Post-socialist urban planning:
Local needs in the City of Murmansk, Russia

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When planning is an attempt to explain the world not as it IS but rather as it OUGHT to be, it “sets itself the task of rationalizing irrational, and seeks to materialize itself in social and historical reality by bringing upon the world a set of abstract, independent and transcendent norms” (Scott & Roweis, 1977)

“The latter-day capitalism justified its own legitimacy by spinning around itself a complex set of distortions in communication […]. Thus, individuals became powerless to understand how and why they act, and so were excluded from all power to influence their own lives” (Forester, 1980)
ABSTRACT

Urban research is aware of being culturally embedded, and inability to break free from history in some cases may explain why the change goes in a particular direction. After more than 70 years of centrally planned community and isolation, present urban structures in Russia stand as arenas for the system transitions. Embeddedness with political philosophy during the soviet period has created a phenomenon of the “socialist city”, where the prioritized economy-military complex and strict top-down communications put aside the local needs (Engel, 2006). The political and socio-economic changes of the last decades had an impact on urban structures and relations between the different levels of planning. The municipalities are now assumed to be independent in terms of decision-making and local priorities, urban programs and civic engagement procedures and coping with the changed governance within residential areas. While the degree of success in urban development varies between the different Russian cities, some researchers argue that Murmansk city planning put little attention to the human-scale development and will remain a “service city” in the context of regionalization (Espiritu & A., 2016). Within urban research, residential areas are seen as “mirror the city’s development” and show the quality of the urbanites (Lloyd & Auld, 2003).

The paper therefore studies the local planning functions as well neighborhood governance and puts the results into the soviet planning context. By using in-depth interviews, the data has been collected providing a knowledgebase of the subject across the study area. The results show both various gaps of transformation (e.g. insufficient legislature, lack of local initiative and federal guidance, marginalized master plan, poor neighborhood governance) and path-dependent system (normativism, unsuccessful civic engagement, lack of communication between different institutions, companies and publics). The discussion argues that at the national scale the issue lies in the uncompleted socio-cultural transformation, which creates a quasi-existent planning system at the local level.

Key words: post-socialist planning, path-dependence, modernization, planning systems, rationality, local needs, municipal decision-making, residential development, civic engagement.
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INTRODUCTION

Urban research is aware of being culturally embedded, and inability to break free from history in some cases may explain why the change goes in a particular direction. Nevertheless, the past does not predict future, it rather explains the present. During modernization processes in western societies, a declining concern over industrialization has led to a growing emphasis over quality of life and subjective well-being (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). While in the most democratic countries, the notions of post-modernity have prevented the political and economic activities of being the most influential, the post-socialist countries are said to be affected by their socio-political outcomes (Inglehart & Baker). The countries may have only started the re-evaluation of historical experience, and the present system of Russian planning may serve as a bright example of these.

After more than 70 years of centrally planned community and isolation, present urban structures stand as historical monuments of modernism and arenas for the system transitions. The main factor shaping the soviet urban reality was the state control over land use with almost all regulatory agents integrated into the governmental system (Axenov et al., 2006). Embeddedness with political philosophy has created a phenomenon of the “socialist city”, with local needs generally being put aside (Engel, 2006). Since the first years of the twenty-first century, the changes have started to slow up, designating the end of the transformation period (Axenov et al., 2006). The political and socio-economic changes of the last decades had an impact on urban structures and communications between the different levels of planning. While from the economic perspective, Russian systems have been attempting to adopt to market economy, municipalities are now assumed to be independent in terms of decision-making and economic performance, local priorities and urban programs, civic engagement procedures. Therefore, it may be a time to wonder whether the local planning initiatives lead to a quality urban environment.

Besides of the local planning system of the city of Murmansk, the paper explores the city’s residential areas, which in urban theory are seen as “the mirrors of city’s development” and show the quality of the urbanites (Lloyd & Auld, 2003). A lack of attention to cultural side of human life in Murmansk has led to the hundreds of thousands of inhabitants locating themselves mostly inside the micro-districts, in which there is no developed social infrastructure (Nedosedka, 2013). Additionally, after privatization process in the 1990s, the Urban Development Code of the Russian Federation defines a neighborhood as private property with quite narrow municipal responsibilities here, and basically, no planning. The existent physical structure of the post-socialist neighborhood is seen as a problematic issue, with no clear solution found. In the context of the soviet planning, those stand as depersonalized blocks of standardized and low-quality apartments. Overall, a need for quality residential environment is noted: “everyone should understand that construction and development are not the same thing” (Stadnikov, 2017). Therefore, what could a municipality do in order to achieve and assure the neighborhood quality within the already built up areas?
The city of Murmansk itself is quite a complex and therefore an interesting for study. The industrial port-city is an administrative center of the region and represents its financial, business, transport and cultural cores. The city’s original planning structure has been largely influenced by the strategic navy zones as well as shipyard and material transportation services of the national importance. While the local documents put quality of life as a top objective for the local development, some researchers argue that Murmansk will remain a “service city” in the context of regionalization (Espiritu, 2016). The present general plan of the city of Murmansk was adopted in 2009 and updated in 2015 (GEONIKA, 2015b). It was created in accordance with the Strategic plan for social and economic development of the city of Murmansk until 2020 and multiple socio-economic programs. The plan is mostly concerned with targeted infrastructural numbers and functional zoning. The city’s neighborhoods and public spaces are under concern of the national priority program “Formation of a modern urban environment 2018-2022”, which considers their re-design and redevelopment (Municipal Property Development Committee, 2017). The program states the following principles: public participation, neighborhoods as the primary objects, and personal responsibility. At the document level, attention is paid to diversity and accessibility and well as to active public participation.

The problem is defined as following: planning of the city of Murmansk since the beginning has been dominated by the soviet central planning with the strict top-down communication processes. In the 1990s, the system experienced transformation, and nowadays, the success towards local autonomy and urban quality varies between different Russian cities. The aim of the paper is defined as to explore and analyze the city of Murmansk planning system in respect to the local needs and within the context of the soviet planning. The paper focuses on residential areas as far as these are seen as “the mirrors of city’s development” and show the quality of the urbanites (Lloyd & Auld, 2003). Roughly speaking, the paper studies what is happening in the local planning and how it has changed since the transformation period has ended. The research questions are stated as following:

1. What is the soviet and transformation context of planning in relation to the study?
2. How do the local planners describe the city’s planning practice?
3. How does the local planning system address the existent residential issues?
4. Whether and how the contextual influence of the soviet period establishes itself in the present planning of the city of Murmansk?
CASE STUDY: THE CITY OF MURMANSK

History and Socio-economic profile

The city of Murmansk functions as the administrative center of the region and represents its financial, business and cultural cores (fig. 1). It is the biggest city beyond the Polar Circle with a population of 298000 inh. (39.3% out of region) (Federal Statistics Service, 2018). Despite the fact, that the greatest share of Murmansk city development occurred during the 1960s-1980s period, the context for local planning was formed during the first years of the Soviet regime. The development of the city had started in accordance with a need of an independent harbor. The shipyard and transportation routes were constructed along the coastal area while the city’s downtown was built up with residential, health and cultural facilities (GEONIKA, 2015a). In the 1950-80s Murmansk region was transformed into a powerful industrial region and a strategic point of the Northern Fleet as well as the outpost of the Arctic exploration.

Contrary to other cities in the region, the city cannot be characterized as a completely single-industry town (fig. 2). It comprises a transportation center of the regional extraction activities as well as the fishing industry and military harbor. Nevertheless, during the post-war period, the city’s structure was filled in with the “socialist city”, meaning strict functional zoning. Consequently, compared to the market-based land use, socialist land allocation was characterized by inner city over-industrialization, and not by high population densities in peripheries (Borén, 2007).

Figure 1. The location of the city of Murmansk

Figure 2. The city’s economic profile (FSSS, 2018)
Close to the “perestroika” processes in the end of 1980s, the changes in planning began in the overall conceptualization of planning in the field of social development (Engel, 2006). The “social planning” movement had emerged as a precondition for the comprehensive planning of regions and cities. There have been attempts to strengthen the local authority (e.g. to allow them to control industrial expansion, the civil sector and the urban infrastructure), but the measures hardly went into practice in the overall context of central planning (Shaw, 1983). From the 1980s the time of the system insufficiencies had started to influence the whole structure. As Shaw (1983) notes, “in an era of rapid social and technical change, requiring great planning sensitivity, there can be little room for the rigid general plans which Soviet cities have so far relied on”. Soon, the systematic crisis of the 1990s has affected its development and the construction complex overall. Murmansk has faced the unpleasant consequences of its industrial specialization and lack of cultural identity: a fast-moving population outflow (fig. 3).

