

# Exploring the embodied narrations of the city

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – *This study aims to explore how people bodily narrate and use collective memory to clarify their embodied experiences regarding a city which they memorise.*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *Drawing on 1,359 short stories collected by the online travel portal Visit Turku about 'How the city feels', the fine-grained embodied experiences of people are represented through descriptions of their feelings towards the city of Turku.*

**Findings** – *Based on the analysis, two aspects through which the respondents narrated their embodied experiences of cities have been identified: (1) the sociomaterial entanglements with the city and (2) the humane relationship with the city.*

**Research limitations/implications** – *This study is limited to short stories acquired online, raising questions of anonymity and representativeness. Thus, these narrations are constructions which have to be interpreted as told by specific people in a certain time and place.*

**Practical implications** – *Tourist agencies should pay attention to the value of looking at written stories as bodily materialisations of people's experiences of city destinations. Understanding this would strengthen the cities' competitiveness.*

**Originality/value** – *By empirically highlighting how people memorise a city through narrations, the study offers novel viewpoints on the embodied experiences in cities as well as the cultural constructs these narrations are based on, thus broadening our understanding of how cities become bodily entangled with us.*

**Keywords** Embodied experience, City, Embodied narration, Narrative template, Cultural construct, Collective memory

**Paper type** Research paper

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## Introduction

[The city of] Turku is the quieter brother, at whom the bigger brother laughs, even while knowing that the quiet one is actually older and wiser; he does not waste his time on partying or innovating with a loud voice but instead reads and philosophises (Quote 483).

This study focuses on the embodied narrations of the city. By embodied narrations, we refer to the representations of the past, namely, collective memories (Stepnisky, 2012; Wertsch, 2008), which come alive through the nostalgic experiences that people relive and describe in their stories in sensory-based, intimate and vulnerable ways.

In tourism research, there has been a tendency to prioritise the auditory (Kaaristo, 2014) or gustatory (Hall and Sharples, 2004) sense. In turn, this has created a tendency towards an analytical isolation of the senses in which an individual sense has been placed at the centre of the study, which then results in somewhat isolated accounts of sight, smell, touch, sound or taste (Crouch and Desforges, 2003). "I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience", Pallasmaa (2005, p. 40) writes. In line with this thought, this study emphasises that all the senses should be viewed as a complex entirety, whole, forming the basis for experiencing urban space "through the whole sensory body" (Degen, 2008, p. 9). For example, an auditory experience, such as silence, has simultaneous visual,

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aural, social, haptic and temporal aspects (Kaaristo and Järv, 2012) and cities, then, form experiential milieus in which our bodily sensations become mediators of urban experience (Degen, 2008) examined in this article.

The quotation presented in which one of the respondents describes the city as another human being, a quiet brother, serves as the starting point for this paper, which draws on the theoretical framework of collective memory (Durkheim, 1961; Halbwachs, 2002; Wertsch, 2008), according to which people share the same narrative tools to narrate their experiences in embodied ways (Merleau-Ponty, 1964; Seremetakis, 1994). Here, we understand the body as an ambiguous and hence contested concept, “produced and consumed in particular places and localities” (Holliday and Hassard, 2001, p. 12), and embodied narrations as constitutions of the sensory-practico body (Degen, 2008) and performative by nature (Butler, 1990). These narrations are thus embodied in the sense they entail highly intimate, emotional and sensuous descriptions of the attachments between the respondents and the city they memorise. Specifically, “embodied experience” is the central theoretical concept in our framework of collective memory, and it is developed within the wider theoretical discussion on the sensory holistic urban experience (Breiby and Slåtten, 2018; Campelo et al., 2014; Hubbard and Lyon, 2018; Jones, 2013; Park and Almeida Santos, 2017; Rahmani et al., 2019; Tusseyadiah et al., 2018).

The study illustrates how people use their collective memory (Glăveanu, 2017; Wertsch, 2008; Sturken, 2008) to make representations of their embodied experiences of the cities they encounter (Adams et al., 2007; Crouch and Desforges, 2003) and hence illustrates that embodied experiences are an inseparable part of representing the cities people live in or visit and a valuable aspect in making sense of them.

### Narrating embodied experiences of cities

There are rich geographical studies (Seamon, 1979; Tuan, 1977) on how individuals experience places, spaces and landscapes and how these experiences constitute the basis of an individual's involvement in the world (Li, 2000). For example, the discussions of sense of place and space (Crouch and Desforges, 2003) and embodiment (Crouch, 2000) focus on physically, socially and culturally embedded interrelationships between the body, the mind and the environment (Agapito et al., 2013). Tuan (1977) defined a place as a human creation invested with meaning, and since then, scholars (Cresswell, 2004; Young, 1999) have highlighted that meaningful places are not prefigured ontologically given objective entities but are social constructions (Chronis, 2015).

