of the AURFC, the culture of the club and its history. As a board member of the AURFC, he gave me permission for the research. Further, Robin played an important role in the selection process of the participants as he introduced me to some club members who were willing to participate. The selection of research participants was based on a few criteria: participants should be connected differently to the AURFC, and participants should have been a member of the AURFC for at least one year. The first criteria were set in order to get an overview of the various club members. The latter criteria were used because it takes time and effort to become familiar with the rugby club and its culture.

This approach resulted in five male, pakeha⁷ participants of whom the youngest was 19 years and the oldest 54 years. Three participants were players of the AURFC, one member was a coach of an AURFC team, and the fifth participant was a member of the board. The length of membership to the club varied from 2 seasons up to 7 seasons (table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>AURFC seasons</u>	<u>Function as a member</u>	<u>Employment</u>
Robin	30	3 Seasons	AURFC director of rugby	AURFC Director of rugby
Roy	19	2 Seasons	Player Under 19's	University student
Mark	54	7 Seasons	Head coach of the Premiers team	Property manager at Dilworth Trust
Nick	33	7 Seasons	Player of the Premiers team	Fitness trainer
John	25	7 Seasons	Player of the Reserves	Owens a house building company

3.4 Research ethics

The purpose and the aim of the study were explained to the participants at the start of the research. They signed an informed consent form which declared that they understood the project, its possible outputs and agreed on participation. Further, it was made clear that the participants

⁷ Pakeha is the term Maori use to refer to New Zealanders who are from European descent (Philips, 1987). Although the AURFC has members from Maori descent, they were left out of the study as the study could conflict with the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi.

could withdraw from the research at any time without given a reason, that their information would be treated confidentially, and that their identity would be masked by the use of pseudonyms. However, none of the participants objected to the use of their real names. The five participants were offered a copy of their individual transcript of their go-along interview, but no one took this offer. Generally, the members just wanted to know the aims of the research and were curious about the findings. Although no official permission was asked of members who were only observed, such as my teammates, they were informed about the research project. However, they did not expressed any reservations, neither did they show much interest in this research

3.5 Positionality

In qualitative research, most data is a result of interactions between participants and a researcher. While the process of interaction makes it possible for findings to remain close to real world experiences of participants, the data is open to the interpretation of the researcher who can, intentionally or unintentionally, harm the experiences of participants (Van Holstein, 2010). However, it is impossible to represent another person's emotional experiences completely natural or 'the way they are', as there are always cultural differences between a researcher and the participants (Kusenbach, 2003; Anderson, 2004; Pink, 2007).

In this research, the participants knew a lot more about rugby, the rugby club and its culture than I did. I only knew the sport from television and was quite unfamiliar with the culture, rules, positions and terminologies of rugby. However, due to my own background in participating sport I was familiar with being part of a team and sports club as I knew how to behave in such a social context albeit in the Netherlands. As time passed, I noticed that I became accepted as an AURFC club member and as a player of the Barbarians because I was always present at practices and matches of the Barbarians. For example, some teammates invited me, and other teammates, to their homes for a drink. During the course of several weeks, I began to develop a friendship-like relationship with some of my teammates, and a trusting relationship with three participants; Robin, Roy and Mark. Both participants and team mates seemed to feel comfortable around me and behaved normal, as far as I could observe. Mark even suggested to conduct the go-along interview at his work and home, where we had lunch together. Although my teammates knew about my research project on rugby and the AURFC, they perceived me as 'one of them', instead of seeing me as a researcher. I think that the participants only saw me as a researcher because the main contact I had with them concerned my research project and I did not play rugby with most one of them, only with Robin in his role as trainer of the Barbarians.

I think that the fact that I was an outsider to rugby and the rugby club gave me some advantages. For example, I could ask silly questions about aspects of the game, the AURFC and the rugby culture. Further, my position as a relative outsider gave the participants the feeling that they could freely talk about their relation to the rugby club as I would not judge their answers and behaviour in terms of rugby qualities, therefore not 'damaging' their identity as a rugby player and member of the AURFC. It was also relevant that I was a male researcher who was young and able-bodied to play rugby, otherwise I would not have been accepted by the team and the club as a member.

3.6 Reflexivity

The data was collected in a relative short period of time. At the end of the period of data collection, I had the feeling I was being accepted and recognized as a member of the AURFC. I

also experienced an emotional attachment to the rugby club's places. The data would be richer and more useful if the rugby club and its places had been studied for a longer period of time. Also, I may have had more (intense) experiences-in the places of the AURFC to reflect on.

What can be seen as lacking to this research is, besides the small amount of participants, their gendered identity and the fact that all participants were members of the club, which left females and non-club members out of the research. Because the participants chose to become a member of the AURFC, it is not surprising that they are primarily positive about their experiences of the rugby club and its places. Otherwise, they would, indirectly, be negative about a part of their own identity.

The inequality between the participants' experiences-in the places and my own participant observations were a problem. Especially, experiences-in the changing room derived from both methods were different. Part of the inequalities can be explained by the fact that most of the participants were connected to the Premiers or the Reserves team of the rugby club, while I experienced the game, and its places, on another level of competitiveness. This difference between the status of the teams might have set lower expectations on my team, which could have made the experiences-in-place less intense and emotionally charged.

4. Findings

As mentioned above, the places that emerged as significant places for members of the AURFC are the clubhouse, the rugby fields and the changing rooms. However, the significance of these places is not solely based on the physical objects. Various studies on place attachment have indicated (e.g. Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Manzo, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2010) that people generally do not become attached to them directly. More often, people's attachment is based on the (symbolic) meanings of these objects, the social interactions and experiences-in these places. The meanings a place can adopt are partly constrained by the physical objects of a place.

What further makes these places special is the amount of time that club members get to experience and become attached to these places. The culture and atmosphere that makes these three places unique to the AURFC are only noticeable on Tues-, Thurs- and Saturday during the rugby season. Entering one of these places at another time 'has much the same feeling as walking into an empty nightclub; the facilities are there but there is no atmosphere' (Andrews et al., 2005: 881). Particular on Saturdays when the AURFC teams play at the home ground, the culture and atmosphere of the AURFC can be experienced in full. However, per rugby season teams of the AURFC only play around ten matches at Colin Maiden Park. Therefore, the small amount of time that members can experience the places is highly valued which makes the experiences intense and emotionally charged.