Local Planning and Urban Environment

The city is stretched along the Kola Bay for 19 km, with most of the city itself located on the east coast (GEONIKA, 2015b). Murmansk is clearly divided by natural terrains (Green Cape and Lake Semenovskoye, Gorelaya Mountain and Ledovoe Lake) into three planning areas set up by the current master plan: Northern, Central and Southern (figure 4). Residential area Roslyakovo, joined to the Northern District in 2014, is located on the east coast of the Kola Bay, and provides services for the military area. The city is defined by two types of territory: fully accessible modernist areas and inaccessible industrial zone. The planning structure of the Central district is characterized by a high density and compact construction and is comprised by administrative and cultural facilities (GEONIKA, 2015b). The shore is built up with industrial areas, where the port, fishery, metallurgy, machinery and warehouses are located (Fedotova, 2013). The third level consisted of residential micro-districts represented by high-rise apartment blocks, schools, kindergartens, hospitals.

The city has a strict functional planning structure (fig. 4). The main sports and recreational areas are located around the lakes and valleys. Large areas in each administrative district of the city are occupied by zones of military (the dark-grey areas on the figure 4) and industrial facilities (the light grey ones). The coastal area represents a special economic zone, where the main city-forming enterprises are concentrated. On the eastern shore of the Kola Bay there.
are ship-repairing, fish processing and other enterprises with access to the bay. The territory of the western coast is poorly developed, mainly due to the lack of railways.

*Figure 4. The city’s functional zones (GEONIKA, 2015a)*
DELIMITATIONS

Within the case study methodology Baxter & Jack (2010) note that researcher should make several decisions. To assure that the question is not too broad, the case should have boundaries, and in this study, it is binded by definition and context (Yin, 2012). How to define the local needs? This paper is focused on the local quality of life. Quality of life is a complex subject that requires approaches from different theoretical perspectives (Hamam et. al., 2013), but within a context (time, place and society), people needs and their fulfillment can be defined in a relatively precise manner. During the modernization processes (discussed further in the theoretical chapter), the focus of urban planning in the western countries has shifted from functional physical design to the post-modern local diversity and communicative rationality (Hall, 2002). Therefore, the paper explores the overall direction of the planning system towards the city’s issues and public participation. Second, the neighborhood layout is studied mainly through the prism of the changed governance: from the municipal to private property.

The context is meant by particular topics to be analyzed, which are based on the previous studies (local issues and functions). For the planning system, the functioning of a general plan is analyzed. For the residential areas, the changed urban governance (discussed in the theoretical chapter) is explored: the on-going initiatives, household companies and communicative processes with administration. Within the city of Murmansk residential areas, a couple of municipal programs are concerned with social housing, repair of retaining walls and rehousing of the residents living in the extremely low-quality apartments, which are beyond the scope of the study. The only initiative concerned with residential areas infrastructure and design – is the federal program “Formation of a modern urban environment 2018-2022”, which is to be studied.
CONTEXT: The system transformation

The Soviet system of planning

According to the previous research, the system of soviet urban planning had a strict vertical of power with regulative norms shaping the general plans as well as district planning projects and schemes. Those were based on the documents of planned socialistic development of the industry-military complex, the planning system was devoted to the construction interests of the respective departments and ministers (Meerovich, 2014c). Simply saying, the roles of customer/employer, developer and executor were all monopolized by the state. The head position in the planning vertical since 1950s was placed by Gosstroy of USSR (the Governmental Construction department), which controlled the related scientific and methodological disciplines of spatial organization – architecture and urban design (Lola & Lola, 2017). The local planners’ role was to execute the plans determined centrally. The previous research widely uses the term “departmental approach” or “the branch principle”, which implies that various industrial departments had been making decisions according with their sectoral goals and priorities, usually inconsistently (Meerovich, 2014b). All the city plans were made by Moscow and St. Petersburg (figure 5). Consequently, the local planning processes were completely detached from localities with absence of publics in the formation of urban environment.

Figure 5. The soviet planning system (Seema, 2003)

While in the Western countries, strategic planning was gaining popularity, the soviet General Plans had their own peculiarity: on the hand, the plans dictated the whole direction of a city’s spatial organization for the prospect of 25-30 years, on the other - immediate tactic solutions, conditioned by the short-term problems of the “Five-Year Plan”, which in reality shaped the urban environment. Such pattern has resulted from the scientific thinking of that time, with such disciplines as anthropology, urban management and urban ecology being left with no attention (Lola & Lola, 2017). With the ignored tension between long-term and short-term urban development, strategic ideals had been left for the future and often abandoned.

Transformation processes

Since the end of the planned economy in 1991, the Russian systems have been attempting to adopt market economy. During the 1990s, the urban planning documentation within the
country had stopped: public budgets, investors’ capacity and legal base were insufficient. Some researchers even note that urban development at that time completely fell out of the management field, drowning in crisis, destruction of the existing institutes and outflow of specialists (Axenov et al., 2006). One of the most important factors behind the processes is the land reform and right of property ownership, which now is guaranteed by the constitution. 

The privatization of the economy meant an abolition of planned production as well as transfer of industrial enterprises into private hands, liberalization of prices and emergence of independent entrepreneurs. During the privatization processes, residential areas have been claimed as private property of the inhabitants and the responsibility for their development has been delegated. Moreover, with the withdrawal of political function, urban spaces were challenged by the new social, economic, ecological, developmental patterns. Issues like disorder of uses, pollution and distribution of land have emerged (Engel, 2006).

Important to notice, that the period is characterized by high involvement of informal sector, the market establishment and rapid changes in property legislation (Mazaev, 2014). From this perspective, it is claimed that together with the insufficiency of local budgets and the lack of project organizations, the processes of town building were admitted to almost anyone with an ambition but without any qualifications. While the local authorities could not acquire the whole range of primary data for the project organizations, the absence of a proper legal base had led to chaotic and lowered quality planning (Skaterschikov & Chistobaev, 2014). Nevertheless, the transformation of the planning system into a more decentralized had started with the more decision-making at local and regional levels. It brought up the responsibility of the local authority to create the necessary framework for urban development (urban development concepts, plans for land use and construction, etc.).

Post-socialist planning

Since the first years of the twenty-first century, the changes have started to slow down, designating the end of transformation period (Axenov et al., 2006): business objects and locations have been distributed into private hands, and legalization of market processes found its realization. That was the time of intensive renewal of the federal, regional and municipal strategic planning with a range of documents established: “Concept for the long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020”, “Fundamentals of Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation”, the Federal Law "On Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation” was signed, which establishes the needed legal basis (Demidova, 2011).

A new system in the forms of territorial planning, urban zoning and spatial planning was established by the Urban Development Code of the Russian Federation adopted in 2004. The common approaches to planning were adopted from international legal acts and legislation of economically developed countries (the European Charter for Regional Spatial Planning (1983), the European Spatial Development Policy (1998) (Kramkova, 2013a). The documents have been prepared in accordance to the socio-economic development of municipalities. According to the Code, there are three main levels of planning: federal, regional and
municipal, with municipal level having sublevels of municipal area and urban/rural settlements (scheme below).

**Federal Level**
(federal transport, defence and security, energy, education and healthcare)

**Regional Level**
(transport of regional importance, emergency situations, education, health, sport)

**Municipal Level**
- Schemes of territorial planning of municipal areas
  - electricity and gas supply to settlements, roads, education, health care, sports, waste, settlements boundaries, the functional zones
- General plans of Urban/Rural Settlements
- + Local Land Use and Building Rules

*Figure 7. Planning System of the Russian Federation (SDRF, 2004)*

While a General Plan prepares long-term targets of socio-economic development, the Land Use and Building Rules are concerned with more detailed regulations of construction and zoning, such as density or altitude of construction. The new general plans differ from the soviet ones in having the actual concept of a city development in the long-term perspective, principles, goals and objectives. Some cities make attempts to create a “master plan” based on Western experience and nowadays only one has elaborated on of those (Kramkova, 2013). After the transformation period and establishment of the legal base, a great share of new general plans in Russia were to be ready before 2012.

