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PhD by Practice

Architecture of Rapid Change and Scarce Resources
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SIBERIAN IMAGINARIES

EVALUATING PARTICIPATORY PLACEMAKING AS A TOOL FOR CIVIC DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED SPACES IN THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXTS OF YAKUTSK AND LENSK, NORTH-EASTERN SIBERIA

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I. ABSTRACT

This PhD by practice examines the potential of participatory placemaking as a tool for the civic development of shared urban spaces in the postcolonial contexts of the cities of Yakutsk and Lensk located in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), North-Eastern Siberia. Inhibited by its colonial history and forced urbanisation during the period of Soviet rule and the rigidity of the current Russian-based planning process, the citizens of Yakutia have little involvement in the imagining and making of the fabric of the city. The research asks: how can participatory placemaking contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood and building scales?

The research methodology is built on three stages of *Investigator, Narrator*, and *Maker* in three case studies and two surveys. The facilitate participatory placemaking, Lefebvre's methods of deduction, induction, translation, transduction, and transposition were applied to provoke the imagination and aid the representation of alternative futures by participants. The research methods used for data collection included facilitation of co-design workshops, hands-on building initiatives, and snowballing interviews. These research methods use the community auto-ethnographic lens to empower local participants as the main decision makers.

The case studies of *Oyuur Park* in Lensk and *Dog City* in Yakutsk test the top-down and bottom-up approaches of participatory design. The third case study of the *Amphitheatre Project* in London was added to compare Yakutian learning-by-making practices with western ones. The survey of snowballing interviews assesses newly emerging participatory design practices in Yakutia in comparison with the practices in Canada, Greenland, Scandinavia, and the UK to define its characteristics. The final survey of Siberian Imaginaries built on found local affordances tests further the theory of urban imaginaries through online participatory design workshops.

Throughout the research process an optimal 4-stage PP structure was applied based on the heuristic adaptation of PP processes and methods in the Yakutian context. The research demonstrates that Participatory Placemaking can be successfully used as a tool for the civic development of shared spaces in Yakutsk and Lensk through the assembly of urban imaginaries. In addition, the urban learning forums created by PP can contribute to design creativity and participants' capacity to participate, expand affordances through co-making of narratives and artefacts, and subsequently, expand the urban imaginaries which embodying the aspirations of residents. Yakutian Participatory Placemaking is characterised by its fundamental embodiment of the conditions of the context such as extreme climate, remote location, and scarce resources. Additional contextual factors were the lack of time and low experience of civic action by participants.

The research contributes to knowledge by helping to fill the gap in the application of participatory placemaking in the postcolonial Far North. The recommendations evaluate the most effective design approach, timing, process structure, and scale for PP in the research context. The recommendations can be tested further to scale up the local initiatives in Yakutia and in regions with similar contextual characteristics and/or used as guidance to facilitate speculative participatory placemaking projects in other contexts.

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VI. PREFACE

This PhD research is a continuation of the MA research that I developed as a member of the Architecture of Rapid Change and Scarce Resources teaching and research group at London Metropolitan University from October 2018 to September 2019. The MA research tested learning-by-making possibilities through a hands-on building project, *Growing Structures*, in the context of my hometown, Yakutsk. Being an Indigenous Siberian and a practicing architect back home, I was always interested in the expression of indigenous identity in the built environment and the tools required for its civic development. In addition, my hobbies include drawing and hands-on building, both at the core of learning-by-making. Before starting my MA at London Metropolitan, I set up a couple of speculative shared space projects in Yakutsk, such as a free ice-rink for children on a public square in 2016 and student practice workshops. Through my MA, I realised these initiatives were participatory learning-by-making projects that had developed intuitively, without any predetermined methodology. This led me to believe that the democratic tools of participatory placemaking can encourage and initiate positive civic change in Yakutia if applied methodically and with care.

I started on this PhD journey in October of 2019, just before the sudden Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in the UK in March 2020. This had a significant impact on my research methodology, both positive and negative. Whilst I was prevented from conducting fieldwork for a period of two years, I was provided the opportunity to rethink my research methodology and case study programme, and even add to it the different aspects of participatory placemaking. For example, there were tested remote methods of participatory placemaking in case studies 1 and 2. These accommodations are described in more detail in Chapter 3, 3.2. 'Research Timeframes – Accommodation of Resistances'.

My intention is to use and share the knowledge gained from this research in further initiatives, both in academia and in practice. Currently, due to the difficult political situation in Russia, I am not able to put into practice or facilitate civic engagement initiatives. I hope to be able to use my experience remotely and encourage positive civic change in my

hometown, by inspiring future participatory placemaking projects focusing on indigenous cultures in cold climates and postcolonial urban space imaginaries.

Declaration of Authorship

I declare that while registered as a student for the University's research degree, I have not been a registered student or enrolled student for another award at a UK university or other academic or professional institution. I declare that this thesis has not been submitted in support of an application for any other degree or qualification. References to the MA project carried out prior to this thesis have been clearly cited. The analysis and interpretation of case studies and surveys are my own work alone. The work of the students in the case study 2, 'Dog City', and the case study 3, the 'Amphitheatre Project in Caledonian Park', is illustrated in their respective appendices and referenced. Extracts from the 'Introduction' and 'Methodology' chapters were previously included in the following publications and events:

Book Chapter

Sivtseva, M. (2020) 'Learning-by-making as a Tool for Provoking Placemaking Initiatives in Yakutsk, North-Eastern Siberia', in Jokela, T. and Coutts, G. (ed.) *Relate North. Tradition and Innovation in Art and Design Education*, InSEA Publications, pp. 94-115.

Conference Participation

Sivtseva, M. (2020) *An opening speech as one of the three David Hakken grant holders*[1]. The PDC 2020 Doctoral Colloquium, 15 June, Manizales.

Sivtseva, M. (2020) *Between Tradition and Innovation* [Poster lightning talk]. London Metropolitan Student and Staff Research Conference, 14 July.

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[1] The David Hakken Participatory Design Grant 2020 – the grant recognises talented graduate participatory design students. The PDC 2020 took place in Manizales, Colombia, 2020. The researcher attended online due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background

This PhD by practice examines the potential of participatory placemaking as a tool for the civic development of shared urban spaces in the postcolonial morphology of the cities of Yakutsk and Lensk located in the Republic of Sakha[2] (Yakutia), North-Eastern Siberia. The way in which the Yakutian settlements were established and developed over time has been affected by the continuous permafrost landscape and the extreme climate of the Subarctic, the socio-cultural context of its Indigenous people, and the Russian incursion. The urban identity of Yakutian settlements, first set by Russian empire invaders (1632-1921) and rapidly developed throughout the Soviet regime (1922-1992) and the post-soviet period (from 1992), does not embody the aspirations of its residents. The form of the Siberian city was experimentally developed by Soviet architects who imposed a typical Soviet civic identity (Hemmersam, 2020) that led to urban identity issues as the indigenous Sakha culture is based on a rural lifestyle and spiritual beliefs that struggle for expression in the urban context of Yakutia (Cruikshank and Argounova, 2000; Peers, 2008; Yakovlev et.al., 2019). The recent top-down participatory design initiatives brought by the local Yakutian authorities to address this issue have not yet been extensively studied.

The MA research that preceded this dissertation studied the possibility of hands-on learning-by-making as a tool for civic[3] shared space development in Yakutsk. The term *shared space* was adopted to describe common public spaces used by the local community on a daily basis. The MA thesis sought to extend the term *participatory design* (PD) to *participatory placemaking* (PP), combining both collaborative design and making processes. Recent developments in the field of participatory design[4] have led to renewed interest in decolonisation through design, in both the global South and North. Participatory design practitioners suggest that collaborative design in non-western contexts gives the

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[2] Sakha – self-identification of the Sakha people, Yakuts – given name to the Sakha.

[3] Civic engagement – collaborative work to make a difference through a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to achieve a desired result (Conner, 2019, p.14).

[4] Participatory Design – a process of investigating, understanding, reflecting upon, establishing, developing, and supporting mutual learning between multiple participants in collective 'reflection-in-action'. The participants typically undertake the two principal roles of users and designers where the designers strive to learn the realities of the users' situation while the users strive to articulate their desired aims and learn appropriate technological means to obtain them (Simonsen and Robertson, 2013, p.2).

opportunity to expand practice with new perspectives and theories encompassing different epistemologies that can be deployed within Western contexts to create more inclusive mainstream knowledge systems. "Rather than tangible design outcomes, the design process addresses the question of how new understandings, opportunities and imaginaries can be created" (Smith, et.al., 2020, p.99). Thus, building on a form of participatory design recently introduced by the Yakutsk city architects department, this research asks: how can participatory placemaking contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood, and building scales?

In order to address the research question, the research investigates the fundamental conditions – the physical affordances of the context (climate, landscape, resources and materiality), socio-cultural and politico-economical structure – and the non-physical affordances available to initiate participatory placemaking processes. Furthermore, the research studies participatory placemaking through three case studies and two surveys to define the character of the phenomenon in the research context: its approaches, power balance, scale, levels of users' involvement and their capacity to participate, process structures, time factors, and adaptation of methods. The application of participatory placemaking defines the local resistances, accommodations, and subsequently, the possibilities of expanding urban imaginaries to tackle the research problem.

The introduction chapter includes the research background, research questions, aims and objectives, and the thesis structure. The research background consists of three sections: Urbanisation of Yakutia, Adaptation of Indigenous Identity, and Participatory Design in Russian Siberia. These sections frame the research problem by outlining the fundamental conditions and history of the place, show the current state of participatory design in Russia, and lead to the research questions construction.

1.2.   Research Problem

The research problem: a lack of civic engagement in Yakutian urban planning processes is linked to the socio-cultural history of the urban development of the settlements and the politico-economical structure of the Russian planning processes with the climatic building restrictions of the Subarctic (1.2.1. Urbanisation of Yakutia), followed by the indigenous urban identity issues (1.2.2. Adaptation of Indigenous Identity) (see portfolio, stage 1). Additionally, the recent implementation of participatory design in Russia, and Yakutia in particular, needs of more extensive research.

1.3.   Urbanisation of Yakutia

Throughout the history of the conquest and urbanisation of Siberia, there have been wildly different approaches to address the physical contextual affordances. The physical context of a space with extreme climatic conditions dictates the affordances available for its built environment design, both providing its identity and regulations for its development. The research context of the Sakha Republic (see fig.1-1) is famous for its Extreme Continental Subarctic climate with winter temperatures dropping to under -50C on average (see the fig.1-2) and summer temperatures rising to above +30C. This results in heavy fog conditions in winter and dusty hot conditions in summer (see portfolio, p.6).

Fig.1-1 - Location Map of Yakutsk and Lensk on the Map of Russia

The heating season in Yakutia lasts approximately 9 months (September-May). These climatic features and the rapid urbanisation in the rush to mine natural resources shaped the urban fabric of Yakutia. The most prominent and unprecedented, original feature of Yakutsk are the large-scale structures built on stilts, lifted 1.5-2m above the ground level (see fig.1-3), and connected to the city-wide centralised heating pipe infrastructure (see fig.1-4, 1-5). However, the city of Yakutsk is still underdeveloped and lacking appropriate community spaces, especially, during the lengthy winter season when residents do not have many options for free socialisation.

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Fig.1-2 - Kalvitsa Street, Yakutsk, January 2020

Fig.1-3 - A Residential Building on Stilts in Kalvitsa Street, Yakutsk

Fig.1-4 - The City Canal Side, Yakutsk, February 2019

Fig.1-5 - The Centralised Heating Pipe System along the Canal behind Lermontova Street, Yakutsk

The topography of the major cities in the Sakha republic are identified by their riverbank location and mostly flat landscape, which brings floodwaters in spring and rainwater drainage problems at other times. The Lena River is one of the largest rivers in Siberia. It flows from its sources in the Baikal mountains into the Arctic Ocean, with the largest settlements of the Sakha Republic built alongside it (Ma, et.al., 2005). In addition to the climatic conditions and the remote location of Yakutsk, there are issues of transportation and scarce building resources. The main transport link between Yakutian cities, the Lena River closes October-December, when water forms into thick ice tundra allowing a vehicle road on the river. From March-May, when the ice melts, ferries connect settlements with western Russia. The main building materials such as Siberian larch wood, metal and steel are imported from western Russia.

There are thirteen cities in the Republic of Sakha (see table 1), each the centre of one of the thirty-four *Ulus* [5]. The case study cities of Yakutsk and Lensk are both located along the riverbank of the Lena River. Lensk is a small industrial town in the western part of Yakutia and is widely known as the 'survivor' city. The disastrous flood of May of 2011 destroyed 70 % of Lensk's buildings (over 3,000 houses), left 30,800 people homeless and took the lives of 9 people. The city was re-built almost from scratch in a short amount of time. Yakutsk city is the capital of the republic and one of the largest permanently inhabited settlements in the challenging conditions of continuous permafrost.

No	Name	Est. – first mention	Ulus	Population
1	Aldan	1924	Aldanskiy	20,366
2	Verkhoyansk	1638	Verkhoyanskiy	1,095
3	Vilyuysk	1634	Vilyuyskiy	11,319
4	Lensk	1663	Lenskiy	23,266
5	Mirniy	1955	Mirninskiy	35,416
6	Neryungri	1975	Neryungrinskiy	58,969
7	Nyurba	1924	Nyurbinskiy	9,761
8	Olekminsk	1835	Olekminskiy	9,102
9	Pokrovsk	1682	Khangalasskiy	9,507
10	Srednekolymsk	1643	Srednekolymskiy	3,470
11	Tommot	1923	Aldanskiy	6,694
12	Udachniy	1967	Mirninskiy	12,198
13	Yakutsk	1632	Yakutsk City	330,615

Table 1-1 - Cities of Yakutia

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[5] *Ulus* – Yakutian word meaning the indigenous tribal community and the land belonging to it, as well as the name of the district, locality. Regions within the Republic of Sakha.

Continuous permafrost shaped these settlements, covering nearly a quarter of the Northern Hemisphere, and widespread in the Arctic and Subarctic regions of Siberia, Northern Canada, Greenland, Svalbard, and Alaska. According to Osterkamp (2007), permafrost is any type of ground that has been frozen continuously for two years. Conditions of continuous permafrost have particular features which require the significant regulation offered by Yakutian architecture. Due to permafrost, the vegetation of Yakutia is low in height and density. The landscape of the region consists of taiga (forest) and tundra (reindeer moss, absence of trees). The lack of vegetation in the urban environments of Yakutia adds to the dusty summer conditions: soil without cover dries and is picked up by the wind, forming sandy fogs. The increasing intensity of wildfires in the last couple of years has added to the pollution and makes urban life difficult.

The challenges of Yakutia's physical context have been approached in various ways throughout the politico-cultural history of the land. First, the indigenous people adapted to its climate by building using animistic (shamanist and spiritual beliefs based on animating nature) traditional semi-nomadic architecture; colonisation by the Russian empire then produced towns and cities for the prestige and control of the rich mineral resources; this was followed by manifestations of the communist ideology, demonstrating power over nature through building typical soviet structures; finally, there was some imaginative experimentation adapting the urban built environment during the late soviet union period in the 1960-70s (description follows further in the text).

The first settlements in Yakutia, particularly the city of Yakutsk, were established by Russian invaders in 1632 to collect *yasak* (taxes) from the indigenous people (Tichotsky, 2000, p.73). The conquest of Siberia brought the spread of disease among the native population - smallpox and other infections reduced the indigenous population by 70% (Richards, 2003, p.538). This period of terror ended in the 18th century, with the Tsar reducing pressures by giving the freedom to the local native authorities to self-organise, bringing Russian Orthodoxy to Siberia, giving Russian names to the indigenous population, and providing agricultural education. Later on, the change in politics and discovery of gold and other natural resources (Tichotsky, 2000) brought an increasing number of Russians to the region and prompted the rapid expansion of the city of Yakutsk.

The Soviet regime reached Yakutia in 1922 (Forsyth, 1994). This period is characterised by the repression of the traditional Sakha culture, malnutrition and poverty among the population, and the use of the land as a place of exile for political activists, the large-scale mining of natural resources and the testing of atomic devices. Hemmersam noted:

> In addition to these dark dimensions of urbanism in the Arctic, the Soviet ideologies saw an opportunity to Sovietify indigenous peoples during the urbanisation of the north. Assimilation took many forms and included forced collectivisation and eradication of traditional livelihoods. Indigenous rights were, along with democratic processes, accountability and local agency, a marginal concern for the various organisations of the Soviet state that planned cities in the North. While northern cities share many features with contemporary urban development in the West, the planning of Soviet cities left urban dwellers in the 'dark'. Citizens had little say on urban planning or wasteful government practices (Hemmersem, 2020, p. 72).

The rapid urbanisation of Yakutia by the Soviet Union can be characterised by its early development. The communist party wanted to showcase the dominance of ideology over nature that resulted in the typical urban carcass of the biggest settlements of Yakutia. For example, all the settlements have their main public square named after V.I. Lenin, with his statue in the middle, with the main high street similarly named, and vast open urban spaces (which completely ignore the climatic conditions of the context). Later development during the Soviet regime in 1960s and 1970s can be characterised as having an experimental character. It was in 1960s that the city canal (Dmitriev, 2017) and the central heating pipe system of Yakutsk were built, unpreceded by developments anywhere else in the Arctic or Subarctic. However, in the pursuit of economic expansion, the planners did not take into account the environment – industrial development and experiments with atomic devices by the mining companies in the North had led to the degradation of ecosystems. The environmental challenges brought by Global Warming include increased occurrence of wildfires and pollution, destabilised ground and more seasonal flooding.

After the second world war, the Russian authorities decided to strategically relocate industrial sites to the far east of the country and expand the mining industry, which led to further expansion of the urban fabric of Yakutia. The modern period in the socio-political context of Yakutia is characterised by the Perestroika period after the collapse of the USSR

(an uncertain, chaotic time), the establishment of the republic with its own president, further growth in the urban fabric, travelling opportunities to foreign countries and the implementation of new technologies in the 2010s (social media and design software development, for instance). Although participatory design principles started being implemented in Yakutia in 2018, Russian building regulations along with the fundamental conditions described above, have restricted them.

Russian building regulations and the approval system required for government funded projects are heavily restricted in time. The funding of shared space design is typically planned at the end of each year, which gives architects a few months in winter to design and submit a project for approval. Due to the climate of Yakutia, building periods are short, which means civic projects have to be approved and built during the periods of warmer temperatures. Architects and designers lack adequate time for site analysis, user involvement and design tests. These physical and non-physical issues have led to the following indigenous urban identity matters of concern.

1.4.   Adaptation of Indigenous Identity

The Yakut people (Sakha) are of Turkic origin. They settled in the Far North-East of Siberia in the 13th century (Stepanov, 2008). The Sakha are one of the most populous of the native peoples of Siberia and occupy the largest territory within it. The traditional culture of the Sakha is based on their lifestyle (cattle and horse breeding, fishing and hunting) and the climatic context of the land. Thus, the life of the Sakha was always highly dependent on the climate, which formed the basis of their religious beliefs: Shamanism and Animism. Originally, the Sakha used to live remote from each other, typically settling one extended family per field (Nikolaev, 2009), and changing home every season. Subsequently, the social habits of the Sakha are different to Western ones: the Sakha have a social gathering only in the summer, during the national festival *Ysyakh*, celebration of the summer solstice and the new year (see fig.1-6). However, the Russian invasion and urbanisation processes has changed the Sakha way of life and communication.

Fig.1-6 - Siberian Culture, a Summer Dance Performance. Source: Cheremkin, 2018

The power struggle and place identity in postcolonial Russia is a sensitive and complex topic that became more prominent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992. According to Tichotsky, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the continuing process of defining the relationship between the Republic of Sakha and the Russian Federation makes the discussion of colonial and non-colonial relationships particularly valid. The Sakha government and industry leaders saw the relationship with the USSR as a colonial relationship (Tichotsky, 2000, p.13). Peers, in her extensive research of non-Russian Siberian culture and identity in the post-soviet era looks at urbanisation and nationalist tendencies through the lens of journalism (Peers, E.K., 2008). Peers argues that "academics in both Russia and the West have advocated the promotion of a civic identity, attached to the Russian Federal state, which would replace the Soviet civic identity as a unifying alternative to potentially dangerous national identities. This civic identity would have to incorporate collective values, norms and aspirations, in the same way as the Soviet civic identity" (Peers, E.K., 2008, p.49). However, it is difficult to find that shared civic identity in such a diverse country as Russia, which has more than 120 ethnic groups, though 4/5 of the country's population are ethnic Russians/Slavs/Caucasian).

Fig.1-7 - Siberian Culture, a Food Market in the Winter. Source: Bustos, 2020

The cultural identity of the Sakha is linked to their semi-nomadic lifestyle, horse and cattle breeding, shamanic beliefs (see fig.1-8), and rural lifestyle. Forced urbanisation and the suppression of traditional Yakutian culture have added to the urban identity struggles of the Sakha. According to Peers, the urban Sakha incline towards abstracted and idealised conceptions of their culture: "their narratives offer imaginary representations that relieve the emotional tension caused both by a lack of identification with rural Sakha culture and life, and the contradiction between a lingering willingness to believe in the reality of spiritual agency, and the desire to view oneself as a 'developed', rationalist post-industrial town-dweller" (Peers, E.K., 2008, p.272).
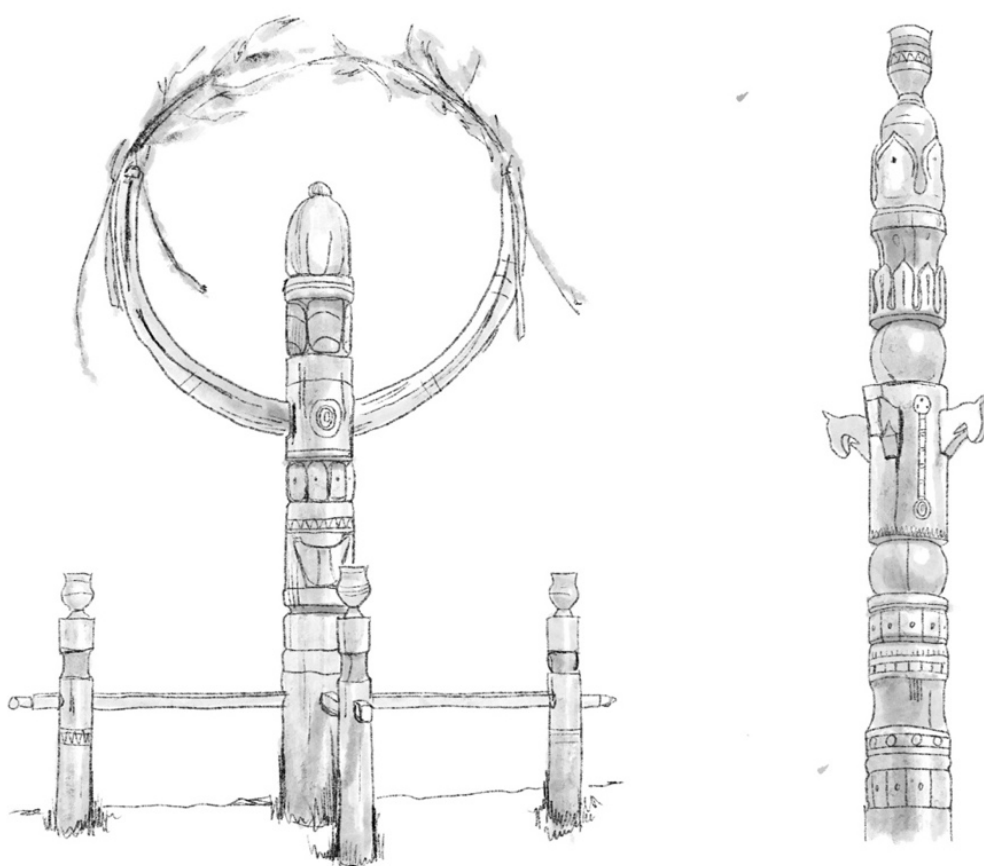
Fig.1-8 – Sakha Ritual *Serge*

Furthermore, Peers looks at the connection between lifestyle with identity through the work of Cheney (1996): "the anonymity of contemporary urban space, the development of cultures of consumption, along with mass advertising and fashion, and the fracturing of pre-modern hierarchies have led to a new emphasis on visualisation in the formation and negotiation of social structuration and identity. If social imaginaries refer to 'collective

representations of social identity', Cheney's account points out the work these representations do in the negotiation of power" (Peers, E.K., 2019, p.259).

Peers argues that: "visitors to the republic constantly encounter a worry that others may perceive the Sakha people and their culture as primitive, irrelevant, on the verge of dissolution — and, even worse, that this perception could be correct. The massively increased exposure to global technologies and cultural products brought about by the cessation of the Soviet administration has in some respects exacerbated the worry about Sakha culture and its value, while providing opportunities for individuals to adopt or create new forms of Sakha identification" (Peers, 2019, p.262).

Cruikshank and Argounova refer to Gillis (1994):

> Identity and memory should be treated as processes that involve selectivity, reconstruction, and fluidity, and must be understood historically. If we want to discover the relationships that material representation mask, we have to decode them to see whose interests they serve. Such disagreements in the Sakha Republic concern conflicting versions of the past and perceived hierarchies of asymmetry differentiating relatively powerless communities within a republic where economic and political futures are being negotiated. Symbolic resources continue to be crucial in the discourses of indigenous nationality constructed in Yakutsk (see fig.1-9). In the example of rural *Tatta*[6], prohibitions directed against specific cultural practices have enhanced the passion with which narratives linking history, culture, and place are now being re-inscribed on the landscape. Attempts to link object and story (*aal luk mas* [7] and *olonkho* [8]) with place in Tatta evoke the kind of commemoration that Keith Basso refers to as a basic and universal tool of the historical imagination. Placemaking, he argues, involves the fleshing out of historical materials – reimagining, refashioning, revising what really happened here (Cruikshank and Argounova, 2000, p.100).

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[6] *Tatta* – is the name of an ulus / region in the Sakha Republic, located in the central part of the republic.
[7] *Aal luk mas* – a sacred Sakha tree sculpture made for rituals, represents a model of the world of the Sakha.
[8] *Olonkho* – is a term used to refer to the entire Sakha epic folklore tradition as well as individual epic poems.

Fig.1-9 – Sakha Women in Front of a Yakutian Traditional Winter House. Source: *YakutiaMedia*, 2018

Basso suggests that specialised revisionist historians are not needed when placemaking is alive as social practice, because anyone can do it. Nor are archives, photographs, or sound recordings necessary. Places become the "durable symbols of distant events, and indispensable tools for remembering and imagining them" (Feld and Basso, 1996, p.7). The value of placemaking is not in the end product of the built artefact but in the organisation and meaning it creates. These organisations form social groups which can learn from each other and, through the process of making, can have an impact on the development of a civic commons similar to that established during the communist era. However, this new common ground would not be an oppressive idealised policy but a civic ground for democratic development.

In his article 'Arctic Record', Hemmersem maps contemporary approaches to building in the Arctic (Hemmersem, 2016).

> *Arctic Regionalism* (reflecting international, post-modern, architectural culture, whereby architects map inter-linked physical and social contextual conditions and design a *softened* Modernist architecture that focuses on place-making, identity, and community-building. According to this definition, architectural form links directly to

the analysis of climatic and functional requirements as well as the social ordering of space).

A New Indigenous Architecture (extending ideas about regionality, considering the Arctic to be an inhabited region with an emerging architectural design culture all of its own, architecture that express regional identities that respond to local landscapes and desires and designed by architects belonging to local communities).

Cultural North (the final argument also refers to the discourse on the globalisation of the Arctic but considers it to be a fragile region and cultural territory where communities and ecosystems are under threat from capitalism and climate change. Designs based on this argument combine civic action and local knowledge with digital open-source tools and the media. Through art and architectural projects, this logic legitimises indigenous rights by reinforcing claims of ecosystem stewardship (Hemmersem, 2020, p. 29).

One of the core Sakha worldviews is that "The city of Yakutsk is an 'Oasis' inside the 'Vacuum' (Yakovlev et.al., 2019, p.812), whereas the *Vacuum* refers to the vast remote territories of rural Siberia: the wilderness. The *Oasis* of Yakutsk city is where life happens, money circulates, as does knowledge and development. The *Oasis* is also a diverse meeting place that offers opportunities and new experiences. Yakovlev argues that this urban *Oasis* of Yakutsk can be a source of self-identification and can be seen as a threat by local rural migrants. "In this case, according to V. G. Babakov, ethnographers prefer to turn back in time to traditional ethnic values. This view can also find support in the works of C. Levi-Strauss. In his opinion, the myths of traditional culture are understood by the community without any explanation, and they are collective (Levi-Strauss, 2021). Thus, in a changing environment, in an environment of accelerating globalization processes, a return to strengthened traditional ethnic values is a way of adaptation, both to the urban environment in particular, and to the multicultural environment in general" (Yakovlev et.al., 2019, p.812).

The struggle to accommodate both rural self-identification and the aesthetic values of the Sakha within the urban environment is not to resolve easy. The fluid character of culture means that adjustments happen naturally. Some citizens move more easily in the direction of globalization and adopt Western lifestyles and values, other citizens travel in the opposite direction, back to the roots of the Sakha, while still other citizens nurture the

Soviet past. All alternatives are equally valid as they represent the needs of the users. However, it is important to provide a platform for all voices and opinions to move towards civic development. Thus, this research tests the possibilities of using participatory placemaking as a democratic tool for the civic co-design of shared spaces to expand urban imaginaries through making narratives and artefacts.

1.5.   Participatory Design in Russian Siberia

Participatory design (PD) is a relatively new approach in Russia, based on the idea of involving users in design processes (Starodubets, 2020). PD initiatives were introduced to Russia at the beginning of the 2010-s, inspired by Henry Sanoff's book, 'Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning' (1999) (Tikhomirova, 2019). Sanoff defines three main principles of PD: an input (involving users in the full process of design, implementation and owning of space/structure after completion); participation of anyone who is interested (equal importance for any stakeholder or body/institution); organisation and information (variety of tools and methods of community involvement depending on the context, time and scale) (Sanoff, 2010). The input principle in Russian PD is often reduced to initial design workshops and public consultations followed by varying levels of public involvement.

According to Glushakova and Bagrova, participatory design was not a natural development of urban design within urbanisation in Russia because of the political history and social features. During the Russian monarchy (classism and serfdom) and the Soviet Union (communism and the repression of identity) periods, the local authorities' decision-making was restricted and the rights of citizens were not considered as important or significant (Glushakova and Bagrova, 2017). Nowadays, the government of Russia encourages citizen participation to support Open Government Partnership ideas (OGP, 2011). Such participation can be related to the immediate results of the PD projects, which can be physical artefacts and/or manifestations of a 'Russian democracy' that does not really exist. Thus, whilst PD practices are emerging from the need of to allow the population the freedom to change their environment, such initiatives can be reduced to tokenism if the PD moments are not adapted to each specific context.

In the 1970-80-s, the first studies of participatory design in Russia were conducted by Glazychev V., Egorov, N., Iylina, T. (1995), and Kogan, L. (1981), where the authors classified citizens according to their interests and social groups in order to evaluate optimum strategies for initiating and deliberating about potential solutions to urban problems. In recent years in Russia, there has been increasing studies of cross-disciplinary PD: scholars and experts from architectural, political and sociological fields have been involved in the creation and discussion of PD methodologies, for example, studies of the economic impact of PD by the economist, Irina Antsyferova (2018), a sociological study based on a landscape design project by Gamurak (2019), and a political study of PD by Perezolova (2018).

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in PD in Russia and its regions of influence with several studies conducted by Russian architectural researchers. For instance, a comparative study of public consultation and participatory design by Zimuldinova, S. (2018) defines the key advantages of PD principles. Eshchina and Obidennova (2018) raised the question of possible gaps in knowledge of PD principles, techniques and methods in Russia. Another example is an architectural school: 'Strelka', in Moscow, which produced the methodology/guidelines for bottom-up urban design 'Involving citizens in civic design' (2017) adding to the PD methodology guidelines issued by the federal and local authorities. These methodologies have an optional and theoretical character and are not regulated nor required within Russian urban design.

The main principles of the participatory design of civic spaces in Russia include involving the local community (future users of space) in discussions/workshops and making design concept decisions (technical brief for architects); public consultations during the process of construction and taking care of the place after its completion. Public consultations were always included within the process of architectural and urban design but were considered too bureaucratic and combative (when certain very assertive people could push for a particular solution) whereas, participatory design is considered to be more flexible and balanced (Tikhomirova, 2019). However, PD is a new approach in Russian urban development and the level of local community involvement can vary. The practitioners of PD in Russia use PD methods to co-create the design brief but leave the design idea creation in practice to architects, though the more direct involvement of participants through imaginative workshops might create new knowledge for architects to interpret. Thus, there

is a need to define the connection between the level of involvement of the participants and their impact on the outcomes of such initiatives.

More recent attention has focused on the integration of PD principles from the top down. Since 2018 the Ministry of Construction in Russia has started to hold a Federal Grants Competition for the participatory design of civic space renovation projects (Case Study 1). The Ministry of Construction has also issued several advisory documents on how to involve local communities in civic design processes (Dr. Urban, 2016). In addition, the bottom-up approach and PD principles are being scaled up by projects like the crowd funding website '100 Cities' (100 City Leaders, 2020). Although there are now examples of Russian PD which have shown positive results as successful civic projects, it is not clear what issues have arisen within these processes, the level of users' involvement and what differences and similarities there are with other PD initiatives elsewhere in the world.

Thus, the emergence of participatory design practices in Siberia run parallel to a process of democratisation of the socio-cultural realm. "Rather than tangible design outcomes, the design process addresses the question of how new understandings, opportunities and imaginaries can be created with and for the 'Born Free' generation—young people born since independence in 1990" (Smith, et al., 2020), while participatory placemaking acts as a civic place for co-learning and co-constructing shared civic spaces.

1.6.   Research Questions

The research question asks how can participatory placemaking contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood and building scales? The main research question is divided into the following secondary questions regarding local affordances and resources, the adaptation of research methods and features of participatory placemaking in the framed context. (a) What place-based affordances and resources are there in Yakutsk and Lensk to facilitate the participatory placemaking of shared spaces (that is, the physical and non-physical resources, materiality, constraints, and opportunities of the context)? (b) How can participatory placemaking methods in the

North-eastern postcolonial context (methods, approach) be adapted for use in this context? (c) What the features of participatory placemaking are there; in Yakutsk and Lensk (structure, agency and involvement)?

1.7.   Aims and Objectives

In order to answer these questions, the research aims to evaluate the affordances and resources for participatory placemaking in the research context, test the various initiatives in terms of spatial agency and define the contextual singularities of participatory placemaking in Yakutia. The study of the physical and non-physical urban features and issues of Yakutia – in relation to its history with the environment and the urban development of Yakutia – took place through walking and mapping observations, discussions to assess the affordances of the research context. This investigation facilitates the identification of speculative sites for participatory placemaking case studies, the users' matters of concern and the available resources (materiality, participants, scale, and time). Furthermore, the assessment of local matters of concern and potential imaginaries for civic space design through the participatory placemaking case studies co-constructs the narrative and expands urban imaginaries within local community groups. Finally, the literature review and snowballing interview survey helps to define the character of participatory placemaking in similar contexts, and by comparing these with the case study data helped to imagine and evaluate the potential for participatory placemaking in the development of civic spaces in Yakutsk and Lensk.