A time-space routine of an AURFC member on a home-Saturday can be briefly described as follow: Before the match, a club member will visit the clubhouse to meet other club members and to have a chat. From the clubhouse, a member will make his way to the changing rooms with his teammates to prepare both mentally and physically for the game. When ready, the player leaves the changing room and jogs out onto the field to play rugby. Afterwards, he will walk back to the changing room to relax, shower and change clothes. A home-Saturday ends with social activities at the same place where the day started, the clubhouse.

The findings are based on individual experiences-in the places of the AURFC and are structured around a time-space routine (Andrews, et. al., 2005) of a home-Saturday at Colin Maiden Park. This structure has been used to illustrate the intensity of participants' experiences-in the places, and how emotions nuance the attachment to a place change in time.

4.1 Key places of the AURFC

Before commenting on the community which creates the places of the AURFC, the following description provides the reader with an idea about the physical spaces of the three places.

The AURFC clubhouse is 'the hub for the whole club. It is where everything happens' (Roy, 19, player, member for 2 seasons). It is also the first place members visit, for example on a home-Saturday. The clubhouse is a brown painted building that holds a large white and blue sign displaying the name of the rugby club (Berg & Kearns, 1996; figure 4.1). On the inside, a showcase displays the club's rich history in the form of prizes, rugby jerseys of the club and photos of rugby players and teams (figure 4.2). The main part of the clubhouse consists of a lower and an upper area. An important feature in the upper area is the rugby club's bar, which sells beer and snacks but also t-shirts, shawls and hoodies of the AURFC. Above the bar hangs a large sign displaying the club's keystone foundation members (figure 4.3). Further, both areas are filled with photos of rugby players, rugby jerseys and sponsor signs, which give the clubhouse a rugby atmosphere.

While there are three fields in Colin Maiden Park used as rugby fields, they differ in appearance and importance to the AURFC. The two rugby fields close to the park's main entrance are basic rugby fields (figure 3.2). There is nothing special or unique about them in terms of appearances or importance. However, the third rugby field does stand out for the rugby club and its members. It is the rugby club's main rugby field, located in front of the clubhouse and flanked by elevated pieces of land which function as stands for spectators (figure 4.4). Compared to the other two rugby fields, the main field is maintained the best. The appearance of the main field even evokes feelings of pride to Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons) as 'it is such a nice ground... I think that is a real privilege and we are very lucky to have an excellent main field'. Most of the successive memories happened on this rugby field as the field is solely assigned to the Premiers and the Reserves team to compete on. Further, the goalposts on this rugby field differ from their basic equivalents on the other fields as they are painted in the colours of the AURFC; blue and white (figure 4.4). And, what makes the main rugby field even more special is the naming of the rugby field: number 10. This numbering is unique because rugby clubs' main fields are numbered as field 1, thereby reflecting the importance of the rugby field for the club.

Relatively far away from both rugby field number 10 and the clubhouse, are the changing rooms. The building itself is not much more than a grey set of changing rooms. From the outside, the doors are coloured blue with a white number, expressing the relationship with the AURFC. On the inside, the locker rooms are painted white and furnished with wooden benches and cloak hooks above them. At the end, there is a door leading to the shower area (figure 4.5). However, one changing room stands out from the rest; changing room number 5. This is the changing room only accessible for players and staff of the Premiers teams. Number 5 is significantly bigger than the other rooms; it has two access doors from outside, and is painted on the inside in the colours of the AURFC. On the walls, the logo of the rugby club and some texts like 'Varsity Hard! 2010', 'AURFC' and 'Snake Pit' are painted (figure 4.6), 'as the Premiers deserve some extras' (Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons). Also, just like the numbering of the main rugby field, choosing number 5 as the Premiers' changing room makes it unique for members of the AURFC, particular for members of the Premiers team. According to Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons), these members immediately know they play at Colin Maiden Park 'when someone says changing room number five'.

Rugby field number 10 and changing room number 5, then, are two places unique of the AURFC. Their uniqueness is based on their exceptional appearances on both inside and outside, their unusual numbering/naming (Berg & Kearns, 1996), and their exclusive access to members who are part of the Premiers or the Reserves team. Both places compose a large part of the AURFC history and myth, which I will try to unravel.

Figure 4.1: The appearance of the AURFC clubhouse



Source: Nick, 2010

Figure 4.2: Awards and photos in the showcase



Source: Roy, 2010

Figure 4.3: The bar inside the clubhouse



Source: Roy, 2010

Figure 4.4: Rugby field number 10



Source: Nick, 2010

Figure 4.5: Inside a (normal) changing room



Source: Roy, 2010

Figure 4.6: Inside changing room number 5



Source: Gijs, 2010

4.2 *The clubhouse: Let the games begin*

‘...they are small clubrooms and they might not be as flash as other clubs, uhm...the people that are in that clubroom, are fantastic people. There is a lot of history inside there, heaps of history. Yeah, it is small and humble. It is awesome, it is good.’
(Nick, 33, player, member for 7 seasons)

The objects inside the clubhouse not only decorate the place, but simultaneously code the space, evoking feelings of pride amongst club members (Manzo, 2003). Team photos, photos of rugby players, rugby jerseys and awards are tangible (visible) memories that display the long and rich history of the AURFC (figure 4.2 & 4.3). For example, a large action photo of All-Black and former AURFC player Daniel Braid, refers to a rugby player who has become successful after playing for the club. Such a photo likely fulfils members with feelings of pride and trigger them to ‘play their best footy’. For younger players, the history of the AURFC, particularly in terms of the championships won and top rugby players, can be a reason to join the rugby club. Roy, for example, joined the AURFC because he wants to become ‘part of the heritage’ of the club (Roy, 19, player, member for 2 seasons). By displaying items of successive memories, these past moments can be relived or extended in the clubhouse. Thereby, the memories become part of the present identity of the place, and contribute to the culture of the rugby club and the atmosphere in the clubhouse. According to Tuan (1975), knowledge of a place’s history, or place familiarity (Vanclay, 2008), is a prerequisite for place attachment.

