

The place of meaningfulness

A study about how tourism affects the residents' place attachment in Mirissa



Source: Authors' own photo.

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the local residents' perceptions of the tourism in Mirissa, Sri Lanka, and how their place attachment is affected by changes related to tourism. In order to fulfil the purpose, two research questions are answered. First, which are the most significant changes that the residents in Mirissa perceive due to tourism? And secondly, how do the tourism-related changes affect the local residents' place attachment? The data was gathered through 18 semi-structured interviews with residents that live in Mirissa, all conducted on site. The results are analysed through three specific yet interrelated contexts of place attachment; the personal context, the community context and the environmental context. This is loosely based on a conceptual model by Raymond, Brown & Weber (2010).

The conclusion of this research is that the people of Mirissa perceive their lives changes as a result of tourism. The most significant changes experienced are financial prosperity as well as societal changes. Some alterations that affect the respondents place attachment are positive and some alterations are negative. Two changes that affect the place attachment positively are that a sense of "us" and "them" is created between the tourists and the residents, tourism contributes to economic networks that strengthen social bonding. Identified alterations that have a negative effect are drug and alcohol use and that the respondents have less time to see their friends. The perceptions concerning changes in the environment due to tourism are polarized where some respondents are positive towards the increase in buildings, since they equate this with positive development. Respondents that live in high-income households had a more critical attitude.

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Preface

We would start by thanking SIDA, who granted us a Minor Field Study scholarship which enabled this research. The minor field study was conducted in Mirissa, Sri Lanka during spring 2019.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to all the respondents that participated in our interviews. Thank you all for devoting your time and sharing your honest answers. We would also like to thank our newly found friend Veran, our translator. A big thank you for the effort, commitment and patience. Without your assistance, this study wouldn't have been possible. Additionally, we would also like to thank all the people that helped us to get to Sri Lanka, and to get in contact with Veran.

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Our deepest condolences to all the victims of the horrible inhuman acts on Easter Sunday 2019. Our sincere sympathies to you and your families.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The total amount of international tourists in the world has grown over time. UNWTO (2018) stated in their annual report of 2017 that the amount of international tourist arrivals has increased the last eight consecutive years and were in 2017 at levels of about 1326 million arrivals. This increase will continue according to UNWTO forecasts and international tourist arrivals will reach 1,8 billion by 2030. Since tourism is growing as an industry it is becoming increasingly important to study the effects tourism have on local communities all over the world (UNWTO 2018).

The physical environment has transformed in many places as an apparent result of increasing tourism. This is evident since hotels have been built, restaurants have been opened and various activities are arranged to fulfil the needs and requests of the tourism industry (Williams 2009 p.121). The physical environment is however not the only thing that transforms by increasing tourism. Cultural, behavioural and economical dimensions are also impacted by tourism hence affecting the daily life of the local residents (Hall & Page 2014 pp.141-142).

These physical and social changes, as a consequence from the tourism industry, can affect how the local community perceives their locality where they live their lives. In other words, their place attachment can be altered. A lot of research has been conducted about how tourism affects local communities but there is a knowledge gap when it comes to how place attachment is affected (Gu & Ryan 2008). Place attachment is a concept that describes positive bonds that individuals have towards the place (Brown, Altman & Werner 2012). This knowledge is important as previous research has shown that if people's perception of the place where they live is considered in planning and development strategies, it can lead to an increased sense of security and pride. Furthermore, these aspects are fundamental to ensure a sustainable social development (de Wit 2013).

The influence of tourism on the host community arouses curiosity about how the local resident place attachment changes. How do they perceive that tourism affects the place? Do the perceptions of tourism affect their feelings towards the place where they live their daily lives? If so, is their place attachment getting stronger or weaker?

A study about residents' attitude toward the growth of tourism in Shi Cha Hai hutong, Beijing, shows that tourism weaken place attachment for some respondents since the physical

environment changes due to the industry (Gu & Ryan 2008). Tourism can however also strengthen the residents place attachment. The residents can according to Liu & Cheng (2016) shape a common social identity as differences between foreigners and residents appear evident for the local population.

Recently, several studies have been conducted on how residents' place attachment is affected by tourism (Kajan 2014; Lemelin et al. 2015; Liu & Cheng 2016). Though some studies on this have been conducted in the global south and China in particular (Liu & Cheng 2016; Su & Wall 2010), these studies have often used cases in the global north (Kajan 2014; Lemelin et al. 2015). The effect that tourism has on the local populations place attachment has, as far as we are aware, never been studied on Sri Lanka.

Until the end of the Sri Lankan civil war, the number of arrivals of international tourists was relatively stable, around 500,000 arrivals per year. After 2009, when the war ended, tourism has increased rapidly. The number of arrivals in 2009 was 448,000, and the corresponding number in 2018 was 2,333,796 (The SLTDA's Research & International Relations Division 2019). This upward trend makes Sri Lanka ideal to investigate the effects that tourism have on the local population and the place where they live their daily lives.

This study focuses on the village of Mirissa in the southern part of Sri Lanka. Mirissa has previously been a fishing village but due to the increasing tourism, more and more people engage in the tourism industry due to the economic opportunities. Many tourists come here to do whale watching and to enjoy the surrounding beaches. In the harbour of Mirissa the fishing boats now have to share the space with the whale watching boats, a business that is constantly growing in correlation to increasing tourism industry (Buultjensa, Ratnaykeb & Gnanapalab 2016).

1.2 Purpose and Research questions

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the local residents' perceptions of the tourism in Mirissa and how their place attachment is affected by tourism related changes.

In order to fulfil this purpose, the two following questions will be answered:

- *Which are the most significant changes that the residents in Mirissa perceive due to tourism?*
- *How do the tourism-related changes affect the local residents' place attachment?*

1.3 Thesis outline

In the second chapter, *Literature review*, relevant theories will be presented as well as the analytical framework and previous research. The third chapter, *Method*, contains the methodological approach and procedures of the study. Chapter four, *Results*, presents the results of the conducted interviews. In the fifth chapter, *Analysis*, the results are analysed against the theories and previous research presented in chapter two. Finally, the sixth and the last chapter of the thesis, *Conclusion*, summarizes the findings and answers the research questions.

1.4 Limitations

The study is conducted in Mirissa, Sri Lanka. One limitation is that the interviews are conducted with people that lived close to Mirissa beach, where most of the tourists enjoy their holiday. Residents that live in the in-land of Mirissa may also be affected, but these individuals are not regarded in this study. The area where the interviews were conducted is the most tourist intensive part of Mirissa and is diversified regarding types of buildings. Hotels, restaurants and bars are often situated next to residents' living houses.

Another limitation is that only individuals that are older than 23 years old are represented among the respondents. The reason for this is that those who are 23 years old or younger are assessed to be too young to remember what Mirissa was like before the war civil ended in 2009. The respondents that are 23 years old or younger may therefore not remember what it was like to live in Mirissa before the increase in tourism. According to Gu & Ryan (2008), younger residents may get a strengthened place attachment due to tourist-derived changes. This perspective could therefore have been important for the study in order to get a more complete picture of how tourism affects residents in Mirissa.

Additionally, the study was based on a single case; a village dependent on tourism. It is therefore not possible to know for sure that certain changes that the respondents perceive are due to tourism. Other factors may affect the change as well or be the cause of them. A comparative study, with a village without tourism, could have been made to ensure a more reliable analysis.

2 Literature review

In this part of the thesis we first introduce our main concepts; the meaning of place and place attachment. In the succeeding section we present the analytical framework used in the study as well as previous research. These two parts are merged in order to facilitate for the reader, structured by the three different contexts which place attachment can emerge; *personal*, *community* and *environmental*. Initially, each context is described in general terms and subsequently previous research are presented.

2.1 Theory

2.1.1 The meaning of place

In the field of human geography, the concept of place has been ascribed different types of meanings during the years (Gren & Hallin 2003). In the early twentieth century, places were described by their physical attributes within the geographical tradition. Places were perceived as distinct entities where processes occurred somewhat isolated. Since the seventies the concept of place has evolved and the meaning has broadened. Today, place is a central concept in human geography. Places are not only recognized for their physical characterizations, the present interpretation of the concept rather focuses on place as a social construct and how people relate to places (Williams 2009). That place is a social construction is evident by the fact that there are people who are creating places by building roads, houses and other physical units. Place is also a social construct in the sense that it is a representation which is manifested through people's social interactions and notions related to their material surroundings (Gren & Hallin 2003).

Places are all unique as they differ from their surroundings and other places. Gren and Hallin (2003) highlight qualitative aspects, unique characteristics and how places are used as three dimensions of their particularity. The qualitative aspect means that places differ due to that they are physically separated from their surroundings or through boundaries which are mentally perceived. A place can diverge from other places due to its unique characteristics, such as physical and cultural attributes. How places are being used also makes them different. For example, a place can be private and exclusive or open to the public (ibid).

Hence, place is a phenomenon which shapes through human interactive processes, it is something that never is static. Places always change, both in a physical manner but also in the way that people think about the place. This can be affected through time and scale. The

history of a place can be maintained through ancient monuments or through people's memories. A place can also be influenced by the connection to other places owing to the flows of people, material and information (ibid). Tourism is one example of an activity that can bring these kinds of changes to a place and influence the residents living there, including their sense of place (Hall & Page 2014).

2.1.2 Place attachment and related concepts

In *A Dictionary of Human Geography* (Rogers, Castree & Kitchin 2013) the phenomenon “sense of place” is defined as follows: “*The specific feelings, perceptions, and attitudes generated in people by the particular qualities of a locality, or the events that they experience there.*” As the definition describes sense of place is a concept of subjective manner. It is also dynamic as the place always changes over time. Sense of place forms through people’s everyday routines. This experience in turn shapes attitudes and feelings about their locality and themselves (Knox & Marston 2016). Further, an essential aspect of the concept is how the locality distinguishes through the physical environment (the built or the natural) and the geographical location (Rogers, Castree & Kitchin 2013).

In the field of social science there has developed several concepts concerning the relation between place and people. Sense of place can be seen as an umbrella concept which encompasses a range of person-place concepts, such as place attachment, national identity and regional awareness (Shamai 1991; Kianicka et. al. 2006; Mayhew 2009). Some of these concepts are used interchangeably, and sometimes the same concept can be given different meanings or be given relatively similar meanings (Brown, Altman & Werner 2012). In this study we have chosen to focus on place attachment. This concept will be defined below.

Place attachment is according to Brown, Altman and Werner (2012): “*Positive bonds developed from behavioural, cognitive, and affective ties between individuals or groups and multiple levels of their sociophysical environment*”. As mentioned in the quoted definition, attachment to place can be generated through several levels. A person can create bonds to a home as well as to a neighbourhood, city or nation. The bonds can also vary across these levels of scale. A resident can for example possess stronger place attachment to his or her city than to the neighbourhood (ibid).

The act of staying in a place as opposed to moving can be a choice that is influenced by the place attachment that the individual has, as well as the neighbourhood and the house that the person lives in (Clark, Duque-Calvache & Palomares-Linares 2015). Family roots,

community connections and neighbourhood satisfaction are shown to be important for this choice (ibid).

2.2 Analytical framework and previous research

The analysis in this study is loosely based on a four dimensional model for place-attachment developed by Raymond, Brown and Weber (2010). The model was established in order to analyze the attachment that proprietors of land in rural areas have towards their natural resource management district. The four dimensions are place dependence, place identity, social bonding and nature bonding. The four dimensions should be researched within three different contexts: the personal context, the community context and the environmental context. Place identity and Place dependence are researched in a personal context of place attachment, social bonding is studied in a community context and nature bonding is researched in an environmental context. This framework is illustrated in figure 1.

The three contexts are strongly interrelated. Therefore, the categorization of the result may overlap and the explanations of how tourism affects people's attachment to place can be sorted into more than one of the categories. The purpose of the analytical framework is however to illustrate how people's place attachment relates to personal experiences, as well as to interaction with other people and the physical environment. The following sections explain these three contexts in relation to place attachment more generally. After each part previous research on tourism's influence in these contexts will be addressed.