1.8.   Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters: introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, two chapters of data collection and analysis, discussion, and conclusion (see fig. 1-10 below). Chapter I, the Introduction, evaluates the research problem and its background, states the main research question and the secondary questions, aims and objectives, and structure of the thesis. Chapter II summarises the theoretical framework on the affordances and thresholds of the context, the community auto-ethnographic lens in

postcolonial context, the spatial agency principles, the urban imaginaries theory, and hypothesis (Portfolio, stage 1). Chapter III presents the research methodology, adapted from the methods used and developed by the 'Architecture of Rapid Change and Scarce Resources (ARCSR)[9] ', which uses a community auto-ethnographic lens, along with the methods used in the empirical data collection (surveys and case studies) and their analyses by the researcher. The methods of data collection used in the research include walking and mapping methods to investigate the affordances and boundaries of civic spaces in Yakutsk to locate potential sites for participatory placemaking, three case studies, the snowballing interview survey, and the urban imaginary survey. The case studies used similar methods with different types of involvement: public talks and exhibitions, participatory design workshops, negotiation and consultation sessions, and hands-on building. The findings from the case studies and the snowballing interviews were used to construct the final survey of Siberian Imaginaries. This survey assesses the potential for civic engagement in the co-expansion of the urban environment of the Sakha (Yakutia) through collaborative speculative design proposals built on the existing affordances. The data analysis methods included reflective drawings and a thematic and comparative analysis of the survey and case study data.

Two chapters of 'Narrating and Making' (Chapter IV) and 'Making and Imagining' (Chapter V) describe in detail the surveys and case studies. Chapter IV reviews the snowballing interviews survey with participatory placemaking practitioners in similar contexts to understand the character of Yakutian participatory placemaking, and two case studies ('Oyuur Park' in Lensk and 'Dog City' in Yakutsk – Portfolio, stage 2) to evaluate Yakutian participatory design as a narrative making tool using the spatial agency principles.

Chapter V describes and compares the third hands-on making case study in Caledonian Park in London (Portfolio, stage 3) with the previous MA hands-on project in Yakutsk to test possibilities of learning-by-making as an artefact making tool and its contextual differences, and analyses the Siberian Imaginaries (Portfolio, p.15-25) survey outcomes.

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[9] The Architecture of Rapid Change and Scarce Resources (ARCSR) is an emergent, studio based, teaching and research area within the practice and academic discipline of architecture. It examines and extends knowledge of the physical and cultural influences on the built environment, focusing on situations where resources are scarce and where both culture and technology are in a state of rapid change (Mitchell and Tang, 2018).

Chapter VI presents the discussions, analysing the findings from the case studies and surveys (Chapters IV and V) along with the theoretical framework (Chapter II) to answer the research questions. The discussions are divided into two sections of the Spatial agency to analyse the practical findings from the case studies and the Imaginaries to evaluate the non-physical aspects and possible contribution of PP.

Chapter VII summarises the key thesis findings, the research questions' answers and situates the original contribution to knowledge. The research concludes with the recommendations gleaned from the participatory placemaking initiatives in the Yakutian context that could be tested further to scale up the local initiatives in Yakutia / regions with similar contextual characteristics or used as guidance to facilitate speculative participatory placemaking projects in other contexts.

The PhD portfolio accompanying the thesis, summarises the findings from the case studies and the Siberian Imaginaries survey. The portfolio should be read along with the thesis – each chapter gives references to the relevant portfolio pages. More detailed process description of the case studies and the snowballing interviews' transcripts are presented in the appendices.
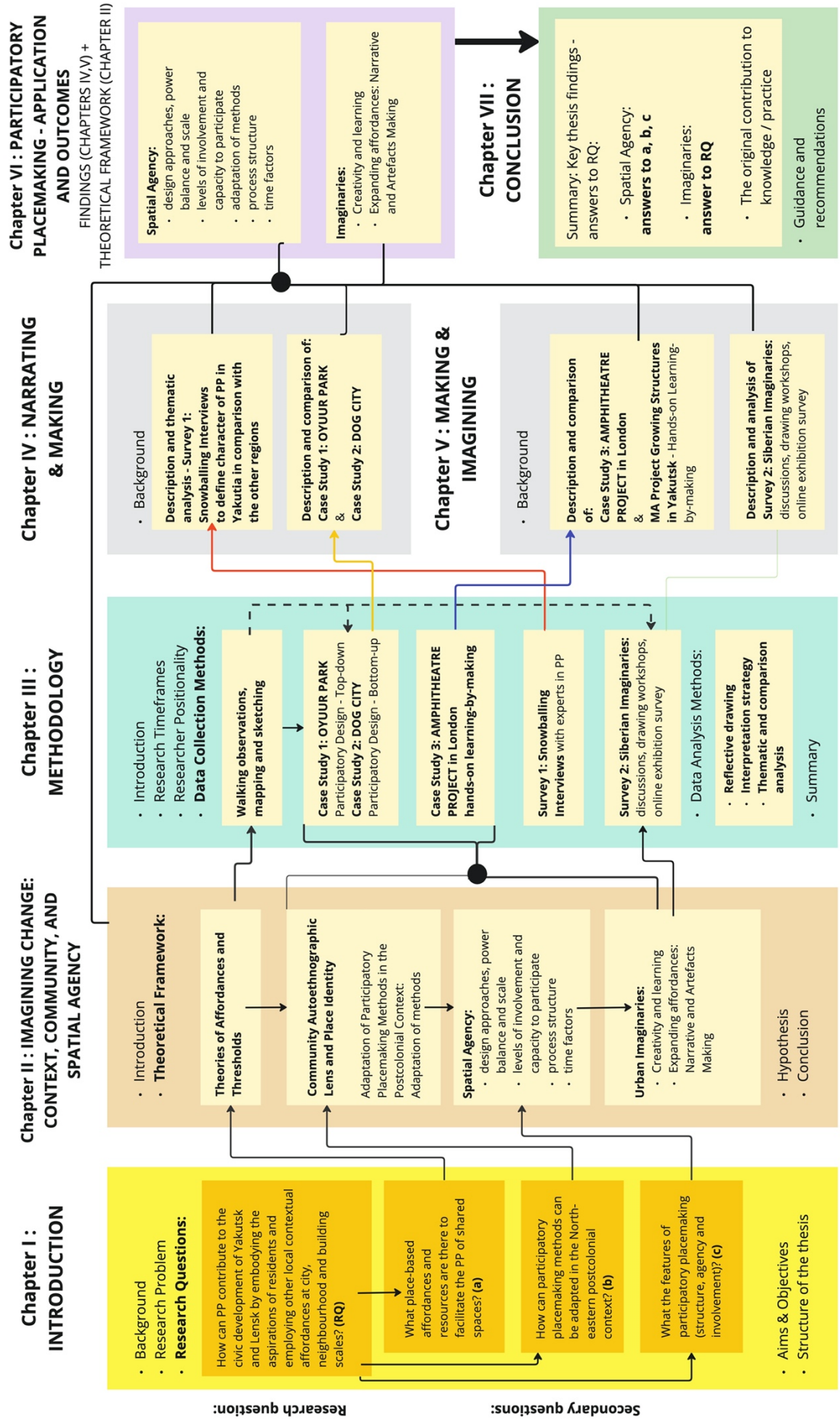
Fig.1-10 – Diagram of the Thesis Structure

CHAPTER II: IMAGINING CHANGE: CONTEXT, COMMUNITY, AND SPATIAL AGENCY

2.1.   Introduction

In order to address the research question, a theoretical framework was established to identify and analyse the processes and outcomes of the case studies and surveys. The theoretical framework adopted follows three stages: architect as Investigator, Narrator and then Maker. For the first stage, Affordance Theory (Gibson, 1977; Jones, 2003; Michaels, 2003) and Threshold Theory (Malisz, 1970; Hewings, 1975) were chosen to investigate the fundamental conditions: the physical affordances of the context (climate, landscape, resources and materiality), the socio-cultural and politico-economic structure together with the non-physical affordances to provoke and resource participatory placemaking processes (Portfolio, stage 1, p.4-8). These foundational theories were first developed in the 1970s (Gibson, 1977; Malisz, 1970) and revisited by researchers in the 2000s (Jones, 2003; Michaels, 2003). They provided an effective prism to connect the physical and non-physical contexts with local opportunities for urban development.

The theoretical framework used to analyse the second and third stages of Narrator and Maker (Portfolio, stages 2-3, p.9-14) adapted theories spatial agency (Awan et.al., 2013) to the postcolonial context using a community auto-ethnographic lens (Chang, 2008; Toyosaki et.al., 2009; Kardorff and Schönberger, 2010). This allowed the application, adaptation, and evaluation of participatory placemaking within the postcolonial context. Embedded, as it was, within the fundamental conditions of the context, this 3-stage process also enabled the exploration of the potential role of the Urban Imaginary (Bloomfield, 2006; Short, 2017; Long, 2019) within the participatory placemaking of shared urban space (Portfolio, p.15-25).

For the production of new knowledge, Lefebvre's methods (Lefebvre, 1996) were chosen rather than similar methods of McFarlane (2011) and Hemmersem (2020). Yakutia is a new context for PP application and Lefebvre's methods provided a broader set of tools of inquiry. As the work developed within a context unfamiliar with citizen engagement, Lefebvre's methods were found to be capable of appropriate creative adaptation. Spatial agency literature and recent research in this field (Del Gaudo et.al., 2017; Soma et.al., 2018; Drain and Sanders, 2019; Semeraro et.al., 2020; Schiffer, 2020) was framed to map the

potential for future Yakutian participatory placemaking. Derived from the fundamental conditions of the context, Urban Imaginaries were used as a framework to construct, represent and evaluate PP outcomes.

The finding that Urban Imaginaries could be used successfully in the context of Yakutia enabled a wider link to the broader family of participatory placemaking methods. The theoretical framework developed for the research allowed the application of Participatory Placemaking in the new context, based on foundational theories accompanied by the newest research in the field. Thus, the originality of the research lies in its interpretation of Participatory Placemaking methods for use in Yakutia allowing an effective application of new research by practice to articulate important aspects of shared placemaking and for these aspects to be tied back to the academic discourse.

2.2.   Thresholds and Affordances of the Context

The theories of thresholds and affordances were assessed as tools to analyse the past and possible future development of the Yakutian urban settlements. Understanding the thresholds and affordances of the context can lead to a better understanding of the nature of the issues within the settlements in order to test research hypothesis. In their paper entitled 'The River & The City', Mitchell and Roca Iglesias interpret Gibson's Affordance Theory (1977) as a way of spatially imagining change and then acting to analyse the theory through a speculative process (Mitchell and Roca Iglesias, 2019, p.14). It is a way of matching the potential of the context to the abilities of the local community groups, the makers and users. Thus, these processes can prompt and facilitate tangible changes, directly responding to the needs of the users and expanding their horizons.

Gibson asked why do humans change their natural environment? To change what it allows them to do, was the response. It is how a user can interact with their environment. "Within limits, the human-animal can alter the affordances of the environment but he or she is still the creature of his or her situation" (Gibson, 1986, p. 130). However, Jones (2003) highlights Gibson's (1977/1986) argument that the perception of an object's qualities and its affordances are not the same. Michaels (2003) argues that affordances exist objectively

and do not depend on their perception by a subject. Thus, one object/issue/context can have different affordances at the same time; what these are is a matter of perception. Urban imaginary prompts can suggest alternative views of local issues, together with the thresholds that that bind any proposed changes. This can, in turn, provoke further and deeper discussion within the same context.

The discovery of new affordances can be interpreted as the expansion of the horizons of involvement. According to Carl's interpretation, horizons of involvement refer to when, in a particular context, individuals negotiate/get involved in defining "the conditions for freedom" (Carl, 2017, p.3), and establish common ground. Through making all the opinions and physical constraints (thresholds) explicit, the users can begin to imagine what might be possible to implement in reality.

Threshold theory was first coined by Malisz in 1963, with further research implementated in Poland, the central regions of the USSR, Edinburgh and other regions of the UK. According to Malisz, Threshold theory is a response to three problems in urban planning: interdisciplinary cooperation (physical and economic planners), communication between planners on different levels, and the timescale that the plan should cover (Malisz, 1970, p.220). As argued by Hewings, "the threshold analysis has become an important planning tool in the general planning process related to urban development in Europe" (Hewings, 1975, p.21). Threshold theory is way of choosing the most suitable plan to expand a place, by overcoming its natural and technical obstacles.

The main idea of threshold theory is to find a balance between the physical, technological, structural and economical affordances of a place in order to expand the built environment (Kozlowski, 1968, p.99). The physical affordances of a place are dictated by its landscape, climate or other contextual features. However, while physical obstacles can be overcome, this requires greater economic investment. For example, the growth of Yakutsk city is limited towards the North-West (steep hill Chochur Muraan and ponds within the valley) or South-East (riverbank of Lena). During its development, Yakutsk pushed through the threshold of the ponds in order to expand to the North-West. The threshold of the hill is an 'expensive threshold', that requires a significant number of investments and specific technologies of construction. Thus, the city of Yakutsk is expanding its linear structure along the Lena River with future plans to adapt the bankside territories to densify the city centre.

Participatory placemaking is a way of co-investigating the local affordances and thresholds. It can inform the making process and justify its economic and environmental impact. Hence, the first part of the research, investigating the research context, is based on a study of contextual affordances, and the possibilities and limitations these affordances create. The evaluation of the contextual affordances allows to construct narratives and expand and enrich ways of tackling local matters of concern.

2.3.　　Community Autoethnographic Lens in Postcolonial Context

The main idea behind PD practices is the democratisation of design processes through the participation of their users. According to Sanoff, participatory design first emerged as a grassroots movement of community consciousness in Europe in the 1960's and has links to Plato's 'Republic' concepts of free speech, equality, and freedom (Sanoff, 2006, p.131). Scandinavia played a major role in the development of PD with the implementation of the co-design ideology as a democratic workplace movement in the 1970's (Szebeko and Tan, 2010, p.581). Recent developments in the field of participatory design have led to a renewed interest in decolonisation through design both in the global South and North. Although, participatory design is an empowering tool where answers come directly from the users, it is still a western way of approaching design through collaborative discussions and activities that might not be entirely understood or welcomed in postcolonial[10] contexts. However, methodical / experimental implementation of participatory placemaking can become a tangible civic development tool and create an urban learning forum if applied with care.

The community auto-ethnographical lens of the research allows participants to reflect and co-create narrative and artefacts by adapting existing knowledge to the research context. In her major work on auto-ethnography, Chang argues: "Auto-ethnographers are privileged with a holistic and intimate perspective on their 'familiar data'. This initial familiarity gives

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[10] Postcolonialism is a scholarly conversion that is situated within academic space, as opposed to decolonization, which is much more all-encompassing and transformative. Postcolonial theory also addresses the cultural transformations of nations whose cultures are deeply influenced by those of colonisers. It engages with how these nations are now striving to find their cultural identities in a world where globalization affects contemporary cultures (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2006).

auto-ethnographers an edge over other researchers in data collection and in-depth data analysis/interpretation" (Chang, 2008, p.52). Community auto-ethnographies use the personal experience of researchers-in-collaboration to illustrate how particular social/cultural issues are manifested in a community (Toyosaki et.al., 2009). Community auto-ethnographies thus not only facilitate 'community-building' research practices but also make opportunities for 'cultural and social intervention' possible (Kardorff & Schönberger, 2010, p.59). This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others (Spry, 2001) and treats research as a political, socially-just, and socially conscious act (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008).

PP as a situated practice is linked to a certain site and its residents/users. An understanding of the culture[11] of a place and its identity[12] is crucial for the analysis of a non-physical context and to propose methods of live intervention. A community auto-ethnographic approach embodies invisible cultural data as it is made manifest from the inside out. This way of working helps to effectively identify research methods that can be adapted and tested. In addition, this approach empowers the local community, allowing it full ownership of the artefacts and the freedom to build the narratives.

Co-constructed narratives illustrate the meanings of relational experiences, particularly how people collaboratively cope with the ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions of being friends, family, and/or intimate partners. Co-constructed narratives view relationships as jointly authored, incomplete, and historically situated affairs. Joint activity structures can be co-constructed research projects (Bochner & Ellis, 1997; Toyosaki & Pensoneau, 2005; Vande Berg & Trujillo, 2008). Appadurai argues that aspirations are not individually defined but are formed in the process of social interaction (Appadurai, 2004, p.67). Often retelling events about or around an epiphany, each person first writes her or his experience, then shares it and reacts to the stories the others wrote at the same time.

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[11] Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other, as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p.181).

[12] Place identity - those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural tendencies relevant to a specific environment (Proshansky, 1978, p.155).

Thus, co-constructed narratives are embedded in co-imagined and / or co-built settings, as each collaborative process can create a meaning and expand the mutual knowledge of the participants.

Giddens uses the term mutual knowledge, which is founded on exchange, negotiation, based on hunches or intuition. It aspires to abandon hierarchies in the field and welcomes contributions from everyone in the spirit of a shared enterprise (Giddens, 1987, p.216). Mutual knowledge is practical, everyday knowledge grounded in the particular demands of each condition. Wechsler defines collective intelligence as composed of the global ability of an individual to act purposefully, think reasonably, and to effectively deal with their environment (Wechsler, 1964, p.13). Whereas participatory placemaking can act as an urban learning forum to define and expand collective understandings of the existing realm and possibilities for its further development.

It is a challenge for indigenous communities, protective of their culture due to their history of oppression, to strike a balance between innovation and tradition. However, in order to expand their knowledge and develop new ideas, local practices need to be more open. Although, culture is fluid and changes over time, it still has its own form (essence). Geertz sees culture forming in the process of people's interactive communication and meaning making (Geertz, 1973, p. 12-13). For Geertz, a person's behaviours cannot be appropriately understood and responded to unless such behaviour is publicly exhibited and others correctly interpret its meanings using standards familiar to both parties (Chang, 2008, p.22). Thus, a local culture can become more open by introducing new ideas that challenge and expand the urban imaginaries of the cultural group.

Imaginative proposals and hands-on tests can help to find new ways of designing shared spaces. This concept sees collaborative learning as processes whereby people can "grow into knowledge" (Ingold, 2013, p.13). Colin McFarlane conceptualises urban learning having three forms: translation (displacement and change), coordination (linkage of different knowledge fragments), and dwelling (way of seeing and inhabiting) (McFarlane, 2011, p.360). McFarlane's concepts can be aligned with Lefebvre's ways of representing alternative futures in research by practice (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26).

Lefebvre's ways consist of deduction (top-down problem-solving practices), induction (bottom-up narrative making practices), translation (changing the order of a process structure), transduction, and transposition. Transduction refers to the construction of an ideal vision / speculative project to promote change. Transposition is a way of transferring an idea from one context into another, where the original idea is placed in and accommodated to the new context, so changes and becomes something new (Lefebvre, 1996, p.102). This research applies the deduction, induction, transduction, and transpositions ways to the case studies and tests its outcomes.

2.4.   Spatial Agency

Spatial Agency is defined as a new way of looking at the role of the architect in the production of a space and buildings. Spatial agency is a space for collaboration between professionals and non-professionals to make things otherwise (Awan et.al., 2013, p.33). The term Spatial Agency describes a participatory placemaking process where users operate at the same level of agency as designers, authorities and stakeholders and are empowered to construct their reality through learning-by-making methods. According to the spatial agency ideas, described of Awan et.al., architecture can be described as an act determined by structure (economic and social forces), but not limited by it. The place and structure of the context should be understood as a duality. This means that place is not seen as a determinant of society (the individual takes precedence) nor as determined by society but rather as within society (Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011, p.31). Hence, participatory placemaking is not just an alternative, construction solution for a local issue at the given time, but an act of provocation and inspiration by and for its users. It is a way of broadening horizons and contributing to the urban imagination of the occupants of a place.

This research studies following spatial agency principles: design approaches, power balance and scale; levels of involvement and capacity to participate; process structure; and time factors. All these principles are linked to the affordances of the context – fundamental conditions.

2.4.1. Design Approaches, Power Balance, and Scale

Spatial Agency practices can be approached either from the top-down or the bottom-up. The top-down and bottom-up approaches that represent decision-making and the organisation of placemaking processes both have strengths and weaknesses. According to Semeraro et.al., the top-down approach - where the authorities act as the decision-makers - creates tension between stakeholders concerning the type of use of a space, environmental protection, the interest of residents, labour conditions, economic development, and the identities of urban areas (see fig.2-2) (Semeraro et.al., 2020, p.3).
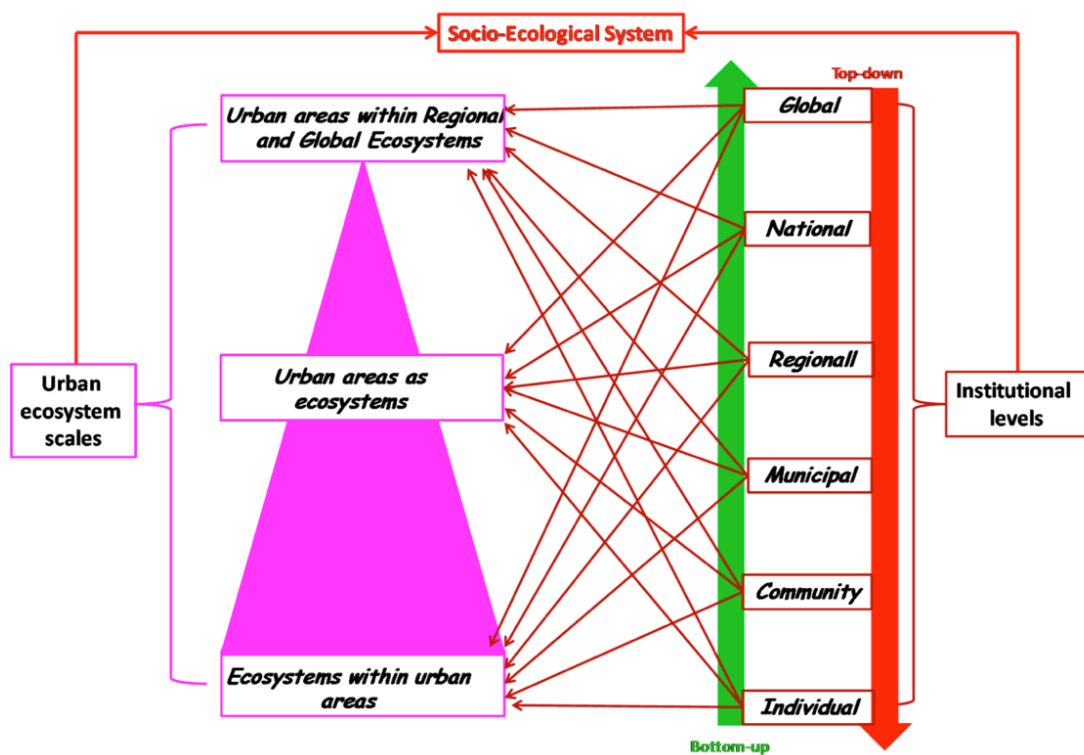
Fig.2-1 – Schematic Representation of the Relationship between Urban Ecosystem Scales and Institutional Levels in the Socio-ecological System (Semeraro, et.al., 2020, p.2)

Bottom-up initiatives facilitated by the users can meet obstacles such as local regulations, lack of organisation and funding issues. Soma et.al. argue that the combination of the top-down and bottom-up can lead to better-quality shared spaces through "including stakeholder's participation with strategic spatial planning at different urban levels" (Soma et.al., 2018, p.439). However, the levels of user participation in such processes should be observed as they can fall into the trap of simply being a token or consultant inputs.

Another aspect of the placemaking processes is the balance of power (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014; Steiner & Farmer, 2017; Shiffer, 2020) between the participants and facilitators. In the ideal participatory placemaking process, the participants and facilitators should have equal power. However, power relations can be especially hard to balance in bottom-up initiatives where there is no assigned leader to unite the participants and organise the process. Drain and McCreery also highlight the power relations that exist between the participants due to the socio-cultural power systems within a society (Drain and McCreery, 2018). Drain and McCreery point out that socio-cultural dynamics can create obstacles and should be considered in advance. For example, in certain contexts, male participants can be more dominating.

The understanding of participatory placemaking and the creation of a safe space for equal partnership means in each case should be designed within the placemaking process. Adapting the participatory design methods can vary from serious games (Paracha & Yoshie, 2011; Paracha, Khan & Yoshie, 2008; Paracha et al., 2019) to drawing and planning workshops (Messeter et al., 2012; Ospina Pinillos et al., 2019). Sanders and Stapper categorise PD methods as making-style, enacting-style, and telling-style activities (Sanders and Stapper, 2014). While making-style refers to the making of an artefact, while enacting-style uses role play or prototype testing, and telling-style uses discussions and interviews.

Adaptation of methods can balance the power within participatory placemaking by increasing participants' capacity to participate and subsequently the levels of participants' involvement.

2.4.2. Levels of Involvement and Capacity to Participate

Levels of participation in participatory placemaking vary depending on the approach adopted, methods, scale, and time. Participation can be measured through participation ladders (see table 2-1; fig.2-3, 2-4, 2-5) (Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992; Druin, 2002; Hussein, 2010), project evaluation criteria (Schot, 2001), and participation evaluation criteria (White, 1996; Kanji & Greenwood, 2001). This research used Hussein's ladder of inference that consists of three levels: included, consulted, and empowered (Hussein, 2010). The level of user participation can change during the process of placemaking when participants become progressively more empowered and develop trust.

3	EMPOWERED	The highest involvement
2	CONSULTED	The middle ground - discussions
1	INCLUDED	The lowest involvement

Table 2-1- Table Illustrating Hussein's Ladder (2010)
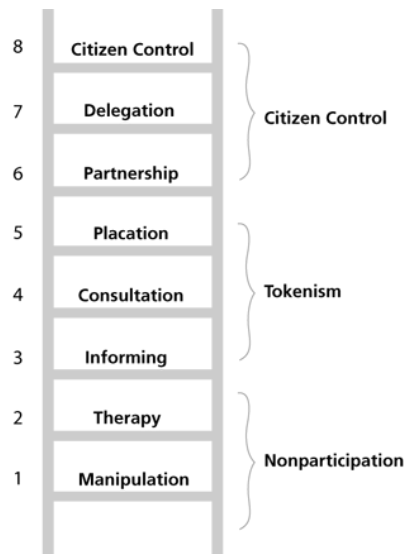
Fig.2-2- Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
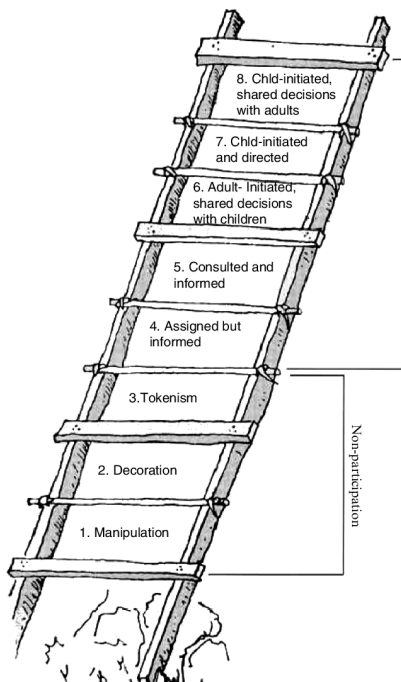
Fig.2-3 -Hart's Ladder (1992, p.8)   Fig.2-4 -Kanji and Greenwood (2001)
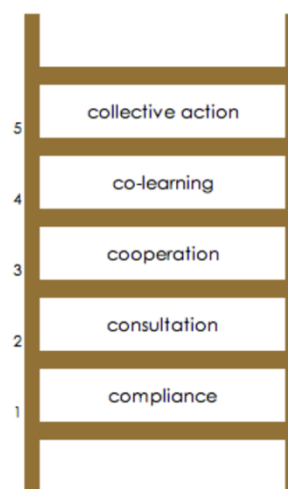
Drain and McCreery, in their collaboration system model (CSM), define the components of a participatory design project as society and culture, design environment and materials, designer's existing knowledge and activities, and participant's existing knowledge and capacity to participate (Drain & McCreery, 2018), while the capacity to participate is based on participants' ability to communicate and contribute to a process in an effective way (Spinuzzi, 2005). Drain and McCreery identify six aspects of a participant's capacity to participate: the ability to express contextual insights (Contextual Insights); the ability to express design critique (Design Critique); the ability to generate insightful ideas (Ideas); the ability to create insightful prototypes (Prototypes); the understanding of the design process (Design Process); the motivation to contribute (Motivation). The research case studies and surveys indicated that these aspects need to be cultivated and built into the tools by the facilitators.

Drain and McCreery recommend assessing the participants' capacity to participate in PD before the start of the project by holding capacity building sessions (Drain & McCreery, 2018). Capacity building sessions aim to create relationships between the participants, create trust to enable active involvement. However, in learning-by-making processes, these sessions are not necessary, as the making process itself acts as a group building process (Hamdi, 2014).

Christiaans argued that co-design processes should include three knowledge-sets: process knowledge, basic knowledge, and design knowledge (Christiaans, 1992). Process knowledge is knowledge about process structures, finding accommodations for the increasing resistances and a certain design mind set. Basic knowledge can cover socio-cultural or local matters of concern, or any other knowledge of a range of topics. Design knowledge is professional knowledge about design, building, and/or engineering. The presence of all three forms can make learning-by-making processes the most effective. For instance, users can bring the basic understanding, designers, the design knowledge, and facilitators, the process knowledge to create mutual knowledge.

Christiaans' argument resonates with Hamdi's saying that participatory design "is fundamentally about creating the pedagogical, social, and ethical conditions under which students agree to take charge of their learning, individually and collectively, to create their own knowledge" (Hamdi, 2004, p.127). Thus, participants' levels of involvement and

capacity to participate directly link to process structure. The way participatory placemaking processes are structures can either expand or decrease these involvement aspects.

2.4.3. Process Structure

Freire argues that 'education is freedom', that traditional teaching styles keep people powerless by treating them as passive recipients of knowledge (Freire, 1970). Learning-by-making gives the freedom to participants, to make mistakes and find new accommodations. As stated by Nabeel Hamdi, learning-by-making is not only about placemaking, but it also involves designing both spatial and organizational structures where people can "remove barriers to knowledge and learning, find partners, build networks and open lines of communication" (Hamdi, 2004, p.116).

Therefore, PP can expand participants' horizons through reflective experience, making mistakes, learning, and creating precedents for sharing experience. However, the flexible character of a hands-on initiative requires a great deal of determination from the group of participants, as the organisational processes led by volunteers can go wrong within the time frame and exhaust the participants, so freedom to learn can be restricted by time. Inexperienced participants can build a structure based on theories and common sense if they have enough time to experiment, however, the over-extension of a building process can reduce the participants' motivation.

Moreover, Lefebvre defined social space as a dynamic space where shared productive enterprises have no fixed start or finish and where multiple actors contribute at various stages (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26). His analysis of space at a given moment in time is augmented by other factors that came into play in the past: social networks, global networks (globalisation), ecological networks (climatic events) and virtual networks (Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011, p.30). These networks are additional parts of the structure and should be taken account of by practitioners.

2.4.4. Time Factor

The time factor is contextual, a social phenomenon as every participant and institution involved has their own pace, habits, and possibilities. Del Gaudio et al. define four contextual time factors in participatory design initiatives. A project's timeline is a combination of the timelines of the institutions involved - local rhythms (implementation moment, speed, and lifespan), the timing norms of partners (organisational dynamics), community participants' speed (also time required to build the capacity to participate), and time required for achieving change (Del Gaudio et.al., 2017). While the first two factors of local rhythm and the timing norms are already present in the context, the third, participation speed, is established during an initiative, and the fourth, the time required to achieve change, can only be evaluated after the project has been completed.

According to Del Gaudio et al. there are three possible time misfits: between the design process timing and the time for the social environment to evolve; between the speed of the designer's actions and the speed of the community's participation; between design timing and the timing of the design partner, such as an NGO (Del Gaudio et.al., 2017, p.125).

The time factor is also linked to the scale of a project. Participatory placemaking was a grassroot movement which is naturally a bottom-up phenomenon of changes starting at a small scale. However, participatory design tends to be practiced at a bigger scale of a neighbourhood and city. At neighbourhood and city scales, the practitioners usually work with the local NGOs to help with the organisational processes. Bigger scales require more assistance for organisation of a large number of participants. In order to define the time factor in Yakutian participatory placemaking, the case studies are facilitated at three scales of city, neighbourhood, and building.

2.5.   Urban Imaginaries

In this research, urban imaginaries are co-developed with the users based on fundamental conditions of the context (affordances and thresholds) using the participatory placemaking methods (spatial agency principles). According to Short, urban imaginaries are constantly changing constructs that move back and forth from representations of reality to effective constructors of reality, actively connecting space and society, identity, and place. They are general ideas in the local contexts that inform and affect power relations in a place (Short, 2017, p.35).

Moreover, Bloomfield argues that urban imaginaries project unconscious social desires and construct imaginary social alternatives which form part of a long utopian tradition, where memory plays an important role in framing such urban imaginaries (Bloomfield, 2006, p.43). Thus, urban imaginaries here refer to collective understandings (by its urban residents, not the global outside image) of a public place, its character, features, the ways it functions and aspires to function. Urban imaginaries are built on collective memory and represent the fluid yet constant reality of current urban users.

In his article 'Spatial Imaginaries and Personal Topographies in Siberian Life Stories: analysing Movement and Place in Biographical Narrative', Joseph Long studies the relationship between spatial imaginaries and movements (the lived experience of tourists/travellers). Long sees "the concept of a 'spatial imaginary' as a way of considering how places, routes and landscapes are given meaning in visual media and narrative accounts" (Long, 2019, p.170). He sees the term social imaginary as one that refers to collective representations of place identity. "If, as argued above, tourism can be explored within broader practices of movement and place-making, then the more holistic 'spatial imaginary' provides some utility for our present purposes. Here, the spatial imaginary is employed to connote the combination of discourses, images, memories, and fantasies that inform and reflect travel practice, realised in the personal topographies of individuals" (Long, 2019, p.171).

Furthermore, Long addresses travel restrictions during the Soviet Union period, when tourism was organised by the government (Long, 2019, p. 172). For example, people would get travel quotas, mainly within the territory of the Soviet Union or to the left-oriented territories such as Berlin and Dresden (and Baltic countries) in the post WW2 period. The collapse of the USSR in the 1990-s opened the borders and gave people the freedom to have a wider lived experience. This change is especially relevant in Yakutia, which because of its remote location, has only recently started to test outside knowledge.

The existing contextual affordances and adapted methods determine what can be done in the present. A society's culture is the context within which not only the aesthetic values and aspirations but also "the freedoms that we seek" (Sen, 2004, p.39) are established. Participatory placemaking can enhance the democratic aspirations of citizens through promoting the freedom to create and enhance creativity through learning-by-making (Sen, 1999; Tully, 2008; Hallward, 2006; Carpenter, 1997; Turner, 1969; Grube, 1992; Hallward, 2006; Tully, 2008; Szebeko and Tan, 2010). Whereas collaborative making of narratives and artefacts can expand the local affordances and create new urban imaginaries.