Nowadays, the way territorial planning is practiced is still being formed. There is a challenge to master new methods of organizing urban spaces, move on to new types of land use, rethink the role and tasks of the state, municipalities, designers, architects, developers, investors and urban community in the development of urban areas, as well as in investment-construction processes related to such development. Important to notice, that the difficulties faced by the public officials and planners are conditioned by both contemporary planning issues of post-industrial countries (urbanization, information, social transformations) and the inheritance of socialist planning (Demidova, 2011). Overall, the processes behind (formation of the legal base, informal sector and private ownership, planning crisis, market and the global shifts) are impossible to comprehend within one discipline.
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

Modernization and path-dependency

Urban research is aware of being culturally embedded, and inability to break free from history in some cases may explain why the change goes in a particular direction. Nevertheless, the past does not predict future, it rather explains the present. As already discussed, recently Russia has experienced a major transformation which affected all the sides of community and individual life: ideological and institutional, economic and socio-cultural. Within the previous research, some claim that post-socialist cities experience a similar path towards *modern urbanization* as the non-socialist cities only with some variations (Hegedüs, 2009; Hirt, 2005). Others argue against generalization and are concerned about some distinct features inevitably affecting the urban change (Sailer-Fliege, 2000; Sasha Tsenkova, 2013). In addition, the former claim that post-socialist urban structures are said to be in conflict with the capitalist economy, where a collage of past and present, local and global, standard and specific creates a sort of *path-dependence* (Axenov et al., 2006; Bouzarovski, 2012; Tsenkova, 2008).

In a broad sense, path dependence implies that “where we go next depends not only on where we are now, but also upon where we have been”, or simply, that “*history matters*” (Liebowitz & Margolis, 2000). In the urban planning discourse, Fainstein & Campbell (2016) refer to *path-dependency* as a phenomenon, when once an arrangement is found, it tends to reproduce itself. In this paper it is meant by the claims of modernization theory and evolution of rationality in planning. The theory implies that a greater economic concern of the 20th century has led to the social and cultural change guiding societies from a general evolutionary trend from rational domination over environment to communication and processing of the information (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The modernization processes have respectively changed the role and functions of power structures. While industrialization was followed by the rising levels of education, in the 1960s, the richest countries experienced an increase in the service and knowledge sectors, which considered working with people and concepts (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Consequently, *autonomous decision-making* has inevitably led to attention towards self-expression and diversity of needs. These transformative processes have resulted in the changing attitudes towards authority, broader political participation, and less easily led publics. At a greater scale, political concern has shifted its focus from the interests of those in power - towards coordination of various community and individual needs within spatial scales (Fainstein & Campbell, 2016).

According to the modernization theory, while the richer countries tend to move towards the similar value-oriented direction, *cultural and historical heritage of the post-socialist states* highly affects their development (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The theory argues that economic change of the first group has fostered the socio-cultural transition towards diversity, tolerance, concern over environment and individual preferences. On the contrast, the communist political system assumed control over economic change, a scarce service sector, overemphasized rationality and suppressed self-expression. When it comes to the
modernization processes in the post-socialist Russia, Kivinen & Cox (2016) note that the country is not following a transition to liberal capitalism but rather its own path of transformation. The authors call a conservative path together with a modernization effort “a typical Russian paradox”. Therefore, this paper assumes that the post-socialistic urbanization and planning tends to create some distinct features, which are discussed in the previous research section further.

Modernization theory is criticized in a way that countries can be modern in different ways, and Westernization is not equal to “modernization” itself (Sakwa, 2012). Nevertheless, it is not important within the scope of study, as far as the main idea extracted from the modernization theory is that the cultural and historical heritage of the post-socialist states influence their ability to construct a well-functioning market- and participation-based system. Since the top-down approach assumed a control of knowledge sector, suppression of autonomous thinking, and absence of public participation in decision-making.

Rationality in Planning history

Modernist planning

How the modernization theory is to be applied to a planning system? As Alexander (2000) notes, planning is about rationalizing society, but rationality as a tool could be used in different ways. Throughout the planning history, it experienced transformations along with the planning thought itself. In the beginning of the 20th century, the authoritarian “high modernism” was a characteristic of planning in the most-industrialized countries, functioning on a basis of incapacitated civil society, technological progress and rationality in planning (Fainstein & Campbell, 2016). The traditional model of rational planning presents a tool and includes five steps (Taylor, 1998): definition of problems and goals, identification and evaluation of alternative plans and policies, implementation and monitoring of effects of plans and policies. This type of rationality nowadays is referred as “instrumental” (Innes, 1995), and within modernist paradigm, rationality was used to “design the society”, which inevitably took highly authoritarian nodes.

Originally, a planned community or a planned economy served as a tool to cope with the war economy, which in practice had transformed a human into “a machine that must be well fed and kept in a good working order”. From that conceptualization, the medium statistical values had been used to create a “norm”, and “a normative standard” to be achieved in a planned community (Hacking, 1990). In physical planning, rationality took a form of functionalism. For instance, in the American planning of 1960s, the goal of planning was the system performance and the tool was land use and transport planning (Hall, 2002). As modernization clock ticked, functionalism eventually became quite problematic, especially with capitalism in work. The issue has emerged as far as the city was seen as a passive structure, with planning being the only dominant force. The future had been regarded as predictable, and analysis of alternatives had failed (Hall, 2002).
Contrary to pluralistic political and liberal economic systems of the former, the USSR’s planned economy was able to manage, in this case, predictable future. In this sense, the system worked quite stable for a long time until the collapse. But stable does not imply quality. How the theory translated into the everyday practices of the soviet community? The system applied the tradition in the beginning of the 20th incorporating the idea of rationality and community design into every side of human activities and institutions. First to be said, while rational allocation of resources had been a basis for the high-modernism, Meerovich (2014a) found that lots of territories were chaotically and inappropriately allocated (e.g. territories close to water were occupied by the least water-intensive enterprises). Second, throughout the research, the human is found to be central for the soviet planning theory, but the theory is said to transform badly into practice. For example, it is noted that the planning concern had mainly supported the functioning of the overall socio-economic system (Meerovich, 2014b). Later, in the 1970-80s, the conferences on environmental psychology had been happening throughout the USSR, but the research did not gain popularity as far as the idea of environmental influence on the human behavior as well as the existence of the human emotional life were not to be discussed (Solovieva, 2011). Therefore, any architectural and local authorities’ attempts to view the socialist city in a broader social context than "the settlements for industrial plants" were criticized and rejected by state planning (Demidova, 2011). Finally, the theory of “no differences between class and culture” had resulted in “uniformity of lifestyle” and Engel (2006) states that the desire for a “better society” in practice transformed into a restricted ambition towards individual design. The term “privacy” was hardly found in the concepts with the notion that person should subordinate his private interests to the state goals (Engel, 2006). Overall, while architecture and planning served the needs of the state industry, and conceptualization of planning is said to be oriented at a general and unrealistic ideal model of a man.

To sum up, each community has its own planning system, which evolve side by side. Planning theory highlights that flexibility and adaptivity is essential for a system, and in the western world, the modernist paradigm needed to transform to adapt to socio-economic uncertainty and economic progress. While in the soviets, the centrally planned economy was kept in a long-term throughout the 20th century, the western modernization was followed by a major transformation in attitudes towards governmental functions, with societal quality of life taking the central place.

The Post-modern discourse

The era of modernism in the planning history was followed by a so called “divorce of theory and practice” in the 1970s, meaning that the normative goals were widely criticized as distracted from reality (Hall, 2002). The modernist rationality was said to reject subjective knowledge and human values. That was the time, when “communicative planning” has emerged relying on a notion that the role of a planner should be much beyond theorizing the city and rather looking into the processes already happening in the city. That is, to negotiate with different actors and communicate with the publics. The second planning shift of the
1990s is associated with eventual denial of any kinds of norms and the post-modern cultural diversity. How has the idea of rational planning has transformed then?