The above emphasises a ‘historical’, ongoing sense of place which causes expectations of the identity of the rugby club into the now and the future. During the go-along interviews, it became evident that the club’s history shaped high expectations of the AURFC top teams. For example, it is expected from the Premiers to win every game and finish top four each season. The high expectations mark the seriousness of rugby in the AURFC culture, which attracts rugby players. Nick (33, player, member for 7 seasons), for example, transferred from Pakuranga to the AURFC because of the club’s history and the high expectations at the club. Commenting on his transfer Nick says: ‘if you are gonna play rugby and throw your body around, you might as well do it seriously and win while you are doing it’.

Most conversations in the clubhouse are about rugby, because ‘everyone is there for rugby. And if you have nothing else to talk about, you talk about rugby, and you have got something in common and that is pretty easy’ (John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons). In such conversations, members tend to communicate in a specific “rugby language”, using terms that only make sense to rugby players or rugby-followers. The conversation were loaded with terms sounding like codes, such as ‘scrum’, ‘ruck’, ‘line-out’, ‘conversion’ and ‘try’ which described specific rugby activities. Also, performances of players were reviewed, whereby players could be recognised by the position they play, for example ‘prop’, ‘lock’, ‘full-back’, and ‘flanker’, instead of their real name. Using such codes, or discourse symbols, simultaneously represents and reproduces the main part of the AURFC culture, making the clubhouse a place of the AURFC, or a rugby place. Experiences of such conversations in the clubhouse can provide members with feelings of being a rugby player of the AURFC, and make them become attached to the place.

4.3 The changing room: 'Get them into the right state of mind' (John, 25, player, 7 seasons)

An hour before kick-off, members of a single team will leave the clubhouse to get ready for their match in a changing room. A changing room is the place where players of a single team prepare themselves both physically and mentally for the match. Physically preparing means that players are 'putting on the jersey and uniform' (Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons), while preparing mentally refers to getting into a specific mindset before the match. What makes a changing room special to rugby players is that only the individuals of a single rugby team are in there before a match. This unique characteristic of a changing room is also acknowledged by Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons):

'I think the locker room is a special place for a rugby team, and obviously individuals make up a rugby team, and it is some way that it is quite sort of sacred to the team as you are usually the only ones in there and it is the place before you go out to battle'.
(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

In the above quote, Robin even indicates that a changing room can be a 'sort of sacred to the team', referring to the importance of the exclusive access to the place and gives a 'sense of ownership' over the place. By using the emotional loaded term 'sacred', Robin expresses his attachment to the place. This attachment is mainly created by the people in the changing room; the person dimension (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The use of the term sacred can also refer to feelings of safety which can be experienced in the place because the individuals are familiar and Robin knows the codes of conduct of the place.

In Colin Maiden Park, one changing room stands out for the AURFC from the other changing rooms: changing room number 5. Only people, players and staff, related to the Premiers team have access to this particular changing room. Although only the Premiers have access, other club members consider changing room 5 to be special as well because they look up to the rugby skills and status of the Premiers (in conversation with Robin, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons). The exclusive access to the place is further limited by the small amount of time that the Premiers can be in there; only ten times a season at which makes the experiences in the place intense. From here on, the focus of this paragraph will primarily be on changing room number 5.

Just as Robin indicated in the quote above, in Mark's vision the changing room is a very important place for the Premiers team. In the go-along interview, Mark (53, coach, member for 7 seasons) reflected on the role of the changing room:

'Yeah the dressing room is very important from the point of view that, when we had our values meeting right at the begin of the season, and we come up with our philosophies and values and rules and tactics for the team, we won't gonna lose at home. So, the dressing room became a very, very important part, or the Snake Pit as we call it now. A very important part of that is our ground at Colin Maiden, the changing room is our fortress, and nobody penetrates that fortress. And that is one of the agreements that we had within that group and that is a very important part of it'.
(Mark, 53, coach, member for 7 seasons)

The fact that Mark chooses the changing room as the place to 'come up with our philosophies and values and rules and tactics for the team', indicates that he regards the room is a safe place to discuss important rugby issues and a place in which others will also respect these rules. The philosophies determine the rules of belonging and the codes of conduct in the changing room, which perhaps give the place some similarities to home. An important team agreement was that the Premiers will not lose at home. Mark (53, coach, member for 7 seasons) emphasised the value

of this agreement by referring to Colin Maiden Park as ‘our ground’ and to changing room number 5 as ‘our fortress, and nobody penetrates that fortress’. Comparing the changing room to a fortress reflects a strong identity of the place, and indicates a sense of ownership over the place; the Premiers team of the AURFC ‘own’ the place. With the agreement ‘not losing at home’ the players agreed on defending, thereby maintaining the ‘historical’ identity of the place. The creation of such agreements can be experienced as an intense moment, or a milestone moment (Manzo, 2005), whereby the place becomes part of the individuals’ identity. Experiencing such a moment, for example, confirms someone’s identity as a rugby player and identifies the changing room as a place of rugby, and a place of the rugby club.

In his quote, Mark (53, coach, member for 7 seasons) also mentions that the changing room is called the ‘Snake Pit’, by players and staff of the Premiers. ‘Snake Pit’ is a reference to the 2010 nickname of the Premiers team; Varsity Vipers. Naming a changing room gives the place a meaning, especially for members who know the name (Berg & Kearns, 1996). Providing the changing room with a name reflects the power relations in the place, and works as a strong bonding mechanism to the team in making the place a part of their identity.

The ownership of the Premiers over the place is also reflected on the inside of the changing room, as mentioned above. ‘Number 5’ is larger than the other changing rooms in the complex and its walls are painted in the colours of the AURFC (blue and white). The walls are further decorated with the logo of the AURFC and texts like ‘Snake Pit’ and ‘AURFC 2010’ (figure 4.6). These adjustments give the place a more ‘homely’ appearance that makes the players feel more comfortable so that they know they are at home. Such feelings are important to get players into the right state of mind for the match. As Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons) quotes about the interior of the changing room:

‘... it is painted and got the logo, and various other bits that make you feel very comfortable and know that you are at home.’