In their extensive research on narrative, Bochner and Ellis perceived the meaning of narrative-making as a way of knowing about and of participating in the social world through sense-making and the identification of oneself (Bochner and Ellis, 1997, p.308), while the co-construction of a narrative can make explicit or uncover a particular socio-cultural issue (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011, p.279). Moreover, use of existing situated resources can create meaningful artefacts (Dirkx, 2001; Ingold, 2000, 2013; Taylor, 2017).

The North-Eastern Siberian context gives an opportunity to test participatory placemaking initiatives that aspire to build on indigenous knowledge and the available resources and contribute to the epistemology of PP through case study tests.

2.6.   Hypothesis

This study hypothesises that:

First, the newly emerging practices of participatory placemaking in Yakutia have a distinctive character linked to the contextual affordances of the climate, topography, resources, and local matters of concern relating to the local socio-cultural and politico-economical structure.

Second, the transferred and adapted knowledge interpreted by local practitioners in Yakutia using participatory placemaking practices can create new knowledge which is useful for the recognition and creation of urban public places in Yakutia. The co-expanded urban imaginaries can empower civic society and provoke democratic urbanisation.

Third, participatory placemaking can act as an agon / learning forum for the citizens of Yakutsk and Lensk as a way of co-learning and expanding urban imaginaries in the research context. The expansion of urban imaginaries is formed by using PP methods based on local affordances: constructing narratives (participatory design) and making artefacts (learning-by-making). These urban imaginaries aim to locate and tackle local matters of concern giving distinctive architectural identity to shared places and enhance civic action.

2.7.   Conclusion

The theoretical framework described in this chapter forms the basis for the methodological framework of Investigator-Narrator-Maker (see fig.2-5 below). Theories of affordances (Gibson, 1977) and thresholds (Malisz, 1970) were used to analyse the fundamental conditions of the research context – co-define the local issues and aspirations of the users, physical and non-physical possibilities, and their limitations. These theories link to the first stage of the methodology – architect as Investigator. The concept of a community auto-ethnographic lens for use in a postcolonial context (Chang, 2008) and Lefebvre's ways of producing new knowledge (Lefebvre, 1996) were adopted to inform the following stages of architect as Narrator and Maker. These foundational theories were used as ways of applying Participatory Placemaking in the postcolonial context, giving power to the participants. More recent research on the adaptation of design knowledge by McFarlane (2011) and Hemmersam (2020) were found to be similar to the Lefebvre's theory. However, Lefebvre's theory was more expansive and offered more space for experimentation.

Furthermore, theories of spatial agency design approaches (Soma et.al., 2018; Semeraro et.al., 2020), power balance (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2014; Steiner and Farmer, 2017; Shiffer, 2020), levels of involvement (Arnstein, 1969; Hussein, 2010), capacity to participate (Druin, 2002), process structure (Freire, 1970; Hamdi, 2004; Drain and Sanders, 2019), and time (Del Gaudo et.al., 2017) were adapted to determine the distinctive character of Participatory Placemaking in the contexts of Yakutsk and Lensk. These theories and various aspects of Participatory Placemaking methodology were tested in the case studies. Theories of spatial agency were chosen to align the research outcomes based on foundational theories to recent developments in Participatory Placemaking. Urban Imaginaries (Bloomfield, 2006; Short, 2017; Long, 2019) were used as a shared forum to tie together context and users in a process of contemporary Participatory Placemaking. These Urban Imaginaries were tested in the Siberian Imaginaries survey to evaluate Participatory Placemaking as a civic action enhancement tool for the democratic development of shared spaces. Therefore, the theoretical framework developed in this research was able to effectively conduct and analyse the research by practice by adapting

the relevant methods and filling the gap in the knowledge of Participatory Placemaking in Yakutia.
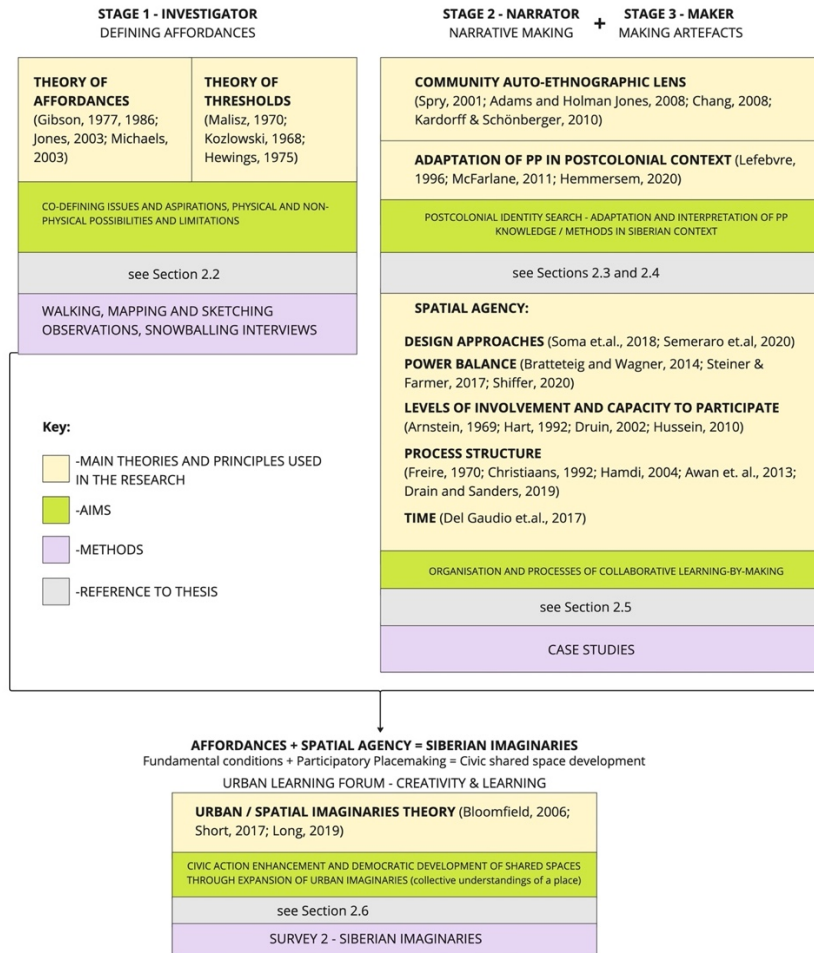
Fig. 2-5– Diagram of the theoretical framework along the research methodology

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This PhD is a continuation of an MA thesis on learning-by-making in the context of Yakutsk completed in 2019. The refocused MA methodological framework of learning-by-making to include participatory design was further broadened to participatory placemaking to combine both collaborative design and making processes. In this research, I use the term *participatory placemaking* (PP) as a combined method of *participatory design* (PD) and collaborative architectural *learning-by-making*. In order to test the research hypothesis, the case studies and surveys were conducted on three scales (city, neighbourhood, and building) using different approaches (top-down, bottom-up, and a combination of both; remote, online, and in-person).

The research methodology is based on an adapted version of the ARCSR methodology of the architect as a *Detective*, a *Narrator*, and a *Maker*. It was amended to accentuate the community auto-ethnographic aspect of the research to an *Investigator*, a *Narrator*, and a *Maker* (see fig.3-1). The original stage / role of *Detective* is now the combination of cultural and physical surveys carried out by participants in the field. This stage used various methods of site analysis such as transect walks, sketching, measuring surveys, interviews with local people refined by being repeated. In this way, participants can develop an understanding of a site from the perspective of the everyday lives of local inhabitants, define cultural pockets, local matters of concern and assess the available resources (Mitchell and Tang, 2018, p.92). The term *Investigator* replaced that of *Detective* to highlight the community auto-ethnographic character of the research, whereby the local community members are the active researchers / participants. As the local people already embody knowledge of the socio-cultural context, they investigate a site to co-define users' aspirations and matters of concern they want to address. Therefore, participatory design initiatives become an *agon*[13], a place of discussion and learning. This is intertwined with the *Narrator* role where the users adopt participatory design methods to speculate on how to move resolutely forwards based on a shared understanding of local matters of concern and the local affordance of the climate and landscape, materials, and other resources. Finally, the *Maker* role stands for the learning-by-making practices of producing an artefact.

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[13] *Agon* – is a Greek term for a conflict, struggle or contest.

Learning-by-making can provoke further interest in tackling local matters of concern and produce new knowledge by expanding urban imaginaries.
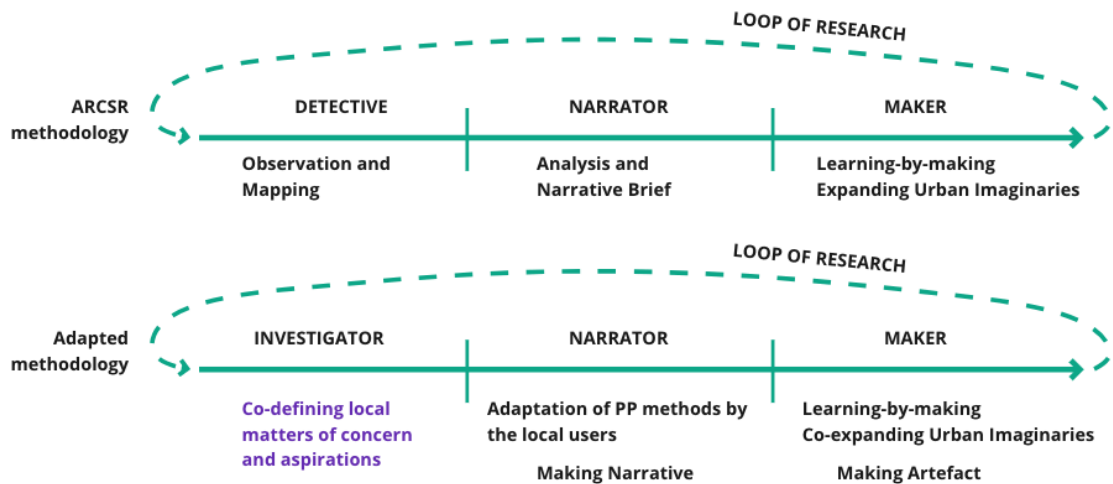
Fig.3-1 - ARCSR Methodological Framework and Adaptation

This flexible research by design framework allowed the research question of how can participatory placemaking contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood, and building scales to be effectively addressed. The secondary questions were designed to answer the overall research question concerning local affordances and resources, the adaptation of the research methods and the features of participatory placemaking to the framed context to ask: What place-based affordances and resources are there in Yakutsk and Lensk to facilitate the participatory placemaking of shared spaces (physical and non-physical resources, materiality, constraints and opportunities of the context)? How can participatory placemaking methods be adapted for use in the north-eastern postcolonial context (methods, approach)? What are the features of participatory placemaking in Yakutsk and Lensk (structure, agency and involvement)?

The three-step methodological structure allows to us to identify the actors in play with regard to the research questions to be identified. The investigating stage explores the affordances of the context, its fundamental conditions for shared urban space development. The narrating stage assesses the local matters of concern to co-create the narratives that embodies the aspirations of the users. The making stage tests the research hypothesis through three case studies to evaluate the adaptation of methods and approaches, and the spatial agency principles of participatory placemaking initiatives in

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Yakutsk, Lensk, and London. The comparison of London and Yakutsk placemaking initiatives allowed the distinctive character of Yakutian PP based on its contextual differences to be identified. These case studies along with the snowballing interviews survey answer the secondary questions which lead to the main question's answer. The urban imaginaries survey summarised the findings from the case studies and tested further the hypothesis to answer the main research question.

The methods of data collection used in the research included walking and mapping to investigate the affordances and thresholds of shared spaces in Yakutsk; three case studies and two surveys to co-create the narrative brief and urban imaginary projects, analyse, and locate the findings (see fig. 3-2). The case studies and surveys have a mainly qualitative character, a common approach in participatory design and learning-by-making projects as the process followed by each project is unique, based on its context, scale, and time.
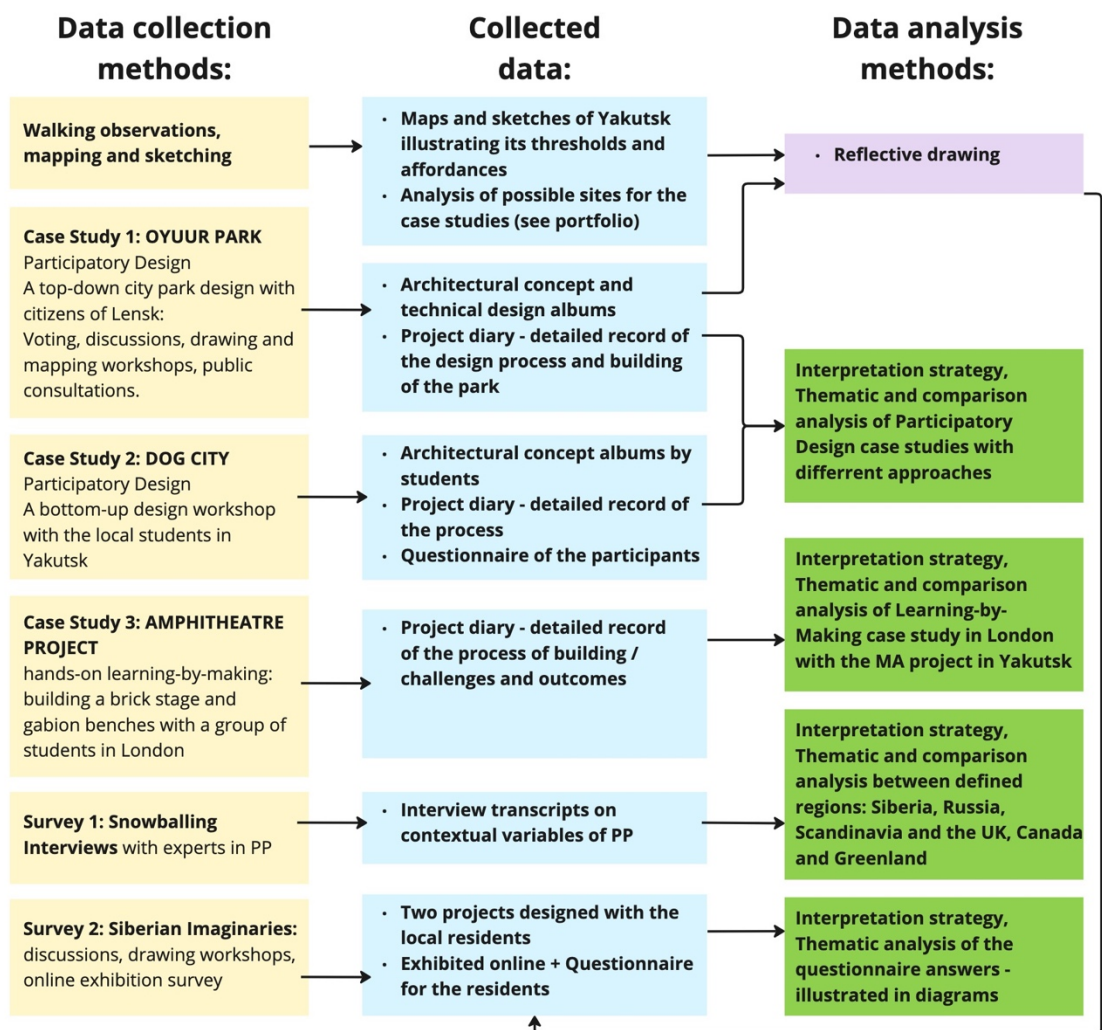
Fig.3-2 – Research Methods Diagram

The empirical data was analysed using reflective drawing for walking and mapping exercises, thematic and comparison analysis for the survey and case studies' data. These qualitative methods offered an effective way of extracting and analysing the data and framing it within the philosophy of the research framework. In addition, the interpretation strategy allowed the use of the auto-ethnographic lens to highlight the appropriateness of the research methods for the Yakutian context. The research findings are discussed with the theoretical framework and summarised in the conclusions and recommendations, accompanied by the PhD portfolio of drawings.

3.2. Research Timeframes - Accommodation of Resistances

The research plan and methods changed due to the contingencies necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic: lockdown, the impossibility of social gatherings, and travel restrictions (see fig.3-3, 3-4, table 3-1). Although, the sudden pandemic lockdown at the beginning of 2020 heavily restricted the field trips and hands-on collaborative learning-by-making research plans, it also offered new accommodations for in-depth participatory design tests and the development of the spatial imaginary proposals.
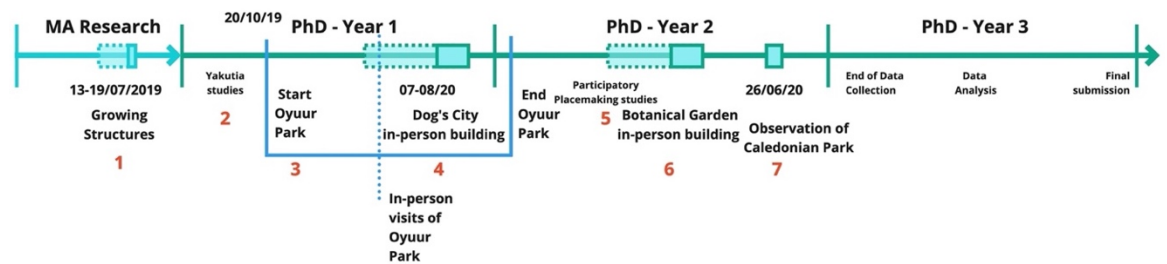
Expected timeframe
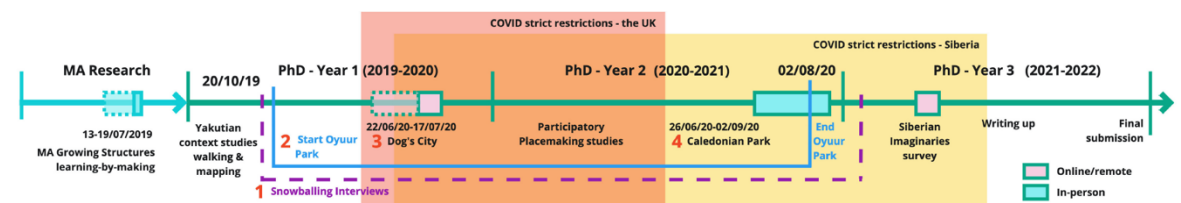
Realised timeframe

Fig.3-3 - PhD Timeframes – Expectation and Realisation

Timetable - CS	January - September 2018	October - December 2018	January-May 2019	June-August 2019	September - December 2019	January-May 2020	June-August 2020	September - December 2020	January-May 2021	June-August 2021	September - December 2021
Case Study 1 OYUUR PARK	Participatory Design	Participatory Design	Frozen due to lack of funding and absence of an architect	Frozen due to lack of funding and absence of an architect	Participatory Design	COVID Lockdown	Participatory Design + Building	Negotiation + Building	Negotiation + Building	Building	
Case Study 2 DOG'S CITY					Negotiation	COVID Lockdown	Process - Workshop				
Case Study 3 CALLY PARK								Design work by students	COVID Lockdown	Process - Workshop	New Initiative Work (Mural)
Previous Research Growing Structures		Negotiation	Provocation - Workshops and Talks	Process - Workshop							

Legend:
- Preliminary work on the project by someone else
- Project Frozen
- Preliminary work on the project by the researcher
- Case Study Process - Action
- End of the project
- Team celebration
- Community celebration

Table 3-1 - Summary Timetable of Case Studies
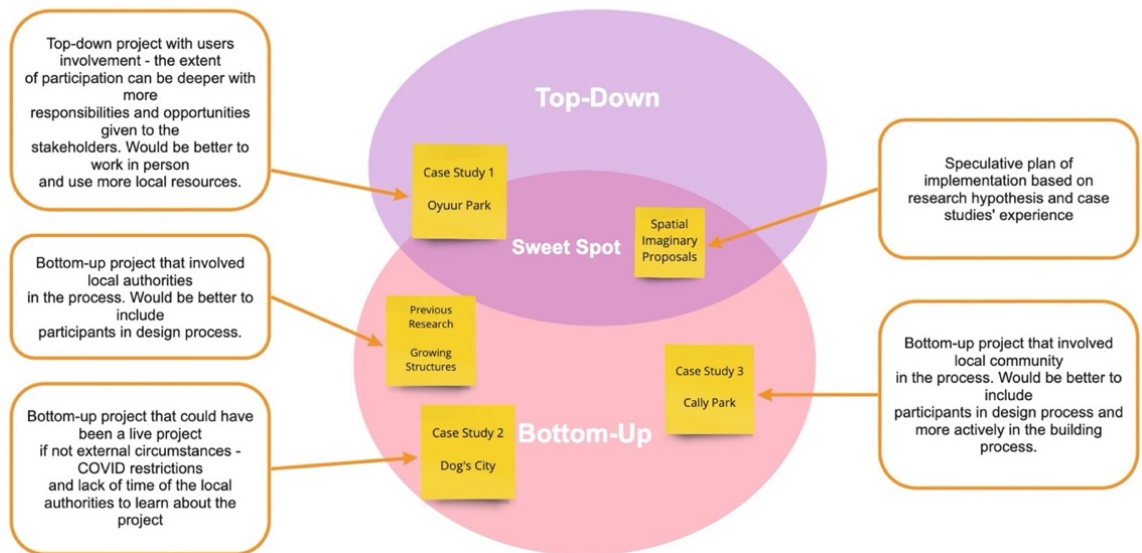
Fig.3-4 - Case Study Approach Diagram

The first Oyuur case study of the remote participatory design of the city park in Lensk was carried out without interruptions as it was already at the construction phase. Two of the following planned case studies with the Yakutian Botanical Garden and a project involving student learning-by-making workshops were cancelled due to mass gathering restrictions in Siberia (see portfolio p.16-17). Instead, the research concentrated on remote methods to broaden the philosophical framework, looking in-depth into topics of place identity and urban imaginary, together with the politico-historical postcolonial aspects of participatory design.

A new method of snowballing interviews was added to investigate the character of participatory placemaking initiatives in different contexts. The findings from the interviews added new *invisible* analysis categories to the research. For instance, new questions of freedom, agency, and the structure of participatory design initiatives emerged. Consequently, an online 4-week participatory design workshop was conducted with the Yakutian students and foreign practitioners of participatory design (Case study No2 – Dog City). Furthermore, urban imaginary processes were tested through the second survey with the young people at the children's design studio in Yakutsk. Thus, newly available online methods enriched the research by extending the length of participatory design workshops and subsequently increasing the levels of involvement.

The learning-by-making process was added through an ARCSR initiative - the collaborative hands-on case study No3, Amphitheatre Project in London. The findings from the third case study allowed the comparison of a hands-on building process in London with the previous MA building process in Yakutsk. All these case studies together gave an opportunity to study each stage and type of participatory placemaking in-depth, define reappearing themes, compare the approaches and its contextual variables.

Other methodological resistances required the adaptation of design and making methods for the case studies carried out in Yakutsk, as the participants, due to their lack of experience of using participatory placemaking approaches, their age, or other variables, had to be involved in alternative exercises to increase their capacity to participate. Timing accommodations had to be made during the making workshops. For example, the hands-on building process in London required adjustment and extension due to the weather and availability of the participants. For health and safety reasons, there should have been at least 5 participants on-site for each workday, with work finishing at twilight as the amphitheatre site is located in a concealed part of the park without lights. The MA project was in contrast, as the site is based on the site of a nursing home and is extensively lit, making it safe to continue work until 11 pm. The adaptation of methods is further described in the case study methods and analysis chapters.

3.3. Practice Research and Researcher Positionality

This PhD research is carried out by practice work. Practice research in architecture is research by design that focuses on a project development informed by theoretical framework and leads to generation of new knowledge. I employ Roggema's definition of research by design: "a method, which uses design to research spatial solutions for a certain area, accommodating a design process, consisting of a pre-design phase, a design phase and a post-design phase, herewith providing a philosophical and normative basis for the design process, allowing to investigate the qualities and problems of a location and test its (spatial) potentials, meanwhile creating the freedom to move with the proposals in uncharted territory, and producing new insights and knowledge interesting and useful for a wide audience" (Roggema, 2017). This research was inspired by my architectural interests (democracy in architectural design, indigenous identity, hands-on building) and informed by my Indigenous Siberian background.

Participatory placemaking is a democratic practice of direct users' involvement that employs hands-on practices. By adopting the community auto-ethnographic lens, I position myself in one line with the participants and take not only the facilitator's role but also a role of an active participant and a learner. As a facilitator, I organise the projects by finding design sites, involving potential participants and funders, and outline the work. As an active participant, I get involved in the design and hands-on building processes with the other participants. This means that I do more of a physical work and observe the processes, but not necessarily supervising them. As a learner, I do architectural design work based on the participatory workshops and discussions. This part of a work can be also described as a mediator as the designs are dictated by the users.

This positionality aligns with the Roggema's definition: a pre-design phase as a facilitator, a design phase as a participant or a mediator, and a post-design phase as a researcher (analysis of the findings). This positionality allows to test different approaches in participatory design and determine what structures can work better and helps to gain trust of participants.

In the case study "Oyuur Park" and the "Siberian Imaginaries" survey, I position myself as a mediator who draws on the ideas of the participants and brings their design solutions together. In the case study "Dog City", I work as a facilitator who outlines the workshops' structure and brings together the speakers to introduce the ideas of participatory placemaking to the participants. In the case study "Amphitheatre Project", I position myself as a participant in the hands-on building process. In order to document and reflect on the processes, I was taking photographs and sketching during the work, which were later combined in research diaries (see appendices).

The different roles employed in the research, those of facilitator, participant, mediator, and researcher gave an insight into the structure of participatory placemaking processes. Firstly, in the Lensk project, I adopted the role of a mediator, as the top-down and mixed approaches required some direction and decision making. Later, I switched to the role of a facilitator to give full freedom to the participants in the bottom-up case study Dog City. As the case studies have shown, the roles of a mediator and a facilitator require more care and flexibility to feel the process and amend it carefully without imposing a solution from the top down. In the Amphitheatre project, my role was changed to a participant role, to gain the insight from London initiative. The role of a participant was more challenging, as there was no clear responsible leader in the group. However, the role of a participant helped to identify general challenges in PP practices, such as organisation and power relations. These processes with their benefits and resistances are described in detail in Chapters IV and V.

3.4.   Data Collection

3.4.1.   Walking and Mapping

The method of walking and mapping is a primary method of architectural site analysis. It allows the researcher to understand physicality (the built environment, landscape and topography, climate, and lighting) and function (use and users, matters of concern, perception, meaning of a space), and it fits within the larger scales of neighbourhood and city. Architectural walking and mapping research can be conducted intuitively as preliminary site analysis or be based on one of the many existing tactics/schools for the deeper understanding of a site (Rodriguez, et.al., 2002), design conceptualisation and making connections with the community. In their extensive research on walking methods, Kanstrup et al analysed a variety of walking research types adapted for participatory design and revealed their valuable attributes such as stimulating memory, ideas, and participation; and the development and use of visual, tangible artefacts (Kanstrup et al, 2014, p.58). In my research, I use walking observation strategy for contextual analysis (finding affordances and thresholds) and the development of urban imaginary proposals, and 'transect walks' as a participatory exercise in Case Study No2: Dog City. For more extensive research it is important to include the aspect of time: spaces continuously change throughout time and seasons, and so do its functions. This is an especially important aspect of the Yakutian context, where temperatures rise and fall with extreme ranges during the seasons.

The walking observation method originated in ethnography (*shadowing*) and "is a method for observing people while they move" (Ylirisku & Buur, 2007, 65). According to Marušić, environmental and behavioural observations help to reveal how effective a shared space is in meeting spatial dimensions and human needs. Marušić defines five dimensions of observation and mapping, which are behaviour, environment, time, observer, and record of observations - a behavioural map (Marušić, 2010). As a native researcher, I chose the walking routes by reflecting on my personal memories of the context and constructed them along the main undeveloped pedestrian lines of the city - the city canal and *desire paths* [14]

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[14] *Desire path* is an unplanned small trail created as a consequence of mechanical erosion caused by human or animal traffic. Desire paths act as convenient shortcuts.

to it. The walking observation method was adopted to record the existing spatial narratives, affordances, and thresholds of the place in order to allow its re-imagining.
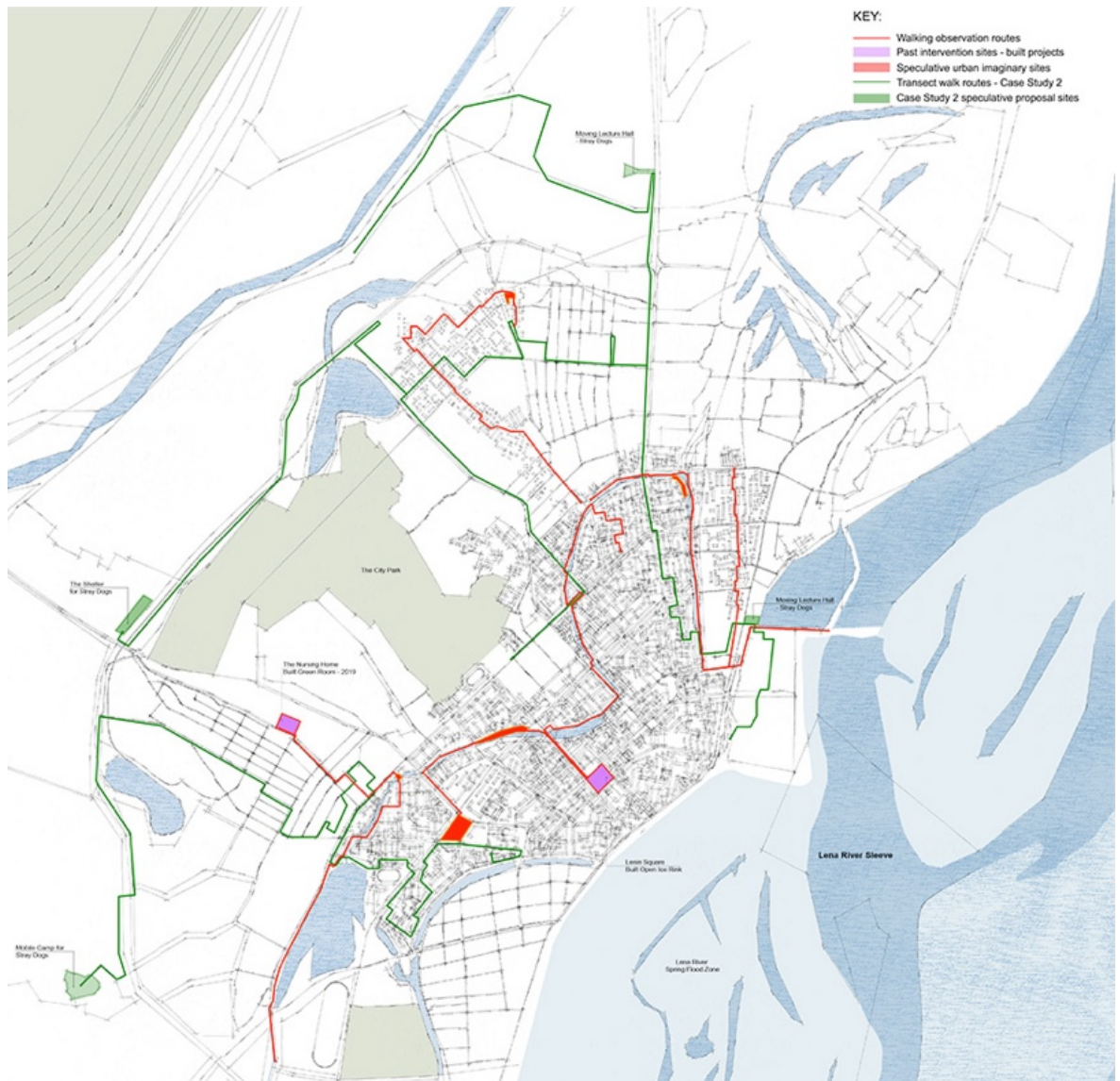
Fig.3-5 - Walking and Mapping – Combined Map of Yakutsk Walks

These walking observations resulted in a refinement of the choice of speculative participatory placemaking sites and their local matters of concern (see fig.3-5, 3-6, 3-7; portfolio p.7-8, 15). The findings from these walks - recorded in the sketches - provided the basis for compiling the introductory materials for the case studies and the urban imaginaries survey (see portfolio p.19-25). Originally, three prospective sites found during these walks led to the formation of a team with local architecture enthusiasts to set up a hands-on project. The marginal land in the middle of Yakutsk - land in the 17th residential district, and the territory of the local botanical garden - were originally intended to be the sites for the research case studies (see portfolio p.16-17). Although, these case studies did

not go forward due to the pandemic and natural inadequacy - the 17th district was too underdeveloped and lacked basic living conditions, which made a public space development project unethical to propose - they helped to define the local conditions for PP initiatives.
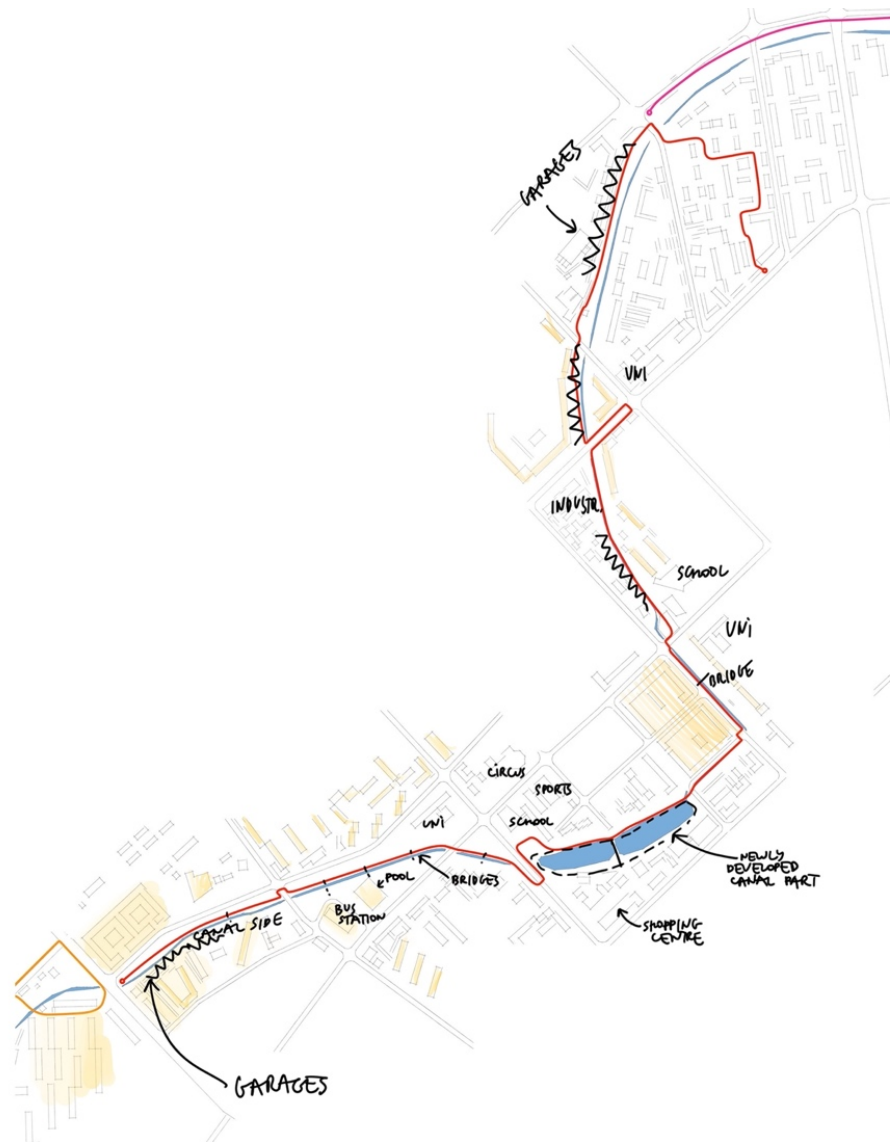
Fig.3-6 - A Map from the Transect Walk 2

In addition, the walking observations as a site analysis tool offered insights into potential design solutions as the analysis of the existing context provided an understanding of local materiality and resources. Mapping during the walking observations can help to reveal unseen information (Shiffer, 2020, p.3). For instance, in the urban imaginary No1, the idea of building community workshops above the existing garage complex was the most obvious thing to do. The lack of free space and the marginal nature of the garage site afforded a combined solution (see portfolio p.19-22).
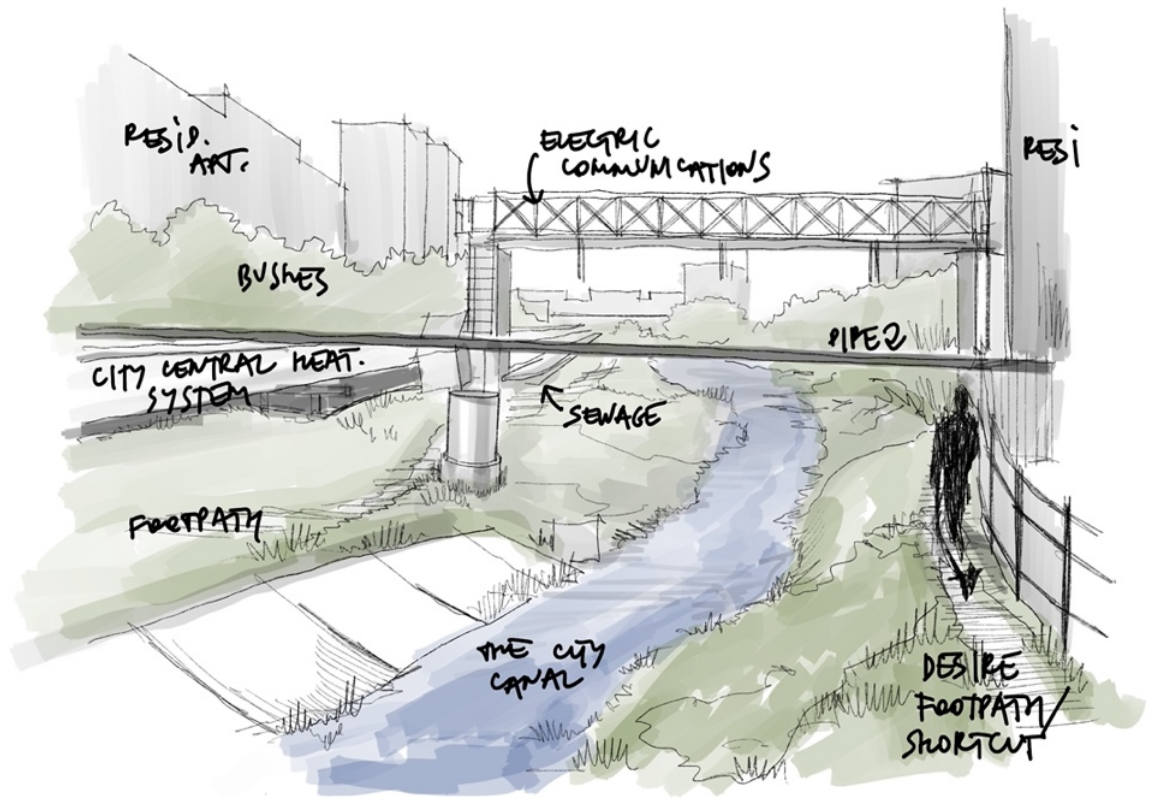
Fig.3-7 - A Sketch from the Transect Walk 2

A walk with the experts used by Mahiri (Mahiri, 2001) or the *transect walks* method is a group investigation method that engages local community members. In the general practice of this method, the residents and researchers gather to draw a map of the area and walk through the locations that have been mapped. During the walk, practitioners record new urban discoveries in dialogue with local residents (see fig.3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8). Various practitioners of participatory design use different terms to describe this method. For example, *gleaning* (Ferreira, 2017) which has a similar aim, consists of walking, drawing, collecting, and interviewing the community to find and study marginal contexts. Narayanasamy used the transect walking method to explore rural agricultural sites and their resources in dialogue with participants during a walkthrough, arguing that this method "depicts a cross-sectional view of the zones and provides a comparative assessment" distinct from "the bird's-eye view walking method" (Narayanasamy, 2009, p.83). Therefore, the transect walks method is more suited for research aiming to explore a specific issue of an area.