In the field of cultural and urban studies, there is a growing stream exploring the embodied side of the cities (Brown and Shortell, 2016; Degen and Rose, 2012; Hubbard and Lyon, 2018; Low, 2015; Paterson and Glass, 2020), which seek to provide detailed accounts of the ways walking and other forms of our embodied presence produce city spaces as meaningful (Brown and Shortell, 2016). These studies involve the aspects of senses (Degen and Rose, 2012; Low, 2015; Taylor, 2003; Urry, 2001), rhythm and memory (Goh, 2014), temporal experience and the slow pace of rurality (Kaaristo and Järv, 2012) and the body in narratives of tourism (Rickly-Boyd, 2009). The idea of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990) dominated the discourse of embodied tourist experience for decades, even though Ryan (1997), for example, challenged the dominance of the visual sense by arguing that the tourist experience is a multi-functional leisure activity that engages all the senses. Tourism destinations – whether urban or rural – provide multisensory encounters in which tourists are bodily engaged in the process of sense-making (Crouch and Desforges, 2003).

“An experience is a subjective-objective phenomenon”, according to Rahmani et al. (2019: 193). Throughout this paper, embodiment is considered the sensation of inhabiting a body that moves and feels (Noland, 2009). The term “embodiment” is related to the strand of non-

representational theories and focuses on practices, actions and performances that are enacted between humans and nonhuman materialities (Thrift, 2007). The body is viewed not only as a physical, socio-cultural object but also as the performative site (Butler, 1990) and “platform” of human experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1989). Therefore, in terms of embodiment, people perceive and feel their surroundings in sensory-based ways, but also do different things in relation to the world around them. The body is thus “both material and social” (Huopala, 2015, p. 829), consisting of embodied experiences to which materialities around it are linked.

## On the embodiment of collective memory

In this study, the short essays analysed were viewed as cultural constructs and narrative templates (Wertsch, 2008; Sturken, 2008), and the theoretical framework of collective memory was used to designate “our relation to the collective past” (Glăveanu, 2017, p. 256), including events or circumstances in the city that shape entire communities. By cultural constructs, we refer to the narrations to which experiences are inherently entwined with, and by narrative templates to the platforms in which the various descriptions we come to know and understand the social world around us (Somers, 1994: 6060) become told and made sense of. People engage in the process of remembering socially in relation to others, and memories are formed and re-formed in social contexts (De Rosa and Dryjanska, 2017; Halbwachs, 1992). Collective memory, therefore, reflects a certain group’s social framework, and it links the past with the present (Wertsch, 2008). What is remembered extends beyond what has been personally experienced (Zerubavel, 1996) and cities as spatial-sensuous encounters (Degen, 2008) are a valuable site for this process of remembering.

Collective memory is constructed not only in an individual’s mind but also in the sociomaterial field outside the individual (Seremetakis, 1994), thus making it an embodied phenomenon. According to this view, the embodiment of a collective past has been theorised as a “somatic experience” that refers to the way in which the body informs the logic of thinking about history (Joy and Sherry, 2003). This is the perspective applied for this study. Thus, we argue that collective memory can be used as an analytical tool to better understand the complex ways people construct narrations about and representations of embodied experiences in the cities, and in which different aspects, such as temporal, visual, aural, social and haptic, are included simultaneously and overlappingly (Kaaristo and Järvi, 2012). In this study, we aim at illustrating how collective memories come alive through the experiences that people narrate in their stories. It is, thus, through these narrations we constitute our social identities, as well (Somers, 1994).

## Methodology

### *Context and research material of the study: case of Turku*

The empirical aspect of this study was conducted in Turku, the former capital of Finland, located in Southwest Finland. Currently, Turku is the sixth largest city in Finland with a population of 190,000 (Visit Turku, 2019). Turku is a city that raises various emotions in the minds of Finnish people. On the one hand, Turku is a despised city because of its ugly dialect and an image of its “yokel” people. On the other hand, for example, the atmosphere of the riverfront of Aura is almost lyrical and renders visible the feel of Central Europe. Therefore, walking along the river makes many people feel being on a vacation abroad, thus making walking in this small-sized, cosy city a very lovable experience.