With the post-modern shift, justice and equality joined the principles of planning with communication, individual action and information become the essential parts within planning process (Fainstein & Campbell, 2016). Consequently, the “multiple truths” rationality found itself in a variety of forms, meaning that it lies beyond the planners expertise and instead - in the individual institution and creative imagination (Alexander, 2000). Planning paradigms should use different types of rationality in regard to their nature, such as instrumental, strategic, bounded, communicative rationality. Theoretically speaking, Alexander (2000) refers to a "four-fold way", integrating four planning paradigms, which together help to avoid the mistakes of the modernist thought: rational planning, communicative practice, coordinative planning, and frame-setting. At the same time, this integration of different types of rationality allows planning to be a tool to manage urban development and conflicts.

Rational planning is only the first stage of planning process, when all the actors define their goals and the most effective actions to achieve those though various types of analysis. At the stage of communication, the actors negotiate their ideas and resolve conflicts. At the stage of coordination, the actors look for the appropriate tools to enable coordinated actions: strategies, rules, institutional structures. Finally, the frame-setting aspect of planning is comprised by defining problems and developing appropriate responses, ranging from developing a community's master plan to the maintenance of national planning agenda. Important to notice, that all the stages, contrary to the modernist rationality, should be inclusive and interactive, and the goals are to be derived from comprehensive analyses (Alexander, 2000). Overall, this integrative way underlies the post-modern planning systems, and rationality in planning should be a principle rather than a tool to define an abstract future of “designed” communities.

**Post-socialist urban development**

The chapter so far has briefly discussed the evolution of rationality in planning and described the high-modernism paradigm applied in the USSR until the collapse. Socialist urban planning used to be about the economy and military needs of the state, the city was a tool rather than an object itself. As already stated, the post-socialist states are found to be path-dependent. What exactly does it mean for a planning system? Within the western planning, the contemporary national, regional and local planning represents a combination of a “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches (Pissourios, 2014), while the post-socialist planning is found to be path-dependent in the authoritarian manner.

Generally, the post socialist research is divided in two country groups: Europe and Russia (Ferenčuhová & Gentile, 2016). The difficulties faced by the public officials and planners are conditioned by both contemporary planning issues of post-industrial countries (urbanization,
information, social transformations) and the inheritance of socialist planning (Demidova, 2011). As a result, some of the post-socialist countries have applied capitalism comprehensively and turned into the globalized and segregated world more quickly, others produced locally differentiated combinations of capitalism and socialism (Bouzarovski, 2012). But similar for all, the institutions are on the one hand, culturally embedded in the overall process of transition, and locally specific – on the other (Tsenkova, 2013). In addition, the emerging local autonomy in the post-socialist cities is followed by common for all lack of national urban policies and inconsistency between the planning levels (Tsenkova, 2008).

The former seems to be especially relevant for Russia. Urban transformation has happened in a compressed time compared to these of Western (Golubchikov, 2004). In practice, the planning context in Russia is found to be dominated by persistent departmental approach, bureaucracy, continuation of authoritarian soviet tradition. Ten years after the system collapse, Seema (2003) found the incompatibility of planners with progress towards a democratic, market-based society. The planners themselves had no clear direction for the future of the cities and looked for guidance from central and regional authorities. While the Moscow chief city-planner is said to still relying on the soviet tactical thinking: “people in 20-30 years will have their own vision”, the today developers have to obtain multiple technical approval from various local and regional sectoral authorities (Golubchikov & Phelps, 2011).

As for the public participation, Golubchikov (2004) found that the publics are used to link city development only to administration, where only the privileged could participate; people do not believe in their ability to influence the decisions. As for capitalism, it is stated that the government did not analyze the market needs and never modelled on the needs of local population. In the beginning, the first biggest Moscow urban projects (e.g. Manezh Square) had mostly ideology- and profit-led goals. The more recent research reveals such trend as “urban entrepreneurialism” and uses “the growth-machine concept” to describe how the local coalitions of private and public interests exploit the city to make a profit and a strong visual impression of progress and development, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the regional authorities (Golubchikov & Phelps, 2011; Kinossian, 2012). In addition, research on governmental policy towards the single-industry towns of Russia showed a formal character of plan-making, with industrial enterprises benefit (Didyk & Ryabova, 2014).

While aspirations to improve territorial planning are present, the overall urban planning lacks a comprehensive approach and integration, and masterplans are mainly marginalized. To sum up, Golubchikov & Phelps (2011) state that “in reality, Russia has developed a transitional system of urban planning and development control wherein a combination of different institutional traditions, including Soviet-style planning, bureaucratic centralization and US-style zoning”.
Residential planning

Functionalism and participatory planning

Besides the planning system overall, the paper studies the transformed governance in the residential areas. To not confuse the reader, it is reasonable to discuss the same evolution of the planning thought and post-socialist research on residential areas in a separate chapter. As already stated, the modernist paradigm assumed technocratic functionalism and distraction from the real urban processes and individual issues. Modernist functionalism can be clearly seen in the soviet residential areas, which have translated into a socio-cultural phenomenon of collectivization of domestic activities (Meerovich, 2014b). The literature states that residential areas had been divided into smaller-scale micro-

Figure 6. An example of the city’s residential micro-district (MurmanskGroup, 2018)

districts (“microrayons”, figure 6), which included functional units: housing, kindergartens, socio-cultural sites (interest clubs and sport grounds, theaters), domestic services (laundry, boilers, warehouses, waste storages) (Konyshева, 2011). Generally, the dynamic of a change in their layout was extremely low, or even absent until the collapse of the system. The already mentioned mechanistic conceptualization of human had led to a practice of planning, when costs were cut on the expense of residential quality: construction of a quality dwelling; formation of diversified habitats and a wide range of lifestyle choices; technical support of urban areas (water supply, sewerage); production of a wide range of household equipment, etc. (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006; Meerovich, 2014a). To sum up, “quality of life” within socialistic paradigm was not the planning priority.

In the western world, the planning shifts put strategic and communicative rationale in work, making planners responsible for the constant analysis of demographic, cultural and other influences, constitution of a neighborhood plan; involvement of different private and public actors; establishing a trustworthy environment and assurance of all the rights being protected by law; gathering of a feedback (Myerson, 2004). In addition, the “bottom-up” communication assumes that participatory processes should be active, meaning that not only the opinions of residents should be gathered, but the residents should be given adequate information (problem, solutions, alternatives, etc.) in order for them to make an educative decision (Hirt, 2005). Surveys, public meetings, ballots, fact sheets, web-sites, work-shops, participatory decision-making etc. are the tools for that. Finally, it is important to make a clear policy and decision-making framework, methodology, as well as to specify the responsibility roles in terms of goals and plans. Important to notice that as Pissourios (2014)
claims, there should exist a community that has certain needs, and expectations, and also wants to participate in planning.

Post-socialist neighborhood governance

Nowadays, the existent physical structure of the post-socialist neighborhood is seen as a problematic issue, with no clear solution found. In the context of the soviet planning, those stand as depersonalized blocks of standardized apartments. Therefore, what could a municipality do in order to achieve and assure neighborhood quality within the already built up areas? The research on the changed residential governance and planning in Russia is extremely scarce. What is present is some research on the emergence of household maintenance companies under the newly established market (the companies do services for hard infrastructure, inner roads, waste management, water/heating/electricity supply etc. since 2004). Reformation of the housing and communal services in the country have led to new social and economic problems in the industry. The problems found in research are related to the services quality, lack of institutional base for market relations and competition, formation of private business, development of the institute of professional household companies, and owners literacy about their rights (Shulepina, 2015).

An interesting example in the post-socialist context would be China. Contrary to the compressed transformation in Russia, China has experienced 30 years of the market-oriented economic reforms (Qi, et al., 2018). While neighborhood planning has not yet been included and no law specializing public participation is present in China, community building policies have been launched. The system nowadays includes a multi-level system at the local level consisting of the governments (municipal governments, district government, street office) and autonomous organizations (community residents committee). Nevertheless, the institutional issues are said to be present. (Qi et al., 2018) point the following essential processes within post-socialist residential planning:

- empowering local communities under national decentralization policies;
- broad public participation;
- emotional interconnectedness within residential community;
- iterative and adaptive planning of a neighborhood plan that meets the higher-level guideline.