Fig.3-8 - Mapping Exercise – Walking Observation of 17th District, Yakutsk

In the Dog City case study, the local participants used transect walks to investigate their project sites during the lockdown in Yakutsk in July, 2020. Three groups of participants investigated their local neighbourhood, collecting opinions on the issue of stray dogs. It was partly an *ad hoc* [15] investigation, as the participants were local university students and had sufficient knowledge of the local area to enable them to find out efficiently what they needed to know (Chambers, 1997, p.407). Moreover, the walking and mapping studies helped to form relationships within the groups which led to better teamwork in the later stages of the design. Although the students were not able to engage in face-to-face conversations with passers-by on site, they developed a broad -based online questionnaire to gain an objective understanding of the relevant issues. The online format helped to minimise the disadvantages of this more remote method by involving representatives from broader area of the community and acquiring new knowledge about different aspects of the site at different times of the day and in different seasons. Students analysed the online

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[15] Ad hoc - made or happening only for a particular purpose or need, not planned before it happens (from the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary).

data along with the transect walks maps and developed their narrative briefs. Hence, the specific findings from the walking method helped the participants to produce specific proposals speculating on the site-specific affordances.

3.4.2. Snowballing Interviews Survey

The snowballing interview method was adopted to understand the particular location of the participatory placemaking phenomenon in Yakutia within the wider Subarctic and Arctic context. Snowball sampling is a technique used in sociology and statistical research, where existing study subjects suggest the next potential subjects for investigation (Goodman, 1961). As participatory design and collaborative making is a broad interdisciplinary field, this technique allows researchers to identify interviewees of interest to the research. For example, interviewees for the Yakutian context were urbanists and architects, the interviewee for Greenland was an anthropologist, and Canadian interviewees were social workers. All these interviewees from different professions had a shared interest in collaborative community initiatives relevant to the research topic (see fig.3-9, 3-10 and Appendix 1).

Snowballing interviewing is a qualitative method using semi-structured interviews with one theme as a general guide to formulating follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses during the initial interview. I identified the first set of interviewees based on two criteria: their relationship to participatory placemaking (academic or practical), and the similarity of context (severe cold climate, diverse urban realm and/or indigenous urban identity). Furthermore, the snowballing technique led to the second set of interviews, whose interviewees were suggested by the first set of interviewees. The aim was to explore the motivation, structure, and processes of participatory placemaking in different, mostly Subarctic contexts and the role of an architect in them, in Yakutia and other Russian regions, Northern Canada, Svalbard and Norway, Greenland, Finland, and the United Kingdom.
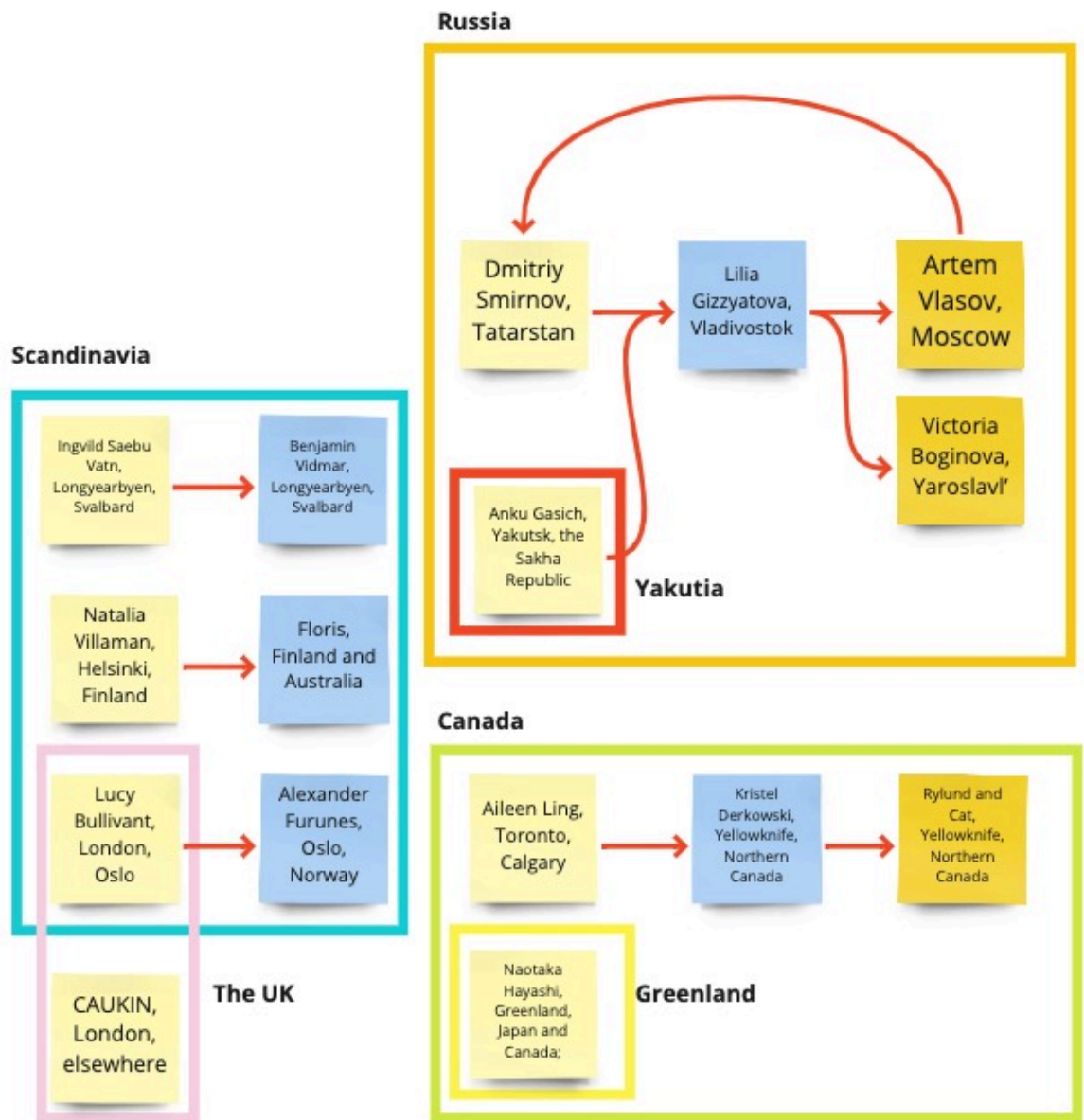
Fig.3-9 - Diagram of Snowballing Interviews
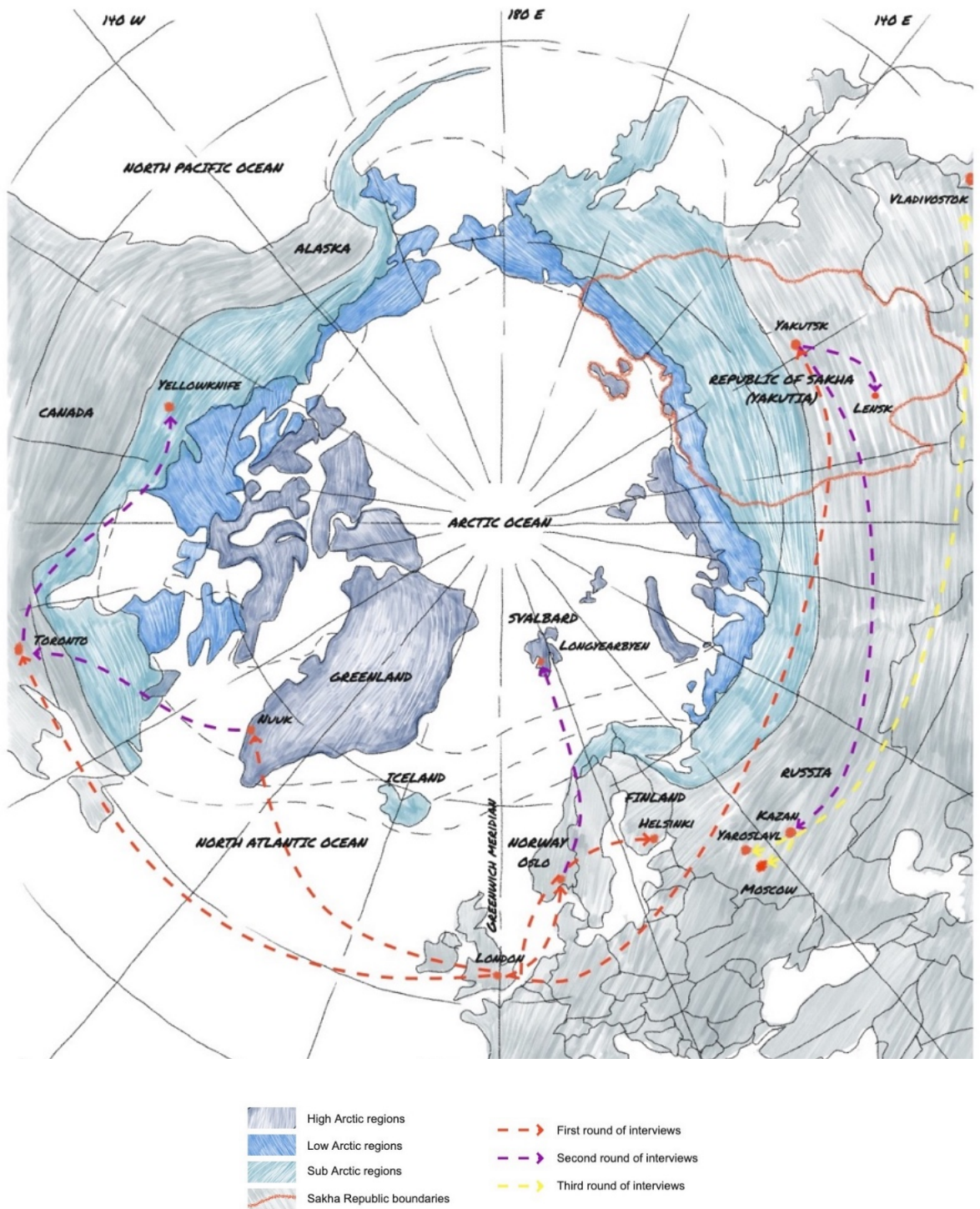
Fig.3-10 - Map of the Arctic and Subarctic. Hand-drawn by the Researcher

This interview method was chosen due to the different coverage of participatory design and making in different sub-arctic regions. An online format was used for convenience due to the geographically dispersed contexts and disparate time zones. Yakutian, Russian, and Canadian participatory placemaking are mostly based on practice with little published academic research, while Scandinavian and European placemaking are mostly research

initiatives. Unfortunately, the researcher could not find any existing practices of participatory design practice in Greenland and very few examples in Alaska.

Canada and Greenland share similar climatic conditions and a history of forced indigenous urbanisation, as in Yakutia. However, due to different historical and economic circumstances, the main settlements in Northern Canada and Greenland are much smaller in size than Yakutian cities. Scandinavia and the UK were chosen due to their expertise in the field of participatory placemaking, with scholars practicing in a variety of different contexts worldwide. For example, researchers based in Finland are also researching in East Asia and Australia, and academics based in London practice in Norway. The wider Russian context was chosen to understand the current character and placemaking trends that are likely to move to Yakutia at a later date. Therefore, the interviews were divided into three sets: Canada and Greenland, Scandinavia and the UK, and Russia.

The use of informal interviews helped to identify similarities and differences in practice and their specific features. Although, participatory placemaking is rooted in political activism and democratic movements, its focus varies in different urban contexts. According to Marzot, the principles and rituals upon which the inception of urban developments are formed, together with their realisation and use are based, are instrumental to the development of urban political, social, economic, and cultural contents (Marzot, 2013, p.75). For instance, participatory design is an established and effective tool for tangible change in Scandinavia, whilst participatory design is only just starting in Russia.

The limitations of snowballing interviews lie in their scale and subjectivity. As each research region outside Russia included only one or two interviewees, the findings can be highly subjective to these individuals. However, the interviews were further analysed in parallel with the theoretical framework in order to justify or reject irrelevant inaccurate findings. The qualitative character of the interview data tolerates these limitations as this data identifies the current state of practice according to the leading experts in the field of participatory placemaking in the chosen contexts.

The study of the history and character of these well-established existing participatory placemaking practices allowed the researcher to speculate on the future of PP in Siberia and helped to address the research question of how PP can be developed further as a tool

for civic public space design. Understanding these relations from different perspectives helps to define unique characteristics of PP - its aims, methods, agency, approaches, and the factors that affect and facilitate the collaborative processes. Hence, the data gained from the interview method led to a deeper understanding of existing PP practices in Yakutia and located the findings within the academic discourse.

3.4.3. Case Studies and Siberian Imaginaries Survey

The first two case studies are remote participatory design projects in Yakutia: the top-down design of Oyuur Park (see portfolio p.9-10 and Appendix 2) and the bottom-up design of the Dog City (see portfolio p.11-12 and Appendix 3). The third case study is a hands-on collaborative learning-by-making project in Caledonian Park, London (see portfolio p.13-14 and Appendix 4), which is compared with the live MA project in Yakutsk. The case studies employ a variety of methods depending on the different types of involvement. These include public talks and exhibitions, participatory design workshops, negotiation and consultation sessions, and hands-on building (learning-by-making). The case study data were recorded via photographs, audio and video recordings, case study diaries, and sketches.

If participatory design goes even further with its hands-on collaborative implementation (learning-by-making), this can lead to more meaningful space design. The learning-through-making term refers to the processes of collaborative architecture-making initiatives that can create both physical and non-physical artefacts, which can include the cultivation of shared experience and social cohesion (Bruhn, 2011; Friedkin, 2004; Lesser and Storck, 2001), the stimulation of emotional learning, and the creation of meaningful structures (Seel, 2012; Dirkx, 2001; Taylor, 2017; Hamdi, 2004; Mitchell and Tang, 2018), the reduction of social interdependence and social inactivity, the creation of a loop of practice (Johnson and Johnson, 2009; Karau and Williams, 1993; Sicart, 2014; Arendt, 1958), support for the freedom to create art and the ritual of creation (Sen, 1999; Tully, 2008; Hallward, 2006; Carpenter, 1997; Turner, 1969).

McFarlane (2011) conceptualised learning as a political and practical domain through which the city grows and functions, and as a tool for developing progressive urbanism. McFarlane

refers to Ingold (2000, p.155) who compares learning to 'wayfinding', a process of learning as you go. In the same way as Ingold, McFarlane extends his argument to different levels and discusses the philosophical meaning of urban making, and its possible impact on the processes of design.

Seel argues that learning-by-making is an expression that emphasizes the fact that in any situation of learning, people are actively engaged in making sense of the situation – the frame, objects, relationships – drawing on their history of similar situations and the available cultural resources (Seel, 2012). Collaborative making is a way of publicly expressing values (co-creating the narrative) which are interpreted by collaborators in the real context of place making. As an outcome, *outside knowledge* goes through the process of interpretation by the practicing community and creates new, more inclusive knowledge, adding to the mainstream knowledge system.

In order to test different ways of knowledge interpretation I adopted Lefebvre's concept of 5 ways (Lefebvre, 1996, p.102). In the Dog City case study, the participants used Lefebvre's concept of transposition by adapting newly gained knowledge from the talks they were given to fit their particular situation, while the Lensk case study used Lefebvre's concept of deduction – a top-down problem-solving approach to the project. The Amphitheatre and MA Growing Structures bottom-up projects were based on Lefebvre's concept of induction. Hence, the case studies used four of Lefebvre's five ideas to create new knowledge. The Siberian Imaginaries survey can be defined as the Lefebvre's theory of transduction, creating a utopian/ ideal place in a given context (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26).

The Siberian Imaginaries survey was carried out to test the urban imaginary hypothesis – that it is a way to match the affordances and potential of the context to the abilities of the local community groups, while participatory placemaking acts as a tool for expanding the perception of the horizon of Yakutian civic space and gives users' voices by creating an urban learning forum. The two proposals and one open call for ideas to submit for the third imaginary were exhibited online, on a website specifically created by the researcher. The aim of the exhibition was to collect the reactions of the local community to the imaginary proposals and promote further interest in such initiatives to expand the existing urban imaginaries based on a co-created narrative.

The only Lefebrve's concept untested was translation, which requires a change in the process steps. In the future, when Yakutian participatory placemaking develops further, it will be possible to test the concept of translation as well. In order to expand participatory placemaking practices in Yakutia, its methods should be tested so that they become familiar to the residents.

3.5. Data Analysis:

3.5.1. Interpretation Strategy, Thematic and Comparative Analysis

The qualitative data from snowballing interviews and empirical data from case studies were analysed using thematic analysis (see fig.3-11). Thematic analysis allows the analysis of subjective experiences and opinions, and the identification of common patterns (or repeated themes) in the data to guide its interpretation and identify the individuality of Yakutian participatory placemaking practices. For example, each research interviewee used the same methods of participatory design and collaborative learning-by-making practices, whilst the aims and processes used varied depending on the context and their individual approach.

Thematic analysis was developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and consists of six steps: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, naming themes, and writing up. In this research I combine the inductive and latent approaches of reflexive thematic analysis. The inductive approach is an open approach that allows themes to emerge from the data, whereas the latent approach interprets the findings at a later stage of the analysis. My research data interpretation is based on Chang's Interpretation Strategy (Chang, 2008) which is suited to auto-ethnographic research.

I adapted Chang's auto-ethnographic research analysis by adding the physical aspects of architectural research, such as topography and the built environment, materiality, and building structures. The research hypothesis concerning expanding the urban imaginaries of civic places through participatory placemaking is based on the theory of affordances interpreted by Mitchell (2018), which includes the non-physical and physical aspects of the context. The auto-ethnographical interpretation of socio-cultural aspects helps to clearly define the character of the Yakutian built environment compared to the existing

established practices of participatory placemaking and speculates on the emergence of future design based on the findings.

Furthermore, I reduced Chang's data analysis and interpretation strategy of ten steps (Chang, 2008, p.132) to focus on the research questions – the search for recurring topics and patterns (cultural and physical themes); the identification of exceptional occurrences (singularities); the analysis of inclusion and omission (the omissions from each inclusion – absence); the analysis of the relationships between the self and others (the role of the architect); the comparison between the self and other people's cases (data from case studies and interviews); the broad contextualisation (city, neighbourhood and building scales); the comparison with social science constructs and ideas; the comparison with the existing theoretical framework.

The empirical data from the case studies was also thematically analysed and interpreted. The themes for analysis were based on the research theoretical framework - participatory design and collaborative learning-by-making, and how they fit in the overall theme of participatory placemaking. Each theme's preparation, investigation, process, artefacts, and aftermath were studied. Thematic analysis starts with descriptive diagrams of the processes and outcomes. Furthermore, the case studies were analysed through the charts according to their levels of involvement and scale. The summaries were analysed along with the theories and precedents that emerged from the snowballing interviews to define individual practices in each context.

Thematic and interpretive methods of analysis identified the features of the participatory placemaking phenomenon in the Yakutian context and situated the research findings within the wider knowledge base. The findings offered responses to the research question about how participatory placemaking can contribute to the development of shared spaces through time at city, neighbourhood and building scales in Yakutia. They also responded to the secondary questions relating to the characteristics of change, processes, and artefacts.

Following the thematic and interpretation strategy, I analysed the empirical data using qualitative comparison. As there is no standard participatory placemaking practice, I compared the themes developed at the initial analysis stage which are presented in tables. I used this method to analyse the snowballing interview and case study data. I divided the

snowballing interview data by region: Canada, Scandinavia with the UK, and Russia. After the first row of comparisons within regions, I produced two short summaries for Russia and the outside to help identify any gaps as well as the features of PP in the research context.

Data analysis methods:

Case studies and surveys:

Case Study 1: OYUUR PARK
Participatory Design
A top-down city park design with citizens of Lensk:
Voting, discussions, drawing and mapping workshops, public consultations.

Case Study 2: DOG CITY
Participatory Design
A bottom-up design workshop with the local students in Yakutsk

Case Study 3: AMPHITHEATRE PROJECT
hands-on learning-by-making: building a brick stage and gabion benches with a group of students in London

Survey 1: Snowballing Interviews with experts in PP

Survey 2: Siberian Imaginaries: discussions, drawing workshops, online exhibition survey

Interpretation strategy, thematic and comparison analysis of Participatory Design

Spatial Agency:
- design approaches
- levels of involvement and scale
- capacity to participate
- power balance / aspirations and issues
- time factors

Imaginaries:
- Urban Imaginaries - expanding affordances through imaginaries

Interpretation strategy, thematic and comparison analysis of Learning-by-Making case study in London with the MA project in Yakutsk

Spatial Agency:
- levels of involvement and scale
- capacity to participate
- power balance
- time factors
- freedom in process structure - creativity and learning enhancement

Imaginaries:
- Urban Imaginaries - expanding affordances through imaginaries

Interpretation strategy, Thematic and comparison analysis of **exceptional occurrences and features of PP between defined regions: Siberia, Russia, Scandinavia and the UK, Canada and Greenland**

Interpretation strategy, Thematic analysis of the questionnaire answers - illustrated in diagrams

Imaginaries:
- Urban Imaginaries - expanding affordances through imaginaries

Fig.3-11 – Data Analysis Methods Diagram

I compared case studies 1, Oyuur Park project, and 2, Dog City, as they have a similar scale and context but different approaches and levels. Similarly, I compared case study 3, Amphitheatre project, with the MA live project (Sivtseva, 2019), as their methods and processes are similar but contexts different. I aligned the findings with my theoretical

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framework and hypothesis to answer the question on the process structure, adaptation of methods, features, and resistances of participatory placemaking.

3.5.2. Reflective Drawings

In this research by practice, I used reflective drawings to analyse the maps developed through the walking observations and create the PhD portfolio of urban imaginaries speculating on the combined research findings. Reflective drawing refers to the process of defining the resistances and possibilities that can be found at the larger scales of the city or neighbourhood, but which are hard to notice during the field work; and reflecting on the non-physical aspects of the observed data.
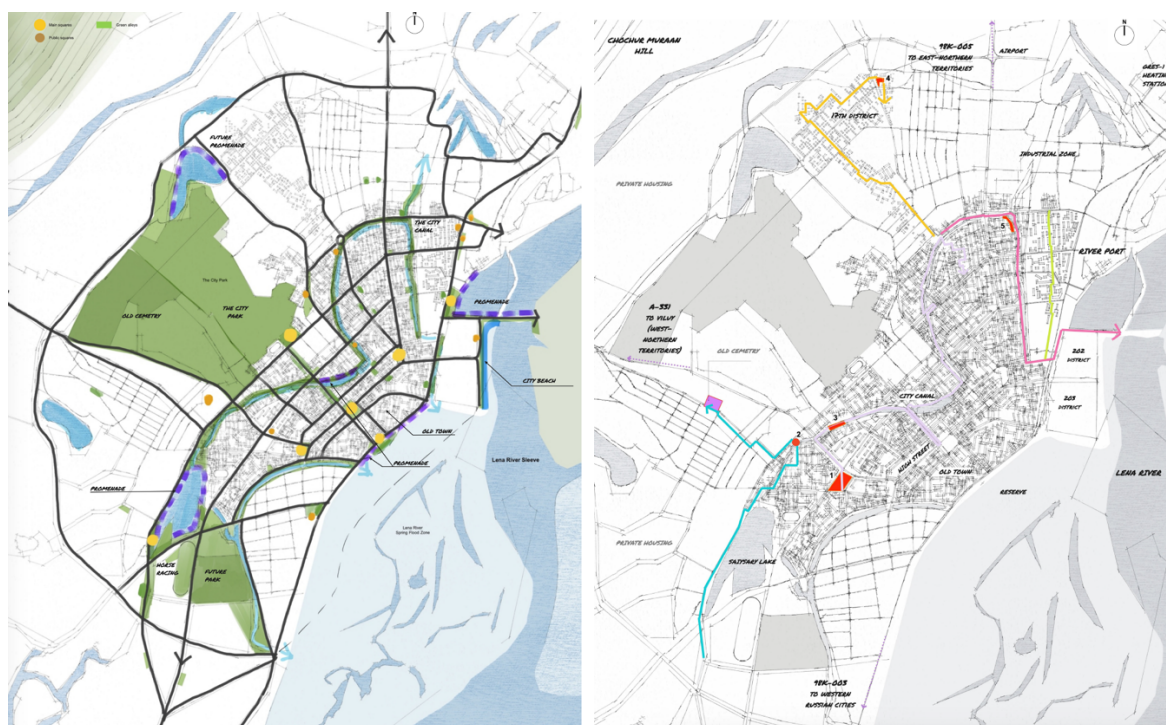
Fig.3-12 - Map of Yakutsk – Investigating existing shared spaces
Fig.3-13– Map of Yakutsk – Walking observation routes and possible case study sites

The reflective drawing method is incorporated within the walking and mapping observations as a tool for interpreting and locating the findings (Calvo, 2017, O'Rourke, 2017, Goličnik et.al., 2002), while the participatory design workshops were a collaborative design generating tool, learning-by-making initiative, a group brainstorming tool during the various initiatives, case study albums, and the PhD portfolio. For example, reflective drawings were used as a mapping tool to define the physical affordances of Yakutsk. The

hand-drawn maps allowed to effectively choose the walking routes and cover different sides of the city (see fig.3-12 and 3-13), define key spaces in chosen neighbourhood areas (see fig.3-14 and 3-15).
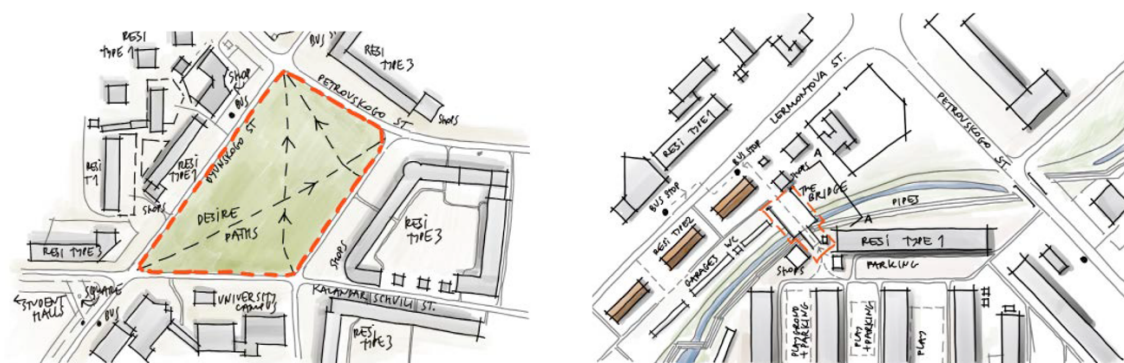
Fig.3-14 - Map of speculative site 1 in Yakutsk
Fig.3-15– Map of speculative site 2 in Yakutsk

Mascio argues that there are "two main values in the architectural built environment: a cultural resource and a material resource. In order to preserve, reuse, evaluate and promote in an appropriate way this resource, it is necessary to comprehend, document and disseminate it properly" (Mascio, 2015, p.199). Mascio views analytical drawing as a tool for communicating one or other aspects of architecture (Mascio, 2015, p.200). An analytical drawing can highlight the research interest and is less distracting than a photograph can be. Moreover, analytical drawings can combine data from different resources such as historical and new survey maps, massing or movement studies, seasonal and cultural use, the location of stakeholders and community groups etc. For instance, the sections through speculative sites were sketched as it was more illustrative and informative than being photographed – sloping of the site is difficult to comprehend unless its schematically drawn (see fig. 3-16).
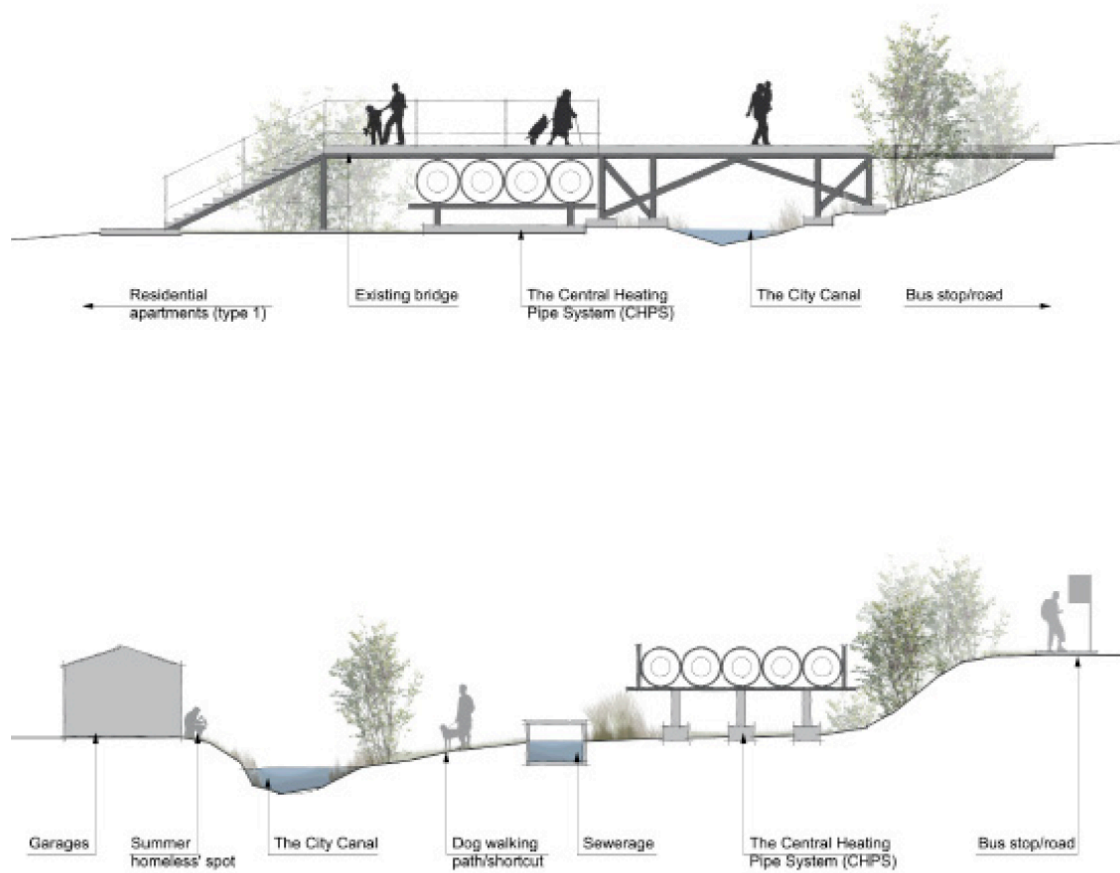
Fig.3-16 – Sections through speculative sites 1 and 2

This research adopts a variety of drawing types - digital and hand-drawn, scaled plans and elevations, unscaled sketches, and 3D drawings. Some drawings are accompanied by site photographs to give the overall context. The site analysis drawings illustrate the findings on site, the geometrical forms of the natural and built environment, views of a place, site elements (patterns, colours, scale and shapes), activities and seasonal use, ground relationships and collective memory, lifestyle and philosophy (meaning), emotional aspects and ownership. These aspects are not detailed on every site but chosen according their importance for each site. For example, the sketch for the speculative site 1 shows the surroundings of the space and its desire paths. As the space is completely empty and is being used as a shortcut by the residents (see fig. 3-17).
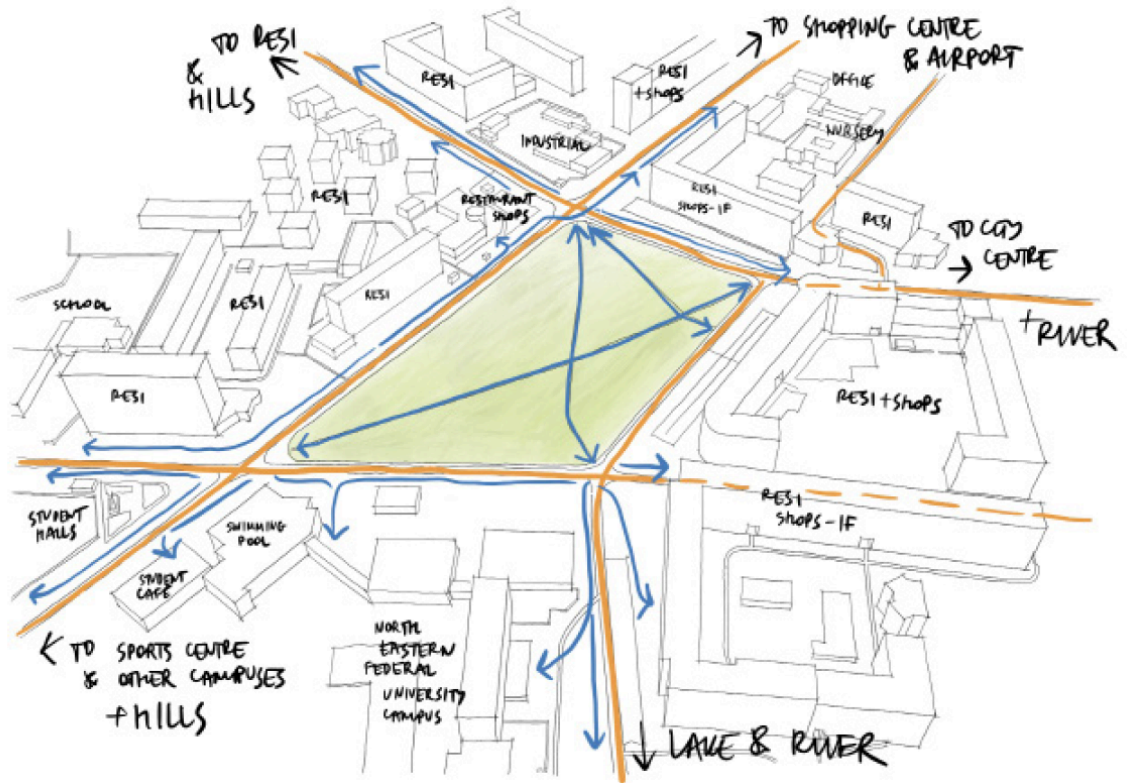
Fig.3-17 – Diagram of speculative sites 1 use

Reflective drawing at the design stage is based on forming spatial relationship diagrams that accommodate the resistances of a place. This process is aligned with the conceptual design and its functional aspects/affordances to create new urban imaginaries based on a co-constructed narrative brief.