The research material consists of 1,359 short stories, varying from 20 to 80 words in length, that describe what Turku feels like. The stories were collected in autumn 2018 through an online portal ([www.kissmyturku.fi](http://www.kissmyturku.fi)) of Visit Turku, a local destination marketing organisation that is responsible for marketing Turku and the surrounding areas to tourists. The collection

of the stories is part of a wider “Kiss my Turku” marketing campaign, and the organisers of the competition aimed to use it later in marketing the city. The respondents were informed their short stories would be used as a part of the city’s marketing campaign later and that some of them would be published online (see <https://kissmyturku.com/turku-tuntuu>). However, the idea of using the short stories as a research material came later, and the respondents did not know about this when writing their stories. The second author of this paper has collaborated with the Turku board of tourism for years and got to know from the board that there would be a writing competition of “how the city feels”. With a background in experience tourism, she got interested in this competition and approached the travel manager of Visit Turku to ask for a permission to use the stories as a research material in the future.

The publicly communicated aim was to write what Turku feels like. What is distinctive in the city of Turku is that it raises emotions – positive and negative ones – in most Finnish people, and there are many jokes about Turku as well. Three more specific questions were also posed to the people in the online questionnaire: What kind of thoughts, feelings and emotions does Turku arouse in you and why? Do you remember a special encounter with Turku or the people of Turku? In your opinion, how do people talk about Turku in general? Participation was encouraged by the chance of obtaining a gift certificate to be given to one randomly chosen respondent.

Because of the anonymous collection of the research material, the respondent profiles cannot be described. The short stories vary in style and include stories written by females and males, young and old and tourists and locals. Although many stories were not written on a highly personal level and contain general information on the attractions of the city, there was a number of multifaceted, embodied, emotional, sensitive and humane stories and even poetic narratives, through which people reflected on their embodied relationships with the city.

### *Analysis*

Places are constructed through the embodied experiences of people (Soica, 2016), which are negotiated and represented through collective memory and their cultural constructs (Stepnisky, 2012; Wertsch, 2008). These cultural constructs are then communicated via spoken or written language (De Rosa and Dryjanska, 2017; Young, 1999), such as the short stories examined for this study. The analysis began with a close reading of the 1,359 short stories. The two researchers separately read the material and selected the short stories that described the ways people narrated their embodied experiences of the city. As a result of this process, the first researcher selected 160 and the second researcher 124 short stories to be included in the second phase of the analysis.

Second, both researchers classified the selected short stories into certain categories, which emerged based on the research material. Next, the categories that had been separately identified from the research material were examined to reach a consensus on the selection and primary analysis; it was clear that similar types of thematic categories, such as humanising the city, had been identified by both researchers in the research material. The first author developed the analysis into the final two aspects of narrating the city bodily described in the findings section of this paper.

Of course, there are limitations in this study. The research material consists of short stories, which raise questions of private and public, personal and representational and authenticity and cultural construction. Thus, as narrations are always constructions, the level of representation becomes an important, methodological issue of this specific study. Moreover, the short stories acquired online are probably not as rich as in-depth face-to-face qualitative interviews would be. Because the respondents are writing from their own subject

positions, we as researchers must clarify our own subject positions, as well as avoid romanticising the short stories or exaggerating their meanings.

## Two aspects of narrating the city in embodied ways

### *Narrating the sociomaterial entanglements with the city*

An identity of a group is constructed with narrative templates, consisting of collective memories organised and told in specific ways (Stapleton and Wilson, 2017). In the first part of the analysis, the ways people described the city of Turku as a home – an intimate, a material and a meaningful place for the respondents and a collective site of embodied reflections from the past – were examined. Often, this was expressed by respondents living in or by previous residents of Turku who had special memories of the city, such as described as follows:

Turku feels like home. In Turku, I was born and gave birth to two children. Turku is big enough but also small enough. It has a vivid city life, but if you want, you can easily get into clearer waters: to woods, fields and beaches (Quote 335).

As this quote illustrates, meaningful and embodied life events, such as the birth of children, are attached to the narrations of cities and affect the way people become engaged with the city in a sensory manner (Adams *et al.*, 2007). The contrasts between the rush and slowness, relating to what Kaaristo and Järvi (2012) call as distinctive “timescapes” of the city were also felt as something meaningful, as the quote above renders visible. In some of the short stories, the material entanglements with the city were related to bodily sensations, functions and humane rhythms. The following quotes describe the convenience and welcoming spirit of the city, which relate to its embodied entanglement:

Turku is like a warm embrace, which you love to return to after a journey. Turku means home (Quote 407).