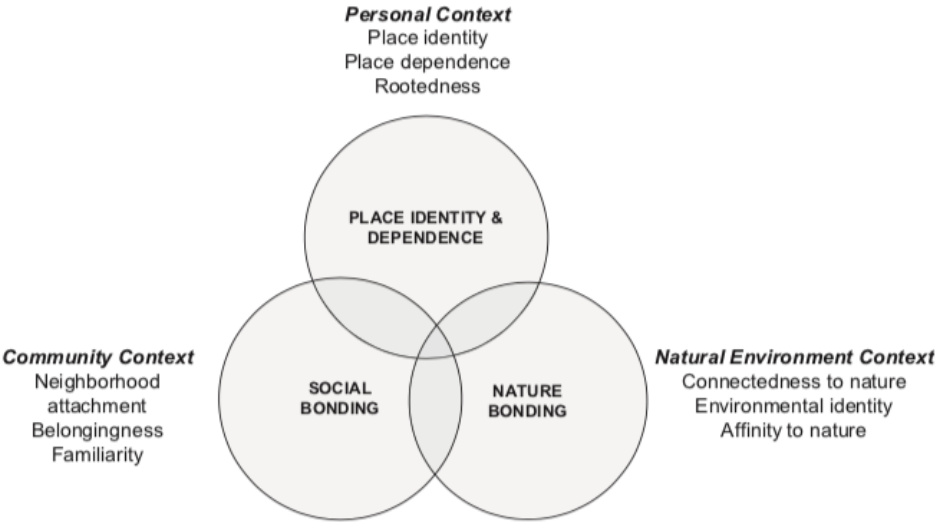


Fig. 1: Model of the four-dimensional framework for place attachment (Raymond, Brown & Weber 2010, pp. 425).

2.2.1 Place attachment in a personal context

Experiences and events through our lives often create a bond to the places where they occur. The concept of *place identity* describes those characteristics of self-definitions that emerges from those places and defines who we are (Scannell & Gifford 2009). That we identify as “göteborgare” (a person from Gothenburg) is an example of a characterization we attribute to our self in correlation to a place. In this sense we identify ourselves through our place of origin or where we live our lives (Clifford at. al. 2009 p. 163). Furthermore, a person’s place identity can contribute to a social identity. This aspect of place identity is highly related to the community context. The place identity can develop when a person pursues similarities to others. This can create a sense of belonging to a place as a group which shapes an “us” and “them” (Scannell & Gifford 2009).

Place attachment in a personal context also includes *place dependence* which is a functional attachment. Place dependence relates to the functional attributes of a place that constitute conditions which enable people to achieve their goals or carry out their activities (Raymond, Brown & Weber 2010).

2.2.2 Previous research - The influence of tourism in a personal context

Liu and Cheng (2016) researched what happens to residents’ place identity in tourist destinations, through a case study on Lijiang in China and Palma in Spain. The main findings are that tourism makes the difference between foreigners and local people appear explicit, which causes them to make distinctions between tourists and themselves. The residents are therefore nudged to be one entity, shaping a collective identity. Place identity becomes more prominent and gets stronger after tourism develops the place, because residents can make these distinctions. As a consequence of this, residents gain a stronger sense of belonging compared to before the increase in tourism, get proud of the group, and they see the worth of the indigenous culture. This leads to a situation where tourists and people from outside the area, may be held accountable for things that go wrong in the society. New forms of social identity may, however, also form because of the combination of different cultures (ibid).

A study from Finnish Lapland shows that tourism strengthens the resident’s place dependence as well as the development of the place identity (Kajan 2014). Even though the nature in the area is financially important, it is also shown that the environment is valuable for the residents in other ways as well. The respondents described, for example, places in the area

that are significant for their psychological well-being (ibid).

In previous research it has been shown that personal factors can influence the answers of the respondents (Gu & Ryan 2008). In this study we have therefore chosen to include details about the respondents' age, gender, income level, and occupation.

2.2.3 Place attachment in a community context

Place attachment in a community context concerns the social processes through which place attachment is manifested. It is created from feelings of belonging to a group of people, shared cultural values (Raymond, Brown & Weber 2010; Scannell & Gifford 2009). It also includes the emotional attachment and having a common history and sharing interests and worries may be important (Woldoff 2002). Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018) mean that place attachment in a community context has a foundation in sharing. Common experiences and shared interests lead to an attachment to the place of occurrence.

Being attached to place means according to Woldoff (2002) to be attached to the people that live there and to the social interactions that occur in the place. Among other things Woldoff's study shows that if inhabitants of a place think that the people within the community are distrustful, a lot of conflicts arise, and that they do not look out for each other, they are less likely to feel attached, think highly of the area and to get involved in problem resolution (ibid).

2.2.4 Previous research - The influence of tourism in a community context

Gu and Ryan (2008) describe two dividing effects on place attachment on residents in Shi Cha Hai hutong in Beijing, China, regarding tourism. Some experience that the sense of community has become weaker as opinions regarding tourism growth, and the physical changes of the place that follows, are diversified among the residents and creates a polarization in the community. Other residents take pride in the changes, making the place attachment stronger. The study furthermore shows that age is an important variable concerning social bonding. Societal and infrastructural changes do not necessarily shape the younger residents place attachment in a negative way. Change may even be desirable among the younger residents and therefore strengthen the place attachment (Gu & Ryan 2008).

2.2.5 Place attachment in an environmental context

Place attachment in the environmental context is according to Raymond, Brown and Weber (2010) the link that individuals have towards the natural environment regarding history, emotional affinity and knowledge of the place. These links are described as bonds that are not of human type. Emotional affinity towards nature is shown to have great influence over individuals' protectiveness of nature (ibid).

This dissertation will however also incorporate the built environment and the feelings that respondents exhibit towards these. The reason for this is that a lot of constructions have been made in Mirissa and the respondents' perceptions of these may affect their place attachment as well. The conceptual model was originally developed in order to research a rural tourist destination. Researching how the built environment effect place attachment may therefore not have been relevant in their study.

The attachment that individuals have towards the natural environment has an important role in creating environmentally responsible behaviour among the coastal residents. Emotional attachment is important in order to make functionally attached residents behave environmentally responsible. The coastal residents that have a functional attachment to the place may develop an emotional attachment, if they interact with the natural surroundings more frequently over an extended period of time (Soo- Hee Lee & Oh 2018).

2.2.6 Previous research - The influence of tourism in an environmental context

Many people visit Rosspport, Ontario Canada for recreational purposes. A study conducted in that area shows that the residents who have lived in the area for a long time believe that they are entitled to maintain protection of the island and lakes because of their expertise, awareness of the history, as well as their sense of place (Lemelin et al. 2015). People that have willingly migrated to the area for reasons that have to do with their choice of lifestyle are instead more positive towards partnerships with federal and provincial agencies to improve access and promote the area. Furthermore, they believe marketing strategies will attract people and spread recognition of the areas inherent values (ibid).

A study from Kavala shows that the environmental impacts of tourism are not of large concern for the residents (Stylidis 2018). The author points out, however, that this may be due to the economic situation as the study was conducted in the midst of a crisis (ibid).

2.3 Summary of the analytical framework

Place attachment can be divided into three different contexts. Firstly, the personal context involves place identity and place dependence. Place identity is an affective attachment to the place, which is created through personal experience that occur at the place. Place dependence is instead a functional attachment. This is a bond that is established through the physical attributes of the place and enables the individual to fulfil their goals. Secondly, the community context which regards the bonds that shapes in a group of people. Shared cultural values and history may be important aspects. Lastly, the environmental context, consists of affections to the environment. In this study we include feelings towards both the natural and the built environment.

The concept of place attachment is multifaceted and complex. The three different contexts presented above are also interrelated.

3 Method

This study was conducted through an eight-week field study in the village of Mirissa, Sri Lanka, during spring 2019. In this chapter, the method used in this study will be presented, as well as the procedure of the study. In the first section, the approaches of the chosen methods will be presented. The second part is about how the interviews were conducted. The third and final part is a methodological discussion, including limitations of the data and alternative methods.

3.1 Approaches to Methodology

3.1.1 Qualitative research method and in-depth interviews

For this study, a qualitative research method was chosen. A qualitative research method is, according to Bryman (2016, pp. 454) not focused on numbers like a quantitative research method often is. An example of a qualitative method is in-depth interviews where individuals' perceptions, views, and feelings are studied (Gren & Hallin 2016, pp. 36-37; Bryman 2016, pp. 561). Qualitative interviews were used since the aim of this study was to accumulate knowledge through residents' perceptions.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were chosen. According to Bryman (2016, pp. 564), semi-structured interviews may be preferable to unstructured interviews, as this facilitates the comparison of the respondents answers. The reason for this is that the comparison between interviews may be enabled. The focus of the study, which is to investigate the resident's place attachment in Mirissa, was relatively clear before beginning fieldwork in Mirissa. This is also a contributor to the choice of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are often chosen when the focus is rather clear because the interviewer can use more specific research questions (Bryman 2016, pp. 564).

Additionally, we did some observations and took photos. This was a compliment to the interviews.

3.1.2 Processing of the data

To be able to pay full attention to the respondents during the interviews, the interviews were recorded using a dictaphone. This makes it easier to focus on the answers of the respondents and to come up with questions to follow up with interesting aspects (Bryman 2016 p.578).

Notes were taken as a complement to the recording. The interviews were then transcribed word by word. The process of transcription is time consuming but a worthwhile practice. The reason for this is that the researcher familiarises with the data which facilitates latter analysis (Braun & Clark 2006). After transcribing all of the interviews, they were summarized to get a better overview and to prepare the material for the next step of the analysis. Then the relevant quotes were divided into different themes. Those themes were developed from the topics brought up by the respondents. Later on, the material was categorized into the three contexts of the analytical framework.

3.1.3 Case study and choice of case

The case study is, according to Bryman (2016, pp. 96-98), the detailed and thorough research on a specific case. A case study usually investigates a specific place or location, for example, a society. Case studies are typically qualitative, though it can be used in other kinds of research (ibid). This study is a qualitative case study conducted in Mirissa, Sri Lanka, and the case is the residents of Mirissa and how tourism has affected their place attachment.

Bryman maintains that there are distinctions between cases and introduce classifications that Yin proposed (Yin 2009, pp. 48 referred to in Bryman 2016, pp. 98-100). The study conducted in Mirissa is what Yin refers to as a representative or typical case and what Bryman refers to as an exemplifying case. The aim with exemplifying cases is to describe the circumstances and conditions that exist in situations in ordinary or everyday-life. A reason for choosing an exemplifying case is to implicate that the choice can represent a broader category of cases (ibid). As far as we know Mirissa is an exemplifying case for a small village in a poorer country, that is recently developed into a tourist destination. Mirissa is not believed to be an extreme case, and there are many villages along the Sri Lankan coastline that have become popular tourist destinations (Lonely Planet 2019b). It is likely that resembling results would appear in places with similar attributes.

The aim of the study is to investigate how tourism affects the residents' *place attachment* through their perceptions. In order to find a case, Sri Lanka was chosen because tourism has increased a lot in the country since the civil war ended in 2009 (The SLTDA's Research and International Relations Division 2019). The case Mirissa was furthermore selected because it is marketed as a tourist destination (Lonely Planet 2019a).

Another reason Mirissa was chosen is that it is a small village, which means that the impact of tourism may be particularly significant. It is also a village with few other external

impacts such as foreign investments in infrastructure etc.

3.2 The interviews

The interviews were conducted between the 6th of March and 19th of April 2019. Although, we did not start with the interviews until we spend around four days in Mirissa. We first wanted to become familiarized with the area. In order to find people volunteering to be interviewed, we walked around in the village of Mirissa knocking doors. This seemed to be the simplest method due to the lack of contacts and familiarity with the area. Direct contact also seemed to be the politest way in order to present ourselves in person and explain the purpose of the interviews and the study, since we were new in Mirissa.