3.6.   Summary

To answer the research questions concerning the current extent and future potential of PP to contribute to the development of Yakutian shared spaces, this research by practice produced three case studies, two surveys, and re-examined the MA case study experience, all of which practiced and observed participatory placemaking initiatives using a variety of approaches (online and remote, top-down and bottom-up, collaborative and participatory) at the three scales of city, neighbourhood, and building. The different approaches, materiality, timing, and scale of these projects allowed the investigation of different opportunities for participatory placemaking and defined the character of possible tangible changes in Yakutian shared space design. The third case study in Caledonian Park was conducted in the United Kingdom to observe the impact of contextual differences on learning-by-making projects when compared to the otherwise similar hands-on making case study in Yakutsk.

The research followed an adapted ARCSR methodology – Investigator, Narrator, Maker. The research methods were amended during the process due to the Covid restrictions. The data collection methods included walking and mapping observations to study the affordances and thresholds of the research context and locate the case study sites; participatory design workshops to co-construct the narratives and define their possibilities; learning-by-making initiatives to study their processes and outcomes; the snowballing interview survey to define the character of Yakutian PP; urban imaginaries survey to test the research hypothesis. Participatory design workshops included drawing and modelling sessions, transect walks and mapping, speculative design and discussions. The empirical data concentrated on the spatial agency principles and was recorded via diaries. The data analysis methods that helped to identify these categories involved thematic analysis and interpretation, qualitative comparison, and reflective drawings. The following chapters describe and analyse the adaptation of methods used in the research and the research processes and outcomes.

CHAPTER IV: NARRATING AND MAKING

4.1. Background

This chapter studies the potential of participatory design to contribute to the co-construction of urban narratives in the context of Yakutsk and Lensk. In order to evaluate the singular aspects of participatory design in the research context, the empirical data analysis starts with the snowballing interviews survey (see Appendix 1). The interviews assess the practices of PD in Yakutia, Russia, Scandinavia, Greenland, Northern Canada, and the UK. Although Greenland and Northern Canada share similarities with Yakutia in terms of climatic conditions and their history of the process of the urbanisation of semi-nomadic indigenous populations, their settlements are less expansive due to their economies. Scandinavia and the UK are the most advanced countries in the development of PP methods, with a long history of democracy and civic movements which serve as a comparison. The study of Russian PD allows the direction and regulation of such practices in Yakutsk and Lensk to be evaluated. The findings from the interview data analysis allowed the new knowledge to be positioned within the wider discourse of participatory placemaking in the postcolonial Far North.

The second part of the chapter describes in detail the participatory design case studies conducted using top-down (Case Study 1 - Oyuur Park) and bottom-up (Case Study 2 - Dog City) approaches. These case studies were carried out using Lefebvre's principles: deduction – top-down problem-solving approach in the case study 1 and *transposition* – adaptation of new knowledge in a new context in the case study 2 (see Portfolio, stage 2-3, p.9-12; Appendices 2 and 3).

4.2.   Contextual Singularities of Participatory Placemaking

4.2.1. Introduction

The interviews started with general questions about the interviewees' practice and work in the field of participatory placemaking and moved on to a description of their projects. Usually this would lead on to a discussion about difficulties they had met in their work and the ways they had accommodated to them. During the interviews, the interviewees were free to focus on any aspect of their practice which they preferred to talk about. The concluding questions focused on the interviewee's experience of participatory design in different contexts. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, allowing enough time to cover all the drafted questions.

The data from the snowballing interviews was analysed using a simplified version of interpretation strategy (Chang, 2008) combined with thematic (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and comparative methods (Collier, 1993). This combined version consisted of five steps: a brief summary of interviews, the identification of recurring topics and patterns, the identification of exceptional occurrences, a comparison of the findings, and a comparison with the research literature. The interview data is divided into two parts: Russian data and data from other regions with similar contextual conditions. The findings from this analysis helped to provide answers to the research questions and allowed speculation about specific features and limitations of participatory placemaking in the research context and its potential for urban development, whilst also fostering further debate within the academic discourse.

4.2.2. Features of Participatory Placemaking in the Far North

The first interviews on participatory placemaking practices took place in the Canadian context as Canada shares a similar climate and has indigenous postcolonial cultures as does Yakutia (see table 4-1). The bottom-up community initiative of Yellowknife (sister city of Yakutsk) started from local needs for housing, energy, and need to adapt to the climate. The not-for-profit organisation, Ecology North, aims to collaboratively build a sustainable hub for people interested in new solutions that tackle specific northern problems (remoteness, extremely limited resources and struggling economies). "The idea is to combine social and environmental sustainability, working towards local empowerment (self-sufficiency) within the northern communities" says Derkowski (Derkowski, Appendix 1, p.3). The new hub will accommodate local initiatives such as a Makerspace that hosts skill-building workshops and works toward creating 'Northern Unity'.

Northern Unity is a political initiative of Yellowknife citizens with the goal of "collaborating with other Subarctic and Arctic communities across the globe" (Derkowski, Appendix 1, p.3) and share their knowledge. For example, Johnson and McGurk look at different ways of building foundations on permafrost, for instance building on piles (need adjustment every few years), pinning foundations to bedrock (most common in Yellowknife), or a *web foundation* innovation (Johnson and McGurk, Appendix 1, p.4). This is unlike Yakutia, where large-scale buildings are built on pre-cast concrete pillars and small-scale ones use traditional foundation structures. Thus, common space addressing specific northern construction issues can help communities develop more sustainable ways of building through sharing and amending their techniques.

Another example of the bottom-up approach to PD is the Makeshift collective, founded by architectural students in Canada. The main idea of Makeshift is to use the available materials to learn by making a space. In the beginning, the collective's aim was to find a new way of learning that could lead to more meaningful space design. This led to experiments with fieldwork and hands-on building initiatives. Nowadays, the collective community is growing through hosting design courses, running an open workshop space and a community room. Occasionally, Makeshift members collaborate with designers from different contexts to share knowledge and create experimental spaces using methods of learning-by-making and tactical urbanism (Makeshift collective, 2021).

The next interview was held with an anthropologist, Naotaka Hayashi, who has done research work in Greenland. Greenland shares historical (colonisation and the forced urbanisation of the indigenous peoples) and climatic similarities with Yakutia. Colonised Greenland became a Danish County in 1953 and is still on the way to gaining independence (Hemmersem, 2020, p.16). The urbanisation of the Greenlanders started in the 1950s. The mistreatment of the indigenous population included forced relocation of their settlements and misplacement of children who ended up in Nuuk's orphanages. The majority of the indigenous population struggled to adapt to urban living and carried on with traditional livelihoods (fishing, hunting). Neither Inuit or Danish cultures flourish in Nuuk due to the loss of traditional ways and the building of European housing suburbs. "Instead of showing the hopeless and unachievable integration between different life expectations and livelihoods, the events in Nuuk could be a forerunner to a revision of what differences could produce given a minimum of hospitality and openness towards the other" (Bode and Shmidt, 2013, p.80).

According to interviewee Hayashi, the architecture of urban public spaces in Greenland is similar to that in Danish cities. Hemmersam agrees: "despite stating that a Greenlandic town cannot have the same form and architectural expressions as a Danish town due to the landscape and climate (Greenland's climate is significantly colder than Iceland's and Denmark's, with less fertile soil), the urban designs were expressions of Danish and international urban planning ideals of the era" (Hemmersam, 2020, p.127). The concrete apartment blocks were more economical to build and heat than the traditional buildings. In the 1970s, urban living was seen by indigenous people in opposition to the traditional Greenlandic way of life and the densification policy and the design of the urban apartment buildings were blamed for the growing social problems of violence and alcoholism, which were seen as a threat to indigenous culture (Hemmersam, 2020, p.138). In summary, Greenland's limited resources, remoteness and economy based on fishing did not lend themselves to the rapid urbanisation of Greenland. Hence, participatory design methods have not been widely implemented nor tested.

Greenland, Canada and Yakutia shared many similarities until the 1960s: remoteness and extreme climatic conditions with a permafrost landscape; indigenous semi-nomadic cultures based on rural lifestyles and spiritual beliefs; a history of oppression and

colonisation. However, the physical affordances of these places led to different levels of urbanisation. Greenland's settlements and Canada's most northern cities such as Yellowknife have not expanded as Yakutian cities have. Located on the river Lena, Yakutsk and Lensk were transformed after the opening of rare mineral mines by the USSR. The mining industry and the introduction of political concentration camps forced an increased and more diverse population on Yakutia. The wealthier northern parts of Canada, such as Calgary also attracted newcomers and expanded rapidly. Subsequently, participatory placemaking is more common in Canada. Participatory urban planning has been used at the Active Neighbourhoods Canada since 2009 and civic and social infrastructure co-development has been practiced at Participatory Canada since 2015.

After interviewing PP actors in Greenland and Canada another round of interviews was conducted with PP actors in Scandinavian countries and the UK where there is a longer tradition of embodied participatory placemaking practice (see table 4-2). From the 1960s when it first emerged in these countries Participatory Placemaking has developed a tradition of innovative practice. For example, LPO, the only architectural practice in Longyearbyen, Svalbard archipelago, has started initiatives with the local residents in 2019. Ingvild Saebu Vatn and her colleagues from LPO have founded a community initiative platform entitled Right Form Right Place. The community project aims to transform and reuse old mining buildings on the Svalbard archipelago. The initiators suggest storing and reusing these materials to construct new buildings with a local Svalbard identity. The methodology of this programme consists of three steps: analysis (mapping), strategy, project. The Scandinavian principles of PD as a civic action are also implemented in the programme to promote sustainability and environmental awareness. For example, the local people initiated the design of an enlarged polar permaculture greenhouse.

Lucy Bullivant, a London based research place-maker (Ermacora and Bullivant, 2016) and Alexander Furunes, Oslo based PhD student are co-founders of Dugnad Days in Norway. Dugnad Days is a PD project that assesses the climate emergency and the associated social division. This Triennale project consists of exhibitions, performances, and workshops. The main advantage of PD methods, according to Lucy and Alex, is its creativity. PD has the potential to create something different and evolutionary through the collaboration of people with their stories and experiences; PD can be not just a process of place-making, but also a pedagogical process of co-learning.

Interviewee, region	Aileen Ling, Calgary, Canada	Kristel Derkowski, Yellowknife, Northern Canada	Rylund Johnson and Cat McGurk, Yellowknife, Northern Canada	Naotaka Hayashi, Greenland and Canada
Workplace	Designer, founder of "Makeshift" Collective, PD practitioner with worldwide experience	Project Officer at Non-profit-making company "Ecology North"	Co-founders of "Makerspace YK"	Anthropologist with broad research experience of Greenland and Canadian indigenous cultures
Interview Date	06/03/2021	26/03/2019	24/10/2019	08/12/2020
Key words/ **EXCEPTIONAL OCCURRENCES**	Learning with Available Resources Aim of PD: Co-design, learning-by-making	Northern Hub for Innovation Aim of PD: Co-assess Northern Issues	Unity and Knowledge Sharing Aim of PD: Co-Learning	Indigenous People and Urban Lifestyle of Greenland

Table 4-1 – Interview Key Words – Canada and Greenland

Interviewee, region	Ingvild Saebu Vatn, Longyearbyen, Svalbard	Lucy Bullivant and Alex Furunes, Oslo, Norway and London, UK	Natalia Villaman, Helsinki, Finland	Floris Van der Marel, Helsinki, Finland	CA-UK-IN, London, UK
Workplace	Architect at LPO Longyearbyen office	Researchers, experienced in PD. Co-founder of Dugnad Days	Architectural researcher, PhD student at the University of Helsinki, employs PD methods	Architectural researcher, PhD student at the Aalto University, employs PD methods	The UK based practice, specialises in Learning-by-making in different contexts
Interview Date	23/09/2019	19/10/2020	26/03/2021	30/03/2021	19/10/2021
Key words/ **EXCEPTIONAL OCCURRENCES**	Adapting and Sustaining Aim of PD: Finding the Right Shape	Creativity and Commitment Aim of PD: Evolution of Urban Realm	Resistances and Adaptation of Methods Aim of PD: Civic Action	Vocalising and Creating Aim of PD: Tackling Power Imbalances	Learning and Empowering Aim of PD: Learning-by-making

Table 4-2 – Interview Key Words – Scandinavia and the UK

Interviewee, city	Dmitry Smirnov, Kazan	Anku Gasich, Yakutsk	Lilia Gizzyatova, Vladivostok	Victoria Boginskaya, Yaroslavl	Artyom Vlasov, Moscow
Workplace	Director of architectural firm "Project Group 8" (pioneers of PD in Russia)	Architect at the LETO – urban design company in Yakutsk	Architect, activist at the Public Space Department of Vladivostok	Architect, urbanist, founder of research group "Arcticometria"	Urbanist, ex-practicioner of PD
Interview Date	28/09/2020	01/02/2021	03/03/2021	03/03/2021	04/03/2021
Key words/ **EXCEPTIONAL OCCURRENCES**	Agency and Approach Aim of PD: New design methods for the system that doesn't work	Trust and Collaboration Aim of PD: Involvement of users to improve the quality of urban environment	Involvement and Democracy Aim of PD: Create an open forum for civic action	Top-down as a Quality Control Aim of PD: Large scale and variations of public space development	Lack of Involvement and Tokenism Aim of PD: Find balance and provoke change

Table 4-3 – Interview Key Words – Russia

One crucial aspect of any PD initiative is gaining the trust of the participants. In PD projects, some people are more committed and interested more than others. Highly committed people who give more time and do more work than others can lose their trust and enthusiasm if other people only get involved for a short period of time. To retain that trust, Alex and Lucy decided to have open groups for everyone to participate in and construct a focus group from the most committed participants. In terms of equality, it is important for group members to be varied, with different ages and backgrounds. Time management is also crucial: PD better works with some momentum. For instance, it might consist of an intense period of work towards a celebration or a festival.

Natalia Villaman, a PhD practitioner of PD in Finland, investigates how participatory methods are adapted in different contexts. PD methods are constantly changing and are different in every region. For example, Scandinavian PD has changed significantly since the 1970s and is currently a natural method of civic action engrained in everyday life. PD in Latin America, however, the homeland of Villaman, is more challenging due to local politics and the hierarchal system. Thus, PD as a social design tool has links to the local politics (power and resistances) of a particular context and PD tools should be adapted to the particular history and narrative of the place where they are applied.

Floris Van der Marel is a PhD student in Finland who uses PD methods in his work. Floris's work has included participation and the organisation of PD in rural Australia and Vietnam. The main aim of his studies is to investigate power imbalances in PD processes. His case studies have included design training workshops and the co-development of design ideas. According to Van der Marel, traditional ways of discussing architecture can exclude less vocal participants. PD methods of drawing and writing down ideas can be more inclusive and contribute to equity among participants. In terms of contextual differences, in Floris's opinion, the participants in Vietnam were more playful and imaginative with their new solutions but need of legitimate approval for their ideas. Participants in Australia, however, were more confidant in their opinions but less imaginative and it was more difficult for them to come up with new ideas.

The London based practice CA-UK-IN specialises in learning-by-making projects around the world. Their aim is to contribute to the improvement of the well-being of communities through collaborative work with local NGO's, community members and volunteers. The methods include online educational courses and hands-on building projects. Similar to the Makeshift Collective in Canada, CA-UK-IN was founded by a group of architecture students who saw gaps in the architectural education system and wanted to try an in-field approach from the bottom-up. Their projects are supported through fundraisers, charities, and overseas participants. The main objective of the projects is not just a physical building and the knowledge learned by the participants, but the creation of meaning. Collaboratively built structures give a place a history and value through the direct participation of its users.

In summary, how participatory placemaking is practised in these countries is the exercise of civic initiatives that concentrate on the search for creativity, education and meaning making. The interviewees from Norway, Svalbard, Finland and the UK experiment with the potential of participatory placemaking as a tool to find new ways of addressing the local matters of concern.

4.2.3. Participatory Design in Russia

The Russian interviewees are all experienced architects and urbanists that use participatory design methods in their practice (see table 4-3). The snowballing interviews in Russia started with Dmitriy Smirnov, a director of an architectural practice, Project Group 8, based in Kazan, pioneers of participatory design in Russia. Smirnov's practice translated the Sanoff's books (Sanoff, 2010) into Russian and has been using PD methods in Russia since 2015. During an hour-long interview, Smirnov started from the beginning of the Project Group 8's work using participatory design methods.

Smirnov and his team started with the bottom-up project, 'Activation', in their hometown of Vologda, in 2012 (Avo Project, 2012). The Activation project aimed to co-design two shared spaces which were in poor condition and design scenarios for their further development and use. The responses to the results were positive and this unprecedented project became famous at federal level. After the Activation project, Smirnov and his team moved to the Tatarstan republic as it had a funding scheme for public space projects. The most famous and successful project they implemented in Tatarstan is the Gorkinsko-

Ometinskiy Forest. This project tackled an urban conflict between users, owners, and investors. This project was not a compromise project, but a scheme that accommodated the resistances from all the parties involved. The Gorkinsko-Ometinskiy Forest project was responded to by urbanists and users and included in a list of guided tours of the best public spaces in Russia (Snigireva, 2020).

Smirnov also talked about the main difficulties PD initiatives faced in Russia, which are linked to the involvement, agency, and approach of PD. According to Smirnov "Russian people are used to being unheard. Authorities can ask their opinions but they would not change anything" (Smirnov, Appendix 1, p.28). Some architects might ask for users' opinions but would not be able to change anything as they would lose the support of local authorities or funding. Thus, participatory design initiatives to be inclusive, need to be approached from both sides: bottom-up initiatives supported from the top-down. Otherwise, PD can be no more than a concept project or even worse, the initiator might be taken to be an extremist by the state. Also, top-down support is crucial in new projects, particularly those which involve a large-scale decision, such as removing a road or demolishing something in the way that is not used. In summary, it is not purely an architect's job to initiate participatory design initiatives. There should be a multidisciplinary team of anthropologists, sociologists etc, who can work with the citizens and stakeholders to ensure the positive further development and use of a place. Only when the concept of a space's function has been agreed can an architect start designing its infrastructure, in Smirnov's view.

Smirnov then moved on to the topic of agency and its contextual features and shared his opinion of Russian architectural cycles: "Not long ago, you had a week to draw a technical design album to submit for an approval. You could not discuss or properly analyse a territory" (Smirnov, Appendix 1, p.30). This time limited situation is linked to the political system, which does not have long-term plans or goals. Budgets are only agreed for a year at a time and local authorities have to spend that budget within a year or lose the money. Thus, the lack of time to develop an architectural design is the most obvious feature of the Russian system. "Russia is a wealthy country, willing to spend an enormous amount of money on public space renovation but has no strategy for it" (Smirnov, Appendix 1, p.31). That is why government funding goes into the participatory design of parks, as it's an easy

way to get positive feedback from citizens. However, participatory design is relevant for all civic space design, not only public parks, in his view.

At the end of the interview, Smirnov talked about creativity and place identity making in participatory design projects, arguing that all PD projects are different as they concentrate on the local matters of concern, history, things that are important to residents, for example, the memory of a town's mining past and/or its need for green spaces. If an architect does a deep analysis of a particular territory and then bases a proposal on this analysis – the proposal would be unique. The opposite happens when an architect is based in an office and copies typical objects in general locations. Smirnov highlighted the potential pitfalls in PD projects, saying: "You should never ask a local what they want. They will say that they want a fountain like in Rome, or a playground like in Moscow. Instead, you should ask what this place means to them, what are the matters of their concern and what is important about it to them" (Smirnov, Appendix 1, p.31). This dialogue can help to identify place identity, formulate the aims of a project, and construct a design brief. Further design work should be made by trained specialists such as architects, designers, and engineers. In conclusion, Smirnov suggested interviewing a well-known urbanist, Lilia Gizzyatova, who specialises in participatory design in Russia.

The next interview was conducted with a Yakutian urbanist and architect, Anku Gasich, who works at the LETO organisation aiming to create comfortable urban environments in Yakutia. LETO is a part of a commercial organisation, Fund for Future Generations, and receives work from the local Yakutian government. LETO was founded by the Chief architect of the Sakha Republic, Irina Alekseeva, and consists of young Yakutian designers, architects and journalists who graduated from the best Russian schools of architecture. The main inspiration of LETO comes from the Republic of Tatarstan (republic in central Russia famous for its public space design), the leader of regional urban environmental design in Russia. This explains why, LETO's team follows the Tatarstan methods of participatory design – users' involvement through workshops and discussions. This all aims to improve the quality of life of residents at the federal level in Russia (it is an indicator for comparing the quality of life).

The main difficulty in implementing PD in the Yakutian context was at the start (note: meaning the work of LETO in Yakutsk). The participants could not understand what

architects wanted from them - the citizens expected just to attend a public talk and go back home, but later on, they became enthusiastic and attended workshops. "Generally, neither the local authorities nor users understood LETO's work, and we had to call them up to ask them to initiate an urban development project, but now after seeing the results from our first projects, they contact us themselves, asking us to co-create with them", says Gasich (Gasich, Appendix 1, p.33). It is about gaining trust from the local community, showing them examples of how PP can work. In Gasich's opinion the co-creation of a place's identity is not an aim, it is a tool/method for improving the quality of the urban environment. Its identity is already here, dictated by local affordances and accommodations to resistances. Gasich suggested it would be ideal to get foreign and local architects to collaborate. Such a collaboration might bring the best results as it would include an understanding of the local narrative from local architects combined with a fresh perspective from the foreign architects. In that scenario, the local matters of concern can be answered in a different way, which has the potential to enrich the existing urban environment of Yakutia.

One of LETO's main strategies is to connect local regional authorities with local architects and provide them with the tools for the civic development of their shared spaces. A team of architectural advisers works closely with the authorities and connects them with their users through workshops and discussions. These collective brainstorming sessions are able to lead to higher quality projects in the regions, facilitate funding and further civic activation. However, the creativity required and the capacity to implement such a system is questionable as only a few local architects in Yakutia have experience of involving the public in their work.

The next interviewee, recommended by both Smirnov and Gasich, was Lilia Gizzyatova. Lilia is an architect who was also one of the PD pioneers in Kazan, a founder of 'ArchLanding' project, who later accepted a job offer from the urban design authorities in Vladivostok. Gizzyatova defined PD as "a process of democratisation in Russia. People are learning to get involved and lead an active social life, starting to have a position; humanity, to listen to each other. Hopefully, the next generation will be different, more active, and freer" (Gizzyatova, Appendix 1, p.36). Lilia added that PD works very differently in each region of Russia. Some places are open, some are scared and want to be left alone, some care only about making a profit. Gizzyatova usually started her projects by identifying focus groups then initiated discussions, preferably with no more than 100 participants (otherwise it

could become chaotic), which lead to a technical brief and design. "Usually, residents think that they can do architecture themselves, but we are actually trying to find an agreement about the functionality of a place" says Lilia (Gizzyatova, Appendix 1, p.36). Lilia highlights another important aspect of their work in Vladivostok: the involvement of 'turned off' users. These were usually young people not actively involved in Vladivostok's civic life. Gizzyatova's team's main aim is to create an open forum for citizens and encourage them to become actively participating citizens.

All the Russian interviewees were located in different parts of the country, but their work was not restricted to their hometown. For example, the fourth interviewee referred to, Victoria Boginskaya, is based in Yaroslavl but has designed in many Russian regions including the Republic of Sakha, and in other regions, Boginskaya has consulted with local architects. Victoria and her practice started by using the bottom-up method and then scaled up these projects, moving on to the top-down approach and winning a large number of federal grants. Boginskaya believes that PD should be a top-down method used to monitor the quality of design proposals. In Victoria's practice, PD contributes to the development of shared spaces through many tools - a variety of workshops, questionnaires and other innovative forms of involvement (social media etc). Furthermore, Boginskaya's team uses *tactical urbanism* to design. Tactical Urbanism also known as *Acupuncture Urbanism*, *DIY Urbanism, Planning-by-doing* refers to a city, organisational, and/or citizen-led approach to neighbourhood building using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions as a catalyst for long-term change (The Street Plans Collaborative, 2016). However, some of Boginskaya's projects have been vandalised by local inhabitants. This might be seen as evidence of a lack of user engagement in the process.

The last of the snowball Russian PD interviewees was Artyom Vlasov, an urbanist based in Moscow. The interview started with a discussion of unsuccessful PD projects in which citizens did not become involved as they were approached in the wrong way. In Vlasov's opinion, PD is more about finding a balance between users' aspirations and funding bodies. "In Russia people are not used to thinking of design outside of their flats/homes. People tend not to get involved in anything public because they have not seen any positive changes before, are used to being ignored by the authorities and not ready to take the responsibility. There is no culture of socialisation" argues Vlasov (Vlasov, Appendix 1, p.45). Thus, PD, in his view, depends on the leader of a particular community and their ability to

actively involve the residents. However, Artyom thinks that there is a political undercurrent in Russian PD. "It's tokenism that gives an illusion of democracy and involvement. It maybe just for government statistics, so that they can tick the box of involvement. Design innovations very rarely come from the users; usually, they are projecting things they have seen elsewhere" (Vlasov, Appendix 1, p.46).

The recurring topics and patterns from these interviews show that they share similar aims concerning the use of PD tools. In the development of public spaces, the common aim is to take account of local narratives expressing local matters of concern about the setting. The majority of Russian interviewees argued that PD is a civic action exercise tool and that Russian citizens are only now being introduced to the idea of getting involved with such public initiatives. However, the success of PD projects in Russia is restricted by the lack of time allowed for the PD process, strict regulations, short construction periods due to the excessively cold climate and lack of professional PD experience. As PD is new to Russia, its methodology is not fully familiar to regional designers. Three of the interviewees mentioned the importance of collaboration with PD experts from different contexts in participatory projects. This relates particularly to the Russian context, as architects have to submit planning design albums within a matter of a few weeks.

As Lilia Gizzyatova and Artyom Vlasov suggested, communities in Subarctic Russia are very different to those elsewhere because of their remote location, extremely cold climate, local culture, and politics. Sometimes PD can be imposed on communities that are not interested in getting involved. Engagement with a PD process always depends on the residents' values and general quality of life. People in the poorest neighbourhoods are not particularly interested or have the time to be engaged with the design of a shared space. They are more concerned with obtaining a safe roof above their heads. However, in some places, as Anku Gasich mentioned, PD can have a snowball effect – people see successful examples of neighbours being involved in the PD of public places and want to try this themselves. Indeed, experience of the impact of such initiatives by residents can lead to further changes in the neighbourhood. A sense of social ownership of the urban setting by the residents can encourage wider civic engagement.

4.2.4. Outline of Contextual Differences

The summary of findings from the snowballing interviews helped to define the perceptions of the contextual features of participatory placemaking in Yakutsk, its limitations, singularities, and its location within the wider discourse. The findings from the participatory placemaking analysis were divided into three geographical settings – Canadian and Greenlandic (1), Scandinavian and the UK (2), Russian (3) of participatory placemaking practice. Canadian and Greenlandic participatory placemaking (1) focused on co-learning and co-assessing the Northern urban matters of concern. Although, Yakutia, Greenland and Northern Canada share a similar history of the forced urbanisation of indigenous people during colonial times, settlements in Northern Canada and Greenland are much smaller than those in Yakutsk and have different matters of concern. Yakutsk's urban fabric developed rapidly due to its mining industry, leading to a concurrent increase in the population and economy of the region. Indigenous Siberian people also experienced a less oppressive history than Inuit people, as the ideology of the USSR focused on the equality of people. However, the rapid urbanisation of Siberia has resulted in a tendency towards a polarisation of opinion, either the rejection of Sakha or Russian culture, leading to confused self-positioning within the urban context of Yakutsk, illuminating the contradictions between Orthodox and Shamanist beliefs, urban and spiritual lifestyles, aesthetics, and aspirations.

Another similarity between Yakutia, Greenland and Northern Canada is remoteness and scarce building resources. Although, Yakutsk and Lensk are linked to western Russia via the Lena River, the link works only during certain seasonal periods (mid-summer and mid-winter). Metal and construction timber are imported materials in Siberia and are not available widely in Yakutsk. A similar scarce resource is people – due to the harsh climatic conditions these regions are historically less populated. For example, the population of the largest Yakutian city, Yakutsk is just above 300,000 people. The population of Nuuk, Greenland is below 18,000 and that of Yellowknife, Northern Canada just 20,000. However, the ability to participate in civic initiatives does not depend on the size of population but on their quality of life (economic stability).

Scandinavian and British participatory placemaking (2) processes are established practices that have developed new dimensions of involvement and creativity in shared space design.

For instance, participatory placemaking is based on the traditions of Dugnad in Norway or 'Right Form Right Place' in Svalbard, both of which experiment with environmental initiatives. These advanced practices are designed to bring tangible change, whereas Russian participatory placemaking has not reached this stage. Experience and the European location allow more room for experimentation and creativity. The political structures of Canada and Norway have expanded the opportunities offered by PP in Yellowknife and Svalbard respectively. The time factor is less constraining in Western regions, allowing substantial periods for civic initiatives.

The main features of Russian participatory placemaking (3) are time and political history. Lack of time is the main limitation of PD in Russia, linked to the country's building regulations and planning approval system. Currently, Russian participatory placemaking processes are trying to fit into the existing architectural design process, but there is insufficient time for the funding applications and participatory involvement in designs. This lack of time can lead to tokenism and lack of the user involvement. In general, participatory placemaking in Russia is a work in progress, where the population of Russia is just starting to exercise their civic rights. Due to the political history of Russia, civic action is commonly avoided. Russian democracy is enclosed in an invisible line beyond which political action can be considered as anarchic or part of a dangerous separatist movement. Thus, the majority of the Russian population prefers to avoid such sensitive areas. Participatory design and making can, however, be considered as simply a civic activity without consequences as it focuses on placemaking – tackling local matters of concern based on the affordances of fundamental place-based conditions.

In summary, participatory placemaking in Yakutsk is distinguished by five factors, its politico-economical structure of federal and local funding; architectural regulations and approval processes (time); socio-political structure of society and its capacity to participate, and local resources (materiality). However, these resistances can contribute to the character of participatory placemaking through finding new accommodations. The current tendencies and advances in Yakutian participatory design of shared spaces showcase its snowball effect abilities and citizens are starting to see positive change in co-designed spaces. Thus, the residents of Yakutian cities familiar with co-design practices are getting more involved in making shared spaces that express their local aspirations and matters of concern. The learning character of participatory design can lead to further civic

development of the urban fabric in Yakutian settlements to find a fit between desired narratives, artefacts and the local affordances of the context and resources.

4.3. Yakutian Participatory Design: Approaches in Narrative Making

4.3.1. Introduction

This section looks at two case studies, the top-down (Oyuur Park) and bottom-up (Dog City) approaches to participatory design at city and neighbourhood scales. These case studies had similar aims of co-constructing narratives to tackle local issues using participatory design but with different approaches and levels of involvement. Oyuur Park structures were built as the result of the PD work in the summer of 2021, whilst the case of Dog City project resulted in three speculative paper projects. This chapter describes and analyses the pitfalls and advantages of each approach, their possible contribution to civic space development in the Yakutian context, and the contribution which co-developed narratives can make to place identity formation.