I like Turku and its humane rhythm; its beat does not choke the wanderer. Turku is the size of its inhabitants. It offers all the services you need and more. It improves and develops. Within all of its history, it is modern and creative. There is no lack of culture or entertainment, and it is ‘not worth going further than the sea to fish’ since even visitors from far away are drawn here (Quote 261).

The quotes contain cultural constructions the respondents believe are expected from them, such as viewing the city as contemporarily creative and full of cultural activities to offer on the one hand and a historical background on the other hand. As the quote above captures, wherever you are in the city, you are involved in an intense sensuous encounter (Degen, 2008). In other words, we approach the short stories not as sites of individual memories, but more as dynamic, contagious and unstable sites of cultural memory (Sturken, 2008) in which personal memories of the city become mediated from the experience of the cultural “image” of Turku among Finnish people.

Sometimes, the city is felt on a more abstract level as a mind-set, a way of living, as the following quote exemplifies:

Turku is a mindset. When arriving by car, I breathe a sigh of happiness when I see the sign ‘Turku Åbo’, and it puts my mind at rest as I immediately feel like I am home. After having lived elsewhere for 23 years, I eagerly await the day when I can return to the home of my heart. As working in western Siberia is sometimes very hard, I have turned a deaf ear to those malicious remarks about Turku or its people; I cannot help but think that it is just envious slander. Not everyone is lucky enough to be able to come from Turku (Quote 143).

Also here, the quote of the short story captures the embodied narrations, such as “putting the mind at rest” and “returning to the home of my heart”, of the city. The material artefact –

the sign of Turku – can be viewed as a site of collective, embodied memory (Chronis, 2006), as it awakes warm feelings and special memories in the respondent. Hence, despite the abstractness of describing the city as a mind-set, the words reflect the embodied narrations of the respondent wants to express when returning to Turku after years. It is notable that in many short stories, the city is described in a positive light. In this quote, the positivity might arise from the phenomenon of memories growing sweeter with time. Overall, regarding the city as an intimate place or a home illustrates the embodied nature of cities in terms of an idea of “cosiness”, which is a profoundly embodied term. Home is a sensory-based place in which many embodied experiences take place. People’s earthy, humane, sensuous everyday life, in all its richness, happens at home.

The short stories also illustrate how a city becomes entangled bodily with those who have experienced strong emotional reactions or meaningful encounters there. Some of the short stories include powerful sensory-based descriptions of the ways that the city has become an inseparable part of the respondents’ embodied selves. The following quotes capture the “fleshiness” of the relationship between the city and its visitors or inhabitants and the multi-sensory encounters (Agapito *et al.*, 2013, p. 70) cities provide:

Turku feels like it is *in my guts* [1], for good or bad. You let it in once, and it will never leave (Quote 433).

You feel Turku *with your whole being and every cell*. You cannot experience its atmosphere anywhere else in Finland. Turku leaves a trace in your heart (Quote 159).

Turku *feels like me* (Quote 290).

The feeling “in the guts” and the feeling “every cell” in these quotes are further examples of expressions that are circulating in the surrounding cultural field. There is also a comforting, soft aspect of the city visible in the respondents’ embodied narrations, as the following quotes show:

Turku *feels like a dream* – like a lapse of memory followed by remembrance. Understanding. Warmth. Loneliness. Gloom. It tears you down, but after the storm, the fallen tree branches are swiftly cleared away. It *offers light and love*, revealing that there is good and bad in everything. Turku is enough, even if it is not enough. *To Turku, I am enough*, even if I could never be good enough for myself. Turku feels pleasant, distant and terrifying, just like the future or home. Unsustainably heavy. Unbearably light (Quote 344).

Nowadays, I live in Helsinki and seldom visit Turku, but I often think of it. In my thoughts, Turku *feels soft*. It feels like my previous home. The one that *offered me shelter, safety and cosiness*. Whose doorbell sound I still remember. The one who makes you feel both warm and wistful when thinking about her. Turku feels like a warm summer sea breeze, smells like salt that leaves traces on your skin and inner mind (Quote 323).

These two quotes capture the “touch” of the city, its shaping nature towards a materialisation of nostalgia as the time passes by and the ways in which the city can be attached to our bodies in very intimate ways; it is through their embodied experiences that the respondents remember it, and through these short stories, they narrate it. Some of the expressions are commonly used and work as a function of shared narrative structures (Wertsch, 2008; 153), such as the “feel of a warm summer sea breeze” and “the smell of salt that leaves traces on the skin”. So, in this sense, what is “collective” in the quotes above is the past, filled with embodied sensations of the city, rather than the respondents doing the “remembering” (Glăveanu, 2017, p. 256). The cultural constructs the short stories entail also transmit the humane attachment to the city, to which the analysis now turns.