When the interviews were conducted, one of us had the responsibility to ask the questions, whilst the other one was taking notes. During the field study we used a matrix to keep track of the interviews spread in age, income level and occupation. Additionally, observations and photographs were used in the study as a complement to the interviews.

3.2.1 Interview guide

Bryman (2016, pp. 565-566) give some advice for the development of the interview guide, which was followed in this study. The first advice is to create some structure in the themes that the interview will be about (ibid). The first theme of the study was regarding everyday life in Mirissa. The reason for starting with this wider theme was to minimize the risk that the opinions of the respondents would be coloured by the other themes. The second theme was concerning the place and the respondent's relationship with the place. The third theme was about the influence of tourism, and the fourth theme was regarding participation.

The second advice that Bryman (2016, pp. 565-566) gives is to create questions that help to answer the research question. The third advice is that the language in the interview questions should be in a language that suits the respondents. Place-attachment is presumably a term that not many people are familiar with. Questions, therefore, had to be more general about the life that the residents lead and how Mirissa has changed since the end of the war in 2009. The fourth advice is to not ask leading questions. And the final advice (fifth) is to ask background questions (Bryman 2016, pp. 565-566). In this study, age, gender, employment in the tourism industry, and household economy were asked.

3.2.2 Sampling

Since the focus of the research is to investigate the effect tourism have on the residents' place attachment, the respondents have been chosen based on where in Mirissa they live. Many tourists move daily in the coastal area, and we have therefore chosen to conduct interviews in this area.

In order to find residents that would have lived in Mirissa before the increase of tourism, we chose to interview people that were estimated to be old enough to remember what Mirissa looked like before 2009. We use 2009 as a year of reference since from then there has been an obvious increase in tourists arriving in Sri Lanka, and we did not manage to find more specific statistics from Mirissa. The respondents were, therefore, between 24 years old and 79 years old.

In total, 21 people were interviewed, ten women and eleven men. Due to the poor English skills of two males, these interviews have, however, been removed. These two interviews were the first ones to be conducted and we did not have Veran, our translator, with us. At the time we were unsure if their English knowledge were sufficient for them to express their opinions, but it became evident during the interviews that the language barrier was too big of an obstacle. A third interview was removed since this male interviewee did not live in Mirissa. A total of 18 interviews were analyzed.

There was an attempt to attain a spread in the respondents' age, gender, income level, and occupation since these factors may influence the answers of the respondents. Seven of the respondents work within the tourism industry, and three work indirectly with tourism, having occupations that somehow are connected to the industry. The other categories of occupation were fishing (two), housewife (two), farmer (one) retiree (two) and other (one).

Regarding the income level of the respondents' household, we asked them to classify themselves, living in a household with low, average, or high-income level compared to others in Mirissa. The majority of the respondents classified themselves, living in an average income household, 12 in total. Three of the respondents considered themselves living in a household with a low income and another three in a high-income household.

3.2.3 Working with an interpreter

The two main languages in Sri Lanka are Sinhala and Tamil. In the southern part, including Mirissa, the most common language to speak is Sinhala. There are some individuals in Mirissa that speak English fluently, and due to tourism, the number of people that learn

English is growing. However, in order to ensure that even those who do not speak English could participate in the study and to make respondents feel more comfortable, we decided to work with an interpreter when conducting some of the interviews. We got in contact with the University of Ruhuna in Matara, before the journey from Sweden to Sri Lanka. Through that university, we got in contact with a former student and current teachers' assistant named Veran. Sinhala is Veran's mother tongue, but he also speaks English very well. Veran interpreted 14 of the interviews for us, and the rest of the interviews were managed without his help since the respondents spoke English very well.

In the first contact with respondents, it was good to have Veran with us. Veran knew, for example, what the customary rules regarding entering respondents' premises were. This was fortunate for us since many people in Mirissa had high fences that faced the streets, and it was difficult for us to know what appropriate behaviour was. Veran was also very good at greeting the respondents and creating the first encounter.

Veran was aware of the purpose of the study, and having the same interpreter through all the interviews had many advantages for us. We were, for example, able to understand Veran's choices of words better since we did multiple interviews together.

Some information, facial expressions, and emotions may have been lost in translation between languages. This is, however, not something that is attributed to Veran as an interpreter. It is rather something that may happen when interviews are translated.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

The respondents are anonymous in the study and are referred to in this article by a number. The respondents were told about the anonymity in conjunction with the interviews. Some of the respondents gave us permission to use their names, but we chose to make all interviews anonymous.

Before the interviews, in order to make the potential respondent more comfortable, we started presenting ourselves, the purpose of the study, the approximate time for the interview, and informed the respondents that their participation was voluntary. Additionally, we opened up for questions and informed them that, at any time during the interview, they were allowed to interrupt if something was unclear. If the person wanted to participate, we asked if we were allowed to record the interview, explaining that only we would have access to the recorded material.

After each interview, we thanked the respondent for the participation and asked if

he/she had any questions for us. Lastly, we also offered our contact details in case they would come up with any thoughts about the interview or our study later on.

3.3 Methodological discussion

3.3.1 Limitations of the data

The 18 interviews that were conducted and that have been used in this study cannot mirror how the entire population of Mirissa perceives that their place attachment has been affected by tourism.

Qualitative research methods and case studies are sometimes criticized for generating knowledge that is limited to the specific case study. The specific case is not applicable to other contexts, because individuals that have been interviewed do not represent the entire population (Bryman 2016). Some researchers do, however, disagree with the prerequisite that it is not possible to generalize when conducting a qualitative study. Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that the case in focus and how it has been selected determines whether it is possible to generalize. The case of this study, Mirissa, may be applicable to other locations given that these places have similar characteristics as Mirissa. A similar case could be another village in Global South, newly developed tourist destination. Such a case would more likely to reach a similar result as this study, rather than a case executed in a well-established tourist destination, such as Barcelona. With that said, there are no guarantees of generalization as place attachment is a highly subjective concept, formed by people's unique feelings, ideas and experiences.

Respondents of different age were among the respondents; however, the average age among the female respondents was 44 years, which was lower than the average age among the male respondents, which was 51 years. Additionally, the two oldest respondents were female, and most of the female respondents were around 30 years old.

The gender distribution of the interviews that were used in the result and analysis were eight females and ten males. It would, of course, have been desirable to have a distribution of nine females and nine males as well as to have interviewees that were more evenly distributed regarding age. We do, however, not know what the demographic curve looks like in Mirissa, and due to time constraints, we decided to settle with the interviews we were able to obtain.

It was difficult to gather data about the respondent's feelings since they generally were reluctant to express their emotions in the interview situation. It was rare to receive an answer, even when respondents were asked directly about their feelings. The findings, analysis and

conclusion of this thesis are slightly quantitative due to this.

3.3.2 Alternative methods

Many studies on tourism and place attachment have been qualitative (Kajan, 2014; Lemelin et al. 2015; Liu & Cheng, 2016). The researchers that have conducted qualitative studies on place attachment have often had the aim to research the perceptions of residents. It seemed that qualitative research was fitting in this study as well since residents' perceptions also were the purpose of this study.

There are, however, many ways of conducting qualitative interviews. One alternative was to use focus groups. Focus groups can, according to Bryman (2016, pp. 627), contribute to a well-executed study if the research questions have a focus on processes that shapes a collective meaning (ibid). This method would have been fitting in this study since the concept of place attachment at least partially shapes through the collective. Furthermore, conducting a focus group online could have meant that the physical journey to Sri Lanka would have been unnecessary, and it could have saved us both time and money (Bryman 2016, pp. 625-626). Group studies online do, however, have the drawback that only individuals that have access to a computer could have participated. Since this would have excluded a vast majority of the residents in Mirissa, it did not seem to be a fitting method. Getting in contact with respondents as well as ensuring that they had stable wifi would also be obstacles, had this method been chosen. Additionally, results from focus groups conducted face to face usually result in higher quality data (Bryman 2016, pp. 625-626). Focus groups that are conducted face to face also have some drawbacks compared to individual respondent interviews. The researcher may for example find it more difficult to have control over the topics, some more non-verbal or shy residents could possibly have found it difficult to share their points of view in a group and opinions that are less culturally expected or accepted may not be brought to the researchers knowledge (Bryman 2016, pp. 627-628).

4 Results

In this chapter, we present our empirical findings, the respondents' perceptions of how the tourism industry affects Mirissa. The result is structured based on the three contexts of place attachment (see analytical framework); *personal context*, *community context*, and *environmental context*.

The first part, *personal context*, includes two subsections; *place identity* and *place dependence*. In the section called *community context*, there are three subsections; *cultural conflicts*, *sense of community*, and *the experiences of security & crime*. Those categories are based on the residents' perceptions regarding how tourism affects social bonding. The last section, *environmental context*, highlights the feelings of the residents towards the built and natural environment in Mirissa.

4.1 A brief description of Mirissa

Mirissa is a small village located in the Matara District in the southern region of Sri Lanka (fig. 2). The definition of the boundaries of Mirissa are not very clear. In this study we conducted interviews in the following local administrative zones; Mirissa North, Mirissa Udupila, Mirissa South I and Mirissa South II. The approximate population of these four zones was 5970 people in 2012¹.

Tourists visit Mirissa from all over the world to enjoy the beautiful beaches, surfing and whale watching, among other things (Prakash, Jayakody & Amarasinghe 2019; Eyewitness Travel 2016). Since way back fisheries have been a main source of income, but with the increasing tourism, more and more residents see the possibilities and try to involve in the industry. Walking around in Mirissa, it is very clear that this village has turned into a tourist spot. You will see uncountable guesthouse signs when walking around on the narrow streets of the village. Everywhere tuk-tuk drivers are continuously honking, keen to find customers to drive, and around each corner, you'll find keen vendors trying to sell you one of their tours to the nearby sights. The tourism industry has certainly changed Mirissa in many ways, and we are excited to find out about how the residents in the village perceive this development. The satellite imagery below (fig. 3-4) shows the change in the number of buildings in Mirissa from 2009-2019.

¹Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka (2012)
<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2011/index.php?fileName=P2&gp=Activities&tpl=3>

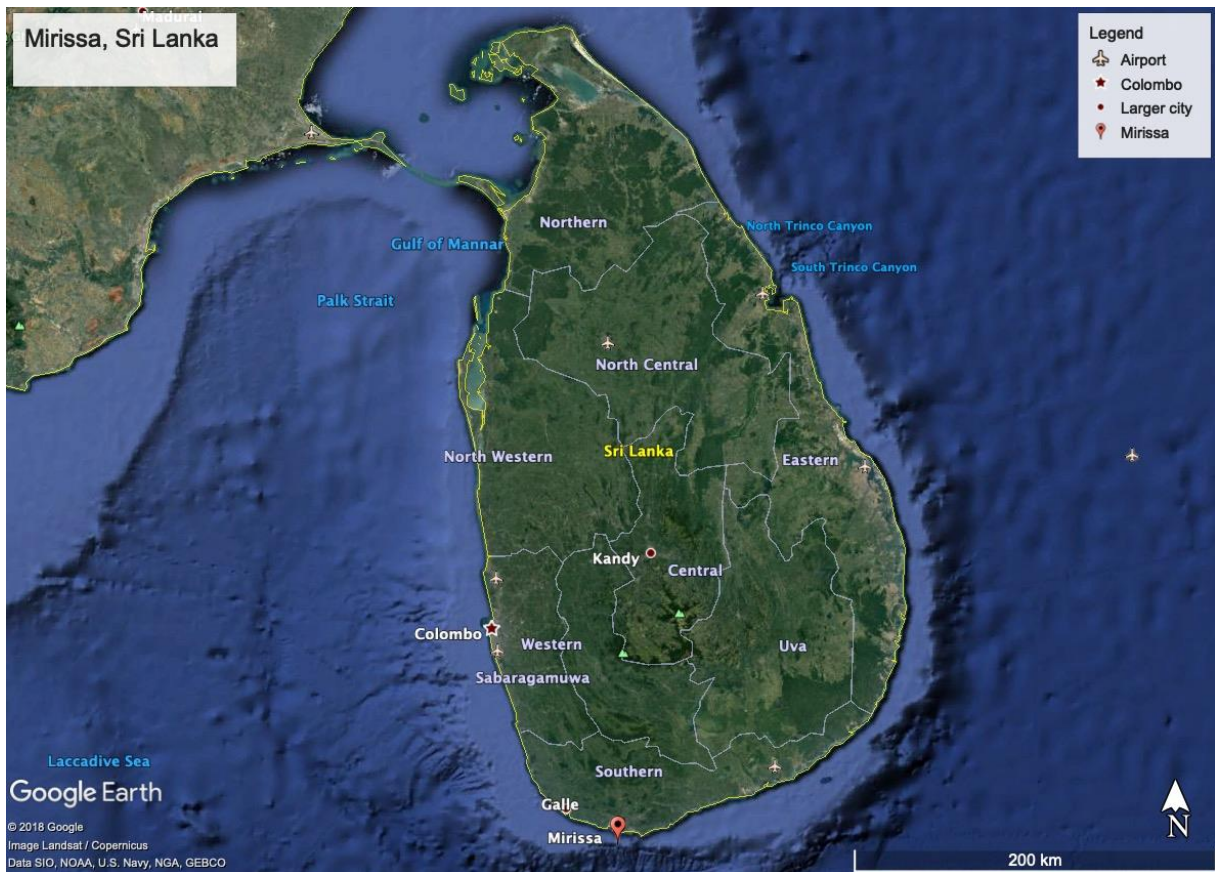


Fig. 2: Satellite image of Sri Lanka (Google Earth 2018).