4.3.2. Top-down Approach of Case Study 1: Oyuur Park in Lensk

The first case study is a top-down participatory design project with the involvement of the local community of Lensk (see fig.4-1; portfolio p. 9-10; Appendix 2). The researcher joined the project initiated by the Yakutian authorities as lead architect to remotely design the Oyuur city park - based on the data from the community workshops - and create a design album 16 for a project funding competition. The project funding competition is a federal grants programme which started in 2018. Twice a year the competition takes applications from every Russian region for funding for a public place design created with potential users' participation. This programme has facilitated participatory design development in the country. Although, the programme funded the building of hundreds of public places across Russia, the design work processes are mainly remote and the levels of participation in these projects are questionable. Thus, this case study at the city scale collected data on the levels and character of the users' involvement, drawbacks to the online participatory placemaking and the outcomes from the top-down process in Siberian Russia.

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[16] A design album for this specific Federal Grants competition was based on the template that included description of the site, participants involvement information, site analysis, design proposal, and possible economic and social benefits from the project (see Appendix 2 – Case Study 1).

Furthermore, the data was analysed along with the summaries from the snowballing interviews.
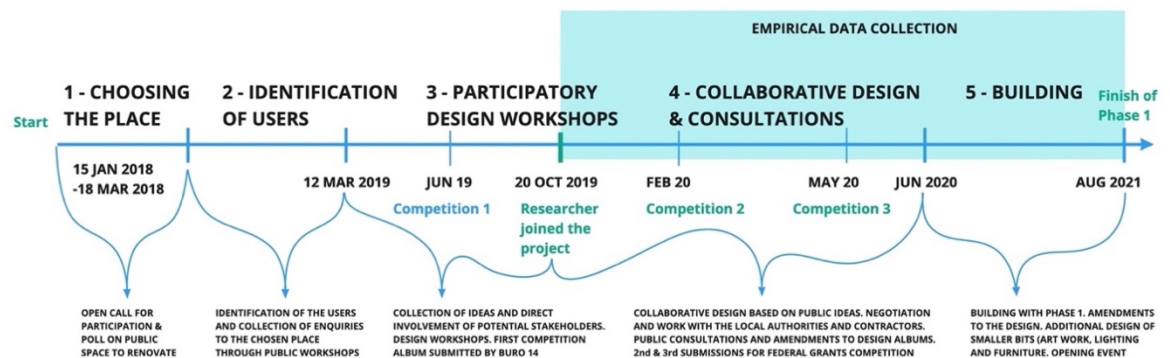
Fig.4-1 - Case Study 1 – Timeline

The Oyuur project started with the community workshop studies carried out by "LETO" 17, the client's team and the Buro 14 practice, a public online and in-person poll to choose a public place to renovate, workshops to identify stakeholders and their requirements for the place, and workshops to develop ideas for the park's identity and function (see fig.4-2). The first vote aimed to identify possible design sites for the top-down participatory design project. Voting was both digital and in-person on printed questionnaires to include all the age groups in Lensk. The vote was widely advertised online and on printed posters and banners on public transport and in various public places in Lensk. Voting took place over a couple of months to identify possible design sites and closed on the 9th February, 2018. 4,426 votes were cast (Sakha Life, 2018) and five possible design sites identified: Lenin Square (the main square of Lensk); Oyuur Park (had a different name at the time); the pedestrian zones of Lenin Street; the central shared spaces of the residential districts of Alrosa, Mukhtuya, and Razvedchik; and the riverbank on Naberezchnaya Street.

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17 LETO - The Centre of Competence on the Issues of Urban Environment of Yakutia, based in Yakutsk. The centre was founded by the Chief Architect of Yakutia, Irina Alekseeva. The centre aims to improve design quality of public spaces in Yakutian settlements through public engagement and inter disciplinary collaborative design.
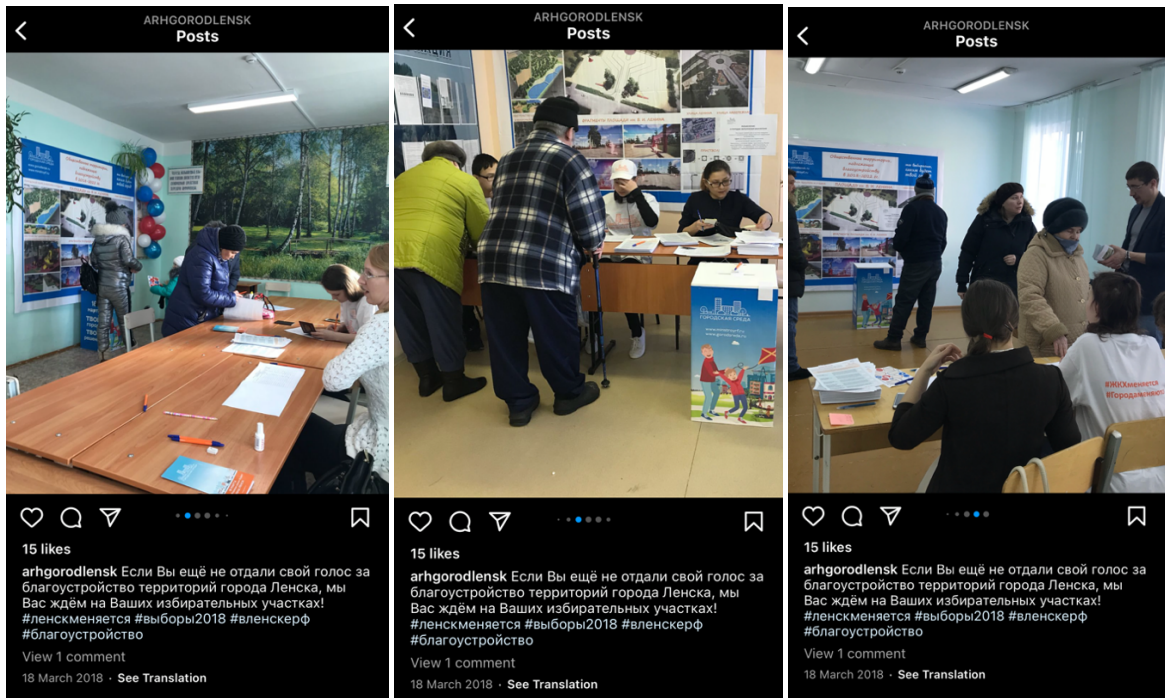
Fig.4-2 - Public Voting, Lensk. 18/03/2018. Screengrabs from Arhgorodlensk Instagram Page

Teal and French, in their study of participatory design spaces, refer to Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren's proposal that "the role of participatory design is to create 'infrastructuring agonistic public spaces' that hold diverse stakeholders in 'mutually vigorous but tolerant disputes'. This perspective on PD emerged in response to the challenges of applying it in new contexts, beyond workplace projects where this field developed, to innovation research within the public realm" (Teal and French, 2020, p.67). Thus, the main idea behind PD practices is the democratisation of design processes through the civic participation of its users. This argument can be illustrated in the voting process in the Oyuur Park project.

Five speculative designs were developed for each of these places, each using a different architectural practice. On 18th March 2018 voting session, the Lensk citizens chose their preferred projects. As a result of the voting, two sites in Lenin Square and the city park of Lensk were chosen as the most needed spaces. Lenin Square is the face of the city and is the town's most important public space. It was decided to design Lenin Square in the usual Russian way, without citizens involvement. The citizens had a public consultation prior to the approval of the square's design but had no power to change anything. However, the Park has city-wide meaning and is one of the most used shared spaces in the town, and it was decided to make it a participatory design project.
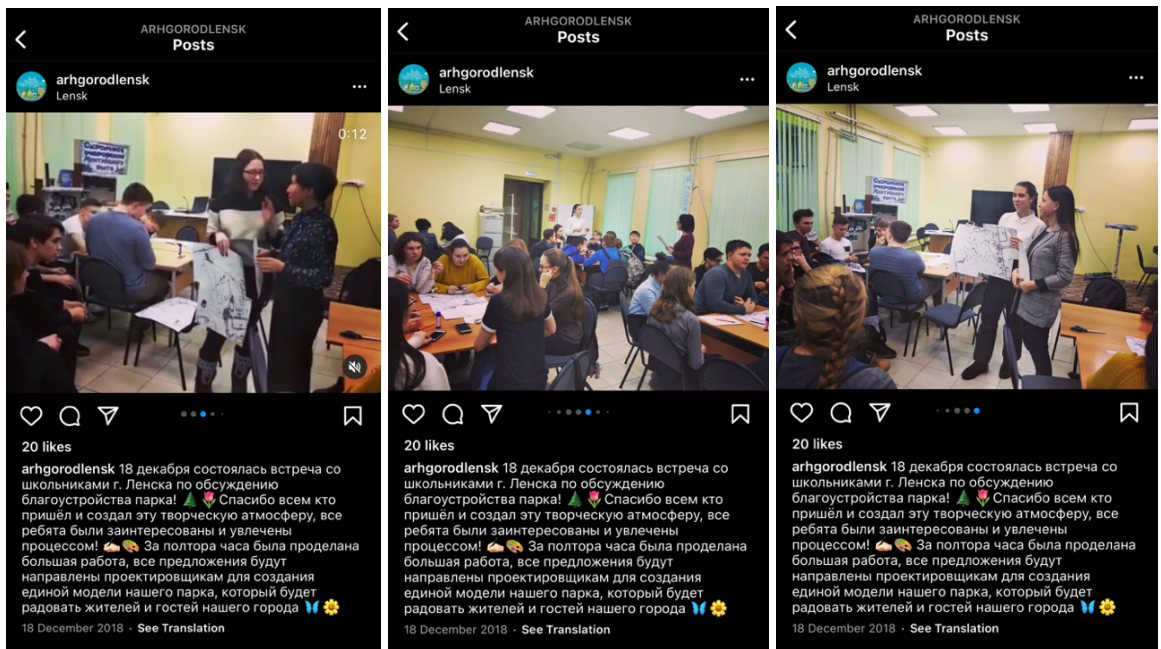
Fig.4-3 - A Youth Workshop, Lensk. 18/12/2019. Screengrabs from Arhgorodlensk Instagram Page

From March 2018, the LETO team set up additional online questionnaires and five workshops, two with an open call to the older generation and three for school children at the children's special care centre and the local arts school (see fig.4-3). Additional online questionnaires were needed to collect a record of the aspirations of the citizens and their suggestions for the park's design and layout. The first in-person workshops with the citizens of Lensk took place in December 2018, on 11th December, with the older age groups of Lensk, at the local administration building, and with the younger age groups on 18th December at one of the schools. The meetings were divided by age groups to give more freedom for creativity and expression by the young people as the young Lensk citizens are very involved in the park's life and had already initiated the building of a small skate park in Oyuur Park earlier that year.

Fig.4-4 - Case Study 1 Oyuur Park – Sketch from the Workshop Studies

The older age groups and youth workshops used mapping design methods (see fig.4-4, 4-5). The participants were divided into five groups and given the existing map of the park along with stickers and markers to locate and draw their ideas and suggestions. Each group used the stickers to map functional zones on the map and draw additional ideas using coloured markers. In the second half of the workshops, the groups introduced their map to support their ideas. On the basis of these workshops, it was decided to keep the original layout of the park for the main zones such as the fountain, *Ysyakh* zone, entrances and the sports zone. In addition, the participants decided to build a new multi-centre (youth centre + lecture café) in place of the old timber shops in the middle of the park, build an additional sports equipment rental shop and a stage and relocate the playground. Further suggestions proposed renovating the pond area within the park and the creation of walking routes in the woods area. In general, the participants were enthusiastic, creative, and enjoyed the workshop activities.

Fig.4-5 - Mapping Exercise by Group 1

The workshops for the younger, primary school pupil participants were concerned with identity making (see fig. 4-6). The children were asked to design a park symbol based on their thoughts about what the park's meant to them. As the park has a dense woodland area, it is widely appreciated for its wildlife, flora and fauna. The young participants drew a variety of flowers, cedar cones, squirrels, and trees. The initial architects for the park design, after an analysis of the children's drawings and consultations with the local

authorities, decided to use the symbols of the cedar cones and rowan for the park's design identity. Furthermore, the data from the workshops was added to the competition application album produced by the architectural practice, Buro 14. The proposal did not gain funding in the summer call of 2019 and was frozen.

Fig.4-6 – Children's Drawings

The project was given a fresh start at the end of October of 2019, when the researcher was appointed new lead designer. The new album work started from the online site analysis of the city park neighbourhood and extended to include the city centre of Lensk. The analysis stage included studies of existing community groups and the physical surroundings along with the previous workshops' materials. The new design of the park was collaboratively created by the researcher and Aileen Ling, a Canadian designer (see fig.4-7). Furthermore, the LETO team organised public consultations on the design proposal. The amended album included the data accumulated during the project and was submitted twice with revisions (from the citizens and authorities of Lensk) to the federal funding competition. Neither new application gained federal funding, but the project found local investors during the process. Similarly, the MA project had found sponsors during the community involvement activities (exhibition and planting workshop). It is often the speculative part of collaborative work

that provokes the interest of local people through its humanitarian character and because of its potential to improve important public places in the area.

Fig.4-7 - Case Study 1 Oyuur Park – Park Identity Design

Furthermore, the building and completion stages of the project helped the process to be understood in-depth, its gaps and future possibilities for carrying out large scale participatory design projects. The building phase opened up new involvement possibilities for local people to add in their new ideas. The data from this stage was recorded in the form of a diary supported by site photographs provided by local residents (see Appendix 2).

4.3.3. Bottom-up Approach of Case Study 2: Dog City in Yakutsk

The second case study was moved to an online format due to the covid lockdown in the spring of 2020 (see fig.4-8; portfolio p. 11-12; Appendix 3). The online practice was a bottom-up participatory design exercise, Dog City, with students at the North-Eastern Federal University of Yakutsk to address the local, city-wide issue of stray dogs in Yakutsk. The matter of concern was chosen through monitoring social media news on topical items (Burakova, 2019). The stray dogs' issue is not new in the Sakha Republic – it has a long history of animal's mistreatment, resulting in dog attacks on citizens and inappropriate solutions from the top-down that were neither ethical nor effective (Stewart, 2020). The Dog City workshop was asking whether participatory placemaking could tackle this issue through collaborative methods with citizen involvement. The expectation was that bottom-

up suggestions from local designers might bring an insightful perspective and expand urban imaginaries by presenting them to the local community for feedback.

FIG.2 - EXPECTED WORKSHOP STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

FIG.3 - CARRIED OUT WORKSHOP STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

Fig.4-8 - Case Study 2 Dog's City – Timetables, an Extract from Appendix 3

The aim of the workshop was to develop design solutions that might ease the problem of stray dogs in Yakutsk. The design brief was formed by the participants based on their collaborative investigation and analysis work. Galleguillos and Coşkun (2020) argue that there is no one participatory method per se, but different ways of enabling people to get involved in the development of projects that seek to improve their lives. It is not so much about a specific method but the confluence of different interventions supporting the influence of the participants of a project. Therefore, the researcher framed the exercise as a 4-week workshop for the 4th year BA architectural students with talks from foreign experts in architecture and design to diversify the design approaches and methods (see fig.4-9).

Fig.4-9- Case Study 2 Dog's City – An Online Meeting – Hand-drawn Sketch by the Researcher

During the first week, the participants had an induction meeting and a talk on collaborative design and site analysis methods. In order to investigate the whole city, the students formed themselves into three groups of four people and each group chose three different Yakutsk neighbourhoods. The students observed their chosen sites using the method of transect walks, then mapping, and sketching their findings. At the same time, they carried out an online survey of the socio-cultural aspects of the matter of concern through a social media questionnaire. These methods helped them gain an understanding of the problem and to choose the design sites for in-depth analysis. The week finished with the students presenting their observation summaries.

The second design week started with an online co-design workshop run by the Canadian designer, Aileen Ling (see fig.4-10). Aileen's workshop focused on the creation of context mapping covering the physical and the invisible aspects. The invisible aspects were covering the economic funding and resources, the social – community groups, the cultural – histories of place, the political – policies; infrastructures and stakeholders' relationship to infrastructures; together with asset mapping, the assets stakeholders can bring to the table to support the project. In her talk, Aileen compared traditional design processes with co-design processes, giving examples of their possible impact and results. At the end of the

talk, Aileen gave the students an example map and a template for the students. For the rest of the week, the students worked on developing their site analysis further based on the workshop advice and then created their design briefs. The design briefs were presented at the end of the week in a presentation format that included diagrams of the site analysis.
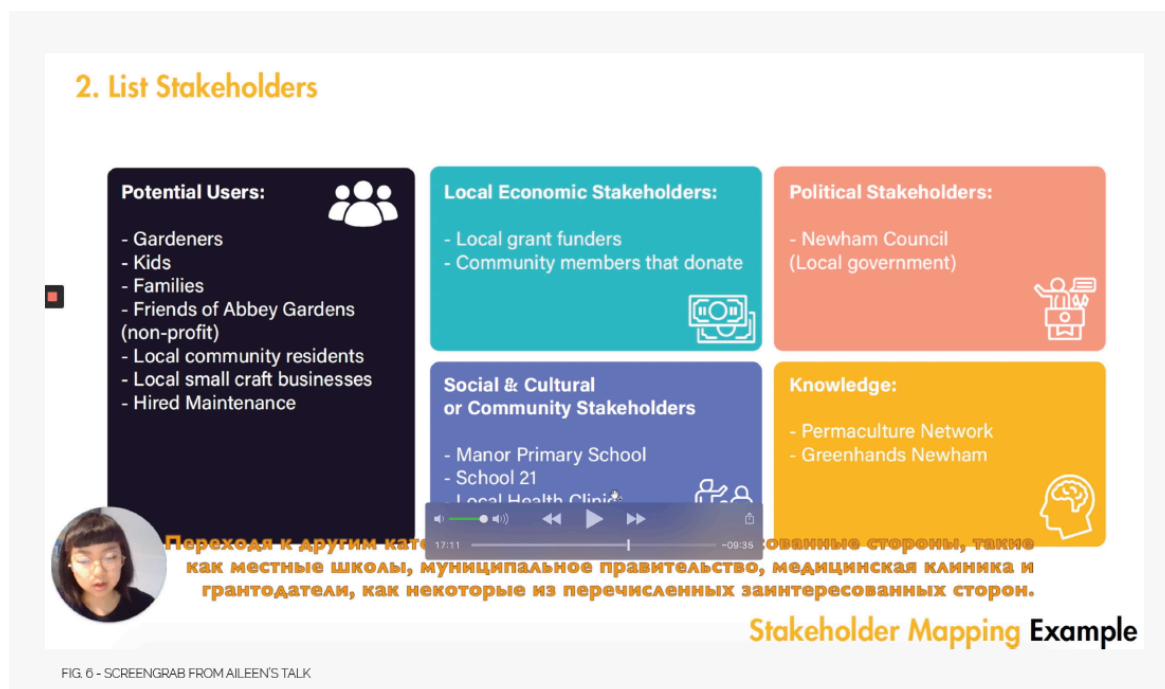
Fig.4-10 – Aileen Ling's Talk. Screengrab, an Extract from Appendix 3

Although, the students found this analysis exercise useful and developed an in-depth understanding of the issues, they hesitated to propose design solutions that could tackle it. Thus, the third week of the workshop focused on design methods by French based architect, Karina Pak, followed by a talk from Daria Titova on design implementation planning (see fig.4-11). These talks and exercises enabled the students to creatively assess the issues. The architectural design taught in Russian schools mainly builds on working with precedents and materials, whereas Karina's talk showed the students other ways of designing that can be inspired by poetry, folklore, or model making / 3D thinking. Karina's talk was based on a comparison of Russian and French architectural school projects, the design approach, and the processes behind them. In order to balance such free design and ground it in reality, Daria's lecture highlighted the importance of design based on local resources and materials.
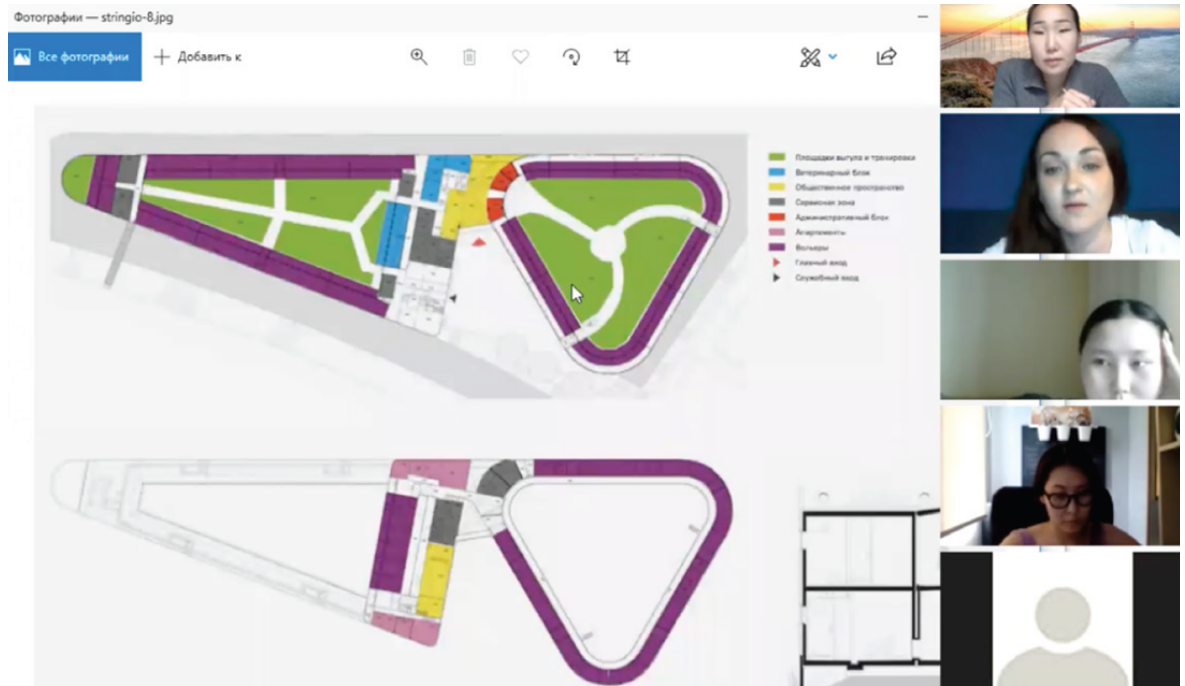
Fig.4-11 –Daria Titova's Talk. Screengrab, an Extract from Appendix 3

For the remainder of the practice, students developed their design proposals and had online tutorials. In the tutorials, the participants were consulted about their design progress and given tips on the materials to use. For example, the second team had chosen a mobile lecture hall but could not decide on their construction materials. After some drawing experimentation with shapes, the students decided to choose timber as it would be easier to make the structure transportable and sustainable. At the end of each week, the students presented their work-in-progress and received feedback on their work from the core consultant teams. Although all the consultations and feedbacks were optional to attend and follow, the students used every opportunity to get their work reviewed and attended every session.
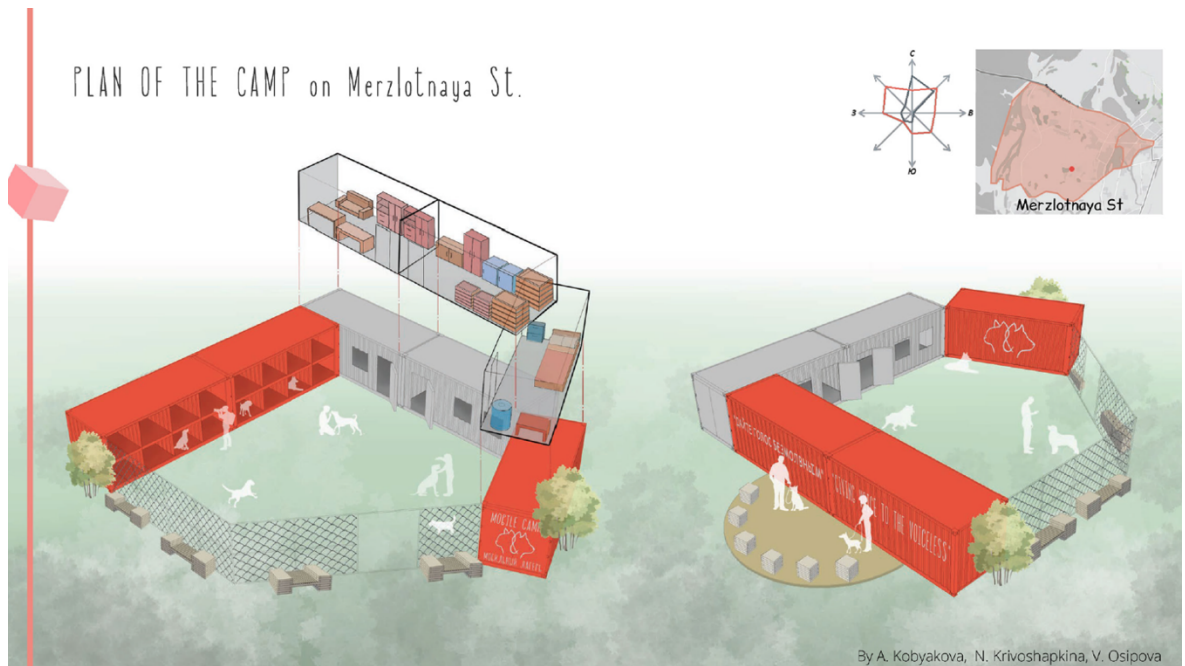
Fig.4-12 – Team 1 – Mobile Camp Project, an Extract from Appendix 3

At the end of the practice, the students presented their design proposals to the workshop lead team (the researcher, Aileen Ling, Karina Pak, Daria Titova) and the consultants (Jillian Nishi, Anku Gasich). Three final designs proposed different ways of tackling the problem. The first team developed a mobile market space built from used shipping containers (see fig.4-12). The second team designed a transportable timber lecture hall that could also turn into a marketplace. The main idea behind this lecture hall was to tackle the issue of stray dogs by educating Yakutsk's citizens in the responsible care of their pets. The third group designed a permanent animal shelter and an app for tracking stray dogs and finding new homes for them. Furthermore, all three groups collaborated to create combined maps of all three proposals and possible locations within the Yakutsk city map. The three projects were exhibited online to citizens and local experts (the research group of the Department of Biology, Faculty of Biology and Geography, North-Eastern Federal University, and animal rights activists at the Yakutsk shelter) to collect their reviews. The feedback data on the case study was also gathered in the form of a participants' feedback questionnaire, reviews from the tutors at the North- Eastern Federal University, and the case study diary. The detailed process and design albums on the different stages of the workshop are described in the Appendix 3.

CHAPTER V: MAKING AND IMAGINING

5.1.   Background

This chapter analyses the impact of participatory placemaking on expanding urban imaginaries through artefact making in Yakutsk. The first part of this chapter compares the hands-on learning-by-making initiatives in London, Case Study 3 – Amphitheatre Project, and Yakutsk, MA case study – Growing Structures (Sivtseva, 2019). Case study 3 was recorded in the form of a diary and presented in appendix 4 (see also Portfolio, stage 3, p.13-14). A comparison of these hands-on projects allowed an assessment of the links between participatory placemaking process structures. The Amphitheatre and MA Growing Structures bottom-up projects were based on Lefebvre's concept of *induction*.

The second part of this chapter is an analysis of the survey of Siberian Imaginaries (see Portfolio, p.19-25). The imaginaries were made using the tools of participatory design from the bottom-up. The imaginaries represented in the survey were developed in accordance with Lefebvre's idea of transduction as a way of knowledge creation – a utopian urban vision based on the potential of local materiality and affordances. The qualitative and quantitative data from the urban imaginaries survey helped to imagine and represent new artefacts and, in turn, the possible impact of these artefacts on the continued use of participatory placemaking in Yakutsk. In this way, findings from the hands-on learning-by-making case studies allowed speculation on how to further expand the development of urban imaginaries in Yakutsk.

5.2. Learning-By-Making: Artefact Making

5.2.1. Introduction

This section describes the organisation and processes of learning-by-making and analyses the contextual differences in two collaborative learning-by-making initiatives in shared space by comparing a project in Yakutsk with one in London. It identifies singularities particular to each situation and discusses the influence of the different contexts and availability of resources. Both projects used a bottom-up approach and were carried out by groups of volunteers. The hands-on building processes were at the same building scale. Levels of involvement were maximised but slightly different to each other. The Yakutsk project was restricted in time and had more participants. The London project had more time available, but number of participants was restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2.2. Organisation of Making Processes

The third case study was a collaborative hands-on learning-by-making bottom-up initiative by the local community group, Friends of Caledonian Park, ARCSR students and the researcher, who built an amphitheatre in North London in the summer of 2021 (see table 5-1; fig.5-1). This case study was a study of the bottom-up learning-by-making initiative in a western context, carried out by participants who barely knew each other before the process. The study focused on the process structure and organisation, power and negotiation within the group, level of involvement of each participant and the outcomes of the project. The case study data was recorded through the diary, sketches, and interviews with the participants. The results were compared with the earlier hands-on-making MA case study in Yakutia (see fig.5-2). The methods, participant groups, timing, and process structures in both case studies were slightly different.

Table 5-1- Amphitheatre in Caledonian Park Project Timeline - Expectation, an Extract from Appendix 4

Fig.5-1 - Amphitheatre in Caledonian Park Project Timeline - Realisation, an Extract from Appendix 4

Fig.5-2 - MA Project Timeline

The Amphitheatre Project in Caledonian Park was initiated and partially funded by the Friends of Caledonian Park, who contacted the Unit 6 [18] tutors (see Appendix 4). The Friends of Caledonian Park group was formed by neighbourhood residents to represent park users and take care of the amenities and wildlife of the park. The leaders of the group, Miriam and Amara, constantly work on improving the park and organising volunteer gardening and maintenance sessions. Caledonian Park is Islington's largest park, at 7.4

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[18] Unit 6 is the ARCSR-led March design unit at the School of Art, Architecture and Design at London Metropolitan University. The unit explores how the urban landscape is inhabited, made, and remade through personal and collective acts, events, memories and experiences; attempting to cut through the surface to expose the undercurrent of silent issues that constitute the everyday.

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hectares, and includes a clock tower, children's play area, café, and community space. The local matter of concern is the tension between community groups in the park's neighbourhood – the council residential apartment blocks and private housing residents. The learning-by-making workshop did not directly tackle this resistance but involved the building of a shared civic place where the divided community could gather and build connections.

The MA Growing Structures project was started by the researcher. The speculative emails, public talks at the local schools and for architectural enthusiasts in Yakutsk, an exhibition at the Yakutsk's architectural school, and a green workshop helped to attract the attention of citizens and find funding for the project. The building site was found speculatively through contacting the local authorities, who referred the idea to the social worker of a nursing home in Yakutsk. The talks provoked interest in learning-by-making phenomena and identified the participants: students from the architectural school and children's design studio, agricultural school students, young and experienced architects and engineers, and other members of the public. At the green workshop, citizens of Yakutsk were invited to learn more about the upcoming project and plant the seed for the future green room to be built on the nursing homeland. During the green workshop, a local construction company owner offered funding for the construction materials – Siberian larch and polycarbonate rolls.

The green room structure for the nursing home was designed by the researcher to be easy to build, economical, and functional. The nursing home's greenhouses had been demolished a few months before the project as there was nobody to look after them. The green room structure offered an alternative to the greenhouses, so the residents of the nursing home could still enjoy flowers and fresh air in the summer. The simple rectangular timber structure's floor plan was 5x 8m. The walls and the gabled roof were made from polycarbonate rolls. The participants formed mixed groups to build the foundations and the vertical structure. Stronger participants did the heavy lifting, whilst smaller participants built the walls and the floor. Some participants were responsible for sanding and staining the wood. Younger participants were taught how to use screwdrivers, build and colour flower bed structures, and a table. The children's work was led by Aileen Ling and their teachers.

During the construction of the green room, the structure received additional joists to increase its rigidity. A balustraded ramp leading to the structure was designed and built on site. In the middle of the process, it became clear that there was not enough material as the participants had to use some of them to test the building techniques to be used. The nursing home social worker found an additional sponsor for the extra materials, which were delivered promptly. Every day, volunteers worked long hours (9 am till 11 pm) with several breaks throughout the day. The structure was finished in one week because of the large number of participants and was celebrated with an opening event on 19th July 2019.

The design of the amphitheatre in Caledonian Park was created by Unit 6 architecture students from London Metropolitan University following the brief given by the client. The project consisted of a brick semi-circular stage, timber pergola, and gabion benches. The size and location of the structure was dictated by the existing sloped topography, which was adjusted on site during the process. The hands-on work took place two or three times a week depending on the availability and number of volunteers. Each on-site day, the participants had to wheelbarrow tools and materials from the storage area to the site. Later on, the park volunteers started helping with wheelbarrowing materials. The construction work started from the ground levelling. This part of the job was the most challenging, as the original slope of the site was complicated. After the groundwork had been completed, the participants started building the brick stage.

Fig.5-3 – Case Study 3 Amphitheatre in Caledonian Park – Sketch of the Process – Hand-drawn Sketch by the Researcher

The making of the brick stage started with the preparation of mortar on the site – mixing sand and cement in a ratio of 4 to 1 and adding water. As none of the participants had previous skills in bricklaying, the left side of the stage was laid rather unevenly. However, the participants mastered bricklaying during the process and the other half of the stage was built more evenly (see fig.5-3). The next part of the project was making the gabion benches. The group of students who designed the benches made a test bench in the workshop, which allowed them to develop faster construction steps made by screwing together the timber top and clipping together the chicken wire gabion baskets. The chicken wire baskets were put into the ground and filled with bricks and stones from the park. Next, the timber tops were attached to the chicken wire boxes using metal studding. In total, eight benches were made. Additional volunteers from the BA studio of London Metropolitan helped to push forward the bench making stage. Due to the lack of time at the end of the project, the participants and the client decided to leave the pergola building for another time.

Although the local community members were unable to be actively involved in large groups due to COVID restrictions, they occasionally visited the site to chat and watch progress. Children from the local youth centre attended on one of the construction days to learn about the process and lay some bricks. This encounter led to another possibility, a mural for the back of the stage that could be drawn by the young people. The researcher and two other volunteers attended a couple of the young people group drawing sessions and connected them with a sponsor. As stated by Nabeel Hamdi (2004), learning-through-making is not only about placemaking; it involves designing both spatial and organizational structures where people can "remove barriers to knowledge and learning, find partners, build networks and open lines of communication" (Hamdi, 2004, p.116). These structures of meaning frame the habits of people and their behavioural patterns and are tangible as long as people continue to experience new social activities.

Unfortunately, the mural project did not go ahead due to miscommunication between the local parties, but the Caledonian Park workshop had certainly brought about contact between the community groups. The youth group worker argued with the sponsor about the theme of the mural. The researcher gave the youth group complete freedom to draw anything they wanted as it was their shared space, but the sponsors imposed some

censorship requirements (avoiding political slogans). However, the incident could prompt more discussion and improve communication in the future as the project might go ahead in 2022.

