

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI  
ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE

# SENSE OF PLACE AMONG YOUTH IN RUSSIA'S ARCTIC CITIES

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## BACKGROUND

- Cities built during the soviet period for the extraction of natural resources
- Prevailing single-industry towns, where community is strongly dependent on a 'city-forming enterprise'
- Large-scale youth out-migration over the last decades

## RESEARCH FOCUS

- Youth perceptions of place in industrial towns and their interaction with stakeholders
- Specific legislation and corporate responsibility programmes directed at youth, and their implementation

## POPULATION DECLINE IN MURMANSK REGION



## KEY PROBLEMS OF YOUTH IN MONO-CITIES

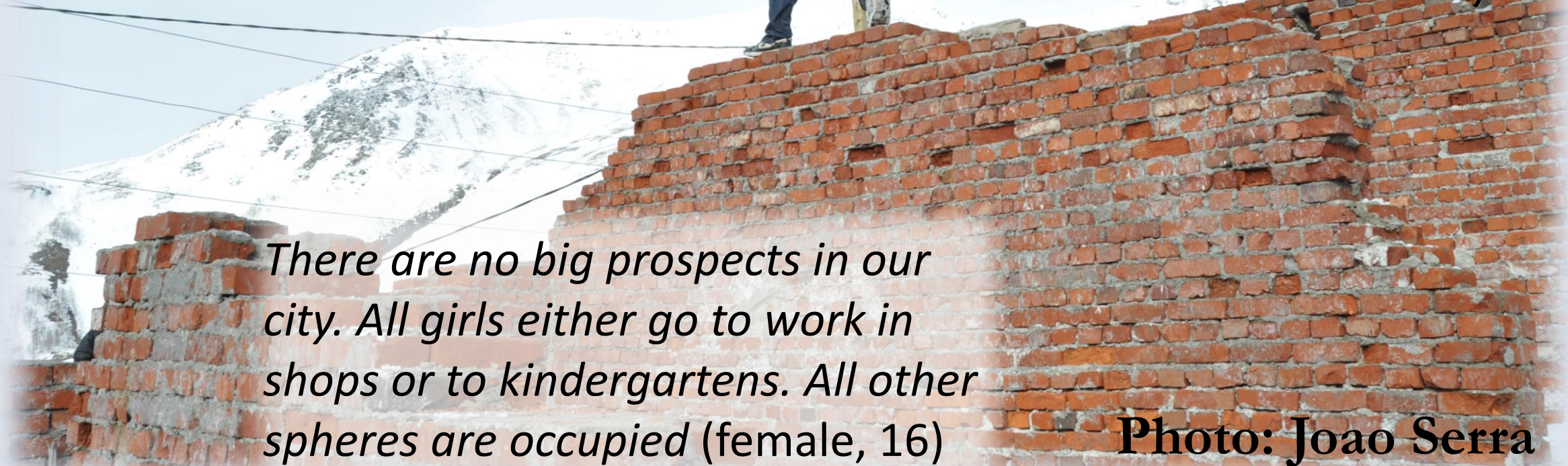
- **BOREDOM:** the urban environment of mono-industrial cities is boring and does not satisfy needs of modern youth
- **MONO-EDUCATION:** opportunities for education are rather limited and industry-oriented, which contributes to the outflow of creative and talented young people
- **DISADVANTAGED FEMALES:** young females are leaving in large numbers, as such cities require more male labour than female
- **UNCERTAINTY:** high level of instability and dependence on the industrial company

## SENSE OF PLACE: place as a 'meaningful location'

Social, material, and emotional components of belonging

*Of course all my friends are going to leave! It is too boring here. And there are no good cafes and museums as e.g., in St.Petersburg (female, 17)*

*I plan to stay here, but I want to save money in order to be able to buy an apartment in another region. Nobody knows what will happen with our city in 10-20-30 years (male, 30)*



*There are no big prospects in our city. All girls either go to work in shops or to kindergartens. All other spheres are occupied (female, 16)*

Photo: Joao Serra

*Young people appropriating industrial ruins in Kirovsk, Murmansk reg.*

## ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITIES

- Working in cooperation with young people and local stakeholders in order to identify and analyse key factors that make places attractive or unattractive, according to young people's own priorities
- Seeing young people as partners and agents of development of the urban Arctic
- Analysing successful stories of young people becoming more viable and resilient in their home communities, bringing youth perspectives to policy makers
- Translating research findings into policy recommendations for the planning of Arctic urban development



Photo: Alla Bolotova

*Public space in Apatity, Murmansk reg.*

The poster was prepared in the framework of the WOLLIE project: 'Live, Work or Leave? Youth – wellbeing and the viability of (post) extractive Arctic industrial cities in Finland and Russia' (2018-2020)

### Project partners:

Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland; Aleksanteri institute, University of Helsinki, Finland; North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk (NEFU), Russia; Petrozavodsk State University, Russia

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