### *Narrating the humane relationship with the city*

In the second part of the analysis, the various ways in which the respondents narrated the city as another person, a human, was examined. The following quote finely captures how vividly the body as a point of “affordance between ourselves and our surroundings” (Crouch and Desforges, 2003:7) can be captured:

Old, wise, beautiful, by the river shore, sunny, with the archipelago, appealing, filling, thirsty, green, light, patriotic, full of history, cosy, sympathetic, introverted, funny, happy, humorous, Christmassy, summery, appealing, always ready, beautiful, dog-friendly, destroyer of her great city centre, maritime, charming, awake, so slow in decision-making, slipping in her budgets, known for her students, friendly, caring, my city. Now and forever! (Quote 382)

Taking one step further, some stories include multifaceted, humane characteristics or traits that are associated with the city or describe how Turku would behave in different situations:

There is magic in the spring evenings of Turku. I said to my friend some years ago that when I am lost and sad, I feel that Turku takes me in her arms and gently swings me. She articulates: you belong here; you will be fine here (Quote 746).

These narrations embody Turku as a fascinating personality that consoles, encourages and empathises with the people around, if needed, as the quote describes. As the city becomes “in sync with the body’s needs” (Hubbard and Lyon, 2018, p. 943) in the above quote, it turns into a magical site of collective memory, as well. Another respondent discussed a slightly different relationship with the city of Turku:

Turku is straightforward and beautiful, European and different. It fascinates and provokes but still attracts me. She allows herself to be just like you, private and personal. She lives through four seasons. In winter, she walks on the ice of the River Aura, celebrates spring on the Vartiovuori hill, in summer awaits the festivalgoers who feel the sea breeze in their hair and carries a Bishop’s doughnut in her hands while returning home in the shadows of the autumn foliage. It bears wars and terror attacks. Despite them, the river Aura flows towards the Archipelago Sea, the sound of a guitar can be heard from the Puolala park and dancing continues at Uittamo pavilion. Life goes on, and that, if anything, is what it feels like to live in Turku (Quote 1, 174).

In this quote, the personality of the city is described as provocative and daring, but even so, the respondent writes, the city lets its people be who they are. Here, Bishop’s doughnut and the sound of a guitar can be interpreted as the materialisations of embodied memories attached to the city. As Chronis (2006, p. 293) states, “either in actuality or in imagination, a contact with objects of the past is a multi-sensory, synesthetic experience”. Hence, the city does not push the people to be who they are not, and this is an essential characteristic of the relationship between the city and the people. Another respondent continues in a similar vein:

Turku is sunny, beautiful, unique and modern. Slightly introverted, but she takes good care of her people and guests. She is the administrator of the Finnish Principality of Dining and the pearl of the archipelago! (Quote 325)

In some short stories that depict the city as another human being, the rather small and compact, Turku is compared to famous city destinations, such as Venice, Rome, Paris and New York. The following quotes illustrate the deep emotional and sensuous traces that cities may leave in respondents’ minds:

Turku is *the Venice of Finland*: a little magical, sophisticated (at least in her own opinion), an artistic soul who, despite her refinement, reawakens the scent of life from her canals and rivers (Quote 1,357).

Turku is *the Paris of Finland*. For real. It is warm-hearted, dark and slightly bohemian, with arms full of velvet, whose artistic fringes tickle your cheek while embracing when you meet. I ♥ Turku (Quote 238).

*The hills surround the city as in Rome, opening up beautiful vistas around the city (Quote 143).*

Turku feels and breaks into you. It rolls around in the slush, reaches for the starry sky and rushes forward. Reunion with Turku is like looking into a mirror again: something new, something old, something borrowed [...] The streets smell like mud, rain, beer, car exhaust, burger, sometimes even cigarettes: *the most New Yorker smell of Finland!* The lights by the river sharpen the mind of the nightly wanderer. The most European scenery of Finland! The most historical scenery of Finland! The most astonishing shimmer! The deep hole at the marketplace construction site feels like amnesia (Quote 344).

In these quotes, people seem not to treat Turku as a touristic destination. Rather, it is compared with legendary touristic destinations (Venice, Paris, Rome) but is not necessarily sensed like one. Hence, by determining what people sense in the city that is familiar to them, it is possible to reflect on what it is they want to feel about other cities, as the four quotes above illustrate.