5.2.3. Process Structure and Imagination

The building structures of London and Yakutsk were designed (in general detail) prior to the building processes. The London structure of the stage set out by rule of thumb, one step at a time and using rope to estimate the radius of the semi-circular stage. During the building process, the students' teachers gave talks and practical lessons on mixing mortar and concrete and brick layering techniques. The students struggled the most with levelling the ground and laying the brick paving. The first half of the stage ended up being uneven and bumpy, but the second part of it was even and sound as the participants had become familiar with the technique. The initial method of using string to estimate levels was not successful. However, subsequent experimentation with a scaffolding board and spirit level solved the problem.

One of the hardest parts of this project was delivering materials to the construction site as the site was located in the far corner of Caledonian Park without vehicular access. Later on, the park volunteers started helping with wheelbarrowing the materials to the site which made a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the building process. The bricklaying process took longer than expected: around two months instead of the planned four weeks. This was partly due to the lack of participants and rainy weather. The theatre was completed by placing gabion benches built by the participants around the stage on a landscaped embankment. The initially planned timber pergola structure was not built during this phase. The participants of the project came forward with some ideas of how to involve the local community members more effectively (local theatre performances, mural drawn by the local youth centre).

The Yakutsk building structure was also amended during the process, additional diagonal connections were added to give extra support to the structure. The non-professional participants were joined by experts in architecture and construction in the evenings. These

professionals were curious to see how the first participatory learning-by-making project in Yakutsk was going. The experts gave their professional opinions and made suggestions, adding their own ideas for the design of the structure. For example, one engineer highlighted the importance of staining the timber structure with special fire-resistant emulsion. Another local craftsman made a metal balustrade in his own workshop for the structure. He was not asked to do it; he just suggested it and brought a ready-made balustrade the next morning. The rushed construction process was completed in just a week due to the organisers limited availability. Voluntary projects should be short in time to avoid exhausting the participants and them losing their interest in the project. That is why the building started at 8:30 am and finished around 11 pm every day during that week, the only possible hours because of the extended daylight in sub-polar regions in the summer months.

Thus, a process structure should be determined before the start of a project. Depending on the size of a building, materials and tools, the nature of the participants and the time available, learning-by-making can have a rigid or loose process structure. Certain materials and scale require more experienced participants or more process time. This might be considered an advantage of a learning by making project as processes involving different types of materials can facilitate the collaboration between the different participants with different types of specialist knowledge. Furthermore, a consideration of the agency and responsibility of the participants involved in collaborative making processes is crucial in learning-by-making exercises. This brings the question of what the role of an architect is in participatory placemaking. As the case studies have shown, an architect can take on any role according to their preference. An architect is not necessarily the leader of a process, but can be an interpreter or translator, or the facilitator of change. The lead should be taken by a considerate person familiar with the type of work and the context in which it takes place.

5.3. Co-designing Siberian Imaginaries

5.3.1. Introduction

The urban imaginary survey is one of the last research methods used to gather empirical data in the city of Yakutsk (see Portfolio, p.19-25). Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the survey was held online in the form of discussions, a drawing workshop, an exhibition, and a questionnaire. The survey was in the Russian language to target Yakutsk's citizens as the survey respondents. A website created for the purposes of the survey exhibited two urban imaginary proposals based on the earlier research findings and called for ideas and suggestions for a possible additional urban imaginary proposal. The survey sought to obtain data that would help to address the research focus of participatory placemaking in Yakutia as a tool for co-creating and expanding the participant's shared urban imaginary of public spaces. The survey was intended to test the ways in which participatory design methods might be adapted to the local context and the ways in which a shared local identity might be assembled based on placemaking. The actual interpretation of the survey results required a qualitative approach to understand and define the interests of the respondents in urban imaginary projects, their willingness to participate in possible collaborative design projects, and whether participatory placemaking projects might grow out of these speculative seeds.

5.3.2. Process of Co-design

The scale of the survey was taken at neighbourhood scale to speculate on larger territories. The methodology was based on the research survey of Investigator – Narrator – Maker (see 2.1 for a full description). The stages of Investigator and Maker were carried out by the researcher based on the making workshop and discussion meetings with the residents of Yakutsk at the second Narrator stage. As the project had a speculative character, hands-on building was not considered. However, the materiality and structures proposed contemplated the buildability of the imaginaries on the potential sites selected. Such projects have the potential to produce expanding circles of initiatives and scale up. For

instance, imaginary projects can provoke further investigation and lead to new narratives and learning-by-making initiatives.

During the first Investigator stage, walking and mapping observations helped to identify research sites in Yakutsk. The researcher walked 4 routes in total and mapped findings in the form of sketches. As a result of this mapping, multiple areas within the public realm of the city were chosen based on where the researcher thought that speculative participatory place-making initiatives might be possible. Eventually, three sites were chosen, and discussions were held on matters of local concern to Yakutsk citizens (see portfolio, stage 2). The first site was on the southern side of the city canal, the second located around the pond in the north-east side of the city, and the third, a pass over the centralised heating system in the residential neighbourhood of Yakutsk. These three sites were chosen based on their unique features of landscape and built environment, local users that might be interested in involvement, and their condition of infrastructure.

At the second Narrative stage, an online workshop with the Children's Architecture and Design Studio in Yakutsk, held to encourage the creation of urban imaginaries The online workshop was conducted with two groups at the children's School of Architecture and Design in December 2021-January 2022 in Yakutsk. There were 20 participants in total, aged from 6 to 17 years old. During the 3-hour workshop, the researcher gave a 40-minute talk on the key issues of her research topic and a drawing task on shared space design. The participants were given a chosen site and the freedom to choose one local matter of concern to address through their design of a small, shared space. The young participants were given 3 days to complete their drawings and submit them to the researcher.

At the beginning of the workshop, the youngest participants struggled to generate ideas, so the task was amended, asking them to draw anything they liked and enjoyed outside of their houses. They were given a week to finish their drawings and submit them. In total, ten completed drawings were submitted and digitised by the researcher. The designs included a public toilet, a variety of benches, bridges, and abstract figures. All the ideas were combined into a theme park for young people within the first urban imaginary project *Djoghur* [19].

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[19] *Djoghur* – a Sakha term for skill, dexterity.

The narrative-making workshop was followed by discussion meetings with Yakutsk's citizens. During the discussions, representatives of different Yakutsk community groups (the participants) examined the drawings made by the researcher together with maps of the existing opportunities and constraints of the sites. The participants added their knowledge and suggestions to these maps. For example, one participant pointed out that a school next to the site was attended by differently abled students and that it might be a good idea to make the whole proposal wheelchair accessible. Others highlighted issues as the darkness of public spaces (on the desire paths) and the lack of community and sports spaces. Some participants to the discussion were from the neighbourhoods next to the design sites. These participants mapped the paths they used on a daily basis to commute to work or school, run errands and shop.

In the third stage of Making, the outcomes from the workshop combined with the discussion findings resulted in two urban imaginary proposals. The other proposals were made using Lefebvre's ways of representing alternative futures in research by practice: induction (top-down) and transduction, which according to Lefebvre is a method that "involves developing the theoretical object from the information and problematic posed by reality" (Lefebvre, 1996, p.21). It is a 'possible impossible' that shows the users how they can affect the built environment around them. Transduction was chosen due to its inspiring character and ability to invoke the residents' interest in participatory placemaking. If, eventually, participatory placemaking were to be embodied within the Yakutian planning process, other ways of enhancing creativity in co-design could be added. For example, a 'translation' way, where the process structure and its steps were mixed up and re-ordered.

The co-designed urban imaginaries proposals did not involve any unrealistic or utopian designs but provided a different perspective of what could be achieved within the existing neighbourhood structures using locally available resources. It was an exercise in expanding 'mutual knowledge' and the 'capacity to participate' where situated knowledge is combined to widen the horizon of possibilities and imagine alternative affordable futures in the Yakutian urban context. Further implementation of learning-by-making methods could contribute to the creation of a learning forum for civic action in Yakutsk. Here hands-on initiatives for artefact-making could empower the participants and showcase the importance of collaborative design work to the local planning authorities.

5.3.3. Co-Imagined Places: Siberian Imaginaries

The co-creation process resulted in two urban imaginary proposals and an open call for the third one. The proposals are illustrated in the research portfolio that should be viewed in parallel with this written thesis. The first urban imaginary of the city canal site is the *Djoghur* workshop cluster proposal built on top of existing garages. The scheme re-imagines a perilous and unwelcoming site of concrete garages in a residential neighbourhood along the city canal (the south-east side). The space is widely used by residents as a shortcut to bus stops and connects the neighbourhood with the school for children with special needs. The main concern of the local population was the absence of any indoor community spaces for the adult population. Thus, a variety of wood, metal, and ceramic workshops were designed along with an art studio, a café, a playground space, and a wheelchair-accessible bridge connection to the bus stops. The workshop cluster was the first suggestion as the Sakha culture is famous for its traditional crafts and woodwork. The new public space was intended to contribute to a wider spread of craftsmanship among the citizens and make safe to the marginal pocket of garages.

The *Djoghur* structures were proposed to be simple SIP (Structural Insulated Panels) models to make them economically affordable and architecturally lightweight. The SIP structures were widely tested and proven to be heat conserving, even in the extreme cold temperatures of Yakutia. Due to their light weight, SIP panels can be transported to Yakutsk without major expense and are significantly cheaper in material and construction costs than wood. These panels could also be supported by the existing foundation of the reinforced concrete garages (in the second urban imaginary design). The low cost of the panels and short construction period meant the project more affordable, too. It was envisaged that the material costs would be low enough to be affordable to the housing associations who owned the existing residential apartments. Moreover, the simplicity of SIP panel construction shortens the building process, which is important in the Yakutian climate.

The playground space was designed on the basis of the local young people's drawings developed during an online design and drawing workshop in Yakutsk in December, 2021. The playground structures could be made out of timber and metal by local companies or

during workshops with young people. The structures are small-scale and are easy to build, taking about a week to assemble. The designs made by the local youth reflected their conscious and subconscious ideas in relation to their environment, how they wanted to use the space and what should be in it. Further learning-by-making implementation of these designs could contribute even more towards a democratic exercise by increasing involvement and ownership. Seeing how their initiatives could literally change a space might empower the participants to imagine more widely and become more enthusiastic about and familiar with civic action.

The second project imagined accessing the city's canal pond site in between two neighbourhoods in the northern part of the city. The existing site is characterised by a row of large, individual garages and a pond. Although, the environmental condition of the pond is poor due to lack of care, the space is still an oasis for nature within a grey concrete neighbourhood of typical residential apartments built during the Soviet Union period. The area is mostly used by dog walkers and vagrants who gather in the space during the warmer months. The surrounding neighbourhoods lack sports or community facilities, especially in the wintertime. Yakutsk city has a transportation problem, especially in the summer, as almost every adult owns and uses a motor vehicle. The parking issue is critical, with residential courtyards being turned into improvised parking spaces. The existing individual metal garages mostly store old vehicles and are used by their owners as a space to gather for drinking and socialising. Spaces between the garages are occupied by large groups of vagrants and homeless people, turning them into marginal outposts that are not safe for the neighbourhood residents or passers-by.

As a response, the second imaginary proposal would reclaim the area by demolishing the old garages and building a 5-storey car parking building. The newly created space would be turned into a green park with a community centre, a coffee shop, sports centres, and a sports equipment rental place. The proposal would surround the pond and connects two neighbourhoods by renovating the existing bridge on the east side. The imaginary idea was developed based on verbal discussions with local community representatives of different ages. Similar to the first urban imaginary proposal, the smaller new structures of a community centre, café and rental shop were to be made of SIP panels or any other locally available material such as scrap timber on a metal carcass. The sport centres were designed to be made out of used shipping containers. The use of containers was also inspired by the

Dog City case study, where the participants used them. The car park building was shown to have reinforced concrete floors and an automated system for allocating cars inside of the structure instead of a ramp system, which requires more space.

These urban imaginary developments could be owned by the residents of the neighbourhoods, or by businesses or government (to make sure that the structures were maintained). However, the spaces should be mainly free or with only a symbolic charge for their use to make them accessible to all residents. If, as a result, the wider population of the city became interested, they could learn from these initiatives and build their own variations. Although, these proposals could be scaled up by introducing them to similar spaces in other neighbourhoods of Yakutsk, they are all space-specific and while the finding of local affordances and gathering data on existing resources should be copied, the design itself would not be the same. For example, a few Yakutian neighbourhoods have concrete one-storey garages that can be built upon, but the garages built in the industrial part of Yakutsk would not be appropriate sites as they are not well used by citizens as there are not many residential buildings in that area. Other neighbourhoods might have different kinds of affordances such as easy access to fertile soil to build community allotments or greenhouses, for example.

In terms of place identity, these urban imaginaries did not re-introduce traditional architectural elements such as religious shamanic totems or old Sakha structures. Instead, following, the Arctic Regionalism approach, these spaces are "reflections of post-modern architectural culture, architects map inter-linked physical and social contextual conditions and design a 'softened' Modernist architecture that focuses on placemaking, identity and community-building. According to this logic, architectural form links directly to the analysis of climatic and functional requirements as well as the social ordering of space" (Hemmersam, 2020, p. 29). Whilst the place identity of Yakutian public space once embodied Sakha spiritual beliefs, they went on to include new lifestyles, desires, and contemporary local needs. However, if the process of developing new urban imaginaries were to be absorbed into the process of change in reality, then shamanic artefacts could still be included if asked for by the users during the participatory design workshops. As in case study 1, in Lensk's Oyuur Park, the first speculative proposal chosen by the citizens of Lensk was further co-developed with them during the following design stages.

5.3.4. Survey Results

At the end of the survey, the online exhibition collected the residents' opinions of the proposals and offered an open call for participation in creating a third imaginary. The urban imaginaries online exhibition aimed to analyse the potential of participatory design through an online questionnaire (see fig.5-4). The link to the exhibition website was through social media platforms and messengers, creating a snowball effect. The online survey questionnaire was kept short to ensure an adequate number of responses as the survey was free and on a voluntary basis. There were three close-ended questions, two project-rating questions, and one open-ended question. At the end of the questionnaire, the survey participants were asked to provide their names and ages. By the end of the survey period, data had been collected from 110 individuals, 30 of whom answered the open-ended question.

Fig.5-4 - The Survey Questionnaire (Translated from Russian to English)
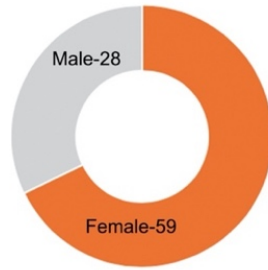
Pie Chart 1 - Gender
87 out of 110 provided
with their name/gender
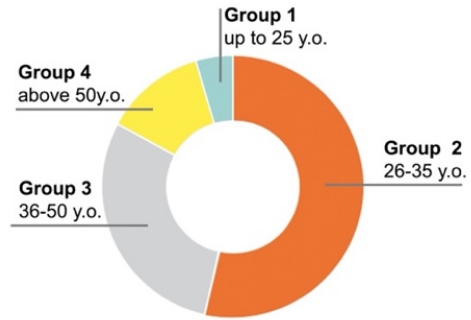
Pie Chart 2 - Age Groups
88 out of 110 provided
with their age:
1 - up to 25 y.o.; 2 - 26-35y.o.;
3 - 36-50 y.o.; 4 - 51 y.o. and above

Bar Chart 1
Rate the Project 1
Djoghur Workshops Cluster on scale 1 to 5 stars:
90% gave 5 stars;
8% gave 4 stars; 1% gave 2; and 1% gave 1 star.
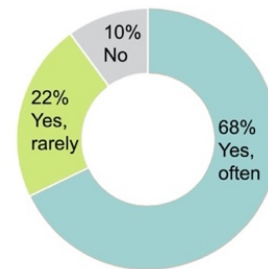
Pie Chart 3
Question 2: Would you use
the space 1?
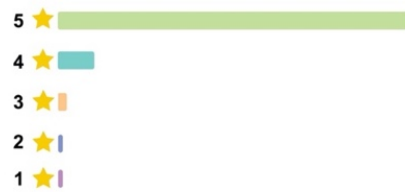
Bar Chart 2
Rate the Project 2
The Sports Park on scale 1 to 5 stars:
87% gave 5 stars; 9% gave 4 stars;
2% gave 2; 1% gave 3; and 1% gave 1 star.
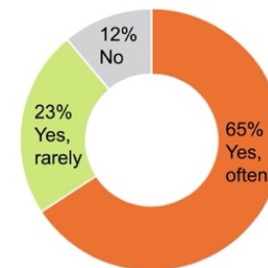
Pie Chart 4
Question 2: Would you use
the space 1?
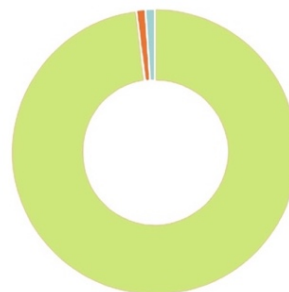
Pie Chart 5
Question 5: Is it worth to design spatial
imaginary proposals?
98%-yes; 1%-maybe; 1%-no.

Fig.5-5- Survey Analysis Charts

The first six questions of the survey provided the quantitative data were analysed through pie and bar charts (see fig.5-5). Pie charts 1 and 2 show the participants' gender and age, which helped to identify the most active groups in the local community. Although the online questionnaire was published at the weekend and distributed through different generation and community groups, it still had some limitations. It became apparent from pie chart 1 that the female participants were more active than the male. However, 17% of those surveyed did not state their gender or name as this part of the survey requires knowledge of the Russian language. The survey was developed in Russian to target the local Yakutian population. Furthermore, pie chart 2 illustrates a lack of young survey participants (below 25 years old), which might be due to the app choice or design of the survey. Overall, however, these results indicated that representatives of all Yakutsk's age groups were socially active and curious about experimental imaginative project proposals.

Bar charts 1 and 2 show the ratings for the two imaginary projects on a scale of 1 to 5. Both bar charts show the positive responses with the majority of respondents giving the projects the maximum rating of 5 stars. Those who gave the low rates failed to provide their ages or names, or comments on their dislikes. These responses might be based on a subjective dislike of the design style and function of the projects, or a technical issue of not understanding the survey form, or fear of reprisal for not liking the project. Pie charts 3 and 4 also show the willingness of the participants to use such spaces were they to be built. Two-thirds of those surveyed (68% in pie chart 3 and 65% in pie chart 4) said that they would visit these community spaces often. Only 10% and 12% (pie chart 3 and 4 respectively) gave a negative answer. Interestingly, the participants who gave the higher numbers of stars for project 1 gave lower numbers to project 2. Similar responses came from those who preferred project 2. This might be due to having a particular interest in the facilities of the projects or their location within the city, possibly living in one of the four neighbourhoods developed in the imaginary projects.

The last more open-ended question was to assess the interests of participants in urban imaginary projects more generally. The results, in pie chart 5, show the respondents' high interest and enthusiasm, with 98% positive answers. This result can also be related to the open-ended question 7 answers. This question about the comments, suggestions and ideas of the participants was qualitatively analysed. The total number of responses to question 7 was 30 out of 110 people (27%). All 30 respondents gave positive feedback highlighting

those aspects of the project that appealed the most to them. For example, one participant said: "projects like these are so needed". Another participant added: "there are not enough public spaces in Yakutsk. The area of the city canal needs to be developed. Although I did not imagine it like this, I am happy projects like these are starting to appear". Other comments included general, positive feedback highlighting the need for good accessibility, simple structures and well-thought-out project functionality. A few respondents expressed their wishes that the projects to be built.

Below are four of the most informative answers to question 7. One participant suggested sun protection structures for the hot summertime, facilities for the elderly in the sports park such as benches and walking routes, and small playgrounds for "hyperactive children". The same person suggested making benches and bins vandal proof referring to our "Sakha mentality". Another participant suggested more projects like these as "Yakutsk lacks green spaces and is full of typical buildings that all look the same". One participant requested swimming pools and more sports buildings. The last informative response expressed the wish for public spaces in Yakutsk: "spaces for leisure or arts. Safe and beautiful". Taken together, these results suggest that the participants struggled with ideas for public space design and were willing to provide only general suggestions for accessibility and safety. However, closer work with a focus group and adapted design methods would be required for more detailed ideas to emerge.

The open call for participation in the third imaginary co-creation was largely dismissed. This might be because the design of the online exhibition that required more careful study to respond to the call. Otherwise, it could be a lack of enthusiasm to attend a workshop with no obvious practical value – with no aims of what was to be built, no payment or potential participants lacked the time to respond. Initiatives of this kind could be organised with top-down support, for instance, to introduce them as an educational method within schools or as a community bonding activity for local groups of activists. Alternatively, hands-on learning-by-making methods from the bottom-up could, by themselves, provoke the further development of such initiatives. As the Growing Structures project proved, there is an appetite for trying out public placemaking interventions in Yakutsk.

CHAPTER VI: PARTICIPATORY PLACEMAKING - APPLICATION AND OUTCOMES

6.1.   Introduction

This chapter discusses empirical data findings from the Chapters IV and V with the theoretical framework, Chapter II to answer the research questions (see fig.6-1- below). The chapter is divided into two sections of Spatial Agency and Imaginaries.

The spatial agency section answers the secondary research questions: (a) What place-based affordances and resources are there in Yakutsk and Lensk to facilitate the PP of shared spaces? (b) How can PP methods in the North-eastern postcolonial context (methods, approach) be adapted for use in this context? (c) What the features of PP are there; in Yakutsk and Lensk (structure, agency and involvement)? The answers to these questions lead to the main research question's answer. In order to evaluate the answers, the spatial agency section analyses case studies' findings with the literature on design approaches, power balances, and scale; levels of involvement and capacity to participate; adaptation of PP methods; process structure; and time factors.

The imaginaries section answers the main research question: how can PP contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood and building scales? To answer the research question, the imaginaries section looks at the overall case studies and the Siberian Imaginaries survey findings along with the theoretical framework on the PP's creativity and learning, and expansion of urban imaginaries through Narrative and Artefact making.

Fig. 6-1 – Diagram of Discussions

Secondary research questions

What place-based affordances and resources are there to facilitate the PP of shared spaces? **(a)**

How can participatory placemaking methods can be adapted in the North-eastern postcolonial context? **(b)**

What the features of participatory placemaking? **(c)**

Main research questions

How can PP contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood and building scales? **(RQ)**

Participatory Design + Learning-by-making

Spatial Agency:
- design approaches, power balance and scale
- levels of involvement and capacity to participate
- adaptation of methods
- process structure
- time factors

Answer to approach, process and methods that can work better* in this context (Subarctic climate and Russian building regulations)?
*high levels of involvement

Imaginaries:
- Creativity and Learning
- Expanding Affordances: Making Narratives and Artefacts

Answer to how PP can become a tanbgible tool for civic development
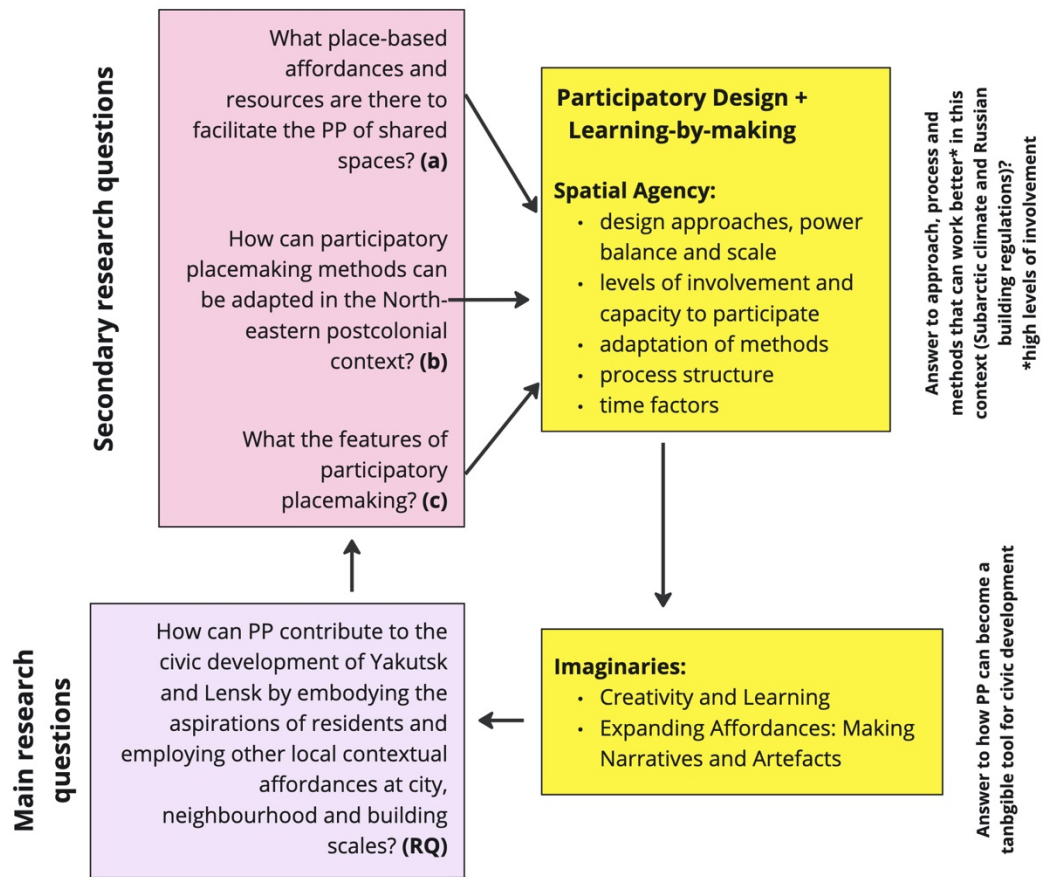
123

6.2. Spatial Agency

6.2.1. Design Approaches, Power Balance, and Scale

Design approaches and power balances within participatory placemaking are mostly dependant on scale of an initiative. The research case studies were facilitated using different approaches in order to test the variables (see tab.6-1).

	Design Approach	Power Balance	Scale
Case Study 1 – Oyuur Park in Lensk	Top-down Participatory Design	Balanced	City and neighbourhood scales
Case Study 2 – Dog City in Yakutsk	Bottom-up Participatory Design	Balanced	Neighbourhood and building scales
Case Study 3 – Amphitheatre Project in London	Combination of top-down and bottom-up Learning-by-making	Less balance because of no clear project leader	Building scale
MA Project – Growing Structures in Yakutsk	Bottom-up Learning-by-making	Balanced	Building scale

Table 6-1 - Table of Approaches in the Research Case Studies

As the case studies 1 and 2 has shown, bottom-up initiatives can create a more insightful platform for place identity creation than the top-down ones. Although bottom-up and top-down PD initiatives can adopt similar co-design methods, the levels of involvement, scale and power relations define the processes and outcomes. The advantages of smaller scale bottom-up processes align with Hamdi's arguments on placemaking – when the participants are not passive recipients, they can enjoy the freedom to learn, make mistakes and find new accommodations (Hamdi, 2004, 2010).

The advantages of high levels of trust and equality established in a small-scale secure group environment, as in the Dog City case study, can provide a much deeper analysis of the design setting and lead to more informed decisions. Easier navigation within groups and a common goal can enhance creativity, for example, one of the groups in the Dog City's workshop had to analyse residents' opinions on their matters of concern and set up an

online questionnaire, a measure also necessitated by Covid lockdown restrictions, and which resulted in a deeper analysis of the site.

However, bottom-up initiatives based on equal partnerships can produce power imbalances and shifts over the period of the project as it happened in the case study 3, Amphitheatre project. How power is balanced has implications for decision-making and the direction in which a placemaking process proceeds. For example, one section of a group might push for a certain speed for the operation of a project, whiles the others would like to take things at a slower pace. Some initiatives might lack a larger-scale perspective or possibilities. However, the small-scale bottom-up MA project had no power balance issues because the leadership of a project was considered in advance as per Drain and McCreery's point (Drain and McCreery, 2018). Although, the absence of clear direction and leadership can slow down the process, it can also lead to other kind of advantages (see Process Structure).

Top-down projects are easier to navigate and implement as they have an existing hierarchy and work within a given, existing budget and can handle process resistance more easily. For instance, the funding for the top-down Oyuur Park project was easily navigated by the local authorities, whereby the lost federal grant competition funding was replaced from the local budget. Another example is the navigation of larger questions such as closing down or relocating a road. These kinds of interventions are only possible from the top-down.

Moreover, the top-down large-scale initiatives have higher coverage and can work with larger participant numbers. The initial survey in the Oyuur Park project used questionnaires and the co-design involved thousands of Lensk citizens. In the voting stage, more than 4,000 answers were received from residents. In contrast, the Dog City's bottom-up approach allowed only 12 local students to be actively involved in the co-design and received around 100 responses to its online poll. However, a larger-scale vision can miss local matters of concern that are visible from bottom-up approaches, which can lead to the actual needs and aspirations of the participants to be ignored. Moreover, user involvement in top-down design when affected by time restrictions, can reduce the PD process to tokenism (see levels of involvement).

However, the large-scale coverage is also a pitfall as it is more challenging to evaluate the aspirations of residents for a large public space such as a city park used by thousands of people on daily basis than a small neighbourhood park. A large-scale public space reflects an image of the whole city and should be analysed at the city scale. That is why the Oyuur design site analysis process spent a lot of time studying the city structure and history of Lensk, the analysis of its demographics and statistics, local businesses and hospitality within 1 km, transport and pedestrian links, other city public spaces, historical heritage, massing and other site regulations. Additional design resistances were dictated by the future plans of the local authorities for other major Lensk public spaces. The main Lenin square of the city is adjacent to Oyuur Park, with the main entrance at the back of the park. As a result, the design of the main park entrance was adjusted several times to accommodate the aspirations of both the users and the authorities.

Therefore, a better way forward for participatory placemaking is to use a combination of both approaches - bottom-up initiatives with help from the top-down. As per Soma's argument, combined approach can contribute to "strategic spatial planning at different urban levels" (Soma et.al., 2018, p.439). Finding this sweet spot might result in the actual implementation of a design as in the Oyuur Park project with the creativity and engagement of the Dog City project.

6.2.2. Levels of involvement and Capacity to Participate

Levels of involvement in the case studies were assessed using Hussein's ladder of participation which consists of three levels (Hussein, 2010). The case studies' involvement levels varied from 1 to 3 level depending on the affordances of a place and project structures (see tab.6-2).

Projects	Level of Participation on Hussein's Ladder
Case Study 1: Oyuur Park	In-between levels 1&2: Included & Consulted
Case Study 2: Dog City	Level 3: Empowered
Case Study 3: Caledonian Park	Level 2: Consulted
MA: Growing Structures	Level 2: Consulted

Table 6-2 - Table of Levels of Participation in the Research Case Studies

In the top down Oyuur project, involvement was restricted due to Russian building regulation time limits, while the Dog City project had no such pressure, as it was not intended for immediate implementation. Involvement processes could become easier in time if participatory design processes were made to fit and became embedded within the Russian planning system. For example, in future, neighbourhood or community groups could choose representatives or assemble focus groups to be involved in every civic design project in a settlement. The current state of citizen involvement in Yakutsk and Lensk is not organised or regulated and has no overall monitoring body, for example, to ensure the inclusion or check the overrepresentation of minorities. User representatives could help define the methods and agenda for PD sessions. A relationship needs to develop between this proposed democratic structure and the challenges of the making exercises needed to stimulate creative and imaginative engagement.

In the top-down Oyuur Park project, the participation level floated between the included and consulted. If the lack of time obstacle had been overcome, then the participation level might have increased. The bottom-up Dog City level of involvement was 'empowered' as the participants had the full power and responsibility within the project. However, the Dog City project was not implemented in real life as it was a preliminary speculative design. Also, the Dog City participants were from the same group – students at the architectural school - and the placemaking was designed to train and support the participants during the initiative with talks on the use of placemaking tools. The Dog City's participants had all six aspects of a participant's capacity to participate: contextual insights, design critique, ideas, prototypes, design process, and motivation (Drain and McCreery, 2018). Whereas Oyuur Park's participants were lacking of design process.

However, the CSM (Drain & McCreery, 2018) does not take the timing and motivation of the participants into account. In the Amphitheatre project, the participants were motivated by the course leaders and were obliged to participate. In the Growing Structures project, the participants were led by their own curiosity towards a new design approach and for the altruistic reason of helping the Nursing home. Moreover, the Amphitheatre project participants had only a basic knowledge of design and none had adequate hands-on building experience, while at least some of the participants of the MA Growing Structures project were experienced architects and engineers who gave detailed advice on the structure and materials.

Overall, the participants of the Yakutsk project were more enthusiastic than the London participants. This might have been due to the social character of the first one, where the future users – residents of the Nursing home were helping and following the construction process. The Yakutsk project group was bigger and more diverse, with young and older students, young and experienced professionals, older volunteers. The process and mood of the initiative was friendly and open, with a lot of new and unexpected participants joining every day. In the London's project, participant numbers were restricted due to Covid-19: they were mostly the AAD students at London Metropolitan University, with some friends of the students getting involved from time to time.

As the case studies' data has shown, the levels of involvement depend on participants' capacity to participate that requires a certain set of knowledge, motivation and time. Levels of involvement can increase with time if PP practices become a common tool of civic development of shared spaces.

6.2.3. Adaptation of Methods

The goal of participatory placemaking is to create a meaningful place out of a space that embodies the aspirations of the users and represents their collective values and identity. In order to meet this aim, participatory placemaking methods have to be adapted for non-professional use. For example, telling and enacting styles like walking and mapping observations, public discussions and workshops can all help to identify local matters of concern like the stray dogs' issue in the Dog City case study or the search for identity in the Oyuur Park project. At one of the community workshops in the Oyuur Park case study, the users (non-professionals) were given stickers and a map of the park to refine the ideal functionality of the park. Four groups made their individual versions which were later combined into a final design map.

The methods should be adapted also by gaining trust of the participants via creating safe and welcoming space. Some communities might resist PD interventions, or an organiser of the process of design and construction might not be able to establish appropriate contact with the local population and gain their trust. As interviewee Floris Van der Marel

suggested, it is more efficient to have two types of events during PD process - in open and focused groups. The open groups should involve everyone curious about or interested in the project. From within the open group, the initiator should form a focus group of participants ready to commit. The creation of a focus group establishes trust between the participants and encourages their work by acknowledging it. In the Oyuur Park case study, no such focus groups were not created, and participation was reduced to a form of public consultation. This was unlike the Dog City case study, where the participants were fully committed and accepted their responsibility to participate till the end of the workshop.

The co-creation processes of the Oyuur Park project could have been improved by using focus group design sessions where the residents could have expressed their wishes for the space. Focus groups would not ask non-designers to create designs but rather to make explicit and collect users' visions and aesthetics. For example, discovering what adjectives users would choose to describe the entrance design: should it be a classic stable structure where they could sit and wait, or a lightweight bright structure that would just indicate the entrance zone, without seating? In the absence of such focus group sessions, the designers had to speculate on the design and choose the lightweight version. This was later replaced by the local authorities. A concrete colonnade was built instead of the designed wooden structure. This colonnade matched the values of the old Soviet architecture principles that are preferred by older community members, while younger generations do not favour Soviet aesthetics. What was the best choice could have been evaluated earlier if the participant groups had been more organised.