In addition, a relevant topic within Russian neighborhoods is civic engagement. The only initiative concerned with neighborhoods at a national level, is a federal program “Formation of a modern urban environment”, which came into realization in 1112 cities in 2017 (Makovetskaya, 2018). It is concerned with basic elements of a living area: roads, benches, lightning, trash cans and in some cases – greening and play-grounds. No comprehensive research could be found on the program’s results and relation to residential quality. Nevertheless, the success of civic engagement initiatives is discussed by experts: it differs from city to city and is dependent on several factors. It is noted, that a degree of public awareness and willingness to participate faces difficulties, as far as the whole concept of
participation and individual agency is new for the Russian population (Makovetskaya, 2018). The developers describe several additional issues: the already existent urban communities, which are skeptical towards national/municipal initiatives, public disbelief that “anybody will listen to them”, lack of social cohesion, lack of civic engagement specialists and persisting authoritarian paradigm of politicians and architects – who are not ready to accept public involvement in decision-making (Makovetskaya, 2018). Overall, the described issues seem to reflect the statement, that history matters.

To sum up the theoretical chapter, modernization has led to multiple changes within societal institutions, and urban planning has not escaped this transformation: from national to local, from top-down to bottom-up, from tactics to strategy, from standard to diverse, from functional to mixed and integrated. Post-socialist urban planning research shows that the field in the country is composed by a collapse of past and present, socialist and capitalist with various gaps and inconsistencies between those.
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Case Study Methodology

Each city is a case itself, but the choice of the case study methodology is highly relevant for the study as far as the contextual conditions are assumed important. As already stated, the developmental outcomes of the post-socialist cities are found to be influenced by the political and cultural heritage. More precisely, the urban reality of each city is drawn by the long-standing principles of soviet planning together with the rapid establishment of the market forces and local independency, which varies between the Russian cities. While the city of Murmansk was built up according to the socialistic planning concepts, these do not meet the nowadays resident’s needs. Therefore, the context, in which the present planning occurs, is of a great importance, as far as “what is being done” depends on “what was left”. Finally, a case study methodology allows to use various data resources, which is especially relevant for the investigation of the context.

A type of the study is determined as exploratory as far as the aim is to explore and analyze the local planning system within the soviet legacy context. The paper uses qualitative methods because 1) information is difficult to obtain through more quantitatively-oriented methods of data collection, and 2) the paper aims to explore the opinions and experiences of the actors involved in urban change (Mack et al., 2005) as far as the previous research finds a formal character of the post-socialist planning documentation (Didyk & Ryabova, 2014; Hirt, 2005)

In-depth interviews

Qualitative approach contains a broad variety of methodological approaches, from interviews to document analysis as well as various data analysis approaches. The local planning system and residential planning in this paper are studied through in-depth interviews made during a field trip to Murmansk in June 2018. The method implies a use of open-ended questions (informants may expand their answers and respond in their own words) and allows for obtaining culturally embedded, and widely explanatory in nature responses (Mack et al., 2005). Contrary to questionnaires, in-depth interviews do not provide with eventual generalization of phenomena, rather create an insight into a case study (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). Therefore, transformation of authoritarian political outlook and emergence of civic responsibility are to be studied through opinions and experiences of the empowered urban actors. The paper uses different types of interviews: unstructured and semi-structured, which has allowed to gain information from a wide variety of actors depending on their background.

An essential part of interview design is sampling. To reflect the specifics of a case study methodology, the Key Informants Technique was used. It implies participation of the informants who have specialized information on particular topics rather than those who may just add to an understanding of the culture (Pashkevich et al., 2016). Also, sample sizes in
case studies are generally small, in this paper – 9 people, who occupy a position of responsibility and influence, were purposively selected for the interviews (according to their knowledge and involvement into the redevelopment program, figure 7). Deputy of the Head of Administration – the overall attitude towards local planning in addition to the city’s development, Responsible person for the General Plan updates - plan-making and the planning system, Culture and Municipal property committees - the public space and neighborhood redevelopment program, Department for citizens appeals – to explore the administrative concern over public interests, and a Household Maintenance company workers – to explore the changed neighborhood governance and residential issues.

Figure 7. The sampling scheme

An essential approach for conducting a semi-structured interview is to construct an interview guide. Overall, within the case study methodology, the questions should be designed with a focus on unique features of interest (Guest, et al., 2013), which in this study are defined as the following: General Plan and Local Goals, Residential Planning Governance, Public Space Redevelopment, Public Participation, Communication with the local Administration. The topics are divided into several issues to be discussed in form of follow-up questions. In this study, several interview guides have been assembled - for each informant, regarding their position and background. Note-taking was used for data collection. The interviews were conducted face-to-face (at the informants’ workplaces/offices) and through phone calls, varied in length from twenty minutes to one hour.

Thematic Analysis

The two commonly used approaches for interview analysis are the qualitative content and thematic analysis. Both are aimed at systematical transformation of large amount of qualitative data into organized summary of text (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). The methods
break a text into relatively small units of content, code the main meaning and thematically organize the text. The paper uses *thematic analysis*, as far as it is particular relevant for the case study: it is flexible in terms of theory, research question, sample size and data collection, meaning that the relevant themes may emerge during the whole process of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the paper, the themes were constructed in the inductive manner as far as almost no research is present on the post-socialist local planning in Russia and theoretical background is hard to define. The inductive thematic analysis implies that analysis is linked to the data and not driven by theoretical interest in a topic, the resulted themes may also have little relation to interview questions. A theme captures something important in relation to the research question.

Since themes could not be emanated from the theoretical framework and previous research, these have emerged from the inductive analysis: for the local planning system – 1) Marginalized plan-making, 2) Lack of legislature, 3) Lack of the local knowledge; for the Residential Governance – 1) Poor neighborhood reform, 2) Unsuccessful civic engagement. Additional, one theme has emerged within the both research questions - Lack of communication between the different actors. The designed themes respectfully have their own sub-themes, which capture different aspects. The last research question about the contextual influence is stated in a form of discussion.

**Method Discussion**

First to be said, within any methodology, researcher should control for being self-reflexive and avoid judgement (Guest et al., 2013). To overcome this in the process of interviews, leading questions were avoided, as well as any pre-determined conclusions and encouragement (Mack et al., 2005). Second, a shortcoming of the interview method is the subjective view of an informant. To account for that, the sampling was made using *triangulation*, so the study considers people from different backgrounds. There are different actors involved in the Murmansk city public spare and residential change: planners and municipal programs coordinators, responsible committees and project organizations, household maintenance companies, the publics. The latter was included through talking to a municipal worker responsible for sorting out and answering to the public appeals.

Finally, the qualitative methodology is embedded in a debate of whether an objective reality exists. Constructivists argue that truth is dependent on one’s perspective and is socially constructed, realists claim that observer can accurately capture an independent reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2013). The authors state, that thematic analysis provides a flexible approach, implying a theoretical freedom. Thus, thematic analysis can be a method that both reflects reality and unravels the surface of ‘reality’. However, clarity throughout the whole process of analysis is vital, and theoretical position needs to be made clear. Several decisions about the nature of data has been made: 1) there are two approaches: inductive and deductive and 2) there are two kinds of themes: semantic and latent. First, there is almost no research on the topic, therefore the inductive approach was used. Second, the study is not a
“participant” interview, but the key informants one, there is no need to look for the underlying meaning, rather work with the facts that are given in their speeches, which is basically “transformation of the planning system”. Therefore, the analysis is made through inductive approach, constructing the semantic themes.

Software

For visual representation of descriptive data (maps and charts), ArcGIS and Microsoft software were used. Also, some photographs were made during the field trip and some were taken from the local social media to illustrate the arguments. The ATLAS.ti software was used to code and group the themes.

Limitations

First, while the paper is aimed at exploration of the change in Murmansk local planning, investigation of the context refers to the country-level overall (as far as there is almost no research made in historical perspective on the city of Murmansk). Despite that, it is not seen as a problem since the planning principles were strictly unified and many examples from the city of Murmansk are provided. Second, the influence of a rapid market establishment has a considerable influence on present urban reality within the country. Nevertheless, this line of reasoning is not considered within the scope of study as far as it requires a separate research within political economy field. Finally, the neighborhood redevelopment program under study also includes a second part which is concerned with public spaces, but the analysis of this part could not be accomplished in a comprehensive manner due to unwillingness of the responsible committee to provide with relevant information.