Fig. 3: Satellite image of Mirissa Beach in 2009 (Google Earth 2009).

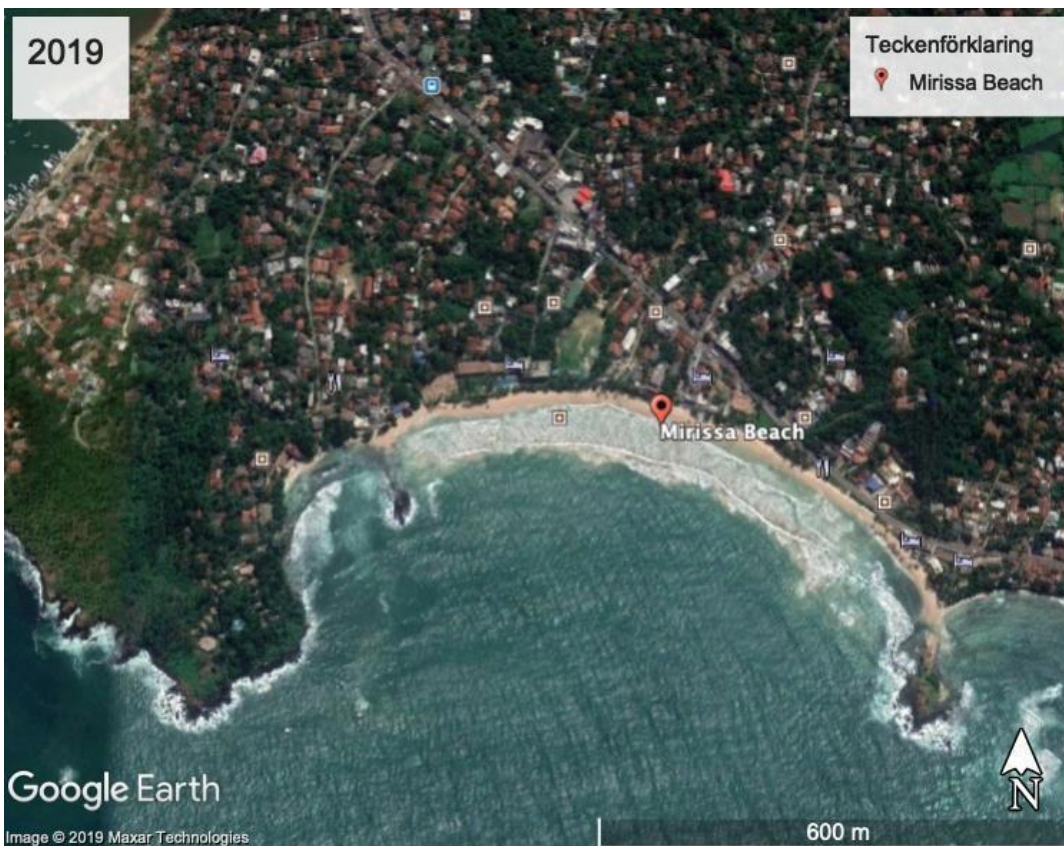


Fig. 4: Satellite image of Mirissa Beach in 2019 (Google Earth 2019).

4.2 Place attachment in a personal context

This section is about the personal bonds that the individual respondents have towards Mirissa. We will present what it is about Mirissa that the respondents feel connected to and why they choose to live their lives there. Few respondents brought up tourism regarding place identity. This section, therefore, mainly focuses on other aspects of the residents' place attachment. The results regarding place dependence are, however, highly related to tourism.

Place identity

Most of the respondents are born in Mirissa, and many feel that this is the reason to stay there. Some would rather live in other places, especially due to the cultural conflicts and drug-related problems (which will be discussed below) but because of the comfortable and familiar life they have in Mirissa, they choose to stay. This is the voice of a 69-year old male who depends economically on his children, both of whom work in the tourism industry: *"I was born here, I'm used to here, so it's okay for me."* (interview 10).

The relationship with other people is also important for the residents' personal attachment to Mirissa. The historical tie is a significant determinant. Having ancestors that have lived in Mirissa seems to be important, and some mentioned that their family had lived in Mirissa for generations. This is the voice of a 52-year old housewife that runs a small guesthouse. Before returning to Mirissa, she worked as a housemaid abroad for 20 years: *"I like living in Mirissa because I was born here. It is my father's village."* (interview 19). Contemporary relationships are also pointed out as essential reasons for living in Mirissa. The respondents mention that being close to relatives and friends is significant for their choice to live in Mirissa. A male, 40 years old that work in the tourism industry, illustrates this by stating: *"Because I was born in Mirissa. I feel comfortable here. I don't want to leave. I am working here, all my relations are here, people both from my mothers' and fathers' side, they all live here. I like to live with them."* (interview 4).

To feel free is also significant for some of the respondents in Mirissa. The meaning of feeling free is, however, different for different residents. It is not something that the respondents describe in much detail. It is, however, often said that people don't interfere in each other's' lives. Furthermore, the sense of freedom may be affected by the amount of visitors. This is the voice of a 40-year-old man that works in the tourism industry. He explains that Mirissa beach is one of his favourite spots in Mirissa but that it has changed due to the increased tourism, it is more crowded now. He says that he does not feel free due to this:

“Going where it’s crowded you will not feel free.” (interview 4).

Some of the respondents describe that they enjoy Mirissa for its natural surroundings and the beach is often mentioned as their favourite place² (see photo 1). A 56- year old male explains that he appreciates the vegetation and that he loves trees: *“Yeah I like the green, I like the trees, I love the trees. So I can’t live without trees; basically, that’s why.”* (interview 17).



Photo 1. A view over Mirissa Beach where both vegetation and buildings are visible. Source: Authors’ own photo.

Place dependence

The job situation of the residents is often brought up as a reason for living their life in Mirissa. People feel that they are bound to Mirissa because they work there. Working with fishing seems like an especially important aspect as well as being close to the ocean. One person who expresses this is a 39- year old housewife, who has a husband who is a fisherman:

“Actually, we would like to go to another place, but the problem is that we are always linked with the ocean because as fishermen we have to be here. But we would like to

² See chapter 4.4 *Place attachment in an environmental context.*

go to another place because of different reasons, especially connected to cultural conflicts and drug-related problems. But we stay in Mirissa because we feel comfortable and familiar here.” (interview 16).

According to the respondents, Mirissa used to be a village with many poor people before tourism became a big industry. The residents mention that the increase in income is one of the most positive things about tourism in Mirissa. Many of the respondents also mention that the employment rate is higher than earlier. Even those who do not work directly with tourism explains that they benefit economically from the industry. Fishermen may, for example, sell their fish for a greater return, others cook food that they cater to hotels and restaurants. A 36-year old female, who does not work in the tourism industry and has a husband that is a fisherman says for instance: *“During periods with many tourists, hotel owners buy our fish. My husband is a fisherman so, there are some specific fishes that tourist love to eat. So we can charge a high price for such kind of fish”* (interview 11).

Even though fishing historically and contemporary has been an important source of income, more people engage in the tourism industry. Some respondents say that they would like to get involved in the tourism industry and start guesthouses. Others say that they want to expand their businesses.

The development of Mirissa is also brought forward as a positive outcome of increased tourism. In relation to this, many of the respondents mention that people can improve their houses and lifestyles. This is the voice of a 31-year old housewife: *“Earlier there were a lot of poor people, but with tourism, the income has increased. They have money. They have a good income so that they can build up their houses.”* (interview 9).

It appears from the interviews that the number of visitors varies during the year which creates an economic uncertainty. The respondents describe that the high-season is from December to February and that low-season starts in March to April. Tourism levels further decrease during the months when it's summer in the northern hemisphere. Those who are engaged in tourism often experience struggle in the months of low tourism since this affects their personal economy. Residents worry about the uncertainty if they will make ends meet. Some residents have loans that they have to pay off, which is another concern. This is the view of a 56-year-old male, who works in the tourism industry, about what happens in Mirissa in the low-season. He says that he thinks that many residents are worried in the low season because they do not have an income:

“I think they are all upset and they are worried. But I think they know it’s good to rest sometimes. But financially they are in trouble. It is chaos because they take a lot of loans from the bank and they don’t know how to pay when they don’t have any income for nine months. There is a lot of stress, and the government does not present any solutions for those with loans to face that. So that’s why most of the time they develop business, and then they sell it. They have a lot of hopes and dreams when they build it, but then they sell it. I mean the same thing happened to me, I would have run this place alone with my own staff, but I know I can’t do it.” (interview 17).

Summary and patterns in the data - place identity and place dependence

Having relatives and friends living nearby seems to be one of the most important aspects of why the respondents live in Mirissa and feel attached to the place. This shows, regardless of age, gender, occupation, or income level. Another recurring factor why the respondents experience a personal attachment to the village is that they are born there. Having ancestors that have lived in Mirissa also seems important. Further, this implies that historical antecedents are vital in the context of personal attachment. Many residents describe that they and their families historically have depended on Mirissa's location by the ocean in order to make a living on fishing. Tourism has, however, become a growing source of income, and the majority of the respondents express that this has brought many new business opportunities and that residents' standard of living has improved. On the other hand, it also appears that many residents have taken bank loans in order to start their business. This highlights a negative aspect in the sense that those with high credits are highly dependent on the tourism industry in order to pay off their credits. Hence, the seasonal tourism industry in Mirissa creates a vulnerability in residents' livelihoods.

4.3 Place attachment in a community context

4.3.1 Cultural conflicts

Conflicts can emerge when people from different cultures meet. Some of the respondents express concerns about how tourists from “western” countries behave. This brought up agitating feelings in some cases because of the way that some tourists act, and it is pointed out that this is not compatible with what the respondents perceive as their own culture. In this section, we will discuss various aspects of cultural conflict that the respondents brought up.

This will be done under the categories of clothing, behaviour, and relationships.

Clothing

Some of the respondents feel that the way that tourists dress is in conflict with their culture. The conflict does often mean that females are wearing a bikini. Tourist males do not appear to dress in a way that generates as much conflict. Bare-chested local males are quite frequently observed in Mirissa, while local women usually cover at least their shoulders and knees. This is the voice of a male, aged 49, who works in the private sector, but not with tourism: *“The way that males dress can be inappropriate too, but the main thing is women. The way that the males dress is normal. They can go without a shirt, but women can’t go without a shirt, but that is what is happening now”* (interview 21).