Depending on the respondents' sensory experiences and previous encounters, Turku is also sometimes depicted as a specific person, someone who is distant and unknown, a casual acquaintance, a dear friend or even a close relative. The following two quotes narrate a city as a distant or unfamiliar person:

Personally, it is regrettably distant. Confident but introverted. Beautiful and interesting but so traditional, without any surprises (Quote 289).

Turku, so far, you feel unknown to me. You have been a casual acquaintance I have met while just passing by. I am sorry, Turku, for not visiting you more often. I still believe that our relationship will improve as you have, for sure, stolen many of my friends already. From them, I have heard so much good about you. One day we will meet again, and I will give you enough time. Waiting for you, Turku (Quote 898).

However, in many short stories, Turku is represented as a dear friend or a close relative, a sister, a brother or even the "stylish aunt" who is not as close as the other relatives but far more sophisticated:

Turku is like a little sister who gives herself airs and graces, assumes she is a bit more sophisticated and pretty, but in reality, she is just okay (Quote 117).

Turku is not one of those cities that warmly welcomes you with open arms and offers you a home [...] Turku is like a distant and sophisticated aunt, who offers you a room to stay while you study: you will take particular care not to call her mother – unless you are one of her children—and that is her will as well (Quote 214).

Overall, the quotes illustrate the dynamic ways embodied experiences of the respondents could be narrated in relation to the city by considering it as a "she", a dear and precious relationship that may last for the lifetime and the ways these narrations worked as a site of collective memory.

## Discussion and conclusion

Drawing on short stories of "How the city [of Turku] feels" collected by the online travel portal of Visit Turku, this study has illustrated the fine-grained ways collective memories come alive through experiences that people narrate in the stories. The existing debates on embodied experiences of cities (Degen and Rose, 2012; Goh, 2014; Low, 2015; Paterson and Glass, 2020) have already acknowledged the value of the body and senses in the path of constructing experiences. Multisensory experiences of places and urban environments (Crouch and Desforages, 2003; Degen, 2008) and their complexity (Kaaristo, 2014) are an important field of study, and the aim of this study was to make a valuable contribution to this field.

The study results emphasise that all the senses should be viewed as a complex entity, forming the basis for an embodied experience at the heart of being a human. People engage in the process of remembering socially in relation to others, and memories are formed and re-formed in social contexts, as Halbwachs (1992) argues. Collective memory, therefore, reflects people's social framework, and it links the past with the present (Stepnisky, 2012; Wertsch, 2008) in bodily nostalgic ways, as we, in this article, have described through the short stories describing what the city of Turku feels like. By putting the theoretical notion of collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992; Misztal, 2010; Olick, 1999; Stepnisky, 2012), and its embodied nature (Narvaez, 2006) into the focus, this study aimed at describing what the narrative templates that were chosen to capture the embodied relationship with the city were like. In the analysis, the reasons that these particular narrations have been used and some have been left out was considered a crucial part of shaping collective memories of the embodied experiences of the cities.

Based on the analysis, two aspects were identified through which respondents narrate their embodied experiences of cities:

1. narrating the sociomaterial entanglements with the city; and
2. narrating the humane relationship with the city.

Specifically, it has been illustrated that the sensing of and turning into specific, shared experiences with the city occur first and foremost through the embodied narrations of the individual, who reflects on his or her encounters with the city. Several recent studies have acknowledged the role of the body in urban experience (Agapito *et al.*, 2013; Chronis, 2015). The findings provide nuance to these studies by empirically demonstrating how the body is subtly implicated in the experience and how the phenomenon is attached to more broad cultural circulations of embodied experiences and their expressions of urban environments, and how the collective memories are always generated by the relations with other people and materialities around us (Stepnisky, 2012).

Travelling agencies all over the world are increasingly advocating embodied experiences, such as biking, nature, bungee jumps, Segway tours and air balloons. However, this study encourages researchers of urban spaces, tourist agencies and other travel organisations to understand the embodied experiences attached to cities and their landscapes in a more complex and reflexive ways. It is crucial to pay attention to the subtle details of embodied experiences with and in a city to understand the ways places are continuously memorised, negotiated and represented collectively and bodily in the discursive fields that surround us. The memorisations of people and the embodied narrations constructed based on them play a significant role in conveying hidden experiences between cities and the people they embrace.

## Note

1. Italics have been added for emphasis in the original quotes.

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