The co-creation process of the Dog City project had its own challenges. The participants (architectural students) struggled with ideas for their design proposals for the co-defined local matter of concern. This resistance was accommodated by increasing participants' capacity to participate - adding additional talks on the design process. A French-Russian architect, Karina Pak, and Siberian architect, Darya Titova, gave talks on forming new ideas based on external sources (poetry, art etc.) and materiality. As a result of the participants then coordinating with each other, three different projects were developed: a reinforced concrete building for an animal shelter, a mobile shelter made of redundant shipping containers, and a wooden temporary structure to house a market and lecture space. One group also designed a template for an app that helps animals to find adoptive homes. These designs were later shown to the wider Yakutian public and experts that deal with the stray

dogs' crisis in Yakutsk. The viewers reviewed the projects and expressed their approval of these solutions that they had not considered before.

The Dog City case study used Lefebvre's *transposition* way of transferring knowledge which is well suited for bottom-up approach. The Oyuur Park case study adopted *deduction* way that is a top-down problem-solving solution. As the previous section on approaches showed that combined version of the bottom-up and top-down can lead to more effective initiatives, transposition and deduction can also be combined for tangible change. For example, projects initiated from the top-down can create focus groups from the bottom-up and give them methodological resources to assess the local matters of concern in their own way.

6.2.4. Process Structure

Process structures in participatory design case studies of Oyuur Park and Dog City were pre-designed and were not flexible. The comparison of the Amphitheatre project in London and the MA Growing Structures project in Yakutsk allowed the link between a process structure and its agency, and the impact of this process on the level of creativity in the learning-by-making exercise to be established. Both these projects illustrate Hamdi's saying that learning-through-making is not only about placemaking, but it also involves designing both spatial and organizational structures, where people can "remove barriers to knowledge and learning, find partners, build networks and open lines of communication" (Hamdi, 2004, p.116).

These initiatives created temporary institutions from the group of participants who exercised their creativity in accommodating resistances in the process. The more rigid process structure can make the building easier, as in the Yakutsk project example, while the looser structure of the London project, provided a broader learning experience for the participants. Experience of a loose structure can be described as follows: "in any situation of learning, people are actively engaged in making sense of the situation – the frame, objects, relationships – drawing on their history of similar situations and available cultural resources" (Zittoun and Brinkmann, 2012, p.1809). Thus, the participants in the Caledonian Park project found their way by rule of thumb.

Ways of making, even using the same tools, can vary substantially. Ways of making are based on the worldviews and preferences of makers and users. For instance, local designers using walking and mapping tools can focus on the aspects they consider to be the most important in a place. These might be dog safe routes that are used more often by residents or an alternative use of a space in a different season. In this way, each participant can enrich the design process with their experience and understanding of a place and PD can create an agora [20] for it (Teal and French, 2020), an agora for the collaborative tackling of a shared local matter of concern. In this case, making a narrative within a PD process became a common ground and an enabler of democratic change.

The case study findings showed a link between participatory placemaking process structures and the freedom to create. The more rigid structures were beneficial in motivating the participants to complete their project and for the dynamics of the process. If the project processes were unclear, the participants could lose enthusiasm. However, loose structures allowed learning and participants found their way through testing and experimentation. Loose structures in general are preferred in placemaking in postcolonial contexts where participants are free to interpret and adjust participatory placemaking tools to suit their own choices of design direction.

6.2.5. Time Factors

One of the most distinctive limitations of participatory placemaking in Yakutsk and Lensk were time and climatic conditions. Local rhythms and the timing norms of partners in Siberia are usually fast and efficient as they are primarily driven by the extreme climatic features of the context. Local programmes to be carried out in conditions of extreme temperature drops, and short seasonal building campaigns are necessarily efficient. The economic-political regulations of the Russian built environment and design approval system contribute further to the speed of the approval processes. Top-down funding for the following year has to be planned and approved by the end of the previous year and spent during the warmer seasons before the next winter, or the funding might be lost, and/or the authority's priorities change.

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[20] *Agora* – is a Greek term for a public open space used for assemblies and markets.

This situation is especially applicable to Yakutia, where construction cannot be carried out in the colder seasons. Here architects are normally given a couple of months in the winter to complete their designs and submit them for planning approval. If PP intentions require an additional approval from the top, then the agency of the participants is restricted by this process. An alternative would be for the space where the PP takes place to be under the control of residents so that proposals only require health and safety approval from the Local Authority, particularly in cases where there was no top-down funding.

The process of participatory design from the top-down in Lensk was an inclusive initiative restricted by the time taken for design approval. As the interviewee, Smirnov, pointed out, the disadvantage of large-scale public space design in Russia is the short amount of time during which local funding can be spent. This is linked to budget regulations, which means schemes have to be approved and built within a year, so architects and designers do not have enough time for deeper community involvement to work. For example, the Oyuur Park project involved citizens in voting and brainstorming processes to agree the function and symbol of the park with local stakeholders and community members. Although, residents were indeed, able to make the final choice of these aspects of the park, the remainder of the work process was similar to typical Russian design discussion meetings where the residents were unable to make significant inputs. If the funding process could accommodate the community design process, then the opportunity for the creative engagement might be improved.

Moreover, the participatory placemaking case studies carried out in Yakutsk and Lensk had different process time misfits. Unlike common time misfits of participatory design initiatives (Del Gaudio et.al., 2017, p.125), for instance, when the participatory placemaking facilitator overestimates the abilities of the participants, in Yakutsk and Lensk, the pitfall was an overall lack of time. All the processes were time limited. The organisation, planning and implementation required the facilitator to make decisions more rapidly than usual. Both case studies needed more time for the best conclusion, Lensk for site analysis and design and Dog City for building implementation.

Hence, participatory placemaking timing should be considered in more detail in the Russians building regulations realm. Perhaps it can be solved from the top down allowing longer processes to increase the levels of involvement. If Yakutian participatory

placemaking projects become familiar to the Yakutian residents, it can increase participants' capacity to participate and reduce PP's timing in this context.

6.3. Imaginaries: Creativity and New Knowledge

6.3.1. Creativity and Learning

The creation of new knowledge and enhancement of creativity in the design process can be facilitated by adding a new perspective. Yakutian participatory placemaking can be described by Hemmersam's "Arctic Regionalism", a softened form of modernist architecture produced by reflecting on contextual conditions and focusing on placemaking, identity and community building (Hemmersem, 2020, p. 29). The idea of community and civic action in Yakutsk is changing because urban processes are becoming more globally evident. Yakutian urban lifestyles are changing in line with the changing aspirations of well-travelled citizens.

Fig.6-2 - Case Study 1 Oyuur Park– Sketch from the Workshop Studies

Christiaans describes creativity as a relative construct that is linked to its 'domain at issue' (matters of concern) and the context. Creativity is influenced by culture, time, people's ideas and always varies in breadth and depth. For example, in the arts, creativity means something completely unique and new, whereas in engineering, creativity cannot be completely new (Christiaans, 1992, p.18). In Yakutsk, in order to provoke change, the knowledge transferred through participatory placemaking was combined with the participant's general knowledge

New knowledge about the Dog City project emerged from the extensive analysis of existing situated resources by the participants and their adaptation of outside knowledge taken from the workshop talks. This process is described by McFarlane as "translocal learning: a way of working based on combining sources, methods and participants" (McFarlane, 2000, p.6) or Lefebvre's "transposition" (Lefebvre, 1996). The uncertainty of the process for the participants gave them the freedom to interpret the situation and assemble their own design methods and ideas. A combination of applying separately existing approaches and theories implemented in a particular context led to a different kind of knowledge. Ultimately, the contribution of the Dog City project was not to produce a tacit change by building new imaginative projects, but to showcase the possibilities inherent in local affordances and alternative ways of design through provoking the interest of the local community and creating a civic activity platform.

According to Hamdi, foreign practitioners can open new worlds that can stimulate people in the dynamic process of reconstructing their urban neighbourhoods through bringing a wider awareness of alternative possibilities, thereby increasing their freedom to build. (Hamdi, 2004, p.134). In this way, local citizens can find alternative perspectives and new tools to tackle local matters of concern. The new artefacts which emerge from these kinds of initiatives can create new knowledge and a new place-based identity, as the use of tools such as participatory placemaking, is based on their local interpretations.

For example, the MA Growing Structure project first gained interest from the local population by its unprecedented international character in Yakutsk. It became international because of the collaborator, Aileen Ling, the Canadian designer, travelled to Siberia to participate in the project. Aileen, as an experienced commons designer and hands-on making practitioner brought her own techniques and views to the project.

Aileen's techniques of first sketching a design idea and then making it using rule of thumb to make a quick decision in order to make projects in the time available, were adapted by the local residents who worked in her team. Thus, indigenous architecture that aspires to build its unique place identity should not reject foreign knowledge. On the contrary, by co-learning and adapting transferred knowledge, new outcomes can emerge.

The outcomes of learning-by-making exercises are not just physical artefacts. The physical artefact itself provokes the assembly of new local narratives and in the process expands the number of imagined local opportunities for built environment design. Hands-on building initiatives can be embodied in everyday life as such projects have immediate results. These results are both the physical artefact of the built structure and the socio-cultural artefacts of the group and the place. The shared work process connects people and gives meaning to the structure, as well as giving the participants new knowledge and making skills.

The Amphitheatre project participants gained more direct knowledge through learning-by-making than the Yakutsk's participants, who did their assigned, straightforward tasks. The Yakutsk's project would have benefitted from learning forums where participants discussed and tried different ways of making. Both projects provided emotional learning experience for their participants and resulted in the creation of meaningful structures. Furthermore, learning-by-making initiatives that involve people from different community groups can increase social cohesion 21 between participants in the process of place-making. As, according to Kearns and Forrest, an important element of social cohesion is an attachment to place. This happens by associating people's identities with particular places (Kearns and Forrest, 2000, p. 1001). As a place is being created, memory and meaning are also created, uniting the participants through shared experience. This aspect is particularly relevant in settings currently undergoing newly increased diversity in their populations as shared experiences can generate a civic culture of shared values. Moreover, participation itself can be an act of involvement that can result in participants self-identification as belonging to the group, being a contributing, active part of it.

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[21] Social cohesion - dictionary definitions place 'cohesion' as the action, or fact, of holding firmly together or forming a unit. It refers to a state in which components 'stick' together to form a meaningful whole (Chan et al., 2006, p. 289).

For instance, the participants of the Amphitheatre project came from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, age, and gender, but gave roughly equally contributions to the placemaking of their time and hands-on building. The MA Growing Structure project participants in Yakutsk were more diverse than in the Amphitheatre project. Participants with different professional, educational and cultural backgrounds, age and gender contributed to the co-learning processes and these different abilities enriched the project. For instance, the young participants contributed by building flower beds and painting a table for inside the structure although initially, the project had no brief to design the interior.

Thus, in order to enhance creativity and learning processes in Yakutian PP, it is important to increase the levels of involvement and motivate participants with new knowledge or experiences. As the case studies have shown, online talks with the foreign experts can give a new perspective to the local participants and encourage further experimentation.

6.3.2. Expanding Affordances: Making Narratives and Artefacts

Adapting participatory placemaking methods to the capabilities and aspirations of the participants enhanced local creativity and the potential for further imaginative change. Subsequently, participatory placemaking with a looser structure can create an agon (Sawhney and Tran, 2020, p.176) / urban learning forum (McFarlane, 2011, p.368) as was demonstrated in the Siberian Imaginaries survey, Oyuur Park and Dog City case studies, and the exhibitions afterwards.

As the interviewees Smirnov and Gazizova suggested, Russians are not used to expressing their civic rights. Collective practices of participatory placemaking and adapting new methods to fit the setting can expand imaginaries and tackle local resistances. For example, after completion of the Oyuur Park project in Lensk, a local citizen came forward with an experimental bench idea that he had designed to match the new identity of the park (see fig.6-3).

Fig.6-3 - Oyuur Park –Men Building an Experimental Bench Initiated by Local Participants After the Park Project was Built

Thus, group designing and making initiatives are representations of the group's aspirations. The aspirations of users can also be divided by age. For example, the older generations that were born before the collapse of the Soviet Union mainly prefer traditional values and classic forms, whereas the younger generations tend to lean more towards minimalist contemporary forms such as Scandinavian precedents, for instance. However, the tendency to lean towards native Sakha culture can be seen in all age groups in Yakutsk. For instance, reference to traditional elements of shamanistic rituals, serge (see fig. 1-8 and glossary), or traditional types of houses continue to be used for festivals and other

celebrations. Participatory practices can enhance the development of a shared narrative that can fit into both the physical and cultural context.

The participants in the Dog City project evaluated the issue of stray dogs based on their lived experiences in Yakutsk. Narrative-making can also be considered as existing on different levels based on the scale of a design site, whether city, neighbourhood or building. For example, in the Oyuur Park project, narrative-making was at the city scale and had to be defined through public voting and extensive workshop sessions, while the Amphitheatre and MA projects speculated at the neighbourhood and building scales, creating a narrative to fit that scale through making an artefact.

Thus, the case studies revealed learning-by-making might be best classified by separating the making of narratives and the making of artefacts. The Siberian Imaginaries survey - co-finding the local matters of concern in Yakutsk - revealed new narratives by assembling together citizens' aspirations. These included an increase in free indoor shared spaces such sport or hobby venues, increased accessibility in the infrastructure for wheelchair and baby stroller users, more green areas within the city, public toilets, and ways to increase an overall feeling of security from vagrants and stray dogs.

The proposed designs of the survey addressed the findings, speculating on other ways of approaching these issues based on the local affordances of the landscape, climate and materiality. The new imaginaries displayed a distinctive urban identity that could be expressed through existing affordances. The proposed simple SIP structures would be unprecedented as they would be built to respond to the particular permafrost context by being raised off the ground on stilts.

Making of an artefact is a way of gaining praxis from hands-on learning format and is tool for increasing social cohesion. If making processes are structured with consideration for the capabilities of the participants and the exigencies of the setting, they can empower local civic action to tackle local matters of concern through collective action, knowledge and skills. Further hands-on implementation of one of the survey designs or the Dog City project would facilitate small change by example and could instigate further experimentation.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

7.1.   Summary of Findings: Spatial Agency and Imaginaries

This research by practice evaluated participatory placemaking as a tool for civic development of shared spaces in the postcolonial contexts of Yakutsk and Lensk in North-Eastern Siberia. Using the three-step methodology of Investigator-Narrator-Maker, the research tested participatory placemaking variables in three case studies and two surveys.

The main research question asked: how can PP contribute to the civic development of Yakutsk and Lensk by embodying the aspirations of residents and employing other local contextual affordances at city, neighbourhood, and building scales? In order to answer the research question, there were formed three secondary questions: (a) What place-based affordances and resources are there in Yakutsk and Lensk to facilitate the participatory placemaking of shared spaces (that is, the physical and non-physical resources, materiality, constraints, and opportunities of the context)? (b) How can participatory placemaking methods in the North-eastern postcolonial context (methods, approach) be adapted for use in this context? (c) What the features of participatory placemaking are there; in Yakutsk and Lensk (structure, agency and involvement)?

The case studies and the Siberian Imaginaries survey were conducted using Lefebvre's ways of transferring knowledge. The findings from the case studies and surveys were analysed along with the theoretical framework on affordances, spatial agency, and urban imaginaries. The spatial agency principles along with the defined affordances from the case studies allowed to answer the secondary questions and led to the main question's answer. The Siberian Imaginaries survey with the case case studies' findings answered the main research question. Participatory placemaking can create urban learning forums in the Yakutian context to locate affordances and available resources (Investigator stage), co-create narratives by evaluating shared aspirations and solutions for the local matters of concern (Narrator stage), and co-build artefacts to empower civic action and ownership (Maker stage). This way PP can expand mutual knowledge and imaginaries for shared space development in Yakutia (see fig.7-1).
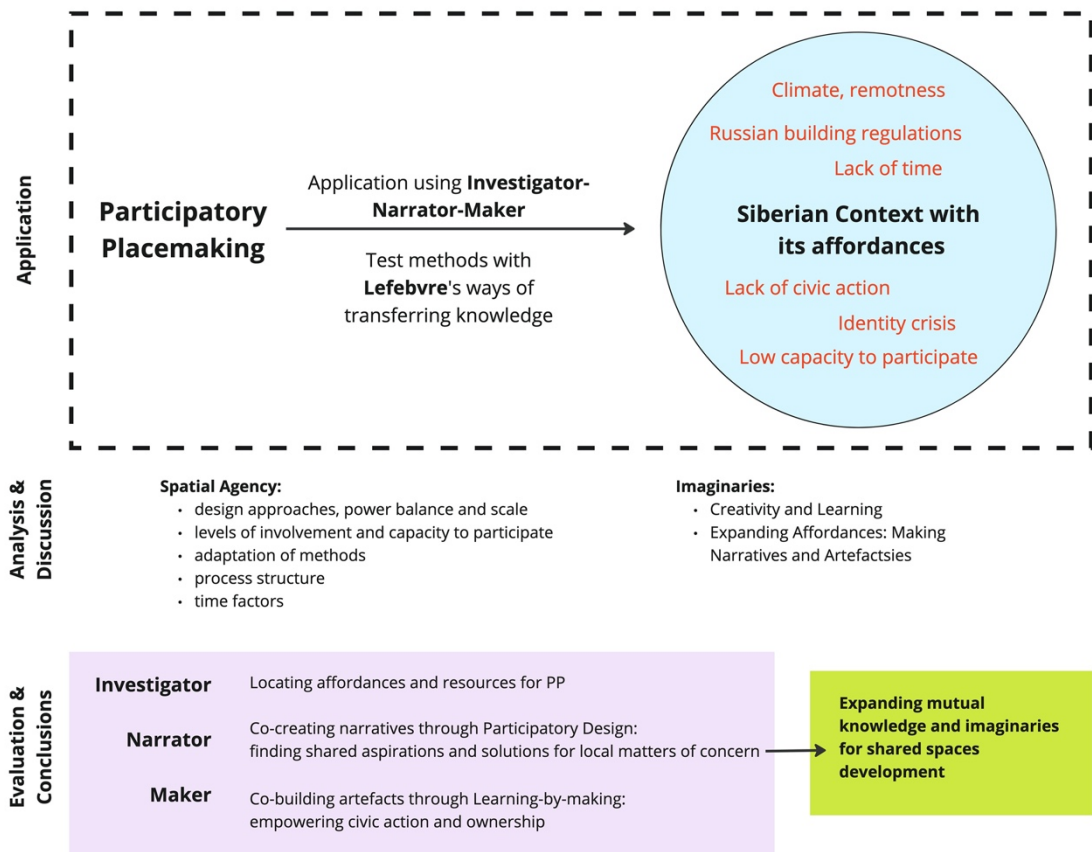
Fig.7-1 – Diagram of Research Findings

Conclusions, similarly to the Discussions chapter, are divided into two sections of Spatial Agency and Imaginaries. The chapter concludes with the sections on the Original Contribution to Knowledge (7.1.3) and Guidance and Recommendations (7.2).

7.1.1. Spatial Agency

The spatial agency conclusions summarise the affordances, adaptation of methods, process structure and involvement characteristic in the research context. Furthermore, the findings are compared to the practices in western contexts to define the features of Yakutian PP.

As the case studies have shown, both top-down and bottom-up approaches have their own constraints and opportunities that are similar to PD elsewhere. Top-down initiatives are easier and faster to implement, fund, navigate the process, accommodate resistances, and scale-up. However, it is easier to miss the real matters of local concern from the top-down as they are usually not visible, and the strict structure of a top-down process can reduce creativity. The gap between decision makers and makers can also add to a greater inequality within a process. Although, top-down processes are easier to scale up due to their organisational advantages, scaling up makes it more difficult to take into account of local matters of concern. The larger the scale, the more structure is required to ensure equality of expression and representation in the participant groups. The use of focus groups in participatory design projects contributes to establishing trust in the participants, helping them take on their civic responsibilities. The more involved participants want to be recognised and appreciated as more than curious passers-by. However, a flexible structure in bottom-up projects promotes learning and creativity.

Bottom-up initiatives are more inclusive and can tackle local matters of concern as they are directly experienced and assessed by the users. An openness to new experience in less rigid bottom-up initiatives can facilitate the learning process through re-discovering the potential of the setting to satisfy local aspirations. This re-discovery is based on implementing and interpreting new ideas in the native context. These experiments are, however, limited by time and resources but, when successful, the collaborative analysis of the fundamental local conditions can lead to the construction of narratives based on the situated knowledge and local matters of concern chosen by local residents themselves. The constraints of the bottom-up approach include power misbalance within an initiative (shift in leadership during the process), the absence of a wider picture, and perhaps less likelihood that they will actually be implemented as first imagined.

Thus, the resistance to PD methodology in Yakutsk and Lensk was similar to that experienced elsewhere in the world. However, the main limitation, restricted time, is particular to PD in Russia. Lack of time can reduce the level of user involvement and subsequent freedom to become engaged in a PD process. The socio-cultural context of Yakutsk and Lensk revealed another particular feature of PD in this context: the creative adaptation of PD methods by the participants. The use of methods by the local residents was found to depend on the development of a shared local narrative, collective memory, and agreed ways of doing things.

The comparison of the hands-on learning-by-making initiatives in Yakutsk and London led to the evaluation and comparison of their outcomes - questions of freedom and process structure, learning-by-making and praxis, mutual knowledge, meaning making and wayfinding. The process structure in the Amphitheatre project was loose, which led to more freedom and experimentation within the process, whereas the project in Yakutsk had a rigid structure that was more effective and exciting for the participants. However, the differing circumstances of the projects make them more difficult to compare: the Amphitheatre project was initiated during pandemic restrictions and the Growing Structures project had limited time. The leadership and power relationships within the Amphitheatre project also created more obstacles. Reflecting on the structure of both case studies, it is perhaps preferable to create two types of groups within a project: an open one with participants free to join and leave at any time and a focus group that is central to the project and ensures that it will be completed. In this case the process structure and timing of a participatory placemaking project would be dependent on the local affordances of the context such as the availability of local materials and the abilities of the participants (capacity to participate), topped by the project aims and the design's difficulty level.

Learning-by-making initiatives inevitably result in praxis, mutual knowledge gains, meaning making and wayfinding. However, every participatory placemaking project is unique and different, even if it follows a rigid structure. The resistances that can arise during a learning-by-making process (inside of the group or outside it, as during a pandemic, for instance) can lead to new accommodations. Creativity in participatory projects increases according to the level of the participants' involvement and the opportunity to experiment within the initiative. Furthermore, making projects can act as a facilitator of further change as they can directly represent the potential of collaborative community work. The collaborative

making of an artefact creates new meanings and narratives through increasing social cohesion and empowering the local population for involvement in civic action. Smaller scale learning-by-making projects can be implemented as seeds in Yakutsk if these bottom-up initiatives meet support from the top-down.

7.1.2. Imaginaries

Participatory design as a democratic tool for civic action through the co-construction of narrative briefs is a newly emerging practice in the Far North. Due to the different fundamental conditions in Scandinavia and Europe where it was first formulated, the Russian Far North can offer a new context for enriching the epistemology of participatory placemaking.

The postcolonial North, with its contextual variations of oppression (English and French colonies in Canada, Danish in Greenland, and Russian in Yakutia) and natural resources, provides a rich ground for further research into the use of PD in the construction of urban narratives and civic identity. Canadian and Greenlandic northern settlements' local matters of concern are different to those in Yakutsk and Lensk. Yakutsk and Lensk's expansive urban fabrics developed alongside the mining industry and are currently regulated by Russian federal norms. The urban cultures of Yakutsk and Lensk were transformed from the indigenous independent, rural, semi-nomadic lifestyle, by the Russian empire (1632-1921), the Soviet regime (1922-1992), and the post-Soviet period up to the present. An understanding of this history helps contextualise the values of the local population and their aspirations.

The community auto-ethnographic lens of this research has enabled the interpretation and implementation of PD practices through the co-construction of narratives from both Yakutsk's and Lensk's citizens. This co-narration acted as civic exercises that prompted local involvement in the development of shared spaces in the cities researched. As the case studies showed, the different types of PD as in Yakutsk and Lensk can invoke different kinds of civic development. For example, the Dog City project aim of producing imaginary proposals might not lead to their being implemented but could encourage further speculative design projects, whereas the Lensk project activated civic engagement in the town with subsequent new public space projects started by local enthusiasts. Interpreted

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by local participants, PD in the research context can transform public places into something quite different to Western versions.

Making as a narrative and artefact making based on local affordances and resources can expand existing urban imaginaries. As the comparison of the Amphitheatre project case study with the MA Growing Structures showed, learning-by-making collaborative projects can experience similar resistances in different contexts. However, different kinds of resistance relate to specific contexts, such as climate and timing, materiality and human resources. Learning-by-making is highly dependent on the interest and motivation of participants, which can be increased by adding a new component to the project. For instance, a project's aim should tackle a local matter of concern or address local aspirations: the need for a community space in Caledonian Park for example, or the social character of the green structure for the nursing home in Yakutsk.

The Siberian Imaginaries survey was designed to assess the interest of potential participants in engaging with urban imaginary projects, their willingness to participate in possible collaborative design projects, and their aspirations for the development of Yakutian civic spaces. Yakutsk citizens of all ages and genders actively participated in the survey and enjoyed the urban imaginary projects. This finding supports the suggestion developed in the methodology chapter 2 of the research that urban imaginaries can provoke change by adding to and constructing a shared collective memory through collaboratively defining local matters of concern to imagine a fit between socio-cultural memory, future aspirations, and material affordances. To involve the residents in participatory design and learning-by-making initiatives they need to be embodied in the existing system of education or familiar activities. For instance, the Dog City case study was supported by the university and its students were obliged to participate, which led to bigger design projects.

Another lesson learned from the survey was the need to find effective design workshop methods when working with children. The drawings were accomplished after a change in the task. The initial task, to design an ideal public space, puzzled the young participants. The amended task provided a way for young people to reveal their favourite things. This broader and more understandable task allowed young participants to imagine their dream

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environment. Thus, it was better to generate non-professional themes relating to the topic. This task was about narrating the project and discovering the users' aspirations.

The answers from the survey participants showed local interest in the process of expressing their opinions and suggestions and the outcomes in the form of imaginative local projects. The design proposals were found to be unique, simple, and desirable. Imaginative projects like this can lead to tangible change if facilitated further by the learning-by-making of artefacts. This could consist of the actual implementation of a project or a provocation following further discussion.

Expansion of the urban imagination can be an expected outcome of participatory placemaking if the participants are familiar with this type of involvement. Adapting methods to a new context can lead to new knowledge specific to the research site. When it comes to speculative design initiatives that are not intended to be built, there can be a lack of participant interest. Participatory placemaking initiatives as civic action are not familiar in Yakutsk and need to be supported by other rewards such as the creation of new knowledge or the facilitation of social exchange. When this is successful, urban imaginaries can create an urban learning forum where citizens can discuss and generate new ideas and actively participate in city making.

7.1.3. The Original Contribution to Knowledge

The research contributes to knowledge by filling the gap in the application of participatory placemaking in the postcolonial Far North through evaluation of participatory placemaking as a tool for civic development of shared spaces in the contexts of Yakutsk and Lensk. The research defined the character of Yakutian participatory placemaking and tested different spatial agency principles through case studies (approaches, power and scale, levels of involvement and capacity to participate, adaptation of methods, process structure, time factors). The research adapted the three-step methodology of Investigator-Narrator-Maker to highlight the community auto-ethnographic lens of the case studies. As a tool for methods' adaptation the research used Lefebvre's ways of transferring knowledge (1996). The research hypothesised that participatory placemaking can create an urban learning

forum to co-define affordances, make narratives and artefacts in order to expand the urban imaginaries of shared spaces.

The research concludes with the recommendations gleaned from the participatory placemaking initiatives in the Yakutian context that can be tested further to scale up the local initiatives in Yakutia / regions with similar contextual characteristics or used as guidance to facilitate speculative participatory placemaking projects in other contexts.

7.2.   Guidance and Recommendations

Design Approach and Time

As purely bottom-up processes have funding and logistical difficulties in Yakutsk, an approach using participatory placemaking practices which combine top-down and bottom-up approaches together to fit the realities of Russian design-making and approval processes is preferable. Top-down support from local authorities can first of all, grant permission for shared space development and secondly, help with funding and the organisation of the initiative. This is especially true if an initiative includes the use of public land.

In Yakutsk, the lack of time available for participatory placemaking processes can mean a reduction in the level of voluntary involvement. Participatory placemaking initiatives require time to build an organisation and trust between the participants. When trust between participants and a safe working environment is created, then participatory placemaking practices are enhanced and a user's capacity to participate is increased. This was especially so, in Yakutsk and Lensk, where citizens are not yet familiar with the civic tools of participatory placemaking. Therefore, participatory placemaking practices in Yakutia should be supported from the top-down to tackle the lack of time available due to Russian building regulations and approval system. However, these time resistances depend on the scale of projects. Usually, the larger-scale projects are more restricted in time. In order to accommodate to time restrictions, it is preferable to organise placemaking in stages.

Process Structure

It is preferable to have at least four stages in a participatory placemaking initiative, starting with an initial project stage of talks and discussions where potential participants can become familiar with the tools and aims of the project. This session can also include ice-breaking activities and test tasks. This first stage should allow the participants and stakeholders to commit to the project, identify their local matters of concern and their aspirations, and enable them to form a focus group for the second stage.

The second stage could be a focus group meeting where the interested participants can work closely in collaboration. Depending on the aim of a project, this second stage can result in the creation of a narrative brief focusing on the needs of the users and stakeholders and their aesthetic preferences. The first and the second stages should be organised over at least two seasons in Yakutia, as the cold temperatures of the winter season and the overly dusty and hot summer season in Yakutia do not allow in-depth site analyses to be carried out.

The third stage of a project could be an actual design stage or a hands-on building process with discussions and amendments along the way. These discussions and amendments can be developed in the form of a learning forum or an agon for civic activation. This third stage is ideal to either in early June or any time during July. First of all, because of the remoteness of Yakutia means building materials have to come from central Russia. Supplies are normally delivered by river, which is closed in early spring and late autumn, when the ice is forming and melting. Secondly, the summer months of June and July in Yakutia are ideal for outside labour but the most importantly, the Sakha celebration, Ysyakh (summer solstice festival on 20/22 June) can disrupt all the work preparation and participation (the festival is held in different parts of the republic over 1-2 weeks, with the full involvement of the Yakutians).

The fourth stage is the wrapping up stage of a project – the opening of a project to the general public by the groups. This step is crucial for the afterlife of a place as it celebrates and acknowledges the process and outcomes, together with the meaning invested in the place created by the participants. This stage should be dynamic and continuous so that the public space stays alive. Exhibitions, maintenance, events, changes to the public space should be democratically organised through an elected focus group of participants. This

fourth stage could also perhaps promote similar projects elsewhere in the city and beyond if the participants were encouraged to use methods of participatory placemaking from the bottom-up in local small-scale projects.

Scale

The number of participants in participatory placemaking initiatives should be regulated according to the scale and number of facilitators, as the case studies have illustrated. The agency of PD should be based on an equal partnership with a team of mediators (interdisciplinary experts in management, sociology and/or anthropology). These mediators should not act as authorities but encourage involvement and equality. For the equality of a PD process, it is important to include as many local community groups as possible. First of all, these projects should target the least powerful members of the local community, young people and ethnic minorities. At the initial stage of open involvement, the focus should be on the number of the participants – preferably no more than 100 people (as interviewee Lilia Gizzyatova suggested, see Appendix 1, p.34) from all the local community groups, depending on the scale of the project. In larger scale participatory practices it is more challenging to collect and analyse generated tacit knowledge from those involved. The discussion processes are more democratic if the analysed findings (sometimes with opposing suggestions) are produced in the form of a written summary for use in another round of discussions. The next stage of focused participation can vary in size depending on the number of facilitators. For a single facilitator, the ideal number is 12 people as in the Dog City case study. Participatory practices elsewhere can vary in the number of participants involved and there is no prescribed number.

The structure of a PP process varies and is linked to the scale of the project. If the PP process is a small scale initiative, it is preferable to have a less rigid process structure as small initiatives work better as learning processes and foster creativity. However, it is important to have a balance between experiential knowledge in combination with basic, process and design knowledge. Process knowledge is crucial as it is essential to plan a PP project in order to ensure the timetabling is appropriate, especially to negotiate top-down processes. The timing of a PP process, especially of a hands-on initiative, should be kept short in order to be effective. Strict timing encourages the participants' enthusiasm and their capacity to participate. Unlimited time can result in the participants falling out and losing interest in the project.

The findings from this research could be further tested in other sub-arctic contexts where participatory placemaking practices are just starting to emerge. Some conclusions and recommendations such as timing are specifically applicable only in the Yakutian context based on its environmental and socio-economic features. These recommendations could be tested in regions with similar climatic conditions, such as Svalbard for instance. However, the remaining recommendations such as the four-stage process structure, the formation of focus groups and learning forums, number of participants, and specific methods of involvement and encouraging interest can be tested in other regions with similar features of Russian building regulations, indigenous population and place identity search, encouraging civic involvement. Further research could be scaled-up to analyse the extensive data from the LETO top-down practices in Yakutia in more depth or try to implement speculative imaginaries in real life through bottom-up hands-on initiatives.

The effectiveness of a participatory placemaking process depends on careful identification of the users, stakeholders and their concerns and aspirations; the affordances of a project site, its location and available resources; the opportunities available for experimentation and creativity in tackling the narrative brief; and the establishment of effective communication between the participants. Experimentation and creativity in Yakutian shared space design could be enhanced through the application of knowledge/structures from elsewhere adapted to fit the local affordances. Over time, participatory placemaking could become an effective tool for civic action and the creation of unique, meaningful shared spaces in Yakutsk and Lensk because the seeds of experimentation through imaginary design and hands-on learning-by-making exercises can empower the residents, provoke action and create a base for knowledge sharing and development.

VII. GLOSSARY

(Sakha, Russian, and Greek are in italics)

Agon – is a Greek term for a conflict, struggle or contest.

Agora – is a Greek term for a public open space used for assemblies and markets.

Djoghur – skill, dexterity in Sakha.

LETO – the Centre of Competence on the Issues of Urban Environment of Yakutia, based in Yakutsk. The centre was founded by the Chief Architect of Yakutia, Irina Alekseeva. The centre aims to improve the quality of the design of public spaces in Yakutian settlements through public engagement and inter disciplinary collaborative design.

Oyuur – a Sakha word meaning forest or woods.

Sakha – self-identification of the Sakha people, Yakuts / Yakutians – given name to the Sakha.

Serge – a hitching post that can have a practical or ritual meaning in Sakha culture.

Tatta – a name of an ulus / region in the Sakha Republic, located in the central part of the republic.

Tsar – an emperor of Russia before the Soviet period was established in 1917.

Ulus – a Sakha tribal community and / or land belonging to it. The name of a district / locality. Regions within the Republic of Sakha.

Yasak – fur taxes imposed by the Russians on the indigenous people of Siberia.

Ysyakh – celebration of the summer solstice and the new year in the Sakha culture.

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