(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

On home-Saturdays, ‘number 5’ gets even more ‘personalised’ with papers expressing the team agreements and the game plan (figure 4.7). These papers are visible reminders of how the Premiers wish to play the game and are meant to help the players get into the right frame of mind for the match. Another paper which is meant to mentally prepare players shows the name of the club, combined with a photo of the clubhouse and players of a single AURFC team forming a huddle. The subscription is B.T.B., the abbreviation of Be The Best (figure 4.8). The huddle represents the bonding between the individuals to form a team; only when everyone in the team works together, a team can be the best.

Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons) mentioned that ‘there is a lot of history in that changing room, so it puts you in the right state of mind’. Knowledge about the history of the changing room can evoke expectations for the match and helps players to get into the right game mentality. However, past moments are not always visibly displayed, but can be present in an intangible forms, such as thoughts, memories or ideas. Thoughts about, for example, former rugby players and former successes of the club can put players ‘in the right state of mind’, so that players are ready for the activities on the rugby field. Mentally preparing means that players have to make a switch in their mind and attitude from adapting to the codes of conduct of real life to those rules of the game. Nerves and feelings of uncertainty should be transformed into positive emotions, such as excitement and adrenaline. The changing room is the place where players make this mental switch as they are in a safe environment where they can be their selves.

Players prepare themselves in various ways to a match (see box 4.1, for an observation of how the Premiers prepare themselves). Roy, for example, mentions to be:

‘Always like nervous and just trying to get into the game mentality. So for last year that was just getting myself into the zone of I can do it. Sort of becoming a bit cocky and arrogant I guess. Knowing that I can do it, that I had to believe so, then I would do it.’
(Roy, 19, player, member for 2 seasons)

Telling himself that he could do it and encouraging himself to do it, transformed Roy’s nerves into feeling he described as ‘a bit cocky and arrogant’, which was the opposite of Roy’s personal character. However, by convincing himself of his rugby skills and courage Roy could deal with ambivalent emotions before a match. Other players, for example Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons), get into the right mindset by ‘thinking of the out coming of the game, and how I wanna play. Visualisation certain situations of... how I am gonna react to them’. The atmosphere of being in a changing room helps Robin visualising rugby activities. This can be explained by the presence of his teammates, the history of the room and physical transformation of putting on the jersey.

Box 4.1: Observing match preparations in changing room number 5

On the 22nd of May, I was invited by Mark to be present at the preparation of Premiers team in changing room number 5.

Each player of the Premiers was preparing himself in his own way. Some guys would sit together and talk about the upcoming match, discussing scrums and line-out. Others would sit alone, listening to some music. These guys used music to cut off all other rumours in the room, creating a sort of personal space wherein they prepared themselves mentally. However, most players closed their eyes to cut themselves off the surroundings, and murmur some things. The looks on the faces were tightened and concentrated. Each of them was getting mentally prepared for the moment to kick-off. When the moment of kick-off was coming closer, it became quieter and a tense atmosphere took over the place. Nerves, feelings of uncertainty and even a bit of fear became noticeable on the faces of most players. I noticed that some players suppressed their nerves and fears in order to hide these feeling from their teammates.

The focus of the players was interrupted by Mark, a few minutes before the warming up. Mark walked towards the middle the changing room and demanded for attention. I could almost feel the eyes of the players focus on Mark, as he was about to speech. While the players had been mentally preparing themselves, Mark speech was aimed to get each of his players as a team in the same mindset. Mark discussed the game plan to be sure that everyone knew what to do out on the field. Mark tried to get his players pumped up and focused on the match, using terms as ‘smash them’, ‘play it hard’ and ‘mind the details’. When Mark was done talking, the assistant coach took over. The focus of his plea was on technical details of the game plan and game tactics. Afterwards, the players and staff came together, making a sign like vipers and ‘go like vipers and then tsssssssssss’ (Mark, 53, coach, member for 7 seasons).

The rugby atmosphere and culture in the changing room is also highlighted by the language used by both players and coaches. Just as in the clubhouse, most conversations and discussions are held in rugby jargon. However, the tone of this language is fiercer, as the words should motivate and focus players for the match. Also, most of the terms used in the discussions are displayed on the team agreement’s sheet.

The Premiers story of success is facilitated at several levels. First, the AURFC assigns the best changing room to the best team and agrees on 'personalisation' of the space to a certain degree. The coach, Mark in this case, emphasises the messages of the team through setting important rules and codes of conduct. The players bring in the decoration and practice in certain routines. In addition, there is the spontaneous element triggered by the outcome of the match.

A changing room is the place where players get physically and mentally prepared for the match. The physical preparation refers to players 'putting on the jersey' (Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons). The mental preparations are more complex, involving various, individualised, activities that should get players into the right frame of mind for the match. A changing room can be seen as a special place for members of a single team, because the access is limited to them. Therefore, a changing room is regarded as a safe place and suitable for making team agreements and other rules. Making such agreements can be regarded as a milestone moment (Manzo, 2005) for an individual, as the information is sacred to one single rugby team and confirms someone's identity as a rugby player. Also the amount of time a player spends in a changing room is exclusionary, as it only happens around ten times per seasons making the experiences-in place intense. Before a match, the atmosphere inside the room can be described as 'emotionally charged' (Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons). Players can experience a range of emotions, also ambivalent or even negative feelings, such as nerves, uncertainty and fear. However, as Robin (30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons) indicates, his memories about match preparations, particular in changing room number 5, 'always stands out as a good memory'.

Figure 4.7: Sheet displaying the team agreements



Source: Gijs, 2010

Figure 4.8: Be The Best



Source: Gijs, 2010

4.4 On the rugby field: 'You wanna make them proud'
(Nick, 33, player, member for 7 seasons)

After preparing in the changing room, it is time to run onto the field. A rugby field is the place where the rugby activities become visible to spectators and are regarded as the activities that make Colin Maiden Park a place of the AURFC (figure 4.9). Although, the preparations and social activities are also considered to be part of the whole rugby experience, these activities are unacknowledged as they stay, more or less, invisible to the spectators. In this way, a rugby field can be seen as a stage on which players display their rugby skills and their identity. While Roy (19, player, member for 2 seasons) connects his personal performances and the field on which he performs to the AURFC, his attachment to places of the rugby club are grounded on previous emotional experiences and social activities in these places:

'I think more the memories and emotions and like sort of the fans supporting the side, I guess. And the players they are playing for the club on the pitches, putting their bodies out there, putting their bodies on line to play for the club, to win the game for the club on those pitches. So it is a sort of that connection to the club as well.'