The biggest issue seems to be when the tourists wear a bikini on the roads in the village. It is often stated that it is okay if tourists are wearing a bikini at the beach. Meanwhile, many of the respondents choose not to visit Mirissa beach and say that they prefer to go to other beaches, where there are not any tourists. Some of the also express worries about how it will affect their children when they see tourists wearing beachwear and short clothes. Reasons for this being that they do not want their children to adapt to the way tourists dress. One respondent who expresses this concern is a 79-year-old female: *“I think the beach is the most beautiful spot in Mirissa. We cannot go there with the children now though, due to inappropriate dressing”* (interview 7).

The respondents find it difficult to state how it makes them feel when this cultural conflict occurs. Some describe that they feel uncomfortable. Some feel that the way that female tourists dress can be worrisome because it can provoke bad behaviour from local males. One respondent, a female aged 52, mentions rape, and another respondent, a female aged 79, believes that the short clothes worn by tourists are a reason for divorce in local families. The voice of a 24-year-old male, working in the tourism industry, expresses what he experiences is the attitude towards female tourists’ beachwear in his family:

“Because sometimes we cannot go to the beach with our mom or with a woman, like our wife or with the kids, especially with the girls in the family, we cannot take them out. Women are wearing bikinis, but our women, in our culture, women don’t like to see such things. So they think it’s negative like especially our parents they don’t like to take us to the beach with them. They are very shy, too, shy in front of their kids. (...).

Because they think that it will be so bad for their kids because they are growing, and they are not following the culture, and they will turn into bad persons by seeing these things” (interview 20).

Even though many of the respondents feel that these cultural conflicts are problematic, it is not something that they typically perceive that they personally should do something about. Instead, several suggest that the hotel owners should tell their guests how they should dress. A female respondent, aged 79, says the following about if it’s a problem that they cannot go to the beach: *“It’s a problem. But we are not going to tell tourists ‘don’t do like this.’ We can’t avoid tourists, but we can go to other beaches where we can enjoy ourselves.” (interview 7).*

Behaviour

Another cultural conflict that many of the respondents identify is that some tourists behave in a way that they do not think is traditional. Some feel that tourists have too much physical contact in public spaces. Kissing and hugging are brought forward as examples of this kind of behaviour. This particular respondent, a female aged 27 that rent out some rooms, thinks that drugs can be an explanatory factor for the inappropriate behaviour: *“The problem is also about some behaviour of some tourists. They are not behaving well, especially couples, sometimes hugging and having too much contact. It’s our responsibility to prevent our children from seeing this. Some tourists are drunk, and some use drugs.” (Interview 15).*

One of the respondents, a 24 old male, feels that there would be gossip among the local residents if he and his wife would behave more in line with how tourists behave. Furthermore, he argues that if his wife goes to another place, outside the village, she does not have to worry about how to dress. When she stays in a place where they do not know anyone, they do not have to worry about gossip. Additionally, he thinks that local people need to change their mindset:

“I would really love for my wife to be able to wear makeup and short clothes if she wants, but I tell her to think a bit because we grew up in this society. We meet people every day, we talk to people every day, and we cannot run away from these things because we have to live with these things. [...]. I’m telling her all the time: ‘if you go out from our village you can wear whatever you like, no problem, because nobody knows us, so it’s not a problem.’ [...]. I don’t want people to gossip about her. [...]. I

mean it's crazy. But the mind of the people needs to change. They need to develop, no they don't need to develop they need a brainwash." (interview 20).

Another aspect that is brought up is that the Mirissa area is becoming less calm due to tourism. It is mentioned that hotels and restaurants are loud, and this can affect the local residents. Parties along the coastline seem to be the main source of the disturbance (see photo 2). One female aged 39 mentions that this can cause sleeping problems for her children affecting their school results. *"There are some DJ's and parties, beach parties here so because it's a problem now. There is a lot of noise then and the school children they are interrupted by those things."* (interview 16).



Photo 2. Mirissa Beach in night-time where restaurants and hotels arrange dining and parties to attract tourists. Source: Authors' own photo.

Relationships

There are relationships that have been initiated in Mirissa between local residents and foreigners. These relationships are usually between a younger local male and an older foreign woman.

The nature of these relationships is brought up continually in the interviews, and

several respondents are worried that these relationships will lead to divorced families. The situation that the respondents then talk about is that the husband of one family will get together with a foreign woman. This respondent is a 38-year-old female who owns a restaurant, and she expresses:

“Sometimes a man goes to another white woman you know, they are causing a family breakdown, just for the money. They go to find the money, but they make problems for the family. The wife is always in the house, and they are not working; they are staying with their children. But the husband always goes to work at a restaurant or a hotel or maybe somewhere else. There he might become friends with a white woman and then maybe... this is the problem.” (interview 3).

Some feel that this is a problem for the entire society, and it is often talked about as something unethical. Another perceived negative consequence is that local children will mimic this kind of behaviour. A 31-year-old housewife says:

“Sometimes, young males in this area try to get a relationship with an older foreign woman, and then they try to go with them to a foreign country. This kind of relationship is bad because my children watch those things and they think ‘right I can also do that.’ So that’s not good for the people here. It’s not ethical.” (interview 9).

Summary and patterns in the data - Cultural conflicts

Among the respondents, both men and female are of the opinion that the way that tourists dress is an issue, especially when tourists wear a bikini in other places than on the beach. Many respondents are also worried about how it will affect their children to see tourists wearing clothes that differ from culturally worn clothes. The male respondents generally do not bring up the dress code as an issue as much as the female respondents do. Although the only respondent that explicitly expresses a wish for acceptance in reference to how women dress is a male. The male that wishes that there was more acceptance in this matter is also one of the youngest respondents, at age 24. There is, however, not a pattern in that younger respondents are more positive towards females dressing in short clothes or bikini. A female who also is 24 years old and works in the tourism industry says for example the following about this matter: *“It’s not a problem with the dress code at the beach or maybe when they*

are in the guesthouse, but if they are wearing the same kind of clothes in the road or in another public place then it will become a problem.” (interview 12). This is not the voice of one of the more conservative respondents, but she is clearly opposed to tourists wearing a bikini in public places.

The same pattern as with the clothes is found regarding relationships between tourists and local residents. The female respondents do, to a larger extent, think that the relationships described above are unethical. Similar to the cultural conflict that emerges with how tourists dress, it is not possible to see a pattern within the data considering different age groups.

Concerning behavioural aspects, there is no apparent difference between the views of men and women. This may be due to that not as many respondents bring this matter up at all.

4.3.2 Sense of community

Some respondents feel that the coherence in the community in Mirissa is being affected by tourism. This influence can be both positive and negative. This section will be divided into two categories. The first one, *the established community*, will treat the connections between the local residents. There is however also a lot of new people that visit or settle down in Mirissa because of tourism or due to business prospects, and this create new relationships/bonds that affect the residents’ sense of community. The second category will, therefore, present viewpoints on this *new sense of community*.

The established community

The increase in tourism is affecting the relationship between residents in several ways. These accounts vary a lot depending on personal feelings and relationships. With that in mind, it is still clear that many of the respondents experience that they have a bond towards their fellow villagers, and they usually feel that they have good relationships with their neighbours. Networks were described where people help each other with their businesses. This is indicated by the example from a 36-year-old female who dries fish for a living.

“It is common to have a dialogue with the neighbours. One person may offer accommodation, and another person might be cooking, and a third person might be guiding. So it's like a network. The network has changed because tourism has increased. The network or relationship is stronger now because for example if four foreign couples come to our house and I only have two rooms, then I can take those

other two couples to a neighbour's house.” (interview 11).

Many respondents did, however, also describe that there is a growing individualism. This is according to some, manifested through a drive to earn money and that helping others has become less important. One of the respondents, a 62-year-old male who runs a stall, perceives that for many people, the highest priority in life is to make money. Furthermore, he sees a connection between people becoming more concerned about making money and that they no longer help each other in the same way as before. He describes:

“They would use that income for another business to gain more and more profit. (...) They will not stop it. There's no end of that. If I have a thousand rupee I would like to have a thousand more, if I have two thousand tomorrow, I would like four thousand, like that. There will be no end of this. (...) They just earn money, and then they will die. That's it. Some people will not even help others; they just earn money, and then they will die. [...]. It's not good, but if people can help others, that's better” (interview 14).

Some explain that they work more now that tourism has become a growing industry in the area and that this, in turn, means that they don't have as much time to visit their relatives and neighbours. Traditional events and holidays seem nevertheless to bring people together as is shown by the example below, where a 38-year-old female who works within the tourism industry tells us about her point of view:

“We don't have enough time to talk with friends and neighbours, and we don't have as much time to go to their houses. They don't have time to go to our house. But before we were always together. [...] If someone had an accident or something happened then very quickly we were going to their house, but now we don't have enough time. Now people think a little bit more about themselves. We have a business, and everybody has their businesses. [...]. Normally we do have strong relationships with each other though. Every year in April we have our Sinhala festival to celebrate the new year, and at that time we go to all our neighbours and our cousins' houses. But that is the only time when we all can get together.” (interview 3).

The relationship between neighbours seems to be affected by tourism in another way as well. It is common that the respondents do not feel that their interests are being regarded when their

neighbours expand their business or build something in their property, though there are a few respondents that feel that they are being considered. The respondents appear to find this lack of concern from their fellow villagers to be of little importance. They also repeatedly explain that they do not want to interfere in other people's business. An explanation for this is that if the respondents themselves are given the opportunity to start a business, for example, a hotel or a restaurant, they do not want anyone else to come in their way. A 54 year old male who does not work in the tourism industry gives an explanation for this by saying that he would not want anyone else to tell him that he cannot build, if he is presented with the opportunity to start a business: *“If I get money, I will definitely build a hotel. I don’t want anyone to interfere”* (interview 8).

New sense of community

People visit Mirissa with different purposes and reasons. There are, however, two apparent groups of non-Mirissans that the respondents mention in the interviews. One group is the tourists that visit for a limited amount of time. This group of tourists is generally described as friendly even though most of the respondents state that there are some tourists that behave badly.

This group of temporary tourists may revisit Mirissa several times, and the respondents describe that they sometimes develop friendships with these tourists and even stay in contact with some of them after they left. If they come to the country again they may visit the residents they have made contact with. One respondent, a female aged 38, who works in the tourism industry, mentions that she has developed strong relationships with some tourists; they are almost like family to her. She says: *“I mean they come here to particularly visit us, my daughter [...] and me. We are like a family, you know. If they want to enjoy their holiday, they can go somewhere else, but they don’t.”* (interview 3).

The other group of people is the one that has moved to Mirissa on a more permanent basis. These people often start businesses for tourism in Mirissa. Because of this, the community is changing, according to some respondents. Although this group of people is staying for a longer time, they are still thought of as visitors. A 31-year-old female accounts for her thoughts on this new kind of community. She says that she does not know the new people that has settled down in Mirissa and that there is a shift in the community. She expresses that she does not like this:

“Most of the owners are from Mirissa, but now there are also people coming from outside to run hotels here. I don’t like that. But actually, what happens is that now land price is very high here if someone has land they would like to rent it or sell, so they get money. Then they can go elsewhere. So, then people not from Mirissa come, and they buy land here. It is a shift in the community [...]. I don’t have any connection with those people, so I don’t know about those people, about what kind of people they are.” (interview 9).

Another respondent, a 40-year-old male that works in the tourism industry, argues that business owners who come from outside of Mirissa do not care about the environment or the society. He says: *“They are doing just their business, they don’t think about, worry about, the environment or the society here. They just earn their money, and after sometimes five years working here, they just go away. It’s like that. They only think about their own profit.”* (interview 4).

Summary and patterns in the data - sense of community

Both respondents that work within the tourism industry and respondents that do not work within the tourism industry, bring up a growing individualism due to tourism. These respondents vary in age as well as gender. The described individualism is, according to some respondents manifested by a desire to earn money and a disregard when it comes to helping others. Other respondents do, however, describe situations where residents help each other with their businesses.

There are also respondents that say that they don’t have as much time to see their family and friends anymore. These people are working in the tourism industry, and are middle-aged, between 38 and 51 years old. Both genders are represented among these responses as well. One respondent, a 49-year-old man who does not work in the tourism industry, also says that he is very busy with work. However, he does not mention that this is something that affects the amount of time he spends with his family and friends, like the respondents that work in the tourism industry do.