Ethical considerations

When recruiting the participants, the informed consent was sent by e-mail or presented in words prior to interview in a language that can be understood by participant. An ability to refuse participation at any time was assured. No recording device was used due to the informants’ preferences. Regarding anonymity, this could not be fully assured since in the most cases, there are particular Key Informants, responsible for municipal programs. However, since the collected data was used rather to provide with a general understanding on the situation in the city, it was not considered to be an issue in the thesis.
RESULTS

The local planning practice

Marginalized plan-making

First, the most influential underlying force forming the local planning environment mentioned was the socio-economic situation in the city. Despite the clear goal-setting at the document level, the local goals are said to be difficult to define as far as the population moves out to the capital cities, and demography overall is a very problematic topic in Murmansk. One of the informants even referred to a possible scenario, where the the city will return to a “shift” character of work and residence, meaning that the most of population will be represented by temporary workers. Therefore, the planning reality of the city is narrowed down to “sustain” rather than “develop” what is left:

“Murmansk is shrinking, so there is no need to develop it” (Informant 1)
“We wish at least to keep it all together” (Informant 2)

Moreover, the finance on which the strategic planning depends, is usually unknown until the last moment, and the lacking economic base is urgent. The city needs not only diversification but at least some local production, companies, and new job places. Nowadays, people are said to be mainly employed within sales, power structures and a few private companies.

“First of all, it is necessary to create enterprises, jobs, production, and then to provide infrastructure for these industries, everything else will catch up.” (Informant 2)

The local planning functions therefore were referred as scarce. From the informants’ words, the city suffers from multiple “worn-outs”: the lack of social infrastructure (leisure amenities, sport- and play-grounds), especially for the younger part of population; worn-out and technically unsafe urban environment (physical conditions of the built-in infrastructure); lack of design (etc. the inhabitants are making themselves the attempts to change the “grey and impersonal layout of the neighborhoods”, or architectural imbalance of the private business constructions was also an example); old road network (are said to be insufficient to respond to the present car use, multiple traffics, narrow roads and lack of highways); multiple issues within residential areas were also frequently mentioned (which are discussed further). Despite the mentioned problems, the functions are present only in a few forms: functional zoning of the territories and control of construction within these zones, building of the residential housing under some social programs, redevelopment of recreational zones and greening control under private constructions.

“There is nothing more we do for the local needs” (Informant 2).
Lack of local knowledge

Important to notice, that a lack of urban development knowledge at the local level was highlighted during the interviews. First, the plan itself was prepared as a municipal order from the capital cities companies, and one administrative informant referred to these as “the Moscow and Saint-Petersburg scientific minds”. In practice, the plan is said to formally meet the requirements of the Urban Code with the absence of actual territorial development. Additionally, the already existent physical layout is not seen as something needing re-planning. While the plan at the document level use the definitions of contemporary urban theory such as “compact” and “mixed-use” constructions, “human capital development”, “ecological safety”, “modern urban environment”, “quality of life” (GEONIKA, 2015b; Ministry, 2013), none of the participants has used any of these concepts or could explain their meanings. Most of those were referring to the citations from official documents. Another informant had a highly normative attitude towards local decision-making, saying that

“There can be no level of “we thought, or we decided”, everything should be normative.”
(Informant 5)

Of course, that quotation should not be extrapolated to the whole local autonomy level and each decision-maker, it is probably rather an individual opinion, which reflects the high level of reliance on documents.

Lack of legal base

The related issue was mentioned as the unclear urban planning legislature and as well as a “recommendation” character of the planners themselves. For instance, there is a council for discussion of the private constructions design and layout, which the planners and private agents should participate in, but in practice, the construction firms do not listen to the recommendations and perform actions according their own vision. The legislature is said to be insufficient for architectural field also: the position and functions of a chief architect is not defined in both theory and practice; no architectural regulations are longer existent since the soviet period has ended. Also, the regional authorities have made the ecological regulations stricter, but have hot provided with any methodological instructions.

The informants referred to a lack of regulations within the quality of the private business, meaning that contractors do the work «just to build», with no practical guarantee for a long-standing quality. The planning committee highlighted the formal character of fees and rule of law. People do to not take seriously such regulations as ecology, quality of construction, parking due to the low fees. Moreover, there are not enough of employees within the control over law.

What is the function of the planning committee? The endless fee controls.” (Informant 3)
Federal and regional guidance

The federal and regional guidance happen to lack communication, especially when it came to the bottom-up processes. For instance, despite that the plan itself contains a complex *analysis of the territory*, during the processes of joining of the residential area Roslyakovo to the municipal area in 2014, no geodesic information has been provided by the city of Severomorsk (a part of which Roslyakovo used to be). For the residential program, the informants note that there was a lot of questions within the publics and private agents, which even the administration was not able to answer: they had neither adequate knowledge nor time to gain it. In addition, it was characterized as quite *standardized* instructions and far away from the actual needs. For instance, the disadvantaged regional policies (especially, the long-standing “polar night” and human factor).

In relation to the residential areas, the instruction was in February 2017, when it was not possible to analyse the physical conditions of the neighbourhoods covered by snow. It also was designed with inadequate for the local conditions timing. While the technical details have been specified for the extremely northern weather, the time limits did not take into account the early winter. Moreover, while the program in practice was concerned with several elements (roads, lightning, benches and play-grounds), the inventory of these elements has happened in 2017 across all the 1713 neighborhoods in the city. The inventory is said to have more of a quantitative than qualitative character. For instance, in a great share of the cases, the roads have been recognized present despite their physical conditions. Sometimes, the unnecessary changes were to be made and the true needs are ignored due to the high reliance on the document formulations. A lack of clear methodology was noted.

*The Program had appeared absolutely outside the general plan, and chaotically all over the country. At that time, we had our own municipal programs, but we were ordered to execute it. (Informant 4)*

Local administration response

When it comes to communication with the publics, in practice, the petitions of the active residents simply drown in the whole communicative process between administration and population, which is referred as the *delegative and normative character of response*. The administrative workers are said to be forced to respond with any answer since the law clearly delimitates the pending period for citizens appeals. Moreover, the system is described as *quite disintegrated*. For example, a person writes a complaint that is related to the work of several committees. Eventually, it turns out that each committee responds with its respective part of the text and the document is then formed. As a result, people receive some extracts from the official documents and mostly are sent to communicate with the maintenance companies or even change one.

*“Something needs to be answered, so they try to come up with this “something”. If there was no time limit, the appeals would have gone completely in the air.”* (Inf.7)
Public participation within the process of plan-making is said to be highly formal as far as publics were unaware that such thing as a general plan exists. Moreover, while the goal of the neighborhood program is said to “wake the residents up”, the standard time-limits made public participation quite exclusive. Overall, the lack of public awareness about the local governmental system was noted several times. The participants claimed that when people call to different committees, they do not have an adequate knowledge of their functions and responsibilities: they refer to a district administration as being responsible for everything that is happening in their residential areas.

From the companies' view, communicative processes are characterized by the same features. One informant noted that the administration frequently “throws off” responsibility on the companies even when there is no adequate ground. The informant also notes that sometimes the changes appear when the appeals go all the way to the head of administration, but in practice those are still quite formal and insufficient. The second point within communicative processes was found in a highly normative character of administrative attitudes towards the issues. For example, one informant claims that the companies must provide with risky and unsafe services when testing the old housing stock only because the administration sticks to standards written in the documents. One of the participants eventually described the present situation as following:

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“It’s a vicious circle: no way to solve the problems and no one needs to solve those.”
(Informant 7)
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Residential layout

Poor neighborhood reform

In relation to the neighbourhood reform and the absence of municipal planning there, the issues found within the neighborhoods are diverse. First, the worn-out infrastructure is found to be insufficient for the present urban life: the areas lack meeting places, play- and sport-grounds, gardens and greening. The grounds that are present are said to be very old and beyond the safety standards. It was highlighted that there is nothing can people can be engaged into inside the neighborhoods, especially, the youth. Also, while the territories are filled with the private vehicles, parking lots are noted as quite an urgent issue. Finally, the areas are said to be lacking design elements and greening, and the residents themselves try to create a more livable environment. Overall, no “planning” is considered at any level of residential areas.