(Roy, 19, player, member for 2 seasons)

Rugby is a tough sport with fast moves and hard hits. The visible performances are sometimes compared to a war, making a rugby field become 'a battlefield' (Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons). The comparison does not mean that all activities are allowed during the game, rugby is strictly regulated by rules. However, playing a match requires commitment and courage. 'You have got to be committed to your teammates and your club. Courage, you have got to lay your body on the line for your teammates, if you don't you gonna let your team down' (Nick, 33, player, members for 7 seasons). Due to the pressure to perform well, laid on players by both themselves and other club members, it is not uncommon that rugby players experience nerves and feelings of fear before and during a match.

Although it might sound contradictive, emotions derived through sporting activities are processed and experienced differently than emotions in 'real life' (see Howe, 2001; Thing, 2001). Partly, this can be explained by the acceptance of a different set of behavioural rules in rugby. Differences in the sets of behavioural rules influence players' actions and can, for example, lead to small riots or the use of foul language, which is not uncommon in a rugby match. This excessive behaviour can be regarded as an extension, or an emphasis, of the differences in behavioural rules tolerated in the boundaries of the game.

By overcoming negative emotions and feelings that are evoked in such behaviour, these emotions are transformed into positive feelings of excitement, pride and relief. Nick describes the emotions and feelings he experiences while playing a match for the Premiers as follow:

'It is excitement, a lot of pride, a little bit of relief as well, you know because if you plays against big teams you will put a lot of pressure on yourself to play well, to perform well. Perform well for your teammates and for your coaches, so it is always a bit of relief that you haven't let you coaches down and you haven't let your teammates down, and that you have done something really good for them. So, yeah I guess relief is a little portion of that.'

(Nick, 33, player, member for 7 seasons)

It was notable that the participants, especially Nick, primarily talk about 'making others proud' or 'not letting them down', thereby referring to teammates, coaches and other club members. The

participants were searching for approval or recognition for their rugby identity from others. Missing a tackle, failing to score a try or losing a match, for example, were activities that were experienced as letting others down. Experiencing a game, and its location, in terms of not letting people down heightens the pressure on players' expectancies to perform well. Perhaps, it is a realisation that an individuals' performance can determine the experiences of an entire rugby team. Such an realisation can have an impact on people's attachment to a place as failing will affect both the team and the players' sense of identity. However, when being successful such an approach can lead a more intense experience, which may lead to a positive attachment to a certain rugby field.

Nick (33, player, member for 7 seasons) also emphasised experiencing feelings of relief and pride when performed well. With a good performance, Nick met his personal and public expectations, and did not let anyone down. Feelings of pride were also experienced, when Nick pulled on 'that blue jersey'. The blue jersey represents the rugby club as a whole, including the rugby club's culture and its history. The culture and former success of the rugby club are represented by the players that wear the jerseys. To Nick, pulling on the jersey means:

'... having pride. You know, being proud to pull on that blue jersey every week. There have been such a good tradition and history here.'
(Nick, 33, player, member for 7 seasons)

Some rugby experiences can be so intense, or unique, that they are memorable for an individual. Therefore, a rugby field can hold personal memories which can be seen as an emotional bond between player and the place. An experience can be so intense that an individual can even recall the exact spot where the activity happened on a rugby field. A milestone experience for John (25, player, member for 7 seasons) was the moment he was sent onto the field for his first, and so far, only appearance in the Premiers team. John could memorise the exact spot where he entered the field and what his first action was. The following quote reflects John's emotional experiences of his entrance onto the field:

'...to ran on to that field is, it brings back hairs back onto the back of your neck, and uhm... you don't want to miss a tackle and let those guys down, and with those guys on it is a faster paste game. It is just a fantastic experience. And we won that game, so I can say I have played Prems and never lost'.
(John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons)

John's reaction indicates that entering the pitch for the Premiers meant a lot to him. Playing for the Premiers confirms a player's rugby identity and is the highest level for an AURFC member to compete at. Also playing on field number 10 means that your rugby activities are seen by the spectators in the Park. This intense experience attaches John positively to the main field of the AURFC, because the experience was fantastic and the Premiers won that match.

However, this form of place attachment is not only restricted to recent events or to the main field in Colin Maiden Park. Nick (33, player, member for 7 seasons), for example, was able to recall the day he had beaten arch-enemy Ponsonby twice; first with the Reserves and later on with the Premiers. Through his clear memories of that day, Nick could identify the spot where he scored a try in the Reserves match, and indicated his position on the field when the final whistle of the Premiers game match was blown. Also, Roy (19, player, member for 2 seasons) holds a special memory to a specific spot on one of the rugby fields at Colin Maiden Park. In his first seasons as an AURFC player he tackled an opponent who had broken through the entire team in the last minute of the game. But tackling the player, Roy secured the win for his team.

The rugby fields in Colin Maiden Park are the places that matter most, because the visible rugby activities happen there. The experiences from playing rugby are not always positive, as the outcome can be painful. Rugby involves tough behaviour which is simultaneously part of the excitement and fun of the game. Further, rugby can be seen as an expression of masculinity, because it shows the strength and toughness of men (Philips, 1987). To be able to play a rugby game, players have to overcome a certain degree of fear, which in the end can lead to feeling of relieve and pride. Pride can also be experienced by wearing a jersey of the club, as it refers to the history of the club and displays someone membership to the club. While the emotional experiences-in place during a match can be negative, rugby players tend to become positively attached to a rugby field.

The next paragraph brings us back to the changing rooms where the activities differ between before and after a match. How the activities in the changing room need to be interpreted depends on the result of the game.