There are two groups of non-Mirissans that are identified in the answers: (temporary) tourists and new business owners. Most of the respondents and both males and females are of the opinion that tourists generally are good, but that there are some tourists who act in a bad way sometimes. On the contrary, none of the female respondents, older than 45 years old, say

that they think that tourists are good in general.

4.3.3 The experiences of security and crime

When it comes to the experience of security and crime, the opinions slightly differ between the interviewees. Some argue that the history of Mirissa is characterized by deadly violence and family feuds. Mirissa had a reputation for being a rough village that resulted in the avoidance of people from other parts of Sri Lanka. This bad situation, some argue, has been improved due to tourism. Others argue that drug use has increased in correlation with tourism, and that the hotels are significant actors in distributing the drugs. They mean further that the new networks that have been enabled due to tourism to facilitate the spread of these illegal substances.

Drug and alcohol use

There is, according to several of the respondents a high demand for drugs and alcohol in Mirissa. Many are of the opinion that this has increased due to tourism. As a consequence of this, there are some worries that the local children also will get addicted to drugs that they get from the tourists. Some think that this is the reason why school children drop out of school. Several of the respondents express their concern about that the behaviour of the tourists will influence their children, that they will start abuse alcohol and other drugs. A 24-year-old woman tells that children interact with tourists and that they use drugs together: *“Young people, young small children, school children they use to go to the beach and just chat to the tourists and they use to take drugs with the tourists. They use drugs together, so that’s a bad thing.”*(interview 12).

There are different explanations of how the drugs end up in Mirissa and how they are distributed. Some respondents say that it is the tourists who are bringing the drugs and sometimes even give to children. Others argue that there is a bigger kind of network with drug dealers from outside of Mirissa who control the distribution of drugs. Further, it is stated that many hotels in Mirissa create an arena for dealing with drugs. There are also beach parties hosted by the restaurants and hotels where it is said to be a different kind of drugs used by both tourists and local residents. However, there are some ambivalent feelings towards the beach parties as these events are a way for hotel and restaurant owners to attract customers and earn money.

Some of the interviewees also think that it is the hotel and guesthouse owners who are

illegally selling alcohol and drugs to the tourists and local residents. This is the voice of a 39-year-old housewife: *“Guesthouse owners bring drugs from outside to here because you know they sell for tourist and other people that are living around here, they also can buy.”*

(interview 16). A 79-year-old woman also says that the hotel owners are selling drugs to tourists. Sometimes the owners even make the drugs available for school children she mentions. She perceives that the drugs are a social problem and that it is a lot of drugs in the village now: *“Some hotel owners try to sell drugs to tourists. And other small school children also use to take those drugs from hotel owners. Then again, that is a social problem. There is a lot of drugs in the Mirissa area now.”* (interview 7).

The increasing presence of drugs is recognized as a problem that mainly affects boys. There is a concern that they will start using drugs and alcohol and become addicted. This, in turn, may result in low school attendance and conflicts within the family. Moreover, since tourism has created a demand for these products, it is more easily accessible for the children. These problems mentioned above sometimes even make some interviewees want to move away from Mirissa to somewhere else in order to protect their children. A 40-year-old man thinks that the drugs are such a serious problem that he plans to move from Mirissa when his children get older: *“I think, in 15 years I won’t live in Mirissa. Because of my children. I don’t want to stay here. Because it’s, I told you, the drugs, because I can’t go with my children everywhere, you know.”* (interview 4). He is not mentioning if he would like to move because of concern that his children will start using drugs when they are older, but somehow he feels that the drugs inhibit them and that he is obligated to protect his children.

It is also mentioned that drug use among children can be derived from the absence of accessible meeting points for the youths. Earlier, there was a well-visited place, adjacent to the school, where children could meet and play a different kind of sports in their leisure time. This place was destroyed by the tsunami in 2004, and later, the Sri Lankan Coast Guard built a facility on that site (see photo 3). The male quoted above mentions that he used to go there as a child and that there were not that many children that smoked in these days:

“And now they don’t have anywhere to play. They are using their phones and gathering [...] they are smoking, starting to smoke this ganja. We need playgrounds in Mirissa. We have a playground, but we’re not allowed to go to the coast guard because it’s a military place. It was a nice place because in my era there were no children smoking or using ganja, just a few but now it’s most of them, more than 70%. In age 12-13 they start to smoke. It’s very bad.” (interview 4).



Photo 3. Entrance to the Sri Lanka Coast Guard. Source: Authors' own photo.

Several of the respondents express their dissatisfaction about that it recently opened a liquor shop in Mirissa. This makes alcohol more accessible. It is described as a well-visited store by especially local males and tourists but that it also makes it possible for children to buy beer for a small amount of money. A 49-year-old male says that the opening of the liquor shop is mainly because of the demand from the tourists: *“And one bad thing, they opened a liquor shop here, this year. Their main target is tourism.”* (interview 21). A 53-year-old female is concerned that the liquor shop can sell alcohol to children for a low amount of money: *“[...]there is a new bar³ here, that is very bad because even small children can, small children means school children, can buy a beer can or something for a little amount of*

³ The respondent says “bar” but from the context it can be determined that she means liquor shop.

money, one or two hundred, so it's very bad." (interview 19).

The issues related to increased drug and alcohol abuse in the community seem to be, as described above, derived from tourism. That is a shared view among most of the respondents. Some are trying to find a reason for this and highlights the difference in cultures as a factor. The tourists that come to Mirissa are considered to have another culture and approach to alcohol and drug use. They are described as being accustomed to it and that it is something that is a part of their culture. A 39-year-old female that is involved in the tourism industry says: *"But of course tourist people they like to drink, that is their culture, but our people cannot handle the alcohol very well. Tourists, they don't drink much, only with their meals [...]."* (interview 3).

Further, one view is that tourists are just temporary visitors, spending a limited vacation in Mirissa, using drugs and alcohol just for that limited time and for personal enjoyment. This, in turn, becomes a permanent situation for the residents in Mirissa. Someone's temporary enjoyment affects the community all year around. The voice of a 40-year-old male working within the tourism industry:

"Tourists I mean, you know about the tourists, European culture. I don't know about it, but normally we think we see tourists using drugs just for fun, that limited time they have here, on their holiday and when they are going out. But for us who lives here, this is always all year round because people coming and going and there are always new tourists they can join. It's how it is. I think it's easy money for people; that's why they try to spread it. The best market for them is young people between 13 and 15 years old." (interview 4).

Respondents say that students do not complete school, even though it is compulsory. These students are allegedly as young as 15 - 16 years old and are often males. The reason that they leave school is believed to be due to opportunities to work in the fishing industry and tourism industry. There is a big worry about these youngsters, and some are concerned that they will get addicted to drugs. A 27-year-old housewife who rents out some rooms shares her point of view on the matter:

"Some tourists bring illegal drugs here. There are beach parties regularly here. So there are a lot of drugs in those parties. (...). Young people when they get to age 15 or 16 they just drop off from school and go to work in hotels and sometimes they work as

beach boys like that. So that are the problems, and sometimes they are addicted to drugs, so that are the problems.” (interview 15).

Other crimes

The main issue in Mirissa seems to be drug-related for the reason that this factor is mentioned most frequently by the respondents. Though, there are some that mention other crimes like robbery, sexual abuse, and fighting. These activities are sometimes highlighted to have a negative effect on the reputation of Mirissa as a safe place to visit. Furthermore, this may decrease the number of tourists coming to Mirissa according to some of the respondents. This type of situation is brought up by a 31-year-old housewife; *“Sometimes young people they try to steal a purse or money of tourists. So you know it is not good. Tourist thinks it's not safe to be here. And in some periods the number of tourists decreases due to such activities.”* (interview 9). Another 52-year-old female housewife who runs a two-room guesthouse mentions about two German ladies who were robbed and that she was concerned that these women would tell others that Sri Lankan people are not reliable. Further, she mentions that the German women decided to interrupt their vacation and go home one week earlier due to this incident and that they, after such a negative experience, will not come back to Sri Lanka. The housewife argues that this may have a negative impact on tourism. She worries about this since the tourism industry is their main source of income now. *“After they don't come back to our country, that's why we want to control. We want them to come back, come back to our country because our main job now is the tourism”* (interview 19).

Improved security

Although the drug-related problems are a highly discussed subject, some residents feel that Mirissa has become a safer place to live in because of tourism. The tourism industry has contributed to people's wealth and is mentioned as one reason that crime has declined. This is pointed out by a 36-year-old woman who works with drying and selling fish: *“Now the economy is well developed, better than earlier, why there are not as many thieves here. It's reduced now compared to previous years before tourism,”* she says (interview 11).

Some respondents also perceive that Mirissa has undergone a major change towards a more safe and peaceful community and that tourism is somehow an explanatory factor to this positive transformation. A 24-year-old male describes Mirissa, before the development of tourism, as a gangster village: *“Because there were people that were killing each other all the time (...). Because Mirissa was like a gangsters village before and when the tourist come,*

people changed, and there are many people that know that they now have a good life.” (interview 20). In the below quote a 56-year-old male, also working within the tourism industry, explains that earlier Mirissa was a rough area where people felt unsafe and even avoided to travel through the village. He also argues that the reason Mirissa was a violent village was because of the fishing community and that it has improved in correlation with the increasing tourism. Thanks to tourism, people have the opportunity to work, and it is now safe to walk in the streets, even at night. He expresses:

“Now we have work, and we have a vision. In the past, it was a rough area. You would not walk along this street after 7 o’clock. And other people didn’t like to pass Mirissa, because they could be robbed or they could be killed. It was so rough in Mirissa. But now, with tourism, of course, everything has changed. It has changed a lot, so it’s a good thing. People can now walk along these streets without fear. Even at midnight, there’s no problem. In the past, you couldn’t, like four or five years ago.” (interview 17).

Another male, 40 years old who works within the tourism industry, draws similar conclusions. He claims that the fishermen behave aggressively, that they drink a lot and sometimes fights. Mirissa is now a calmer place to live in due to the fact that this generation is gone and has been replaced by a new generation that wants to work within the tourism industry:

“(…)they feel aggressive, you know, the fishermen, (…).Then when they come here, they’re trying to drink more alcohol then sometimes fighting, parties, shouting everywhere. It was like that, but now it’s calm because that generation is gone; it getting old now. The new generation is trying to work with tourists. Not with fishing.” (interview 4).

Some of the respondents perceive that criminal activities are controlled in Mirissa due to the increased presence of police. A 69-year-old former fisherman perceives that drugs and thieves are a problem in Mirissa but that it has been reduced because of the police: *“Drugs is a big problem and also thieves, but now there’s a lot of policemen here, so it has reduced, so it’s now somewhat in control.”* (interview 10). Another male, a 51-year-old farmer, thinks that the police manages to control the drugs in the village: *“Because there is some problem with drugs and some tourists are arrested with drugs, and now there is tourist police, that’s good. The*

situation is better now” (interview 18).

An opinion that stands out is from a 62-year-old male. He perceives that the problem with drugs has been solved since a few years back: *“Drugs and other illegal alcohols was there a few years back, but now it’s gone, there are no things like that.”* (interview 14). This, he argues, is due to the involvement of the Buddhist monks, politicians, and the police. They made the young people in Mirissa swear an oath in front of Buddha that they would not use drugs:

“Actually that’s because of the involvement of the Buddhist monks. They forced people not to use drugs, not sell drugs, and don’t involve for that kind of things. So the involvement of monks actually prevented such illegal things.[...]. First, actually there was an announcement to all the village. After that, they gathered all the people living in this area, all the monks, the politicians, and the police. They got together and discussed this, and finally, they resolved this as a group. [...]. This was seven years back, before the tsunami. Actually, young people, they were asked to come to the temple, and they took an oath in front of the lord Buddha that ‘I will never use such kind of things,’ so they can’t break that then.” (interview 14).