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People ask the maintenance companies to bring land into the courtyard areas or to paint the fences, so they could create their small gardens. They are saying: “We are lacking colors”. (Informant 8)
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Additionally, the household maintenance companies are mainly characterized as disadvantaged. First to be noticed, one informant from the household maintenance company highlights, that since the privatization has ended, the municipality had to perform a full repair of the housing stock as well as the surrounding territories. In practice, none of that happened and privatization is said to mainly happening in terms of private interests of power structures rather than of the citizens interests. Nowadays, the housing buildings and their territories (as a private property) experience quite a tough situation with the only one to be blamed – residential maintenance companies:

“They threw off the responsibility and blamed everything on the companies, which emerged only 10 years ago, while the property has not been repaired in 30 years.” (Inf. 9)

Second, the companies’ technological and financial insufficiency. For instance, waste management system is old, and the snow-cleaning technology calls for innovation. One of the most popular complaints was the amount of waste within the neighborhoods: a lack of trashcans as well as long distance to those due to the natural terrain of the territory. Finally, a great attention across all the informant was given to personal responsibility of the inhabitants, which is discussed further.

There was found a lack of dialog between public and the companies: when the residents have complaints about their maintenance service, they immediately call to the administration instead of communicating directly with the company. The companies receive enormous fees which are later compensated by the same residential payments, as a result, the money is spent on the fees instead of the neighborhood needs. The lack of dialog was found also from the other side: when the companies need to make some repair works, they may destroy the already mentioned home-made “gardens” in the count yards with no consequent restoration or communication at all.

The difficulties of civic engagement

A question public participation is found a popular issue in the talks of all participants. The residents are divided into two groups: “old school” soviet thinkers and a small part of the active citizens. One of the administrative workers has mentioned, that the soviet system had been working in a way that personal responsibility was seen by the citizens as something “irritating” and “not-worth the time”. The informant also made a comparison with one of the Nordic countries, saying that the government there has been educating the population for centuries, and the Russian people received the responsibility immediately. It is noted, that people have not yet realized that they, as the owners of houses and yard territories, are responsible for their content and appearance since 2004.

“The values have been suddenly exposed to the population, people are not ready.” (Inf. 1)

“People are calling with a question of why nothing is done and why they have to do something, saying "I even have to come to the administration myself?" (Inf. 5)
On the contrast, the small part of active population is said to be present. Some people begin to read the laws, participate in procedures, claim for the rights and create initiatives. Ones even go to courts in relation to the privatization processes and worn-out stock, but the number is said to be very low, with the main part of initiatives staying on the level of talk. An informant from the maintenance company mentioned, that

“People do not want to take action, or are afraid, in old fashion, as well as do not want to spend any of the financial resources on a neighborhood development.” (Informant 9)

Within the Program. civic engagement and acknowledgement of different residential interests were referred as innovations, but the opinions towards the goals differ between private and public sectors. Maintenance companies mention the program as a result of unwillingness of the administration to deal with outcomes of privatization. In practice, the “engagement” is said to have resulted in multiple structural issues, which have been widely described by the responsible committee worker. While the local administration had only one month to begin, manage and complete the whole process, the criteria of the appeal choice was established in a “first come, first served” manner, creating an exclusive environment. In addition to that, those who have been active, stated all the questions they had about neighborhood issues, also showing lack of knowledge about the official point of the program. The views upon informative procedures within the civic engagement differ, while ones state that there is a plenty of information posted on the administrative web-site and people “are just too lazy to search for it”, others claim that those were scare and not on time: the television started to advertise too late, when the gathering of appeals has almost been finished. Overall, the civic engagement procedure had been happening in a rush and with public unawareness of their role in the program.
DISCUSSION

This section discusses and analyzes the research questions in relation to the used themes and subthemes. It as well connects the findings to theory and previous research. Figure 8 below clarifies the structure of the discussion.

Figure 8. Thematic overview

Needs to be said, that the topic lacks a comprehensive body of previous research, and it was quite hard to make any comparisons. When it comes to the planning practice, some relation to studies could be made, but the topic of residential planning has almost no sources to relate to. Additionally, the qualitative methodology used in the paper is not common for Russian urban studies, which actually at some level shows the persistence of technocracy found by Golubchikov (2004). Overall, the results reflect the findings previous research and add some new knowledge such as responsibility issues (which are discussed further).
1. Local planning: quasi-existence

Marginalized plan-making: catch up with urban change

The theme reflects what Seema (2003) mentioned as the incompatibility of planners to handle a democratic, market-based society. The population outflow is said to be an obstacle for private sector investment as far as “no new construction is needed” and the socio-economic trend of the recent decades has mainly resulted in a formal character of planning, which is found a popular topic within post-socialist research (Golubchikov, 2004; Golubchikov & Phelps, 2011; Kinossian, 2012; Didyk & Ryabova, 2014). While the city depends financially on the regional budget, it is not able to cope with the market-based economy and functions on a basis of control and regulation. The plan itself is concerned with functional zoning and the city’s infrastructure is not seen as an object for re-development. Same as Golubchikov (2004) has found, the population is not engaged in the processes of planning, because the engagement procedure that happened in 2009 was formal and exclusive, indicating that public participation was not a prioritized concept. Lack of experience with handling population dynamics together with the economy-oriented mindset create a model of plan-making, where the changes to the plan happen after the decisions and practical applications are made. While the plan is said to mainly “catch up with the urban change”, the results show similar to the previous research incompatibility of planners to cope with progress towards a market-based society.

Lack of local knowledge: the executive attitude

Similar to Seema (2003) and Golubchikov & Phelps (2011), one of the most important findings shows that the workers do not have a comprehensive urban planning knowledge and highly rely on federal and regional instructions. The city needs to attract specialists and engage into the international research paradigm in order to cope with the present issues. It seems especially relevant in the soviet context that Gentile & Sjöberg (2006) describe as a lack of access to the international knowledge base. Moreover, the workers are not aware of the concepts used in the official documents, with makes the development formal and normative. The head decision-makers show an executive attitude towards the federal authorities, relying on the “Moscow and Saint-Petersburg scientific minds”.

Lack of legal base: the gaps of compressed transformation

Additionally, the national the legal base shows multiple gaps and insufficiencies, which affect functions of the planners, which is discussed in the post-socialist research worldwide (Tsenkova, 2008). While according to Axenov et al. (2006) the transformation period has ended, the role of the urban planner is not defined, meaning that without a centrally planned community, a city itself lacks identity. The field of market regulation, rule of law and quality control also suffers from inconsistencies. The contractors do the work with no practical guarantee for a long-standing quality and people do to not take seriously such regulations as ecology, quality of construction, parking due to the low fees. Again, it indicates that that is
not only the system that transforms, it’s the society itself that needs to be integrated into the modern world. These arguments make sense in the historical context even more, when considering the socialistic ideology. In theory, human was a central idea, but in practice, suppression of autonomous thinking may have created a system, where individual quality of life was not worth the effort. A loosen attitude towards quality is a feature of both socialist and post-socialist systems. With the market coming into the scene, it is especially relevant to create a legal base which would control private businesses and protect the consumers rights.

**Federal and regional guidance: authoritarian persistence**

Related to the stated above, the regional and federal guidance also shows the traces of historical heritage. The whole system seems to work in a largely normative environment, meaning that the human is still treated as “a machine to be well-kept”. While the city’s planners perform formal functions, other planning levels design instructions based on standardized indicators. In this sense, the lacking practice of bottom-up communication is urgent, which reflects the findings of Golubchikov & Phelps (2011) in a way that developers have to obtain multiple technical approval from various local and regional sectoral authorities. In order to account for the diverse and various urban needs, the society needs to be analyzed as a living organism. For now, the persistence of targeted indicators implies that the city is still seen as an object to be sustained rather than researched and developed. The cities and regions therefore experience a sort of “abandonment” lacking methodologies for comprehensive local analyses and specialists. Thus, the federal and regional responsibility here is to encourage and support local initiative rather than direct their development in the environment of bottom-up fear of communication. In relation to that, the civic engagement initiatives are also questionable, as far as the federal guidance assumes strict time limits and does not provide localities with adequate knowledge base. Informative procedures for the population are scarce, market mechanisms are chaotic, and rights are not fully protected.