Figure 4.9: The Barbarians in action



Source: Gijis, 2010

4.5 *The changing room: The war is over*

After a match, players walk back to a changing room. Although, the changing room was physically the same as before a match, the atmosphere inside was completely changed. Whereas players were quiet and preparing for battle before a match, afterwards players are relieved, noisy and exuberant. However, how a changing room is experienced depends on the result of the match. As Robin explains:

‘After a game, if it is a victory, there is a lot of noise, a lot of relief, music, people sitting down having a drink, getting something to eat. There is always a lot of noise, could be a bit of singing, or a joke, or vaguely talking about the game, a critical point. A victory is usually what you would expect at a birthday party.’
(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

After a win of the Premiers team, changing room number 5 is taken over by rowdy men. The music is turned on and some players try to sing-along with it, although this is not always appreciated by teammates present in the room. Jokes are made, people discuss details of the match, and others get something to eat and grab a beer. Drinking beer is accepted in a changing room after the match, as it is not only considered as a way to celebrate a victory but also as a mean of relaxation. Soon, the changing room is covered with beercans while the smell of (old) beer dominates the room.

However, the atmosphere in a changing room number 5 is not always joyful. After a defeat, players are not as exuberant as after a victory, especially because they agreed on ‘not losing at home’ (Mark, 53, coach, members for 7 seasons). The player’ activities in the changing room look nearly the same, however they are experienced quite differently. Robin explains the resemblances of players’ activities between a victory and a defeat:

‘Losing, try to keep it consistent, because we don’t want to go to the big high’s and low’s, so when we do lose, the music still plays and so forth but it is a lot more sombre. Probably more reflective on what we need to do to turn a loss around. There are still a few laughs, after we get over the loss and start to think about next week. Cause you can’t dwell in it too long.’
(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

Although, individuals emotional experiences in a changing room may differ depending on the result, there is a bigger contrast between experiences in a changing room before or after a match. As Robin explains:

‘...there is quite a clear contrast between victory and losing, however there is probably a bigger contrast between pride before and after a game. It is quite distinct, you could walk into a changing room and know exactly if it is before a game or after a game.’
(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

Whereas before a match the atmosphere in a changing room can be described as tense. Afterwards the atmosphere primarily exists of feelings of relief and pride, although the degree of expression of these feelings depends on the result. Especially, the contrast in feelings of pride, as Robin mentions, between the two moments is notable. Before a match, players only experience a bit of pride when pulling on the blue jersey, while afterwards players know if they let other people down or made them proud with their performance.

Observations from and experiences by the respondents suggest that the locker room is an emotionally charged place. The range of emotions which can be experienced is wide, ranging from positive emotions, such as pride, excitement and relief, to negative emotions and feelings,

like pain, fear and frustration. The wide range of emotions experienced in the changing room can be explained by the exclusive access to the place and the camaraderie amongst members of a team. Everyone in the room is associated with the team and considered trustworthy, because they are working towards a common goal (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This provides the place with feelings of safety and togetherness. Due to the mix of emotional experiences, a changing room, especially number 5, becomes an important place of the AURFC. Robin acknowledges this by saying:

‘... there is a lot of emotions, and at the end of the game there is a lot of relief or disappointment... a great mix of emotions and I think that is what really stands out... as an important place, and a place that I feel strongly about being an Auckland University rugby player.’
(Robin, 30, director of rugby, member for 3 seasons)

One of the differences in emotional experiences after a match between a changing room and the clubhouse, are people present at both places. Therefore, the emotional bond of club members is stronger with a changing room than with the clubhouse of the AURFC.

4.6 ‘Kick away the ball, put away the pants and sort of let it loose’ (John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons)

After the matches, club members meet each other in the clubhouse where they can chat, have something to eat and to drink. The clubhouse can be seen as the facility of social activities. For a rugby club it is important to have such a ‘social’ place as social interaction between club members determines the culture of the AURFC and the atmosphere in the place. Further, it can be argued that the social activities in the clubhouse represent the true culture of the AURFC as these activities distinguish the AURFC from other rugby clubs in New Zealand. In Mark’s vision, the clubhouse is:

‘Very important, it is a very sociable place. It is a good place to be and it is a good group to be around, a lot of good people. It is relaxing. You can just sit down on a nice, sunny, day with a beer and watch a game. It is really good’.
(Mark, 53, coach, member for 7 seasons)

The culture and identity of the AURFC are mainly created through the (social) interactions and social activities performed in the coded space of the clubhouse (figure 4.10). It can be stated, consistent with Andrews et al. (2005), that the clubhouse and the AURFC culture are co-dependent and co-produced. Therefore, the clubhouse can be seen as the representation of the AURFC, particular for outsiders. The performed activities in the clubhouse are regarded as typically male activities, coding the space of the clubhouse masculine. Therefore, the clubhouse is a place where social, masculine, activities are conducted. Most conversations, for example, were, just as before the matches, about rugby. In particular, club members’ performances and experiences of the games were discussed. Other topics of discussion were stereotypically masculine as well, such as other sports, cars and women.

The masculine ‘rituals’ as a part of coding the clubhouse were ‘opened’ with some speeches. In the speeches, held by the captains of the competing teams, both teams were thanked for the match. In this way the AURFC to and shows its respect to opponent teams. At the end of each speech, both captains were required to ‘skull a jug of beer’ (emptying a glass of beer as fast as possible, at once) as a sort of sign of peace. However, the activity can also be seen as a match, wherein two men could show their masculinity. Being a fast ‘skuller’ provided a person a lot of respect from other men, as the activity emphasised someone’s identity as a man. Drinking beer

was one of the social activities in the clubhouse, and happened in various forms; from just relaxed and enjoying drinking a beer to drinking games expressing player's masculine identity. One particular drinking game was popular in the clubhouse, the so-called boat-race. This game was used by the AURFC as an activity to enlarge social interactions between different club members. In a boat-race there are two teams of five (male) competitors, although women are not excluded but they do not often participate in such games, around a table. On each side of the table are five jugs of beer. As a referee starts the race, the two guys first in line may grab their jug and skull it as fast as they can. The two guys second in line may only start their jugs when his teammate emptied his jug and had put it on the table. The team that finished the five jugs the fastest became the winner. Although, this drinking game was mainly done for fun, the competitive element in the game made it a bit more serious for the competing men. For an individual, losing a boat-race could mean letting your (drinking) teammates down, and could (negatively) affected their self and their identity as a men.