Summary and patterns in the data - the experiences of security and crime

The respondents have a relatively shared view regarding that drug use is a vital problem in Mirissa and that this correlates to the increase of tourism. These opinions do not obviously differ between the respondents within the tourism industry or those who work in other fields. Although there are a few, who mention that Mirissa was a really rough village before the tourist boom. The common perception among those is that this is because of that Mirissa earlier was a fishing village and that the fishermen’s working culture strongly revolved around alcohol abuse and tough working conditions. The respondents who mention this are all included in the tourism industry.

4.4 Place attachment in an environmental context

Appearance of the natural and built environment

The appearance of the environment is constantly changing. It is highly noticeable in Mirissa

which is a small village that has undergone a major change in just a few years, from having been a village largely dependent on fishing to a tourist destination where a lot of people try to involve in the new business. Hotels, restaurants, and other constructions are built to fulfil the requirements of the tourism industry, and this alters the appearance of the place (see photo 4). This physical change can affect how the local community perceives their locality where they live their lives.



Photo 4. The main road in Mirissa which is surrounded by hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. Source: Authors' own photo.

Most of the respondents think that there has been a major change in the environment of Mirissa due to the increasing tourism. The opinions do, however, differ concerning the attitude to these changes. There are those who are positive and feel that the buildings are proof of development. Others perceive that these processes are going to fast without consideration of consequences and lack of respect to nature.

In Mirissa there are lot of constructions that are unfinished (see photo 5). Many residents expand their living houses in order to host more tourists. Some respondents

experience the changes positively. They mention that they like the new buildings and explain that the expansion of the built environment indicates that Mirissa is developing. A 62-year-old male describes how his favorite place that he also used to visit as a child has changed. Before there were only coconut trees there and now there is a hotel at the site, owned by his friend. He perceives this as a positive transformation: *“It is better now because earlier there were just coconut trees, but now it is developed, there’s a lot of facilities now there so now it’s good.”* (interview 14). A similar experience is described by a 31-year-old housewife. She explains that her favourite place, the beach, has changed a lot due to tourism: *“After the increase in tourism, there has been a lot of hotels that have been built in the coastal area. And it has changed very much.”* (interview 9). Although, she is positive to the changes due to the economic benefits: *“Actually I like that, because tourists have a place to stay, because of the accommodations. Then income will increase, and also employment will increase.”* (interview 9).



Photo 5. An unfinished hotel construction in Mirissa village. Source: Authors’ own photo.

Some respondents appreciate the looks of the new buildings. A 36-year-old female explains that there are some areas in Mirissa that are unbuilt and that she would like to see new buildings there. She also mentions that she appreciates the lights at the beach: *“There are some empty spaces in here, so I hope that new buildings will take place on those empty spaces and also beautiful gardens. It will be beautiful. In the night time, there is a lot of lights here and there so the beach is always lightened and it is much more beautiful than previous. I like the lights on the beach.”* (interview 11). A 69-year-old male also explains that he appreciates the new buildings. He thinks it’s now more aesthetically appealing than before when there was a lot of vegetation:

“It actually has changed a lot because there are big buildings on the beach and also in the harbour, especially to accommodate tourists. Earlier there were some places with bushes and trees everywhere. It was not beautiful, but now it is much more beautiful, especially the beaches and the harbour. It’s good now. Earlier there was a lot of bushes there, but now it’s cleared, and it has been built beautiful hotels there.” (interview 10).

In contrast to the experiences of the quoted respondents above, some are more sceptical of the many buildings that are being built. They express more concern about the environment and the aesthetic appearance of Mirissa. A 40-year-old male explains that he does not want for Mirissa to become a “concrete jungle”: *“I do not prefer big buildings, not like a concrete jungle, I mean. Nicely build places consider the environment, not destroying it. It is important to keep your environment in good condition and create good places.”* (interview 4). Although, he perceives that there are some people that make an effort when they build through investment in good architecture:

“But they now try to get good architecture, paying good money for that. Some of them, because some hoteliers go abroad to visit Thailand or other countries and they can see the differences, how not to make boxes everywhere. Then some of them try to build more natural housing⁴ for the tourists. I think it will change, but still, there are some people who don’t have good knowledge of tourism, that’s why they try to make these

⁴ The respondent says “natural housing” but from the context it can be determined that he means building more in tune with nature.

buildings.” (interview 4).

Another 24-year-old male also explains that he is critical of the concrete buildings as they destroy the environment but that other people may like it. He mentions that he does not like it when tourists choose to visit those kinds of places:

"Actually, I hate that kind of things, but I'm only one person. But there may be 100 people who like it or even 1000, who don't see the world very well because they build concrete buildings and destroy all the nature and shed trees. These kind of things are not good, you know. I'm not happy to see this. I don't like the tourists even that comes to those kinds of restaurants and hotels. They come to visit Sri Lanka, saying 'Sri Lanka is the best country to travel, with nature, the mountains and everything it's really beautiful.' But they come to Sri Lanka, and they go to a five star, big hotel, getting stuck in a concrete building, having an expensive glass of wine and they think they are enjoying their holiday. Is that a life? I think no." (interview 20).

A 38-year-old female describes how Miressa has changed since 2009. She explains that it was much more vegetation before and that now there are buildings everywhere. Although she is positive to the change as she thinks that it is beautiful now as well despite the changes. She also expresses that there are buildings everywhere but that they are a prerequisite to accommodate tourists:

"We only had coconut trees on the beach, and everywhere like a jungle, you know trees like that. But now there are buildings everywhere. But what to do, people need accommodation, and in that way, they want to build some guesthouse or something like that. Otherwise, Mirissa was very beautiful before. But now it's also beautiful... but I mean... you know it has changed, from before 2009 to now." (interview no.3)

Additionally, she highlights the importance to consider the environment and preserve the trees when building:

"I really do like this change. But I like it when it's more trees, you know. I don't like it when it's only buildings. I think here it's still some trees left (...). So much work to do and you need so much space, but if we cut the trees like that then it will be very hot

here and...Building and, making new hotels, it's good, but we also need to protect our nature.” (interview 3).

She also points out that the beach is better now than before due to that there are fewer buildings at the site. Now, she says, you are able to see the beach: *“Now the beach is good because so many restaurants were demolished, last government you know, that incident. Now it's very nice, and you can see the beach. But before, there were restaurants and buildings everywhere” (interview 3).*

A 56-year-old male mentions that he appreciates the colonial architecture (see photo 6 & 7) and that he is sad because houses built in that style are deteriorating and they are being demolished: *“I mean we had a beautiful kind of architecture here, Colonial houses on the main road and in little roads but they are all broken now. The houses are being removed, and they are building new things.” (interview 17).* The reasons for this, he says, are that the houses are difficult to maintain, do not have a modern look and that people do not understand the beauty of these houses: *“Because they think it is difficult to maintain them. And also the houses don't have a modern look. So some people don't understand how beautiful the colonial things are. I mean I love it, I love all colonial architecture. But many don't understand. So the beauty is lost.” (interview 17).* Further, he mentions that the houses that are being built nowadays are missing the aesthetical attractiveness and he brings up his neighbour's house as an example. Lastly, he says that he is not able to influence this. Even though there are regulations people do not care, and if he tries to involve, he feels that he only wastes his time:

“(...) my neighbours they are now building three-floor stories. (...) Inside it looks all right but from my compound look at it. Look at it, and it's an ugly building just behind mine. It's really ugly! And it's not properly done, and it's not completed. It's a distraction. So it's the same everywhere, this tasteless... and there are no rules and regulations. I mean there are rules and regulations, but they don't care because they can go around that. Because of bribes and you know. (...). So if I fight for that, I lose, and I waste my time, unfortunately. Because these people don't understand the real beauty of the environment and that's sad.” (interview 17).



Photo 6. A house in colonial style which is in good condition, Mirissa. Source: Authors' own photo.



Photo 7. An old, uninhabited, house in colonial style, Mirissa. Source: Authors' own photo.

Summary and patterns in the data - Appearance of the natural and built environment

A common view among the respondents is that Mirissa is changing in correlation with the increasing tourism. This is also evident through the satellite pictures of the village. There has been built a lot since 2009, and the range of hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and other tourism-based facilities has increased. Those of the respondents that seem to have a more positive attitude to these changes are the ones that classify themselves living in households with an average or low income. They often equalize the increase in buildings with development. This implies that this kind of development perceives as something desirable and the growth of new buildings in the area is proof of that Mirissa is developing.

The respondents that are more sceptical to the ongoing changes are those who classify themselves as living in a household with high-income level. They criticize the way facilities are being built, both concerning the aesthetic appearance and the consideration of the natural environment.

5 Analysis

In this chapter we analyse the result of this study in relation to the concepts and previous research presented in chapter two. The structure follows the same logic as in the method and results chapters. First, place attachment in a personal context will be examined, followed by community context and finally environmental context.

5.1 Place attachment in a personal context

Place identity and place dependence

As previously stated, *Place identity* refers to experiences and events through people's lives which often create a bond to the places where they live. A person's place identity can contribute to a social identity. The place identity can develop when a person pursues to feel similarities to others. This can create a sense of belonging to a place as a group which shapes an "us" and "them" feeling (Scannell & Gifford 2009). The distinction between the personal context, to which place identity belongs, and the community context can become blurred. It can be particularly difficult to distinguish between the two contexts in situations where place identity contributes to a social identity. According to this study, the social identity seems to be the only aspect of place identity that is affected by tourism.

Place dependence, on the other hand is a functional attachment. Place dependence relates to the physical attributes of a place that constitute conditions which enable people to achieve their goals or carry out their activities (Raymond, Brown & Weber 2010).

Some signs that residents in Mirissa are gaining a stronger place identity, in a similar matter to what Liu & Cheng (2016) described, are identified. The business networks that are shaped between residents (see chapter 4.3.2) as a result of the tourism industry can for example be something that brings the residents together while also creating a sense of distinction between tourists and residents. The distinctions between the hosts and the visitors create roles since the residents benefit economically from having the tourists visit.

Residents in Mirissa do however also describe that the relationship that they have to other villagers are getting weaker because they have become busier as more tourists come to visit. In that sense, the Mirissa residents' place identity, may be headed in a different direction than in the studies done in Lijiang and Palma.

Regarding the passing of blame that Liu & Cheng (2016) also brought forth as an outcome of tourism in Lijiang and Palma it is not obvious that the same pattern can be found in Mirissa in this regard either. Many of the respondents do for example think of drug

and alcohol use as something negative that has become more common with the increasing tourism. Although a few respondents think that tourists are the ones that are bringing the drugs to Mirissa there is also some that believe that hotel and guesthouse owners rather are the ones that are dealing drugs.

That a new form of social identity, similar to the one that Liu & Cheng (2016) describe, is being formed in Mirissa is however possible. Respondent 20, a 24 year old male, indicates a change in social identity by disregarding some notions that exists in the village about how women should dress and act. Meanwhile, many other respondents feel differently. For example, several women think of how the tourists dress as something negative that they would like to change.

It appears from the interviews that the respondents work is an important contributing factor to why they live in Mirissa. The fact that Mirissa is a village located close to the ocean, is a physical attribute that is mentioned as important by the respondents working as fishermen. However, the majority of the respondents argue that there is a shift in the resident's livelihood in Mirissa. Although, there are still residents in Mirissa who are engaged in fisheries and agriculture there is a rising dependence on tourism as an industry. The majority of the respondents highlight that the increasing tourism brings new economic opportunities. The economical benefits are perceived to be the most positive impact of tourism. This demonstrates that the respondent's place dependence and the functional attachment have changed due to the increase of tourism. Tourists may want to visit Mirissa due to the physical characteristics of the place which means that this attachment is indirectly functional. This has created a new kind of place dependence for the residents. The tourism industry in Mirissa has contributed to a new functional attachment in the sense that it constitutes conditions which enables the residents to achieve their goals. An example of a goal related to the new functional attachment that is mentioned by some interviewees is to start a guesthouse in order to improve economic wealth. Several of the respondents, who are not working within the tourism industry yet, express that they have the ambition to someday convert their house into a guesthouse or in other way involve in the tourism industry.