**Local administration response: a vicious circle**

As the local institute of planning performs formal functions, lacks specialists and legal base, the communicative processes with the publics happen in a respective manner – formal. While socio-economic changes in the western societies have led to a shift from rational domination to communicative rationality, the administrative responsibility in the city of Murmansk is mostly delegated. What could that pattern imply in the context? Throughout the whole soviet history, regions and localities relied on central directives and now they are supposed to make decisions independently. People happed to take the decision-making positions without any adequate knowledge what decision-making and societal development is. This finding sounds even more persuasive considering that during the privatization processes, the processes of town building were admitted to almost anyone with an ambition but without any qualifications (Mazaev, 2014). In addition, the publics do not have an adequate knowledge of their functions and responsibilities. An understanding should occur that the system is a mechanism for an effective and quality development rather than an authoritarian rule-maker. The normative thinking is another feature that was frequently found
during the analysis. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, autonomous decision-making has been suppressed for a long period of time, which inevitably affected not only the system, but the culture itself (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). In this sense, the responsibility roles at the local decision-making should be defined precisely.

2. Residential layout: who is responsible?

Poor neighborhood reform: another gap of transformation

The present residential planning is at a great share a result of system transformation. While urban planning is at least at a minor degree present, the neighborhoods are basically abandoned by the system. No sufficient institute, no re-development and reconstruction initiative, only support programs. While the maintenance companies provide with technical support, insufficient infrastructure, parking issues, greening and livability – are under no one’s responsibility. The companies themselves are found to be low quality and professionalism, lacking institutional base for market relations and competition, which reflects the findings of Shulepina (2015). Additionally, similar to the results of Golubchikov (2004), the owners’ literacy about their rights is minimal. The system needs to reform the residential institute at the national level, define responsibility roles, design methodology for local neighborhood analysis and plans as well as assure bottom-up communication (discussed further). Communicative rationality is urgent within this process as well as a change in attitudes towards quality and private property. In this sense, a long-standing absence of privacy, individualization and the market itself create a trace of path dependence.

The difficulties of civic engagement: “why me?”

The results show, that societal evolution is not something that can happen in a compressed time. While the western world has experienced a major transformation in attitudes towards authority, civil responsibility and democracy, the post-socialist Murmansk is largely inhabited by those who treat administration as the main rule- and problem-solver. In this context, it seems important to politically educate the population. A huge attention to the socio-cultural transformation is required as far as during the modernist “society design” people have resulted in lack of self-identification. As (Golubchikov, 2004) notes, people do not believe in their ability to influence the decisions. For the residential areas, no doubt that the system of neighborhood communications is absent: empowering local communities under national decentralization policies, broad public participation, emotional interconnectedness within residential community, etc. Within this paper, the stress is especially made to cultural problem and the issued social ties and a research on the possibilities and patterns for self-expression, critical thinking and civil responsibility could be made.
CONCLUSIONS

The specifics of the Russian urban environment are largely conditioned by its history, culture and developmental path. The western urban environment had been forming “from the bottom” through the socio-economic processes and the class transformations had led to the developed local urban management and urban culture. In Russian Federation it is claimed that transformation has ended, but the regions and localities fail to acquire economic independence. While in a couple of large regional centers the urban change happens, Murmansk is not an example of those. The local planners face incapability of facing the democracy- and market-based society with the local planning institute performing formal functions. The plan itself is treated rather as a regulative document for functional zoning and the actual urban development is absent. The long-standing instrumental rationality under ideological domination has transformed into the lack understanding of real urban processes. At the same time, the communicative rationality has not found its realization.

“Keep it all together” – would be quite a descriptive citation of the present urban development: from the large-scale development to the smallest neighborhood units. While the low-quality and insufficiently controlled market is happening on the streets, the governance tends to be influenced by the soviet values: normative and executive, economy oriented. Residential areas in the city of Murmansk massively experience this ideological contrast. During the soviet planning, those have been planned to provide the working class with the basic needs and the basics were unified, controlled, but taken care of. Nowadays these are the questions of personal responsibility of the residents. What are their needs now? Population analysis and education, community building and proper civic engagement, rights protection and quality control drown in the outcomes of the compressed transformation. The city needs professional urban planners and national guidance. The question here would be where are the respective national policies and research? The urban planning discipline in the country should study and incorporate communicative planning techniques, spread knowledge to the regions, create education events, pay attention to the traits of normativism at the executive power and local authorities, encourage initiative and ideas, promote analysis, educate the publics, create an environment where they can be sure that their rights protected.

While the discussion has presented some comparisons to the existing body of research, it seems important to mention the contribution of the study in terms of new knowledge. The topics that do not appear in the theoretical part are mostly connected to the transformation that has happed across all dimensions of societal life: lack of knowledge about societal and urban development, normativism and standardization, lack of critical thinking, loosen attitude towards quality and diversity of needs, a lacking practice of bottom-up communication, lack of public awareness and civic responsibility.

The system has transformed, but the post-modern shifts discussed in the theoretical chapter (Hall, 2002) have not appeared in actual institutions and policies. That implies, that societal evolution is not something that can happen in a compressed time and requires a lot of attention and resources. While the system is spotted as disintegrated, the soviet “branch
principle” and systematic approach only support the responsibility delegation between administrative departments. “Norm”, “standard”, “document number”, “order” – are the categories applied by the administrative workers. Thus, the modernist paradigm is still present within the post-soviet mindset in the city’s institutes. The absence of an adequate goal setting based on a comprehensive analysis creates a quasi-existent local planning system, functioning on a basis of normative goals, which are distracted from the actual urban needs.

From here, it seems interesting to notice, that the citations presented in the beginning of the paper are related to the first shift in the planning history: from rational functionalism to communicative planning. What could it mean within the context of post-socialist planning? Societal transitions take time, so does it mean that the country first should survive a realization that leads to communicative planning, and then it will be evolutionary prepared for the post-modern, multiple-truth reality? Sometimes the line of reasoning in this paper goes beyond the scope of urban planning and into philosophy. But the author believes that it’s a human nature that affects his development and consequently the societies and nations, and a human nature cannot be studied within one discipline. As far as planning is about rationalizing irrational, it is crucial to call for psychological and philosophical, cultural grounds in urban research, and for the post-socialist studies in particular.
References


26. In Siberia: Urban Planning and Resettlement Policy In The USSR During The


APPENDIX 1. Interview guides.

The Appendix presents the approximate questions, which constituted a skeleton of the data gathering. Each of the questions have been adapted to the participants’ background, position and knowledge on the topic. The questions are organized thematically based on the research questions. The follow-up questions are not stated below.

**General Plan and Local Goals**
What are the committee’s functions?
Who and how has created the master plan? What are its functions and what regulates?
How are the development objectives relate to the local needs? (examples)
How exactly does the committee work with the master plan? What are the responsibilities of a chief architect?
What do you think about the federal and regional guidance?

**Residential Planning Governance and Civic engagement**
What are the problems in the residential areas?
Which problems are delegated to the maintenance companies and which – to the administration?
How would you describe the condition and infrastructure of microrayons?
How does the administration work with the population appeals?
What do the citizens need? What are the appeals and applications about?

**Federal program “Formation of a modern urban environment”**
The Program is established at the federal level, but it was adapted by each municipality in its own way. How was it adapted for Murmansk?
The program determines the minimum list of objects for redevelopment. How exactly would you, as a specialist in the town planning department, describe a high-quality and comfortable neighborhood?
How would you describe the effectiveness of the program? How can it be, in your opinion, improve the daily routine of those living in the area?
What were the problems in the implementation of the program and what helps to overcome these difficulties?
What can you say about poor quality reviews?
What forms does the public take part in?

**General Questions**
How can committee’s work improve/worsen the population’s life? (examples)
Citizen participation in decision-making is an innovation. What are the problems with attracting and participation?
What do you think about the Program? What would you change in the program? And in the residential areas?
If you were responsible for all the planning in Murmansk and had all the money, where would you like to start? What would you like to change?