Box 4.2: Participant observation of drinking games in the clubhouse

In the Barbarians there were two guys who could slam a jug of beer incredibly fast, which gave them great respect from other club members, and even a sort of reputation. Although the Barbarians had not won a single game of rugby, they were unbeaten in the boat-races. The Barbarians were, for example, challenged by players of another AURFC team that had beaten them in a rugby match that afternoon. In the boat-race, however, the Barbarians smashed their opponents, again. I remember being the second Barbarian drinker in line. When the race started I felt the adrenaline and excitement rush through my body. When it was my turn, I 'skulled' the best I could. Soon it became obvious that the Barbarians would win the boat-race, and I was feeling proud. Not on my own achievement, but on our team performance. The victory in this social activity strengthened the bond between the members of our team, and contributed to the identity of the team and of ourselves (see Gustafson, 2001 for a discussion on identities).

Drinking beer was not only done to gain respect or display a person's masculinity, beer was also 'a bit of a relief', and it just 'sort of brings the boys together' (John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons). The social interactions and activities also created, and maintained, friendships between club members. The participants often referred to the 'great camaraderie' between members of the club, especially between teammates. Social relationships between AURFC' members can exceed the borders of the club. For some members, the social aspects of being a club member and being part of the club's social network might colour the experience-in places more than the actual game of rugby. Their attachment to places of the club was more socially based. For example, Roy (19, player, member for 2 seasons) indicated that, despite his love for the game, most of his personal memories about the club and places of the club are based on social activities in the clubhouse, such as the conversations and the drinking games.

As a facilitator, the clubhouse plays an important role in maintaining the social interactions and camaraderie, as club members primarily meet in this place. Nick, for example, explained the importance of camaraderie in his attachment to (the places of) the AURFC, thereby linking it to a special characteristic of the rugby club's culture:

'The camaraderie here as well. It is a real student club, so you get a lot of fantastic people around here. And they do more than just play footy, they just help out around the club and there is great camaraderie in this club. Fantastic camaraderie.'
(Nick, 33, player, member for 7 seasons)

The rugby club and the atmosphere in the clubhouse is also characterised as '*student-like*' (John, Roy and Nick), due to the people around and the social activities performed. The atmosphere was

experienced by the participants as relaxed and they indicated that it was a place where they could be themselves. “Being you” is highly valued by the AURFC. For example, the rugby club does not subscribe a certain dress code, unlike other clubs. Therefore, the clothing of members was regarded casual, with members wearing ‘hoodies and jeans’ instead of ‘blazers and ties’. Cultural differences between individuals were accepted and respected. The freedom of expressing oneself, for example through clothing, also contributed to the specific atmosphere of the AURFC. John (25, player, member for 7 seasons) commented on this freedom by saying:

‘Varsity... it is casual, like you know we can rock around in hoodies and jeans, while other clubs are in their blazers and ties. It is much as you look smart, but here it is kinda like a student atmosphere you know. And that is what I like. That is part of...that is who I am personally. You know, I am not someone who is gonna put on a suit and pretend to be someone I am not. And I do think that is what Varsity brings out in people, just the individualities and the personalities. Like the individualism, like everyone is different, it is just amazing.’
(John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons)

The individualism of club members, indirectly, refers to the fact that experiences-in a place are, just as the clothing in the clubhouse, personally (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). However, despite the freedom of wearing your own style of clothes, most members were wearing similar looking upper clothes with the AURFC logo on them. Displaying the club logo on clothes was a strong expression of the club’s culture and strengthened the social bond between members. It appeared to me that each single AURFC team had their own, unique, AURFC clothing, which expressed a sort of togetherness. Also, these clothes emphasised the culture of the rugby club and coded the space as place of the AURFC.

The discussion so far characterises the AURFC as a masculine place. Rules, behaviour and objects all support this. John (25, player, member for 7 seasons) emphasised this, by saying:

‘It is just somewhere where blokes can be blokes. And, you can share the experience of the game you had today, the good win and drink some beer. Uhm...see some strippers. Haha. After every home game we have a topless bar maid, mate. There are not many other clubs in Auckland that have that, you know.’
(John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons)

The women present performed stereotypical roles as ‘cares’ and/or ‘lookers’, letting the boys be the boys. Typifying the women as ‘cares’ refers to the women ‘taking care’ of the men. For example, the women could be regarded as a sort of cabdrivers as most of them drove some men home or to another location at the end of the evening. Seeing the women as ‘lookers’, also refers to the activity of women ‘looking after’ the men, but can also be explained as men ‘looking at the women’. To emphasise the masculine character of the rugby club and for fun, the AURFC hired a good looking girl. She would walk around the clubhouse in short shorts, selling tickets for the club lottery, of which the prices were typically masculine as well; for example a package of barbeque meat or a bottle of strong liquor. During the evening, the girl would take off her shorts and bra, serving beer to the guys only wearing a pair of knickers. The stereotypical roles of women strengthened the masculine character of the place.

Although the culture and the places of the rugby club are coded as masculine, women are welcome to become part of the culture and the places of the AURFC. However, for women to become part of such a masculine culture is not easy. It means adapting their feminine behaviour to masculine codes of conduct. It is likely that women may not feel comfortable in such a place as they might need to pretend being someone they are not. However, the AURFC is trying to diversify the people at the club and in the clubhouse by making the places of the AURFC more family orientated and increasing the involvement of women into the club. This can be illustrated by Mark (53, coach, member for 7 seasons) saying that the rugby club is ‘very family orientated,

at least that is what we are trying to get it to now. Because it used to be just a young fellows place to go. Now, we try to get a lot of women back to make it more sociable and more family orientated.’ An example of this is that the AURFC tried, unsuccessfully, to set up a women’s rugby team a couple of years ago.