Another aspect, that may have a negative impact on the residents' place dependence, is the fact that many people involving in the tourism industry are obligated to borrow money in order to afford to start a business. This makes them highly dependent on a constant inflow of money, which it is highlighted that the tourism industry cannot guarantee. In the months with lower number of visitors it is perceived to create a stress among the people with high loans. This implies that tourism as a source of income may not contribute to a positive functional

attachment to the place, in this sense.

5.2 Place attachment in a community context

The community context regards the bonds that shapes among a group of people. Shared cultural values and history may be important aspects in forming an attachment to the place as a collective.

Cultural conflicts

The highlighted situation regarding the dress codes of the tourists evokes agitating emotions among the majority of the respondents. The way that the tourists dress, especially regarding the female tourists, perceives as unethical and not in line with the local culture. There is an apparent concern among the interviewees that their children will be negatively affected by this behaviour. The respondents do not however explain in detail what consequences these negative effects can entail. Furthermore, the behaviours of some tourists may be seen as a threat to their own culture. Since many of the respondents highlights the dress code as an issue this shows that they share common cultural values, creating an “us” and “them”. Furthermore, the shared opinions of the dress code as problematic can have a unifying effect that contributes to strengthening of the social bonding anchored to the place. This may prove that this issue derived from the tourism enhances their place attachment through this commonly held view (Scannell & Gifford 2009).

On the contrary, several of the respondents explain that they deal with this issue by going to other beaches, with less tourists, or by not going to the beach at all during the high season. It also appears from the interviews that the issue of dress code and having access to the beach does not outweigh the economic benefits derived from the tourism. Avoiding places due to cultural reasons leads to changes in the patterns of movement. In the long run this may affect the place attachment for their children that do not create memories at the beach, as their parents choose the to avoid visiting that area. It is not certain however that they get a weaker attachment to Mirissa as a village.

Sense of community

Many respondents exhibit feelings of belonging to the community in Mirissa. Woldoff (2002) shows that looking out for one another is important for the place attachment in a community context. A clear example from how tourism affects this in Mirissa, is that engaging in tourism

activities prompt economic networks that also improve social connectivity between neighbours. Some respondents also say that if they can help each other out with their businesses, they do that.

The study that Gu & Ryan (2008) conducted in Beijing, shows that the sense of community has become weaker because opinions in the community have become more diversified. From the example above it is not obvious that the same pattern exists in Mirissa.

On the other hand, tourism has according to some respondents also had an opposite impact, driving a more individualistic way of thinking. This is manifested by the lack of help for those less fortunate, which some respondents perceive. Having less time due to tourism, to tend to family and friends may also drive this change.

Another aspect of how tourism affects community change is correlated to the increasing number of constructions. Many respondents say that they do not want to interfere when other people in the village are building tourism related facilities. They say that they do not want to prevent others from earning money and if someone owns a property they have the right to build what they want there. Even people that do not have a positive attitude to tourism in general thought that people should be able to do what they want with their lands. This may indicate that the attachment that the respondents perceive remain unaffected by the tourism.

Many respondents have a different attitude regarding business owners (within tourism) from Mirissa, and business owners that come from other places. They perceive that the outsiders are less concerned about the community and maintaining good relationships with the residents. This may be an expression for feelings of disconnection from this this new group of people that settle down in Mirissa. Their place attachment may get weaker since feelings of belongingness are important to achieve this.

Most of the tourists that visit Mirissa are staying on a temporary basis. These people are not as individuals seen as part of the community, since they only stay for a short amount of time. However, since there is always a number of tourists in Mirissa, the tourists as a group become a part of the scenery and everyday life of the permanent residents, even though the individuals are exchanged. As a group, tourists may therefore affect the community attachment that the residents have.

The experiences of security and crime

Many respondents describe that problems with drugs came to Mirissa with tourism. The tourists are described to use drugs just for fun and that they are the ones that control the demand. There is an obvious concern among the respondents that the permanent residents will

adapt the tourists' behaviour and start using drugs as well. There is a suspicion that owners of tourist businesses are distributing the drugs, which can be accessed both by tourists and local residents. This may be an expression for that tourism get blamed for things that go wrong in the society as Liu & Cheng (2016) describe.

Some respondents mention that they want to leave Mirissa because of the drug related problems, particularly in order to protect their children. This indicates that the respondents have a lack of satisfaction with the neighbourhood in this regard. None of the respondents express, however, that they personally feel unsafe due to tourism. Some respondents even say that the area has become safer due to tourism as residents get increasingly better finances. It is therefore not possible to draw the conclusion that their place-attachment has become weaker due to tourism in this regard.

5.3 Place attachment in an environmental context

Appearance of the natural and built environment

The environmental context, consists of affections to the environment. Feelings towards both the natural and the built environment are considered in this study.

The data from Mirissa indicate that the bond that most of the respondents have towards the natural environment is weak. A correlation exists between protectiveness of nature and emotional affinity, according to (Raymond, Brown & Weber 2010). This is however not something that the respondents in Mirissa express. Some respondents mention they enjoy living in an area with a lot of nature, in particular trees. Many respondents seem to think that nature has an instrumental value for tourism and to earn money. It was, however, not apparent from the answers of many respondents that they felt strongly about the natural environment themselves. An example of this is that maintaining and conserving the area is something that the respondents from Rosspport Canada believe that they are the most equipped for, but respondents in Mirissa do not reveal that they have similar ambitions.

Additionally, some residents mention that the beach has become cleaner due to tourism. This is also something that is observable every morning as waiters/business owners along the coastline clean the area around their bars and restaurants. Some respondents say that the reason that they are cleaning the beach is to attract tourists. Soo- Hee Lee & Oh (2018) describe that a functional attachment to a place can develop into an emotional attachment if interactions with the natural environment are frequent over an extended period of time. The residents that work at the beach restaurants may currently have a functional attachment to

keeping the beach clean. An emotional attachment may however develop since this behaviour of cleaning the beach is repeated daily.

Only a few residents convey that they are concerned and engaged in environmental issues. They raise a concern about the increasing plastic pollution and express fear that Mirissa will become exploited. A common factor among these respondents is that they live in households with high income.

6 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to contribute to a deeper understanding of the local residents' perceptions of tourism in Mirissa and how their place attachment is affected by tourism related changes.

In order to fulfil the purpose, the questions “*Which are the most significant changes that the residents in Mirissa perceive due to tourism?*” and “*How do the tourism-related changes affect the residents' place attachment?*” were researched.

Which are the most significant changes that the residents in Mirissa perceive due to tourism?”

All of the respondents perceived that Mirissa has changed due to tourism and they all had opinions regarding these changes. Both positive and negative aspects were highlighted. One of the most significant effects from tourism is the economical. Many of the respondents perceive that they have financial opportunities due to tourism. Increased employment and welfare are some of the positive aspects that are brought up. It is evident that there is a shift in Mirissa from a fishing community to a community that is increasingly dependent on tourism.

Tourists from all over the world visit Mirissa. Many of the tourists, according to the respondents, does not behave according to the local customs. As a small tourist destination the place exposes by several different cultures and this is something that not goes unnoticed by the residents of Mirissa. Some respondents perceive that tourism can influence the culture and sense of community for the better while others think that tourism threaten their way of life.

The physical changes in Mirissa does not seem to create strong negative feelings for several the respondents. Many of the respondents had a positive attitude towards the constructions that are being built since it is perceived as a sign of increasing economic wealth. This may change in the future if residents get increased household economy. Since the more critical respondents are those that are wealthier than the average.

How do the tourism-related changes affect the residents' place attachment?

Tourism has affected the residents' place attachment in many ways. Some changes are according to the study positive and some processes are negative for the place attachment. It is therefore difficult to make a single conclusion that covers all aspects. Tourism changes many

things in the community and as a fall out place attachment is becoming stronger in some ways and weaker in other ways within all three contexts.

In a personal context, the respondents place identity is affected positively through a sense of “us” and “them” that is created between the tourists and the residents. A reason for this is that roles are assumed since residents benefit economically from having the tourists visit. The residents become *hosts* who earn money from the tourists. Meanwhile the respondents also describe that they have become busier, implicating that they have less time to see family and friends. This assumedly affects the place identity negatively.

The place dependence has changed due to tourism. Residents used to work within the fishing industry, however tourism is becoming an increasingly growing employment sector. Residents used to be functionally attached to Mirissa due to the proximity to the ocean. The residents that have switched occupation and currently work within the tourism industry are still functionally attached to Mirissa though, since tourists come to visit the village because of the beach and whale-safaris.

In a community context, tourism affects the place attachment in several ways. One positive effect is that tourism contributes to economic networks that strengthen social bonding. A negative aspect is that alcohol and drug use have become more common due to tourism. Many respondents are concerned for their children and mention this as a reason that they want to leave Mirissa. In this sense, the respondents perceive that the place attachment has become weaker or at least that the concern for the children outweigh the bonds to the place.

The perceptions concerning changes in the environment due to tourism are polarized. Some respondents are very positive towards the increase in buildings, since they equate this with positive development. For these respondents the place attachment is affected in a positive manner. On the contrary, a few respondents have a more critical attitude. They express concern about the natural environment. The respondents that have a more critical attitude also classify themselves as living in high-income households.

A final conclusion is that place attachment is a multifaceted concept that regards individuals’ feelings, perceptions and experiences. For this reason, it is a complex concept to investigate. This does however not diminish the importance of researching the residents’ bonds towards the place where they live.

In order to create a sustainable tourism development, it is essential to be mindful how tourism can impact a society. Place attachment is a cornerstone towards achieving this.

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8 Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview guide

Pre-questions

- Do you live or work in Mirissa?
- Have you lived or worked here since before the war ended 2009 or longer?
- Where does the income of the household come from?
- Would you say that your household has a low/average/high income compare to other permanent residents in Mirissa?
- Gender? Female/Male.
- Age?

The place

- Can you describe how it is to live here?
 - Are there any positive things about living in Mirissa?
 - Are there any negative things about living in Mirissa?
- Do you enjoy living in Mirissa?
 - Why? or why not?
- How do you think Mirissa has changed since the war ended in 2009?
 - In what way?
 - What do you think about the changes?
- Would you like for Mirissa to be different in any way?
- Why do you live here?
- Do you have any favourite spot in Mirissa?
 - Can you describe that spot?
 - Has the spot changed since the war ended in 2009?
 - Could you imagine living in any other place?

Everyday life in Mirissa

- Is your everyday life different today in anyway compared to before the war ended in 2009?
- Could you describe a regular day?
 - What daily activities do you typically practice?
 - Are the activities dependent on specific places?
 - Do they vary over the year?
 - Did you used to do those activities in other places before the war ended?
- What are the most important things you do?
- Are there places in Mirissa that you would like to or used to visit but that you can't visit anymore?
 - What place/places?
 - Why?

Tourism and feelings towards tourism

- Do you think there is anything positive with tourism in Mirissa?
- Do you think there is anything negative with tourism in Mirissa?
- Could you describe the tourists that come here?
- Does the tourism change during the year?

- How does it feel when the tourists come?
- How does it feel when the tourists leave?
- Are there periods when there are no tourists here?
- What happens when the tourists leave?
- Do you feel that the tourism has increased since the war ended in 2009?
- Do you work in the tourism industry?
 - How long?
- Are you affected economically in any other way by tourism?
- How do you think it will be to live in Mirissa in twenty years' time?
- How do you think Mirissa would be if no tourists would have visited?

Participation

- Are you in some way included in the planning of Mirissa regarding tourism?
 - Would you like to be included?
 - How would you like to be included?
- Do you know any owners of hotels (or other types of accommodations), restaurants or tourist activities businesses? Are the owners from Mirissa or elsewhere?
- Do you think that the people who are building hotels and restaurants are taking the permanent residents under consideration?
 - Do you feel that this has changed since after the war ended in 2009?
- Do you think that you can influence the development of Mirissa as a tourist destination?

Final questions

- What are your dreams for the future of Mirissa?
 - Do you think Mirissa is on that path?
- Is there something else you would like to share or tell about?