After a home match, the clubhouse is the place where club members have to go. It is here and then that the culture and the identities of the rugby club and the clubhouse are expressed, and can be experienced, at full. Trough the interaction between the physical objects and the social activities of club members, the culture and identity of the rugby club and place are simultaneously represented and reproduced. While the coded space of the clubhouse sets the conditions, club members’ activities that make the place become a place of the AURFC. Important aspects thereby are the freedom for club members to express oneself, the camaraderie between members and the role of drinking beer. Particular the experiences-in the clubhouse after the matches, is what makes club members become attached to the place and what makes the rugby club stand out from other clubs. The clubhouse is a place for relaxation and relief for the boys, and is an important part in the identity of the AURFC and its members, as John illustrates:

‘...being a member is like...uhm...somewhere you can go and you know people. You can talk about things with the boys, and you know, it is boy talk. It is girls, or you wives, or girlfriends they usually don’t stick around too long, and it is just boy talk really. It is after a game that you can just sort of kick away, kick away the ball, put away the pants and sort of let it loose’.
(John, 25, player, member for 7 seasons)

Figure 4.10: Social activities in the clubhouse



Source: Gijs, 2010

5. Conclusion

'I really had a strange feeling about playing my last game. Although rugby is not my game, I really enjoy it and almost came to love it. What makes rugby and the AURFC special for me is the strong camaraderie in the team and the club. I have to admit that my goodbye did, emotionally, more to me that I had expected beforehand. Due to my intense involvement with the members and the club, I had created an emotional bond with both of them. The AURFC including its places, stand for me as sociable, camaraderie, respect, good fun and masculinity. But also for pain, fear, nerves and getting into the unknown. Being at places of the rugby club sometimes, nearly, felt like being home; my New Zealand home.'

(Research diary, 16 June 2010)

The objective of this thesis was to provide an answer on the question 'How do members of a local rugby club become emotionally attached to places of their rugby club?' In order to answer this question, I explored how places of sport are made, how people become emotionally attached to such places, and what kind of emotions are experienced in these places. In this research, the Auckland University Rugby and Football Club was studied as a case.

Sport clubs, sporting activities and related culture have become important aspects in society today, influencing people's lives in various ways. Places of sports are complex, social, cultural and material constructions. The culture and identity of the AURFC was represented, and reproduced, in a specific place: Colin Maiden Park; the home ground of the club. However, zooming in on specific locations, such as the clubhouse, the rugby fields and the changing rooms, shows that these places are even more significant to members of the rugby club. What makes these places become sport places, or in this case places of the AURFC, is a complex interaction between the physical objects of and in the places, the history of the places, the people in the places, and the activities performed in the places. In case of the AURFC, the places were not only coded as sport places, but also as masculine places; referring to the history, culture and tough characteristics of the game.

To explore how people become attached to places of sport, I used Scannell and Gifford's (2010) triple P-framework (figure 2.1). This framework illustrates that, in general, people do not get directly attached to physical aspects of a place, although it determines, at least in parts, the meaning a place can adopt; the place dimension (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). More often, people become attached to symbolic meanings of a place and social interactions with other people in-situ; the person- and process dimension (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). To become attached to a place, active experiences-in a place are important (Tuan, 1975; Manzo, 2005) and, as Tuan (1975) argues, experiencing a place takes time. However, time works in different ways; it passes and has a temporarily character. The passage of time itself does not have to create an experience-in place, while the temporarily of time can make a place exclusive and the experiences-in place intense. Intensity is needed to make an experience, and the place, memorable. Through memories of experiences-in a place, a person can become emotionally attached to a place. Therefore, I added the dimension time to the framework, making it the PPPT-framework.

To members of the AURFC, a home-Saturday at Colin Maiden Park is a unique moment as it only happens around ten times per season. Only on a Saturday, the culture of the AURFC and the places of the AURFC can be experienced at full. The exclusiveness in time makes the activities in the places of the AURFC, and therefore the experiences, intense. Colin Maiden Park is the setting for peak experiences of the AURFC culture, which relatively matter the most in developing an emotional attachment to the places of the rugby club.

The emotions that are experienced in the places of the AURFC differed in time and place. However, even when ambivalent or even negative emotions were experienced in a place,

participants indicated that their attachment to these places was positive. The range of emotions experienced also differed per location; the emotional range was the widest in the changing room and the smallest in the clubhouse, which can be explained by the exclusiveness of access to the places. Feelings and emotions experienced, for example, inside a changing room, before a match, were nerves, feelings of uncertainty and even some feeling of fear. During the mental preparation of players, most of these feelings were overcome. After a match, the feelings and emotions of relief, excitement and pride were notable in a changing room.

The participants have indicated that they are primarily become attached to places of the AURFC through actively experiencing the places and social interactions in these places. The physical objects in the places of the AURFC functioned as facilitators of the rugby related activities, and often referred to the enduring history of the club. Although the experiences in the three places of the AURFC differed from each other in terms of emotions and intensity, the participants indicated that they were emotionally attached to all of them. To them, rugby, and the rugby club, are actually composed of all activities and experiences-in the places. The meaning and attachment to Colin Maiden Park is based on all events performed at places of the AURFC, because they are intertwined and together make Colin Maiden Park; the place of the AURFC.

The last remark will be about the PPP-framework of Scannell and Gifford (2010). While the thesis indicates that the framework should be completed with a time-dimension, it can also be argued that the framework neglects the question about power relations in a place that could influence people's emotional attachment to a place. In this case, officially the University of Auckland has the power over Colin Maiden Park. They, for example, have determined the numbering of the rugby fields and changing rooms. However, the University has given the AURFC permission to use the facilities in the park and adjust some of them, particularly making them places of the AURFC. Adding a power-dimension to the framework could provide us insights and a better understanding of the physical appearances of certain places, which could be used in people's attachment to a place. Also, insights in power relations of a place could explain how certain codes of conduct influence people's attachment to a place and the identity of a place. So, the framework should be reshaped into the PPPPT-framework; Person-Place- Process-Power-Time.

5.1 Discussion and recommendations

As the participants in this research were only men, questions about how women can become emotionally attached to places of masculine sports and what such places mean to them, have remained unanswered. Due to the growing amount of women participating in masculine sports, like rugby and boxing, it can be interesting to study whether experiences-in such places of sport are different to female athletes. Further, it might be interesting to know how their female identity is influenced by their presence and activities in masculine coded spaces.

While Manzo (2005) has referred to people's negative emotional attachment to places, this study has not found such an attachment. Although some participants indicated that they experienced some negative emotions in a place, the attachment was always considered to be positive. This could be explained by the fact that participants were free in their decision to visit, and be active, in these places. Acknowledging a negative emotional attachment to the places can damage their sense of self. Perhaps, it is interesting to conduct a research solely focusing on negative places of sport, for example a place where a sports team lost an important match, or a place where someone got injured, or even worse died due to a sporting activity. Focusing on such places can provide us with a better understanding of the relationship between people and places (of sport).

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